D/discourse Analysis: Using Multiple Lenses for Researching

Curriculum, Sustainability and Agency in the Context of

Higher Education Texts and Talk.

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degree of Doctor of Education in Education, October 2014

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified

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# Abstract

This thesis primarily involves an exercise in D/discourse analysis (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000), where particular Higher Education [HE] curriculum D/discourses were explored in the context of sustainability and with an emphasis on agency. In drawing together the global and local nature of D/discourse, attention to change as a linguistic phenomenon envisaged concepts of sustainability, curriculum and agency as 'floating signifiers' or 'nodal points' filled with different discursive meanings. This was progressed through poststructural, constructionist and constructivist lenses using linguistic, semiotic, narrative, interpretative and reflexive methods in analysis of texts and talk in a creative way and it is my approach to study that, I believe, offers a distinct and original contribution to the academic community. The emphasis was on personal challenge to my own ways of knowing and being.

My research has alerted me to the power of D/discourse analysis in diminishing the realist sense of closure that in the possibility of multiple interpretations can also highlight languages of agentic possibility as well as despair. In moving from constructs of Discourse to discourse and back again, I considered that we were in some ways creating the issues we discussed and in this maintaining and perpetuating a restricted view of educational curriculum, each other and the future that we did not necessarily want or believe in. The pessimistic narratives reinforced articulations of hopelessness in educational, agentic and natural ways, offering multiple reasons for inaction and in this also constraining potential opportunities for more positive change. My argumentative, interpretative and reflexive approach made me more attentive to and understanding of alternative perspectives and positions, and my own, that I hope will open up lines of dialogue and suggested agency that may generate more sustainable ways of being.

# List of Contents

# List of tables

# Acknowledgements

# Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis primarily involves an exercise in D/discourse analysis (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000), both in terms of the hegemonic fixity of discursive orders, and counter-hegemonic articulations of discoursing subjects. Higher Education [HE] curriculum D/discourses were explored in the context of sustainability, with an emphasis on reflexive modernity and agency. In empirical analysis political, environmental and curriculum D/discourse analytic approaches were developed into a methodology that highlighted the relevance of poststructural and postecological discourse theories for analysis of texts and talk. Personal reflexivity within the process was also central to analysis, where my sense of personal agency in curriculum development was explored. This chapter introduces the topic, my approach and myself as researcher.

In recent decades there has been increased emphasis on, and greater inclusion of environmental alongside economic and social concerns and considerations in globalised development thinking and policy prescription, including within higher education and curriculum development (Cortese, 2003; Sterling, 2004, 2012; Blewitt, 2004). In pursuit of sustainable development and/or sustainability, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and a number of related variations, have been envisaged as essential for a necessary reorienting of education in relation to the economic, social and environmental issues we face and choices we make (WCED, 1987; Sterling, 2001; UNESCO, 2002; 2005; Cortese, 2003). Key elements of D/discourses surrounding sustainability, [a term I shall use as inclusive of multiple discursive, conceptual and practical variations at this time], feature notions of environmental change, uncertainty and risk, alongside anthropocentric and normative concerns of survival, rights, well-being, equality and freedom. In calls for global

thinking, there has also been increased emphasis on local action, participation and heterogeneity of ideas (Turner, 2005: 58), to the extent that global issues are clearly linked to local solutions, and changes at the micro level of opinions, attitudes and behaviour.

In recognition of the importance attributed to environmental concerns that further complicate, and for some override, anthropocentric normative articulations of progress and the good, D/discourse analysis is thought to enable a more dynamic, historically sensitive mode of cultural inquiry that could also draw attention to agency and responsibility of HE, my institution and self as individual agent and curriculum developer. This focus was, I felt, a part of my own professional identity and responsibility as a lecturer in Higher Education (HE), and an assumed and ascribed area of 'expertise'. From the outset, my thesis was an engagement in challenging personal and professional understandings through attention to D/discourse. An empirical focus on 'discursive orders' and 'discoursing subjects', in texts and conversations regarding curriculum and sustainability was key (Hajer, 1995; Dryzec, 1997/2005; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000; Wetherell, 2000a). For Szerszynski (1996), the 'environmental movement' was borne out of D/discourses of identity, technology and crisis, an approach, for some, tinged with or motivated by 'angst', 'fundamentalism' and 'traditional certitudes' and 'values' and rationalised inactivity (Blühdorn, 2002:7; Beck, 1997; Wals, 2012; Zeyer and Roth, 2011), as will be discussed. I felt it important, and was given a scholarly opportunity, to [re] consider my own position as advocate for sustainability, personally, professionally and empirically.

Reading and reflection led to some introspective questions at this time, relating to my own links to the intellectual, practical, and ethical dimensions of sustainability and curriculum development in H.E. (Torrés, 1999), specifically:

- Whose agendas was I representing in my promotion of sustainability in curriculum development?
- What was I really implying in my articulations of the purposes, processes and products of this approach to teaching and learning, and how did my colleagues, locally and in wider space and time, confirm or challenge these ideas?
- How did D/discourses of sustainability relate to the sorts of social and cultural changes I envisioned as both positive and necessary?, and
- What was my role in this process of curriculum development as a lecturer in HE and how could/should this embody sustainability?

In part this challenge also emerged from my own practice, where curriculum developments focused on sustainability seemed to be limited within my own institution, conceptually marginalised and a source of personal frustration and professional concern at the time. I wondered why the concept of sustainability was not being embraced. Was it that colleagues did not share concerns? I felt they did. Or perhaps they felt other concepts or approaches provided more coherence in curriculum development? I was not sure. Turning my introspective questions into the context of my collective and relational professional practice, I drew on Sterling (2004:54 also see e.g. Bowers, 1995; Stables, 2001) who suggested the following broad areas for investigation of SE:

- What sorts of education are appropriate to the conditions of the 21st Century?
- Do the discourses of sustainability provide a substantial and coherent base for any necessary revisioning of education?
- How far is our conception of the purpose, nature and role of education still informed by largely unexplored norms of the Western, modernist worldview?
- Is this worldview adequate for, and appropriate to, the post-modern conditions of unsustainability, uncertainty and complexity in which we live? If not, are there others?

Here I felt a space emerging that would be critically sensitive to both my own interests and goals, but grounded in an enhanced understanding of these in my own professional context, where I needed to 'listen' to the cultural 'beat' of the system and 'dance' with it. (Meadows, 2001; Alkire, 2008). In her article, 'Dancing with Systems' Donnella Meadows offered an overarching sentiment for my inquiry at this time, and throughout:

> The future can't be predicted, but it can be envisioned and brought lovingly into being. Systems can't be controlled, but they can be designed and redesigned. We can't surge forward with certainty into a world of no surprises, but we can expect surprises and learn from them and even profit from them. We can't impose our will upon a system. We can listen to what the system tells us, and discover how its properties and our values can work together to bring forth something much better than could ever be produced by our will alone. (Meadows, 2001: online)

This choice highlighted perhaps the 'old [green] hippy' in me, as will be discussed, with notions of dancing through life lovingly, of hope and optimism, and implicit constructions of community echoing what might be considered romantic idealism, a way of thinking that itself was perhaps limiting my own sense of identity and agency (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Biesta and Tedder, 2006; Mezirow, 2000; Sterling, 2004) and wider engagement with sustainability (Blühdorn, 2012; Zeyer and Roth, 2011).

A focus on D/discourse offered potential to objectify and reconsider, through empirical research, both the topic under investigation and myself as inquirer (Richardson, 2000: 923-4; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2001; Wetherell, 2001a; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Caldwell, 2007). While not denying the felt and embodied nature of my concerns, it was existentially useful to see my/others

cognitive and emotional responses in/as discursive practices that link, through a poststructural lens, identities to culture, politics and power (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Caldwell, 2007; Olssen, 2006), rather than more individualised cognitive, emotional and relational deficits.

The object of this thesis, therefore, is to offer a distinct and original contribution to knowledge in terms of the development and application of poststructural and postecological D/discourse theory into empirical D/discourse analysis (Hajer, 1995; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000; Hökkä et al, 2010; Zeyer and Roth, 2011). Using the concept of D/discourse as a way of focusing on the language of curriculum as 'language in use' (Wetherell, 2001a; Reis and Roth, 2007) offered ways of theorizing curriculum, sustainability and agency through re-viewing the linguistic cultural and agentic positioning of knowledge, pedagogies and practices. Taking an 'argumentative approach' in this endeavour, curriculum was taken as a 'floating signifier' filled with different meanings (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Becher and Trowler, 2001; Hajer, 1995; Tregidga et al, 2011) that could foster educational and political analysis.

This research seeks to go beyond more general articulations of what sort of curriculum should, or might, be involved in ESD/SE (Tregidga et al, 2011; Biesta and Tedder, 2006) – important as they are - to focus on how curriculum, sustainability and agency are constructed broadly, institutionally and individually. Of course this study can only offer a suggested construction of how individuals abilities and environmental issues are discursively related, but as my theoretical framework highlights it is a novel, yet valid line of inquiry (Biesta and Tedder, 2006; Alkire, 2008; Coate, 2009), that can further develop this emergent field of empirical research and

understanding (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Hajer, 1995; Chouliaraki, 2008; Keller, 2013).

Poststructural D/discourse analysis is suggested to enable 'a more dynamic account of subjectivity and agency, and their complex intersection with incomplete social structures' and in questioning, empirically and reflexively, notions of identity and interests (Howarth, 2013:4). Here I felt I could contribute to the 'growing body of literature that seeks to provide a more critical assessment of sustainability in higher education' (Sylvestre et al, 2013: 1368). While the latter authors focus on the emergence of 'disciplinary structures' that become hegemonic in HE more broadly, I also wanted to focus on discourses generated between individuals in the organisation, supplementing institutional arguments 'with broader concerns of social psychology, particularly the psychology of sharing and of social freedom' (Sen, 2013:18) and 'to imply the capacity for willed (voluntary) action' (Biesta and Tedder, 2006:5; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Caldwell, 2007). To generate different ways of looking at my own organisational 'beat' (Meadows, 2001), their ascribed meanings and my own preferences and dispositions might, I considered, offer both personal understanding and potential opportunities to facilitate new conversations with colleagues (Ahearn, 2001;Caldwell, 2007; Alkire, 2008) and the wider academic community.

D/discourses were explored through theories of risk and reflexive modernity (WCED, 1987; Beck, 1992, 1994, 1997, 1998, 2008; Giddens, 1994; Lash, 1994; Elliott, 2002; Borne, 2013). These, along with postecological theories, challenge scientific knowledge, and therefore the HE curriculum to some degree, and through theories of individualisation and 'reflexive modernity' also help focus on the agency of individuals. A methodology featuring linguistic, semiotic and interpretative strategies

and approaches were keys to reading curriculum texts, (Fairclough, 2001; Sylvestre et al, 2013) and talk (Potter and Wetherell, 1994; Wetherell, 2001a; Hökkä et al, 2010; Zeyer and Roth, 2011), discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

## Focus and Key Questions

The focus of my research was on curriculum D/discourses within my institution in the context of sustainability, 'reflexive modernity' and agency. From reading, reflection, and in part shaped as data collection and analysis progressed, key questions emerged.

QUESTION 1: What D/discourses of HE, sustainable development/ sustainability and curriculum are discursively constructed in academic literature, and education policy?

Here the focus, primarily progressed via review of literature in chapter 2, is on the ways in which economic, socio-cultural and environmental D/discourses construct meaning and purpose for both curriculum, and sustainability in HE, and how texts and talk position curriculum agents. Here, a focus on Beck's theories of risk society and reflexive modernity proved useful in framing the global and individual aspects of research (Beck, 1992, 1994, 1997, 1998, 2008; Cohen, 1997; Elliott, 2002; Borne, 2013).

QUESTION 2: What do curriculum texts in my own HE institution [in recent times] represent as significant knowledge, pedagogies and practices? What priorities and subject positions/agentic orientations are being articulated, and what are the implications for sustainability education?

I wondered how my own institutional D/discourses (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) reflect and deflect wider discursive trends. Theories

linking the particular to the general were primarily progressed through notions of 'storylines' and ''discourse coalitions' suggested by Hajer (1995; Elliott, 2002). While links are made here to wider articulations of sustainability curricula, D/discourses of sustainable curriculum development in HE have themselves been criticised as rooted in the same inherent hegemonic assumptions, 'root metaphors' and 'metaschema' (Beck, 1998, 2008; Blühdorn, 2002; Bowers, 2003; Gruenewald, 2004), that have maintained unsustainable actions. This led to my third question.

QUESTION 3: How can postecological theory and discourse analysis using associated interpretative repertoires reframe and challenge my understanding of curriculum development, sustainability and agency.

Postecological theories highlight, and critique, the symbolic nature of sustainability, noting how '[t]he old conceptual shells are being retained but they are filled with a different meaning' (Blühdorn, 2002:7). Postecological interpretative repertoires (Zeyer and Roth, 2011, 2013), which focus on 'common sense' and 'agentic' articulations regarding the environment and individual inaction were utilised in analysis of texts and talk, including my own , through which I could explore cultural 'common sense' discursive practices (Gramsci, 1971; Blühdorn, 2002; Wetherell, 2001a; Beck 1994; Gruenewald, 2004; Zeyer and Roth, 2011). Alongside this curriculum repertoires (Hökkä et al, 2010) looked to discourses that accommodated hegemonic curriculum Discourse or sought its reform.

QUESTION 4: How is agency articulated within my own institutional context?

To move beyond the dualism 'between instrumental and normative action', Emirbayer and Mische (1998:968) draw on American pragmatism and elements of European phenomenology that focus on 'a theory of action that analyses the

conditions of possibility' stressing the constitutive creativity of action' and 'the permanent reorganisation and reconstitution of habits and institutions' (ibid:969). This involved a shift of mindset that 'might point to new initiatives in empirical research' (ibid:1005; Peschl, 2007). The emphasis on 'languages of possibility' shifted my frame of analysis to focus on the creative and critical nature of discourse articulated by curriculum developers as active agents.

Question 5: Reflexively, how have my understandings and learning from this process of research influenced a personal sense of agency?

This was the self-reflexive dimension of this inquiry that has danced with the process as a whole (Peschl, 2007; Caldwell, 2007). My personal sense of marginalisation and impotency that had in part prompted this thesis, was reconsidered as 'decentred agent' with the possibility of 'making a difference' (Giddens, 1984 cited in Caldwell, 2007:2; Lash, 1994, 2003). Re-viewing the process and attention to my 'own agentic orientations' and their 'imaginative recomposition and critical judgement' (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:1010;) was an important aspect of inquiry for which Peschl (2007: 141-142) was particularly useful in considering my 'epistemic dance with reality' as discussed below and in Chapter 3. Before moving on to outline my empirical study and this thesis, I briefly touch on some key terms that will begin the initial framing of my inquiry.

## Postmodernism and/or Reflexive Modernity

A key D/discourse that binds together my focus on higher education, sustainability and agency involves notions of rapid change, a new postmodern era of instability, innovation and contradiction. As Carneiro suggests:

> Education – the supreme social function – is "caught" in the transition of millennia between "two fires", two kinds of society. Ever more placed on the thin borderline between stability and change, between preservation and innovation, education undergoes unprecedented tensions. Indeed, education is a mirror of all contradictions that strike our modern societies. (Carneiro, 2011:3)

Higher Education and change is expressed in similar terms:

> Today's universities appear to be caught between two trends: one that is hegemonic, and another that is emerging but still marginal. The hegemonic trend builds upon the industrial society model of fragmentation, prescription, management, control, and accountability, while the marginal trend is based on integration, self-determination, agency, learning, and reflexivity (Unterhalter and Carpentier 2010 cited in Peters and Wals, 2013: 86).

Robinson (2001:91) suggests technological change demands a change of educational paradigm:

> The present rate and scale of technological change means that we are facing a paradigm shift in the ways in which we live and earn our livings. It needs to be met by a comparable paradigm change in how we think about education. We need to rethink some of the fundamental ideas that we have come to take for granted as simple common sense: about education, intelligence and ourselves.

Sterling calls for a paradigm shift towards sustainable education, where the concept offers, he suggests, a '[g]ateway to a different view of curriculum, of pedagogy, of organisational change, of policy and particularly of ethos' (Sterling, 2004: 55). Orr too calls for seismic change in education on the horizon of environmental crisis:

The crisis we face is first and foremost one of mind, perceptions, and values; hence, it is a challenge to those institutions presuming to shape minds, perceptions, and values. It is an educational challenge. More of the same kind of education can only make things worse. (Orr, 1994:27).

Current literature is replete with such calls and concerns. According to Barnett and Coate (2005:16), therefore, '[t]he idea of curriculum goes to the heart of what we take Higher Education to be, of what it might be and should be in the 21$^{st}$ century' (Bowers, 1995; Stables, 2001).

Whether these times represent a fundamental postmodern shift in contemporary society is itself contested. Postmodernism involves modes of thinking, a style of philosophy and kind of writing that forms a matrix for theoretical consideration of society, culture and history (Agger, 1991), which challenges notions of modernity discussed further in Chapter 2. Particularly pertinent to this study are D/discourses of 'risk society' (WCED, 1987; Beck, 1994, 1998, 2008; Giddens, 1998; Lash, 1994; Sousa, 2011), where demographic, technical and global changes deny the future certainty or predictive capacity of knowledge, perhaps striking at the heart of HE curriculum development in a knowledge economy (Brown, 2011; Sousa, 2011). Constructions of reflexive rather than post modernity involve, for the authors, a situation which engenders self-critical examination of our actions and agency.

Personal responsibility to continually create and recreate ourselves in this process prompts solutions that are individual rather than collective (Reay, 2003; Sousa, 2011) and where, therefore, failure is seen as personal rather than related to circumstances beyond individual control, resonating my own framing of and in part justification for this thesis above. Links can be made between D/discourses of sustainability, risk, reflexive modernity and notions of agency in which agency becomes both more

necessary and difficult to achieve, bound up as it is in a web of alternative ways of seeing and 'part of a reflective process connecting personal and social change' (Giddens, 1991: 32; Beck, 1992; Elliott, 2002). Reflexivity, and notions of the self as 'reflexive project' does not for Beck imply a 'hyper-Enlightenment culture', however, 'but rather an unintended self-modification of forms of life' (Elliott, 2002: 301), characterised by scepticism and 'as if' alternatives, based on choice but with inadequate knowledge. This suggests a fairly limited space for agency, also noted in postmodernism and poststructuralism (Caldwell, 2007) and discussed further in Chapter 2.

## Key Terms

### D/discourse

The importance of language within socio-cultural realms has been acknowledged as a means by which we socially construct our worlds, and there has been a shift of emphasis towards poststructural D/discourse research and analysis (Agger, 1991). Luke (2002:3; Chouliaraki, 2008) suggests that '[n]ew forms of social life in advanced capitalist societies turn on text and discourse' as a way of developing cultural understanding. As a philosophy attention to D/discourse offers a range of theories relating to 'texts', institutional critiques, and concepts and forms of analysis of power which are relevant and significant for, although underutilised in, the study of education (Peters and Humes, 2003:112). D/discourse can be conceptualised, according to Keller (2013:2; Wetherell, 2001a), as 'a social, psychological and textual phenomenon involved in the creation of relatively coherent public and private meanings', and involving 'more or less successful attempts to stabilize, at least

temporarily, attributions of meaning and orders of interpretation and thereby to institutionalise a collectively binding order of knowledge'.    Here the argumentative political nature of educational curriculum D/discourse was noted and pursued empirically.

A strength of Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) poststructural D/discourse theory (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Tregidga et al, 2011; Borne, 2013; Howarth, 2013; Iversen, 2014), is that it helps progress research into sustainability through its attention to fixity [hegemony] in and through D/discourse, but also pays attention to the multiplicity and contestability inherent, enabling educational and political analysis (Hajer, 1995; Alvesson and Karreman, 2000).  For Tregidga et al (2011: 4):

> Dominant discourses succeed by displacing alternative modes of argument and forms of activity; by marginalising radically different discourses; by naturalising their hierarchies and exclusions presenting them in the form of 'common sense'; and by effacing the traces of their own contingency, [although a] successful hegemony will always seek to render itself contestable.

Hajer (1995: 44; Bingham, 2010) also discusses the hegemonic yet contested political nature of environmental D/discourse and for him discourse analysis 'primarily aims to understand why a particular understanding of the environmental problem at some point gains dominance and is seen as authoritative, while other understandings are discredited'.    This does not however assume coherence of or in single environmental D/discourses, and this plurality can be a site for social action (Hajer, 1995: 58).

Davies and Harré (1990:45; Becher and Trowler, 2001; Macfarlane, 2004) in their discussion of Discourse as institutionalised use of language and language-like systems suggest that notions of institutional identity and concensus are also more fragmented than this homogenising term might imply, where diversity can occur

along disciplinary, political, cultural and small group lines and around specific topics such as sustainability. However, institutional and educational 'conceptual schemes' (Davies, 2000:89) shape and potentially limit categories of speech available to individuals, becoming for the author 'static repertoires located primarily in the mind of each individual thinker or researcher almost as a personal possession'. Shifting emphasis from orders of Discourse to discoursing subjects, as noted, also envisaged a 'multi-faceted public process through which meanings are progressively and dynamically achieved' (Davies and Harré, 1990:45; Davies, 2000:89; Reis and Roth, 2007; Karlberg, 2008).

Conceptualising D/discourse as social action enables a view of language as constructive and constitutive of social life rather than purely reflective of it, and this allowed a measure of 'situated objectivity' considered important in researching my own professional context. As Wetherell notes:

> In discourse research, decisions about the truth or falsity of descriptions are typically suspended. Discourse analysts are much more interested in studying the process of construction itself, how 'truths' emerge, how social realities and identities are built and the consequences of these, than working out what 'really happened'. Part of what is meant then, by the 'turn to discourse' is this epistemological stance which reflects the broader cultural and intellectual shifts of postmodernism. (Wetherell, 2001a:16).

## Curriculum

The focus/lens through which I sought to view D/discourses of sustainability and agency was curriculum. Philosophically, our considerations of curriculum, and education more broadly, involve a statement of values, a moral compass and an 'abiding engine of ideas' (Hansen, 2007:7). Education is involved in constituting human consciousness (Gramsci, 1971), with language seen as the carrier of our

20

political and philosophical presuppositions. Kelly (2009) speaks of the 'educational' curriculum to provoke philosophical consideration of purpose. He suggests politically sensitive questions need to be asked in relation to ideas of legitimate knowledge, power, control, access, pedagogies and theories of learning linked to student biographies, as they have clear implications for practice. This for me echoed sentiments of the need for increased curriculum theorization in contemporary unsustainable times noted above.

The term "curriculum" for Thomas et al (2012: 581) involves both content and process and 'is comprised of the formal learning experiences provided to students, and which in turn is the sum of the knowledge (or subject content) that is conveyed, plus the understanding that is generated through the pedagogy (or process) that is used'. The authors (ibid.: 841-2) suggest that educators in HE play a key role in both constructing sustainability conceptually and practically, and hence, '[a]cademic development for sustainability education should enable educators to develop sustainability education praxis'.

Young (1971:24) described curricula as 'social inventions', and Goodson (1997) noted curriculum to be a social construction grounded in the past, activated in the present and creative of the future. Goodson's conceptualization seemed particularly pertinent in recognition of the epistemic, active and philosophical dimensions of 'curriculum' that resonated well with my focus on change and sustainability noted above and discussed further in Chapter 2. The curriculum is seen as being at the heart of education, since it defines the integrated, holistic, narrative and public nature of education, and is also a primary locus of the discourse bound up with education (Connelly & Xu, 2007). For Young, echoed by Carneiro (2011) above:

21

> the history, the social divisions and the many competing interests and value systems found in a modern society are expressed in the curriculum… likewise, curriculum debates, implicitly or explicitly, are also debates about alternative views of society and its future. (Young, 1998:9)

The changes, ontological uncertainties and epistemic fragmentation in the twenty first century highlighted by D/discourses of unsustainability and risk suggests the need for ongoing, if not renewed focus on curriculum theorizing, so as to continue 'to engage in complicated conversations with our academic subjects, our students and ourselves' (Pinar, 2004:9). Barnett and Coate (2005) have argued that in higher education it is important to get a better understanding of how the curriculum is intertwined with the social and historical contexts of universities, and of the wider world in which universities are situated. They contend that educators have only a limited understanding of the multiple perspectives and tensions that shape curriculum development, and of how different voices form interdependent relationships between individual actors and their local/global contexts. Coate (2009), in continuing this argument, suggests that the curriculum is a manifestation of practices and values within the university and offers enormous potential for understanding questions of purpose, participation, power and struggles for disciplinary control. This lack of curriculum theorising, for Coate, represents a substantial gap in current educational research, what Macfarlane (2004) might call part of a 'self-regarding agenda', something that I personally hoped to challenge.

I take curriculum within this thesis in this broad sense as a word that is adjectival and active in its epistemic, pedagogic, philosophical and teleological dimensions, linking teaching and learning and questions of power, subject positions and purpose. Like sustainability, curriculum is conceived in argumentative and interpretative ways, as will be discussed.

## Sustainable Development and Sustainability

Sustainable development for some is a liberal reformist ideal and globalised policy prescription that, while still economically driven, brings ideas and measures of social equality, and environmental quality into 'development' thinking and [educational] practice, providing a 'triple bottom line' by which we should evaluate change (Dawe et al, 2005).   The socially constructed and contested nature of sustainable development has challenged contemporary HE, and each institution and individual, to rethink their roles, purposes and curriculum practices, one of a number of such challenges (Brown, 2011; Singh and Little, 2011; Sousa, 2011; Carneiro, 2011; King, 2011), creating perhaps a source of the angst of reflexive modernity.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) involves something of a synthesis of environmental and development educations, part of a globalised policy Discourse (Sterling, 2004; Wals, 2012), which culminated in the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, UNESCO – 2005-14), interestingly the timescale covered by my own institutional documents used in this research.  The DESD 'implies providing the learners with the skills, perspectives, values and knowledge to live sustainably in their communities' (UNESCO, 2002: online), stressing the normative and teleological emphasis and centrality of individual, cultural and global values in this endeavour:

> Understanding your own values, the values of the society you live in and the values of others around the world is a central part of educating for a sustainable future. Each nation, cultural group and individual must learn the skills of recognising their own values and assessing these values in the context of sustainability (UNESCO, 2005: 3)

However, there are multiple educational and curriculum D/discourses and approaches, often linked to the 'conceptual shells' of earlier models, discussed in

some detail in Chapter 2, that try, with varying emphases to move away from associated notions of development and modern ideas and knowledge of nature and each other (Askew and Carnell, 1998; Selby, 1999, 2005; Blewitt, 2004; Sterling, 2001, 2004).  One particular emphasis, as suggested and discussed further in the chapters that follow, involves D/discourses of the individual and education, agency and change [or transformation] through learning that can discursively generate, perhaps, more sustainable ways of being.

## Agency

D/discourses of agency lie at the heart of education (Biesta and Tedder, 2006).  The active emphasis of agency as opposed to the determined nature of action has been for the authors a key sociological consideration, although they note drawing on Marshall (1998) that if it is to be more broadly conceptualised it should 'draw attention to the psychological and social psychological make-up of the actor, and to imply the capacity for willed (voluntary) action' (Biesta and Tedder, 2006:5).  Agency for Newman and Dale (2005:482) 'is necessary for citizens to be able to adapt to their sociocultural environment, and more importantly to respond and transcend tragedy and crisis'.   For the authors, like Biesta and Tedder, agency is both individual and relational in nature.  Agency can be enhanced, they claim 'when people feel they can influence the process, that their voices are being heard, and that they can make a difference' linking to the power of D/discourse and institutional practices (Newman and Dale, ibid.).  As an active agent involved in both curriculum development and as researcher of my own professional context, notions of agency and reflexivity became central avenues in the research process.  While for some this might be constructed as post-modern narcissism (Smith, 2000), critical and

theoretical situation of myself in empirical inquiry, I hope, will dispel this sense of my research.

## Personal Positioning

Initial and ongoing reflexivity:

> forces us to come to terms not only with our choice of research problem and with those with whom we engage in the research process, but with ourselves and with the multiple identities that represent the fluid self in the research setting (Guba and Lincoln, 2005:212).

For Lash (1994:154; Caldwell, 2007), personal positioning should begin with the situated self in a matrix of background practices. Curriculum development is an area of professional practice and social responsibility where academics still have a modicum of autonomy, and hence a professional responsibility to consider the concepts, theories, issues and debates involved (Macfarlane, 2004; UNESCO, 2008; HEFCE, 2009; Orr, 1994; Bowers, 2001; Cortese, 2003). While my original position in this context and my study tended to follow the sense that 'professional concern with curriculum development is compatible and probably synergistic with a professional concern with sustainable development' (Gough and Scott, 2001:103), I wanted to create room for theoretical, empirical and reflexive doubt.

Given the inherently political nature of education and knowledge and its empirical nature that bridges the political, cultural and existential dimensions of study, reflexivity is seen as both politically desirable and a philosophical necessity (Davies and Harré, 1990; Agger, 1991; Langenhove & Harré, 1993; Tan and Moghaddam, 1995; Maton, 2003). In its constructive and relational nature, such positioning is linked both to agentic ideas of self-identity, concept and esteem within cultural contexts where we present ourselves in certain ways (Goffman, 1963; O'Donaghue,

2007).  This therefore involves notions of continuity and discontinuity, a multiplicity of discursive selves, where selfhood itself is in part a product of D/discourse through which 'we position ourself to ourself' (Tan and Moghaddam, 1995: 389).  For the authors:

> [a] reflexive position in internal discourse, then, is a figurative concept through reference to which one's moral and personal attributes as a speaker are compendiously collected by oneself so that one's speech-acts can be made intelligible and relatively determinate to oneself (Tan and Moghaddam, 1995:390).

Caldwell (2007:2) drawing on his four key components of 'decentred agency' suggests self-reflexivity is a mode of self-formation and identity that provides an alternative to the limited reflexivity of rationalist models of agency.  I return to this in chapter 3.

An important recognition in this endeavour is that this thesis links to a Professional EdD.  As such my practitioner enquiry warrants brief contextualisation in light of debates surrounding the professional and action oriented nature of HE teaching and research that helped shape the theoretical and empirical nature of my thesis and suggested my focus on personal agency.  Schön (1998) constructed the concept of professional [teaching] practice as significantly different from other working contexts.  Using Hughes' (1959) idea of the professional as 'one who makes a claim to extraordinary knowledge in matters of great human importance' and Dewey's (1933) notion of 'traditions of calling' (cited in Schön, 1998:32), he spoke of professions as having an 'appreciative system' of shared values, preferences, norms and conventions of action, institutional settings and units of activity which constitute acceptable professional conduct (ibid.:33).  As noted these notions of shared values in HE have been contested, and '[w]ithin most professions the concept of service results in an ongoing discussion of ethical issues as they impact on practice'

(Macfarlane, 2004:21; Becher and Trowler, 2001).  This resonates for some a 'postmodern' notion of professionalism in contemporary educational practice and research.

Hargreaves conceptualises this postmodern context as one 'where teachers deal with a diverse and complex clientele, in conditions of increasing moral uncertainty, where many methods of approach are possible, and where more and more social groups have an influence and a say' (Hargreaves, 2000: 231). The complexity, diversity and inherent ontological uncertainty and epistemological fragmentation discoursed has, alongside other conceptions such as the autonomous and collegial professional noted by Hargreaves, 'muddied the waters' in terms of epistemic and moral concensus or authority in contemporary HE.  This has also been linked to critical discourses of reflexive modernity (Beck, 1994; 1998; 2008) where our flexible and fluid 'selves' in terms of espoused values and values in use, multiple roles, affiliations and identities (Gough and Reid, 2000; Lash, 1994; Caldwell, 2007; Biesta, 2011), resonate for me the necessity of personal and systemic understandings, and a responsibility to research the 'shifting sands' of practice.  According to Huckle '[w]e face related crises of ecological, economic, social, cultural and personal sustainability' (Huckle, 2008:342), and all felt very 'real' to me at this time.

In many ways, these trends, tensions, and questions of responsibility, and my personal engagement with them as a student and professional practitioner in HE, also prompted my initial interest in this focus of inquiry, this thesis truly felt like an epistemic dance (Peschl, 2007) with D/discourses of purpose, process and potential of curriculum in/as sustainability.  Macfarlane (2004) suggests HE, and hence I, fail to critically examine our own practices sufficiently, and Cortese (2003:18) highlights our moral responsibility to engage in such enquiry:

27

Higher education institutions bear a profound, moral responsibility to increase the awareness, knowledge, skills, and values needed to create a just and sustainable future. Higher education plays a critical but often overlooked role in making this vision a reality. It prepares most of the professionals who develop, lead, manage, teach, work in, and influence society's institutions, Higher education has unique academic freedom and the critical mass and diversity of skills to develop new ideas, to comment on society and its challenges, and to engage in bold experimentation in sustainable living. Why, then, is it so averse to risk and difficult to change?

I offer here an initial sense of self as researcher and researched in light of my discussion so far.

I was born in Chatham, Kent in 1958, and am a white woman from a working class background in a middle class profession. I suffer from a range of minor disabilities that I tend to link to aging, although my stories change, and I often exclude the darker times in terms of my autobiography.   From the age of four until I was eighteen I lived in the same village of Hoo St. Werburgh in Kent, having previously lived in a caravan on the Isle of Grain.   My early life was remarkably 'normal', stable and structured family life and education.  I attended the infant and primary schools within the village, and on passing my 'eleven plus' went to Rochester Girls Grammar School until I had completed my 'A' levels.   Being half German, working class, overweight and female had, I felt, resulted in a sense of being treated differently and unfairly on occasion with implications for identity and self-esteem.  I was, seemingly, a Nazi, fat and ugly, poor and needy, and as one English teacher highlighted at grammar school, lacking in cultural and linguistic capital ['things are not funny Susan, they are amusing'], a comment that has remained with me for over 40 years.  The linguistic power of negative positioning, and its embodiment, did not go unnoticed even from an early age.  Growing up in the 'youth culture' of the 1960s and 1970s,

although I still feel I have growing up to do, perhaps made me a postmodern child, adult educator and researcher as Usher and Edwards (1994) suggest.. Reading their account, for which they draw on Bourdieu (1989), was one of the many times that I 'saw myself' in theory which was then taken up in a narrative of self, explaining actions and responses to some degree, and forming part of a more temporally consistent identity.

Usher and Edwards note my lifestyle, and educational/research style perhaps, has been shaped by a time of 'counter-cultural informality and hedonism' (ibid:190; Gough and Reid, 2000), which rejects everything 'which is finite, definite and final. In this I avoid personal, relational and epistemic 'competitions, hierarchies and classifications' and 'above all' hierarchies of knowledge, theoretical abstractions or technical competencies. I am for Bourdieu, as Usher and Edwards note, disposed to cultural equality and diversity, and emphasise experiential learning, the personal and existential nature of life, uncertainty and reflexivity. In fighting taboos, I could also cite my affiliation with sustainability conceptually, discursively and practically to be evidence of this inherent position and focus.

Much of my learning at school, however, involved what I consider now to be functional curriculum approaches, and positivist philosophies and I can, through adoption of this D/discourse, excuse my lack of motivation as somehow counter-cultural, although I did have a measure of success in terms of accredited achievement. Following school and a 'mind-numbing' if in hindsight useful year at secretarial college, and still unable to find an intellectual or social niche that I wished to occupy, I 'rebelled', went travelling and 'living', framed as important experiential learning, then 'settling down' to have my first child in 1982. I divorced and returned

to education [rather than a career] in 1992, and had my second child in 1993 while studying for my degree in Geography and Development Studies.

This was the year of the Rio Earth Summit and, given my studies, sustainable development was a critical focus, and became a key interest in my undergraduate studies. My MA in Tourism and Social Responsibility continued my interest and focus on sustainability, which has subsequently been reconsidered in relation to my professional practice through my studies for PGCE and now in relation to my doctorate.

I began teaching in HE in 2000, at first on a temporary, part-time basis that two years later blossomed, fortunately, into a full-time contract. I have always held a wide range of academic interests, and have taught on programmes focused on Development Studies, Geography, Education Studies, Youth and Community Studies, and the holistic and systemic nature of sustainability enabled me to engage them all, although perhaps not in depth and thus for some perhaps 'expertise'. I have never wished to specialise particularly, and my varied interests, and assertions that all arguments have an element of reason within them, depending upon which temporal, spatial or human scale and criteria one considers, has often confused my understanding rather than the contrary. Was this evidence of my own position in reflexive modernity I wondered. The emphasis in much of my learning [and teaching] surrounding ideas of globalization, sustainability, culpability, responsibility and our capability to attend to if not ameliorate social and environmental issues and inequalities was met with, or led to, my initial sense of personal and professional malaise, yet I remained hopeful. While HE curriculum change alone is not sufficient in terms of a more sustainable education, (Tilbury et al, 2005; Sterling, 2008), or whether this is a necessary concept around which to organise curriculum

was put under a more sceptical gaze.  This felt a necessary focus of inquiry, lying at the heart of personal and institutional practice that could offer a more refined characterization of the socio-cultural dimensions of sustainability oriented curriculum design (Reis and Roth, 2007).

Reflexive positioning was useful in drawing attention to my 'poststructural uncertainties', as Smith (2000) might call them, and theories of agency, reflexivity and transformation were useful in framing this dimension of the research process, in trying to re-centre my decentred self (Caldwell, 2007; Biesta and Tedder, 2006). Postmodernist emphases self and identity as 'decentered, relational, contingent, illusory, and lacking any core or essence involving a general orientation' (Gecas and Burke, 1995 cited in Levine, 2005:176; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Caldwell, 2007) could be seen as a decent into nihilism.   Levine challenges this decentred D/discourse of self, however, through his notion of 'ego identity', where centring relates to challenges to our sense of self.  This links to notions of transformative learning and agency that I hoped to address through my final question above.

## Transformation

In transformation theory, D/discourse has been envisaged as the specialized use of dialogue devoted to searching for, and assessment and justification of our interpretation or belief (Mezirow, 2000: 10).  Focusing more closely on transformation and discourse, Mezirow notes:

> Transformative learning is learning that transforms problematic frames of reference—sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets)—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change.  Such frames of reference are better than others because

31

they are more likely to generate beliefs and opinions that will prove
more true or justified to guide action (Mezirow, 2003: 58-9).

He suggests that this involves 'a willingness to construe knowledge and values from multiple perspectives without loss of commitment to one's own values' (Mezirow, 2000:12-13). Similarly, Peschl (2007) suggests transformative learning involves a particular attitude in research and learning. Triple-loop learning for Peschl and Sterling involves the existential dimension, the self beyond competencies, personal skills, personality and tacit knowledge that moves us into the domain of wisdom and 'profound existential change' involving 'the will, the heart, finality and purpose'. While still a construction, there is less freedom for manoeuvre, in some ways suggesting formation of a new hegemony, discussed in due course. As with Mezirow, this is more an attitude in the process involving a state of mind, of 'presencing' (Peschl, 2007:139; Biesta, 2005), what Mezirow (2000) discusses as *epoché* (given his phenomenological framing). Presencing is the 'intimate epistemological dance with reality' (Peschl, 2007:141-2), and for Sterling involves experience of challenges and threats to existing beliefs and ideas which may involve resistance and perturbation:

> Epistemic learning can be deeply uncomfortable, because it involves a restructuring of basic assumptions caused by the recognition of 'incoherence' between assumptions and experience. This crisis experience can be traumatic – although for some it is inspiring – and can be a lengthy process over time as mental models undergo radical change' (Sterling & Baines, 2002 cited in Sterling, 2010-11: 25).

In many ways, this focus drew attention to my own desires for institutional curriculum change and my own sense of incoherence between an assumed need for sustainability as an overarching concept, and experience of indifference or resistance. I felt in this I was perhaps silencing other ways of viewing the situation, and my own ways of seeing it. The process for these authors involves being patient,

receptive and epistemologically humble, allowing new ideas and changes to emerge and converge [crystallize] and manifests itself as a plan of action, and here I was hopeful.

## Framework of empirical study

My focus on D/discourses of curriculum and sustainability, discursive orders and agency, as noted, drew on theoretical traditions that sought to provide different ways of looking at the data, influenced by poststructural theories of knowledge and language within postmodern notions of cultural stability and change (Agger, 1991). For Jørgensen and Phillips:

> [the use of a specific theory in the production and analysis of material enables researchers to distance themselves from their everyday understanding of the material, a process which is crucial to social constructionist research (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 207).

D/discourse theories were therefore further contextualised by socio-cultural conceptualisations of reflexive modernity and risk, challenging political and academic D/discourses of knowledge society (Brown, 2011; Sousa, 2011), sustainability and individual and collective agency, and drawing in the cross fertilisation of academic and  popular knowledge through the networks and flows of fluid modernity (Bauman, 2000; Robinson, 2001; Blühdorn, 2002; Hökkä et al, 2010; Zeyer and Roth, 2011), discussed further in Chapter 2.  This was a conceptual space in which empirical D/discourse analysis could 'raise profound debates regarding issues of power, agency, the nature of subjectivity and contestation' (Wetherell, 2001a: 27).

The focus of empirical research is directed to the study of 'texts' and 'talk' in my own HE institution that could be seen as part of the discursive fabric of curriculum in the

context of sustainability (Reid and Petocz, 2009) one of a number of discourses that articulate and influence the potential, purposes and processes of education (King, 2011; Sousa, 2011). Different framings and readings of D/discourse were progressed in complex 'epistemological dances' (Peschl, 2007) between 'discursive orders' and 'discoursing subjects' as 'reflexive agents' (Hajer, 1995; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Ahearn, 2001; Wetherell, 2001a, 2001b; Caldwell, 2007; Tregidga et al, 2011).

In undertaking research through this theoretical lens knowledge can be viewed as a social construction (Gergen, 1994; Gough and Reid, 2000), research as a craft skill (Seale, 1999, 2012) or art and involves interdisciplinary study (Biesta, 2011; Sterling, 2010-11; Peschl, 2007). Indeed '[i]nterdisciplinary research is seen as more likely to be informed by values, more oriented toward real-world problems and more focused on wider societal benefits' (Cromby, 2007: 150) as I felt this research to be. Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) discourse theory helps focus research from attempts at definition to the 'discursive terrain' and the 'politics and effects of discursive struggle' (Tregidga et al, 2011:10). Taking a poststructural perspective is considered to help minimise animosity, antagonism, or hegemonic regulation in the research process, in 'accepting the existence of socially constructed multiple truths' (Gough and Reid, 2000:53; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002), a consideration given my involvement in the context of research. Through methodological shifts between questions involving social, political, rhetorical and psychological D/discourse analytic approaches (Wetherell, 1998, 2001a, 2001b; Fairclough, 2001), the emphasis was on using a range of objectifying and interpretative techniques through which to reconstruct and review the data thus challenging myself to empirically, professionally and reflexively engage with these ideas (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

There are, according to MacLure (2003:174) two broad traditions in D/discourse analysis. The first European tradition draws on the philosophical and cultural nature of D/discourse associated with poststructuralism. The second tradition aligns with Anglo-American linguistics, and I danced with both. 'Discourse analysis is a precise application of content analysis in a qualitative context' (Sarantakos, 2005: 309) which focuses on the constructive and action oriented nature of 'communication, text, language, talk and conversation, but also with the ways of seeing, categorizing and reacting to the social world in everyday practices'.

In terms of written documents, the emphasis was on Discourse (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000; Wetherell, 2001b) where texts were taken as examples of institutional public image building in a competitive system. My focus was on two institutional Learning and Teaching Strategies 2005-09 and 2010-14, and one undated Sustainability 'Statement'. The strategies covered the period of the DESD (2005-2014). Texts were sourced with institutional permission, and as publically available via my University website at time of access. According to Sylvestre et al (2013) Strategies, Declarations and other institutional documents can be conceived of as representative of the consensus of the authoring agency. They also are seen as useful in that they tend to be pared down to salient features, involving ideal types, concepts and mental constructions that are often imaginative and utopian in intent and content (Crotty, 1998:70), linking past, present and future (Goodson, 1996; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) conceptualised as involving narratives or storylines (Hajer, 1995; Harré et al, 1999). The emphasis was on curriculum in the context of sustainability, the sedimented or 'durable' nature of Discourses (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000; Sylvestre et al, 2013; Iversen, 2014), although the notion of

intertextuality was adopted here to suggest a 'loose coupling' rather than determinism of wider patterns and proclivities (Wetherell, 2000a; 2000b).

Discourse analysis of texts involved a methodology that engaged with data through the employment of 'objectifying techniques' (Thompson, 1984:134; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). In this, linguistic and semiotic tools were applied in a 'privileged position' over the data drawing on poststructuralist theories that envisage D/discourses operating laterally across local institutional sites, and where texts have a constructive function in shaping human identities and actions (Keller, 2013). It was also influenced by Hajer (1995) and Dryzec (1997/2005) who discuss the political pluralism of environmental discourse which does not assume coherence of or in environmental D/discourse[s], and this plurality can be a site for social action noted earlier.

In order to analyse Discourse, Hajer's 'argumentative' approach which conceptualises discourse as involving discursive hegemony, accomplished through discourse structuration where actors must use particular discourses to ensure their 'credibility', and 'institutionalisation', translated into practice through policy documents (ibid: 60-61). This approach challenges assumptions of unity and consensus, however, suggesting instead a situation of fragmented and contradictory D/discourse narratives around which different groups of individuals collect.

Drawing on the above and Laclau and Mouffe (1985; Tregidga et al, 2011) curriculum was taken as a 'floating signifier', filled with different meanings, although with hegemonic constraints. Discourse analysis was carried out using concepts of 'orders of discourse' (Fairclough, 1995, 2001; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002), intertextuality (Fairclough, 1995; Sylvestre et al, 2013) and discursive genres, Wodak and

Krzyzanowski's (2008) and Sylvestre et al's (2013) concepts of Lexis, Framing and Structure, and Modality that positioned knowledge, learners and staff in particular ways. While the terms sustainable development and sustainability were limited in their use, features of sustainability curricular were applied linguistically and rhetorically to the data to try to inscribe its position and potential in institutional articulations. With just one posting relating to Sustainability on the website at the time [summer 2013], similar analysis was progressed, although also drawing in Kellert's (1993) perspectives on 'nature' in an effort to focus on environmental and subject positioning in the informal curriculum.

While we, as teachers, may often feel constrained in our own professional practice, we are often politically envisaged [and ironically perhaps envision ourselves] as 'best placed to change society, by changing the habits and instilling the ideas of future citizens' (Tripp,1992:22). The Discourses (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000) and policy prescriptions related to ESD resonate this view of education (WCED,1987; UNESCO: online; HEFCE, 2009), as do 'critical' and postmodern [sustainable] educational thinkers (Orr, 1992; Huckle and Sterling, 1996, Sterling, 2001, 2005, 2012; Scott and Gough, 2001; Hicks, 2004, 2010), although the extent to which this can be achieved, and the desired outcomes this will explicitly, or more likely implicitly, influence are highly contested.

The second wave of analysis danced with discourses in four interview transcripts from semi- structured interviews conducted in 2012. Interviews involved colleagues who came from different academic disciplines but who all held responsibility for curriculum design and development. The emphasis here was on individual [agentic], curriculum and environmental story lines and coalitions, extended through post-ecological discourse analysis drawing on Zeyer and Roth's (2011) framework, and

curriculum repertoires developed by Hökkä et al (2010). Attention to the routine arguments, descriptions and evaluations in interview data could highlight, according to the authors, a way of exploring the 'possibilities offered by language', something also suggested by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) in their focus on agency.

Following this focus on agency, my own D/discourses in curriculum texts and talk were also analysed. Initial coding and analysis at the time of first reading of texts and transcripts, followed by an unanticipated gap in my studies, presented a further reflexive opportunity for engagement and 'presencing' in the process (Peschl, 2007; Biesta, 2005). Here notions of transformation (Mezirow, 2000; Sterling, 2010-11) also involved attention to earlier analytic and reflective memos (Charmaz, 2006; Caldwell, 2007; Saldaña, 2009).

## Overview of this Thesis

In Chapter 2, the literature review will set out a theoretical, conceptual, cultural and educational context of my research, drawing primarily on academic and policy D/discourses of higher education, sustainability and curriculum (WCED, 1987, Jickling, 1992; Hajer, 1995; Dryzec, 1997/2005; Wals and Jickling, 2002; UNESCO, 2002; Blewitt, 2004; Sterling, 2004, 2013; Tilbury, 2011; Wals, 2011) with particular reference to HE and curriculum development (Cortese, 2003; Bowers, 1995, 2003; Ryan, 2011; Sterling, 2013). Within this, attention will be drawn to knowledge, power, and agency through theories of risk and reflexive modernity (Beck, 1992, 1994, 1998; Lash, 1994; Giddens, 1994; Elliott, 2002; Sousa, 2011; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Ahearn, 2001; Newman and Dale, 2005; Biesta and Tedder, 2006).

Chapter 3 outlines and discusses my research framework, paradigm, ontological and epistemological position, methodology, methods of data collection and analysis,

alongside ethical considerations and reflexive positioning in empirical study. 'D[d]iscourse analysis focuses on the constructive and action oriented nature of 'communication, text, language, talk and conversation, but also with the ways of seeing, categorizing and reacting to the social world in everyday practices' (Sarantakos, 2005: 309). Discourse analysis was progressed using multiple lenses where understanding and interpreting texts was 'more like riding a bike than following a recipe' (Gadamer, 1975:xi).

Chapter 4 will include detailed analysis and critical discussion of the data as D/discourse in light of the framework set out, and as emergent from and grounded in the data and process of analysis. Reflexive moments and movements will be woven into this research discourse to capture some of the complexity of inquiry, ongoing consideration of positionality, methodological limitations as they appeared, and the political and ethical dilemmas that emerged.

In Chapter 5, I will offer some tentative conclusions, reviewing the process and findings in relation to attendant theories and personal reflexivity, and making suggestions for further research and practice.

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

> The root causes of environmental problems are located in the very nature of our current social, economic and political systems and in the world views, institutions and lifestyle choices that support them (Fien, 1993a: vii).

The object of this chapter is to present an overview of literature that relates to, and places into context, the educational and environmental genres of D/discourse circulating within my own professional context.  The emphasis in this review was primarily to bridge the theoretical and methodological debates that could enable D/discourse analysis.  In this notions of change, risk and agency were key, framed and scaffolded through attention to Beck's (1992, 1994, 1998, 2008; Giddens, 1994; Cohen, 1997; Elliott, 2002; Sousa, 2011; Borne, 2013) social theory and cultural diagnosis of risk society and reflexive modernity.  In relation to risk, genres of policy D/discourse that emphasise social and environmental issues through a knowledge society lens were key (Brown, 2011; Sousa, 2011; Dryzec, 1997; Harré et al, 1999; Blühdorn, 2002).  The second thrust of the individual in a cultural situation of reflexive modernity is linked to agency which in part is shaped through individual agent's active engagement in D/discourse (Hajer, 1995; Ahearn, 2001; Elliott, 2002), coalescing with other D/discourses of purpose, principles and process of HE curricula (King, 2011; Cochrane and Williams, 2011).   In drawing together the global and local, and in order to focus more explicitly on my own institutional D/discourses of curriculum and environmental sustainability,  Lash's (2000:47) focus on 'risk culture' was particularly helpful in his suggestion that 'subinstitutional' resources are a key focus 'if we are to engage effectively with contemporary risk situations'.  Beck also suggests that, with the loss of state authority, global and local sub-political realms warrant attention.  As Adam and van Loon note:

> Beck's work speaks to the contemporary western experience of the industrial way of life, and it touches deep fears about the shadow side of the successes of industrialization, scientific progress and technological innovation. Moreover, it depicts the socio-cultural and institutional nature of the environmental crisis which means that solutions too have to be sought in the socio- cultural sphere and the social institutions of that way of life (Adam and van Loon, 2000:12).

The first section of this chapter will focus on contemporary D/discourses surrounding HE and change, that raise pertinent questions for theorising curriculum development (Coate, 2009; Pinar, 2004; Barnett and Coate, 2005), linked to academic, economic, social and increasingly environmental demands for purpose and relevance (Cortese, 2003; Sousa, 2011; King, 2011; Singh and Little, 2011; Cochrane and Smith, 2011) . In section two I briefly present theories of development and modernity, which have increasingly included environmental concerns through globalised policy D/discourses of Sustainable Development (SD) and the implications for HE curriculum. The breadth of SD and sustainability, incorporating economic, social and environmental dimensions, and within this different temporal, spatial and normative emphases, was narrowed within my search and review of literature to focus on environmental and educational aspects of sustainability, and their discursive manifestations. This section will be discussed historically, but more specifically, given the focus of my thesis, in terms of theories of postmodernity, risk and reflexive modernity (Bauman, 2001, 2005; Beck, 1992, 1994, 1998, 2008; Lash, 1994, 2000; Giddens, 1991, 1994; Elliott, 2001). Here the political and environmental dimensions of D/discourses are brought to the fore and related to HE curriculum models (Kemmis et al, 1983; Fien, 1993; Askew and Carnell, 1998; Selby, 1999, 2005; Bracher, 2006). While aiding potential for analysis, these models are seen as representative of loose 'discursive orders' involving particular 'storylines' and 'discourse coalitions' involving particular

interpretative repertoires (Hajer, 1995; Dryzec, 1995, 2005; Harré et al, 1999; Wetherell, 2000a, Hökkä et al, 2010; Zeyer and Roth, 2011) as will be discussed more fully below and in Chapter 3. In linking educational and environmental D/discourses, to theories of political 'agency', I particularly drew on Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Elliott, 2002; Biesta and Tedder, 2006; Ahearn, 2005; Sen, 2007; Caldwell, 2007). The final section of this literature review will, in preparation for the following chapter on methodology and methods, focus on D/discourse as the object of my empirical research and my own position[s] and perspective[s] within the debates raised so far.

## Global Debates: Higher Education and Change

> Higher education currently faces many changes, some externally driven by government policies and changing patterns of social and economic demand and some internally driven by changes in the way knowledge is produced and organised within universities and other 'knowledge organisations' (Brennan, 2010: 3).

D/discourses of change in the contemporary university seem to pervade my readings and conversations in practice as a source of concern. These are often framed in terms of the corporatization or neoliberalisation of higher education (HE) in part linked to the waning power of the nation state and the growth of a global marketplace (Sylvestre et al, 2013; Brown, 2011, King, 2011; Beck, 1994). For many this is a time, in HE and the social professions more generally, of marketisation, liberalisation, austerity, and managerialism of provision. This has been progressed through the introduction and maintenance of neoliberal polices, and attendant prescriptive models of professional practice, involving calls for more codified, explicit and systematised institutions (Barnett, 1992:214-5) geared towards individual learning and achievement. Thurow (1996: 68) suggests that technological change has

accelerated this process, and '[t]oday knowledge and skills now stand alone as the only source of comparative advantage. They have become the key ingredient in the late twentieth century's location of economic activity'.

The economic importance of higher education is seen as fundamental in the new global knowledge economy/society (Fairclough, 2001; Wals and Jickling, 2002; Selby, 1999, 2005; Blewitt, 2004), with key international institutions such as The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank (WB) promoting the significance of education and training as keys to participation in the new knowledge society (Akkari and Dassen, 2008). For Sousa (2011:54) reclaiming the production of knowledge has involved institutions and individuals embracing D/discourses of this 'knowledge society' and associated competition between and within organisations involving meritocratic conceptions of knowledge that may be, for the author, ill-equipped to deal with the hazards and uncertainties of the future. In this context it is suggested that we as teachers need to profit personally and institutionally from selling our knowledge products that have increasingly to align to those forms of knowledge valued in markets where 'among its many dangers is the illusion that we know what we are talking about with reference to 'knowledge' (Weiler, 2006 cited in Sousa, 2011: 57). Singh and Little (2011: 39) also note contradictions in this knowledge function where in the face of lifelong and 'lifewide' learning 'the dominant knowledge transmission function of HE has been weakened through technological change and the social purposes accorded to and demanded of it.

Brown (2011:14) develops this discussion regarding the 'marketization' of HE in recent decades, noting that many HE institutions are involved in 'quasi-markets….where no or very little private capital is involved and where the state

remains the principal funder and regulator'. This implies, as King (2011:25) suggests, that globally HE, and specifically my own institution, can be envisaged as a social rather than material phenomenon. As such it can be conceived of as ideational, 'characterized by a distribution of knowledge – the socially-constituted beliefs and expectations that individuals, universities, and states respectively have of each other' incorporating 'a 'productive' or discourse-generated sociality'. This global system, for the author, both constructs and reflects agent identities alongside national domestic constructions.

D/discourses of change have increasingly focused attention on the social and environmental role of HE, where calls for a more active and interventionist curricula have been placed on us, and/or emerge from our own agency (Cochrane and Williams, 2010; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Learning societies have not only had to engage with the globalisation of markets, but to respond to the uncertainties these systemic changes have engendered (Scott and Gough, 2001:102; Blewitt, 2004). As the European Science Foundation (2012:3) note:

> The world is currently facing major challenges and crises. Global change is one such challenge, discoursed as an emergent Anthropocene era where 'impacts of human activity on the Earth have started to equal the measurable impacts of biogeophysical forces, in speed and intensity, creating a unique situation that poses fundamentally new challenges and requires innovative ways of thinking and acting.

While global issues are well identified and known, the authors continue, their systemic nature adds to their complexity which 'cannot be addressed by the traditional disciplinary scientific approach' (ibid.) echoing suggestions of risk (WCED, 1987; Beck, 1992).

Policy internationalism (King, 2011) has shown increasing convergence in D/discourses of, and prescriptions for what are multiple purposes, roles and functions

for the universities of the twenty first century.  At one and the same time, curriculum developers in HE need to meet goals linked to the economic success of all involved, generation of 'useful' knowledge, production of skilled and agentic students, social inclusion and sustainable development (Sterling, 2004, 2012; Blewitt, 2004; Cochrane and Williams, 2010; King, 2011).  However, homogeneity is less evident in local contexts, with diversity between and within institutions, and hence interpretations and practices are diverse.  My own institution, for example is situated in a spatially, temporally and culturally specific context, it is small, has a long history of social purpose and has only recently become a university, discussed further shortly.

## Change as Risk and Reflexive Modernity

On this horizon of change, Beck's (1992, 1994, 1998, 2008) theories of risk also offer a critique of modernity, technology and scientific knowledge, pertinent in terms of HE's function in a knowledge society, and given similar critiques in D/discourses of sustainable development as will be discussed.  Cohen notes that 'the concept of risk society holds considerable potential because it illuminates three trenchant issues, namely the liabilities of economic growth, the pervasiveness of hazardous technology, and the inadequacies of reductionist scientific research' (Cohen, 1997: 105-6).  The author contends that Beck's articulations of risk society can be viewed as a radicalisation of Charles Perrow's 'normal accident's' theory, where due to the complexity of industrial systems and the extent to which processes are coupled with one another, technological failures are essentially inevitable.

Beck (1994) suggests that risk society rests on the horizon of industrial society, where the inherent instrumental rationality of modernity has had unintended or

unrecognised systemic consequences for which there are no clear solutions from science or academia and where, therefore, '..the horizon dims as risks grow' (Beck, 1994:9). In many ways this resonated with my sense of my topic and concerns. Here a situation emerges where as we know more about what not to do, we are increasingly uncertain about what we can do in light of potential threats that are out of order and control, as Beck (ibid: 11-12) notes:

> In a political and existential sense, the fundamental question and decision that opens up here is, will the new manufactured incalculability and disorder be opposed according to the pattern of instrumental rational control….or is a rethinking and a new way of acting beginning here, which accepts and affirms the ambivalence – but then with far-reaching consequences for all areas of social action?'

For Beck, however, hegemonic forces are in play, although masked in a fog of institutional and individual uncertainty:

> Risks presume industry, that is, techno-economic decisions and considerations of utility. They differ from 'war damage' by their 'normal birth', or more precisely, their 'peaceful origins' in the centres of rationality and prosperity with the blessings of the guardians of law and order. They differ from pre-industrial natural disasters by their origins in decision-making, which is of course never conducted by individuals but by entire organisations and political groups. (Beck, 1992b: 98).

Lash (2000: 47) suggests that in order to engage with notions of risk, Beck's emphasis on risk society could and should be displaced or supplemented by the idea of 'risk culture'. This would allow a shift of emphasis from the 'determinate, institutional, normative, rule bound and necessarily hierarchical ordering of individual members in regard to their utilitarian interests' to 'a reflexive or indeterminate disordering' involving 'non-institutional and anti-institutional sociations' based on substantive values that are symbolic rather than rule-bound. In this individuals are concerned 'less with utilitarian interests than the fostering of the good life' based in

aesthetic rather than cognitive reflexivity where these sub-institutional resources can provide the potential to engage effectively with risk situations.

Focusing on individuals and risk, Beck highlights processes of depersonalisation, the disempowerment of our senses related to the risks generated by development, and to new levels of self–critique or 'reflexive modernity'.   Beck's theories of reflexive modernity are linked to Giddens' (1991) focus on high modernity and the formation of 'self-identity' within the operation of 'abstract systems' and diffusion of knowledge that furthers our sense of risk and undermines our sense of control.   This is a situation in which 'social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices.' (Giddens, 1990: 38).

Bauman, who emphasises D/discourses of postmodernism, also spoke of the individualisation of contemporary society (2001),   involving a constantly changing 'liquid life' (2005: 2), based in consumption and confession (2005, 2007; Giroux, 2004) where personal identities are shared and opened up to public questioning and multiple sources of 'expert' advice, rather as in this thesis perhaps.   Bauman's suggested sociological emphasis is therefore on agency, linked to individual agent's 'feelings of freedom and dependence' (1991:175) which he terms their sociality.  This interplay between agents and their 'habitat' should be a key focus on inquiry according to the author.  Both Giddens and Bauman suggest political transformations emergent, where for Giddens, 'lifestyle' politics replaces 'emancipatory' politics, and for Bauman, politics is 'tribal' shaped by desires for social confirmation and fear.

An 'active engagement with the self is the subjective backdrop of the risk society' (Elliott, 2002: 298), featuring 'novel personal experimentation and cultural innovation

47

against a social backdrop of risks, dangers, hazards, reflexivity, globalization'.  As Elliott notes:

> As competent reflective agents, we are aware of the many ways in which a generalized 'climate of risk' presses in on our daily activities. In our day- to-day lives, we are sensitive to the cluster of risks that affect our relations with the self, with others, and with the broader culture. We are specialists in carving out ways of coping and managing risk, whether this be through active engagement, resigned acceptance or confused denial (Elliott, 2002:293).

In discussion of knowledge, Beck suggests that science, with its positivist and realist tendencies, when confronted with 'its own products, defects and secondary problems' (Beck, 1998:155) becomes reflexive, a contradictory position in which science is a cause, definition and solution (Sousa, 2011) of social and environmental issues.   While this may be imbued with emancipatory potential, at the same time prevailing ideologies and interested standpoints become immunized from critique, throwing 'the door open to a feudalization of scientific knowledge practice through economic and political interests and self-regarding 'new dogmas' (Beck, 1998:157; Macfarlane, 2004).   These new dogmas, such as sustainability in my own case perhaps, potentially downplay or conceal ways of understanding risks and threats, having their own potential hegemonic effect.

Risk for Beck (2008; Sousa, 2011) is therefore related to 'knowledge' and 'non-knowing', where truth has 'fractured into hundreds of relative truths' amalgamating/crossing divides between academic and broader popular/social domains of knowledge and moving away from technological determinism and optimism of the knowledge society to situations of uncertainty, and further risk. Nowotny et al. (2004 cited in Sousa, 2011: 59) note the tension between knowledge and risk societies is one where:

> Consumers, patients and ordinary citizens at the mercy of such a runaway production process are cast into the heroic role of having to resist the self-proclaimed authority of those who still make believe that they know and are in control. The risk society is therefore a latent political society, oscillating between public hysteria, tension-ridden indifference and attempts at reform.

Borne (2013:91) links Beck's reflexive modernity and SD noting synergies that relate people and environment, and question science, progress and rationality, echoing post-structural voices. They also open global and local boundaries, address notions of intergenerational equity and suggest the incompatibility of geological and political timescapes. He suggests, more optimistically that discourses of risk have 'facilitated and catalysed altered epistemological perspectives on many levels that have fed into methodological innovations as a dialogue is sought between theory and empirical work' (ibid: 90). Drawing on Douglas (1972) and constructionism, Borne (ibid:92) suggests 'that risk is a culturally perceived phenomena', as well as having realist tones, and therefore 'it is more accurate to talk about various 'relativisms' and 'realisms' (Burr, 2003 cited in Borne, 2013:92). This he notes allows for and requires a pragmatic approach that is willing to embrace different perspectives that emphasise normative and value laden subjectivities. Risk presupposes for Borne, ideas of choice, calculability and responsibility, and raises questions of whether the future is regarded as fixed and inevitable or as a subject of human agency.

Beck's optimism for 'private reflexivity [as the] prior basis for more public forms' (1992a:7), can only come about he suggests if one takes account of the more situated understandings that people have of the world and their place in it. For Raskin, '[t]he shape of the global future rests with the reflexivity of human consciousness – the capacity to think critically about why we think what we do – and then to think and act differently' (Raskin, 2008, cited in Sterling, 2010-11:19; Ahearn, 2001; Sen, 2007).

## Development and Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is part of a history of development thinking and globalised policy D/discourse through the systems of international governance noted earlier (King, 2011; Sousa, 2011; Wals, 2012; Blewett, 2004; Sterling, 2004). Bringing in and building on similar notions of risk, uncertainty and crisis, it has become a political rallying cry and policy prescription that has challenged the direction of change. According to Crush (1995: 8) the languages and practices of development still hold 'real power' in the world, '...promoting and justifying very real [economic, political, and social] interventions and practices'. This is closely interwoven with notions of the modernising project, and maintained dominance of a belief in universal human progress through society's 'increased capacity to design societies in accordance with rationalist principles' (Hettne, 2002: 9). For Cornwall (2010: 1) the emphasis is rooted in D/discourse where '[w]ords make worlds. The language of development defines worlds-in-the-making, animating and justifying intervention in currently existing worlds with fulsome promises of the possible.' Development's 'buzzwords', according to the author, become passwords to funding and influence, and Rist (2010: 22) observes how Discourses of development have been used 'to convey the idea that tomorrow things will be better, or that more is necessarily better'. The emphasis in D/discourses of modernity, of economic man, progress, industrialisation, consumerism, and individualism have become part of the 'western mindset' (Jackson, 2003 cited in Wals and Jickling, 2010). It is this mindset that is also implicated with the social and environmental issues noted above.

As noted at the outset of this thesis, in recent decades there has been increased emphasis on, and greater inclusion of environmental concerns and considerations in globalised development thinking and policy prescription including within HE and

curriculum development (Cortese, 2003; Sterling, 2004, 2012; Blewitt, 2004; King, 2011). Sustainable development is a globalised D/discourse that permeates all aspects of contemporary policy and practice across professional, geographic and cultural boundaries, and as such the range of literature is huge, diverse, multi-disciplinary and contextual. While the economic and social purposes of education have been with us for some time, sustainability as purpose is relatively new in mainstream HE.

## Environmental Concerns and Sustainable Development

Wals (2012: 630) notes that ESD is not rooted so much in local contexts and issues but international policy, and the broad views of SD that link environments and their social, cultural, individual, spatial, normative and teleological dimensions of discursive construction. What we know of today as sustainability or sustainable development grew largely out of the environmental movement as one challenge to the emphasis on economic development at the unequal expense of both people and the environment. This movement was, and remains, critical of modernity and associated Discourses of development noted above, suggesting that the root causes or constructions of the environmental crisis require a fundamental questioning of the values, beliefs and assumptions that underpin modern society (Baudrillard, 1987; Hajer, 1995; Dryzec, 1997, 2005; Peet and Hartwick, 2009). This crisis for Dickens 'is both a crisis of the ways in which modern capitalist societies combine with nature, and a crisis of understanding whereby citizens of those societies fail to understand their relations with nature' (Dickens, 1996 cited in Huckle, 2004:2; Orr, 1994, 2009).

Heilbroner (1985) suggests the environmental crisis emerged out of the ideological and cultural changes that fed into and developed from economic and political liberalism and the project of modernity, where market interactions that rationalized consumption and commodification were moralised through a focus on Utilitarian values where 'what serves the individual, serves society'. Individuals became regarded as isolated except within market relations and contractual obligations, and the constriction of political authority was deemed necessary to leave 'a big space for the self-determined action of individuals' as 'freedom from subservience' involving political and intellectual liberty (Heilbroner, 1985:121; Biesta and Tedder, 2006) as foundations of human agency.

For Peet and Hartwick (2009: 107) it was the combination of two particular historical perspectives, naturalism and rationalism, 'into a powerful theory of societal structure and development [that] was a defining moment in the intellectual history of Western modernity.' Naturalism highlighted notions of 'survival of the fittest', the environment's role in shaping potential for individual and social development and competitive advantage. Rationalism, for the authors, emphasised our ability to control nature through 'thought, logic and calculation'. Characteristic of 'modernity' through this constructive lens is a belief in human privilege, progress, and technological innovation which contributes to a society complacent about ecological and social exploitation, and ignorant of more spiritual and value's oriented considerations and concerns (Selby, 1999, 2005; Robinson, 2004). As a result, the predominant criterion to assess the value of the non-human world was, and to a large extent remains, perceived in terms of utility or 'use value' for human endeavours (Baudrillard, 1987: 63-4). Such anthropocentrism has 'contributed to a short-sighted, exploitive and unsustainable criterion for progress' (Coates and Leahy,

52

2006: 3; Cortese, 2003; Wals and Jickling, 2002), and 'an expanding economy, in which more and more material goods are produced, consumed and discarded (Clark, 1989 cited in Coates and Leahy, 2006: 4). For the authors (ibid.: 3)

> Emerging within this attitude of superiority and exploitation are very powerful beliefs that govern public, industrial and frequently personal decisions. Economism, progressivism, industrialism, consumerism and individualism serve to set the direction of human actions.

Dualism, domination and determinism are noted in discourses of modernity and associated discourses of development, including to some degree Sustainable Development as will be discussed. For Huckle (2004:2) these ways of thinking and acting were in part supported and maintained through the reproductive functions of HE:

> The modern university became an institution that reflected modern reductionism and dualism. Academic divisions of labour separated knowledge into discrete compartments with separate natural and social sciences largely talking past one another. Students failed to understand how knowledge connects, how processes in the social world might combine with those in the biophysical world to produce sustainable development, and how people's local knowledge can combine with academic knowledge to foster such development.

In international governance and policy development, the Brundtland Report 'Our Common Future' (WCED, 1987) was pivotal in both defining SD, and in partly shaping subsequent political and environmental D/discourses that surround its globalized educational policy prescriptions. The often cited definition of SD was optimistic in the ability of national governments and local communities to manage environmental threats and meet 'basic' needs:

> Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable – to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability for future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987: 8).

Later in the document, the focus on meeting individual and social aspirations was also noted 'sustainable development seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the

present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future' (ibid: 40). The 'basic needs' approach, which could be 'ensured' emphasises a technical and managerial discourse and measure of certainty, while 'seeking to meet aspirations' suggests less confidence. Of course this could be read in relation to diversity of aspirations as opposed biological needs, after all participation and cultural rights had been a backdrop to this document, given its situation within UN discourses of development focused on integrating environmental policies and development strategies. However, aspiration[s] could imply, given standard definitions of the word, breathing/survival and hope/desire/ambition as less certain, involving notions of risk and uncertainty.

Education for sustainable development [practical and vocational skills for self-reliance] should, according to this WCED Discourse, be infused with environmental education 'throughout the formal education curriculum' at all levels 'encompassing and cutting across the social and natural sciences and the humanities' (ibid: 113). Informal and community education were also seen as essential in promoting the comprehensive knowledge required for sustainability, further linking academic and civil society in/through D/discourse. Notions of quality linked to ideas of relevance to local conditions.

'Our Common Future' it was suggested is intimately bound to technology which provided the 'key link between humans and nature' (WCED, 1987:60). The WCED warned however, rather as Beck had, that our knowledge and technical abilities were insufficient to address social and environmental issues and that 'the rate of change is outstripping the ability of scientific disciplines and our current capabilities to assess and advise' (ibid: 22/243). This, it was suggested, warranted 'break[ing] out of past patterns', where 'security must be sought through change' (ibid: 22/243).

## Education for Sustainable Development

The links between sustainability and education were further progressed at Rio 1992 (Agenda 21 Ch. 36: 3) when it was noted that:

> Education, including formal education, public awareness and training should be recognized as a process by which human beings and societies can reach their fullest potential. Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues.

In 2002, Section X of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) addressed the need to integrate sustainable development into formal education at all levels, as well as through informal and non-formal educational opportunities. It agreed a commitment to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, UNESCO – 2005-14), which 'implies providing the learners with the skills, perspectives, values and knowledge to live sustainably in their communities' (UNESCO, 2002: online).

In their International Implementation Scheme, linked to the DESD, UNESCO stress the centrality of values in this endeavour in stating that:

> Understanding your own values, the values of the society you live in and the values of others around the world is a central part of educating for a sustainable future. Each nation, cultural group and individual must learn the skills of recognising their own values and assessing these values in the context of sustainability (2005: online)

Still within a liberal reformist, rights based approach, UNESCO (2005) in their draft proposal for the DESD listed essential characteristics of ESD, as laid out in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Essential Characteristics of ESD (UNESCO, 2005: online)**

Education for sustainable development:

  ➢ is based on the principles and values that underline sustainable development;
  ➢ deals with the well-being of all three realms of sustainability – environment, society and economy;
  ➢ promotes life-long learning;
  ➢ is locally relevant and culturally appropriate;
  ➢ is based on local needs, perceptions and conditions, but acknowledges that fulfilling local needs often has international effects and consequences;
  ➢ engages formal, non-formal and informal education;
  ➢ accommodates the evolving nature of the concept of sustainability;
  ➢ addresses content, taking into account context, global issues and local priorities;
  ➢ builds civil capacity for community-based decision making, social tolerance, environmental stewardship, adaptable workforce and quality of life;
  ➢ is interdisciplinary. No one discipline can claim ESD for its own, but all disciplines can contribute to ESD;
  ➢ uses a variety of pedagogical techniques that promote participatory learning and higher-order thinking skills.

In the International Expert Review of ESD in 2011 for UNESCO (Tilbury, 2011) there was also an emphasis on processes of learning rather that subject content. It was noted that while ESD is often interpreted in terms of gaining knowledge, values and theoretical or conceptual understanding, it also refers to certain key processes which include:

  • processes of collaboration and dialogue (including multi-stakeholder and intercultural dialogue);
  • processes which engage the 'whole system';
  • processes which innovate curriculum as well as teaching and learning experiences; and,
  • processes of active and participatory learning.

The learning involved would include:

  • learning to ask critical questions;
  • learning to clarify one's own values;

- learning to envision more positive and sustainable futures;
-  learning to think systemically;
- learning to respond through applied learning; and,
- learning to explore the dialectic between tradition and innovation.

The Review noted that '[t]ransformative views of pedagogy have informed adjectival educational movements such as peace education; health education; global education; development education; and environmental education' (Tilbury, 2011:online).

European policy too has focused on ESD.  The UNECE Strategy (2005: online) aims to encourage integration of ESD in all forms and levels of education systems. The emphasis of the ESD was on inclusion of:

> key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning, such as poverty alleviation, citizenship, peace, ethics, responsibility in local and global contexts, democracy and governance, justice, security, human rights, health, gender equity, cultural diversity, rural and urban development, economy, production and consumption patterns, corporate responsibility, environmental protection, natural resource management and biological and landscape diversity.

> It also requires participatory teaching and learning methods that motivate and empower learners to change their behaviour and take action for sustainable development. ESD consequently promotes competencies like critical thinking, imagining future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative way.

While 'reformist', the circulating D/discourse of sustainable development have themselves been criticised as part of a development hegemony, still emphasising economic growth, in which notions of sustainability – economic, social and environmental – were seen as one muted part of a polyphony of challenges to globalised development discourse and associated social and environmental inequalities that were considered as antithetical to individual wellbeing and human survival.  The D/discourse and policy prescriptions related to ESD resonate an

instrumental view of education (Cochrane and Williams, 2010), as do 'critical' and postmodern [sustainable] educational thinkers (Orr, 1992; Huckle and Sterling, 1996, Sterling, 2001, 2005; Hicks,2004), although the extent to and means by which this can be achieved, the instrumental and intrinsic emphasis and the desired outcomes this will explicitly or more likely implicitly influence is where the contest lies as noted by Jacobs (1999).

Sylvestre et al (2013:1358), through empirical research stress the need for caution with regards to international policy D/iscourses of ESD however.  Using critical discourse analysis of International ESD declarations 'From Talloires to Turin' [covering the time between 1990  and 1999], the authors suggest such texts can be envisaged as carrying guiding principles, philosophies and tenets, representing socio-political constructions of sustainability, the university and current socio-ecological crises.  These employ particular structural, thematic, rhetorical and metaphoric elements, which can lead to a 'gambit of possible responses' environmentally and educationally.  The authors through their research highlighted problematic constructions and reproductions of both the University and Sustainability in International Declarations, which while speaking a 'strong socially progressive politic' at the same time exhibited an increase in neoliberal, free market discourses which the authors saw as uncomfortable bedfellows.  They were also critical of the omission of any mention of culpability on the part of Higher Education in the creation of economic, social and environmental issues which for the authors meant that any 'new innovations may fall into old traps' (Sylvestre et al, 2013: 1362).

UK government politics and policy developed national D/discourses of ESD, in which this empirical research sat, were also pertinent both to my hope for change, and in

their particular discursive framings. In 1998, the UK Government [New Labour] established the Sustainable Development Education Panel, (SDEP) which defined ESD as encompassing seven key concepts:

- **Diversity:** Respecting and valuing both human diversity - cultural, social and economic - and biodiversity.
- **Quality of life:** Acknowledging that global equity and justice are essential elements of sustainability and that basic needs must be met universally.
- **Interdependence:** Understanding how people, the environment and the economy are inextricably linked at all levels, from the local to the global.
- **Citizenship - rights and responsibilities:** Recognising the importance of taking individual responsibility to ensure the world is a better place for yourself and others.
- **Needs and rights of future generations:** Understanding our own basic needs and the implications for the needs of future generations of actions taken today.
- **Sustainable change:** Understanding that resources are finite and that this has implications for people's lifestyles, and for commerce and industry.
- **Uncertainty and precaution:** Acknowledging that there is a range of possible approaches to sustainability and that situations are constantly changing, indicating a need for flexibility and lifelong learning. (www.defra.gov.uk:online)

Further policies ensued. 'Learning to Last: The Government's Sustainable Development Education Strategy for England' (2003), and 'Securing the Future: Delivering the UK Sustainable Development Strategy' (2005) presented a view of education as playing a crucial role in promoting economic prosperity, social equality and environmental protection, as essential for continued social development and human flourishing. In my own teaching context, HEFCE's Sustainable Development Strategy (2005) noted encouragement of the sector to 'develop curricula, pedagogy and extra-curricular activities that enable students to develop the values, skills and knowledge to contribute to sustainable development' (HEFCE 2005: 8; Sterling, 2010). It specified this further by articulating four areas in which HE institutions could contribute to sustainable development. These related to our:

- Role as educators
- Generation and transfer of knowledge
- Leadership of, and influence upon, local, national and international networks
- Business strategy and operations

The call to ESD has had an effect and there are growing international movements of sustainable universities (Corcoran & Wals, 2004). For Wals and Blewitt (2010), however, while commitments to SD have been ambitious and increasingly numerous, there has been an equally striking gap between rhetoric and reality, and for Blewitt:

> [a]lthough declarations of principles are important signposts, the everyday reality of educational administration, management, funding, career development, teaching and learning …offer more than a challenge to champions of EfS within the university sector (Blewitt, 2004:5; Sylvestre et al, 2013).

A report for the Higher Education Academy in 2005 on curriculum development in HE linked to ESD focused on the 24 Subject Centres within the HEA. Their research suggested that tutors felt curriculum change needed to join up with broader organisational changes to avoid accusations of hypocrisy (Dawe et al 2005: 23). They also emphasized the recognition by tutors that students were increasingly interested in and motivated by ESD, and the need for tutors to lead by example. The authors noted three prevailing orientations in the teaching of Sustainable Development at University level:

- 'Educators as role models and learners' where there is an emphasis on how the 'tutor can offer a credible and authoritative perspective on the realities of putting sustainability principles into practice.'
- 'Experiential learning by reconnecting to real-life situations' which 'focuses on real and practical life issues and actual experiences as learning situations.'
- 'Holistic thinking.' 'This approach encompasses a more open-ended exploration of interdependency/trans-disciplinary connections between subjects as well as including approaches to developing and honing *critical thinking*.'  (Dawe et al, 2005:4-5)

Another study for the Higher Education Academy (Cade, 2008) explored the links between sustainability and graduate employability in relation to higher education teaching and learning. Using a mixed method approach the author found that social and environmental ethics and competencies were seen as important by both prospective students and future employers. Changes in the job market connected to SD and Corporate Social Responsibility, media coverage, and students desire to work for ethical employers were, in part, driving this agenda.

## ESD and HE Curriculum D/discourses

ESD as it has emerged since the 1992 Rio Earth Summit has been discursively created involving an ongoing synthesis of environmental and development educations (Wals, 2012; Sterling, 2010). UNESCO, as noted, has linked this to notions of citizenship education and political literacy, drawing from its earlier and ongoing emphasis on rights, responsibilities and participatory development, although aligned if not allied to more individualised neo-liberal discourses of education and development, and learners and teachers. UNESCO (1997, paragraphs 67 and 68) suggest the implications for curricula:

> a curriculum reoriented towards sustainability would place the notion of citizenship among its primary objectives. This would require a revision of many existing curricula and the development of objectives and content themes, and teaching, learning and assessment processes that emphasize moral virtues, ethical motivation and ability to work with others to help build a sustainable future. Viewing education for sustainability as a contribution to a politically literate society is central to the reformulation of education and calls for a "new generation" of theorizing and practice in education and a rethinking of many familiar approaches, including within environmental education.

However, in mirroring wider if loose structures, contradictions and contestations (Wetherell, 2001a; Carneiro, 2011) these models of curriculum are set within an HE context rooted in modernity and neoliberalism (Giroux, 2004; Apple, 2013). It is

suggested that dominant political and educational curriculum models are linked to technical instrumentalism, rationality, and neo-conservative traditionalism (Young, 2008; Cortese, 2003; Karol and Gale, 2004; Tregidga et al, 2011), and resultant curricula have been seen as problematic in this light, individually, socially and environmentally . The dominant hegemonic curriculum model in modern universities is described as 'technical' (Kelly, 1989), 'vocational/neoclassical' (Kemmis et al, 1983; Fien, 1993), 'functionalist' (Askew and Carnell, 1998), and 'global competitive' (Selby, 1999, 2005). This form of curriculum emerged in promotion of the scientific and technological knowledge as an instrument of modernization (Kelly, 1989). Focus on curriculum development followed Tyler (1949) featuring objective, linear, technical rational discourses, in which subject specialists would design and specify curriculum content and pedagogies linked to psychological principles aimed at passive students, through production line processes, who could be moulded through outcomes-based approaches. Rather than agents, this curriculum discourse tended to view students as 'malleable objects' (Kelly, 1989: 62; McKernan, 2008). Knowledge was viewed in similar terms, favouring scientific and technical knowledge which for Huckle (1999: 4) makes sustainability 'mere fashion or slogan' that traps us in an industrial mindset.

Cortese (2003: 18) suggests that dominant curriculum models have failed to facilitate critical questioning or our relationships with nature. As such the author suggests we maintain the illusions that:

• Humans are the dominant species and separate from the rest of nature.
• Resources are free and inexhaustible.
• Earth's ecosystems can assimilate all human impacts.
• Technology will solve most of society's problems.
• All human needs and wants can be met through material means.

• Individual success is independent of the health and well-being of communities, cultures, and the life support system (Cortese, 2003: 18).

Academic-rational models can tend to support this hegemonic Discourse (McKernan, 2008) through transmissive traditional pedagogies inherent in technical and disciplinary curricula (Thomas, 2005; Bracher, 2006), where teachers initiate their students into particular D/discourses that can colonise their thinking. Bracher stresses the potentially harmful nature of transference found in traditional and professional pedagogies, where the teacher overtly celebrates particular disciplinary Discourses or master signifiers , identities, ideals or values – such as sustainability - which can lead to alienation of students (Bracher, 2006: 85-86). Through this, it is suggested, we can easily lose critical sight of its potential value beyond its educational and social currency of such Discourses, for addressing social and environmental problems.

Academic curriculum models can also link to liberal progressive (Carr, 1998) D/discourses and to perhaps more reformist client-centred or learner-centred models (Kemmis et al, 1983; Fien, 1993; Askew and Carnell, 1998; Jickling, 2003; Selby, 2005; Scott and Gough, 2007;). Here education is articulated as both personal and intrinsically valuable rather than a 'means to an end' linked to 'rational autonomy and individual freedom' (Carr, 1998:327; McKernan, 2008) and hence certain conceptions of agency (Heilbroner, 1985; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Biesta and Tedder, 2006). Through this lens Jickling (2005:93), drawing on Peters (1973), highlights the need to challenge any discipline or master signifier, such as sustainability, even if it purports to be 'radical':

> How can we ensure that educational programs provide a sufficient breadth of alternatives for them to ponder and use to construct

meaning in the face of important decisions, to ensure that they are adequately prepared to play an active role in democratic processes?

Calls for teacher neutrality (Scott and Gough, 2007) are evident and often this is an emphasis of environmental education (Stables and Scott, 2002; Jickling, 1994; Orr, 1992).  Jickling (2005: 94) goes on, '[h]ow do we enable our students to push beyond the bounds of our own best thinking or the conventional wisdom of the day?  How do we ensure that they can be exposed to more alternatives?'  Huckle (2008) suggests, however, that such liberal approaches are likely to fail by omission, where a focus on the learner is both time-consuming, and agency can be thwarted through the sense of isolation it can provoke.   Stressing instrumental economic, social and environmental purposes for HE noted earlier does not necessarily preclude notions of the intrinsic value of education (Sen, 2009; Walker, 2012).  Sen's emphasis on capabilities in education combines these dimensions and purpose subsuming notions of human capital to those of wellbeing that focus on modern ideas of democracy, freedom and agency, also echoed by Apple (2013).

Socially critical curriculum discourses (Kemmis et al, 1983; Fien, 1993; Askew and Carnell, 1998; Carr and Kemmis, 1985; Huckle, 2008, Parker and Wade, 2008) often articulate an approach in terms of social justice and/or education for sustainability, stressing the importance of ideological critique through historical and social analysis of knowledge and power, and reappraising education and self in light of critical theories.  For Sterling:

> Education is both part of the problem and the solution. … Education is proclaimed at a high level as the key to a more sustainable society, and yet it daily plays a part in reproducing an unsustainable society. If it is to fulfil its potential as an agent of change towards a more sustainable society, sufficient attention must be given to education as the subject of change itself. A society faced with a radical imperative

to achieve a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable basis within a historically short time needs to reappraise most aspects of its organisation; education – as the main means of social reproduction – has to be at the centre of this task, both as subject and agent. (Sterling, 1996: 18)

Eco-socialist curriculum discourses are overtly political, stressing the importance of values in social change. Often claims of or links to transformative learning are made (Fien, 1993; Huckle, 2008; Sterling, 2010-11). In its counter-hegemonic tendencies, however, it can be seen as potentially 'dangerous', puritanical and exclusive (Bowers, 1993, 1995; Jickling, 1992; Giroux, 2004). Bracher suggests that in this approach teachers might aim to gain recognition for and expose the identity bearing master signifiers responsible for their own alienation. While this can strengthen individual sense of identity and agency as advocate of social justice or sustainability and shape a collective sense of solidarity, it can also be disempowering, supporting socially destructive identity politics and fundamentalism (Bracher, 2006: 98; Blühdorn, 2002). This can also, through processes of othering within such discourses, alienate students and colleagues generating institutional violence through potential humiliation and punishment, and hegemonic cultural violence through the promotion of certain qualities and ideals.

Postmodern curriculum discourses (Orr, 1992; Stables and Scott, 2001; Bonnett, 2004; Kagawa and Selby, 2010) in line with postmodernism more generally, question modern reason and rationality, aiming in the face of complexity, diversity and change to 'renew humanity's spiritual, affective and intuitive capabilities' (Blewitt, 2004: 5). In this there is an emphasis on nature, organicism and holism rather than suggestions of mechanism, instrumentalism and dualism (Gray-Donald and Selby, 2008). 'Postmodern education must have a different agenda, one designed to heal, connect,

liberate, empower, create and celebrate.' (Orr,1992:x)   Often this curriculum discourse/model generates more uncertainties and concerns than answers prompting for Slattery (2013) 'a deep ecology' of education' in an ongoing process of clarification and exploration.  For Boboc (2012:148):

> Discourse (i.e., negotiation) and praxis are the two main components of any postmodern approach to teaching and learning.  Due to the diverse student and teacher body, differences have to be learned and celebrated as the foundation of society.   Instructors and learners educate themselves while interacting formally in the school setting. This "trial and error" approach ensures the constant reshaping of the content to be learned as well as the context in which learning occurs. Students become aware of their individual role in bringing about the social change that supports the further development of society.

Marrying critical and postmodern curriculum models, notions of radical pedagogy (Giroux, 2004a, 2004b, Bracher, 2006) emphasise similar goals if different articulations of purpose, process and potential and uncertain outcomes.

Bracher (2006) suggests that for radical pedagogues, perhaps no different to expressions of purpose in other traditions, the two fundamental aims of education are to benefit students in terms of empowerment and fulfilment, and in this enabling them to benefit society as a whole.  He suggests that this involves a 'resistance' or critical social [as environmental] pedagogy and 'Socratic method'. Teachers, for Bracher, aim to empower students to develop a reflexive ability to focus on their own 'identity components', the effects of these for self and others, and the opportunities and issues of change they might choose to dance with.   This involves a curriculum process or pedagogy in which:

> students would study their own ethnicities, histories, and gain some sense of those complex and diverse cultural locations that have provided them with a sense of voice, place, and identity.  In this way, students could be made more attentive to the struggles that inform their own identities (Giroux, 1994:51 cited in Bracher, 2006:104).

Apple (2013: 151) emphasizes the necessity of this as a form of 'conviction politics', which he calls 'radical democratic egalitarianism'. This, for the author, is 'necessary for a flourishing and fulfilling personal and social life' for me resonating Sen's (2007) notion of capabilities, and more humanistic, liberal-reformist curriculum D/discourses emphasized in DESD. The lack of clarity of boundaries between and within curriculum models were increasingly noted in my readings and reflexive choices sprang to mind regarding my own discursive positionings.

I, as might be expected given my narrative in Chapter 1, felt I aligned at the critical/radical/postmodern end of this curriculum spectrum in terms of personal preference. Casting my mind to experience I sensed this may not be clearly articulated or indeed enacted, a source of initial concern alongside more fundamentalist notions of my own D/discourses of sustainability in relation to curriculum change. I was surprisingly interested rather than concerned about potential findings, which from my research standpoints could consider the potential of such constructive and reconstructive processes. This loosened the hold of the real as I danced, and ontological and epistemological uncertainties reinforced a sense of personal autonomy and agency rather than merely creating a sense of being dragged under by the shifting sands or swampy lowlands of practice. Empirical research may not access any truth but it was even in formulating my context, approach and questions, generating a sense of enhanced knowledge of the topic and myself, I needed now to further attend to notions of context.

While policy internationalism (King, 2011) may show increasing convergence in D/discourses of, and prescriptions for what are multiple purposes, roles and functions for the universities of the twenty first century, this has been put into practice at a local level. At one and the same time, curriculum developers in HE need to meet goals

linked to the economic success of all involved, generation of 'useful' knowledge, production of skilled and agentic students, social inclusion and sustainable development (Cochrane and Williams, 2010; King, 2011; Sterling, 2004; Blewitt, 2004). However, homogeneity is less evident in local contexts, with diversity between and within institutions, and hence interpretations and practices are equally diverse. My own institution, for example is situated in a spatially, temporally and culturally specific context, it is small, has a long history of social purpose and has only recently become a university.

## Institutional Culture and D/discourse

Kemmis and McTaggart (1992) note that culture comprises the characteristic substance and forms of language, discourses, activities and practices, social relations and organisation which constitute the social interactions of the group. Similarly, Giroux suggests:

> Culture is partly defined as a circuit of power, ideologies, and values in which diverse images and sounds are produced and circulated, identities are constructed, inhabited, and discarded, agency is manifested in both individualized and social forms, and discourses are created, which make culture itself the object of inquiry and critical analyses. Rather than being viewed as a static force, the substance of culture and everyday life—knowledge, goods, social practices, and contexts—repeatedly mutates and is subject to ongoing changes and interpretations (Giroux, 2004a: 59-60).

Giroux speaks convincingly of the cultural influence in education in terms of identity transformations, enactments of power and the political dynamic of learning in providing or limiting the 'acquisition of agency' and 'for imagining oppositional social change' (ibid.: 60). Culture becomes, according to the author, a site of contestation and utopian possibility. For Peterson and Spencer (1991:142) while aspects of culture are shared through 'deeply embedded patterns of organisational behaviour and the shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies that members have about

their organisation or its work', notions of homogeneity and concensus are challenged, and citing Bergquist (1992: ibid.), the authors note at least four co-existing institutional cultures:

> ➢ Collegial culture arises primarily from the disciplines.
> ➢ Managerial culture focuses on the goals and purposes of the institution
> ➢ Developmental culture is focused on the personal and professional growth
> ➢ Negotiating culture values the establishment of equitable and egalitarian policies and procedures

In academic/disciplinary terms HE 'culture' has been seen to be riven with what Becher and Trowler (2001) and Macfarlane (2004) call 'rival tribes'. We work in a context, according to the authors, where educators tend to adopt a disciplinary rather than vocational identity that has been further impacted, in processes of globalisation, by marketization and massification of HE, the changing demographic of students and staff, and the inclusion of new disciplines, domains of knowledge and hence D/discourses (Becher and Trowler, 2001:2). This has been heightened in post-industrial times by processes and experiences of change, information overload, competitiveness, uncertainty, organisational decline, fragmentation and loss of autonomy, a sharper more management oriented division of labour, and multiple demands or roles relating to teaching, research and publishing (Macfarlane, 2004:9; Becher and Trowler, 2001; Sousa, 2011). Macfarlane (2011) extends this discussion, noting that our practices have become more divided into 'para-professional roles' and subjected to different measures of accountability resulting in a loss of automony. For Blewitt we as individuals face these pressures as we 'directly experience the risks, uncertainties and pressures of working and living within a globalized, weightless knowledge economy' (Blewitt, 2004: 11).

Mumby & Clair (1997:181; Zelle, 2009) suggest that 'organizations exist only in so far as their members create them through D/discourse. This is not to claim, the authors note, that organizations are 'nothing but' D/discourse, but rather that D/discourse is the principal means by which organization members create a coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they are'. They are also the site of contestation, and Luke (2002:3; Wetherell, 2000a) notes that we now engage in 'semiotic economies, where language, text and discourse become the principal modes of social relations, civic and political life, economic behaviour and activity'.

This struggle centres in part on D/discourses of curriculum (Young, 1998; Connelly and Xu, 2007; Barnett and Coate, 2005; Coate, 2009) in the context of [un]sustainability, risk, and uncertainty. (WCED, 1987; Orr, 1994; Sterling, 2001).

Brennan (1991, 1994; Stables and Scott, 2001; Scott and Gough, 2007) highlights the issues that the disciplinary and bureaucratic nature of higher education poses to interdisciplinary normative concerns for justice and sustainability in curriculum development and practice. An issue for Brennan (1991: 291) that resonated with my own concern was that the more I tried 'to do justice to the complexity' of my subject-matter, the more defensive I 'had to become'. Brennan (1994; also Dresner, 2002) suggests therefore the need for teachers to become 'bilingual', moving beyond their disciplinary boundaries to include and develop a human ecology approach needed in times of a human/environmental crisis.

Cotton et al (2007) in the UK suggested that subject area of tutoring was not necessarily a barrier to ESD. Their research based on questionnaires and interviews in one particular organisation highlighted greater familiarity among tutors with ESD than sustainability, and that the contested and controversial language of

70

sustainability, which precluded fixity, was expressed as an issue. Subsequent research in the same institution (Jones et al, 2010) highlighted tutors resistance to implementation to ESD in terms of loss of academic freedom, disciplinary inappropriateness and in terms of suggested indoctrination, linked to the values orientation implied or assumed in discourses of ESD/SE or our unfamiliarity with them. Others noted by Cotton et al (2007:590) saw potential opportunities in the contested nature and pedagogic approaches suggested by ESD/SE. With regard to pedagogies, interactive and student-centered approaches were seen as key. More interestingly perhaps, less than a fifth of respondents (19%) suggested it was irrelevant to their teaching and only 13% suggested lack of time or institutional structures to be barriers. The main reason cited for lack of engagement was the sense that tutors lacked subject expertise (28%).

Ryan (2011) conducted desk-based research looking at curriculum documents of twenty U.K. universities, and noted that links to size or type of organisation seemed to have little influence on curriculum, although inter-disciplinary focus seemed more evident in research-oriented institutions. He found evidence of thematic overlap, conceptual blending and different priorities at organisational level, with nearly half focused on SD/ESD, just over a third prioritising global citizenship and ESD, and a fifth emphasising inter-disciplinarity in teaching and learning. He also noted a tendency for initiatives to change curriculum content rather than pedagogic approaches, an interesting potential link to notions of expertise noted by Cotton et al (2007). There was also increased focus on employability, graduate skills and capabilities, with some ideals of integration emanating from liberal arts perspectives. Research into institutional engagement with sustainability continues to highlight the

focus on and implicit celebration of diversity, notions of expertise and links to a sense of the need for professional autonomy and agency.

Beck (1998) contends, however, that there is a contradiction between, or nominalisation of, the role of institutions in the lives of individual agents which the author considers to involve 'organized irresponsibility', born out of a *laissez faire* approach in global policy and manifested through technical rationalist institutional and legal procedures that link to D/discourses of accountability and performativity. For Elliott, like Beck, culpability is individualised and collectively denied, maintained through political D/discourses of 'industrial fatalism: faith in progress, dependence on rationality and the rule of expert opinion' (Elliott, 2002: 297-8; Cohen, 1997; Beck, 1998).   Universities, more optimistically, are places 'where the contradictions of the knowledge society are most apparent, and as such, the potential exists for universities to become important agents of the public sphere, initiating social change rather than just responding to it' (Delanty, 2003: 81).

## Reflexive modernity and agency

Beck's (1992a: 7) emphasis and optimism for reflexive modernity suggests individual agency.  For Raskin too '[t]he shape of the global future rests with the reflexivity of human consciousness – the capacity to think critically about why we think what we do – and then to think and act differently' (Raskin, 2008 cited in Sterling, 2010-11: 19; Caldwell, 2007).  Agency for Newman and Dale (2005: 482) 'is necessary for citizens to be able to adapt to their sociocultural environment, and more importantly to respond and transcend tragedy and crisis'.  Links have thus been made to notions of agency and reflexive modernity, where agency becomes both more necessary and difficult to achieve, bound up as it is in a web of alternative ways of seeing and 'part

of a reflective process connecting personal and social change' (Giddens, 1991:32; Beck, 1992; Elliott, 2002).

In Sen's 'capability approach' to development, that sought to challenge emphasis on dominant human capital approaches to broader emphasis, including in HE curriculum as discussed below, on notions of flourishing, dignity and agency (Walker, 2012). In the context of sustainability, Sen emphasises the need to see ourselves and others as agents of change:

> we also have to go beyond the role of human beings specifically as 'consumers' or as 'people with needs', and consider, more broadly, their general role as agents of change who can—given the opportunity—think, assess, evaluate, resolve, inspire, agitate, and, through these means, reshape the world (Sen, 2013:7).

While well-being for Sen (2007) may be achieved through 'functionings' [actions] that may show concern for others well-being, his notion of agency involves a sense of commitment to support other individuals regardless, and perhaps at the expense of one's own wellbeing. He notes '[s]ince people are the ultimate 'agents' of change, much must depend on their inspiration and commitment, and we do require a broad enough notion of sustainability that can be sufficiently enlivening' (Sen, 2013:9). Agency for Sen (2007:275) 'encompasses the goals that a person has reasons to adopt, which can *inter alia* include goals other than the advancement of his or her own well-being.' He suggests therefore a need to consider the 'extent of freedom (and the real capability to do—or achieve—what one has reason to value)' (ibid, 2013:11) where a distinction between personal values, and the reason to value involves wider conceptions of the good and 'careful assessment of aims, allegiances, objectives, where to be 'responsible agents' involves paying attention to and an assessment of the 'state of affairs' (Alkire, 2008:6; Meadows, 2001). As such agency

becomes an assessment of 'what a person can do in line with his or her conception of the good' and the possible (Sen, 1985 cited in Alkire, 2008: 3). Sen (2013: 17) notes, however, drawing on earlier work (1999) that 'It has to be borne in mind that quite often the isolated individual has very little opportunity of going against established patterns of behaviour and socially accepted norms'. Effective power 'to achieve chosen results' (Alkire, 2008: 4) is social in nature. For Alkire (2008), drawing on Ryan and Deci (2004), not being able to exert agency can lead to alienation, openness to coercion, submission and passivity. This resonated with Beck's notions earlier and suggested I might consider how we articulate our ability to exert agency, how we discourse the actions and agency of ourselves and others, and how this relates to curriculum development in the context of sustainability. For Ahearn too, agency involves 'the socioculturally mediated capacity to act' (2001: 112; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Biesta and Tedder, 2006). It is therefore problematic to view agency as a synonym for free will or resistance which potentially neglects 'the social nature of agency and the pervasive influence of culture on human intentions, beliefs, and actions' (Ahearn, 2001:114). It is equally problematic to succumb to 'romance of resistance', which, for the author, could neglect that agent's motivations 'are always complex and contradictory' (ibid: 116).

Biesta and Tedder (2006) note that the concept of agency lies at the heart of education [and hence curriculum], across traditions/ideologies whether liberal, humanist or critical and emancipatory. Agency's discursive links to concepts of freedom, rational autonomy, conscientization and moral autonomy have their home in 'modern' ideas and the authors draw on Kant's (1784) definition of Enlightenment as 'man's [sic] release from his self-incurred tutelage' where tutelage represented 'man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another'

(Biesta and Tedder, 2006:4), alluding to agency as connected to contextual and structural factors noted above.  The authors go on to suggest that there is a difference between normative and empirical interest in agency, with the former emphasising the need for learning 'particular things' to become more agentic, and the latter recognising that agency is thrust upon us, we have the capacity of agency through processes of individualisation (Bauman, 2000; Elliott, 2002; Beck, 1992a), with greater uncertainty, therefore, of what learning is needed. In this I saw potential to suspend my unquestioning normative focus on sustainability within the research process.

Emirbayer and Mische (1998: 963; Biesta and Tedder, 2006) suggest agency is a 'temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past, (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects with the contingencies of the moment), linking this concept to storylines and narratives, curriculum and sustainability (Harré et al, 1999; Hicks, 2006, 2010, 2012).   Again articulations of agentic positioning, potential and ability was conceptualised as one way to 'get the beat' of my own institution (Meadows, 2001; Alkire, 2008).

## Moving towards empirical study

Hatzius (1996:5) notes three particular D/discourses of development and sustainability within contemporary policy and institutions which he calls 'sustainable growth', 'sustainable development' and 'ecological sustainability'.  These were useful in highlighting both the breadth of reach of this D/discourse, and also the diversity and contested nature of this concept.  Sustainable growth is primarily an economic

D/discourse emphasised by businesses and most governments, where the goal is economic efficiency and development is largely viewed in these terms.   This D/discourse is generally optimistic, anthropocentric and research favours positivist and liberal notions of neutrality, where agency is expressed through market interactions primarily involving freedom to choose.  Sustainable development, for the author, remains largely optimistic and anthropocentric although involves normative concerns for social justice, where research therefore involves attention to values, institutional development and participation.   Many criticisms of SD and alternative discourses of 'sustainability' have emerged from academic and non-governmental organisations (Robinson, 2004; Tilbury and Wortman, 2004; Hicks, 2008), bringing new languages and discourses of sustainability as individuals and groups within learning societies attempt to respond to uncertainties and risk (Scott and Gough, 2001:102).   Ecological sustainability D/discourses have, for Hatzius, a strong ethical base that challenge anthropocentrism, are pessimistic and values driven.  Education is seen as key for effecting environmental protection.

In development of 'the [sub]political nature of socio-environmental debates', Dryzec (1997:16, 2005) suggests environmental D/discourses operate across two dimensions of critique of the conditions of industrialism and the politics of modernity, in which  language becomes important in 'constructing, interpreting, discussing and analysing environmental problems, with all kinds of consequences in practice' (Dryzec, 2005: 9-10).  For the author SD is broader than environmentalism, involving different groups including market liberals, institutionalists, bioenvironmentalists and social greens who go about generating different discourses along binary dimensions (ibid: 14).   The author notes these binaries position D/discourse in both their

environmental critique of modernity and their sense of individual and/or collective agency.

The first binary, between 'reformist' and 'radical' positions, relates the extent to which alternatives wish to move away from these conditions. The second binary, between prosaic and imaginative positions, suggests the extent to which political-economic conditions are accepted as given or open to transformation. When combined, these dimensions produce four distinct discursive approaches according to Dryzec (1997, 2005). The 'problem solving' D/discourse [prosaic and reformist] suggests acceptance of the way things are and seeks largely to manage emergent issues. 'Limits and survival' D/discourses [prosaic and radical] take a pessimistic stance that may prompt a critique, but with limited potential for change articulated. 'Sustainability' [imaginative and reformist] is muted in critique of industrialism although articulates potential for change, while 'green radicalism' [imaginative and radical] suggests, as the name might imply, both the need and potential for transformation. Tregidga et al (2011) suggest, however, that we should not rely too heavily on 'assessing conceptualisations of sustainable development against the weak/strong continuum' as it can limit exploration of alternative constructions, or fail to explore 'why some constructions are weak while others strong' (Tregidga et al, 2011:10).

Hajer (1995: 44) also discusses the political nature of environmental D/discourse and for him discourse analysis:

> primarily aims to understand why a particular understanding of the environmental problem at some point gains dominance and is seen as authoritative, while other understandings are discredited' involving processes of reproduction and transformation in particular 'social practices' through which meaning is given to reality rather than representative of it. This does not however assume coherence of or in single environmental D/discourses, and this plurality can be a site for

social action which 'originates in human agency of clever, creative human beings but in a context of social structures of various sorts that both enable and constrain their agency. (Hajer, 1995: 58)

D/discourse, for Hajer is 'a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities' (Hajer, 1995: 44) involving the complex mix of cultural norms, disciplines and rituals which govern discursive formations. Hajer notes that environmental conflicts over interpretation of ecological problems take place in the realm of D/discourse where, drawing on Foucault, he suggests a 'discursive order' that regulates both the discourse itself and 'discoursing subjects' (ibid: 48; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2001; Bingham, 2010). This regulatory function in terms of the parameters, participants and rules of interaction within discourse become dialogically involved in generating practices, discursive formulation and ascription of subject positions that can both limit and enable individual actors. Argumentative D/discourse analysis (Hajer, 1995) highlights notions of discursive agency linked to storylines that construct subject positions and build discourse coalitions. His view is that language has 'the capacity to make politics, to create signs and symbols that can shift power balances and that can impact on institutions and policy-making' (Hajer 2006: 66).

Beck (1998, 2008) highlights the discursive melding of academic and wider cultural discourses through processes of globalisation noted above which continue to draw on the assumptions, language and metaphors of modernity and thus maintain 'an industrial culture and consciousness' that is potentially problematic for both new knowledge and sustainability (Gruenewald, 2004:86; Bowers, 1991; Beck, 1998, 2008; Elliott, 2002; Blühdorn, 2002). Interpretive repertoires highlight these

discursive links which involve notions of concensus where a repertoire can be seen as so established and familiar [thus hegemonic] 'that only a fragment of the argumentative chain needs to be formulated in talk to form an adequate basis for participants to jointly recognize the version of the world that is developing' (Reynolds and Wetherell, 2003: 496). For Gramsci (1971:323) this represents a 'determined notion of concepts', in our 'common sense', 'good sense' and 'popular religion' that help weave together 'the entire system of beliefs, superstitions, opinions, ways of seeing things and of acting, which are collectively bundled together under the name of 'folklore'. Wetherell too speaks of exposure to 'popular psychology' and 'collective memory' (Wetherell, 2001a:25), as something that shapes the discursive spaces in which we act. Environmental or post ecological interpretative repertoires (Kellert, 1993; Zeyer and Roth, 2011), were found to offer conceptual and heuristic models for analysis of D/discourse, particularly discourses offered by individual respondents in my inquiry. Hökkä et al (2010) offered accommodatory and reformist curriculum repertoires that enabled analysis of the same data in relation to curriculum and agency.

Potter and Wetherell (1987:149) define interpretative repertoires as 'recurrently used systems of terms used for characterizing and evaluating actions, events and other phenomena.' For the authors these often dance around specific metaphors and 'figures of speech'. Billig (1991) in his work on linking ideology and opinion, suggests the importance of a 'rhetorical psychology' approach to D/discourse and D/discourse analysis that focus on the strategic and self-determining nature of argument and persuasion. From this view, speaking undertakes both the strategic business of ideological position taking, and elements of self-representation that can be offered as opinion. In this and drawing on Potter and Wetherell (1988), he

suggests that 'people use complex and frequently contradictory patterns of talk' (Billig, 1991:15), where different interpretative repertoires come into play in order to accomplish different functions, both ideological and subjective. This echoes, for Billig, Gramsci's (1971) conceptualisation of common sense as made up of 'competing maxims' where hegemony does not necessarily prevent argument but provides 'resources for criticism' (Billig, 1991:22). However, while we may express opinions, '[o]ur beliefs and our attitudes do not merely occur in our heads, but they too belong to the wider social contexts of controversy' (Billig, 1991:43). While these might indicate shared ways of speaking, I also felt it important to consider the unique, diverse ways of speaking, by discoursing subjects as creative agents (Hajer, 1995; Ahearn, 2001).

Harré, Brockmeier, and Mühlhäusler (1999:4) focus on cultural systems of D/discourse as 'Greenspeak' paying attention to the 'linguistic resources deployed in and fashioned by a particular conversational moment'. The authors draw attention to two aspects of D/discourse as particularly relevant, the first is the temporal teleological aspect, while the second focuses on the spatial aspect. As noted earlier, these changes are said to be progressed through the globalization of technology and the increased circulation of discourse genres. The authors see language as the medium in and by which concepts are created, negotiated and maintained, but note that in times of rapid change, these linguistic devices tend to 'lag behind' other changes, more problematic given the temporal concerns of environmentalism and sustainability, but also suggestive that actions will speak louder than words perhaps.

For Harré et al (1999: 4) Greenspeak involves 'the symbolic means by which the issues of environmentalism are constructed, represented and negotiated, bringing together the linguistic, psychological, social and philosophical dimensions that can

form a framework by which we come to terms with 'nature and the conditions of our existence (Harré et al, 1999: 69). These forms of expression are interwoven into a cultural fabric that 'embeds the individual within socially shared contexts of meanings', again supportive of my framework for study. The author's emphasis on narratives was particularly pertinent to this research, conceptualised by the authors as allegories, concrete stories that also convey abstract meanings and complex temporal transformations, and as such become 'teleologies of hope and despair' (Harré et al, 1999: 9). They suggest there are strong arguments for understanding our repertoires of narrative forms as a type of discourse, through which authors take up positions through the use of rhetorical devices rather than as semantic essences. Alongside environmental 'positions', temporal positioning sits at the heart of sustainability, and in discourse writers or speakers can also articulate 'moral assessments and expressions of time mingled with aesthetic values' (Harré et al, 1997: 9) which can reveal meanings within particular cultural-historical contexts. McKeown and Hopkins (2003:125) share this notion of D/discourse, and suggest that it is at the cultural or organisational level of analysis that interpretation and implementation of international agreements 'develop a local interpretation and a fuller meaning' similar to Ahearn (2001) and Alkire (2008) noted above.

D/discourses of SD and HE's role in its promotion have been subject to ongoing rearticulation. Tregidga et al (2011:1) focused on SD as a 'floating signifier' and discussed the value of Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) discourse theory in provision of a useful framework for 'recognising the complex nature of sustainable development' and in provision of a useful way of 'conceptualising counter-hegemonies and thus the possibilities of and for resistance and debate', and potential change. The authors, from their discourse analysis of corporate reports over a twelve year period,

found that since the Brundtland Report (WCED,1987), SD had been filled with 'economic-focused content'. Yet, 'the meaning' was open to a multiplicity of meanings, 'highlighting the potentialities of such a conception'. SD for the authors was seen as important in countering the negative impacts of 'corporate domination' (Dryzec, 1998; Hajer, 1995), and in light of this concepts role in diminishing the force of the environmental movement. The construction of D/discourse and its meaning for the authors is context dependent, and the local, or rather glocalised (Robertson, 1994, 2012) and where discursive responses are seen to be important sites of hegemonic resistance.

My review of literature and a good deal of reflection sought to challenge my own taken for granted allegiance to sustainability, and here empirical research offered a particularly exciting opportunity to engage more rigorously and reflexively with my topic and agency. In this, the emphasis was on a decentred approach and objectifying techniques that could distance myself from inquiry experientially and politically and poststructural approaches to D/discourse analysis offered particularly useful ways of doing this (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Caldwell, 2007; Peschl, 2007).

## Personal position in research

As noted in the introduction my original focus was sustainability and hopes for curriculum change that had not been taken up by colleagues or more broadly within my institution. Initially I framed this position as one of angst and fundamentalism (Blühdorn, 2002). In this I seemed to align my thesis with what Wallace and Poulson (2004:24) describe as 'knowledge for critical evaluation' in its attempts to develop theoretical and research knowledge from an explicitly negative standpoint towards

practice and policy and to argue why it should be rejected….advocating improvement according to an alternative ideology'.  Critical inquiry seemed to offer potential keys to the educational change I felt and feel are needed, however, I was uncomfortable in adopting this particular perspective in my own practice context.  Was I, in this approach, claiming some sort of ideologically or educationally superior position in my research?  And more relationally, was I, or would I be perceived to be suggesting that colleagues were unaware of curriculum alternatives, or worse still conscious agents of oppressive and unsustainable practices?   I could only take heart in the literature, and personal reflections and justifications that this research was advocating for an oppressed and marginalised nature [including human], that current educational institutions including my own are part of the problem, and that we as educators do engage in the same critical thinking and inquiry that we encourage in our students, although not necessarily through this particular lens.

As such my writing would seem to dance with critical and postmodern curriculum D/discourses cited above.  However, criticisms of my position raised in this review of literature, alongside personal experience of practice raised questions that warranted empirical study rather than normative evaluation.  I was looking for clarification rather than challenge (Charmaz, 2006:199), but still felt that the empirical and relational nature of research in my own practice context presented particular issues.

These considerations prompted the need for further reading and reflection on the political and ethical dimensions of the research, in terms of both intent and content.  I moved to a research approach more in tune with Wallace and Poulson's (2004) 'Reflexive Action', with a focus on developing self-critical research knowledge in order to improve practice according to an alternative ideology.   In this process I needed a shift of mind from '*akrasia*' to *'metanoia',* the result of an attentive mind

where my own 'reality' was considered, challenged and might be changed (Clarke, 2012:29).

A strength of Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) discourse theory for Tregidga et al (2011), also noted earlier (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Borne, 2013), is that it helps progress research into SD through its distinction between existence vs being, the ontic and the ontological, overcoming realist critiques. Also, with an emphasis on democracy and pluralism, their theory challenges personal bias in research. Their recognition of fixity [hegemony] but also multiplicity and contestability, where articulation is defined as 'any practice establishing relations among elements such that their identity is modified as a result' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985: 105).

The research questions posed, and the theoretical frameworks that have been examined within this work so far have tended to indicate my personal preferences and narratives, as did the research techniques initially considered. Gough and Reid (2000) in their discussion of environmental education research highlight how our views of education, professionalism and teaching are influential on our actions as educational researchers. They cite Bennett (1997), who highlights certain professional characteristics that we have drawn on within the teaching 'profession' to exemplify and justify our roles, rights and responsibilities as teachers and within research. These involve characteristics of 'diagnosis, evaluation, implementation and standard setting' (Gough and Reid, 2000: 48). For the authors, the way we approach these characteristics in our research will be influenced by how we see our work. They particularly link this to our engagement, or lack of it, with research 'guidelines' noting that we may see our work and research as 'science-based profession, a profession based to a greater or lesser extent in something other than science, or as something other than a profession'. This continuum, they suggest,

has implications for the role of theory in research and the extent to which we follow existing canons.    However, objectivity and reflexivity were key in this study in moving away from my own 'habits of mind' towards a more open approach, and in consideration of academic standards associated with doctoral study discussed further in Chapter 3.  I also had to take into account my own position and bias, in part articulated in Chapter 1.

I cannot deny that I had hoped at the outset, and perhaps still do, to 'discover discourses which encode worldviews that inspire people into action for sustainability' (Stibbe, 2009: 4) although 'different discourses motivate different audiences'. Cutting (2002) in his discussion of pragmatics and D/discourse suggests this involves not a different focus of study, but an emphasis on relevance rather than coherence of the research.  Sustainability, like justice and health are emerging qualities arising from sets of relations in a system (Sterling, 2004:55).  As a concept, sustainability can offer a more fertile ground for educational innovation (Rauch, 2004) or model site of contest and renegotiation (Soetaert and Mottart, 2001: 55) with huge heuristic capacity to exchange views and ideas (Selby, 2008:65), and through which for Wals and Bawden (2005:38) 'may generate fruitful working hypotheses for the concrete formulation of curriculum, study programmes, subject matter content and didactical arrangements'.

As Sylvestre et al (2013: 1357) note, however, '[t]hough institutional transformation for sustainability is a laudable goal, the contested and protean nature of the concept of sustainability presents a significant challenge when using it as an organizing principle for change'.   Wals too warned against this stance:

> Talking about sustainability is quite different from making it the end, or
> aim, of education, or using it as the preeminent organizing concept.

Unfortunately, the mantra of sustainability has conditioned many to believe that this term carries unconditional or positive values. Yet environmental issues are not fundamentally or exclusively about sustainability. Rather, they are issues about cultural identities, social and environmental equity, respect, society-nature relationships and tensions between intrinsic and instrumental values. Ameliorating issues of sustainability involves addressing ethical questions, for instance, regarding the injustice in sharing the use of the world's resources. We do not know the answers to these questions and should not pretend that we do, but we do know that they cannot be found without also looking at issues of development, justice, peace and conflict, human rights and dignity, and intrinsic value of other species, and indeed, whole ecosystems (Wals, 2002: 223).

Sustainability for Grove-White (1994 cited in McNaghten and Urry, 1998:95) provides a new space for political explorations rather than establishing unambiguous call for action based on fresh values, and this was important in moving this thesis from normative to empirical study.  Ongoing self-questioning through the lenses of risk and reflexive modernity (Beck, 1992, 1994; Lash, 1994; Elliott, 2001) can help to 'penetrate the masks and veils of media spin, political rhetoric and instrumental rationality' (Blewitt, 2004: 6), but in this we create new masks (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002) and constructions that themselves warrant investigation.  Elliott suggests the need to develop methods of analysis that highlight old and new patterns of power and domination through the 'socio-symbolic structuring of risk' (2001:305), 'the privatization of risk' where as active agents we 'confront socially produced risks individually', and where 'risk-avoidance is a matter of individual responsibility and navigation'.  They also suggest the commodification of risk through 'myths, fantasies, fiction and lies', and the 'instrumentalization of identities in terms of lifestyle, consumption and choice'.  These ideas resonated with my readings to date (Hajer, 1995; Dryzec, 1997/2005; Blühdorn, 2002) and in part influenced my methodology discussed further in Chapter 3.   Reflexive decentring was also key, and here I looked primarily to Caldwell (2007) and Peschl (2007).

Caldwell's (2007) notion of decentred agency, developed through his review and rearticulation of Foucault's theories, proved particularly useful in consideration of my methodological approach, linking empirical analysis with the reflexive process. His article starts with a provocative question that resonated with my own framing of concern regarding 'post' approaches:

> With this apparent destruction of the epistemological and moral subject of science and rationalism and the eclipse of individual and collective social action the very idea of a link between agency and change becomes profoundly problematic. How can there be any possibility of agency, any hope of change, if human actors as moral agents and social subjects are unable and incapable of exercising choice, free will or autonomy? (Caldwell, 2007:2)

Caldwell suggests that there are four key components of decentred agency – discourse, power/knowledge, embodiment and self-reflexivity. My interest here was the author's suggestion that this could allow for 'new possibilities for resistance and the dispersal of agency and change in organizations and societies' (ibid.3). In focusing on discourse as a way to ask new questions about my constructions of the world, and in recognition that both body and self are 'experienced' through discourse, there was a space being created for personal engagement with the questions and the process of enquiry. Foucault (1996 cited in Caldwell, 2007:12) suggests that some hopeful modern ideas are still required, a source of personal affirmation of my own idealism perhaps although not without question, emphasizing the 'indispensability' of modernist ideas of reason and enlightenment, as well as their limits and dangers'. Caldwell's attention to the 'aesthetics of existence' where through discourses of knowledge, and new forms of disciplinary power we can 'recover and rediscover ourselves' (ibid: 17) through a personal sense of purpose (Lash, 1994, 2003) resonating empirical theories of agency noted earlier (Emirbayer

and Mische, 1998; Ahearn, 2001; Newman and Dale, 2005; Biesta and Tedder, 2006; Sen, 2007) and ideas of transformative learning through engaging in an epistemic dance (Mezirow et al, 2000; Sterling, 2004; Peschl, 2007).

In summary, this chapter has focused on contemporary D/discourses surrounding HE and change and environmental sustainability, risk and reflexive modernity that raise pertinent questions for theorising curriculum development in terms of purpose and relevance (Cortese, 2003; Sousa, 2011; King, 2011; Singh and Little, 2011; Cochrane and Smith, 2011) . I have briefly presented globalised policy D/discourses of Sustainable Development and academic D/discourses of postmodernity, reflexive modernity and risk.  Here the educational [curriculum], political [agentic] and environmental [sustainability] dimensions of D/discourses were discussed in policy and institutional terms and related to HE curriculum (Kemmis et al, 1983; Fien, 1993; Askew and Carnell, 1998; Selby, 1999, 2005).  The final section of this literature review looked to D/discourse analysis in preparation for my empirical research, and my own position[s] within the debates raised so far.  I now move to focus on my empirical study.

# Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Methods

As noted in the introduction the emphasis of my was to explore the concepts of curriculum, sustainability and agency in a new context and in original ways thus contributing to knowledge and potential future dialogue regarding both the topic and approach (Delanty, 2003; Tregidga et al, 2011). As will be discussed, the analytical emphasis was on poststructural argumentative, interpretative and reflexive D/discourse analytical approaches and associated methods in a process that offered a range of opportunities to deconstruct and reconstruct the data. Here methodological emphasis was key, and shifts between questions and approaches (Fairclough, 2001; Wetherell, 1998, 2001a, 2001b; Potter, 2004; Tregidga et al, 2011; Sylvestre et al, 2013) involved a process of ontological self-critique, epistemological challenge and methodological scepticism, problematizing reality, truth, intent and motivation (Luke, 1995: 7; Caldwell, 2007). This chapter offers a critical exploration of the philosophical and theoretical framework of inquiry, with its associated design, methodology and methods, data collection and analysis. Ethical considerations are further discussed. While a certain linear logic may be implied in this rendition of the research process, it was far from linear or logical, involving cycles, long gaps between stages, meanders, blind alleys and cognitive and affective turbulence.

My thesis is contextualised through review on contemporary D/discourses surrounding HE, change and environmental sustainability, risk, post and reflexive modernity that raise pertinent questions for theorising curriculum development in terms of purpose and relevance (Cortese, 2003; Sousa, 2011; King, 2011; Singh and Little, 2011; Cochrane and Smith, 2011). Theoretical debates were linked to globalised policy D/discourses of Sustainable Development, civil and academic

D/discourses of environmental sustainability (Bowers, 1995, 2003; Blühdorn, 2002; Beck, 1992, 1998; Blewitt, 2008; Wals, 2012) and HE [curriculum] (Kemmis et al, 1983; Fien, 1993; Askew and Carnell, 1998; Selby, 1999, 2005). Here constructs of political/agentic positionings (Dryzec, 1997, 2005; Hajer, 1995) in contexts and narratives of change were key (Harré et al, 1999). Reflexivity and 'triple-loop'/ transformatory learning were also central as I focused on my own agentic positionings within and through the process (Peschl, 2007; Caldwell, 2007).

While I did not want to 'lose' the sense of complexity of context introduced and outlined through review of literature in my research, or my sense of allegiance to environmental sustainability and curriculum change, I felt the need and a requirement within my own institutional and this educational context, to focus on empirical inquiry rather than maintain my normative focus, concern, questionable idealism and suggested inaction (Blühdorn, 2002; Wals, 2012). A de-centred poststructural position was considered to help minimise animosity, antagonism, or hegemonic regulation in the research process, in 'accepting the existence of socially constructed multiple truths' (Gough and Reid, 2000: 53; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). Poststructural D/discourse analysis became my window of opportunity in this endeavour, for professional reasons already noted and as the 'crisis of our times' is essentially viewed as a discursive and contested phenomenon (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Harré and Gillett, 1994; Hajer, 1995; Dryzec, 1997, 2005; Harré et al, 1999; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Dryzec, 1997). To be open to diversity in a spirit of democracy curriculum, sustainability and agency were generally envisaged as 'floating signifiers' or 'nodal points' filled with different meanings (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Tregidga et al, 2013). In this D/discourses (Alvesson and Kärreman (2000) were taken as involving discursive 'orders' and

90

'coalitions' that present the hegemonic cultural fixity of Discourse built from the different articulations of 'discoursing subjects' as active agents (Hajer, 1995; Alvesson and Kärremann, 2000; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Keller, 2013). This moved the focus beyond dualistic notions of structure and agency to a more fluid conceptualisation of my own institutional discursive context.

For a number of reasons this thesis has spanned a relatively long period of real time with multiple interruptions in my studies. While a source of concern in the moments, this also enabled an unexpected measure of interested objectivity in the process, particularly in relation to my initial analysis carried out in the summer of 2012 which could also be treated as discursive data in the main phase of analysis that began a year later. I started my thesis 2010 when initial review of literature, questions and methodology were discussed, although subsequently changed from an action research approach to the current discursive one. Following my first interruption, primary data collection in the form of interviews took place in the summer of 2012, when texts [Learning and Teaching Strategies, 2005-2009 and 2010-2014] were also accessed and initial analysis forwarded. The Sustainability Statement did not appear until 2013 and was not analysed before I had another break in my studies. I returned in the autumn of 2013, and having regained consent from participants and the institution to use existing data, continued the process of analysis and writing until the end of the summer of 2014. I outline the timescales, data sets, and analytical techniques used in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Overview of Research Process.**

| Research Phase | Data Set[s] | Analysis | Key themes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Review of Literature: | Academic and policy literature: | Critical reading: 2 main phases - context setting | Change: |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2010 -2014 | | and during analysis of primary data. | Postmodernity<br><br>Risk and reflexive modernity<br><br>Higher Education<br><br>Curriculum<br><br>Sustainable Development<br><br>Sustainability<br><br>Agency<br><br>D/discourse |
| Analysis of Discourse [texts]<br><br>Initial analysis 2012 [summer]<br><br>Analysis Autumn 2013 – Summer 2014 | Learning and Teaching Strategies: 2005-2009 and 2010-2014. Sustainability Statement. | Linguistic, semiotic and narrative analysis. | Narratives of change<br><br>Curriculum and sustainability<br><br>Agent positions |
| Analysis of talk<br><br>As Discourse. Summer 2012 and Autumn 2013 – Summer 2014 | Interview transcripts [n = 4] | Curriculum (Hökkä et al, 2010) and post-ecological interpretative analysis (Zeyer and Roth, 2011) | 'Curriculum', environmental and agentic repertoires. |
| Analysis of talk<br><br>As discourse. Summer 2012 and Autumn 2013 – Summer 2014 | Interview transcripts [n = 4] | | Narrative analysis.<br><br>Agentic analysis. |
| Analysis of self as 'decentred agent'. | Own texts in earlier phases.<br><br>Analytic and reflexive process [2012-2014] | Initial analyses. Analytic and reflexive memos. | Reflexive analysis. |

The research questions posed, and the theoretical frameworks that have been examined within the introduction and literature review have tended to indicate my personal preferences, as did the research techniques initially considered. Gough and Reid (2000: 84), noted earlier, highlight how our own preferences and habits of mind influence our choices of topic and approach to research as 'science-based profession, a profession based to a greater or lesser extent in something other than science, or as something other than a profession'. This continuum, they suggest, has implications for the role of theory in research, and the extent to which we follow the canons of research.

In a related way Biesta (2011) takes a comparative approach to the academic study of education, with a focus on the place, or not, for a distinct approach and discipline for education studies, and the role and status of theory in such inquiry, including research. The Anglo-American tradition has, according to the author, maintained a focus on inter-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary understandings of education, where applied educational theory is essentially drawn from 'other' disciplines, particularly psychology, history, philosophy and sociology, which provide their own 'critical canons' for justifying educational study. His alternative construction, drawn from European or more specifically German ideas [D/discourses] of education and research, emphasises the importance of a more teleological, holistic educational theory and process. I see merit in both these constructions, which could be because I am half English and half German! It could also link with elements of my own socialisation and education noted in Chapter 1 (Usher and Edwards, 1994) or some other 'reasons'. As noted, my first considered approach was on experiential action research, something that felt more in tune with existent habits of mind. The shift towards a more formalised approach, necessary as it seemed, took me out of my

comfort zone and at times highlighted feelings of academic inadequacy and 'imposter syndrome' (Brookfield, 1995), although as will be discussed these were themselves 'decentred' in the process.

Using existent claims to knowledge as stepping stones to present personal understandings became an essential part of the decentring process, '[k]nowledge is always mediated by pre-existing ideas and values, whether this is acknowledged by researchers or not' (Seale, 1999:470; Toma, 1999; Gustavsen, 2003).  What follows is organised in terms of the POEM of research, my Paradigmatic, Ontological Epistemological and Methodological framework.  Methods, ethical considerations and D/discourse analytical processes are also critically explored in terms of notions of their potential and limitations.

## Paradigmatic Position

Research paradigms, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2000:19) provide a 'net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological and methodological premises' for research and in action and as such they are individual constructions.  It is only by understanding these basic premises or assumptions about the nature of the world, and how it can be known, that choices in our approach to research can be informed, and scholarship can be evaluated using appropriate standards (Toma, 1999), an important factor given the accredited context of this thesis.    Research paradigms are contested along similar lines noted above (Gough and Reid, 2000; Biesta, 2001) forming  'a cluster of beliefs and dictates which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be done, [and] how results should be interpreted' (Bryman, 1988 cited in Bryman, 2001:446).  Dewey (1916: 323) noted that paradigmatic distinctions had plagued early educational research,

and suggested they set up 'false dualisms' [such as positivism/interpretivism, structure/agency, human/nature].

Subsequent paradigmatic categorisations reflect a move towards accommodation of further positions and sub-divisions to try to capture the complexity of contemporary educational research and the social world more generally (Hammersley, 2005, 2007). Carr and Kemmis (1986) noted 3 distinctive paradigms, positivist, interpretivist and critical, while Guba and Lincoln (1994) organised scholars into four paradigms – positivist, post-positivist, critical and interpretive, and have included (Guba and Lincoln, 2005) a fifth 'participatory' paradigm based on the works of Heron (1996) and Heron and Reason (1997).   The latter four categories also reflect the influence of post-structural and postmodern thinking, in which the world is seen as increasingly complex, contextual and local, and understanding is therefore indeterminate and subjective rather than universal and objective  (Toohey,1999; Light,2000; Guba and Lincoln, 2005), reflecting broader changes noted earlier, where '[w]ithin the last decade, the borders and boundary lines between these paradigms and perspectives have begun to blur' (Guba and Lincoln, 2005: 183).  Ontological and epistemological stances are seen less as absolutes operating more on a continuum (Toma, 1999; Biesta, 2007), shaped by history, local contexts and social practices:

> Consequently, to argue that it is paradigms that are in contention is probably less useful than to probe where and how paradigms exhibit confluence and where and how they exhibit differences, controversies, and contradictions (Guba and Lincoln, 2005: 192).

Pring (2000:47) also notes that the 'distinctions *within* the so-called paradigms are often as significant as distinctions *between* them.' With this potential for flexibility of approach ontological uncertainty and epistemological fragmentation involves a

'double crisis of representation and legitimation' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Taylor, 2001:12) discussed in due course.

For reasons noted earlier, my paradigm strongly aligns with poststructuralism (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002) where the study of language as D/discourse that links educational, environmental and agentic genres of curriculum texts and talk (Hajer, 1995; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000; Borne, 2013) lies central to understanding. D/discourse analysis surrounding particular topics such as curriculum and issues such as unsustainability, it was considered, could highlight or at least inscribe both the conscious and unconscious assumptions and positions of D/discourse participants. Through attention to institutional and individual discursive constructions and patterns of meaning this could also accommodate a measure of heterogeneity, seen as important empirically, politically and ethically. Laclau and Mouffe (1985; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Borne, 2014) drawing on theories of hegemony and subjectivity offered a framework for conceptualising the 'functions' of D/discourse that enabled focus on issues of knowledge, power and individual and social identities, in contemporary times of risk and reflexive modernity, in part through symbolic orders of meaning. This was a circulatory dance, where 'subjects relate to a range of possible positions in various processes of identification and subjectivity' (Laclau, 1996:36-7). While theoretically useful in drawing attention to subject positions and identity markers in articulations, methodological guidance needed to be sought elsewhere as discussed below.

Poststructuralists agree, according to Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:12) that language does not reflect a pre-existing reality, it is instead structured into systems of D/discourse whereby meaning changes, and in studying the maintenance [socialisation] and diversity [transformation] of patterns of discursive practices these

features can be explored.  For the authors (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 205), and in this study, the concept of critique sought to combine 'the level of principle and the concrete, grounded level' as 'a positioned opening for discussion'.  Analysis involved different 'languages of re-description and re-presentation' of empirical data as D/discourse[s] (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000) where curriculum in the context of sustainability was explored through environmental, educational and political lenses.

Focus in discursive work through a poststructuralist tradition is not so much on what is said but how, on representation and meaning rather than conversational conventions and activities, through which 'society can … be understood as a vast argumentative texture through which people construct their reality' (Laclau, 1993 cited in Wetherell, 2001b: 389).  This involves the 'discursive formation' (Olssen, 2008) of curriculum and sustainability by HE institutional and administrative manifestations, suggested by Laclau and Mouffe (1985).  Here, in line with notions of risk society, reflexive modernity, and critiques of materialist and realist approaches as somehow inappropriate in post-ecological times, it sits within more constructionist theories of meaning. (Gergen, 1994; Wetherell, 2001b; Borne, 2014).  This view of D/discourse also moves away from interpretivism, it does not trust in potential of disclosed meaning and truth (Schwandt, 2003; Karol and Gale, 2004), and that what is written, said, and done can only highlight a selective and partial representation of any notion of reality (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Orr, 2009).  That is not to say that D/discourse does not have functional properties (Potter and Wetherell, 1987), however, but that these are not fully accessible to our knowledge of them.

For Kellner (2005: 57) poststructuralism focuses on situated understanding, 'stressing the importance of context and the social construction of reality that allows constant reconstruction'.  This requires of us as professional educators and

researchers to reflect upon our own subject positions, biases, privileges and limitations, to reflexively critique and rethink personal assumptions, positions and practices, something I also felt important as noted earlier and discussed in further detail below.

## Ontological position

Blaikie (2000: 8) describes ontology as the:

> claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other. In short, ontological assumptions are concerned with what we believe constitutes social reality.

This work proceeds in an ontology based on the constructionist assumption that social context does not just refer to a particular space and time, but is also discursively constituted by three basic processes, 'conversations or symbolic exchanges, institutional practices, and societal rhetoric' (Harré and van Langenhove, 2010: 107). The author's emphasis on notions of discursive positioning and rhetorical redescription of social acts and societal icons offered a useful way of conceptualising and bridging the interplay between the global/local, modern/postmodern, social/natural realms.

A constructionist ontology enables a position that can acknowledge an existent physical reality [the ontic], but that this is not accessible to human endeavour or communicable within the limits of language as social practice [the ontological] (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Gergen, 1994, 1999; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Sarantakos, 2005; Tregidga et al, 2011; Keller, 2013; Borne, 2013Iversen, 2014). In terms of communicating reality, a key constructionist assertion that 'there is no foundational description to be made about an "out there" as opposed to an "in here" .

. . once we attempt to articulate "what there is" …. we enter the world of discourse' (Gergen, 1994:72 cited in Nightingale and Cromby, 2002:703).  In other words, both language and knowledge are seen as socially constructed [we construct it, it is constructed by us], rather than reflecting or mirroring some ontic objective, knowable reality attainable through foundational approaches and objectification of the social other or disembodied self.  Here I felt on the edge of what Hammersley (1992) suggests as 'a more subtle form of realism' where 'for the most part reality is independent of the claims that social researchers make about it' (Hammersley, 1992: 51; Maxwell, 2012).  I could not get behind any masks of reality as some critical realists and constructionists might assert, however, but could offer a new masking (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002) that might develop personal understanding and prompt dialogue (Harré et al, 1999; Tregidga et al, 2011).

Using poststructural theory was seen as particularly pertinent to this study contextualised in times of change, unsustainability and reflexive modernity in that:

> Poststructuralist theory encourages a counter-ontological critique of hose broad theories of human development, social agency and social structure that have been used in the last century to analyse and develop educational interventions. In this way, it enables a self-reflexive critique of the modernist and industrial-era administrative and curricular models ……  At the same time, it encourages the further development of experimental, interpretive modes of inquiry to examine new educational phenomena. (Luke, 1995: 52).

Viewing texts and talk as an active, creative and 'selective process of producing meaning in social contexts' (Sarantakos, 2005: 39; Davies and Harré, 1990) enabled a constructionist position where:

> the nature of the ontology posited is not a spirit or mind but, influenced by the linguistic turn, a series of practices – habits, actions, mores, customs, languages – that function as open symbolic structures with their own internal logic or form, and from which individuals derive, alter, and reproduce meanings (Olssen, 2006: 198-199).

Social constructionism (Gergen, 1994; Roth, 2009:43) also involves an ontological position emergent from and reflected within an existentialist epistemology where there is an 'intimate and active relationship between conscious subject and object of subject's consciousness' (Crotty, 1998: 44; Luttrell, 2009).  This has radical implications for qualitative research, in shifting focus away from interpretivism, noted above, to a reflexive 'as if' stance (Elliott, 2002; Stacey, 2007), that challenges [modern] suggestions of stability of attitudes, behaviours, or institutional structures, focusing instead on the practices through which we construct and present the world in one form rather than another (Potter and Wetherell 1987; Beck, 1994; Schwandt, 2003; Hammersley, 2005).  There is, therefore, increased emphasis on epistemological positioning rather than ontological ideas of the real and truth in contemporary constructionist and poststructural research debates (Crotty, 1998, Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002).

Accounting for fixity and diversity in analysis suggested social constructionism and individual constructivism would be optimum guides to adopt in curriculum research (Hammersley, 1992; Fairclough, 1992; Dickens, 1996, Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999) offering potential to bridge and explore what Goodson (1989: 12; Ahearn, 2001) refers to as 'the story of action within a theory of context'.  My critical ontology of self, attended to through notions of decentred agency (Caldwell, 2007), was also a hopeful one:

> We can learn to reflect critically on the particular discourses that surround us and we can intervene in discourses that we believe are problematic. Through conscious commitment and effort, we can change the discourses that surround us, over time (Karlberg, 2008:311; Stibbe, 2009).

## Epistemological Position

Epistemological positioning 'involves study of social practices by which communities develop a basis for warranted belief and action' (Giarelli, 1999:26). It sets the rules of knowing 'by drawing boundaries and setting up mechanisms to police those boundaries' (Scott and Usher, 1999:11). As such it has as much to do with issues of politics and power among research communities as it does with logic, and intimately relates to personal judgements where '[r]esearch is the servant of professional judgement, not its master' (Pring, 2000: 139).

Epistemologically, my data collection and analysis strategies involved constructionist/ constructivist/reflexive stances (Crotty, 1998; Hammersley, 1992), where I adopted what Alvesson and Kärreman (2000:1137) describe as a 'long-range/autonomous position', concerned with the extent to which what is said organisationally and individually is seen as related to other 'utterances' on the topic and the implications. Here, my trans-local discourse analysis approach engaged with academic, organisational and professional [individual agentic] dimensions of D/discourse, with curriculum and environmental sustainability forming the 'nodal points' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Tregidga et al, 2013) around which these discourses were configured.

Discourse analysis (DA) lay at the heart of my research and as such this thesis is concerned with:

- human experiences embedded in the discourse or influenced by it
- talk, text and social practices and linguistic content [meanings and topics]
- linguistic structure [grammar and cohesion]
- action, construction and variability

- rhetorical or argumentative organisation (Potter and Wetherell, 1994: 48).

Taking an epistemological position that raises 'post' modern, ecological and agentic questions regarding knowledge, language and power allowed for different methodological approaches that could provide alternative 'languages of redescription' following different analytic rules and processes of translation (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2007: 207). This was constraining, particularly in terms of the complexity involved and time needed to engage with multiple analytical lenses. It was also useful and productive in allowing for my 'epistemic dance with reality' (Peschl, 2007), discussed further below.

Dryzec (2005: 20) in his focus on the environmental and political nature D/discourse suggests certain elements that might come into play in analysis, paying attention to:

1. Basic entities recognised or constructed
2. Assumptions about natural relations
3. Agents and their motives
4. Key metaphors and other rhetorical devices

Here notions of constructionism, interactionism, perspectivism and expressivism came to the fore, where we do not discover or find but make knowledge, 'against a backdrop' (Schwandt, 2003: 305). Language was viewed, through these particular lenses, as both 'system' and individual 'resource', if imperfect and fairly fluid. All language is interactive addressed to others, real or imagined, and my goal was to identify the positions and arguments being addressed, countered and ignored in relation to curriculum, sustainability and agency.

Keller (2013:73) suggests, in his 'Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse', a bridge between cultural and Foucauldian discourse theory in that what is sensed,

perceived and experience is mediated through socially constructed and typified knowledge which is to varying degrees recognised as legitimate and objective. This for the author is stabilized [becomes hegemonic] by means of *dispositifs*, the material and ideational infrastructure where D/discourses are institutionalized, materialized, reproduced and thereby exert power effects. Keller links this stabilising effect to interpretative repertoires involving a 'typified ensemble of interpretative components of which a discourse consists and which is more or less comprehensively actualised in individual utterances' (Keller, 2013: 73). Keller's attention to situational analysis of texts and talk drawing on interpretative approaches around thematic and institutional 'references' seemed highly pertinent to my study where D/discourse is seen as part of a socially developed system of communication and representation, enabling us to articulate coherent meanings (Keller, 2013). In this, according to the author (ibid.: 2), D/discourse involves 'more or less successful attempts to stabilize, at least temporarily, attributions of meaning and orders of interpretation and thereby to institutionalise a collectively binding order of knowledge'.

Poststructural forms of critique in part represent 'a specific philosophical response to the scientistic pretention of structuralism' (Peters and Burbules, 2004:56). This therefore situates educational research as epistemically implicated in the power/knowledge nexus forming its own system of classification. For Keller, subject positions can be envisaged as 'places' contoured in D/discourse and more or less stabilised institutionally via preconditions for specific qualifications, such as this EdD, and where we are offered collective identity, institutionally or, for example via models of environmentally aware citizens (Keller, 2013:74) that position us in relative and relational ways (Davies and Harré, 1990; Harré and Van Langenhove, 2010). 'Among the products of discursive practices are the very persons who engage in

them' (Davies and Harré, 1990: 45) and this is where, for the authors, poststructuralism shades into narratology.

Narratives are social products that are produced by people in the context of specific social, historical and cultural locations. They offer interpretive devices through which people represent themselves and their worlds to themselves and to others (Moen, 2006). Hammersley (1992) warns however that cultural connections and assumptions are also fallible, and can lead us astray just as easily as in the right direction. He suggests it is important for us to develop ways in which we monitor our assumptions and the inferences that we make on the basis of them, and investigate those we judge not to be beyond reasonable doubt (Hammersley, 1992:53). I tried to capture and monitor the process through the use of memos discussed below.

From my reading and understanding, texts and talk could offer views of stability and contestation over the appropriate interpretation of socio-political and environmental problems (Keller, 2013: 37) and related HE curriculum purposes (Kelly, 2009). In this the socio-cultural context of D/discourse is fundamental (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000; Harré and Van Langenhove, 2010), dancing with symbolic interactionist perspectives.

Symbolic Interactionism for Blumer (1969: 2) can explain how:

- Human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that these things have for them
- The meaning of such things is derived from, and arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows
- These meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the thing he encounters.

This offers an opportunity for the empirical world to 'talk back' to our pictures of it or assertions about it (Maxwell, 2012:10; O'Donaghue, 2007) linked to my own sense of epistemological challenge (Luke, 1995) noted earlier.

Keller highlights the importance of framing and reasoning devices in particular storylines and scenarios and to academic discourses as locations or institutions within which D/discourses arise, are rooted and develop were key, supporting my engagement with Hajer's (1995) approach discussed below. His attention to the semantic level of meaning rather than linguistic patterns, using 'semantic scarcity mechanisms' (Keller, 2013: 46) was also important, although as will be discussed linguistic analysis offered a necessary entry into the data in terms of developing familiarity and confidence in the process. His mention of an epistemic and reflexive dance with the data echoed Peschl (2007) suggestive of both objective and subjective lenses and mindsets in inquiry where postmodern/poststructural approaches embrace involvement and bias, while ethnographic and interpretative analysis involves measures of engaged objectivity.

Reflexively I was influenced by Peschl's (2007: 140) 'epistemo-existential' U-theory in terms of the transformative nature of the process as a whole noted in Chapter 1. While I, like Newman (2012), struggle somewhat with proclamations of transformation, conscious efforts to be open and honest both to self and the reader in the process were made through multiple attempts to de-centre self within both data collection and analysis phases. Taking this further, and given my study was in my own professional context, it was important to recognise the epistemological emphasis on issues of the position of the researcher in relation to the researched (Hammersley, 2004; Harré and Gillett, 1994; Feldman, 1995), translated into a methodological plan of action.

## Methodological Position

Methodological consideration:

> Concerns the theoretical, political, and philosophical roots and implications of particular research methods or academic disciplines. Researchers may adopt particular methodological positions [eg concerning epistemology or political values] which establish how they go about studying a phenomenon. This can be contrasted with method, which generally refers to matters of practical research technique (Seale, 2012: 578).

Rather than a specific methodology, D/discourse analysis can be seen as a research field (Wetherell, 2001a) or orientation where a range of methodological approaches are available in what is a developing discipline (Agger, 1991; Peters and Humes, 2003).

Discourse analysis of texts involved a methodology that engaged with data through the employment of 'objectifying techniques' applied in a privileged position over the data (Thompson, 1984:134). Key semiotic concepts associated with networks of social practices are discourses, genres and styles organised into 'orders of discourse' (Hajer, 1995; Wetherell, 2000a, 2000b; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Sylvestre et al, 2013).

Hajer (1995: 56) suggests two 'mid-range' concepts that can illuminate the process of D/discourse analysis, 'story lines' and 'discourse coalitions'. The author defines a 'story-line' as 'a generative sort of narrative that allows actors to draw upon various discursive categories to give meaning to specific physical or social phenomena' which metaphorically communicate complex debates reductively, using strategies that potentially disguise bias and contradictions, and/or facilitate dialogue and action. Using notions of 'discursive closure', 'black-boxing', and 'mobilisation' of bias, supported by mechanisms of credibility [plausibility, authority], acceptability

[attractiveness, necessity] and trust [suppression of doubts linked to evidence] enables rigour within the process (Hajer, 1995: 59). Discourse-coalitions share story lines within and beyond institutional contexts and using this analytic concept was advantageous in linking subjects to broader debates through relational notions of compromise, co-option and mobilisation of agents around particular concepts.

Drawing on the above and Laclau and Mouffe (1985; Tregidga et al, 2011) curriculum was taken as a 'floating signifier' using concepts of 'orders of discourse' (Fairclough, 1995, 2001; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002), intertextuality (Fairclough, 1995; Sylvestre et al, 2013) and discursive genres. I also drew on Wodak and Krzyzanowski's (2008) and Sylvestre et al's (2013) concepts of Lexis, Framing and Structure, and Modality that positioned knowledge, learners and staff in particular ways. While the terms sustainable development and sustainability were limited in their use, linguistic and heuristic models of sustainability curriculum were also used to inscribe the data with positions and potential for this focus in institutional articulations.

The first phase of analysis was on institutional Discourse linked to publically accessible documents, specifically Learning and Teaching Strategies (2005-9 and 2010-14), and a single and therefore institutional 'Sustainability Statement'. Here the tools and perspectives described shaped attention to analysis through linguistic, 'rhetorical' and 'argumentative' lenses (Billig, 1991; Hajer, 1995; Fairclough, 2001; Sylvestre et al, 2013). This held opportunities to take a decentred position of ontological uncertainty, and epistemic and methodological diversity and humility (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Jörgensen and Phillips, 2002; Caldwell, 2007; Agger, 1991; Blühdorn, 2002). Analysis was initially grounded in the data, deconstructing and reconstructing the texts and linking this to broader theories and notions of

discursive orders introduced in my review of literature. Alongside this, bigger scoops of language (Quinn, 2009) were analysed using a narrative approach that looked to temporal changes in storylines and associated educational and environmental genres of D/discourse that could be read as if indicative of representing more or less sustainable ways of speaking. Regulated [formal] ways of speaking and writing about the world in education, what Alvesson and Kärreman (2000) refer to as the durable meaning of language, may imply forms of social organisation and practices that structure institutions and constitute people as thinking, feeling, acting subjects and here cultural politics also concerns issues of subjectivity (Foucault, 1970; Keller, 2013).

Drawing on Laclau and Mouffe (1985), Iversen (2014: 57) provided a useful framework for the study of 'recurring curriculum documents' viewing outward facing documents as 'political texts' which he calls 'iterative curriculum discourse analysis'. This 'hinges on identifying key words and phrases that mean different things to different people, and then, tracing the changing and competing use of these words through repeated instances over time', through seven distinct stages. As something already underway in terms of my own analysis, his ideas suggested a measure of affirmation with my own approach to date as I used it as a lens to look back on the process.

Iverson suggests identification of 'key nodes', words and phrases used differently over time and by different actors grounded in the documents themselves. The second step focuses on 'chains of equivalence' and 'chains of difference' that can, if noticed, inscribe the wider 'web[s] of meaning[s]' surrounding the nodes. The third step establishes a 'web of meaning', achieved through coding that shifts from 'theory-laden concepts towards a grounded theory-style approach where the

concepts emerge from the material seemingly regardless of the questions asked by the researcher' (Iversen, 2014: 59). The author combines the fourth, fifth and sixth steps that then seeks to identify chains of equivalence and difference in the next text in the corpus, layering webs of meaning.

Iversen highlights potential, using this approach to capture the 'rich tapestry of the possible meanings, associations, debates and concerns that come to the use' and 'a range of interpretive possibilities within which any individual actor will engage some of these associations more than others' (Iversen, 2014: 61-2), linking to similar arguments progressed by Hajer (1995) and poststructuralism more generally. The seventh and final step suggested by Iversen, is a focus on chains of difference, linking to a more Derridian form of analysis than that suggested by Laclau and Mouffe (1985). The fixity of Discourse as 'common sense' and 'folklore' noted earlier highlights the discursive circulation of ideas between HE and wider society that can call into question the focus on sustainability as an educational goal. In moving from formal to informal curriculum in my own HE institutional context the Sustainability Statement offered an insight into institutional articulations and became a stepping stone into analysis of environmental and agentic D/discourses that could be linked to prior and subsequent analyses and discussion.

While the original emphasis was on Discourse, discursive patterns and notions of fixity, the next phase of inquiry focused on the complexity and heterogeneity within discourse, noted as a key feature in contemporary times. Methodological situationalism focuses on the collective and dynamic processes through which meanings are constructed, acquired and transformed as a phenomenon of communication (Harré, 2004; Harré et al, 2009; Davies and Harré, 1990, Zelle,

2009). As such our conversations can potentially 'reverse the hegemonic flow' (Tirado and Gálvez, 2007). Here a more interpretative and narrative approach was adopted, noting discursive positions in and through individual and interactive storylines. This offered a way of organising information and linking action and agency to structures although without assuming or asserting that they reflect these structures. Here I felt myself the 'swampy lowlands' of research although '[a]bandoning the "quest for certainty" does not require abandoning the search for knowledge' (Torrés, 1999: 110).

In terms of interpretative analysis of talk, attention was paid to analytic tools linking discursive notions of function, context and subject positions (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Hökkä et al, 2010; Zeyer and Roth, 2011). Here patterns within the data were read into both individual and across interview transcripts, highlighting the collective and fluid nature of D/discourse as discursive practice. Biographical narrative analysis did not therefore need to feature in this approach, considered important in maintaining respondent anonymity discussed in my analysis. In analysis multiple readings brought to mind different patterns of speaking that, following Hökkä et al (2010) and Zeyer and Roth (2011) sought to explore different thematic reconstructions that linked curriculum, sustainability and agency in the context of change, risk and reflexive modernity. Overlaying existent repertoires onto the data allowed for a measure of objectivity that, as noted, I felt needed in challenging my own intuitive readings. In this tools drawn from textual analysis continued to dance with me. Hökkä et al (2010) offered a useful lens for highlighting curriculum discourses of accommodation and reform, which also allowed some measure of association to sustainability and agency using postecological repertoires (Zeyer and Roth, 2011) as will be discussed.

The final focus and phase of analysis continued my focus on agency reflexively in the context of transformative learning. For Sterling:

> it appears that transformative learning arises from the interaction between the state of readiness of the learner and the quality of the learning environment to yield a particular learning experience as an emergent property of that interaction (Sterling, 2010-11: 27).

Prior emphasis on discursive reproduction and constraints, while important, cannot prove sufficient in notions of agency and change, 'until we adopt a far more multiple, contingent and fractured conception of society – and of structure' (Sewell, 1992 cited in Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:1005). Building on Mead the authors offer three lines of questioning that proved important in my own analytical formulations, which they note 'might point to new initiatives in empirical research' (ibid:1005).

- How do different temporal-relational contexts support (or conduce to) particular agentic orientations?

The task in engaging with this question was translated to conceptions/positions and agency as constructed in institutional curriculum texts, and suggested within the reformative/ transformative configurations of sustainability. The authors make an exploratory proposition that '[actors who face changing situations that demand [or facilitate] the reconstruction of temporal perspectives can expand their capacity for imaginative and/or deliberative response' (ibid: 1006), and '[a]ctors who are positioned at the intersection of multiple temporal-relational contexts can develop greater capacities for creative and critical intervention'.

- How do changes in agentic orientations allow actors to exercise different forms of mediation over their contexts of action?

Addressing this question involves reversal of the focus in the first question, examining 'how changes in agentic orientations give actors varying capacities to

influence the diverse contexts in which they act' (ibid: 1008). Here the authors suggest '[a]ctors who feel blocked in encountering problematic situations can actually be pioneers in exploring and reconstructing contexts in action'(ibid: 1009).

- How do actors reconstruct their agentic orientations and thereby alter their own structuring relationships to the contexts of action?

This involves the self-reflexive dimension of this inquiry where '[b]y subjection their own agentic orientations to imaginative recomposition and critical judgement, actors can loosen themselves from past patterns of interaction and reframe their relationships to existing constraints' (ibid: 1010).

The emphasis here was on individual narratives of change, education and sustainability that attempted to go beyond modelling, to read new creative meanings into the data that might suggest a 'language of possibility' (Harré et al, 2009) and highlight my own engagement in the process. As noted below, analytical and reflexive memos became key here, linking earlier analysis with subsequent engagement with the data, and in this looking towards my own articulations, narratives and reflections as sources of data and learning (Peschl, 2007; Mezirow, 2000; Sterling, 2011) discussed further below.

## Research Methods

In terms of methods, this is where the 'craft skill' (Seale, 1998:472), or art (Biesta, 2007) is made evident in practice. For O'Donoghue (2007:20) methods are 'adaptive and depend on the judgements and abilities of the inquirer', and part of my concern were my own perceived strengths and weaknesses. As noted, I was prone to particular habits of mind, themselves perhaps hegemonic (Apple, 2004), in their limiting and constraining of possibilities and potential, and in dissolving a personal

sense of agency in the process. Again however judgements were made and actions were taken, and much of the learning came from the experience rather than the intention.

Purposive sampling is deemed appropriate for D/discourse analytic studies (Guba and Lincoln, 1982; Hammersley, 2007), and Quinn (2009) suggests a modest sample size given the labour intensive, time consuming nature of D/discourse analysis, something particularly pertinent to this study given my methodological emphasis using multiple analytic lenses. Strategic sampling was employed to try to gain some measure of breadth and depth of data, and to facilitate positioning of the local in the more grandiose (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000). To this end documents were sought that would facilitate measures on contextualisation, comparison and evaluation – specifically institutional Learning and Teaching Strategies [2005-2009 and 2010-2014] and a university 'Sustainability' Statement [accessed 2013]. A similar sampling strategy was involved in relation to interviews where respondents were chosen who might offer different ways of speaking about the topic, challenging 'prepositioned notions of dominant culture' and to reflect the transdisciplinary nature of our organisation (Bruner, 1990:30; Harré et al, 1999; Quinn, 2009; Silverman, 2010; Peters and Wals, 2013). Originally seven interviews were completed, although given the gaps in my studies, only four are featured in this thesis. Of course my selections silenced more than it included, but this inquiry was and is considered the first step in a longer dance discussed earlier.

## Methods for Analysis of Texts as Discourse

Focus: Learning and Teaching Strategies 2005-2009 and 2010-2014; 1 Sustainability 'Statement'. All publically available via University website at time of access.

113

According to Sylvestre et al (2013) strategies, declarations and other institutional documents can be conceived as representative of consensus of the authoring agency. They also are seen as useful in that they tend to be pared down to salient features, involving ideal types, concepts and mental constructions that are often imaginative and utopian in intent and content (Crotty, 1998:70). Discourse as institutionalised use of language and language-like systems was linked to wider discursive patterns through inscription of conceptual and constructive ideal types, in this case utilising the curriculum models, typologies and repertoires introduced earlier and discussed shortly.

Deconstructive fracturing of the data (Feldman, 1995; Charmaz, 2006), was enhanced by attention to larger structures of meaning making. The emphasis was on curriculum in the context of sustainability (Reid and Petocz, 2006), the sedimented or 'durable' nature of Discourses (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000; Iversen, 2014; Sylvestre et al, 2013), although the notion of intertextuality was adopted here to suggest a 'loose coupling' rather than determinism of wider patterns and proclivities. Texts were also considered as narratives of change. I offer here a description of the techniques and the process, with Table 3 summarising the key objectifying techniques used on initial readings and coding of the texts.

**Table 3: Objectifying Techniques and Tools used in initial coding and analysis of institutional documents**

| Key terms/tools | Use in analysis |
| --- | --- |
| Intertextuality – links to other texts (Fairclough, 1992, 2001, 2003; Sylvestre et al, 2013) | Through processes of decontextualisation and recontextualisation from other texts this can highlight patterns and genres, and |

| Key terms/tools | Use in analysis |
|---|---|
| | diversity linked potentially to local situation of authors or speakers within a wider, past or anticipatory context. |
| Modality – indicates probability and/or necessity (Sylvestre et al, 2013; Wetherell, 2001) | Words like 'can, will may' or 'must, should, need'. Indicative of certainty or commitment. Commitment as deontic modality how things 'ought', 'should' be – normative and temporal emphasis implied. |
| Nominalization – removing agents/ naturalisation of affairs (Fairclough, 2003; Sylvestre et al, 2013; Porter, 2007) | Words and phrases changed often from verbs to nouns or adjectives, removing agents and potentially naturalising assertions |
| Text – in moving from linguistic and deconstructive to 'big scoops' of language (Wetherell, 2001;Wodak and Krzyzanowski, 2008) | Larger structures of meaning making, cohesive ties, paraphrasing |
| Code – brings models into play (Quinn, 2009: 240) | Reflexive reasoning behind propositions |
| Lexis – patterns and choice of words (Harré et al, 1999) | Into which meanings and actor labels are encoded |
| Transivity – who does what to who (Sylvestre et al, 2103) | Can highlight argumentative structure, perception, cognition and emotion through use of clauses |
| Perspectives (Blackledge and Hunt, 1991) | Perspectives made up of: aims and objectives, what is significant, reasons given for action, expected outcomes of action. |
| Interdiscursivity (Fairclough, 2001) | Links from and in texts of different genres involves structures and strategies of text and talk |

This emphasised Laclau and Mouffes' (1985) 'discourse' and Mezirow's (2000) 'hegemony' patterned into the texts.   With just one posting relating to sustainability on the website, similar analysis was progressed although also drawing in Kellert's (1993) values of 'nature' in an effort to focus on sustainability [in informal curricula terms] which was explicitly lacking in previous documents sampled (Jóhannesson et

al, 2011).    Patterning strategies also brought to light the diversity of discourse in texts, and of  'interdiscursivity' (Fairclough, 1995), 'articulations' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985), or Mezirow's (2000) 'negotiations' highlighting how notions of concensus are less stable than more structural approaches might suggest.

However, while D/discourse could be objectified and schematically fixed through the inscription of meaning, an ongoing decentred approach was important and, as noted, I actively sought ways to avoid a position as 'locus of authority' (Lather, 1991) and to be more alert to and tolerant of diversity and ambiguity (Maclure, 2003).  The hope was to become more personally receptive to my organisational 'beat' (Meadows, 2001) this and potential for change (Mezirow, 2000, 2003; Slaughter, 2004; Caldwell, 2007; Peschl, 2007), although correspondence rather than reference was assumed (Gergen, 1994; Sayer, 2001).

 Borne's (2013) focus on the 'practical implications of risk' as a 'culturally perceived' and constructed phenomenon was, in light of my earlier discussion, important, and here environmental or post ecological repertoires (Kellert, 1993; Zeyer and Roth, 2011), were found to offer conceptual and heuristic models for analysis of discourse within the Sustainability Statement and particularly in analysis of interview data. Interpretative repertoires can highlight the possibilities of language offered to speakers, becoming the resources they draw on to develop versions of significant events or topics.   Attention to the routine arguments, descriptions and evaluations in interview data could offer another way of exploring D/discourse.  It also continued to depersonalise the process as discussed earlier:

> In the repertoire-driven discourse analytical approach, it is the account, the discourse that becomes the primary object of research, rather than seeing it as a transparent representation of an individual's

attitudes and beliefs or the true nature of events (McKenzie, 2003 cited in Zeyer and Roth, 2011:36; Wetherell, 2001b; Keller, 2013).

Here, as noted, I drew on particular tools that could link educational, environmental and agentic dimensions of analysis – if loosely.  The first focus with regard to the Sustainability Statement utilised Kellert's framework as set out in Table 4 below:

**Table 4: Nine perspectives describing humans' relationship with nature (Kellert, 1993; Gullone, 2000:306)**

| Perspective | Description |
|---|---|
| Utilitarian | The biological advantage afforded to humans in their exploitation of nature's vast resources including food, clothing, tools, medicine and shelter. |
| Naturalistic | The satisfaction that humans derive through their contact with nature – contact characterised by fascination, wonder, and awe at nature's beauty, complexity and diversity (cf Kaplan and Talbot, 1983). |
| Ecologistic – scientific | The motivation to systematically study the biophysical patterns, structures, and functions of the natural world. This motivation involves a sense of satisfaction at experiencing the complexity of natural processes, quite separately from their utility. |
| Aesthetics | The preference for natural design over human design has been demonstrated in a variety of studies (e.g. see Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989 for review). |
| Symbolic | Refers to humans' use of nature symbols to communicate. As noted by Kellert (1993), over 90 percent of the characters employed in children's language acquisition and counting books are animal characters. Also, natural symbols also feature prominently in mythology, fairy tales, and legends. |
| Humanist | The human experience of a deep emotional connection with the sentient aspects of nature and its individual elements. |
| Moralistic | The strong feeling of affinity, and the sense of an ethical responsibility for the natural world as is often associated with the views of indigenous people. |
| Dominionistic | Refers to the desire to master and control the natural world, often associated with destructive tendencies |
| Negativistic | Refers to negative affect associated with nature experiences including fear, aversion and disgust. |

Using this framework involved looking to patterns of speech and particular phrasing that could be inscribed and reconstructed as linked to particular values and

perspectives, although their dualistic rather than relational nature was noted, and in many ways this formed a stepping stone into analysis of talk, although again it continued to dance with me.

## Methods for Analysis of Talk as D/discourse

Focus: 4 interview transcripts following interviews of approximately an hour to an hour and a half long, with colleagues involved in teaching, managing and curriculum development.

While limitations in terms of meaning and truth danced with me (Torrés, 1999), the next phase of research focused on curriculum and post ecological repertoires, generated by Hökkä et al (2010) and Zeyer ad Roth (2011) respectively, through the author's research in different European contexts. Here the emphasis on metaphorical analysis developed by the authors offered another useful lens through which to view the data. Alongside environmental 'positions', temporal positioning sits at the heart of sustainability, and in discourse writers or speakers can also articulate 'moral assessments and expressions of time mingled with aesthetic values' (Harré et al, 1999: 9) which can reveal meanings within particular cultural-historical contexts. McKeown and Hopkins (2003:125) share this notion of D/discourse, and suggest that it is at the cultural or organisational level of analysis that interpretation and implementation of international agreements 'develop a local interpretation and a fuller meaning'.

Zeyer and Roth (2011) citing Nikel and Reid (2006) list characteristics of post-ecologism that were of interest particularly in analysis of interview data (Zeyer and

Roth, 2011: 36). From their research the authors developed an analytic framework with two particular repertoires, involving four descriptions and ten metaphors. Their focus on 'common sense' repertoires might be able to capture hegemonic Discourses, while their description of the 'agentic' repertoire fitted with my poststructural gaze on the political nature of discourses. Table 5 below highlights the repertoires developed by Zeyer and Roth which were overlaid on the data discussed further in the analysis section of this thesis.

**Table 5: Post ecological interpretative repertoires [adapted from Zeyer and Roth, 2011)**

| Repertoire | Description | Core metaphor |
|---|---|---|
| Common sense repertoire | Me-thing Folk science | Machine Input-operation-output Human action > bad weather Different input > good weather |
| | Me-you Folk psychology | Alter-ego Actions – mental, intentional states |
| Agential repertoire | Ideal – real Pragmatist repertoire | In ideal world – values, mental goals Incompatible with Real world contingencies – practical goals striven for |
| | Self – others Control repertoire | Agency [self] tension with agency of others Control outside of self – heteronomy |
| ACCEPTANCE OF IN PRINCIPLE RELEVANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES FOLK SCIENCE/PRAGMATIST – general full acceptance of in principle relevance of environmental issues – mock attitudes that belong to ideal world FOLK PSYCHOLOGY/PRAGMATIC – must not overstate despite seriousness, won't be good for students | | |
| REPLACEMENT OF THE EMANCIPATORY SUBJECT ORIENTED NOTION OF MODERNIZATION PRAGMATIST – innovation and change as intrinsic values [links to vibrant] often without evidence, will be good for students? | | |
| NEO MATERIALIST AND CONSUMPTION ORIENTED PATTERNS FOLK PSYCHOLOGY – grammatically impersonal – shows finalizing power of folk psychology; undisputed societal norm FOLK SCIENCE/PRAGMATIST – consumerism drives progress via investment | | |
| DISILLUSIONMENT ABOUT THE PARTICIPATORY REVOLUTION CONTROL [antagonistic version of agential repertoire] – questions agency and role of emancipatory subject, frequently anonymous others, relationships block all sensible action to improvement for education and environment. Heteronomy - Locus of control with others – FOLK SCIENCE - Often call for political leadership, organisational argument – system in which politics not representative of power but experts of social machinery | | |
| REGULATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES OF POLITICAL PRIORITIES BEHIND | | |

| SOCIAL MEASURES |
|---|
| PRAGMATIST/FOLK SCIENCE – only one of many problems |
| INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS |
| FOLK SCIENCE – social machinery, not personal, instrumental social needs<br>CONTROL – proposals of social engineering |
| ECOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AS SCIENTIFIC TECHNICAL ECONOMIC MANAGERIAL<br>FOLK SCIENCE – social engineering rather than changing attitudes, managerial, scientific, technical<br>Responsibility to anonymous experts, impersonal references salient.  Issues remain vague and sometimes incorrect or too expensive.  Can result in deep scepticism for > |
| VISIONS OF A RADICALLY DIFFERENT ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY |
| POLITICAL PRAGMATISM AND ECONOMIC GROWTH, TECHNICAL PROGRESS AND GLOBAL COMPETITION<br>PRAGMATIST/FOLK PSYCHOLOGY –rejects idealism for practical goals.  Personal attitudes rejects dogmatic visions, hesitant, ambivalent about global progress and economic growth |
| RADICAL ECOLOGY AND DIRECT ECO-POLITICAL ACTION AS VARIANTS OF TERRORISM<br>PRAGMATIST – ironic, discourse indignation at breaking discursive rules |

The methodological interest and emphasis of my thesis sought to enhance the validity of this inquiry by engaging in different forms of analysis [triangulation] to probe my own readings and interpretations (Lather, 1991: 9; Wodak and Krzyzanowski, 2008; Golafshani, 2003).  In terms of curriculum analysis as noted Hökkä et al's (2010) repertoires offered another useful lens through which to view the data, linking to and challenging prior codings and analyses. Their repertoires drawn from research in are included in Table 6 below:

**Table 6: Curriculum Interpretative Repertoires (adapted from Hökkä et al, 2010)**

| Analytic tools | Interpretative repertoires | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **The accommodation meta-repertoire** | | **The reform meta-repertoire** | | |
| | *Competition* | *Practical knowledge* | *Collaboration* | *Research based knowledge* | *Break with tradition* |
| *Function of the talk* | To emphasise the demanding nature of | To provide a critique of development | To increase collaboration between | To emphasise teacher | To justify the demand |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | curriculum development, seen as an internal process within the department | plans involved in the curriculum reform | teacher educators – especially between educators within the department | education as an academic enterprise | for radical curriculum reform |
| *Context of the talk* | The repertoire occurred many times in each interview, as a self-evident and natural matter | The repertoire was drawn on within a critique of plans to integrate studies – especially the teaching of school subject studies. | (i) Occurred when describing work with other partners (e.g. within the subject departments, or with Normal School staff) (ii) Occurred when talking about future expectations | Appeared especially in talk of what teacher education *should* be in the years to come | Occurred as a critique, aimed *against* resistance to curriculum development plans |
| *Subject position of teacher educator* | (i) Defender of and lobbyist for one's own subject matter (ii) Conscientious Teacher | Subject teacher | Bridge builder | Teacher educator as researcher | Preserver of the old "seminar spirit" tradition |

Emphasis on this socio-cultural approach involving critical discursive psychology continued my emphasis on the political nature of discourse that emphasises 'variability, inconsistency and unreliability' (Hökkä et al, 2010: 849) in people's talk, and pays attention to micro-level details in a global or macro-level layer of analysis (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000). In this subject positions imply different identities made available through D/discourses 'that connect dominant cultural storylines to construction of particular selves' (Hökkä et al, 2010: 850; Hajer, 1995). I also tried to be alive to the constructive ways in which colleagues were able to 'talk for themselves' (Corbin, 2008: vii) as we talked 'with each other' (Zelle, 2009; Harré, 1994; Davies and Harré, 1990).

Narratives, as forms of discourse, had been considered particularly pertinent in this stage of the research, given that they are produced by people in the context of specific social, historical and cultural locations, and also given the teleological nature of stories of educational curriculum and sustainability. Narratives offer interpretive devices through which people represent themselves and their worlds to themselves and to others (Davies and Harré, 1990; Harré, 1994; Moen, 2006; Zelle, 2009), and as such could enhance the process I felt.  However I had particular ethical issues in presenting individual narratives, in that they undermined potential anonymity of respondents in what is a small institution, and discursive melding was needed to avoid others potential recognition of individual speakers.

Interview data were collected and analysed to highlight if and how colleagues reflected or refuted institutional discourses, and wider discourses of [un]sustainability in curriculum development.  Here in a poststructural constructionist/ constructivist framing interviews were seen not as a means of eliciting the truth of feeling or meaning but more as a convenient way of generating data for analysis (Hammersley, 2007). The interviews were conducted in the summer of 2012 and they took place in physical spaces chosen by respondents.  Interviews were loosely semi-structured (Quinn, 2009), and the manner of the interviews was generally informal and conversational. The main reason for the informal nature of the interviews was based on an assumption that as I knew all interviewees as colleagues, this is how they would 'naturally' progress.  I was somewhat mistaken in this assumption, as each interviewee seemed to act on different assumptions or take on different positions within these social events as will be discussed.

Within the process of data collection I had considered the importance of effective communication, and in some ways this was particularly pertinent in the interview

process.   While 'language is seen as both carrier and creator of a culture's epistemological codes' (Lather, 1991: 111), at the same time, however, I was aware that this notion of a shared language or shared understanding needed to be treated with caution (Quinn, 2009; Silverman, 2010).   As suggested earlier I had felt that my own lack of disciplinary 'expertise' might be both enabling and constraining in the research process, and that constraints would in part be overcome through the use of objectifying techniques.

Interview questions looked to breadth of coverage, while allowing for individual stories to emerge.  Here particular areas were discussed only prompted by questions on occasion to maintain a measure of focus, the broad themes that shaped the interviews included:

- An overview of respondent's roles and responsibilities with regard to curriculum development and knowledge generation.
- Changes experienced institutionally in recent years, and their impact on curriculum development and professional agency.
- Agentic positions with regard to sustainability, and if and how this concept features/might feature in curriculum development.


All respondents had been part of the organisation for all of the time covered by the texts used in the first phase of analysis to allow some attempts at narrative and discursive comparison.  Colleagues interviewed also held a measure of responsibility for curriculum development although some more than others and in different capacities, all aligned to different academic disciplines or vocational orientations.  In this, I looked to a view of diversity in discursive circulation within our institutional

context, fitting given my early dance with this methodological approach. An important emphasis in interviews, suggested by Quinn (2009), was not so much on a question and answer format which for the author may not provide the flow of conversation essential if one is to access the richness of data necessary to engage in D/discourse analysis. Foregrounding referential knowledge for Quinn can also lead responses, and restrict them to my own topics, schemas and themes, as such I had only considered areas for discussion noted above rather than questions, and in some ways this was not an issue given the informality of approach that I suggested suited my own stance. My foregrounding of research was, however, considered important in offering informed consent to respondents.

Conversations while potentially generating rapport, increase the potential indexing of shared cultural assumptions, where the presumption of mutual understanding can limit both the data generated and analysis. Despite knowing each of the respondents for some time, and the informality of our conversations prior to inquiry, I was surprised at how and the extent to which colleagues directed the style of interview, and in some ways, despite reading about the 'how to do' interviews (Radnor, 1994; Kvale 1996; Johnson and Weller, 2002; Wengraf, 2002), this created a sense of personal discomfort, both in terms of the process and potential ascription of poor quality of data. One point of reflection at the time was that in interviews I was more of an 'outsider' than I thought as I became increasingly aware of positioned differences that I had not noted in our more informal or even working relationships. While in my working life and normative emphasis on sustainability this might have been considered an issue, a barrier to working together, in research this was reviewed as a strength, moving from the angst and fundamentalism considered earlier (Blühdorn, 2002) and even from more negative conceptualisations of reflexive

modernity (Beck, 1992; 1994; 1998; 2008).  My dance with an agential and reflexive focus that sought to reconsider the articulations of others (Meadows, 2001; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Alkire, 2008; Peschl, 2007) in the context of an existential self could also be enhanced, I felt, through this approach.

Strauss et al (1964) suggest that engaging in interviews to generate data as examples of D/discourse involves four different types of questioning.  Playing 'devil's advocate' could illuminate the speakers position, hypothetical questions could elicit their thinking discursively, asserting an ideal position could elicit their perception of the ideal, and offering my assertions could highlight their frames of reference.  I consciously and more frequently seemed to adopt these strategies as the interviews progressed creating 'emotional and motivational hotspots' (Thompson, 2004; Quinn, 2009) that proved useful in analysis of positioning within the interactions, although ethically this seemed somewhat manipulative and relationally challenging in its practice.

With permission, interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, except where colleagues 'named names' of the institution, particular roles or persons.  In order to allow respondents the opportunity to further cleanse the data of any information that they did not want included, member checks were used (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Seale, 2012).  This was an ethical move rather than involving an attempt to get closer to the meaning of respondents as in more interpretivist approaches. None of the respondents wanted to change their transcripts which for me further evidenced the openness and trust that reciprocally pervaded this inquiry.  While I tried to be both politically and ethically sensitive in the process, it raised certain issues regarding externally facing notions of reliability and validity in qualitative inquiry considered during my own research.

## Initial Consideration of the Limitations of D/discourse Analysis

Critics of D/discourse analysis have pointed to its lack of systematicity, transparency and foundational guidelines or governing principles in research (Flick, 2002). Denscombe (2007: 310) sums up this position:

> A disadvantage of using discourse analysis . . . is that it does not lend itself to the kind of audit trail that might be needed to satisfy conventional evaluations of the research. It is not easy to verify its methods and findings . . . because the approach places particularly heavy reliance on the insights and intuition of the researcher for interpreting the data.

Part of my own methodological emphasis sought to highlight the process in as much detail as possible in order to overcome challenges to this thesis on these grounds. Validity is 'a contingent construct, inescapably grounded in the processes and intentions of particular research methodologies and projects' (Winter, 2000 cited in Golafshani, 2003:602). In terms of my constructivist fallibilistic ontology, notions of plausibility, credibility and relevance came into play (Hammersley, 1992), similar to Cronbach's (1975) idea of 'working hypothesis' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Eisenhart,2009). Triangulation was also seen to offer a validating approach (Hammersley, 1992; Zelle, 2009; Seale, 2012) again part of the crafting of research practice and a hopeful and humble stance. For Hammersley (1992) triangulation exercises can add to the credibility of a particular account. In positioning theory it is seen to offer opportunities for the comparing, cross-referencing or cross-examining of positions that are found in the data at each level of analysis (Zelle, 2009: 9-10). Seale (2012: 473) also notes the value of 'triangulation exercises' in generating material for [poststructural] discourse analytic studies, enhancing for him 'their coherence and fruitfulness' (Potter and Wetherell, 1994). He suggests a range of qualitative research skills that I could draw on as I crafted the process including

member checking, accounting for negative instances, the grounding of theory, deconstructive approaches and reflexive accounting, all of which I tried to address, if implicitly in this study.

In many ways, notions of 'new masking' through the poststructural lens (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002) will disallow traditional validating methods to some degree with the qualities of research judged by readers as well as self and colleagues as reflexive agents in the research process. Seale (1999: 486; 2012) notes measures of trustworthiness, descriptive and interpretive validity in constructionist research. Hajer (1995: 59), as noted earlier, uses similar terms suggesting 'mechanisms of credibility [plausibility, authority], acceptability [attractiveness, necessity] and trust [suppression of doubts linked to evidence] enables rigour within the process'.

Citing Guba and Lincoln (1989) Seale suggests a range of politically sensitive measures of quality, stressing inclusivity and fairness within the process and a range 'authenticities' that should be present in relation to the practice of research (see also Golafshani, 2003). I could not necessarily link these approaches in relation to colleagues involved, and my sample was less than inclusive. Of the limited number of interviews originally conducted, three of the respondents had left the institution subsequent to interviews precluding further conversations or opportunities for re-informed consent. In this light, measures were more useful in my agentic consideration of the process (Caldwell, 2007; Slaughter, 2004: Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Peschl, 2007).

- Ontological authenticity – Have I developed a more sophisticated understandings of the phenomenon? Although I might suggest this is an epistemic question.
- Educative authenticity – Have I been more attentive to and appreciative of alternative perspectives and positions?

- Catalytic authenticity – Has the research process stimulated any action/change?
- Tactical authenticity – Has the process enabled me to enact change towards sustainability? (adapted from Seale, 1999: 468; 2012: 488-9)

Another focus of quality in this research process was on reducing the extent to which participants experienced our interactions as 'irrational, unproductive, unjust or unsatisfying' (Kemmis and Wilkinson, 1998:23). Research is a form of practice incorporating personal, political and moral relationships with those involved (Brown et al, 2003: 88). Alderson (2004: 98) notes that the rules of ethical research are based on three main ways of thinking about the nature of 'good' research. These include:

1) principles of respect and justice
2) rights-based research
3) best outcomes based ethics

This demanded an ethical approach in which I tried to be dependable, open, honest, trustworthy and foster relationships of respect (Brown et al, 2003). This study also involved certain 'rules of engagement' such as assurances of privacy, confidentiality, personal safety and well-being, and of informed consent, voluntary participation and the right to discontinue (Burns, 2000). In this, University of Exeter and BERA (2011) guidelines were consulted, and enacted to the best of my knowledge and ability.

Throughout, communication regarding the process with those involved in data collection phases [institutionally and individually] sought informed consent as an ongoing feature that could maintain ethical involvement. Other measures noted above were key, but in many ways this involved a critical and reflexive stance in the process rather than involving specific techniques.

## Reflection and Reflexivity

Reflexive positioning enables communication of how my sense of self as researcher and professional has been perceived to inform the questions, approaches and purposes of research (Wolcott, 2010). Maton (2003: 54) suggests that reflexivity and explicit positioning in qualitative inquiry enables assessment of my knowledge, individual and social identities, and can reveal '(often hidden) doxic values and assumptions'. As noted earlier, the necessity of critical reflection and reflexivity has been recognised as a method and model of research.

Slaughter's (2004:6-11) reflexive emphasis on both continuity and change, along with questions suggested by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) proved useful in grounding my research in a more appreciative light, supporting a more hopeful rather than helpless frame of mind that allowed me to engage more actively and affectively with the possibilities of cultural innovation. Here the cycle married with Peschl's (2007) notion of U-theory, but offered a more practical set of steps to follow, bridging the epistemological and methodological dimensions of study. The four stages of Slaughter's cycle (2004) direct attention towards internal change, rather than technical or environmental change, and associated 'recovery of meaning'. The first stage involves 'breaking down meanings' and can encompass a wide range of phenomena, but in essence suggests focus on my own understandings, concepts, values and agreements that once served to support social interaction but which now, for one reason or another, have become problematic. Attention to issues of power and my own attachments to, and discourses of sustainability and curriculum was important, particularly in the position of challenge that tried to be open to indifference and alternatives. Nearly all new ideas encounter 'disinterest or resistance'

(Slaughter, 2004:7) which for the author are inevitable, '[c]onflicts arise for many reasons. If new ideas are pursued with skill and vigour then conflicts are usually inevitable' (Slaughter, 2004: 8). If change is perceived as a threat to organisational structures and personal interests, then an adversarial response is more likely. However, conflict can also be seen as positive, as aspect of democratic education that involves 'argument, debate and dissent' (Davies, 2011: 1). Again this was something I was attendant to both in terms of analysis and personal reflexivity. Recognition that conflicts might not be resolved was countered somewhat by colleague's willingness to engage with the process. The final stage suggested by Iversen involves 'selective legitimation' tentative judgement, without guarantee of success or improvement, resembling Peschl's (2007) ideas and Caldwell's (2007) focus on decentred agency.

In many ways I struggled with how a postmodern/poststructural approach to research, which I felt could respect diversity and decentre self in the process, could focus on personal agency and a resource for more sustainable change. Earlier theories and questions associated with D/discourses of agency (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Ahearn, 2001; Biesta and Tedder, 2006; Sen, 2007) danced with me in this phase of analysis alongside notions of reflexive transformation and decentring (Mezirow, 2000; Slaughter, 2004; Biesta, 2005; Peschl, 2007). Caldwell's (2007) notion of decentred agency explicated through his review and development of Foucault's theories, discussed earlier, proved particularly useful alongside Slaughter in consideration of key questions around which such an approach could centre

In this reflexive approach I would need to systematically explore four key questions according to Caldwell (ibid.):

- How can intentional, future-oriented action and forms of discourse be mediated through practice?
- How can 'knowledges' rather than discourses of power/knowledge provide a basis of self-knowledge and self-creation, of agency and change?
- Can the notion of embodied agency include an exploration of an ideal of autonomy and its ethical limits?
- How can self-reflexivity be linked to a positive object of self-knowledge or self-formation that defines new possibilities of identity and moral-political action rather than a negative image of self-subjugation?

The use of analytic and reflexive memos which captured some of my 'internal conversations' (Bakhtin, 1981; Gibbs, 2002; Charmaz, 2006; Saldaña, 2009; Claxton, 2013)  proved important in enabling and maintaining focus [particularly useful given breaks in the process], developing analysis and writing up my thesis.  For Saldaña, (2009:32):

> The purpose of analytic memo writing is to document and reflect on: your coding process and code choices; how the process of inquiry is taking shape: and the emergent patterns, categories and subcategories, themes, and concepts in your data

Memos can help focus on the process of analysis, forming reflexive tools through which we can engage more actively in developing 'theories'.  While often used in grounded theory approaches (Charmaz, 2006), they are seen as useful in a range of qualitative research, forming a prompt to confront and challenge personal assumptions, highlighting developments, and maintaining momentum.  Memos for Gibbs (2002: 88-89) can capture new ideas for coding, hunches and conjectures, integrative and comparative discussion, questions of quality of the data and analytic framework, times of puzzlement and surprise and in raising general themes or metaphors.  For Dey (1993 cited in Saldaña, 2009: 33) this should be a creative activity, allowing for engagement with the data that emphasises a process of

complexity and uncertainty but from which clarity in analysis emerges as the research progresses.  While perhaps less explicit in my writing of research, this tool proved key in linking some of the complexities of inquiry.

In conclusion this chapter has outlined key debates that situate my own approach and methods utilised in order the engage in empirical study of HE curriculum, sustainability and agency in processes of discursive socio-cultural stability and change.  Through a range of objectifying and reflexive techniques I was able to move from a normative concern for sustainability in curriculum development to empirical analysis of institutional D/discourses.  This enabled personal reconstructions of the data which could both generate knowledge of the topics and of D/discourse analysis as a tool in qualitative empirical research.   The methodological novelty inherent in this study is I feel the major contribution made by this thesis, drawing together and explicating in some detail the process itself as I will continue to discuss in the penultimate chapter featuring my data analysis and discussion that now follows.

# Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Discussion

This penultimate chapter of my thesis highlights how attention to different lenses of D/discourse analysis (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000) in my own professional context has enabled me to attend to my questions and the process of empirical and reflexive inquiry. The notion of challenge that accompanied my research was intellectual, practical and existential where a focus on the cultural and discursive 'beat' (Meadows, 2001; Alkire, 2008) of my organisation through attention to D/discourses of curriculum, sustainability and agency was progressed. My research involved something of an epistemic dance (Peschl, 2007) with the data where different methods and approaches to analysis maintained a sense of movement with the words and between possible constructions, as discussed in Chapter 3. I was something of a '*bricoleur'* in the process (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011:4), adopting interpretative, narrative, theoretical and political positions using 'whatever strategies, methods, and empirical tools' I came across. This may challenge notions of quality although for me it seemed entirely appropriate in the context of risk and reflexive modernity and with a focus on sustainability and agency in curriculum development all of which were taken as 'floating signifiers' filled with different meanings. As such my approach has produced something of a montage, a narrative that itself has personal, relational, spatial and temporal dimensions and discursive qualities. In brief, the initial section of this chapter involves textual analysis and discussion of 'official' documents as Discourse, followed by analysis and discussion of the discourses circulating in 'unofficial' talk. The final section will offer a narrative of the process through a personal reflexive lens.

## Strategic Documentary Analysis: Learning and Teaching Strategies 2005 -2009 and 2010 – 2014

While there had been a specific Curriculum Strategy for 2008-2012, this was not accessible for analysis, and without a current Curriculum Strategy, the Learning and Teaching Strategies for 2005-2009 [LT1] and 2010-2014 [LT2] were seen as the best available texts that could offer useful insights into HE curriculum D/discourse in my own professional context.   Strategic documents were considered useful as an initial point of entry into analysis, offering notions of stability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), more regulated ways of speaking and writing, in which change could be inscribed through measures of deconstruction and comparison (Feldman, 1995; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002).  At the same time, there was potential to distance myself from the data, an approach that felt more comfortable ethically and politically as discussed earlier.  According to Jørgensen and Phillips (2002: 149):

> Comparison is a strategy which is well-suited to facilitating the process by which analysts distance themselves from their material. The process of distancing is important as one of the aims of discourse analysis is to identify naturalised, taken-for-granted assumptions in the empirical material and this can be difficult if one shares those assumptions oneself.

Engagement with the Learning and Teaching Strategies involved multiple readings and coding in a process of intuitive fracturing of the data (Feldman, 1995), following lexical and linguistic changes of key words and phrases (Fairclough, 2001; Sylvestre et al, 2013; Iverson, 2014).  This sat alongside fuller rhetorical readings involving 'big scoops' of language as text (Quinn, 2009), where 'orders of discourse' (Fairclough, 1995; Hajer, 1995) and 'structure and framing' (Sylvestre et al, 2013) were key heuristic tools.  I was also influenced here by Iversen's (2014) Iterative Curriculum

Discourse Analysis approach in identification of key nodes, used differently over time.

While risk, sustainability and agency as reflexive modernity set a theoretical context and backdrop for discussion of curriculum, and much of this was achieved via review of literature, key nodes and discursive fillings were essentially grounded in my reading of the documents, adding to the sense of contextualisation of data.    After first reading both documents in the summer of 2012, spontaneous codes and comments were tabulated in a word document and saved to aid further coding, analysis and reflexivity in the process, proving particularly useful as a reflexive tool given my break in my studies.  Fresh, uncoded copies of the documents were used in the main phase of analysis [summer 2013 – summer 2014] as I tried to focus on the texts in different ways.  Fairclough's (1995, 2003) notion of 'orders of discourse', and Hajer's (1995) 'discursive orders' was useful here, in that they '…can be seen as one domain of potential cultural hegemony, with dominant groups struggling to assert and maintain particular structuring within and between them.' (Fairclough 1995: 56), and in and through which 'subjects are ideologically positioned'.  Strategies through this lens were seen as Discourse that works to [re]produce a particular 'ideological' position (Fairclough, 1992; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000) involving 'pared down visions' (Sylvestre et al, 2013) or 'ideal types' (Fairclough, 1992) of language in use.

## Changing Identity Narratives

On first reading of the documents, even prior to deconstructive analysis, I was immediately struck by a changing narrative framing in the documents as shown below.  Following this narrative of change I looked at each strategy in turn, and then through a comparative lens (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002) as will be discussed.

The opening statements of the Strategies moved from:

> 'We will be the Community University College of the South West, providing high quality, holistic, enabling and supportive learning, teaching and research opportunities to meet the needs of individuals, groups, the region and beyond' (LT1).

To:

> 'As a high quality and vibrant higher education institution with a strong community focus, providing learning and opportunity for local, regional, national and international markets our mission is to provide 'learning for life' (LT2).

## Learning and Teaching Strategy 2005 – 2009 (LT1)

The first line of the first Strategy (LT1) suggested, on first and subsequent readings, a potential deficit, postmodern, or reflexive narrative and framing of institutional identity, as one in the process of formation.  This was suggested by inclusion of a future orientation where '*we will be'*, that we were '*aim[ing] for* excellence in learning and teaching'*,* working at *gaining* and maintaining the highest levels of external confidence in our quality of provision……' a statement drawn from the relating institutional Strategic Plan at the time. There was an ongoing emphasis on developing potential, or human capital dependent on your own discourse,  so as to *achieve* 'excellence in learning and teaching', developing technologically with the *creation* of a *'modern information infrastructure'*,  further *development* of the *'high quality campus estate'*, and '*development and implementation'* of a *'sustainable research strategy relevant to UC academic values and priorities'*.  This presented a modern development Discourse (Crush, 1995; Cornwall, 2010; Rist, 2010), where with sufficient inputs of physical, technological and human capital we would improve and achieve excellence.  Looking to the structure of this storyline, it was suggested that once this development had occurred we would be able to provide *'high quality,*

*holistic, enabling and supportive learning, teaching and research opportunities to meet the needs of individuals, groups, the region and beyond'.*  This goal could also fit discursively within a more reformist sustainable development Discourse, favouring a language of holism, enabling, and meeting needs from local to global.  The implied student-centred focus was also, in suggestions of a *'sustainable research strategy relevant to UC academic values and priorities'* perhaps one that might allow for, or have an expectation of a measure of academic autonomy in curriculum development. At the same time it could be dualistically read in more functionalist terms that suggest a determined narrative with a fixed point to be reached and in which a particular set of institutional values and goals are key and concensual.  This might present a situation where students and staff would learn in hierarchical accordance with these externally imposed if implied ideas of the good.  The rhetorical nature of such calls did not go unnoticed, but neither did the ease of interpretation I was noticing. Suspending my own 'explanations' felt necessary, but as they continued I used memos to bring to articulate the dance as will be discussed.

The softness and uncertainty of much of the language of education and curriculum at the outset of LT1 could contribute to a lack of belief or confidence in this organisation in the present. Despite a long history of educational and social purpose, it was a Discourse that I considered as suggestive of reflexive modernity at an institutional level, where identity was under ongoing reformulation, and which formed the discursive 'shifting sands' of my professional practice.  As LT1 progressed the narrative shifted to a market oriented, technical rational genre of Discourse (Beck, 1998; Fairclough, 2001; Elliott, 2002), of employment and skills to be supported by investment in and development of a technological infrastructure and through careful management systems.   The language of certainty that we would reach our goals,

was persuasive, if unintentionally, with the effect of a sense of comfort, a convincing tale in the reading of it, in some ways overwhelming the earlier reformist and future oriented Discourse of an unfinished project.   The technical language of markets and the modern are rhetorically louder, more positive and forceful and hence outweigh alternatives in some ways regardless of the message.  I wondered if, however, I was reading too much into the data, that my own analytical 'habits of mind' might be saying more than the words on the page.

## Learning and Teaching Strategy 2010-2014 (LT2)

The second Learning and Teaching Strategy [LT2] sounded more confident in the storyline of the newly formed *University* College as it was by this time of writing.  The confidence and hence persuasiveness of language use was achieved in part because of the lexical constitution of economic and managerial speak in framing the document (Sylvestre et al, 2013).  There was a firmer sense of institutional identity and authority expressed with claims at the outset of global reach by an institution which had reached its own goals and achieved its identity implying concensus. Curriculum expressions of humanism and futurity through use of the phrase 'learning for life' may have implied a potentially more 'sustainable' orientation although later this was changed to the concept of 'lifelong learning' attendant to market oriented curriculum models and development of human capital that are considered unsustainable (Fien, 1993; Selby, 1999, 2005; Sterling, 2001).   The economic purpose as a narrative framing device was evident with a direct mention of markets in the first sentence which when linked to expressions of global reach accentuated this connection to the knowledge economy (Fairclough, 2001; Blewitt, 2004). Here the UC is presented as a place with strong educational, infrastructural and social

capital, although interestingly human capital was still discoursed as lacking, positioning academics perhaps as not having used their autonomy or agency wisely in response to the directions set out in LT1.   We had the technology, and needed now to *'ensure accurate and accessible information and resources to support student learning'* which alluded to the importance of management, quality assurance.  Quality was linked strongly to technological capital, which in the context of risk could raise concerns about 'the shadow side' of modern ideas of development and progress (Beck, 1992; Adam and van Loon, 2000:12) drawing attention to my socio-cultural and institutional focus if rather loosely to conceptions of risk society.

There remained a potential deficit discourse in LT2, and here – again -  staff rather than the institution were positioned as in need of change, to develop and extend curricula *'to reflect contemporary disciplinary developments'* in scholarship and research rather than challenge them; to develop *'innovative approaches'* in use of the technology where creativity and risk sprang to mind simultaneously; to develop and maintain a curriculum which could be *'delivered in more flexible ways'* that would *'meet the needs of a changing student cohort'*, and to *'extend expertise'*.   In its positioning effects, the deficit Discourse of staff against notions of expertise drew my attention to notions of 'risk culture' (Lash, 2000), where institutional 'techno-economic decisions and considerations of utility' might promote further risks and unsustainability (Beck, 1992b:98).   In this I noted a sense of ease in explanation which did not seem to be as grounded in the data as it needed to be if I was to avoid falling back into an interpretive normative position in relation to the data and my colleagues that was of such concern.   In the spirit of ongoing challenge the documents were reviewed with analysis grounded more linguistically in the text itself,

looking through lenses of framing and structure (Keller, 2013; Sylvestre et al, 2013). An example of this analysis can be found in Appendix 1.

Focusing on lexical shifts and in the more recent strategy supported narrative reading, which in many ways affirmed my more intuitive approach and led to a greater sense of methodological confidence in the process, although this remained a fragile sense of security. In framing LT2 and supported by a structure that emphasised increased inclusion of a market oriented and managerial speak noted above a supply-oriented educational order of Discourse was inscribed into the data. This Discourse stressed curriculum as a deliverable product that would be 'provided', with this word used four times more frequently in the second strategy, suggesting strong modality. This was also furthered by the general increased use of verbs emphasising educational provision aimed at *'preparing students for their future employment'* [which in LT1 read more broadly as *'future challenges'*] through 'professional and inter-professional *training'*, with employment linked to acquisition of a range of '*skills*'. Inclusion of the word 'training' when linked to 'skills' and 'employability' presented a relatively fixed, stable economic purpose for Learning and Teaching in this strategy.

This was further supported, for example, with the inclusion of reworked text from the Curriculum Strategy 2008 -12, suggesting a longer discursive history, and images of the hegemonic 'normal birth' of risk (Beck, 1992) sprang to mind. As noted I could not access this document to look more closely at interdiscursive links. The reference made included the goal of *'developing and maintaining a sustainable curriculum which can be "delivered in flexible ways" and attract additional income streams (including via employer engagements)'*. I would seem only *"delivered in flexible ways"* came from the Curriculum Strategy document and this substantive re-

articulation had, therefore, reinforced the economic emphasis of this Discourse. This potentially could marginalise broader social and environmental discursive orders and those who coalesce with them. My normative bias here was embodied again involving a sense of concern that institutionally we were not rising to the challenges of our risky and unsustainable times. In this as earlier I felt myself losing a more subtle form of realism, drifting to more critical discourse analytic shores and this 'habit of mind' warranted ongoing consideration. My approach however seemed to unsettle and diminish opportunities for drawing easy analyses, judgements or 'conclusions'.

## Revisiting Texts

Returning to the analysis of texts, two key strategic aims from LT1 were seen to offer further potential for comparison, and I began to sense my position as *bricoleur* in the process (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011) following leads rather than taking a clear path in data engagement and analysis. There were a number of occasions when my conceptualisation of the stability of formal publically available texts was challenged through the process of analysis but also through the nature of change itself. Institutional strategies are living documents, under seemingly endless revision and removal from the discursive flow, and hence my approach did not seem out of step. While I had incomplete data sets for comparison of 'curriculum' aims, it was considered useful to compare what was publically available, and this seemed permissible in a post structural, constructionist stance. An example of this analysis is contained in Appendix 2.

Here framing and structure was suggestive of a different potential reading personally validating the time and effort spent with this data. The curriculum Discourses in the

Strategies had essentially been inverted rather than radically changed, and it was only in ascription of 'orders' and 'framing' as linked to meaning or signification that suggestions of institutional identity, consensus and purpose could be upheld.

The structure of LT2 had undergone a shift with the key aim of employability moving up the 'ranking' changing places with facilities, which as the story told, had been developed. The emphasis was still third however after notions of planned curriculum suggesting a dominant curriculum model as will be discussed, and of inclusion, highlighting social purpose (Singh and Little, 2011). In terms of inclusion this articulation as a key emphasis in terms of the structure of the document could be linked to our legal responsibilities coalescing with an institutional Discourse of social purpose, as noted we have a long history of this and a higher than average proportion of 'non-traditional' students. In this case it might also be suggested that in the face of dominant Discourses of the market this was an organisational attempt to hold on to its tradition and purpose in the face of wider discursive forces. A new mention of enterprise activities was noted, again emphasising market interactions in LT2, although subsequent focus on engagement with public and third sector organisations was indicative of a Discourse not necessarily aimed at private sector involvement (King, 2011). At a time of public and third sector funding cuts this seemed to lie in tension with the income generation emphasis noted potentially undermining the economic sustainability of the organisation.

Tensions between suggested links and D/discourses of knowledge, expertise and academic autonomy in curriculum development could also follow, weakening our position and prompting further institutional reflexivity (Singh and Little, 2011). The

accent was on growing provision, and vocational curricula directed at these sectors as important to the Key Strategic aim of *'Ensuring sustainable futures'* where essentially this was framed in terms of sustainable growth (Hatzius, 1996; Blewitt, 2004) and seemed to place this narrative on the horizons of development and modernity at odds with sustainability.   Using Dryzec's (1997, 2005) model highlighted ongoing room for doubt. While this could be considered to be indicative of a 'problem solving' Discourse emphasising acceptance of issues to be managed, it could also be read as a 'sustainability' Discourse, muted in critique of industrialism while articulating potential for change.   In some ways I noted neither seemed attractive in this light.   In this account, academic staff were positioned to hold or diminish this potential, alluding to a sense of autonomy and agency, although I was not convinced.

The 'meaning' however, and in some ways I was still searching for one, remained unclear and more a matter of interpretation than discursive evidence it seemed.   The inclusion of point 5 in LT2 stressing the integration of ESD into the curriculum, with an emphasis on transformative learning, could be seen as a profound and positive shift for a more sustainability oriented interpretation.   This focus was introduced as a result of our involvement in HEA Green Academy II 2013- 2014, and readers not involved may not know this, changing their reading of the text.   It struck me that while considered a major triumph at the time suddenly this seemed discursively 'out of place', sitting in an essentially antagonistic relationship to the rest of the text, but not completely. The inclusion in the structure of more reformist articulations of sustainable development and sustainability dancing pedagogically with an emphasis on transformative learning were evident if one set aside framing.   In LT1 the social emphasis was part of the framing of the document and might seem to dominate this

discursive text but only if one set aside the structure. The pedagogical emphasis on transformative learning offered a glimmer of hope, although added new contested words to the institutional lexicon that needed filling.

I recognised a tension between my hopes and readings to date. In looking hopefully for alternatives I kept inventing patterns. My first thought was that I was perhaps failing to do the analysis 'correctly', or 'missing the point' as despite the objectifying techniques used in the process so much still seemed to be personal. Objectivity in comparison might distance but it did not necessarily seem to de-centre self as interpreter, however with only two documents to compare perhaps I was expecting too much of the data. I wondered at the time if this was the nature of 'presencing' (Peschl, 2007; Biesta, 2005) of 'decentred agency' (Caldwell, 2007), that danced back to the existential self in a process of reflexive reconstruction and re-identification, although Beck (1994) might challenge this view. My ongoing uncertainty was easily translated into a sense of epistemic humility, and maintained my interest in the process despite the time commitment and embodiments it involved. Taking Sylvestre et al's (2013) attention to structure, I looked again with a different lens. An example of coding is contained in Appendix 3.

While LT2 had rearticulated LT1 to significant degree, contradicting to some extent my initial reading, levels of diversity and complexity within the texts challenged singular readings as noted, and the deconstruction of texts seemed to confound rather than enhance notions of power and positioning within them. Confinement to the data without recognition of the theoretical and existential context of the research highlighted how I might be losing sight of a need to take a stand, perhaps, but through this epistemic dance, where I stood, for better or worse, was being brought to view. In many ways this did not seem to go beyond my 'natural' tendencies

towards a reflective approach, but attention to measures of empirical rigour offered a greater sense of both confusion and clarity.

I was also struck through grounded attention to the data by the naturalisation of key phrases and metaphors in the texts, a number of cultural 'blindspots' in my own readings that created new sites of potential meaning making.  It was not so much I had not seen the words, but had filled them with meaning subconsciously perpetuating the taken for granted 'common sense' ways of speaking included within them.  As noted Billig suggests that 'people use complex and frequently contradictory patterns of talk' (Billig, 1991:15) something I had noted in analysis to date and in some ways this was a source of comfort.

My next engagement with the texts involved further emphasis linked to Laclau and Mouffe's (1985; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Iversen, 2014) notions of nodal points and chains of meaning, significance and difference, in another attempt to confirm or challenge previous readings through triangulation.  Here I paid attention to the specific terms 'learning' and 'teaching' looking at the chains of meaning that were 'crystallized' around them.  In this I was attempting to shift position from a focus on orders of discourse to one of subjective positioning noted by Hajer (1995; Harré and Gillett, 1994; Keller, 2013), although this subjectivity was partially suspended given the strategic emphasis learning and teaching rather than subjects as learners or teachers, and reflexively by my own increasing poststructural doubt about any potential 'findings'.

Choosing 'Learning' as a nodal point and following this word through each document in terms of attendant words and phrasing I developed another reading of the data, highlighting a suggested web of meaning, and also changes over time.  Chains of

equivalence and difference noted in this phase of analysis are highlighted in Appendix 4. Several things struck me here. The first was the introduction in LT2 to *'vocational learning'* and *'professional learning and training'*, whereas in LT1 the focus was on *'employability'*, and a *'competitive employment market'*, again challenging my earlier readings and notions of framing. Vocationalism potentially pays more attention to professional D/discourses of ethics and personal values and notions of calling (Schön, 1989) and as such suggests opportunities within curriculum for student agency. Alongside this there was a move from *'objective'* academic learning in LTI [which for me seemed in tension with the framing of a holistic approach], to *'intellectually challenging advanced scholarship'* in LT2 which could resonate breadth, holistic interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and even perhaps transformative approaches also noted in relation to ESD and sustainability. LT2 did incorporate a new articulation of '*expertise*' that could link to the '*objective*' approach noted in LT1, maintaining the importance of the knowledge function of HE suggested by Sousa (2011) and Singh and Little (2011) in Chapter 2. The mention of *'training'* already noted in LT2 might be particularly challenging to this Discourse of academic expertise however drawing in new partners and stakeholders in curriculum development and weakening our role in knowledge production. In LT2, the emphasis on having access to accurate information, as we now had the technology, might certainly permit a reading aligned more closely to a managerial/quality assurance genre that is not clearly articulated in LT1, where there were still attempts to gain status in this regard noted in the narrative above. The emphasis in LT2 and clearer articulation of skills would also support the employability and quality assurance emphasis, although of course the latter is a primary function of such Strategies, and LT2 did come in the same year as the Browne Review (2010) and may have been

anticipatory of it. The Browne Review (2010) 'Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education' involved a Discourse of sustainable growth for the sector although sought to 'balance the level of participation, the quality of teaching and the sustainability of funding; [where] changing one component has an impact on the others' and where '[s]ustaining income – or raising it – depends on improving quality, access and student experience' (Browne, 2010:10).

In terms of learners there was limited mention of students and much of my analysis linked to literature regarding curriculum constructions of knowledge and power where students were positioned through particular curriculum models. The emphasis on '*provision*' of *'high quality learning opportunities'* offered through development of technology, management systems and developing teacher's competencies would seem not to challenge and indeed be inscribed with potential maintenance of 'vocational/neoclassical' (Kemmis et al, 1983) 'functionalist' (Askew and Carnell, 1998) and 'global competitive' (Selby, 1999, 2005) curriculum models featuring designed and specified curriculum content and pedagogies, and outcomes based approaches where students could be viewed as 'malleable objects' (Kelly, 1989:62; McKernan, 2008). *'Appropriate knowledge'* was expressed in similar terms, bolstered by intertextual suggestions of academic-rational models where scientific objectivity and expertise, directed towards *'advanced scholarship'* and *'employability'*, which for many (Huckle, 1999, 2006; Sterling, 2001; Thomas, 2005; Bracher, 2006; McKernan, 2008) including myself are seen to maintain the hegemonic *status quo* and thwart opportunities for sustainability or something better.

The language of liberal progressivism is also evident here, reinforcing my reading through Dryzec's lenses, of more reformist, client-centred, learner-centred models

(Kemmis et al, 1983; Jickling, 2003; Gough and Scott, 2007; Selby, 2005; Askew and Carnell, 1998) with articulations of intellectual challenge and transformation in LT2. This sits on the margin of a stronger web of meaning already noted, and in itself would challenge master signifiers and political, social and environmental purposes for education thus potentially failing by omission (Huckle, 2008). Socially critical and postmodern curriculum models are certainly noticeable in their absence from or silence within this Discourse. The alignment of these models with more sustainability oriented or radical curriculum models (Bracher, 2006) I expected to compound a sense of pessimism for more positive curriculum change. I was somewhat surprised in my reflex, where as I moved through this part of the analytic process, my dance away from both normative and pragmatic positions seemed to enable a sense of freedom, or was this denial?

A similar exercise was progressed in terms of teaching as a nodal point, although signification was far less evident within the documents, with a less engaged and active lexicon attached to this position, perhaps indicative of the emphasis on the learner in our own context and wider contemporary Discourses of HE (Biesta, 2005), or linked to the maintained or decreasing autonomy of teachers in the face of changing policy Discourse, or some other reasons. I did express at the time my sense of the irony of strategies focused on learning and teaching that were limited in their emphasis on learners and teachers! My initial reading of the documents using the nodal point teaching proved particularly interesting and somewhat playful, involving a process of substitution, accentuation and exaggeration of meaning which Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) suggest hold potential in analysis for drawing out positions. Exaggerating the texts led me to construct a brief descriptor of the

expectations of a lecturer in this HE context as drawn from LT1 and LT2 and included in Appendix 5.

Positionings inscribed in the data stressed the discourses of modernity, development as technologically and market driven growth, awareness and ensured management of customer satisfaction, and repeat business perhaps says more about my own bases for interpretation and residual angst.  For while my playful engagement with critique prompted a momentary sense of victory over a mythical 'system' and invisible 'others', engaging in this method of analysis further constructed the very Discourse I hoped to change.  While the webs of meaning linked to discursive constructions of teaching were themselves prone to the benign neglect of subjectivity, they could be constructed as representative of an oppressive and hegemonic discourse, although in part I had created it through the internalisation of the illusion and its re-articulation.  In this I felt I was creating my own hegemonic cage, and I danced away.

Education as a nodal point was surprisingly absent within the Learning and Teaching Strategies.  For Biesta this discursive shift is challenged as a problematic omission and we need 'to re-invent a language for education, a language that is responsive to the theoretical and practical challenges we are faced with today' (Biesta, 2002 cited in Biesta, 2005: 66).  Emphasis on teachers 'supporting or facilitating learning', providing 'opportunities' and 'experiences' has modern and postmodern connections according to the author that challenge relationships and agency.  An emphasis on education as a product to be consumed, offering value for money, that can be provided, delivered flexibly and in response to student needs, experience and consumer rights echoes within my analysis and his concerns.   This educational silence potentially precludes issues and discussions of purpose beyond student

needs and experience feeding into and dependent on particular measurement mechanisms – the National Student Survey springs to mind here. This for Biesta (ibid:59), and I feel my research has in some way highlighted this point, reduces teaching to largely managerial and technical genres of discourse, limiting the 'more important questions about the content and purpose of education' except when they meet learners as consumer's needs for easy, attractive and exciting experiences. Social purpose in this both inflates the student-centred D/discourse and in this relegates other, for example environmental concerns, to the linguistic margins.

My final analysis of the Learning and Teaching Strategies looked at the lexicon of sustainability and curriculum (Sterling, 2010, 2011, 2013; Tilbury, 2011). This represented an effort to triangulate other dimensions of analysis, as another way of revisioning rather than confirming findings in a more realist sense. There was also a measure of linguistic evaluation, a kind of audit (Ryan, 2011) that might highlight further discursive opportunities and constraints for articulating and enacting sustainability. Again this involved a simple focus on specific words to see the extent to which the 'language' of sustainability was evident (Fairclough, 2003). My findings can be found in Appendix 6. Linguistically, the term sustainability was used four times more frequently in LT2, something that was not 'seen' in previous readings. Conceptually the Strategies show no inclusions of sustainability curriculum keywords beyond 'needs', although pedagogically there was greater alignment perhaps. While this comparison was crude, it highlighted a general shift from 'experiential, critical and holistic learning' to 'applied and practical learning', further supporting earlier analysis that highlighted a discursive shift in curriculum to marketable skills, although both applied and practical learning are a feature of some curriculum models and pedagogical approaches to sustainability.

At this level of analysis my textual analytic approaches to date had further muddied the waters of my own 'swampy lowland' of curriculum Discourse rather than clarified them.  While the nature of Discourse and the naturalisation of hegemony may tend to 'position' knowledge, people and education, hegemonic Discourses clearly render themselves contestable (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985) and may not necessarily be seen as entirely negative.  As Webb et al note (2002: 38; Karol and Gale, 2004) 'there is nothing natural or essential about the values we hold, the desires we pursue, or the practices in which we engage' with are themselves constructed in part through linguistic turns.

Ongoing challenges enabled a sense of growing confidence in terms of analysis, and I became increasingly interested rather than concerned about what each new engagement with the data would bring.  In losing my sense of certainty, I felt more open to the learning process and in some ways more in charge of it.  With this in mind I moved to analysis of my own articulations of institutional Discourse.  While I do not contribute significantly to externally facing texts, I had taken a programme through validation, and thought attention to my own framing and structure, modality, and nominalisation could be applied as a reflexive prompt in this research.  Despite my assumed passion, I was surprised at what I 'saw', in that what I had envisaged as linking strongly to a particular view of sustainability lacked discursive 'substance' and reflected a good deal of the patterning observed in previous documents, as shown in Appendix 7.

Here, my own framing of curriculum, in the context of sustainability, placed initial emphasis on academic challenge, intellectual rigour, and skills and competencies relevant for employability, suggesting a traditional instructivist, market oriented curriculum and learning relationships.  Subsequent mention of professionalism, in

this framing links more to discourse of employability and engagement in markets supported by later emphasis on a knowledge economy. The use of the word 'specifically' might suggest the subsequent statement to be the 'real' intention of curriculum noted in other texts, involving conceptual, epistemological and critical reflexive engagement and a later mention of active inquiry might further support this, suggestive of alignment to a more reformist approach to curriculum but still open to interpretation. Mention of a 'triple bottom line' makes intertextual links to SD which given its relationship with 'lifelong learning' suggests further alignment with declarations and curriculum discourses associated with ESD (UNESCO, 2002), although as Sylvestre et al (2013) noted in the broader policy context these too were taking on the language of the market. My own D/discourse also sits in direct relationship to the knowledge economy genres and therefore the message is likely to be equally ambiguous and problematic. Weak modality and nominalisation are evident here too, with a curriculum that 'aims to' and the 'potential' value of education, followed by a shift in deontic modality between my own articulated 'aim' to provide learning to students who 'will' learn. By making reference to work abroad, linked to mention of the knowledge economy, I could be accused of possessing colonising tendencies that are individual, cultural, spatial and temporal, (Selby, 2004; Bracher, 2006), and the thought did and still does cross my mind.

I expected more of self, given my level of interest in and association of my professional and personal identity with the concept of sustainability. Perhaps, I was less radical and postmodern in my thinking that I had led myself to believe, or less centred in my engagement with the concept and associated educational curriculum discursively. Or was it just that my writing had been ill considered, or captured and constrained by the Discourse in which it circulated (Trowler, 2001; Fairclough, 2001).

It would seem perhaps that my own discursive constructions were merely modern hegemonic models of academia, perpetuating curriculum models that I felt needed to change in terms of unsustainability, with implications 'individually (in terms of identity), socially (in terms of social construction) and politically (in terms of the distribution of power)' (Trowler, 2001: 184).

In many ways however this did not marry to my experience of educational approaches or relationships, and in this I wondered if it was more a case of linguistic lag, where changes in practice precede our ability to speak of it in all its complexity (Harré et al, 1999). Or perhaps while I had enacted the language of the market and associated curricula, I had not inculcated it. Fairclough (2001:7) suggests:

> A new discourse may come into an institution or organisation without being enacted or inculcated. It may be enacted, yet never be fully inculcated. Examples abound. For instance, managerial discourses have been quite extensively enacted within British universities (for instance as procedures of staff appraisal, including a new genre of appraisal interview), yet arguably the extent of inculcation is very limited, most academics do not own these management discourses. We have to consider the conditions of possibility for, and the constraints upon, the dialectics of discourse in particular cases.

Was I looking for an excuse to nominalise my behaviour? I found in this moment, a sense of sharing with colleagues and others, an awareness I thought I already had but again could not necessarily express, that an overemphasis on what people write and say as representative of what is and who they are is both projective, divisive and potentially illusory. While I had 'read' widely [texts and experiences], I had also 'read into' language in a way that was itself a limiting basis for judgement, trust and possible dialogue. I felt I could do something to change this.

There had been changes made to my original writing, a reminder that texts are living documents and this offered a further opportunity for comparison. In this

rearticulation, found in Appendix 8, there was a shift from a political/normative discourse [with attendant critique noted] to more student centred one (Askew and Carnell, 1998). More interestingly perhaps was that this change was also noted in the greater diversity of assessment offered in the revised curriculum, as highlighted in Appendix 9. Links from D/discourse to action were made apparent in this a source of further personal concern and challenge. The new potential alignment to a more constructivist pedagogical approach was something I could now choose to make more real in light of this discomfort however. I was also aware of potential criticisms of an emphasis on the learner (Kemmis et al, 1983; Askew and Carnell, 1998; Jickling, 2003; Biesta, 2005; Scott and Gough, 2007) although these changes still seemed something of an improvement on my own curriculum D/discourse. My own mention of 'critical engagement with ways of knowing' perhaps highlights my inculcation of socially critical and postmodern curriculum discourses (Kemmis et al, 1983; Fien, 1993; Askew and Carnell, 1998; Carr and Kemmis, 1985) but not their enactment! I could however do something about this.

What struck me most, and again, at this stage of analysis was that while the shift to a market-oriented education policy Discourse within organisational and texts was visible, these texts were polysemic, open to alternative readings and writings, which are 'never unambiguously accomplished, seamless totalities, but incomplete structures with open sutures that while being established are almost already in transition toward something else' in a potentially endless 'game of differences' (Neubert, 2001:12). The issues of deconstruction that remains with the text was not possible either in terms of my practice, or in concern for issues of knowledge/power, positioning, sustainability and responsible agency.

While I could make intertextual links to wider discursive shifts (Giroux, 2004; Blewitt, 2004; Wals, 2012), however the silence of sustainability was palpable. At a national level while economic goals were stressed, their links to environmental concerns had also been made. The Stern Review (2006) for the UK government on the Economics of Climate Change spoke in terms that seemed to challenge notions of sustainable growth we were emphasising. The author suggested:

> The evidence shows that ignoring climate change will eventually damage economic growth. Our actions over the coming few decades could create risks of major disruption to economic and social activity, later in this century and in the next, on a scale similar to those associated with the great wars and the economic depression of the first half of the 20th century. And it will be difficult or impossible to reverse these changes (Stern, 2006: ii).

Professor Beddington (2009) who was chief scientific advisor to the UK government at the time, suggested an imminent 'perfect storm' of food shortages, water scarcity and insufficient energy resources in 2030, linked to climate change, peak oil and limits to growth, and resulting in public unrest, social conflict and mass migration. More recently, the IPCC's (2014: 1) 'headlines' of their latest report suggests that both the issues and effects are uncertain, interconnected, unequally experienced but ultimately will reflect and enhance existing inequalities and risk our future survival :

> Climate change will amplify existing risks and create new risks for natural and human systems. Risks are unevenly distributed and are generally greater for disadvantaged people and communities in countries at all levels of development. Many aspects of climate change and associated impacts will continue for centuries, even if anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are stopped. The risks of abrupt or irreversible changes increase as the magnitude of the warming increases.

Critiquing LT1 and LT2 utilising Beck's (1992, 1994, 1998, 2008; Cohen, 1997; Elliott, 2001; Borne, 2014) theories of risk explicated in Chapter 2, it would seem that organisational D/discourses are limited in and limiting of attention to the issues of

155

sustainability with a maintained emphasis on economic growth and curriculum provision, technological emphasis and the inadequacies of 'objective' knowledge (LT1) or 'expertise' (LT2).  Beck's (1998; Elliott, 2002) contention of the nominalisation of the role of institutions in the lives of wider society and individual agents could also be read into or made out of the texts.  His suggestion that this involves 'organized irresponsibility', where culpability is individualised and collectively denied, maintained through political D/discourses of 'industrial fatalism: faith in progress, dependence on rationality and the rule of expert opinion' (Elliott, 2002: 297-8; Cohen, 1997; Beck, 1998) was something I wanted to explore further. The lack of institutional discursive change generally seemed to fly in the face of our increasing 'knowledge' of environmental issues, and their increased level of communication in a discursive knowledge society.  Emphasis on the generation of 'useful' knowledge, production of skilled and agentic students, social inclusion and sustainable development (Cochrane and Williams, 2010; King, 2011; Sterling, 2004; Blewitt, 2004) may be consensual themes globally in terms of the politics of curriculum development and nationally there was also evidence of this rhetoric.  This might support Sousa's (2011: 54; Fairclough, 2001) suggestion that we have embraced, institutionally at least, D/discourses of the 'knowledge society' that are ill-equipped to deal with the hazards and uncertainties of the future or even the economic needs of the present perhaps (Biesta, 2005) despite this curriculum focus. The emphasis on employability in LT1 and vocationalism in LT2 both suggested the need for graduate skills, and I wondered if this offered any potential discursive openings for sustainability.

A brief overview of graduate skills at the time of LT1 highlighted that a curriculum focus on skills can potentially support both employability and sustainability.  Looking

at some recommended skills from the view of employers, graduates, and in ESD policy, listed in Appendix 10, a number of similarities are evident and overlaps are suggested.    All stress the important of soft skills, communication, teamwork and planning.  An emphasis in ESD on attention to values and developing an aesthetic appreciation for nature marks a significant addition perhaps, casting us back to the development and environmental education emphases noted earlier in international policy driven ESD, although again the discursive fillings of these concepts are contested.    Saito (1984) for example makes a distinction between aesthetic and ethical appreciations of nature, as culturally and historically shaped and involving local narratives, folklore and myth that can challenge scientific understanding.

## Textual Analysis: Sustainability Statement

As noted in my original framing of my inquiry I had wondered if sustainability as a 'nodal' point in curriculum development potentially alienates and closes down opportunities for other discourses, visions and action.  While I have so long identified with this concept as offering the best available paradigm for both education and life, I was more concerned now in looking at how different genres of discourse were being articulated.   Again in something of a bricolage, my attention to data was eclectic, following lines and dancing with data sources at they came to mind.  Prior to analysis of interview data which as noted had been collected the year before, I turned to a recently added 'Sustainability' page on the University website, with a single message.  I found this particularly rich in terms of textual analysis, and highly thought provoking.   After a number of unsuccessful attempts to find the author[s] of the statement to ask their permission to engage with this particular analysis, permission was obtained at an institutional level.

This was the first real opportunity beyond the review of literature in Chapter 2 to engage in a more 'eco-critical discursive analysis' (Harré et al, 1999; Blühdorn, 2002; Stibbe, 2009) and I perceived this to provide a useful stepping stone into my focus on interview data given the informality of the text. I include the message with original analysis in Appendix 11 in ongoing attempts to maintain the visibility and hence opportunities to validate my approach and the process. Looking for/at environmental perspectives and values in the text suggested by Kellert (1993) and found in Chapter 3, was more for ease than analytical depth as I tried to find my footing in new sources and using new analytical 'tools'. In analysis below I have underlined my application of Kellert's perspectives to the text.

The tone of the message was colloquial and friendly with an initial focus on our 'green' campus, offering a <u>utilitarian</u> perspective involving a potentially exploitative relationship with nature (Kellert, 1993; Gullone, 2000). The imagery/symbolism of 'relaxing in the sun between lectures' potentially features more <u>humanistic, aesthetic</u> and <u>naturalistic</u> perspectives, of emotional and spiritual bonds with nature although linking this with a traditional view of learning in HE diminishes this reading somewhat. This potentially reinforces a dualistic separation between education [as work] and campus/environment/nature [as leisure], and also a division of cultural capital between popular and high aesthetics. An emphasis on management, measurement, technological fixing, market interaction and consumption, and individual choice and responsibility are stressed in what follows, and these remain unquestioned, which potentially nominalises organisational or wider educational responsibility for problems or in taking action (Fairclough, 2003; Porter, 2007; Sylvestre et al, 2013). Here <u>dominionistic</u> and <u>moralistic</u> perspectives enter into the texts, associated with management and markets thus suggesting that any issues are a matter of control of

nature and personal choice.    Lexical shifts in the author's use of object and possessive pronouns reinforces a shift in responsibility or deontic modality (Sylvestre et al, 2013) on a number of occasions.  There is an emphasis in the next section on the University's educational role in being more green through raising awareness of 'our users' which furthers nominalisation, and this is preceded by the suggestion that the University is an organisation that is aware, thus reinforcing a sense of separation and hierarchy between University and public knowledge.   This nominalisation and weakening of modality is particularly noted when the author suggests *'it's not what the institution does, it's what we as individuals, staff and students do'*.

Suggested resistance to social or political pressure and decrees presented to the reader as an unwelcome behavioural intrusion on personal freedom may further a liberal emphasis on individual freedom but this sits uncomfortably with the need for organisationally managed behaviour noted with the 'removal of bins'.  This sentence also highlights shifts in pronoun use that divides those doing something on campus to manage the issue and staff who are unaware of the waste they produce. '*We* have removed all waste bins from *our offices* and instead positioned recycle and general waste bins all around the campus. This has the advantage of *helping staff* become more aware of the *waste they produce*'.   There was a sense at the end of the message of potential for discursive closure to alternative visions and 'greenspeak' (Harré et al, 1999; Bracher, 2006).

> So the answer to the question 'How 'green' is #####?' We're greenish with a desire to be greener. And the staff and students of #####, well they're just like the rest of society and whether they become greener will depend only partly on what we do here otherwise it's a personal choice an individual makes after a period of reflection or it's forced on us by societal pressure or government decree. I'm hoping for the personal choice option.

This Statement was considered problematic less in terms of what was said but of this being the only accessible text via the website that linked directly to sustainability which could deny other voices, ways of speaking and potential messages. The contested nature of the concept is only useful if we can listen to and participate in its contestation. The unintended or unrecognised consequences of such Discourses as 'new dogmas' that could themselves be unsustainable can perhaps be tackled through more democratic dialogue (Beck, 1998:157; Blühdorn, 2002: Macfarlane, 2004;). I might do something about this too I felt, although was interested to consider through analysis how such action might be perceived.

I wanted to focus more explicitly at this point on transient discourse between discoursing subjects (Hajer, 1995). In this I held some measure of expectation that individual and unofficial talk might offer alternative ways of speaking, and a measure of resistance to change. Taylor (1999 cited in Wetherell et al, 2001) noted how ongoing change in an institution can result in a sense of ambiguity and crisis, which is reflected in how we speak about our roles, and in our responses, or not, to change, something that resonated with my own experience I felt. Change that is seen to threaten or devalue our academic identities is noted by the author to bring about individual resistance and group conservatism and normalisation, where identity politics plays out and inter-group conflicts arise noted in Chapter 2. Lane (2007) suggests the advantages of conservativism in academic life in maintaining standards, but also notes how it can stifle change and bring about resistance. Nikel and Reid (2006 cited in Zeyer and Roth, 2011: 36) refer to the '*dangers of Post Ecologism*' characterised by a recognition of the particular environmental problems but involves a rationalisation of the situation in order to avoid the necessity of making any fundamental changes. I had wondered what the potential barriers were to

160

sustainability as a curriculum D/discourse in my own institution, and it was in this frame of mind that I wanted to attend to both the possibilities and constraints for agency that colleagues articulated. I was at this point that I turned to analysis of talk.

## Interview Analysis

My interviews had taken place in 2012, and I wondered whether I should begin again. Their situation within the context of LT2, however, seemed to offer an unexpected opportunity that was both contextualised in terms of institutional changes of Discourse, and at the same time provided an ongoing sense of distance from the data that felt more comfortable ethically and politically. Having [re]secured permission to include our conversations despite this gap in time, I continued to analysis. I had conducted initial analysis at the time of the interviews, but decided to look afresh at the transcripts and do another 'initial' analysis, although the first became a subsequent reflexive tool. Despite going into each interview with three areas of questions, to ascertain individual narratives of the institution as a 'culture', sustainability as a 'concept' and change as an agentic 'possibility', narrative analysis was deemed problematic in terms of respondent anonymity discussed in Chapter 3. While storylines were therefore told to me in my readings of the transcripts and as such formed ghost positions in my dance, I focused more carefully on discursive repertoires, within a long/range autonomous framing that refocused my gaze (Alversson and Kärreman, 2000; Dryzek 2005; Borne, 2014; Tregidga et al, 2011). Findings are presented as reconstructions below to maintain anonymity of speakers as far as possible.

As noted in Chapter 2, Beck (1998, 2008) highlights the discursive melding of academic and wider cultural D/discourses which maintain 'an industrial culture and

consciousness'. Analytic tools looked to create images of function and subject position in the data, where the function of talk takes place within a particular temporal and spatial context (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Hökkä et al, 2010; Zeyer and Roth, 2011) discussed earlier.  Subject position looks at agents as positioned or positioning themselves within particular repertoires, in part through use of pronouns (Harré and Gillett, 1994).  Here patterns within the data were read into both individual and across interview transcripts, highlighting the collective and fluid nature of D/discourse as discursive practice and language in use.  In analysis multiple readings brought to mind different patterns of speaking that, following Hökkä et al (2010) and Zeyer and Roth (2011) sought to explore through different thematic reconstructions that linked curriculum, sustainability and agency.  Overlaying existent repertoires onto the data allowed for a measure of patterning of talk that I felt was needed given my inexperience in this type of research, theoretical focus and research questions.

Interpretive repertoires are recognisable through attention to argumentative chains, linking to prior analysis involving orders and webs of meaning (Billig, 1991; Hajer, 1995; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Iversen, 2014).  Drawing on Zeyer and Roth's (2011) 'common sense' and 'folk psychology' repertoires (Gramsci, 1971; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Harré et al, 1999; Wetherell, 2001a; Claxton, 2005;  Zeyer and Roth, 2011) that linked environmental and agentic dimensions was useful here, as was the temporal and teleological aspects of talk suggested by Harré et al (1999; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) which alongside environmental 'positions' sit at the heart of D/discourses of sustainability, involving both moral assessments and aesthetic values (McKeown and Hopkins, 2003).  Curriculum repertoires (Hökkä et al, 2010) sought to make discursive links to notions of accommodation of hegemonic Discourses and articulations that speak of their reform.

On each occasion I framed the discussion as research surrounding change, sustainability and curriculum in our own institutional context. I had not fully settled on D/discourse analysis as my approach at the time of interviews, and in some ways this further decentred my gaze allowing for notions of objectivity although not dehumanisation in the process. The first question, noted in Chapter 3, sought some 'information' about respondent's background, role and experience in HE. I was surprised at how each respondent offered a different entry point into the interview despite what I thought was a fairly straightforward question. I had not anticipated the diversity I would find in the feel of each interaction, and the unique ways in which each of these interviews unfolded. It may have been through inexperience, but I found the interviews were controlled or at least directed far more by respondents than self. My inclination towards informality within the process was met in very different ways and, in this, I felt less of an 'insider' in these research relationships than I thought I would, where our conversations did not necessarily represent a shared sense of occasion. While much of my reading had focused on the interviewer effect, there was also a significant respondent effect. Our changing demeanours offered a sense of performance (Goffman, 1963; O'Donaghue, 2007) that confirmed my sense of the poststructural, constructionist and interactionist nature of talk. The flow of conversation and emergent positionings enabled me to dance with notions of coalitions and subjective 'equivalence' and 'difference' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Fairclough, 2003) in part facilitated by my own inexperience.

I must admit I felt I could have 'done better' in the interviews, there was evidence of times where my style of questioning, and engagement in conversation were perhaps disruptive of my intention to facilitate respondent's talk. I also noted I missed a number of cues for further exploration, and in hindsight could be considered a lack of

'presence' (Peschl, 2007) in the process, but as noted in Chapter 3 it did allow for repertoires to be brought into play (Quinn, 2009). In some ways my relative ineptitude had helped me engage in the styles of questioning suggested by Strauss et al (1964) that had highlighted or provoked 'emotional hotspots' or clearer positions. Again analysis was iterative and time-consuming, seeing and following multiple trajectories into and out of the data, using post-ecological repertoires (Zeyer and Roth, 2011) but also developing more inductive chains of meaning grounded in the narratives discursively constructed in the interview data themselves.

Drawing on Zeyer and Roth (2011), as outlined in Chapter 3, I sought to explore how individuals engage in and generate post-ecological repertoires of discourse. In some ways the relevance of the framework could be questioned, relating as it does to Continental common-sense repertoires used by young people. However, the framework offered potential, and a measure of familiarity recognisable in my own ways of speaking, my own 'habits of mind' perhaps. In the process of reading into the data particular repertoires I noted difficulty in following their approach however. Zeyer and Roth's (2011) attention to individual voices in analysis, grounded in 'big scoops' (Quinn, 2009) of discourse offered potential for a measure of transparency in the process, validating findings for the reader (Flick, 2002; Denscombe, 2007). I considered in beginning this phase that by involving blocks of text within analysis that individuals could be recognised in what is a small institution. Their particular turns of phrase, their idiolect might be seen and the promised anonymity compromised. To overcome this, although with attendant issues of validation for the reader noted earlier, responses in relation to particular repertoires were mixed in my writing, envisaged as part of the discursive circulation within my own organisation and part of wider flows of conversations and texts. As far as possible given the grounding of

analysis in the data I have tried to be inclusive of individual voices.  In this process I seemed to dance again with earlier analysis, to make tentative links through my use of analytic memos that noted particular paths of coding and associated analysis as they emerged.

Prior to this engagement during the interviews themselves and as transcription progressed, I was interested in the extent of challenge and counter-institutional Discourse, highlighting notions of culture as being individually constituted rather than socially determined (Sayer, 1991; Fairclough, 2001).  The first point of reference in change noted by all respondents was economic, mirroring the new framing of HE noted in LT2 and wider Discourse through review of literature (Blewitt, 2004; Sousa, 2011; Brown, 2011; Sylvestre et al, 2013).  Change for all was storied in negative terms, as an attack on the real purposes, processes and potentials of HE, presenting a threat to knowledge, professional autonomy and personal security.  This was also linked to a sense of punitive accountability although the associated strength of feeling and varying emphases were also evident in individual talk.

The circulating discourse featured a narrative of a top down exercise in governmentality (Keller, 2013), part of '*neo-liberal policy technology which is imposed on us and can change the nature of education itself*' (S3).  The intra institutional discourse suggested that this involved '*the logic of capitalism*' (S1) with knowledge and skills being those '*valued by the employers i.e. private business*' *(S3)*, an institution which was '*fatally compromised with consumerism*' (S1) to whom we need '*to sell degrees to people on the grounds that you will be able to earn more*' *(S1).* Wider changes were recognised creating a narrative of '*a vocational place, and institution, and that's very much the way that higher education is going anyway, and the loss of pure subjects*' *(S2)* and '*wiping out humanities courses*' *(S4).* The dualism

165

suggested between academic and vocational purposes were linked unquestioningly to global shifts presented as fact. It was interesting that the respondent who identified themselves as a manager was quieter in this critique, although I could not read too much into this singularity. This was linked to the skills agenda and economic frame where employers were positioned as non-academic other and as unknowing, with influence yet they *'did not know what skills their graduate employees needed' (S1) and '*skills that are valued by the employers ie private business..[pause] and, I'm not saying that those skills are not valuable in their own right .. but they don't have a value perspective' (S3)*.

In this discourse we positioned ourselves as under threat and in this nominalised any articulations of individual culpability in this state of affairs, taking a similar position to the institutional one noted and thus suggestive at this point of organisational and educational irresponsibility (Beck, 1994; Biesta, 2005). As well as the negative positioning of employers, there were elements of an oppositional position of academics to the technical managerial system, and hence those who operate within those discursive coalitions as managers, something I was aware of in my own articulations and exaggerations, but now challenged. Academic insecurities were articulated in a discourse of personal insecurity and change *'obviously outside of the institution'* and policy climate *that 'does impinge to the extent that I um I feel I am probably not investing in the rest of my career as an academic because I think it will probably be cut short at some point or another'* (S2), a situation where people *'moved from one teaching area to another'* (S3) against their expectations, and if felt their aspirations *'I really expected that I would be a lecturer for the rest of my career, that's what I wanted to do .. and because it hasn't turned out like that..'* (S4).

Change had further undermined HE and academic knowledge in relation to research funding *'where the price of getting the support of a governing body involves that you have to do a survey, they're not interested in any other kind of research'* (S1) although this was not a shared articulation.  Change was narrated as problematic for students and strategies were seen not to  *'speak directly to the experience of students, in exactly the same way that there's an assumption about what education is, what it's for, how we ought to be doing it' (S3).*  Focus on the assumptions of others rather than our own again seemed to nominalise personal involvement in D/discourse, with shifts of pronoun use from a knowing 'I' to an unknowing 'we' or 'they', although respondents corrected themselves at times.    Questions of purpose danced with notions of change and quality in mutually reinforcing ways where increased managerialsm had led to quality systems that *'mitigate against quality as we're all busy working with structural stuff' (S3) where change might emerge 'almost despite management'* (S1), rather than developing and maintaining working and other educational relationships.

In many ways this seemed to represent a critical [realist] discourse, with a dualist intonation of angst that positioned an impersonal system as controlling of our actions, involving an othering of particular coalitions and positioning of academics as an oppressed group and thus forming this new coalition of resistance.  Naturalisation of this state of affairs as 'obvious' featured an associated sense of inevitability, no matter what is 'said' or 'done'.   While narrative analysis, in melding individual storylines into a collective voice felt somewhat inauthentic however, a construction too far.  In looking again at the data using Zeyer and Roth's (2011) agentic repertoire underpinned by ongoing attention to webs of meaning, I could 'see' both the pragmatist and control repertoires in operation. The pragmatist repertoire mobilizes

practical arguments in opposition to ideal stances, and here one can see ideals noted above, academic autonomy, disciplinary learning, student experience, human flourishing and personal security all diminished by the realities of markets, consumerism, policy, managerialism or in involvement of the control repertoire by employers, consumers [of things and education], policy makers and managers.

Such initial framing raises to consciousness the potentially debilitating and negative constructions within this repertoire, and the othering of social sectors, managers and to some extent students as learners.  This was also noted by one of the respondents as an issue in practice.  Here there was evidence of 'intentional positioning' (Zelle, 2009:4) within the conversations, and 'emotional hotspots' (Quinn, 2005) noted earlier.  Countering the cultural othering of managers, a respondent who identified themselves as an academic 'manager' spoke differently.  It was an interesting difference in discourse in relation to the much louder critique, not echoed by respondents who identified themselves primarily as academics intonating a sense of discourse coalitions and academic tribes if not on disciplinary grounds (Hajer, 1995; Macfarlane, 2004; Becher and Trowler, 2001).   Here different discursive storylines were noted:

> *but when you look at the senior managers, um, actually most of them work longer hours than we do, um…. and I obviously know some better than others, but they're just people trying to do their best for the institution, um and they spend most of their time doing what  they think will help…(S4)*

The positioning of the needs of the institution above individual needs maintains notions of concensus and can depersonalise decision making.  It also suggests an interesting positioning of academics as less hard working than managers, potentially

maintaining the negative institutional webs of meaning relating to teaching suggested in earlier textual analysis.

Gripped by the possibilities of this line of analysis I moved on. The first dimension of Zeyer and Roth's interpretative framework looks to discursive repertoires that indicate 'acceptance of the in-principle relevance of environmental issues' found in Chapter 3 and I was keen to visit this given my focus and interest. There was discursive concensus that we face 'real issues' of unsustainability. This D/discourse emphasised the *'likely certainties that we face are pretty unpleasant ones … a very challenging and scary point in the history of the human race…' (S2)* where *'we live in a system, that I don't think is sustainable'* (S3), and where we were individually and globally *'living beyond our means' (S4).* The discourse continued *'I personally find it hard to take because it is so catastrophic, and dramatic, it is almost too much to bear or think about' (S1).* This was a situation with little discursive hope *'because unlike Christianity there is no ultimate salvation is there' (S1).*

In environmental terms, this repertoire according to the Zeyer and Roth suggests that despite this recognition of environmental issues, the inherent pessimism tends, in drawing on 'folk science' and 'pragmatist repertoires' to involve mockery of idealism such as that associated with sustainability, and something I am known for. For example my own affiliation was questioned where I was *'on a road to nothing, even if we do have an effect it is so long before it takes shape and they won't know it's* you' (S1). I thought at the time that this was not necessarily important or likely that it would be me who brought about change, and this comment seemed suggestive of the metaphor of machine within educational discourse, where correct inputs would produce particular outputs, but again I had to be careful to maintain a measure of

fidelity in use of method, to ground analysis in the data. Pessimism was more generally noted in a created discursive context where *'the rest of the world's too powerful isn't it, I mean if you are trying to combat consumerism and links to identities, you are coming up against a massive culture industry, aren't you. And HE is not even a big part of their lives anymore'* (S1).

Links to cognitive dissonance were raised, circulated and projected into the future through the concept of sustainability *'with sustainability …. you've got this enormous dissonance, haven't you between… what is actually happening, and what's projected in the near future to be happening'* (S3), and *'there is this sort of awful sort of cognitive dissonance between knowing what you believe to be true, and then the other part which is why not just carry on being normal'* (S2). I return to issues of normality in a moment. Avoidance strategies were articulated both professionally and personally, *'I try to ignore many unpleasant aspects of working [here] as far as I can, along with the insecurity with which we live'* (S2) and where denial could be theoretically supported and personally avoided *'the form of denial I take is to say it's all down to capitalism….. because mostly it absolves me from doing anything'* (S1). Interesting from the above was a general acceptance of environmental issues, indeed the enormity and intractability of issues was clear. For Zeyer and Roth (2011: 40), a 'folk-science' repertoire operates here where issues are presented as facts and where '[t]he result is the unquestionable and inevitable truth: an ominous future'.

While acknowledgement of environmental issues was noted, Zeyer and Roth (2011) suggest that for many these may not be seen as a priority, and this also had implications for inclusion of sustainability in curriculum development or what that might 'look like'. I turned my attention to the fifth dimension of their model 'relegation

of environmental issues on the political priority list', involving for the authors evidence of pragmatist and folk science repertoires. In this, other priorities might be seen as more important in curriculum development, resistance would be suggested as likely and in discourse those speaking often present organisational arguments, politically aligned with questions of expertise rather than issues of power, also noted by Cotton et al (2007) earlier. The D/discourse emergent from my own interviews suggested dominance of social rather than environmental curriculum purpose in that *'we are a widening participation institution, and… I see that as profoundly linked to sustainability but for other people…..' (S3)* potentially positioning the speaker as aware and engaged and others as potentially unknowing, disinterested or resistant again reinforced through use of pronouns. While the value might be noted, perhaps in part out of politeness given my framing of interviews, immediate qualification of the ideal was commonly used *'it will probably become, um, applied in terms of economic sustainability'* (S4) a somewhat sceptical position shared by all respondents. Support for this discourse was expressed as involving a machine like metaphor where history would be likely to repeat itself and the economy would continue to dominate future actions *'I've seen it happening before you know with other cross curricular themes' (S1),* where *'you can't force people to buy into a, actually into any agenda wholeheartedly, certainly not something that's um, that requires such a fundamental shift of position' (S3)* and where *'they might be talking it up but I don't think in practice it will have an effect, unless it has some impact, some money benefit' (S3).* This was also projected into the future where it *'will get left to wither on the vine so we'll have written policies …. with very little attention to practice' (S2).*

Overall the discourse flowed in which *'I think we'll do it in some ways and not in others' (S4)* recognising the dimensions of sustainability but in a real world [of

management given the speaker perhaps] where *'there are so many other pressures on us as an institution, pressures on us and demands on us, I think those things will always compromise what we do and how we do it to some degree'* (S4) and *'its seen as marginal and because, when people are busy they've got, you know they've got their own priorities, got their own ways of doing things'*. This also resonated Zeyer and Roth's (2011) suggestion of disillusionment about our potential agency, noted in the earlier focus on narrative where anonymous others block all 'sensible' action for educational or environmental improvement, bolstering the loss of autonomy discourse and suggesting the need for management and leadership to spearhead future developments despite the general critique of these discourse coalitions *'it will depend on the response of the managers …. about how great a priority it becomes'* (S3).

Individual agency was also challenged in light of the systemic nature of issues where current pessimism continued to be projected into the future *'we can't act in isolation from that so there's unsustainable structures and practices and things…that will influence us, so no matter how idealistic we are, there are going to be limits to what we can do'* (S4). This suggested a more muted discourse of connectivity beyond the institution than that articulated in official texts which sat alongside discourses of sustainability maintaining pessimism *'one of the problems with sustainability that it's so big and so complex that it's very easy to think..oh god we can't do anything'* (S2). This seemed a cultural and educational discourse of despair (Harré et al, 1999; Hicks, 2010) in need of change if our psychological sustainability is to be considered (Huckle, 2004). I wondered what I could do about this.

Interestingly while other social priorities were ideally stated as suggested earlier, sustainability was situated within a repertoire of implied unwelcome idealism, part of

a genre of contemporary agents as not 'normal' noted above.  This concept was filled and positioned those who used it as I did, linked to a discourse of extremism or as misguided fantasy echoing Zeyer and Roth's (2011) findings and Blühdorn's (2002) suggestion of implied fundamentalism.   Despite recognition of the issues, the policy led suggestions for sustainability and the associated academic movement, these were seen as wasted visioning perhaps.  As noted earlier 'greenspeak' was largely missing within institutional documents, and this interpretative analysis suggested it was not, and would be unlikely to be, a favoured discourse in my own cultural and curriculum context at this time.  While once I struggled and personalised this 'critique' however, I now found this discourse interesting rather than troubling, and noted a more authentic shift from normative concern to empirical interest becoming more central through this process which felt quite liberating in some ways.

Academic discourses of avoidance and denial of environmental issues suggested in postecological theory were also structured in repertoires of  'neo-materialist and consumption-oriented patterns' in our conversations drawing on 'folk psychology', that nominalised and naturalised consumptive behaviour often in/for selves rather than others (Zeyer and Roth, 2011) where it was deemed an issue.  In many ways these did not feature, given my line of questioning in interviews, but occasional inclusions of this repertoire were noted.  While HE was *fatally compromised by consumerism'* (S1) this was a personal concern or a reason to avoid raising such issues in the curriculum for fear of accusations of hypocrisy.  Here the discourse suggested often apologetic recognition of personal interests and acquisitive behaviour in which *'even though I can identify consumerism in everyone else, it's an irrational desire, it is very hard to stop that in me, so it's such a challenge. I mean it's so total, it's such a big challenge, it's so pessimistic' (S1).*  Curriculum that featured

173

sustainability might help students *'to move into a different place' (S2)* but they were positioned as potentially *'complacent'* in the present and for the future, as unknowing (Beck, 1994) *'very well trained consumers, who tend to define themselves in much more materialistic terms than previous generations' (S2)* bringing in positions of age related knowing and unknowing perhaps. Normative emphases, noted in my own articulations were continually reconsidered in light of analysis as were their inherent contradictions and I was equally involved in the stories and discourses as noted in textual analysis and discussed further below. Another interesting aspect of this repertoire involved a more aesthetic view of consumption where we could engage in leisure activities that involved palliative measures of avoidance *'since we've had the boat… I mean once you're on the water you just don't think about anything else' (S4).* Here the environmental symbolism resonated utilitarian, humanistic, aesthetic and naturalistic perspectives suggested by Kellert (1993) and noted in analysis of the Sustainability Statement above and loose links between institutional Discourse and discourses were made out of the data.

I had recognised earlier in this process the suggested dangers of promoting 'sustainability' as a curriculum and thus educational master signifier (Blühdorn, 2002; Bracher, 2006: Wals, 2012) and potential resistance was considered pertinent to understanding the beat of the system (Meadows, 2001; Ahearn, 2001; Alkire, 2008). Again I was interested in repertoires relating to my own position and agency enhancing epistemological and reflexive challenge. Here repertoires that emphasised 'replacement of the emancipatory subject-oriented notion of modernization', and 'radical ecologism and direct eco-political action as variants of terrorism' (Zeyer and Roth, 2011) were read into the data. Resistance, often nominally expressed as a quality in others, was evident here discursively

constructing this as not normal or educational, linking to earlier discourses in terms of priorities and purpose. *'Well, yeah there's a puritanical side to it these days, you know, and it's almost asking too much, to live an aesthetic lifestyle, it's asking a lot'* *(S1).* Here I could see different fillings of notions of aestheticism perhaps as discussed earlier. This articulation also linked back to the first repertoire where Zeyer and Roth noted that we support inactivity in terms of what would be good or not for others in this case students and colleagues positioned as in need of protection. *'I think that would depend on my ability to, to make it palatable for them'* (S2) and *'students find that very very difficult and challenging, and I do it to a far lesser extent across teaching'*(S3) , where *'I find interesting …….maybe don't know why the need to know about the environment …. so it has been really quite difficult to frame the content in a way that they can relate to'* (S4) and where 'we are asking students to do something that is impossible really cos the staff won't do it' (S1).

The discourse of agency in pursuit of sustainability as abnormal was also part of an historical narrative where similar attempts towards change were either 'fundamentalist' or politically divisive. *'I mean there was, a few years ago, some kind of ecology cult, that took hold of the college for a bit, and so students would come and tell me off for drinking a bottle of water' (S1).* This was suggested as something of a paradox where *'the more sincere and committed you are, the more likely you are to put people off' (S1).* Notions of cult, activism, hypocrisy and transcendental violence (Biesta, 2005) suggest resistance to behavioural approaches or perceived radicalism or fundamentalism (Blühdorn, 2002) drawing on both pragmatist and control repertoires (Zelle and Roth, 2011). Here perhaps was a space for future discussion, a glimmer of hope grounded in pedagogic dialogue, noted also in textual analysis and discussed in a moment. Other respondents were less vocal in this light

which may be out of politeness in the research situation, or that this was not seen as an issue in curriculum terms or some other reasons.

Analysis to date seemed to support notions of postecologism (Zeyer and Roth, 2011) of rationalised inaction and diminished sense of agency projected onto others in discourses of its abnormality. In temporal terms past and present seemed to outweigh more hopeful visions of the future, and as Hicks (2010: 10) notes:

> One of the dilemmas we collectively face is that the future increasingly feels a troubled place and we have no choice but to go there. Thinking about this and the local-global issues that confront us can be worrying, frightening, puzzling, annoying, challenging, exciting and even downright dangerous. We are, whether we choose to be conscious of it or not, confronted by a range of emotions that we may actually not wish to know about, let alone feel. The future is currently a worrying place, somewhere that we would possibly rather not go.

Zeyer and Roth (2011: 45) suggest that our commonsense repertoires, drawing in part on the wealth of globalised media 'supports a fact-oriented interpretation and articulation of the physical and mental world'. Citing Latour (1999) the authors note that facts thereby become Facts with a capital F, just as Alvesson and Kärreman (2000) suggest discourses become Discourses. While the common sense repertoire may emphasise inherent environmental pessimism, the agential repertoire developed by Zeyer and Roth (2011) produces similar effects in human and social terms, where the ideal and real are seen as incompatible, and in this individual action will fail because of unknowing others. This can be envisioned as a manifestation of reflexive modernity (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1994), where risk, uncertainty and loss of control have profound impacts on our personal sense of identity, wellbeing and power (Zeyer and Roth, 2011; Hicks, 2010, 2012). Hicks and Holden (1995) note that those with little sense of control over their lives, or those who are in fear of the

future tend to adopt an understandable 'live for today' mentality, something that Lovelock (2006) also suggested by colleagues aware of their avoidance. Similar arguments can be progressed in terms of risk (Borne, 2013: 136) and while sustainability is an important concept at a global level, at an individual level it is complex and difficult to maintain and can lead to the emergence of 'a form of counter-reflexive behaviour at the individual scale, which has far-reaching implications' involving avoidance and indifference towards the integration of these discourses into curriculum practices.

These repertoires for the authors might be considered 'a symptom of environmental depression, based on the loss of articulated agency with respect to the environment and environmental protection' (Zeyer and Roth, 2011: 46; Borne, 2013). This has educational implications in that teaching about sustainability needs to pay attention to the repertoires available and try to extend them by offering alternatives (Brennan, 2001; Stibbe, 2009). Pessimism in environmental discourse may lead to denial, psychic numbing and cognitive dissonance, but it can also prove to be a prompt for agency (Biesta, 2005) *some parts of me are very very pessimistic, and in terms of saving the world from global warming I think that it is unlikely that we're going to do that, but, at the same time, I am really deeply committed to being active at all sorts of levels, to do something about it' (S2).* As Stibbe(2009) suggested different discourses will inspire different people in different ways and perhaps the key here links to changing agentic and pedagogical discourses where such change is at least considered possible if uncertain in terms of outcomes.

Dancing again with the data I looked to curriculum repertoires suggested by Hökkä et al (2010) in their research discussed in Chapter 3. From their inquiry the authors developed two meta-repertoires related to curriculum, the first linked to hegemonic

accommodation and the second to purposeful reform.  Again looking to patterns in local data respondents discursively constructed the competitive nature of curriculum as a difficult argumentative realm of contest and contention.  The backdrop for this was for all linked to change and for some to particular discourse coalitions and workloads supportive of earlier positions it seemed.  An issue of lack of time tended to dominate this discourse where we would like to develop curriculum *'but just haven't got time at the moment' (S4)* where *'we're so tied up in committees and structures'* and *'heavily focused on teaching, we've got every hour of  our year mapped out' (S3).*  Beyond that it was suggested that management models such as 'workload allocation' did not *'really reflect the time it takes us to do the work' (S3) so that 'we very rarely have the opportunity'* for educational conversations or collaboration.

The loss of disciplines, as something that had accommodated the economic purpose and diminished potential for curriculum development, potentially positons lecturers as curriculum developers into two different lines of discourse according to Hökkä et al (2010).  The first is as protectors of their own subject areas and in this a second emphasis involves negotiation of resources, where individuals who took up this challenge were positioned, according to the authors, as conscientious agents. This was noted in conversations in my own institution, linked not only to academic but to social and environmental curriculum purpose particularly by those not identifying themselves in disciplinary terms such as myself.  In conversations such competitions were expressed *'colleagues here have become a bit heated about this'* particularly when *'connected to sort of political egalitarianism and social justice stuff as well' (S1).*  Interestingly, the past was a time of a better approach to education when we *'used to have big debates about this'* but hadn't *'debated it for years' (S1).*

Issues of pragmatic approaches linked to personal preference and amusement of students was inferred here denying any sort *'of great vision about what sort of knowledge might be needed' (S2).* Notions of the conscientious teacher were linked to positions of knowing and non-knowing if in an inverted way *'where it is really for the knowing ones who thought that the whole this was a waste of time, discussing curriculum and what it should be like' (S1).* Perhaps more troubling was an inclusion in this discourse that suggested colleagues who do not agree with particular curriculum models and approaches would undermine them *'the main problem was that in effect your own colleagues were undermining you I think'* (S1).

Indifference was also highlighted in a context where *'we won't have a discussion'* but if we were more conscientious and *'if we really cared we would'* (S3) a discourse of reflexive blame perhaps. In this interdisciplinary working was discursively associated with the changing vocationally oriented Learning and Teaching Strategies that had broken down disciplinary boundaries and at the same time involved *'stretching across'* into areas of teaching with *'which we may not be familiar' (S2).* For some this had involved a discourse of marginalisation of being *'on the periphery'* involving *'a real struggle to kind of bridge that gap' (S4)* and this was linked particularly to student expectations and interests. In this the barriers to interdisciplinarity were both educational and personal. The discourse also generated possible areas of collective action given there was *'less othering of each other among the academics'* although increased *'diversity in standpoints' (S4)* might make more implicit assertions of competition that could suggest disciplinary protection as important and preclude working together in more sustainable ways (Brennan, 1991, 1994; Stables and Scott, 2001; Scott and Gough, 2007).

Hökkä et al (2010) note the practical knowledge repertoire as the second dimension of the accommodation meta-repertoire to be linked to the importance of curriculum and practical skills. The discursive shift emphasises vocationally oriented and experiential learning, and the requirements of employment [in their case linked to school subject studies and educational sciences] and hence danced with the sad story of disciplinary loss and the need for its preservation. In accordance with their findings, repertoires circulating within my own HE context highlighted the problematic nature of externally facing curriculum development that challenges personal and institutional sustainability suggested in the narratives above. Here the stretched curriculum would struggle to compensate for the lack of education in the face of training noted by the authors and a feature in LT2.

Suggestions of the need for greater interdisciplinarity within curriculum development that can focus on sustainability, may well prove problematic in light of current discourses within my own HE context which was in mourning of its disciplinary loss. Blake et al. (2013) from their own inquiry suggest this as a challenge to traditional curriculum models through its focus on soft skills. It is also seen to be essential to cope with the holistic, systemic nature of the world and emergent environmental issues, and in research oriented institutions noted by Ryan (2011) in Chapter 2, something that resonated with LT2 strategy perhaps. This also echoes Discourses of employability with the G8 University Summit's (2008) call for a global and interdisciplinary perspective, also emphasised in HEFCEs Strategy Update in 2009 (HEFCE 2009: 35). Wilson (1999) criticised disciplinary fragmentation and its effects on ontological uncertainty, 'the ongoing fragmentation of knowledge and the resulting chaos in philosophy are not reflections of the real world but artefacts of scholarship'

(cited in Blake et al, 2013: 9) supporting the need for poststructural curriculum models noted in Chapter 2.

For Selby sustainability necessarily crosses disciplinary boundaries, involving as it does 'aesthetic, cultural, ecological, economic, environmental, ethical, philosophical, political, scientific, social, spiritual, and technological dimensions' (Selby, 2006: 57). HEFCE (2008) in their review of SD in HE suggest wider barriers in terms of the governance of the sector, linked to economic and epistemic constraints through for example research funding and the RAE reflected in the discourse of S1 above . This had also been suggested by Becher and Trowler (2001: 181; Sousa, 2011) when they noted '[a]cademic communities are subject to influences from wider society as well as from the inherent nature of epistemological issues on which they are engaged', although the more I read the more readily I seemed to recognise the inherent complexities and contradictions in every discursive dance I had with the data. The call for a reinstatement of disciplines by each of the respondents might highlight further tensions here in terms of sustainability.

A theory/practice issue formed more of a basis for positioning speakers in discourse 'camps' and 'constituencies' more than disciplinary tribes, linking to a competitive repertoire but in a slightly different way perhaps as this incorporated issues of identity associated with alternative experiences of work. Here there seemed to be particular coalitions between self- identified academics and practitioners and at heart differences were expressed in terms of epistemic tensions between theory led practice and practice led theory. In curriculum terms this tended to support more instructivist and constructivist coalitions although again these reconstructions were always tentative and open to alternative interpretation I felt. All put forward a generic argument in terms of curriculum purpose linked to a 'universal umbrella' of

critical thinking and *'developing the student's capacity to think for themselves' (S2)* resulting in *'an independence of thought' (S4)* suggestive of an academic, liberal curriculum model rather than a critical or poststructural emphasis on critical pedagogy (Bracher, 2006).

What was also being articulated was that educational relationships with students were themselves contradictory where paying attention to students interests, needs and improving their consumer experiences sat in contrast with a focus on skills and learning outcomes which had led to being forced into a *'banking education'* (S3) model, suggestive of similar arguments put forward in review of literature and noted in earlier analysis. Again discursively the emphasis was on postecological and risk related articulations of what we could not do rather than what we could, and in moving to reconstructions of more reformist repertoires I hoped to be able to construct avenues of discursive possibility (Harré et al, 1999).

In terms of the more reformist meta-repertoire noted by Hökkä et althey suggest a dimension that they name as the collaborative repertoire. In my own institution the common external threat, from employers, policy or a more abstract economy, or internally from a top-down system of management, generated barriers to collaboration. Interdisciplinarity was also discoursed as a barrier to conscientious agentic autonomy, and in links to vocationalism as a threat to academic standards and professional autonomy more generally. While academic conversations were considered important, particularly for one respondent, the current situation and possibilities for the future were highly constrained by agentic repertoires suggested in earlier postecological analysis, where those who hoped to implement change were, particularly linked to social and environmental purpose, positioned as idealists, doom mongers or claiming some divine understanding that was seen as dangerous, even if

there was agreement in principle that these were important topics. These deviations in repertoires from those developed by the authors may link to cultural, institutional or individual differences between the different research contexts, issues of data sets and my use of repertoires in the process or some other reasons something that again suggests the need for further study.

Educational conversations were needed, and this offered a sense of hope, but generally this was set within a more pessimistic framework where failure was inevitable and discourses of autonomy seemed to override those for collaboration, where such interdisciplinary work tended to feature articulations of alienation, passivity, and further potentially irreconcilable conflict in the interests of students. Rather than building bridges, it would seem we would continue building discursive walls. Here I felt a sense of pessimism with regards to the system and an unsustainable future which I had introduced into the conversations through this inquiry, and in this I wondered if I too was potentially placing further constraints on discourses of hope.

The research-based knowledge repertoire suggested by Hökkä et al involves a more traditional academic genre of discourse stressing the importance of linking theory and practice. This was evident in my own analysis, again more hopeful than existent given the discursive camps noted earlier. The threats of risk, uncertainty and change had for those involved in this particular institutional discourse, limited their sense of personal agency, and questioned the agency of others. Time ill spent in pursuit of inappropriate measures of quality, accountability and performativity were restricting opportunities of research, and even when this was made available, constraints on such research linked to funding and external pressures noted earlier would further confound ideas of quality and educational purpose. Rather than ignorance of the

complexities, contradictions or concerns in practice however, these seemed to reinforce the sense of malaise and diminish more positive agentic discourse with articulations that suggested *'I don't have control' (S3)* or *'don't have an influence' (S2)* creating a discursive situation where *'there's just no thinking about alternatives' (S1).*

The final repertoire suggested by the authors relates to talk of a 'break with tradition'. This discourse is highly critical of current curriculum practice as outdated further looking to change which in a context of risk, might be captured by unhelpful Discourses of modernity.  Here criticism of traditional approaches, set within a knowledge society were particularly noted in my own context.  The contradictory nature of this discourse which on the one hand talked of autonomy, challenged change and shifts to vocationalism, and on the other sought to reform curriculum was interesting.  Reform was needed but it was not the sort of reform being forced on us despite our eyes being fixed on the directions of management and leadership. While inherently critical of the past, reform itself featured in this discourse of critique that was economic, social, environmental and agentic.  The discoursed necessity of reform as again linked to positioning of/as conscientious teachers also sat in contrast to notions of fundamentalist agency being articulated using Zeyer and Roth's (2011) common sense and agentic repertoires.  While agency might be possible and was certainly needed in my own discourse developed through review of literature and translated into empirical inquiry, this latter dimension offered less hope for change, and I could see the value of avoidance in academic pursuits that as noted could absolve personal sense of responsibility for change.  Confirming Elliott (2002: 293) respondents were well aware of and involved in articulating the 'climate of risk'

affecting self, others, and broader social and natural systems, although were limited in their articulations of possibility.

My final foray into the conversational data looked to both the future and discourses that were more hopeful, therefore, that might offer new ways of speaking that could break out of the environmental, social and personal pessimism reconstructed to date. Also, in confirmation of Emirbayer and Mische, (1998: 1008) I sought to highlight individual's 'capacity for imaginative and/or deliberative response' and suggested action. The emphasis here was on individual and teleological narratives of change, education and sustainability that attempted to go beyond modelling, to a more hopeful position and a reconstruction of the data that read new creative meanings into the circulating discourse and highlight my own engagement in the process. As noted below, analytical and reflexive memos became key here, linking earlier analysis with subsequent engagement with the data, and in this looking towards my own articulations, narratives and reflections as a source of data and learning (Peschl, 2007; Mezirow, 2000; Sterling, 2011).

Conceptual, normative and educational positions were highlighted that suggested agency in light of current concerns discussed in Chapter 2. As noted earlier for one respondent pessimism did not preclude articulations of more positive change and personal agency, and in this there was, given my bias and remembrance of my existential angst, a glimmer of hope. This discourse circulated as one of commitment and normative concern for colleagues, students, wider society and nature. *'I am really deeply committed to being active at all sorts of levels, to do something about it' (S2),* where *'I think it [sustainability] should be taken up, I think it is important anywhere in the curriculum' (S3),* where *'sustainability on all levels, I think it is absolutely relevant in every area, I can't think of one where it wouldn't be…' (S4).*

While once this might have proved highly self-affirming, I surprisingly challenged these articulations of sustainability as themselves open to question. This was a profound moment in analysis, although I had concerns that I could be enhancing my own sense of pessimism prompting personal avoidance of opportunities to take action.

In terms of curriculum development as the conversations progressed they seemed to prompt attention to ways coalitions and individuals could contribute, *'you raise an interesting point, it's a sort of blind spot for me ….. but here we are having an educational conversation, I know it's a research conversation as well, um, in which I'm learning'* (S3), the research interviews also prompted subsequent articulations of personal learning from the process giving it a measure of educational authenticity noted by Seale (2012) in Chapter 3, and indicative of the desire to engage in questions of knowledge and purpose which was itself hopeful. Disciplinary contributions were also discoursed *'I can see that perhaps… history would probably do that in different ways, [and] philosophy would do that'* and *'sociology'* (S1) was also articulated as a major contributor. Moving beyond more traditional curriculum discourses was also noted, of a more holistic approach *'when you're talking about what we're trying to do… its not just about the independent thinking skills they also have that kind of broader understanding of the society they live in and the world they live in'* (S4).

The power of conversation in the research process generated a different kind of 'linguistic turn', where the framing of the interviews shaped and included curriculum and sustainability in the conversations, bringing it into being and creatively filled with meaning in these moments *'so that's that's a really powerful thing isn't it, and, listening to you talk then I was thinking I wonder how it would be to do that with staff*

*here'* (S4).   In terms of the last comment while there may be a lack of clarity in D/discourses of sustainability (Brennan, 1991) including my own, analysis and more importantly perhaps the conversations themselves generated more hopeful visions in self.  Perhaps here rather than ways of speaking that resonated angst, fundamentalism, idealism and rationalised inactivity a different educational curriculum (Kelly, 2004; Biesta, 2005) discourse could start to emerge.  The author[s] of the Sustainability Statement too were committed to engagement with sustainability in the informal curriculum. Here a measure of autonomy and perseverance would be necessary perhaps *'the reason you were able to do it was that there was a bit of autonomy for academics'* where there is *'nothing else to do other than keep batting on about it, to risk being seen as a bit of a pain'* but where those who were conscientious or agentic were seen as *'heroes'* sustained by *'a mixture of hope and denial'* (S1).  Despite a discourse of limited influence of HE in the present or future, the importance of the experience of my studies was something personally noted in Chapter 1 and this too is shared, *'but certainly, my degree hugely developed my understanding of the world around me, in terms of global politics and interactions'* (S4).  Even institutionally muted positivity was noted *'we do offer a lot, we do have a lot going for us, we do a lot of good things that I think have probably been lost, at least to some degree, in the large institutions'* (S2).

In relation to risk (Beck, 1992, 1998, 2008) however embracing notions of academic knowledge and disciplinary expertise, awareness of the threats of industrialism to education and with a loss of social thinking and moral guidance primarily deferred onto others, this critique itself seemed to reinforce the D/discourses it was intent to undermine.  Interestingly, while knowledge was questioned, articulations of issues presented them as real highlighting perhaps our continued emphasis on scientific

[including social scientific] knowledge, key to notions of academic quality and autonomy, but also perpetuating existential and embodied notions of risk, doubt and mistrust.

Technological development seen as essential in texts remained generally unquestioned and this silence was in itself telling in maintenance of discursive risk by omission. The economic and utility value of nature or sustainability as a curriculum concept was noted as something key to its uptake which would involve management and wider decisions to which we were all prey it would seem. In this my own institution, along with HE more generally, could be seen to uphold his assertion that we can offer 'no clear solutions' (Beck, 1994: 9). There was an interesting and contradictory position adopted in discourse between academics as protectors of knowledge and professional autonomy and a questioning of both, a position in which HE could be constructed as cause, definition and solution to risks (Sousa, 2011). The view of other's using their autonomy in promotion of environmental sustainability was, as noted, viewed with similar suspicion. In this challenge, however, this discourse does raise pertinent questions about master signifiers and educational transferance more generally (Bracher, 2006).

In my dance with psychological discourse analysis interpretative repertoires highlighted patterns of talk, and attention to use of pronouns and indexicality drawing on earlier linguistic tools, storylines and attention to metaphors allowed for attention to be paid to notions of personal commitment and agency. Given my approach this could only be considered in personal terms I felt. It was also in recognition of my own dance and discourse of accommodation and postecological avoidance I had recognised in my own ways of writing and speaking. My reflexive emphasis in this was to take account of my own syllogisms, to consider the discursive positionings,

validations, significations and sense of rightness that touched me personally beyond my rational and empirical self, and in this analyses and memos offered particular insights, although mixed with the less well documented experiential moments that could never be entirely bracketed out of the process nor captured in translation into written form.  Attention to potential revisions of my discursive positions and selective agentic commitments as enactments paid attention to my own real and imagined coalitions, narratives and D/discourses as the process continued. While my own stories tried to make sense of an ongoing sense of guilt and confusion, they also seemed to be involved in its maintenance.  It was in this that personal feelings of risk emerged where challenges to my own actions in the past and present, to my own discursive contradictions prompted filling to the concept of change.

Empirical study had offered a number of challenges to my own interpretations and discursive constructions of experience where I was able to look at them in different ways that, in being free from realist certainty, begged a sense of wholeness which while ethereal was deeply moving. I considered perhaps I had fallen prey to the 'romance of resistance' (Ahearn, 2001) which in denial of personal contradictions and my own agency, had limited my potential for forgiveness and hope.  My metaphor of a dance, where my natural abilities to hear the tempo of the music and move in tune, to know different steps involved and follow or adapt them with particular partners, and to perhaps change the/my tune offers an ongoing sense of the individual and shared nature of our educational and worldly endeavours.  I feel I have reclaimed in some ways, although I am not sure I can express how,  my sense of agency in considering 'what a person can do in line with his or her conception of the good' and the possible (Sen, 1985 cited in Alkire, 2008:3; Meadows, 2001).  The power of conversation in the research process generated a different kind of 'linguistic turn', an

educational one, and perhaps the most important source of hope is that we still talk in such terms rather in the divisive categorisations of teaching and learning found in texts institutionally and in wider D/discourses (Biesta, 2005). Bringing sustainability into these conversations opened a powerful space for dialogic filling of the concept in educational curriculum terms (Kelly, 2004) and this prompted learning about the beat of my organisation and myself.

Given the pace of change, issues we face and futures we make, all curriculum developments and educational relationships involve risk, and in this 'education only begins when the learner is willing to take a risk'. While I had 'known' this I felt my learning through research left less room for the language games of accommodation and inactivity as Peschl (2007) had suggested. It has long been noted that learning involves responses to 'what challenges, irritates and disturbs us, rather than as the acquisition of something that we want to possess' (Biesta, 2005: 61) and the challenges offered in this inquiry had certainly been disturbing at times although I was and have always been keen to learn. Sustainability, educational curriculum, agency and other contested concepts and issues would seem important curriculum themes in prompting such disturbance (Selby and Kagawa, 2009) perhaps, and I am more convinced on this point, involving transformative learning (Sterling, 2004) and agency through 'coming into presence' (Biesta, 1999, 2001 cited 2005:61, 62; Peschl, 2007; Mezirow, 2000).

For Biesta (2005: 64) like Ahearn (2001; Biesta and Tedder, 2006; Sen, 2007; Alkire, 2008; Tregidga et al, 2011) education is a social and relational intersubjective process, where concerns for subjectivity and agency should provide opportunities for students to be able to show 'who they are and where they stand' and in 'being challenged by otherness and difference'. Returning to Bracher (2006), this involves

avoiding issues of even well-meaning transference to a radical pedagogy that challenges students to say what they think, where they stand and more agentically perhaps how they will respond.  The risk of such 'transcendental violence' it is suggested can also create 'conditions of possibility'.  Here Biesta suggests the immense responsibility that teachers carry that go beyond notions and measures of quality or meeting needs, of organisational and individual irresponsibility, to a deeper sense of 'responsibility without knowledge', something that resonated in his subsequent writings I now considered as I could dialogue with his works in new ways.

In focusing on D/discourse as a way to ask new questions about my constructions of the world, and in recognition that both body and self are 'experienced' through D/discourse, there was a space for personal engagement with the questions and the process of enquiry that looked towards personal sense of purpose and action (Lash, 1994, 2003; Sen, 2007, 2013; Alkire, 2008).  Peschl's (2007:141) existential dimension 'on the will, the heart, finality, purpose' involved 'a willingness to construe knowledge and values from multiple perspectives without loss of commitment to one's own values' (Mezirow et al, 2000: 12) echoing this newly found dialogue, although as noted this commitment was in part suspended by empirical engagement and in recognition of academic and professional challenges to my position.  The experiential process of 'epoché' (Mezirow et al, 2000: 13) or presencing' (Peschl, 2007; Biesta, 2005) of being emotionally prepared to be receptive was something that seemed to resonate with both my habits of mind, despite my avoidance tactics, and in the experience of conducting and writing about my research.   In and through this attention to self in inquiry Peschl suggests we move towards new visions and plans of action embedded and therefore agentic in their deeper understanding of

context (Caldwell, 2007; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Sen, 2007; Lash, 2000; Trowler, 2010). I move onto my reflexive and agentic 'conclusions' in the following and final chapter of this thesis.

# Chapter 5: Conclusions

At the outset of this thesis I aimed to explore a number of key questions that enabled an empirical rather than normative view of curriculum and sustainability in my own institution and more broadly. This Chapter suggests the position I now find myself in in relation to the topic, the research process and my own professional practice. The first question, largely framed through review of literature sought to contextualise this research through attention to change as a linguistic phenomenon, in which economic, socio-cultural and environmental D/discourses construct meaning and purpose for both curriculum, and sustainability in HE and position curriculum agents. In this a focus on Beck's theories of risk society and reflexive modernity proved useful in framing the global and individual aspects of research (Beck, 1992, 1994; Elliott, 2001; Cohen, 2000; Hajer, 1995; Wetherell, 2000a, 2000b). Empirically, focus on discursive positions in my own institutional D/discourses (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) was progressed through notions of 'storylines' and ''discourse coalitions' suggested by Hajer (1995; Elliott, 2001).

In order to engage with data as texts, linguistic, semiotic and narrative analytical tools were used to look at curriculum and sustainability as 'floating signifiers' or 'nodal points' filled with different meanings. In a process that was inherently driven by personal challenge, postecological and curriculum interpretative repertoires were utilised in critique of the symbolic nature of curriculum and sustainability, and their continued hegemonic influence (Gramsci, 1971; Blühdorn, 2002; Wetherell, 2001a; Beck 1994; Gruenewald, 2004; Hökkä et al, 2010; Zeyer and Roth, 2011) on and in HE. My final focus was linked to discursive constructions of agency, involving a shift of mindset to the languages of possibility and this self-reflexive engagement with the

process as a whole (Peschl, 2007; Caldwell, 2007) as 'decentred agent' with the possibility of 'making a difference' (Lash, 1994, 2003; Giddens, 1984 cited in Caldwell, 2007:2). Re-viewing the process and attention to my 'own agentic orientations' and their 'imaginative recomposition and critical judgement' (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:1010) is as noted the emphasis of this chapter.

In my approach I believe this thesis has offered a distinct and original contribution to knowledge in terms of the development and application of postmodern, poststructural and postecological D/discourse theory into empirical D/discourse analysis (Hajer, 1995; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000; Zeyer and Roth, 2011). Using the concept of D/discourse as a way of focusing on the language of curriculum as 'language in use' (Wetherell, 2001a; Reis and Roth, 2007) has provided ways of reconstructing the contested nature of curriculum, sustainability and agency in my own professional context (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Becher and Trowler, 2001; Hajer, 1995; Tregidga et al, 2011) that could foster educational and political analysis and further collegial dialogue. In this therefore I sought to go beyond more general articulations of what sort of curriculum should, or might, be involved in relation to sustainability (Tregidga et al, 2011; Biesta and Tedder, 2006) to a suggested construction of how individuals abilities, educational curriculum and environmental issues are discursively related (Coate, 2007; Biesta and Tedder, 2006; Alkire, 2008), that has, I hope further developed this emergent field of empirical research and understanding (Chouliaraki, 2008; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Hajer, 1995; Keller, 2013). Poststructural D/discourse analysis also involved 'broader concerns of social psychology, particularly the psychology of sharing and of social freedom' (Sen, 2013:18) and 'the capacity for willed (voluntary) action' (Biesta and Tedder, 2006:5; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Caldwell, 2007). In this a reflexive challenge was useful in highlighting

the potentially empowering nature of D/discourse analytic research in focusing on my own position, perspective and purposes through attention to Peschl's (2007) 'U-theory'.

As a person, learner and researcher I have felt, throughout the process and in practice, something of a postmodern *'bricoleur'* (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011: 4; Usher and Edwards, 1994; Scott and Gough, 2001), a 'jack-of-all-trades' [and some might add master of none], adopting interpretative, narrative, theoretical and political positions using 'whatever strategies, methods, and empirical tools' were available. For me this seemed entirely appropriate given the poststructural and constructionist lenses adopted, and the post or reflexive modern context in which I studied. As such my approach as epistemic dance has produced something of a montage, a discursive narrative that itself has personal, relational, spatial and temporal dimensions and qualities. This has involved a measure of creativity in my methodological approach to D/discourse analysis that can contribute to the needed if growing body of literature in the field. In many ways the idea of reaching conclusions feels somewhat out of place both paradigmatically and educationally, and I am not sure I have many conclusions but rather further questions and uncertainties, and plans of action.

Drawing on poststructuralism and D/discourse theories (Laclau & Mouffe, Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Hajer, 1995; Dryzec, 1997; Fairclough, 2001; Wetherell, 2001a, 2001b, 2009; Sylvestre et al, 2013; Iversen, 2014) enabled a de-centred approach that was helpful in moving from a normative to an empirical and self-challenging focus in reflexive inquiry, important given my bias for sustainability as a core concept in curriculum development noted in my introduction. This was furthered through

employment of objectifying techniques (Thompson, 1984; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002) moving away from personalising accounts as more interpretivist 'truths' (Schwandt, 2003; Bourdieu, 1977; Karol and Gale, 2004; (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Orr, 2009) .  Involving notions of the argumentative nature of D/discourse also enabled political and educational diversity and agency to be considered (Hajer, 1995; Dryzec, 1997; Ahearn, 2001; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000).

From the outset my epistemological positions in poststructural D/discourse analysis has been open about the constructed, provisional, incomplete and tentative nature of my inquiry linked ontologically to similar recognition of imperfection and questioning of knowledge and truth (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002).  Through this lens, more conventional measures of goodness, of reliability, validity, and generalizability or replicability, are seen as inappropriate.  Notions of credibility and plausability, dependability, confirmability, coherence and authenticity have been considered more applicable (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Potter and Wetherell, 1994; Seale, 2012).  In attempting to highlight particular relationships between methods and claims both within my own internal conversations, helped by keeping memos, and for the reader I have sought where possible to be transparent and open enhancing it is hoped a sense of trustworthiness and descriptive and interpretive validity (Seale, 1999: 486, 2012).  Analytic and reflexive self-critique has foregrounded and challenged my own position and allegiance to sustainability although my analysis could still be questioned in this light as well as in terms of sampling (Fairclough, 2003; Flick, 2002; Denscombe, 2007).  Analysis has also been interpretive, personal and as such has rested on my own limitations of knowledge, reading and writing.  I hope however, that rigour in the process is evident to the reader.

Given the institutional and argumentative focus of analysis (Hajer, 1995; Dryzec, 1997; Harré et al, 1999), Guba and Lincoln (1989) and Seale (1999, 2012; Golafshani, 2003) suggested a range of politically sensitive measures of quality, stressing inclusivity and fairness within the process, and a number of 'authenticities' that should be present in relation to the practice of research. While I could not necessarily link these approaches in relation to colleagues involved, they were useful in my agentic consideration of the process (Caldwell, 2007; Slaughter, 2004: Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Peschl, 2007). In terms of ontological authenticity, I believe as noted above that I have developed more sophisticated understandings of the topic, my organisation, this research approach and myself, although suggest this to be epistemic given my poststructural and constructionist stance. My argumentative approach to D/discourse analysis lent itself to a measure of educative authenticity making me more attentive to and understanding of alternative perspectives and positions, and colleagues also expressed learning from the process, although I neglected to ask in what ways. In terms of catalytic and tactical authenticity, Peschl's (2007) U-theory and notions of agency have prompted change in existing discourse although this has been experienced as limited at this time (Seale, 2012: 488-9), it is hoped that this work will open up lines of dialogue, and further attention to my own and others discursive practices as I dance on, hopefully.

Analysis of Strategy documents (Learning and Teaching Strategies, 2005-2009 and 2010-2014) utilising linguistic, semiotic and rhetorical techniques paying attention to orders of D/discourse (Hajer, 1995; Fairclough, 1995, 2001; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002; Sylvestre et al, 2013) and associated tools highlighted comparatively changing narratives, linguistic patterns and omissions and semiotic devices that could be suggested to maintain more widespread hegemonic discursive orders that

work to preserve dominant curriculum models. These 'technical' (Kelly, 1989), 'vocational/neoclassical' (Kemmis et al, 1983), 'functionalist' (Askew and Carnell, 1998), and 'global competitive' (Selby, 1999, 2005) models and instructivist or transmissive pedagogical approaches  potentially position staff as scientific and technical experts, students as passive and 'malleable objects' and learning as linear, technical rational featuring disciplinary learning and transference (Kelly, 1989:62; Bracher, 2006; McKernan, 2008). This is viewed as an inherently unsustainable curriculum model (Huckle, 1999; Cortese, 2003; Sterling, 2001; Selby, 1999, 2005) that maintains an industrial mindset and risk, stifles criticism and does not question our relationships with nature. Social purpose noted as part of institutional identity was also discursively constructed in strategic curriculum texts highlighting Discourses that emphasised liberal progressive, client-centred or learner-centred models (Carr, 1998; Kemmis et al, 1983; Jickling, 2003; Scott and Gough, 2007; Selby, 2005; Askew and Carnell, 1998; McKernan, 2008).  Here a more reformist, humanistic model could be linked to an emphasis on student agency (Heilbroner, 1985; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Biesta and Tedder, 2006; Jickling, 2005) which in calls for teacher neutrality (Scott and Gough, 2007) however could fail to draw attention to sustainability by 'omission', and focus on the learner can thwart their agency through a sense of isolation in the learning process (Huckle, 2008).

This painted a potentially gloomy picture for the D/discourses of more sustainability oriented curriculum models – particularly critical and poststructural - finding a home in this environment.  More challenging was recognition that my own texts reflected this hegemonic position in terms of both the textual articulations themselves and the practices [assessment] that seemed to emanate from it highlighting the functional/action oriented nature of D/discourse (Potter and Wetherell, 1998).  Here

D/discourse could be seen to position knowledge, learning and teaching and fill these 'floating signifiers' and 'nodal points' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Tregidga et al, 2013; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002) with meanings linked to more global emphases as Discourse (Alvessen and Kärreman). Critiqued in terms of risk 'culture' (Lash, 2000) and reflexive modernity, these maintain issues and uncertainties socially and individually. In terms of agency, risk is said to depersonalise, disempower and engage individuals in new levels of self–critique or 'reflexive modernity' (Beck, 1992, 1994, 1998, 2008; Giddens, 1990) and this was certainly the impression formed in the process. For Bauman (2005) a constantly changing 'liquid life' (2005: 2) is based in consumption and confession (2005, 2007), where personal identities are shared and opened up to public questioning and multiple sources of 'expert' advice, rather as in this thesis perhaps, and I remained attentive to self as both researcher and researched .

At the same time this approach alerted me to the power of D/discourse analysis in diminishing the realist sense of closure with a loose sense of structuring (Wetherell, 2001b) that, in the possibility of multiple interpretations, forms the shifting sands of discursive practice and demands ongoing decision-making and identity formation within contexts of economic, socio-cultural and environmental insecurity. Having to permanently decide between articulations of curriculum and sustainability certainly adds weight to the pertinence of theories of risk and reflexive modernity in contemporary HE (Beck, 1992, 1994, 1998, 2008; Giddens, 1994; Lash, 1994, 2000) and the inherent tensions this might create for more sustainable curriculum development in a knowledge society (Cochrane and Williams, 2011; Sousa, 2011; Brown, 2011). Here I moved beyond dualism involving notions hegemonic domination and resistance to one inclusive of notions of chaos, indifference and

freedom (Harré and Van Langenhove, 2010). Control and domination can never be fully secured because of agency in part achieved through 'consideration of the more fundamental, ethical, psychological and spiritual responses needed to cope with the emerging ecological crises' (Newman, 2009:100).

The second phase of textual analysis involve a single Sustainability Statement that enabled a measure of eco-critical Discourse analysis (Harré et al, 1999; Stibbe, 2009; Sylvestre et al, 2013; Hajer, 1995; Dryzec, 1997; Blühdorn, 2002) using Kellert's (1993) environmental perspectives in what was conceptualised as an informal curriculum document. This presented reinforcement of traditional curriculum Discourses of HE, maintaining a people-nature dualism in educational terms, a division between popular and high aesthetics and an emphasis on management, measurement, technological fixing, market interaction and consumption, and individual choice and responsibility. This could be read as nominalising organisational or wider educational responsibility for problems or in taking action (Fairclough, 2003; Porter, 2007; Sylvestre et al, 2013).

Hökkä et al (2010) and Zeyer and Roth (2011) were particularly helpful in carrying me from textual analysis of Discourse to analysis of talk as discourse (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000) further highlighting links between the local and wider including global ways of speaking through attention to interpretative repertoires (Wetherell, 2001a, 2001b, 2009). Through this lens the critical and realist nature of institutional discourses of unsustainability was seen a particularly problematic in maintaining, despite uncertainty, dominant articulations of failure of any attempts to promote positive change (Sousa, 2011). Hicks (2010: 13) draws on Heron (1999) to discuss the ways in which our anxieties 'embrace both the personal and the planetary' that

through dissonance and denial 'creates blind spots and zones of self-deception' at individual, organisational, national and global levels. This certainly resonated with my own interpretative analysis as noted.

As an interesting aside, and there have been many, Norgaard (2006 cited in Hicks, 2010: 12) found educators, men and public figures to be most prone to 'emotional management techniques' making it 'impossible' for people to engage in any discussion or social activism in relation to global warming'. I had noted, in my own analysis gendered notions of such 'emotional intelligence' in a discourse of avoidance and for me this would be an interesting avenue for future D/discourse analytic research, among so many others considered in the process. My growing confidence in using particular D/discourse analytic approaches has instilled a sense that I want to ask others to dance with me in further inquiry. I shall take steps to seek out colleagues locally and globally, and of course look for funding, to pursue shared interests.

In moving from Discourse to discourse and back again, I could see how in many ways we were creating or constructing the issues we discussed and in this maintaining and perpetuating a view of curriculum, each other and the world that we did not necessarily want to or believe in. The pessimistic narrative reinforced articulations of angst and fundamentalism in curriculum and agentic terms, in a storyline (Hajer, 1995) of dangerous knowledge, puritanism and exclusivity (Bowers, 1993, 1995; Jickling, 1992) that it was said disempowered students, creating a space where they were frequently told what they could not do leaving them increasingly uncertain about what they could (Beck, 1994; Bracher, 2006; Blühdorn, 2002). As Bracher notes, this can also, through processes of transference and othering within

such discourses, alienate students and colleagues generating institutional violence through potential humiliation and punishment, and cultural violence through the promotion of certain qualities and ideals. In many ways the use of postecological interpretative repertoires highlighted discourses of agency attached to environmentalism and sustainability as abnormal and unlikely to succeed. This, in light of my own concerns regarding my promotion of sustainability was particularly pertinent to the reflexive process at the heart of my study.

Throughout this thesis, organisational focus on and empirical analysis of D/discourses of curriculum and sustainability involved a reflexive process of ontological, epistemological and existential challenge inspired by notions of [decentred] agency (Caldwell, 2007; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Ahearn, 2001; Sen, 2007) and triple-loop or transformative learning (Peschl, 2007; Mezirow et al, 2000; Sterling, 2004; Slaughter, 2004. As such I attended to personal and academic descriptions of self in earlier sections of my thesis with this chapter engaging in ideas of redescription at the 'end' of this process.

For Bonnett (2004: 46) such redescription of ourselves and our world is important in trying to find 'more interesting' and 'more fruitful' ways of speaking about sustainability, and Stables and Scott (2001:275) suggest, drawing on Rorty, that there are opportunities for 'progress' through attention to such concerns in the absence of epistemological certainty. The authors continue:

> We must have our regulative ideals (truth, beauty, nature, sustainability), but we are often most effective in acting on them when we abandon attempts at absolute and enduring understanding and do what we can to act on them contingently….. Given that our thinking is constrained by the problematisation of the old, easy assumption of possible concensus, and must be done in the context

of varied and shifting cultural perceptions and practices, we can make only tentative, short-term and conjectural statements about how to move to a more post-humanist curriculum that might result in greater care for ecology and the environment.

While my mind remains 'awash with uncertainty' (Kagawa and Selby, 2008), and this has felt uncomfortable from an academic and research position at times, from a professional position I have reached a number of points of 'crytallisation' along the way about my own views and suggestions of plans that I may take into future research and practice for 'testing' (Peschl, 2007; Mezirow, 2003; Sterling, 2010-11; Slaughter, 2004). I considered Eliot's lines as pertinent in highlighting my sense of this renewed institutional construction.

*We shall not cease from exploration*
*And the end of all our exploring*
*Will be to arrive where we started*
*And know the place for the first time.*

T.S. Eliot -- "Little Gidding" (the last of his *Four Quartets*)

My own values and attitudes towards sustainability, social justice and individual responsibility have not necessarily been transformed by the process, but have been challenged and through focused attention I have had to answer those challenges in light of institutional and agentic reconstructions. As a dance partner my grip has loosened on the concept of sustainability as a master signifier, in part through recognition that my own language games in its name have themselves been prone to lexical poverty and political and normative rhetoric. In this I potentially close down alternative ways of speaking and writing, reinforce hegemonic curriculum Discourses and restrict the possibilities for discovering more sustainable ways of life.

Rather than closure, I still believe sustainability holds potential for open, dialogic and agentic engagement that can be profoundly educative, if I remain alive to listening to discursive diversity and can become multilingual. Recognition of discursive coalitions and multiple cultural configurations within HE institutions, suggests a 'market gardening' rather than an 'agribusiness' approach in discursive practice and curriculum development (Trowler, 2010: 4). My developing discursive literacy will I think prove useful in engaging with colleagues more effectively and confidently. If as noted 'most organisational change heavily relies on discursive processes, such as [re]definition, [re]labelling, or [re]interpretation', or 'discursive manoeuvring' (Zelle, 2009:6 also Fairclough, 2000, 2001), I believe this is an important lesson that I have started to learn.

Another useful aspect of this research echoing Laclau (1990: 44; Howarth, 2013: 4) was my involvement in a process where the goal was not to try to understand what curriculum, sustainability or agency is but more a focus on 'what prevents it from being'. As noted in my analysis and discussion I had left little space for language games or inaction (Peschl, 2007) as a result of this process and in my developing understanding of context, increased readiness to question and bring to light my own sense of 'self' and positioning of others I have had to engage with where I stood, what for and what I could do about it (Biesta, 2005; Bracher, 2006).

The emphasis on ecological and critical realism constructed from interpretative analysis of talk seemed to maintain pessimism that was systemic and agentic, as noted above, and in this light I wonder if there is a need to move beyond socially critical curriculum models, and attendant realist tendencies (Huckle, 2004) and D/discourses that can maintain pessimism, political paralysis and emotional despair

that accompanies fear of/and risk (Freire, 1992; Beck, 1994; Ahearn, 2001). My reflexive and agentic attention will now extend my knowledge and enactment of poststructural approaches in curriculum development, and develop D/discourse analytic teaching resources as learning tools, in the context of educational sustainability, that are potentially more in step with a language of possibility and enactment of agency (Ahearn, 2001, Alkire, 2008; Biesta and Tedder, 2006). Here as throughout I am open to challenge and change.

I sense that institutionally we need a language of hope, although this may be the most difficult thing to change certainly in isolation (Sen, 2007). Freire suggested this to be an ontological need, and given my 'findings' or more my 'feelings' I would agree:

> I do not understand human existence, and the struggle needed to improve it, apart from hope and dream. Hope is an ontological need. Hopelessness is but hope that has lost its bearings, and become a distortion of that ontological need … Hence the need for a kind of education in hope. One of the tasks of the progressive educator…is to unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles might be (Freire, 1994: 2-3).

Despite any 'evidence' to the contrary I remain hopeful rather than idealistic I feel. In my increased recognition of uncertainty and discursive diversity I have become more aware not only of the constraints imposed by D/discourse but also a sense of possibility. As Karlberg notes, through conscious commitment and effort, we can change the discourses that surround us, over time (Karlberg, 2008:311; Stibbe, 2009). Here I sense Orr's (2009) notion of 'realistic hope' as something which:

> requires us to check our optimism at the door and enter the future without illusions. It requires a level of honesty, self-awareness, and sobriety that is difficult to summon and maintain. I know a great many

205

smart people and many very good people, but I know far fewer people who can handle hard truth gracefully without despairing...Authentic hope, in other words, is made of sterner stuff than optimism. It must be rooted in the truth as best we can see it, knowing that our vision is always partial. Hope requires the courage to reach farther, dig deeper, confront our limits and those of nature, and work harder (Orr, 2009: 184-85; also cited in Hicks, 2010:15).

It is with these words that I begin a new dance.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Excerpt from Framing and Structure Analysis

| Learning and Teaching Strategy Initial THOUGHTS | 2005-2009 | 2010-14 Being reviewed 2014/15 |
|---|---|---|
| Framing<br><br>From we will be to we are.. arrival through engagement with markets… and sustainability of/through these relationships?<br><br>Change of Leadership and government, change of staff but representative of cultural shifts - explanations keep springing to mind !! It does not feel 'objective' in the sense of removing myself.<br><br>Earlier/ broader for me sounds more ESD although limited rhetorical statement.<br><br>Further framing via reference to other strategies [named] clearer articulation in terms of intertextuality<br><br>LT2 confident, market oriented shift supported by seven key aims [from Strategic Plan] 'learning for life' holds potential but preceding and subsequent market orientation strengthened in structure. Sustainable futures noted although in a less than light green frame… shift to participation at the end | 'We will be the Community University College of the South West, providing high quality, holistic, enabling and supportive learning, teaching and research opportunities to meet the needs of individuals, groups, the region and beyond' | "As a high quality and vibrant higher education institution with a strong community focus, providing learning and opportunity for local, regional, national and international markets our mission is to provide 'learning for life'<br><br>underpinned by seven key aims to:<br><br>• Provide high quality learning programmes and work towards the achievement of university title through accessible and vocationally orientated learning to meet the needs of individuals and communities<br>• Achieve excellence in learning and teaching through the provision of high quality and intellectually challenging applied professional and vocational learning opportunities underpinned by advanced scholarship and applied research<br>• Provide high quality student support enabling students to reach their full personal and professional potential and equipping them for employment and further study<br>• Deliver sustainable futures through the promotion of good leadership and effective management and solutions, both in terms of cost and performance, in all activities<br>• Be inclusive and accessible, supporting those able to benefit from higher education irrespective of background, beliefs and views and ensuring equality of opportunity<br>• Working creatively in partnership with people, employers and communities, contributing to their social, cultural and economic development through encouraging |

207

| | | | participation in University activities and supporting progression through the different levels of higher education |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | • Build capacity and good practice in research emphasising applied research and enterprise and knowledge exchange and working with a wide range of partners |

## Appendix 2: Comparing Aims of Strategic Plans 2005-2010 [abridged] and 2010-15

| | |
|---|---|
| 'Aim for excellence in learning and teaching, gaining and maintaining the highest possible levels of external confidence in our quality of provision and sustaining an enabling and supportive student-centred learning community' and<br><br>'Maintain and develop an attractive, high quality, campus estate and create a modern information infrastructure that can meet future expectation in learning and teaching' | 1. To provide high quality modules and programmes which promote excellence and innovation in learning and teaching, scholarship and research, professional and inter-professional training.<br><br>2. To develop flexible, inclusive and accessible learning opportunities which meet the needs of a changing student body.<br><br>3. To prepare students for their future employment / study through the development of appropriate knowledge and understanding, intellectual skills, practical skills, and, key and transferable skills.<br><br>4. To provide high quality educational facilities to support and enhance the learning environment.<br><br>5. To integrate education for sustainable development into the curriculum. |

**Key**

Shift in framing

Same words

Greater emphasis on sustainability in curriculum added 2014

Perhaps similar intent

New? – skills [not comparable?]

Appendix 3: Second Dance with Analysis of Learning and Teaching Strategies

| Learning and Teaching Strategy 2005-09 | Learning and Teaching Strategy 2010-14 Being Strategic 2011-15 Being 2014/15 |
|---|---|
| 'We will be the Community University College of the ~~~~~~, providing high quality, holistic, enabling and supportive learning, teaching and research opportunities to meet the needs of individuals, groups, the region and beyond'<br><br>AIMS<br>1. To promote both excellence and innovation in learning and teaching, scholarship and research, professional and inter-professional training and development<br><br>• Develop innovative modules and programmes which reflect contemporary developments in learning, teaching and assessment, including e-learning [blended learning] and work-related experiences<br>• Achieve highest possible quality in educational provision and have confidence in the academic standards<br>• Ensure that scholarly and research activity underpins all aspects of learning and teaching<br>• Promote leadership across the institution in both teaching and research<br>• Recognise and reward staff who have demonstrated excellence in learning and teaching<br>• Develop and disseminate good practice in learning, teaching and assessment<br>• Encourage staff to forge links with appropriate external bodies [eg HEA]<br>• Develop opportunities for knowledge exchange | "As a high quality and vibrant higher education institution with a strong community focus, providing learning and opportunity for local, regional, national and international markets our mission is to provide 'learning for life'<br><br>AIMS<br>1. To provide high quality modules and programmes which promote excellence and innovation in learning and teaching, scholarship and research, professional and inter-professional training.<br><br>• Develop and extend the existing portfolio of modules and programmes to reflect contemporary disciplinary developments, which are informed by scholarly and research activity and applied professional practice<br>• Develop learning and enterprise activities through partnership and collaboration<br>• Develop innovative approaches to learning, teaching and assessment, making extensive use of e-learning and work-related activities<br>• Promote and reward excellence, innovation and leadership in learning and teaching<br>• Capture and disseminate good practice in learning, teaching and assessment<br>• Extend the expertise of all staff by supporting continuing professional development and external engagements with other HEIs, subject associations, learned societies and professional bodies<br><br>Key<br>Differences in situ/changed position/removed<br>Similarities in situ<br>Similarities changed position<br>Different or strong shift of emphasis<br>Condensed but similar |

210

Appendix 4: Chains of Equivalence and Difference between LT1 and LT2 – The Discourse of Learning

| Learning in LT1 only | Learning in LT1/LT2 | Learning in LT2 only |
|---|---|---|
| Experiential learning<br><br>Holistic learning<br><br>Learning for Competitiveness<br><br>Objective learning<br><br>Academic learning | High quality learning opportunities<br><br>Learning for work<br><br>Learning Skills<br><br>Flexible learning<br><br>Inclusive learning<br><br>Supported learning | Vocationally oriented learning<br><br>Vocationally relevant learning<br><br>Applied professional learning<br><br>Transformative learning<br><br>Intellectually challenging learning/advanced scholarship<br><br>Appropriate knowledge and understanding<br><br>Access to accurate information<br><br>Training |

'You will be technologically literate, with cutting edge understanding and skills in service delivery. You must have sound business acumen and be effective market analysts with high levels of social capital.  You will be flexible and strategic in planning and managing your work, maximising efficiency and effectiveness through ongoing professional development and technological innovation.

You will be inclusive, ethically aware and responsible, and develop the same qualities in your customers.  You will possess excellent public relations skills and leadership qualities, enhancing customer satisfaction and repeat business.  You will also develop and provide a sustainable development experience that will transform peoples' lives'.

Appendix 6: Sustainable Education Curriculum Keywords in LT1 and LT2 (Sterling, 2010, 2011, 2014; Tilbury, 2011)

| Keywords Missing<br><br>Keywords Changed | LT1<br><br>Sustainable | LT2<br><br>Sustainable x 4 |
|---|---|---|
| Concepts<br><br>Interdependence<br><br>Citizenship and stewardship<br><br>Needs and rights<br><br>Diversity<br><br>Quality of Life, Equity and Justice<br><br>Sustainable change<br><br>Uncertainty and Precaution in Action | Needs x 3<br><br>Diverse<br><br>From Strategy:<br><br>• Learning for life<br>• Prepare for future challenges<br>• Provide opportunities to critically examine the nature and formation of judgements in areas of prejudice, bias, stereotyping<br>• Recruit students [and staff] and to enable them to become highly qualified, creative, constructively critical people, able to contribute to the improvement of the human condition | Needs x 5 |
| Pedagogies<br><br>Active<br><br>Participative<br><br>Experiential<br><br>Holistic<br><br>Interdisciplinary<br><br>Values clarification<br><br>Ethical dimensions<br><br>Applied learning<br><br>Dimensions of Sustainability Literacy<br><br>Holistic            Creative<br><br>Critical<br>Systemic<br><br>Appreciative       Ethical<br><br>Inclusive<br>Practical | Experiential x 2<br><br>Critical x2<br><br>Values [not clarification]<br><br>Creative<br><br>Holistic<br><br>Inclusive x 3<br><br>Ethical | Applied learning<br><br>Ethical<br><br>Creative<br><br>Participation x 2<br><br>Inclusive x4<br><br>Practical x 2<br><br>Transformative |

Appendix 7: Self Analysis: Programme Descriptor

| BA (Hons) | The ##########  Programme aims to provide an academically challenging and intellectually rigorous course of learning that develops the skills and competencies relevant to the increasing professional opportunities for employment in educational and other professional contexts. Specifically, the programme aims to engage students with concepts of individual and social change and development, the nature of knowledge, and critical engagement with ways of knowing.<br><br>This programme will be of particular interest to those students wishing to pursue a career related to ………….or other related professions, here or abroad.  In a 'knowledge economy' and with an emphasis on 'lifelong learning', education is seen to be of crucial importance for individuals and societies – potentially the most important thing for economic prosperity, social justice and a more sustainable future.  Through active inquiry into contemporary …. issues, policies and debates surrounding the purpose and possibilities of education, students will develop their understanding, skills, and personal and professional identities. |
|---|---|

Appendix 8:  Re-articulation of Programme Descriptor

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Original [### Framework]:

Specifically, the programme aims to engage students with concepts of individual and social change and development, the nature of knowledge, and critical engagement with ways of knowing.  ==In a knowledge economy and with an emphasis on lifelong learning, education is seen to be of crucial importance – potentially the most important thing for economic prosperity, social justice and a more sustainable future.== Removed. Through active inquiry into contemporary ……issues, policies and debates surrounding the purpose and possibilities of education, students will develop their understanding, skills, and personal and professional identities.

Reconstruction [### Framework, more recent addition]:

We aim to engage students with concepts of individual and social change and development, the nature of knowledge, and critical engagement with ways of knowing, with particular emphasis on ideas, issues and needs of students at this stage of their education.  Through active inquiry into contemporary educational issues, policies and debates surrounding the purpose and possibilities of education, students will develop their understanding, skills, and personal and professional identities.

Appendix 9: Assessment [Level 4] Original and Revised Programme Descriptors

| Programme | 'original' | 'new articulation' |
|---|---|---|
| Assignments | 6 Essays<br><br>2 Reviews<br><br>1 Group Presentation<br><br>1 Oral Presentation | 6 Essays<br><br>2 Reviews<br><br>1 Poster/Blog<br><br>1 Reflective Journal<br><br>1 Portfolio<br><br>1 Presentation<br><br>1 Picture Book |

Appendix 10: Graduate skills for employment

| for SD | Employers [as articulated by graduates] | Employers |
|---|---|---|
| The ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing | Spoken communication | Communication – both oral and written |
| The ability to think about systems [natural/social] | Problem solving | To work strategically and operationally |
| The ability to work co-operatively with other people | The ability to work in teams | Networking abilities |
| The ability to think critically about value issues | Leadership | Awareness of current issues in relevant fields |
| The capacity to move from awareness to knowledge to action | Numeracy | Teamwork |
| The ability to think in time – thinking ahead/planning | Creativity | Potential ability to manage budgets |
| The capacity to use various processes – knowing, inquiring, acting, judging, imagining, connecting, valuing, questioning and choosing | Advanced IT skills | [Good time management skills; problem-solving] |
| The capacity to develop an aesthetic response to the environment | | [Ability to critically appraise situations and data; analytical ability and data analysis skills] |
| (UNESCO,2002: online; JPOI, 2002:online) | (Purcell and Elias, 2004) | (Anderson and Mitchell, 2006) |

**How 'green' is ###### [accessed January, 2014)**

'Green' is a much overused and badly defined term, sometimes used simply as a way of burnishing a corporation or institution's image. So I think it is worthwhile setting out what we mean when we talk about being 'green'. Claims we are not simply engaged in 'greenwash'. [nominalisation]. Who is I, who is we? Speaking for institution….and offering a unified meaning of 'green'. Strong modality. Use of active pronoun 'we', could also imply active sharing of reader in what follows..

At the University of ######## we have a green campus. It's green as we are fortunate to have a fair amount of green grassy areas, such as the football and rugby playing fields. We have a large grassy area in the centre of the campus, the Quad, which comes in handy for picnics, setting up the marquee for SU events and just generally relaxing in the sun between lectures. We have a duck pond and a woodland area, allotments and an orchard and all around the site there are trees and flowers and wildlife from butterflies to bats and dragonflies to deer (they've eaten the lettuce on my allotment more than once). So if by 'green' we mean somewhere with lots of open space with plants and wildlife then ##### is certainly a green campus. Colloquial, friendly approach links to campus as 'green' and in terms of biodiversity. Links green to sports 'fields' although not terribly 'green' in terms of biodiversity perhaps. Links to utility, aesthetics, 'relaxing in the sun between lectures' separation of education [work] and leisure [pleasure], image of sunshine, focus on lectures further divorces learning from environment and pleasure while reinforcing a traditional notion of HE?

But what about 'green' in its usage as an environmental term. Well there are a number of factors that would affect how 'green' we are. To start with there is what we as an institution do to manage the impact we have on the environment and that can be broken down into a number of separate areas such as: Impact management. Light green, links with managerial discourse alongside traditional educational discourse.

**Power –**

Why does it matter? Well if all our power needs were met by renewable sources there would be no problem in consuming as much as we could afford. Links to renewable, consumption of what we can afford.. market interaction and nominalization – met by who? We could be running air con 24/7 and leave the lights blazing throughout the night. If we could afford? But since most of our power comes from fossil fuel, a finite resource we share with the rest of the world and the burning of which contributes to the production of greenhouse gases, the responsible thing is to not use more gas or electricity than you need too. Shift via object pronoun to individual reader to do the responsible thing? That means insulating your buildings, using efficient lighting and equipment and turning things off when they are not needed. Technological fixes and individual behavioural change needed on the part of the reader? So we have embarked on a programme of replacing lighting with the low power variety, updating boilers to more energy efficient versions and trying to raise our users awareness of their own power

consumption. Technical and raising awareness by those who are aware? Use of possessive pronoun as lexical device that nominalises organisations actions and weakens modality. Reinforces HE as site of knowledge to be passed on.

**Waste –**

We have removed all waste bins from our offices and instead positioned recycle and general waste bins all around the campus. This has the advantage of helping staff become more aware of the waste they produce another shift and rift and separating out recyclables at source and we no longer send any of our waste to landfill it all goes either for recycling or incinerating. Awareness of waste 'they produce' no longer we, lexical shift again.  Division of labour in terms of process, measures taken.  Benefits re recycling and incineration but does not challenge consumption, as above.

**Fair Trade –**

We have gained Fair Trade accreditation and continue to work hard to educate our consumers as to why this matters. Educate our consumers… discourse of the market and education for the market.  We know why it matters?

But the largest impact on the 'green agenda'  is not what the institution does it's what we as individuals, staff and students, do both here at ##### and in our private lives. Shifting responsibility here 'not what the institution does' could absolve us from doing much at all. We all make choices and some of these choices will be' green' and some won't.  We choose how we travel, what we purchase, how we dispose of things we don't want, how we use power and water and how we engage with the rest of society.  notions of rational choice and individual responsibility.

So the answer to the question 'How 'green' is #####?' We're greenish with a desire wish or want rather than need to be greener. And the staff and students of #####, well they're object pronoun decentred self just like the rest of society and whether they become greener will depend only partly on what we do here otherwise it's a personal choice contested prognosis, culpability and assumes equal choices? an individual makes after a period of reflection or it's forced on us by societal pressure or government decree. I'm hoping for the personal choice option.  Focus on individual further supported and freedom of choice … society as enemy akin to government suggests top down threats to individual choice are a problem and should be treated with suspicion.  Symbolism, utilitarian, managerial to technological optimism and moralistic behavioural stance. Through this potential exclusion of alternative visions of 'greenspeak', and despite emphasis on personal choice this sits in an antagonistic relationship with 'managed behaviour' ie removal of bins.

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