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Christie Pritchard

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Pritchard, Christie

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UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

A RELATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE WRITING CAFÉ:
SOCIAL LEARNING, PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES
AND TENSIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

by

CHRISTIE JO PRITCHARD

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Plymouth Institute of Education

July 2021

Author's declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of *Doctor of Education* has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.

Work submitted for this research degree at the University of Plymouth has not formed part of any other degree either at the University of Plymouth or at another establishment.

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Abstract

Christie Jo Pritchard

A Relational Analysis of the Writing Café: Social Learning, Participant Experiences and Tensions in Higher Education

The Writing Café is a social learning space designed to support the development of academic writers within one Higher Education institution. The relationship between learning, space and practices is an emerging area for researchers and this thesis makes a productive contribution to knowledge by using Bourdieu's relational framework to explore the game from the perspective of the players. The story of the Writing Café connects the practices within a particular sub-field to the wider institutional field and explores the pedagogical possibilities. Considering the Writing Café from a micro, social and cultural perspective contributes to the ambition of achieving a social approach to thinking and learning about writing in higher education and how this manifests within changed habitus.

An ethnographic methodology was used to explore the practices of the Writing Café and fieldwork involved participant observations, semi structured interviews with staff and student actors and reflexive field notes. The fieldwork was conducted over an 8 month period with those that worked in the space, those visiting it and those whose power plays out within it. A thematic framework allowed for analysing structural properties that constrain and influence the practices of the Writing Café, the capital that interacts in, on and out of the field and how this is perceived from multiple perspectives. It voices the individual experiences and collective habitus that embody the culture of practices in one higher education institution.

The findings demonstrate the Writing Café is complex and can be considered simultaneously a site of affordances and constraint. As a sub-field within the University the Writing Café practices are significantly impacted by other sub-fields and their positioning. Whilst it holds strong autonomy in pedagogic aspects of its culture, it is weak in its positioning within the overall University priorities and agendas. This research evidences the doxa of students in deficit in relation to their linguistic and academic capital is strong and the institutional habitus positions students to seek support. At times, students embody this through their habitus. The thesis critically reflects on the Writing Café contributing to the reproduction of exclusionary practices and demonstrates how, at times, it makes students feel like fish out of water. Whilst the Writing Café is invaluable for some actors, for others the practices exclude them entirely.

However, it also indicates opportunities for transformation, working with students to create dialogue and critique academic writing practices as well as wider institutional practices. The thesis concludes with recommendations for change and future development.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1: Background to the Study

This thesis stems from over 15 years' experience supporting students in Higher Education (HE). Although I have had various roles throughout this time, each of them has been on the 'front line' with daily contact and interaction with undergraduate and postgraduate students and academic staff from across the disciplines and other supporting roles. During the time of this research I was working as a Learning Developer supporting more than 20,000 students in a post 1992 university on the South Coast of the UK. As a member of a central team focusing on supporting students engagement with teaching and learning I am in an informal position of experiencing and influencing the pedagogy and practices of the academy outside of a specific faculty, school or discipline. My role sees me working with students and staff across the University to develop academic writing practices, embed critical thinking into programmes of study and offer advice and guidance to support students in their academic journey. The way this takes place varies, but includes teaching within the curriculum, stand-alone workshops, and tutorials with students providing feedback and one to one guidance and advice.

In 2013, I had the opportunity to change the way academic writing support was offered to our students as the team moved from an individual one-to-one tutorial appointment system based in a dreary back office within the library, to the establishment of a social and peer led Writing Café. The Writing Café was co-designed with students, academics and the Learning Development team with the aim of sharing, discussing, exploring and developing academic writing practices across the disciplines and the institution. This was a considerable shift in focus from our previous offer of

helping students integrate into the existing practices and socialisation in to their disciplines. When I began this research in 2015 I had been overseeing the coordination of the Writing Café for just over a year and had been influential in establishing its inception, mission, physical space and the training for the team of student Writing Mentors that work there. Yet, it was becoming increasingly apparent that the practices which took place within the space were also positioned by the wider structures of the higher education landscape, the pressure on academic staff to teach, research and be responsible for programme management amongst the many other areas of work. There was also an increasing awareness within the Writing Café team of the apparent consumerist nature of students, the lack of resources within our department to successfully support our new venture and of particular interest to me, the resistance to change practices across the University. My drive to undertake this research was therefore founded on understanding *how* these structures played out in the day to day activities of the Writing Café, my role in them and the way this is considered by the students and staff I work alongside. The provisional research question for this study was:

How do the dynamics of space, power and educational values impact the practices of the Writing Café?

Yet, as the research progressed, it became apparent that these forces do not just impact the Writing Café, the Writing Café also impacts the institution and the practices that take place within it. It was becoming evident that the Writing Café contributed to changing the teaching and learning offer at an institutional level and yet was stifled in other respects, therefore my research question was modified as follows:

How can a relational analysis of the Writing Café help inform the practices of the University?

Specifically, I was interested in how the social learning space of the Writing Café acted as a lens through which the differing cultures of academic writing practices across the University could be explored. To begin to answer the research question it became apparent that I would need to explore and understand how the various users of the Writing Café experienced and understood it. Bourdieu's relational framework provided a way of exploring the various perspectives of different people who interact in and on the space, and is a powerful theory for making visible how power plays out. This in turn could allow for understanding, analysing and examining the wider culture that would impact the future ambitions for the project. I wanted to be able to understand the future development opportunities for the Writing Café and how I might be able to navigate these from within a central team. I wanted to be able to critique as well as make suggestions for improvement.

There was another motivation to undertake the research. I wanted to share the insight this social learning space offered. There were challenges and tensions I felt on a daily basis, including the increasing demand in student numbers as the word spread of our support, the requests from students to 'fix' their writing and the apparent disinterest some student and faculty members had in working collaboratively. However, there were also conversations which took place that felt like they were of real value to direct and influence policy and practice at the University. Conversations around students' attitudes to wider University agendas, their understanding of academic writing practices and their critique of disciplinary practices and processes regarding teaching and learning. I felt these were conversations that were increasingly apparent to me

and the team who worked in the Writing Café, but they were not something I heard more widely within the different University committees and conversations. These areas were not often talked about openly in the University and were only beginning to appear within education literature, therefore they could provide valuable insight into understanding the student learning experience from a particular intersectional, transdisciplinary perspective.

Therefore, in order to understand how a relational analysis of the Writing Café could help inform University practices this research needed to also act as a lens through which to observe and analyse the policies, practices and tensions within the sector today, from multiple perspectives but predominantly through the lens of the student. It is hoped that in voicing these perspectives and relating them to the local institutional context the research itself and myself as a researcher act as a cultural critic to help us to move forward in the complex and often contradictory landscape of higher education in the 21st Century.

1.2: The Writing Café: an Overview

The Writing Café is a physical, open-access café in a popular and busy building on a University central campus. The original drive to establish the Writing Café was to provide a space for students and staff to discuss their academic texts in progress and reframe the traditional notion that academic writing is solitary and isolated (Moore, 2003; Murray *et al.*, 2008). The Learning Development team wanted to provide a space that would allow for a social practice of learning. The ethos behind the Writing Café also acknowledged the literature that contends writing is not an easy endeavour, even for those who are particularly experienced and that technical advice alone would not help writers to develop the combined strategies needed for their progression and

development. Moore (2003, p.333) argues that even the most 'experienced academic writers encounter difficulties, challenges and obstacles in their effort to write effectively and productively' and it was hoped the Writing Cafe would provide the space to explore this collaboratively in a shared environment. The historical legacy of the coffeehouse, the predecessor to the café, is rooted in a culture of community, collaboration and social activity and these were the values that I wanted to encourage in the Writing Café (Ellis, 2005). Whilst many universities have Writing Centres, the Writing Cafe was the first in the sector. It differed in that it was designed as a specific social learning space whose focus was not on orders, cover numbers or making a profit, but rather a social learning place for students and staff that focused on encouraging discussions and dialogue around academic literacies and texts in progress, across the disciplines. By framing the Writing Café in this way I hoped to move away from one-to-one discussions led by an 'expert' and provide the space to learn together as members of an academic community. Whilst it was clear that some of the team's work would focus on supporting and socialising students into the culture of academic writing, given our core remit was working directly with students, I also hoped to influence the culture of teaching and learning towards a social model of learning.

During the time of the research I coordinated the Writing Café, scheduled and oversaw the Learning Developers who also worked in the space to support the project, and trained the 25 students who came from a range of academic disciplines and levels of study to work as Writing Mentors. The recruitment of Writing Mentors was open to the whole student body, with first year students through to doctoral level students able to apply for the role. In practice, students were informed of the opportunity to become a Writing Mentor through their Schools and applied directly with the Learning

Development team. The recruitment process did not ask students for their grades or expect high mastery of academic writing, but rather a willingness to learn about the practices and a drive to support other students. Training of the Writing Mentors formally took place in a one day event before starting their role. This covered aspects of academic writing theories, practical mentoring experience through role play and reflective activities to consider their understanding of themselves as writers. Ongoing opportunities were also provided throughout the year, alongside the on the ground experience they gained working in the role. This Learning Development team worked closely with the Writing Mentors to facilitate conversations and writing activities with both students and staff members, learning together.

As well as daily presence from the Learning Developers and Writing Mentors a number of workshops and collaborative teaching sessions were held at the café during the term, including writing in different disciplines, collaborative writing events and the opportunity to work in partnership on a range of research projects. The driver for providing this support stems in part from academic writing being a central feature of HE with both undergraduate and postgraduate students being required to meet the objectives of their assignments by articulating and communicating their arguments clearly. Often students are forced to use the 'hidden' rules or conventions of subject-specific writing practices (Gourlay, 2009) without the guidance or teaching and learning interactions to render these more visible. As academic writing is still the most dominant form of assessment and can therefore be considered as having 'high-stakes', students, and indeed staff, are driven to understand how to produce text in a specific way in order to succeed on their programme of study or within their career (Clughen & Connell, 2012; Hardy & Clughen, 2012; Lea, 2004; Lillis & Scott, 2007). Support

provision in this area are common across the HE sector, yet the way in which the support is provided varies from institution to institution, depending on their pedagogic strategy. The inclusion of staff working alongside student Writing Mentors in these spaces is not the dominant approach for many central writing support ventures. Skills sessions are still the prevailing method to supporting academic writing which focus solely on explicit rules and conventions and therefore have an instrumental focus and position learning as acquisition, and in turn the work of Learning Developers as 'remedial' (Gamache, 2002, p.277). These bolt-on, didactic sessions encourage an unwelcome epistemological belief that knowledge is an 'external, objective body of facts' (Gamache, 2002, p.277) which in turn leads students to objectify their ideas and processes of discovery through writing, ultimately leading to a lack of engagement in scholarship (Richardson, 2005). Undertaking this research was an opportunity to explore the challenges ahead of us with the Writing Café project as we moved away from the dominant approach. In order to try to shift the focus from bolt on sessions, at the Writing Café Learning Developers and Writing Mentors work alongside students to support them to consider how they learn, how they make sense of academic conventions and crucially how they can critically participate in, and change these conventions and practices at an institutional level, if possible. It was not intended to take place with every student that we meet, but the Writing Café wanted to support students to consider both the implicit and explicit practices of HE and to try to take steps to move towards a partnership model.

From the outset, the space was designed in collaboration with students and staff members, both in terms of the design and the environment in which they like to write. We also explored how the support would work within multidisciplinary groups,

recognising there may be value in discussions that branched across disciplines. We grappled with how we could open up conversations that some felt were quite challenging as they grappled with their identity as a learner through their academic writing. In late 2012 we were able to identify a space to launch the project, in a former disused café which the University's subsidiary catering company had closed down due to it not making a profit in previous years. The space was typical of the University at the time, plastic furniture, grey walls and carpets, a small space, overcrowded with furniture that had made its way there over the years, not really belonging here or anywhere else. After a number of focus groups and discussions with stakeholders across the University the Writing Café was framed as an inviting, informal social learning space. An open access, homely space, furnished with comfortable and reclaimed seating and decorated in a way that made it stand out from the rest of campus. Penguin book wallpaper adorns the walls and makes for a visually interesting aesthetic. Whilst it does not look like a traditional space for teaching and learning, the Writing Café is there for students and staff members to participate in, and question, the practices of their disciplines as well as develop their identities, explore their ideas through writing and for the former, ultimately become a student. As the Writing Café is not directly involved in assessing students' work, it was thought to some extent to be free from the teacher-student power relations and some of the practices of performativity at the institution. Learning Developers and Writing Mentors are able to learn together in this space to bring into conversation competing discourses, agendas, policies and practices at the university and within the HE landscape. It was this I wanted to interrogate through this research.

The students who access the support come from every School across the University. In the first year of opening the Writing Café in 2013, approximately 50 students from a small range of disciplines including Education, Health Professionals, Nursing and Midwifery and English visited. By the time this research was undertaken just over 4 years later, students from across all of the Schools visited the Writing Café. The number of students accessing it during this academic year was approximately 600, demonstrating the growth of demand and highlighting the extent of its use. Students from all stages of study visited the Writing Café, from those new to academia and unfamiliar with academic writing, right through to those undertaking postgraduate courses. Staff members also accessed the peer support whilst studying for their postgraduate certificates in education or other professional development courses. Hundreds of other students were also supported by the Writing Café during this time, however they are not included in the overall figure above due to these sessions taking place as part of their programme, within a workshop or event, held outside of the Writing Café and for entire cohorts. Soon after the Writing Cafe launched it became apparent that this social learning space was a melting pot of conversations around power, politics and practice within the University. Conversations took place debating the political landscape in which higher education was operating, the varying practices of teaching and learning and the competing discourses and values students encountered whilst trying to engage with their disciplinary bodies of knowledge. Whilst the main aim of the Writing Café was to provide a space to explore academic writing practices, this research project intended to analyse how wider agendas impact the Writing Café practices, how students and individuals experienced their encounters and act as a case study investigating the culture of academic writing teaching and learning at this particular University.

1.3: My Journey to Higher Education

Before looking to the literature that has informed and shaped this research, I will briefly outline my own journey to higher education and how I came to be in the position to do this research. Throughout my childhood and into adolescence my Mum told me to 'get an education'. What this looked like, which disciplines were acceptable or how I was supposed to achieve it were not discussed, not prescribed, but it was clear that she wanted me to go to university. As a single parent who had not easily been afforded the chance to study at a higher level, she was keen for me to make the most of the opportunity she saw available to me. Although she did not say it in these words, she was encouraging me to gain the academic capital and credentials that could open doors to my future. She did not really mind what I studied, or where I studied, but it was very clear that I should continue education beyond school. I had enjoyed a childhood of being curious and always encouraged to try new things, to give it a go and to enjoy learning, although this did not always translate into formal schooling. At school I was described as a 'strong' student but one that needed to apply herself. In truth, I was often underwhelmed by much of the content of the curriculum, and although in some subjects I was motivated to learn, in others I struggled to find a way to remain interested. Like many pupils and students I was encouraged by specific teachers that I admired and formed relationships with, and their influence, alongside my mum's words, eventually helped me to decide I would pursue study at university. When choosing which university I would go to I did not have the social capital to understand that the field of education is not equal, nor did I care to think about this step in my life in much detail. I had taken a gap year in order to delay having to commit to this next step and when the time eventually came, I decided to go the University

that my sister had studied at 4 years before. For me, it offered the programme of study I thought sounded interesting, which in itself had narrowed the field down to only two institutions, and so I quickly settled on the one that was by the sea. That made it an interesting option for the 18 year old me. Those were really the only factors I considered in my choice of university. I did not attend an open day to get a feel for campus life, I did not compare institutions in any other meaningful way other than the city seemed like somewhere I could live. Considering this from a Bourdieusian lens, I did not have the capital to see the power at play in the game, nor did I have the habitus to feel comfortable within more prestigious universities. The literature surrounding students' choice and parental influence for current applicants highlights that many students are more aware of the different choices available to them and have varying levels of market awareness. This was not my experience. Although, I benefited from the government agenda to make university level education accessible to all, and without the support of government finance and loans I would not have been provided with access to the field. Whilst my sister had been to the same university shortly before, growing up we did not have conversations around the dinner table about what university was like, what to expect and how it worked. This was a world that was entirely new to me in many ways. As I embarked on my course I remember thinking, what even is an essay? The concepts students still find challenging as part of the transition to higher education were unknown to me too. I did not know what referencing was, or crucially, what it was for. I too became hung up on where the commas go, and which bits are supposed to be in italics, at least in those first years. These are areas students still ask me about now in my role. For me, and for some of the students I work with, our understanding of the system of higher education starts with where do you want to live, and what course interests you. It is not always shaped

positively by family experiences of understanding the game, learning from those who have played it.

As I progressed through my course I benefitted from a love of learning, being interested and motivated to embrace the opportunities available to me, but not by feeling as a fish in water with the educational spaces I was now a part of. The support of friends and the programme team helped me to progress, but it was only when I began working for a University that I really started to see the different cultures, variation in the experiences students had and the different games at play, even within the same institution. As a Learning Development Advisor I supported students across the disciplines, from different backgrounds, who had different levels of 'success' within the system. I also worked alongside different programme teams within different Schools and Faculties and it was only then that I came to understand that there are positions of power across the various sub-fields of higher education. This power is embodied and privileges and rewards certain students based on their knowledges, values and behaviours. Power and positioning also played out with the colleagues and staff members I worked alongside and a drive for this research was to understand how this impacted what I was able to achieve in my role coordinating the Writing Cafe. This thesis is not an attempt to review the field of higher education in its broadest sense to the field of political and economic power as other researchers have, but to dive into a specific sub-field within academic literacies teaching and learning and explore this dynamic social context. Bourdieu therefore provided a way of attempting to explore the struggles professionals like myself may have in trying to adopt transformational pedagogies and to highlight how some students may experience their encounter with

our hegemonic system. Ultimately, it is an attempt to share and critically explore the Writing Café practices and how these influence and are influenced.

1.4: Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1 of the thesis explored the background to the research and outlines the research aim of undertaking a relational analysis of the Writing Café to inform University practices. It also provided an overview of the establishment of the Writing Café, its purpose and the partnership approach it aimed to take. It explored how the Writing Mentors were trained and the diversity of the students who visited the learning space. I have also outlined my journey to higher education, offering a positionality statement that explores my experience and how I came to be in the position to undertake this research.

Chapter 2 goes on to situate the research within the literature and begins by briefly mapping the field of higher education and the emergence of social learning spaces within HE institutions. It explores the academic writing practices dominant within the sector and the tensions between theory and practice in supporting students and staff to develop as academic writers. It also explores the driving values of Learning Development professionals, the positions they occupy within institutions and the remits of their role in developing and supporting students to engage with academic writing development. Chapter 2 ultimately demonstrates the gap in the research on social learning spaces, as well as the gap in the scholarship of Learning Development as a profession turning the gaze towards themselves and their contribution to exclusionary, reproductive practices.

Chapter 3 introduces the theoretical framework that underpins the empirical analysis by introducing Pierre Bourdieu's relational concepts of field, capital and habitus.

Central to Bourdieu's concept is the notion that a field is relational and that within fields individuals, groups and institutions are positioned relative to others as they struggle for different positions and resources, or capital. The theoretical framework explores how these concepts have been built upon by subsequent researchers and how the concepts have been utilised in educational research. Here the focus is on analysing the concepts that are later employed in Chapter 5. It also highlights the 3 stages of field analysis that provides structure to Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology of critical ethnography and identifies the research site of the Writing Café as a sub-field within the University. This chapter considers the epistemological and ontological stance of the methodology and how the use of critical ethnography allowed for exploring the power dynamics within the intersectional field of the Writing Cafe. As well as highlighting my positioning as a participant researcher Chapter 4 also explores the ethical tensions, reflexivity and research methods that were used throughout the research.

Having set the scene and introduced the fieldwork and framework underpinning the thesis it moves on to Chapter 5, which is divided into 3 main foci; the Writing Café as sub-field; the pedagogy of learning; and changing the game, changing habitus. After bringing these arguments together in the conclusion, the thesis ends with post pandemic remarks.

Chapter 2: Situating the Research: the Literature

2.1: The Field of Higher Education

Before turning to the research methodology it is important to understand the changing field of higher education and where this thesis locates itself within the existing scholarship. By briefly exploring the shifts in UK higher education I hope to position this research within the wider political landscape. Whilst this research is prevalent and often quoted in the debates on education, it is useful to consider as a background to this research project as it outlines some of the tensions at play in the sector and how they emerged. In the UK, higher education saw dramatic transformations during the 20th Century with major expansions, reclassifications and institutional differentiation appearing at a significant rate (Osborne, 2003). Shifts in government policies and directives of key government departments demonstrate the influence of political power on the academy and long before the release of the 1997 Dearing Report (1997) there was a participation agenda (Maringe & Fuller, 2007) fuelled by social justice and economic rationale (Lea, 2015; Watson, 2013). This massification of higher education alongside the increasingly global neoliberal climate is continuing to stratify the sector. Bourdieu (1988) described this shift in relation to the French education system and argued that enabling monetised educational relationships led to change and a growing political influence on all aspects of university life, including curriculum design, teaching and learning, research and assessment practices (Ainley, 2003; Ainley, 2016). Writing around the time of increasing UK massification, Peter Scott stated that:

‘...for the first time in Britain, anticipations of higher education have been internalised. But, at the same time, mass systems are also more static systems which entrench and legitimise social hierarchies, while elite systems offered upward avenues for able working-class students’ (1995, p.173).

This socioeconomic context has allowed the processes of marketization and monetisation into areas of public life which historically would have been considered as autonomous institutions that define their own purposes (Watson, 2014). Yet as Bourdieu observes, contemporary neoliberalism is a 'strong' discourse embedded in power structures and relationships that aim for politically managed markets (Bourdieu, 1998), and this has not passed the higher education sector by. The relationship between the fields of power and the field of education is complex, but what is clear is that the new model of repayable tuition loans (BIS, 2011) and the 2012/13 transfer of public funding from institutional teaching grants to student loans for fees has linked institutional revenue with the ability to attract students who will pay fees (Watson, 2014). As Bourdieu states, not all players within a given field hold equal positions (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), and those institutions characterised as 'new' hold a less dominant position in comparison to the widely revered red brick institutions, or universities belonging to the Russell Group formed in 1994. Whilst these universities are able to sustain their operations with high volumes of economic capital from research funding, newer universities are largely dependent on student fees for income (Watson, 2014). The divide between the former polytechnics given university status after the 1992 dissolution, and the historic universities demonstrates sub-fields within the sector, each holding different positions in relation to parliament and government finances. These institutions operate to distinguish themselves and their purposes, yet the Russell Group, from a market value perspective, is in a stronger position. Not only is it less reliant on student fees for income, but it also attracts more 'traditional' students who may have higher entry qualifications, or cultural capital, than those from less privileged backgrounds (Watson, 2013; Watson, 2014). This research was undertaken at a post-1992 university.

Thus, higher education institutions and their members, subject to unprecedented government scrutiny and steerage have also had to compete in market forces (Henkel, 2005). The need for maximising income has changed the roles and functions within universities, with auditing and monitoring models and managerial practices becoming commonplace (Henkel, 2005). One of the key benchmarks in the sector for student recruitment and an area which is given enormous resource, commitment and focus, at least for those institutions in more turbulent positions within the field, is national league tables. Serving to differentiate and rank universities against a number of criteria, league tables have been under much scrutiny in the literature, yet they still continue to have a hold over those in more precarious positions within the field. They contribute to a performative culture within the sector (Ball, 2015) and this discourse of neoliberal free-markets increases the performative agenda, fuelled by rankings, student satisfaction surveys and students being positioned as consumers. This has had a significant impact on the University where this research was undertaken, as it has the sector as a whole, as students and staff respond to these pressures.

How policy shifts in education have shifted, stratified and changed over time has been well researched and scholarship argues that the *modus operandi* of higher education has altered (Thomson & Holdsworth, 2003). Bourdieu's relational thinking tools have been deployed to consider the autonomy of the field of higher education and it has been argued that a weakened relational autonomy has contributed to a utilitarian view of higher education as an instrument for achieving politically desirable outcomes (Naidoo, 2003). Naidoo (2004) argued that understanding the concept of autonomy in the field from a Bourdieusian perspective is also central to the development of the field itself and this thesis uses the notion of a sub-field to interrogate practices within a

specific higher education institution. Bourdieu's concepts have also been employed to understand how the practices of marketisation have changed the role of academic workers and how the field, market and the conditions of work are all related (Collyer, 2015). Collyer's (2015) research concluded that universities are sites of conformity and resistance simultaneously and that although the marketisation of universities has changed and distributed power differently, their structures are not only reproduced but also changed through social action. In exploring the relational autonomy of the Writing Café and in applying Bourdieu's concepts this thesis will contribute to our understanding of how positioning and position taking plays out in the daily life and micro practices of the University and how it too may be a site of conformity and resistance to neoliberal agendas and demands.

2.2: Social Learning Spaces in Higher Education

'We need a better understanding of the role of space in the dynamics of creating more productive higher education communities...and its connection with learning and research. *This should be the subject of further research*' (Temple, 2007, p.6).

During the early 2000s there was recognition and a growing interest in the complex field of learning spaces within education settings (Boddington & Boys, 2011b). In the UK, significant investments took place in universities campuses and their infrastructure as the sector shifted from instructional discourses to discourses of learning (Elkington & Bligh, 2019). Campuses were quick to change elements of their estate, or entire estates in some institutions, which led to researchers opening up questions about the environments and spaces in which people learn and the theoretical consideration of how to analyse and evaluate these spaces (Boddington & Boys, 2011b). The

relationship between learning, space and practices still remains a worthy area of research, as Elkington and Bligh conclude:

‘...despite the relationship between spaces and learning receiving growing recognition as a fundamental aspect of the debate on contemporary approaches to learning and teaching in higher education, and so ushering in a broader emphasis on learning space design as ‘sites for learning’; our understanding of the complex interplay between spaces and learning remains largely underdeveloped, lacking a clear evidence base’ (2019, p.4).

Thinking of learning spaces in a relational way, understanding both the space and learning is an ongoing area of research, particularly through exploration of current learning and teaching ventures. Before turning to consider the key themes within the literature it is important to note the various use of terminology that is used within this field. Throughout the literature there is an overwhelming array of terminology to describe spaces for learning in higher education, including, but not limited to; Next Generation Learning Spaces, Learning Spaces, Flexible Learning Spaces, Informal Learning Spaces, Future Learning Spaces (Boddington & Boys, 2011a; Elkington & Bligh, 2019; Fraser, 2014; Temple, 2007; Temple, 2008). Whilst this can complicate our shared understanding of what we mean by social learning spaces, it highlights the continuing interest in the field and situates this thesis within a growing body of knowledge on connecting *how* and *where* students learn.

The Emergence of Social Learning Spaces

‘The development of purpose-built informal social learning spaces as a strategy to enhance the student experience is becoming more prevalent, although empirical research in this area is lacking’ (Matthews, Andrews & Adams, 2011, p.105).

As Matthews *et al* highlight, empirical research focused on social learning spaces in higher education is under-researched, particularly in relation to student experience. This research evidences the voices of the students participating in the practices of the Writing Café, thus contributing to our collective understanding of what takes place within social learning spaces. These social learning spaces can provide an environment for students to interact with each other as well as members of Faculty and wider support teams, yet research analysing the practices within the spaces remains an area for further exploration. The literature highlights that learning spaces are often located outside of the formal spaces for teaching such as the classroom, and provide students with the opportunity to take command over their own learning (Matthews, Andrews & Adams, 2011; Oblinger, 2005; Oblinger, 2006). However, whilst historically there has been research into classroom layouts, particularly within the school environment, there has been less attention paid to informal learning spaces within higher education. The research that has taken place in more recent times has been criticised as problematic as it is often given a taken for granted logic (Sagan, 2001). This is due to it largely not addressing the social practices of learning and as such lacks theoretical underpinning. Boddington and Boys argue that:

‘Learning is always situated and embodied, not just in material space but also in individual, social, cultural, economic and political contexts. Space can only be viewed in relation to its occupation, that is, as socio-spatial practice’ (2011b, p.Xii).

As this quote demonstrates much of the contemporary research into space and learning does not consider the relational interplay of these social learning spaces and therefore offers only anecdotal, and unsupported claims (Temple, 2008). This thesis

contributes to this area by providing an empirical analysis, using a specific social learning space as a case study.

If we recognise that the relationship between space and learning is constructed personally, culturally and institutionally then we can continue to gain more insight into this complex, diverse and fluid debate. Savin-Baden (2011) calls for a better understanding of the way space is conceptualised as learning space and how learning as an activity is socially and spatially embedded. She argues that learning in HE is considered as a trajectory, most commonly expressed as a journey from one place to another, implying a linearity or instrumentality (Savin-Baden, 2011). This perspective gives fixed beginnings and ends, which will seem familiar to those used to marking rubrics, course outlines, and assessment criteria, but fails to acknowledge those unfixed learnings and unbounded spaces, which Savin-Baden terms 'interconnected intersections' (Savin-Baden, 2011, p.102). For her, these are the moments in time where spaces are not seen as separate sites, but as moving images within a much larger network. Thinking of the Writing Café in this way helps us to understand how other practices within the University setting interplay with the culture of this particular social space, in this particular timeframe.

Whilst many modern educators may recognise that learning is situated and embodied, and despite the growing development of social learning space on our campuses, much of the physical campus at our University is still geared towards the enlightenment emphasis of scholarly, disembodied information being imparted by a teacher, filling the mind, as if it were an empty vessel. As Sherringham and Stewart note, in HE, the 'learner is placed, as far as possible, in a space that allows the mind to be engaged and the body to be neutralised' (2011, p.109). Whilst the campus may not mirror the

current pedagogic thinking, it is not as simple as having an informal or alternative space equalling a good learning environment, and a traditional one, as a bad learning environment. In fact, another important driver behind this research is to move away from opposing views and simplistic oppositional descriptions and develop a relational understanding of social spaces, locating them in time, space and multiple sets of practices. Research identifies that we need to further understand and articulate the conceptualisations of learning in HE in relation to social learning spaces as Boys (2001, p.64) argues:

‘we have hardly begun to scratch the surface. The field remains seriously under-theorised and under-researched.’

As learning in HE is transitional, with the introduction of new knowledge unsettling our image of who we are (Sagan, 2001) who we are as learners, and who we become in relation to others, then it is clear that learning is indeed related to space. Factors such as environment, relationships, culture, gender and class play a significant part of who we are, and in our remaking (Bourdieu, 1988; Bourdieu, 1993). Thus, spaces are not neutral. They are not good or bad, nor are they truly created but they can be defined by the relational relationship between those that use them, and by the practices that take place in them and how the different positions people adopt surrounding them shape what people are able to ‘do’. Viewing them in this way, social learning spaces emerge as learners interact with the environment and the space is imagined, perceived, defined and articulated by the community. They are not created because we simply design them and offer them for use within our institutions, nor are they static and stable. As Boys argues ‘we change space through our affective encounters, just as space changes us, through a process of embodied negotiations’ (2001, p.52).

Boys raises the important notion that these spaces change and shift as people and practices interact in and on them. As previously outlined, much of the research on social learning space has focused on the design of physical space and student and staff evaluations of them (Fraser, 2014; Keppell, 2014). It is only within the last few years that the focus on social learning spaces has shifted to exploring how they may contribute to pedagogic practices and the development of student learning (Elkington & Bligh, 2019) and as Fraser highlights 'we know very little about...these spaces in relation to pedagogic practice, curriculum design and student outcomes' (Fraser, 2014, p.xxii).

Whilst this thesis does not touch on student outcomes in terms of grades and achievement, it does highlight transformative moments for students through the pedagogic practice encouraged by the team facilitating the discussions at the Writing Café. Whilst higher education learning does not take place in one single type of space, but a range of places and spaces which students move through during each day, this thesis therefore contributes to understanding one space that could be considered as an interconnected intersection. This thesis is not an attempt to search for a universal truth about the Writing Café as a social learning space that can be packaged and easily replicated, but it does aim to contribute to the field of understanding social learning spaces through the understanding of how people are related to each other in social space with respect to different types of capital they hold, and how that is valued within the space in question. Although there were clear aims for the Writing Café project as previously outlined, and an explicit awareness of the pedagogic practices and the design of a learning space that does not necessarily mean it will be used in a certain way (Fraser, 2014). Therefore, exploring the variety of ways the Writing Café is used as

a social learning space, in line with our aims and the times these are compromised is crucial in gaining a holistic understanding of the complexity of experiences. In conclusion, there is a place for empirical research exploring the role of social learning space in higher education, providing a lens to consider pedagogic practices at our University as well as how individuals encounter and act within these spaces. The current literature focused on social learning spaces as relational is still an ongoing project, in which this thesis locates itself.

2.3: Learning Development in Higher Education

Learning Development: a Brief History

As the team responsible for the ongoing provision of the Writing Café, it is important to briefly consider this profession within the field of higher education and consider how these teams came to be. 'Learning Development' has been used as a term to describe the work of professionals involved in supporting students' learning in higher education since the mid-1990s (Gosling, 1995; Hilsdon, 2011). Whilst I do not intend to map out the entire history of the profession in detail, briefly understanding its emergence within the UK higher education sector is useful to understand how this has impacted the scholarship and subsequent research areas within the discipline. As highlighted in my writing for the EdD614 module focused on Professional Learning, the widening participation agenda and policies within universities at this time created the space for the emergence of new areas within the university, including study skills units and learner support teams. The expansion and massification of higher education in the 1990s and the recruitment of 'non-traditional' students led to the creation of new roles aimed at helping to ensure students had the necessary skills to succeed (Hilsdon, 2011; Hilsdon, 2018). Those recruited to the roles quickly identified the limitations of

their posts, as well as how students were described negatively in terms of their writing abilities and prior experiences of learning being unable to set them up for success (Hilsdon, Malone & Syska, 2019; Lea, 2015). Numerous professional bodies also emerged in response to these new professions, including the Association for Learning Development in higher education in 2003 (Hilsdon, 2011; Hilsdon, Malone & Syska, 2019).

The Values of Learning Development

Although the practices of Learning Development teams and individual roles and responsibilities across the UK differ and vary (Pritchard, 2018), there are shared values amongst those who identify as Learning Developers, as outlined by the Association for Learning Development in higher education's shared value statement (2021):

1. Working alongside students to make sense of and get the most out of HE learning
2. Making HE inclusive through emancipatory practice, partnership working and collaboration
3. Adopting and sharing effective Learning Development practice with (and external to) our own intuitions
4. Critical self-reflection, on-going learning and a commitment to professional development
5. Commitment to a scholarly approach and research related to Learning Development.

These values play out differently institution to institution, particularly in relation to the level of partnership working and collaboration, as well as influencing policy direction or being able to undertake research (Pritchard, 2018). The core value that unites Learning Developers is the commitment to working alongside students to develop their learning. Thus, the majority of scholarship of Learning Development focuses on examples of positive educational practices and showcases projects, technologies, resource development and the constructive impact of these on students. However, those who undertake research focusing on theoretical and methodological approaches

to their work can act as cultural critics (Ball, 2007a; Ball, 2015) and in this sense, Learning Developers should be able to use their experiences and understanding of institutional practice and cultures to critique and interrogate their practice. Yet given the relatively new role of this profession, further research is needed to understand higher education from this particular perspective. Parkes (2018) calls for the work of Learning Developers to begin to focus on their own practices and the cultures they create in working with students, and how this may inhibit students' articulation, understanding and progression. This is a considerable move away from celebrating successful initiatives and embedded Learning Development support as it requires practitioners to turn the gaze to their own role in reproducing negative education experiences and culture. By considering the Writing Cafés practices this research contributes to further understanding how the role of Learning Development in higher education also responds to and shapes the culture of educational values, whether or not they sit comfortably with researchers and practitioners. For the profession to be truly inclusive and to work alongside students, practitioners must understand the ways in which they are not inclusive and how they too exclude students.

Scholarship of Learning Development

The research on higher education is an interdisciplinary field in its own right with contributions from social science disciplines, academic development centres and higher education research centres (Tight, 2004). The scholarship of Learning Development could also be considered as part of this interdisciplinary field as it is also shaped by various disciplinary perspectives, including English for Academic Purposes (EAP), literacy scholarship and Maths tuition. Thus, significant shifts in the theories of how students learn have been applied and explored by the Learning Development

community and include the approaches that theorise teaching and learning, notably communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2000), Academic Peer Learning (Keenan, 2014; Ody & Carey, 2013) and Academic Literacies (Lea & Street, 1998) which will be explored later in this section. During the EdD614 module on Professional Learning I applied and analysed Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of communities of practice questioning whether this theoretical lens provided the opportunity to understand the practices at the Writing Café, concluding that, at times, it excluded the power dynamics at play within the field. Other areas of scholarship prevalent in the Learning Development community include student voice and identity, student experience and questioning the purpose and value of higher education. One of the significant shifts in the scholarship of Learning Development arose when Whitchurch (2013) proposed the notion of a broader spectrum of identities in higher education professionals than that of 'academic' and 'professional' staff member. Given the changes within the academy she argued that roles and identities had mutated and stated:

'...binary perceptions tend not to take account of the ways in which individuals interpret their given roles as defined, for instance, in a job description or specification. Thus an individual on a non-academic contract, especially if they have academic credentials and experience, might interpret their role in an "academic" way' (Whitchurch, 2013, p.4).

The Learning Development community related to this concept, particularly as many have academic credentials whilst not on traditional academic contracts (Pritchard, 2018), but also for the notion that these unbounded roles simultaneously allow for creative and experimental practices whilst being precarious and the site of contestation and uncertainty (Whitchurch, 2013). Many of the Learning Development

Advisors that support the Writing Mentors and students at the Writing Café hold doctorates and some work in hybrid positions as both Learning Development Advisors in a fractional post, with a more traditional lecturing position for the remaining hours. In this sense, the team at this University consider themselves as responsible for and contributing to the pedagogy of student learning. I wanted to explore through this research how these roles, including my own, allowed for creativity as well as uncertainty. In addition to the notion of Learning Development working as a third space profession, is the notion of supporting students within an academic literacies framework. Given the Writing Café aims to encourage this approach and support students to successfully socialise, and then help shape the university practices, we will look next to the key arguments within this literature to understand how this thesis contributes to our understanding of how this theory becomes challenging in practice.

2.4: Academic Writing Practices in Higher Education

This section will review and analyse the key arguments within the research on academic writing practices, as well as summarise the current gaps in this field of knowledge to demonstrate how this thesis continues to build on this scholarship. The position of this thesis continues to build on the thinking that takes the view that literacy and literacy practices within higher education are situated and informed by wider cultural influences and social practices (Ball, 2007b). On academic writing Bourdieu wrote:

‘Academic language is a dead language for the great majority of French people, and is no one’s mother tongue, not even that of children of the cultivated classes. As such, it is very unequally distant from the languages actually spoken by the different social classes. To decline to offer a rational pedagogy is, in this context, to declare that all students are equal in respect

of the demands made by academic language' (Bourdieu, Passeron & Martin, 1994, p.8).

This often quoted phrase, 'Academic writing is...no one's mother tongue' was Bourdieu's response to analysing the French higher education system. It is frequently quoted within the literature as it highlights the challenges, expectations and power imbued in academic writing for many undergraduate and postgraduate students. In their report on the '*First Year Experience of Higher Education in the UK*', Yorke and Longten (2008) claim that the transition to higher education is still often blurred by unfamiliar undergraduate writing practices which students are unaccustomed to and are thus alienating. Although research over the last twenty years has demonstrated how academic writing is a complex set of practices, dominant academic writing models are still adopted which inevitably serve the dominant discourses and actors within the academy (Bourdieu & Waquant, 1992). Higher education often continues to position students as those without the capital to progress, or without the capital to understand clear and communicable rules and regulations despite over twenty years of research arguing this position. This research intends to examine how this position is played out at this particular University and if the theory and scholarship is reflected in the institutional habitus of the University.

In 1998 Mary Lea and Brian Street introduced the term 'academic literacies' in their attempt to 'develop a more complex account of what it means to be academically literate' in regards to writing in higher education (Lea & Street, 1998, p.158). Their argument focused on issues of student identity, institutional power and authority and since the publication of this paper, a large body of

literature has emerged. The work of Lea and Street (1998) was seminal in the field of academic writing research, as well as those within the Learning Development community given, as we have seen, they are often employed to equip students with the 'skills' needed to succeed in higher education. The research from both of these fields, continues to inform practitioners and researchers alike who are interested in exploring notions of power within particular contexts, cultures and genres (Hilsdon, Malone & Syska, 2019).

Lea and Street's seminal paper outlined the differing, and often competing, expectations and interpretations of teaching and learning associated with student writing (Lea & Street, 1998). Their taxonomy of approaches to academic writing was explored in the EdD614 module Professional Learning assignment. One of the central arguments they made was that higher education discourses at the time decontextualized academic writing and therefore it was often left to those outside of the discipline or bolted on to the course (Lea & Street, 1998). This study skills model deems the student as deficit, moving through to a model of academic socialisation where students were supported with understanding the rules or the game, through to an academic literacies model where students have agency within the landscape. In a sense, the ambitions of moving towards a social Writing Café can be seen as an attempt by the Learning Development team to move away from a deficit approach of seeing individual students in a tutorial scenario, towards providing a space for staff and students to question literacy practices. This model was an attempt to try to reconceptualise the work of the team and contribute to students no longer being viewed as deficient, but being given the opportunity to ask questions of their communities with awareness and

criticality. As well as on our own practice at the University, the academic literacies approach evoked a significant response from those working within other universities and indeed researchers focused on literacy development, which in turn has reframed the way academic writing is conceptualised and discussed within the culture of higher education.

More recently, Wingate has encouraged a curriculum-integrated approach to academic literacies between subject lecturers, English for Academic Purpose specialists and I would include Learning Developers to deliver collaborative and discipline specific approaches to supporting student learning (2018). Case studies and ethnographic research highlighted discipline lecturers were frequently unable to articulate the reasons and ways students could improve their writing beyond structure, spelling and grammar and found that academics view their students writing as grounded in epistemological practices students need to learn, model and adopt to be successful members of their communities (Lea and Street 1998). Arguments for discipline specialists to consider academic literacies in the design of their courses has been frequently pushed for within the literature, however, there is a consensus that the dominant model of seeing students as deficit is still the prevailing approach at an institutional and policy level (Lea, 2004; Lillis, 2019; Lillis *et al.*, 2015). While individual modules within the curriculum have been successful and helped to move the positioning of students from passive consumers to active players in the game (Abegglen, Burns & Sinfield, 2019), this is still not the norm. Arguments have also been raised that academic literacies support outside of the curriculum in the form of writing centres do not go far enough to support the ambition of an academic literacies

approach. This goes against the offering of the Writing Café. As highlighted by French:

‘However a key weakness of cross-institutional centres is the extent to which they inevitably decontextualise academic writing; this because they fail to overtly address the symbiotic relationship between academic writing and its role as the primary vehicle for evidencing disciplinary or subject-specific learning. Within writing centres, support is usually offered by generic writing developers who cannot share the disciplinary background of associated writing practices of all the students they support; nor do they have any input into the kinds of assessments, and by implication the particular kinds of writing required by those whose assessments, that students are expected to produce’ (French, 2016, p.4).

It is within these debates that this research locates itself, aiming to contribute to the growing cases studies in higher education trying to move from undertaking an academic literacies approach in theory, to practice. By understanding the cultural perspectives of academic writing and academic literacies from an ethnographic approach allows for framing these arguments in a situated way, considering how the practices are influenced by the positioning of an institution, individual teams and the sub-fields they are located in. Before turning to the theoretical framework it is useful to recall the research question of this thesis:

How can a relational analysis of the Writing Café help inform the practices of the University?

By seeing this in light of the wider field of education, the development of social learning spaces within higher education campuses, the profession of learning development and the dominant academic writing practices across the sector, this ultimately creates a complex, rich and interesting social context to explore.

Chapter 3: The Theoretical Framework

3.1: Relational Analysis

Why Bourdieu?

The analysis and interpretation of this research is centred on using Pierre Bourdieu's relational framework to explore the experiences of those engaged in the practices of the Writing Café, either directly or indirectly. By this, I mean those who may have power over the space and the practices but are not active participants in the field (Hardy, 2014). The Writing Café can be thought of as a cultural field within the higher education system, thus thinking of it through the lens of Bourdieu's theory moves away from thinking of it solely as an isolated space within an institution with specific rules and ways of operating, but rather understanding it as a fluid and dynamic sub-field, or a site of interactions between institutions, fields, rules and multiple sets of practices (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002). At the heart of Bourdieu's framework is the attempt to overcome the dichotomies in social theory such as structure/agency and micro/macro and in doing so consider the *relationships* between these (Ashwin, 2012). Rather than considering how the Writing Café operates under the policy and practices of the individual University in which it is located, this framework also asks us to consider how it impacts and is impacted by the wider fields of policy changes and the higher education landscape as well as the institution's place within that political field. Thus, a relational analysis provides a lens to understand the Writing Café as a sub-field within the wider field of higher education and offers the opportunity to view in it the context of the culture within which it operates.

The Writing Café is influenced and positioned by the University in which it is located and in turn, its position in the field of higher education, which is influenced by the field

of economics and the field of politics. This arguably makes it a site of contention.

Focussing on a particular University in relation to the UK field of higher education is certainly not straightforward and vigorous contemporary debates which consider the future of higher education are taking place across and between fields right now; higher education is not only answerable to the political field but it is also influencing it (Grenfell & Lebaron, 2014). Understanding the ways that the Writing Café also influences and is influenced by the culture of the University helps contribute to this debate and will bring to the fore the patterns of power, status and practices within this stratified field.

Bourdieu was keen to challenge the divide between social structures and individual agency by arguing that practice can be understood through his three 'thinking tools' habitus, capital and field (Bourdieu, 1992; Bourdieu, 1997; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). He argued that practice is not just what people do, but also the complex interactions of the values, social space and the dispositions of those within that sphere. Thus, Bourdieu's theoretical framework enables me to consider and explain the relationships between people's practices and the *contexts* in which those practices occur (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002). It also provides a framework to explore the tensions and struggles for resources and position taking which take place within any given field. Bourdieu himself used the framework to analyse the French university education system, demonstrating its suitability to this type of study but also offering insight into the drivers behind his motivations as a sociologist. His desire was to expose the system as a powerful contributor to the maintenance and reproduction of social inequality (Bourdieu, 1998). Naidoo builds on this notion, whilst also expanding the

opportunity for seeing transformation and argued that higher education is a force that mediates and at the same time reproduces social classification. He remarked:

‘Higher education is conceptualised as a sorting machine that selects students according to an explicit social classification, and reproduces the same students according to an explicit academic classification’ (Naidoo, 2004, p.459).

If the higher education system was a powerful contributor to the maintenance and reproduction of social inequality during Bourdieu’s time, then the expansion and diversification of the field in the UK setting asks us to consider whether or not the aims of recent policy changes, the dissolution of polytechnic institutions and the rise in fees and shifting students to consumers has changed the purpose and practices of higher education. It also calls us to question how these changes to the field change the perception of positional possibilities (Bourdieu, 1993). A Bourdieusian analysis provides a framework to understand the changes in this field and how they manifest locally within the University and for our particular students and staff. As the Writing Café was established to help others to explore their engagement with academic writing, in one sense it can be seen as a service that reflects these changes, contributing to the same concerns Bourdieu had. It supports the reproduction of student positioning by the academy by classifying them as individuals who are able to meet the demands of their course demonstrated through academic writing. It does this within a support service that is located outside of their curriculums. The Writing Café could be seen as an institutional response to the changes in the UK HEI field, offering little to change the status quo. However, the Writing Café and the staff involved in its strategic direction and the framing of its purpose have also been concerned with influencing the University, questioning and debating the academic

writing practices across the disciplines and bringing dominant discourses into question. Whilst I am positioned to offer a Writing Café that can help those in deficit, this is not the approach I have followed without critical awareness.

Bourdieu's framework allows me to consider the ways in which different fields interact, but it also offers a way of thinking through how the everyday practices are experienced by those who participate in a particular context. The complexities of the contemporary higher education system and the policy drivers of universal higher education may be about democratic education but it is only through analysing how people experience social spaces such as the Writing Café that we can begin to see if this overarching aim is the lived experience. Bourdieu asks us to consider the capital that counts; the capitals that enable individual participants to cross trajectories and positions and adapt to the logic of practice of the field they have entered, but can capital also allow us to question and change the logic of practice? Through analysing participants' experiences I will develop a way of understanding those who are denied access to the field through to those who are able to gather capital and 'fit in'. It also allows me to consider those whose position is strong enough within the field to change it from within. In order to understand the positioning of individuals within different fields, or their collective habitus, it is first important to explore the notion of field and the way in which it can be considered at different levels and in different ways.

3.2 The Field

For Bourdieu 'to think in terms of field is to think relationally' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.96). The relational nature of Bourdieu's concepts, his theories of field, habitus and capital provide a lens with which we can analyse and explore users of the Writing Café's experiences of the culture, practices and discourses within this HE environment

(Watson, 2013). Central to his theoretical framework is the notion that social space, or fields, are relational (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Within a field, actors, individuals, groups and institutions are positioned relative to others in a hierarchy as they struggle for different positions and resources. In other words, struggles and manoeuvres take place within fields over specific resources or stakes which are relevant to the field itself. Within the Writing Café, the students are trying to obtain the linguistic capital valued within their disciplinary field. Bourdieu conceptualised the notion of fields as social arenas that are defined by the logic and taken-for granted structure which is necessary and relevant to both the product and producer appropriate to a particular field. Therefore they are dynamic and shift constantly over time (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Bourdieu considered any analysis of the field had to be considered in three distinct levels (Bourdieu & Waquant, 1992).

1. Analysing the position of the field in relation to the field of power
2. Mapping out the actors within the field who are competing for authority
3. Analysing the habitus of these actors

This layered strata allows me to construct a field analysis of a social space, the Writing Café, that is relational as it crosses positions, structures and other fields (Albright, Hartman & Widin, 2018; Bourdieu, 1977).

Research Site as a Sub-Field

Thinking of the Writing Café as a 'sub-field' enables the exploration of the culture of a social space in relation to the fields which it shapes and is shaped by, as well as the dispositions and position taking of those engaged in the field and their relative position of power. In the case of the Writing Café, it is shaped by the University's wider institutional habitus, which in turn is influenced and shaped by its position within the

field of higher education. In order to undertake a relational analysis of it as a field it is important to consider the very notion of fields in a number of ways. Firstly, fields are in a relationship to other fields, particularly those of power (Bourdieu, 1992). The government and fields of political power and economic fields have influenced and changed the agenda of higher education which in turn has changed the way that universities are positioned in society. Bourdieu framed this position taking as shaping the structure of a field, reflecting social systems. His concepts have been used in educational research to map out the field of UK higher education by numerous scholars focused on macro considerations and only recently has the investigation into more local micro sites gained traction (Annala *et al.*, 2020; Naidoo, 2004; Reay, 2004; Reay, David & Ball, 2001; Reay *et al.*, 2001).

The second concept relevant to understanding fields is the notion that position taking within a field is related to the struggle of control over resources valued within a particular field. Bourdieu framed these as the structural properties of a field. He outlines universal mechanisms that are characteristic of all fields and all fields struggle for control over valued resources, or what he terms capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu, 1989). In the field of higher education cultural capital is a key feature of the field, which can be considered as the pursuit of intellectual property. Thirdly, the habitus of the individuals within the field can be analysed to consider both positions and position-taking (Bourdieu, 1993). This is the system of dispositions that have been acquired over time and which are expressed in terms of tastes, preferences, stances or styles. This habitus directs and positions individuals within a field in relation to how strongly this resonates, or not, with the ruling principles or logic of the field.

Autonomy

A central concept of the field according to Bourdieu is autonomy (Bourdieu, 1989). It is a key focus of the struggles within a particular field and beyond it. Bourdieu positioned the field as a social space where interactions, events and transactions occur and his work analysing the French HE sector led him to the conclusion that the intellectual field of universities have a high degree of autonomy. More recently, other Bourdieusian scholars have argued that the field of higher education is relatively free from state organisations and policies, although this is shifting (Naidoo, 2004). Bourdieu considered the autonomy of a field as a key element in understanding the structuring principles of fields in two ways. Firstly, each field is relatively autonomous from the economic and political powers which dominate the world and secondly, each field has homologous features to the wider social structure as well as its own structures and logic. In the case of higher education, whilst it may be freer to generate its own values and markers of achievement, these values are not alone in shaping the field (Reay, 2004). Fields are subject to power dynamics and contestation as the game within a field can be challenged by the agents within it.

Maton (2005) further explores the notion of autonomy by introducing two different dimensions to it, positional autonomy and relational autonomy. He argues that positional autonomy is the extent to which the positions in a particular context are occupied by those from within the field. So if, in higher education, those in monitoring bodies and governance for instance are from other fields such as industry or the political field, then the field has weaker positional authority. He argues that relational autonomy refers to the ways of working within a field, the practice, the measurements of achievement and the aims. If these emanate from within the field, then it exhibits a

stronger relational autonomy. However, if these practices are drawn from other fields such as the field of economics then there is a weaker relational autonomy. So who oversees higher education, positional autonomy, and which principles are valued, relational autonomy are crucial concepts that enable us to consider power and agency within a field. As the field of higher education has changed to include other players from different contexts in both the positional and relational frameworks, there is further stratification which brings tensions in autonomy (Maton, 2005). This tension is played out in the practices and identities of the fields and the actors within higher education and how individuals negotiate this, according to Maton will define the future of autonomy for and within the field (2005). This notion of autonomy and position taking can help us to consider the differing experiences of those engaged with the practices of the Writing Café and help explore how and why some individuals seem more confident than others in making strategic decisions about its operation.

3.3 Capital

Within the field of higher education the autonomy, both positional and relational is dependent on the relationship to the fields of power (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002). For instance, different disciplines enjoy different relations to authority and therefore differing levels of legitimacy. Bourdieu found that the disciplines of medicine, law and theology have a privileged relationship to the political field and that the students entering these disciplines were more likely to be 'traditional' students over those that studied for instance, education (Bourdieu, 1991). At the Writing Café, students from a variety of disciplines engage in conversations, from law to medicine, to nursing, to marine science, to education and social work. Bourdieu's work mapping the disciplines within the field of higher education and those who have continued to

develop this thinking helps us to consider the different forms of capital from different perspectives, depending of the fields in which they are members. An individual's relative position within a field is maintained or advanced by the quantity and quality of the capital they possess, as capital allows individuals to wield power or influence (Bourdieu & Waquant, 1992). As power over and within a field is related to capital, exploring the different forms of capital and how they are acquired is important to our understanding.

The Forms of Capital

As capital is not a fixed thing, but rather relational to the field, power is therefore culturally and symbolically created and constantly re-legitimised. Bourdieu argues it is accumulated and it is what makes the game of society something other than a game of chance (Bourdieu, 1988). Whilst it may take time for capital to accumulate it can be 'converted' at different times, for different purposes within different fields. This notion of transferring forms of capital plays a central role in the power relations of society (Navarro, 2006) and it is the shifting over time from material to cultural and symbolic forms of capital that hides inequalities such as those within the education system (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu coined the term *doxa* to describe these unequal divisions in society and the collective turning away from power. In understanding the different levels and forms of capital, we can understand individual's different positions within different social spaces such as the Writing Café and their experiences of this positioning (Burke, 2015).

The concept of capital is broader than the monetary notion of capital as it might be understood in the field of economics as it considers capital more as a resource that can be monetary and nonmonetary, tangible and intangible (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu

distinguishes between three overall forms of capital, economic capital, social capital and cultural capital, explaining that the different forms of capital can be 'converted' into cultural capital and can therefore take on different forms of symbolic capital when recognised within different fields (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Waquant, 1992). For instance, he defines economic capital as that which refers to monetary income as well as other assets which can in turn be converted into monetary value. Social capital is the resources individuals can access, such as networks and access to cultural institutions; the classic case of not what you know, but who you know. Finally, cultural capital exists in several forms and includes the dispositions and acquisition of educational qualifications and valued cultural objects. Due to its link to qualifications, formal education and training, cultural capital is the one that is most drawn on in the educational research (Burke, 2015; Naidoo, 2004). Bourdieu argues that all these forms of capital only exist and are only valuable in *relation* to a field or fields (Bourdieu & Waquant, 1992). If we consider the Writing Café as a field then the cultural capital that has value upon entry to it include the previous educational experiences, qualifications and training individuals have. Entry to the university, thus entry to the sub-field, depends on this capital to begin with through the admissions process. Access to the field is already measured by the amount and types of these cultural capitals before the team even interact with a student. Whilst qualifications play an important role in individuals gaining access to particular fields like higher education, it can also be understood in more nuanced ways. How individuals experience constraints and affordances in the field helps us to consider how 'local, day-to-day institutional meanings and social situations actually work to shape action (Ferrare & Apple, 2015, p.52). To consider how the relationship between capitals, habitus and field is a process

of positioning, it is important to consider how cultural capital can be considered in different states within local educational contexts.

The States of Cultural Capital

The education system of universities rewards those with cultural capital as suitable for further study at degree level and designates them as individuals who are 'academically suitable'. This cultural capital gives power over a field, depending on the amount of cultural capital individuals have to wield. However, it is too simplistic to consider capital in this research as simply the past experiences and qualifications of an individual but rather we need to also explore the different states of cultural capital Bourdieu outlined how this capital extends beyond an individual (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu proposed that capital should be considered in three forms, embodied, objectified and institutionalised. The embodied state of capital relates to the formation of long lasting dispositions of the mind and body. This capital cannot be accumulated quickly, nor can it be easily bought yet rather it takes time and personal investment to acquire. Whilst it can be consciously sought or acquired, for instance through a commitment to self-improvement through study, it is also passively inherited through families, socialisation into different cultures and traditions (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu introduced the notion of embodied cultural capital to consider the success of students but argued that in order for it to become embodied, then there must be a belief that it is natural or the right course of action as it is linked with attitudes, beliefs and dispositions which come with time, engagement, practice and want. Embodied cultural capital therefore consists of features that characterise ways of being, feeling, communicating and our behaviour. An example of this within the Writing Café could be the capital of a student in understanding the purpose of a university education. Their

attitudes and beliefs will change their encounter with the Writing Mentors and any discussions that take place at their Writing Cafe. If they view education as a transactional pursuit for a particular qualification, or career, they may too view their time with the Writing Mentors in the same light.

The second form of cultural capital that Bourdieu proposed was that of objectivised capital. This takes the form of material, physical objects of cultural goods such as pictures, books, instruments and machines, for example. These goods can be purchased for economic profit but also for the symbolic nature of owning them, thus they are both materially and symbolically active. Finally, Bourdieu considers the final form of capital, institutionalised, as capital that allows individual's access or membership of particular groups or credentials to individuals. This institutionalised capital could be academic credentials or awards which hold power that can be converted to cultural capital by their ability to provide access to the labour market, for instance (Bourdieu, 1986). It was in *Homo Academicus*, that Bourdieu introduced the notion of academic capital (Bourdieu, 1988), which Naidoo positions as an institutional form of capital that functions and is wielded in the field of higher education (Naidoo, 2004). For Bourdieu, cultural capital 'represents the immanent structure of the social world' which determines what it is possible for individuals to achieve (Bourdieu, 1986, p.46) and the dominance of certain forms of cultural capital are institutionalised, giving them symbolic power.

Understanding the different states of cultural capital allows us to consider the field in multiple ways. Firstly, it provides us with a framework to articulate and understand field-specific institutional resources or various capitals. Secondly, it allows us to consider how actors within the field use their embodied cultural capital to navigate

through, or impact the institutional capital and thirdly, how objectivised capital can be used to symbolise attitudes about the social space and the types of practices it wants to make more dominant.

Symbolic Violence and Misrecognition

To consider this notion of capital use in different states from a Bourdieusian viewpoint we can also draw on his notion of symbolic power. He argued that symbolic power is an invisible power that legitimises areas of social life (Bourdieu, 1991). Academic writing in the university is accepted as the legitimate form of communicating ideas, but this conceals the power behind its force (Bourdieu, 1977). The Writing Café, on one level, operates as a sub-field which is complicit in reinforcing rules and conventions which produce and legitimise certain discourses, precisely because of its very existence. It reinforces the notion that that academic writing is valued by the university and that this is the way to communicate intellectual capacity. In other words, it is engaged in reproducing the capital that counts. However, Bourdieu's notions of misrecognition and symbolic violence allow us to question and explore that capital and in questioning what it is that counts, we are forced to step back from the dominant discourse and begin to consider why it counts. He framed the uncritical acceptance of reproduction as misrecognition. For Bourdieu, this is the false consciousness in accepting social life and power relations because individuals are too caught up in the practices that they 'forget' they are produced (Swartz, 1997). He writes:

'The agent engaged in practice knows the world....too well, without objectifying distance, takes it for granted, precisely because he is caught up in it, bound up with it; he inhabits it like a garment...' (Bourdieu, 2000, p.142-143).

In this complicity, Bourdieu argues that individuals are subject to 'symbolic violence'. Whilst they do not consider it that way, this non-physical violence is manifested in the power between groups and appears to the individuals as the natural order of things or the status quo. He suggests that those with the most cultural capital and symbolic power, through subtle and unconscious means, set the standards and established ways of being in a field. Webb, Schirato, and Danaher (2002) also state that misrecognition is a form of forgetting, and in turn individuals are complicit in the violence exercised on them. Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence is particularly interesting in the field of higher education as he emphasises that researchers investigating their own fields need to consider the taken-for-granted practices in order to gain a better understanding and contribute to the changing logic of the practice (Bourdieu, 1988). These concepts are critical to this research as it enables me to call it in to question and challenge the unthinking commitment to the logic, values and capital of the field of a particular University as well as the sub-field, the Writing Cafe. This also provides the framework for myself as a researcher to 'step back' from my own practice and reflexively consider how I am positioned to contribute to the established ways of being in the field. The framework calls for those with power behind sub-fields like the Writing Café to ask different questions around social spaces for academic writing development, particularly in relation to students understanding of its purpose, its institutional value, individuals ability to possess the cultural capital associated with success in the field and how the field is positioned and positioning.

3.4 Habitus

The concept that connects Bourdieu's ideas of field and cultural capital, is the notion of habitus (Bourdieu, 1986). The habitus, in its fundamental form is the embodiment of

history and includes the norms, values and dispositions that are formed by differing influences and are unique to an individual. They are internalised as second nature but these norms and values are not fixed or permanent and can change over time (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Navarro, 2006). This combination of durable and transposable dispositions have been developed over an extended period of time and result in individual or collective practices (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Therefore, they are relevant not only to individuals but also to institutions. According to Bourdieu, through habitus the notion of agency and practice are linked with capital and field (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). He argued that habitus is only active in relation to fields and that the same habitus can result in different practices depending on the nature and the state of that particular field.

Embodied Habitus

Bourdieu argued that habitus not only shows how the body is in the social world, but also how the social world is in the body (Bourdieu, 1977). Thus, it is embodied and expressed through people's ways of 'standing, speaking, walking and thereby of feeling and thinking' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.70) and it provides us with a way of analysing the experiences of different people in different fields:

'Social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside social agents. And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a 'fish in water'; it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.127)

This notion of a fish in water has been drawn upon in higher education research in relation to student experience by a number of scholars (Reay, Crozier & Clayton, 2009; Reay, Crozier & Clayton, 2010) and provides a powerful and relatable metaphor. Those

students who have a 'feel for the game', unconsciously brought about by their habitus, are like fish in water. They feel comfortable and clear with the game. They are able to utilise their capital to play the game, whilst others are not as aware of the game, never mind its rules, and these individuals have a different transition to university life and study. Bourdieu posed that as individuals move through and across different fields they are inclined to incorporate into their habitus the different values and ways of knowing that are dominant (Bourdieu, 1993; Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002) and further complexity occurs if there are multiple games being played (Bourdieu, 1998). As the Writing Café could be considered as a sub-field that crosses over disciplinary practices and institutional practices the 'rules of the game' are multifaceted. Despite the complexity, individuals who engage in the game are those who already believe and see value in the game itself. Bourdieu terms this *illusio*, whether or not battles exist, they are still meaningful and the game itself is not questioned (Bourdieu & Waquant, 1992).

Illusio

Illusio refers to how individuals are 'taken in and by the game' (Bourdieu & Waquant, 1992, p.116) and it is created through repeated action and practices that become routine which in turn reproduce and reinforce the rules of that game. As the game is competitive and involves social positioning individuals involved within fields are able to use their habitus to influence, more or less successfully, the rules of the game for their own interest (Colley, 2012). Colley *et al* (2014) argue that the concept of *illusio* is the least used of all of Bourdieu's tools, but that it is central to Bourdieu's thinking as it is pivotal to connecting habitus and field in relation to our commitment and investment to the game. Different actors bring different interests to the field, some more

dominant than others and any fundamental changes to the field transforms the game (Grenfell & James, 2004).

It is through *illusio* that individuals bring their *habitus* to the field. As the *habitus* is internalised and embodied, its history is forgotten and so individuals are not always aware they are in fact playing a game, nor are they aware that they may be wielding different forms and states of capital to do so. Research to date has demonstrated that how students experience and negotiate the demands of studying in university varies, but those whose *habitus* is most aligned with the dominant culture of the institution held the strongest portfolios of capital and therefore the strongest field positions (Ashwin, 2012). So those who are positioned to change the rules of the game, are potentially those individuals who would not consider doing so as they have gained from the field. Thus, embodied *habitus* alongside the value of the different forms and levels of capital in relation to a field can provide us with a lens to consider an individual's position within a social space. It is through mapping social spaces we can see patterns, and whilst individuals may not share the same values and attitudes the fact that they are positioned similarly allows for researchers such as myself to consider the relationship between field, *habitus* and capital and its constant adaptation (Reay, 2004).

Institutional Habitus

Habitus is not only relevant to individuals but also for institutions as they too can be said to have their own cultures or their own institutional *habitus* (Reay, 1998). This is influenced by their position within the field of higher education and is constructed in a similar way to embodied *habitus*, through past experiences and historical development. Whilst the *habitus* of higher education students has been researched,

much of the insight around the ethos and culture of individual institutions and local contexts has been overshadowed (Ferrare & Apple, 2015). Ferrare and Apple argue that further consideration in relation to more local field positions is needed if we are to fully understand how students and educators read, act upon and interpret dominant cultures (2015). They call for researchers to consider how social structures and institution's habitus forms its own game or games, which are defined by dominant thinking or taken for granted assumptions. New students are required to understand the institutional habitus of the university and to succeed they must grasp how to master the complex terminology, ways of thinking, writing, acting, speaking and being. In other words, they need to develop their habitus and accumulate capital which they can then use to navigate through the different stages of study. It is this notion that Bourdieu (1992) argues creates competition between people and the possibility of reproduction of the game.

Institutional cultures can shape attitudes, beliefs and values in relation to particular fields or learning sites which is particularly evident in the discourses around academic writing development. Ferrare and Apple (2015) argue that the institutional habitus of localised fields has different implications for the sociology of education as it can help researchers to critically analyse the habitus of fields and position taking over and above the current model of students' deficits, or lack of cultural capital belonging within the individual. Higher education has responded to student diversity with an expectation that students will conform to the institutional habitus and educational research to date has argued that universities in particular are slow to change their institutional habitus as 'by dint of their collective nature are less fluid than individual habitus' (Reay, Crozier & Clayton, 2010, p.109). Therefore, understanding and

analysing institutional habitus allows us to reconsider the pedagogic implications that position the Writing Café and shift the deficit to the field position and practices, not the cultural capital or habitus of the individual. As Ferrare and Apple (2015, p.55) suggest this ‘forces us to ask not what students are lacking, but rather what is lacking from the social structures and cultural models of our...universities’.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1: Introduction

The research approach taken in this thesis is one which reflects the various voices, practices and interactions on and at the Writing Café. This chapter examines how I went about researching those voices located within and around the practices of the Writing Café in order to situate them in the broader debates of education: including the socially constructed space within which education takes place and the partnerships between the multiple actors which shape and are shaped by these discourses. It considers how critical ethnography was an appropriate methodology for exploring the research question given the nature of cultural practices under investigation and how the methods supported a flexible research strategy. Having secured a topic for the research I outlined a research strategy that was fluid and this chapter will examine the research methods employed and a detailed account of the research process that I underwent. The research question demanded an approach that allowed me to respond to different directions as well as recognise my position as a researcher as integral to the process. For the duration of the research the methodology supported a way to balance being open minded and open to the meanings that participants placed to their own experiences, alongside my own experiences as the co-ordinator of the Writing

Café and as a professional working within the higher education setting. Ethnography presented the most productive way of tackling this.

In its simplest sense, ethnography, or 'writing about people' can be considered as an in-depth and immersed study of cultural groups, often conducted over a sustained period of time (Geertz, 1973). It privileges situated knowledge and the meanings generated by people within a socially constructed group or setting. In the context of this study, ethnography is both a practice that has evolved over the duration of the research process in terms of generating 'data', but also in the final text in which the material has been subjected to analysis and interpretation (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011). The term ethnography is used in multiple ways across various disciplines and draws on different traditions and ways of knowing. As such it is complex, variable and contested. Due to the varied ways that ethnography is produced Madden states that ethnography defies easy definition:

'Ethnography is not the sort of endeavour that readily submits itself to a neat and bounded definition – the humans that do ethnography and the humans that are the subject of ethnographic research are too complicated and "messy" to allow ethnography to be understood in neat and simple terms' (2017, p.16).

Despite the challenge in defining ethnography and the various ways it is conceptualised (Fetterman, 2010; Savage, 2000; Spradley, 1980; Willis & Trondman, 2000) there are ways of bringing together the essential components of what makes an ethnographic study, beyond data collection, and as a methodology. My understanding of ethnography is that it evolves in design as the study progresses and my research was underpinned by the following ideas:

- 1) Ethnography involves direct contact with human actors, in the context of their lives over a sustained period of time, watching what happens, listening to

conversations and asking questions through both formal and informal dialogues (Willis & Trondman, 2000).

- 2) Ethnography is inductive and interpretative in nature, it involves presenting, explaining and representing the culture of the environment, where this experience is located and the myriad of voices within. It is sensitive to the complexity of the social world and can tell rich and credible stories (O'Reilly, 2012).
- 3) Power relations are socially and historically constituted, thus 'facts' cannot be isolated, but rather values considered. Acknowledging certain groups are privileged over others, which is reproduced when subordinates accept their social status as natural or inevitable (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994)
- 4) Research practices often contribute to cultural oppression thus as a researcher a crucial part of the research process was to recognise my ideologies, including any values that are intrinsically inseparable to my methods, interpretations and epistemology (Lather, 1986). Thus, reflexivity is a key part of ethnographic research.

Ethnography, therefore, reflected both my stance as a researcher and provides a methodology to understand the complexity of the Writing Café, its use and the power relations at play within this sub-field. However, I also wanted this research to be useful in developing my understanding on a professional level, to understand how the practices of the Writing Café could change. For Carspecken (1996) those who undertake research due to a concern or desire to challenge social inequalities and direct their work to positive social change, are 'critical' researchers. They use the opportunity of research to refine social theory, rather than just describe it and in this sense I consider my position as that of a critical ethnographer.

Epistemology and Ontology

As a constructionist I recognise that the research process is also a means of constructing knowledge and having a critical inquiry theoretical approach as well

as critical ethnography as a methodology required me to continue to rethink my approaches, assumptions and changing practice throughout the research cycle (Lave, 2011). This seems an appropriate process to take when researching an ever changing HE landscape, political and global world (Stevenson & Bell, 2009). The research methodology is underpinned by a critical inquiry theoretical perspective. This critiques the paradigms of positivism and objectivism as ways of knowing the social world, which could be aligned with neoliberal and neoconservative practices. These are both committed to the ideals of measurement and objectivity and therefore are inappropriate for exploring and understanding the perceptions of research participants and addressing the question of how a relational analysis can act as a lens through which to analyse the practices and tensions within the research site. The research is constructed in the very nature of its aim to understand participant's perceptions of the Writing Café, as well as in its methodology and how the data is collected, analysed and interpreted, thus an interpretivist stance is taken. In this sense it will have no truth, or finite end as readers of my work can continue to construct and re-construct meaning after the research may be considered complete (Crotty, 1998). It is also worth noting here that different lens and theoretical approaches may have provided different views of the Writing Café, some perhaps more positive but perhaps not as valuable to me in my practice given the commitment to exploring power and exclusion. The critical reflexivity of myself as a researcher and agent within the higher education system is a strength of this research, as I commit to not only critiquing practices but also how to navigate and move forward within them.

4.2: Critical Ethnography in Education

Whilst the historical foundations of ethnography are rooted in anthropologists studying exotic or unfamiliar cultures and practices of others (Seale *et al.*, 2004) in recent years contemporary ethnography has drawn inspiration and theoretical insights from a variety of sources. Ethnography has been employed across the social sciences and is as likely to be applied in any naturally occurring settings which we are all familiar with such as a hospital or school as it is in Aboriginal Australia or indigenous cultures in the Pacific Northwest. In the field of Education, Pole and Morrison (2003) argue that ethnography is one of the most commonly used approaches in the field, although pressures on academics and researchers time are making this methodology more difficult. One of the defining features of critical ethnography, particularly within education research, is moving from describing and identifying ideas and oppressive conditions to having a commitment to changing and overcoming them through the research process itself (Beach, Begoña & Vigo-Arrazola, 2020; Bright, 2016). This can be achieved through giving voice to participants, not just in letting them express themselves but also in terms of their representation, identity and power (Ares, 2016; Eisenhart, 2018). Therefore, developing trust and shaping spaces for deconstructing and reshaping views and practices was central to this research. Allowing myself as a researcher to take a supporting role at times, rather than a leading role in the development of practices around academic writing, particularly with students but also with academic staff members was key (Bagley & Castro-Salazar, 2017). Sara Delamont encourages the use of critical ethnography in education, particularly for those researchers who want to understand the link between space, individuals and practices. She argues:

‘all educational spaces have spaces where some of the teachers, or learners, or other people, can go and do go, and others where they cannot or do not. It is important. Researchers need to ensure that they map these from the various perspectives of the different actors, and explore as many of them as they can. The research on spaces and places in higher education is seriously lacking’ (Delamont, 2014, p.43).

Her view is that mapping the perspectives of different actors is a worthwhile venture and this thesis gives voice to the many individuals who act in and on the Writing Café. Constructionist’s who are interested in social criticism can take a wide range of methodological approaches including critical ethnography, as they are concerned with power relations and what constitutes ‘reality’ within a particular ideological place and time (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994). Rather than focusing on a description of ‘other’, critical ethnography allows for a dialogic relationship between researcher and participants which in turn allows for an analysis of social and historical situations and the elements that contribute to power imbalances (Madison, 2004; Madison, 2011). My focus on academic literacy within an interconnected intersectional space seeks to address the impact of power dynamics at play on and in student writing, both physically and conceptually as well as the way in which the space may position individuals to reproduce contested writing practices and ideologically inscribed knowledge. Burr (2015, p.5) suggests that our constructions of the world around us are ‘bounded up with power relations because they have implications for what it is permissible for different people to do, and for how they treat others’ and it is these power relations that will be considered within this thesis. Therefore, critical ethnography is not just an objection to something such as power but it is also a methodology that calls a researcher to recognise that they are integral to the research process and thus they should continuously question their work, rethinking and redoing (Lave, 2011).

I have previously laid out my position in terms of my journey to higher education as well as my role in the creation of the Writing Café and the research therefore positions me as both an observer and a participant. The use of critical ethnographic approaches in education seeks to not only give accounts of participants and particular settings, but also examine the premises and practices that shape these accounts. A key theme to emerge in the methodology of critical ethnographers is that of reflexivity, not considered only a self-reflection of the researcher, but the dialogue between the research process, the research outcomes and their own ideologies (Anderson, 1998). Overall, critical ethnography differs from traditional ethnography as it calls into question social and cultural practices for the purpose of liberation and it can be considered valid and of great insight when the research is able to practice reflexivity on multiple levels (Davies, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The notion of reflexivity in itself will be explored in further depth towards the end of this chapter, after considering the role of myself as participant researcher, the research methods used throughout the project and how I gained access to the field.

4.3: Access and Time in the Field

As I have outlined in the introduction in April 2013 I started a new job role within the University, that of a Learning Development Advisor. I was sitting in the library in an area our team used for a 'Drop in Zone' or DiZ as we referred to it. This was an area dedicated to providing support for students for two hours each day on a range of areas including academic writing, revision techniques, critical thinking and referencing. Having worked at the same University in a different department, yet still alongside students, I was struck by how few students came to see us given what I knew about

their confidence with studying and I wrote the following reflection at the end of my first week in post:

During my first week of shadowing the team I only came into contact with one student at DiZ. I am aware that I have started this role at a time when the majority of coursework deadlines have passed and term is drawing to an end, but the library was still a busy hive of activity and I had itchy feet. For me it was difficult to sit back and accept it was just quiet and I jokingly suggested we put on some sandwich boards, get out and tell students we were there, ready and waiting. However, the team seemed quite happy with how many students came to see us over the year, but I feel differently. I know from previous roles and my time as a student there is a huge appetite for sharing and discussing drafts of writing, and I think we can do something about it, but perhaps this isn't the place (*reflections on first week, 2013*)

In January of 2014, less than 12 months after writing this reflection, our Vice Chancellor of the time launched a week long programme of activities to celebrate our new venture, The Writing Café. My role evolved to Writing Café coordinator and I was responsible for the development, processes, practices and ultimately the success of this new endeavour. As students began to see us in their hundreds I thought about why students did not want to engage with us in the previous drop in zone and they did in the Writing Café. What was it that had changed? Over time I heard stories from students about the space being relaxed, the threat of sharing work minimised when clutching a cup of coffee and the boundaries being different outside of a more formal learning environment. I became interested in learning spaces within the university environment and how they were conceptualised as well as how education policy shaped the practices that were governing my role and the way I worked with students. The insight I was gaining from being outside and across the disciplines was fascinating, disheartening and at times completely frustrating. I sat alongside students who were struggling to make sense of assignment briefs, not because they were 'not intelligent

enough to be at university' as they often felt, but I also concluded that in some cases the briefs were poorly written, expectations unclear and marking practices variable. I'd sit with students who cried over feedback that stated they 'can't write', without offering any advice on what the expectations were, what could be done differently and what support might be available to help them develop both from the programme team and the wider University offering.

Over time I recognised my role as the co-ordinator of the Writing Café was linked to the political framework of the academy and its underlying philosophies. As my research began to evolve in the early days of the EdD I became interested in policy development and implementation and in the macro of government policy and political discourses. I was drawn to the ways that this policy was internalised in the academy, through the guidelines, strategies and behaviours of those around me and I could see the influences of it in the micro activities of the Writing Café and my interactions and relationships with students. I wanted to challenge competing education discourses, question 'truths' in academic practice and reassure students that they were not 'the problem'. In this sense I was already an existing member of the social group I wanted to study and I did not have the same issues of gaining access to the field as many ethnographic researchers do (Hammersley, 2018). I had access to the Writing Café, I had established the Writing Café. I did not need to write for permission, gain research permits or navigate relationships with 'gatekeepers' and I could use this position to undertake research *on* social relations, *from* the social relations I already had (Crang & Cook, 2007). The only authorisation I needed to undertake this research was an agreement from my manager that my time could be used to further explore the Writing Café. Despite this, it was not without its difficulty as I still had to negotiate

entry into the setting in terms of creating ethical relationships with a newly appointed team of student Writing Mentors and the student and staff visitors to the Writing Cafe, ensuring that I was aware of the relationships I was establishing with those being studied. I also had to try to gain access to certain individuals who I might not usually encounter in my role, but whose power and positioning impacted the practices I was exploring and whose voices added understanding to the culture of the University. As a researcher I needed to establish relationships with these individuals and groups. The ethical considerations that took place throughout this process will be explored in further depth after I outline the time spent in the field and the various methods of data creation that were used during the research.

Time in the Field

I gained ethical approval for the research in November 2017 (Appendix Four) and carried out field work until June 2018, a total of 8 months. In order to be a participant in the culture, I was involved in the everyday rhythms and routines of the Writing Café, developing relationships with those who could tell me what was 'going on' in the environment (Crang & Cook, 2007). Yet, I was also detached in the sense that I was recording the activities through field notes, drawings, photographs and audio recordings of conversations. Figure One highlights the key stages of the research process in the field, demonstrating how the research moved from descriptive observations, to focused observations, through to selective observations within the 8 months in the field. It highlights various events and details of time in the field during each stage and the key focus during each time period.

Data Timeline

8 months in the field

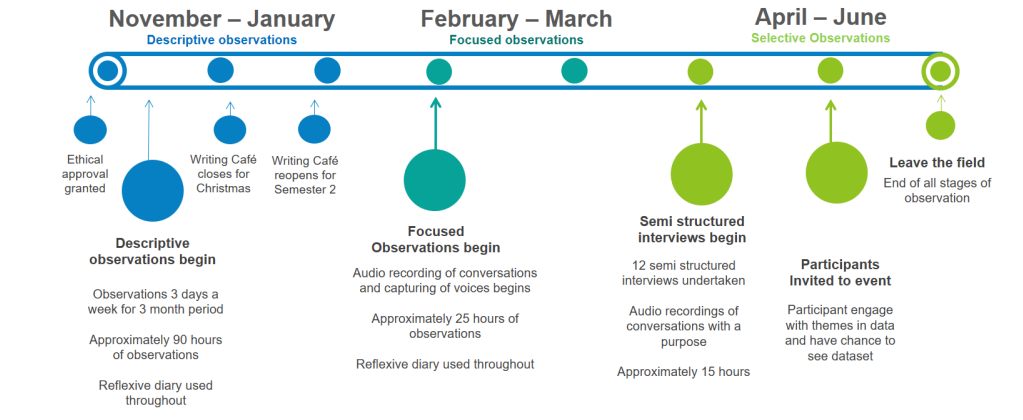


Figure One: Timeline of activities in the field. Diagram showing the 3 stage analysis over an 8 month period with key events. Please see Appendix Five for full scale version.

The research started with a descriptive observation stage where I was present in the field for a minimum of 3 days a week, over a 3 month period and moved towards a focused observation stage for February and March. The final stages of fieldwork were within the selective observation stage where 12 semi structured interviews were scheduled and completed. In May, there was also an event to share the preliminary themes where all participants who had engaged in the research were invited to discuss and review the early stages of analysis.

The following section will explore this three stage process further as well as outlining and investigating the research methods that were adopted.

4.4: Research Methods

In Hammersley and Atkinson’s search for a definition of ethnography, they shift their focus from what ethnography is, to what ethnographers do:

‘Ethnography usually involved the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what

happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through formal and informal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts – in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry’ (2007, p.3).

As such, ethnographic research employs multiple methods to gather, generate and create material. Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p.4) liken an ethnographic researcher to a ‘bricoleur’, or one who constructs ‘bricolages’ using whichever materials are available to them to allow for multiple narratives and voices to sit alongside each other, including that of the researcher (Miller & Brewer, 2003). I used various methods in this manner, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews, working with small groups, reflexive journals and sharing research insights with participants (Carspecken, 1996; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). This allowed for data to be gathered that was ‘soft’, ‘rich’ and ‘deep’ reflecting the natural language used by the various actors within the Writing Café (Miller & Brewer, 2003).

Participant Researcher

The key methods employed in my pursuit to understand and explore the narratives and voices of those who visited the Writing Café was *participant observation*, which involved participating fully in the activities of the Writing Café whilst obtaining enough ‘observational’ detachment to ask questions, probe meanings, definitions, actions and behaviours. Participant observation is used extensively in ethnography and offers the potential to be there when things happen, giving the researcher first hand and direct understanding to individual’s responses to events (Bowen, 2002).

As the field of research was so familiar to me after working in the space for a number of years, and in order to hone the purpose of my being there in a different capacity, I adopted a three stage strategy to my participant researcher activities, which began

with creating descriptive observations, trying to view the familiar through a new lens, then moving towards focused observations and finally concluding with selective observations.



Figure Two: Diagram showing the 3 stages of participant observation I undertook during the 8 months in the field. Adapted from Spradley (1980).

Crang and Cook (2007) outline that much contemporary ethnographic research takes place in environments where the researcher is already part of the community, partly due to the increasing financial and time constraints on research, but it is arguable for critical ethnographers that they are also interested in undertaking research that is useful to changing *their* practice. The level of their role within the community can vary, but those who are familiar or integral to the practice have to make decisions as to when they will be doing participant observation, or 'ordinary' work as constant immersion in the traditional sense of ethnographic study is usually not possible when in this position. This was the case for me. I still went home to my family in the evenings and had other responsibilities to undertake throughout the working week, but rather than find this a challenge to overcome I found it to be an advantage. When I was engaged in the purposes and activities of the Writing Café the 'normality' of our endeavours were never in doubt. It was when I went back to my office, or engaged with the expectations of my identity within the academy that it was difficult to 'forget'

the tensions I was trying to balance. Adopting different identities and attempting to understand and build on the tensions between being a participant researcher and a professional accountable to the University allowed me to reflect on what knowledge was valuable to the academic community, and what knowledge was valuable to the participants of the research. Crang and Cook (2007, p.42) recognise that 'researchers should not expect to emerge unaffected by such encounters' and shifts in roles and for me this was certainly true. Throughout the research I questioned and analysed my participation as I tried to balance the seemingly myriad purposes of my role. This became the subject of many of my reflective journal entries. I filled over three journals of reflective writing based on my personal reflections, emotional and embodied experiences of the research and perhaps because of these challenges these reflections provide a useful narrative of the difficulties that individuals face in being 'productive' in the higher education environment. They recognise how, at times, they have to compromise the values that underpin their drive to work in the sector. This process of navigating myself in and out of the field ultimately contributed data to my research question in ways I could not have anticipated.

Research of this nature generates emotions and I can safely say I was 'passionately immersed' in the process of data collection (Bondi, 2005b, p.232). I spent hours each day occupied with participant observation, interviews, group discussions and informal conversations and I found myself both exhausted and exhilarated by the process of fieldwork. I would go home and keep up to date with my field notes, transcribing audio recordings of group and individual conversations and interviews and consider what topics might need further exploration, what had emerged from the day's events and whether or not I was retaining the richness of the data in the way I was recording it.

Writing field notes from participant observations is an integral part of ethnography and I was guided by Emerson, Fretz and Shaw's seminal text *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (2011). In the early days of the research and during the 'Descriptive Observation' stage (Figure Two) I focused on noting down key details of the scenes and made extensive, handwritten jottings about each day. I would ask questions such as what people are here, what are they focused on, how are they moving through the space? Each evening I would finalise these 'rough' notes and type them up electronically in order to have access to them for planning the next steps in the field. This was not a mechanical process however, as I moved back and forth between jottings and recollections of the events (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011), trying to capture the multi-layered environment. It felt like I progressed to the second stage of participant observation, 'Focused Observations' when it became apparent I had captured minimal verbatim quotes and my field notes were largely comprised of researcher observations, reflections and trying to see new points of view. That is, my views as the ethnographer as I was trying to step back from my role as coordinator. I had captured others voices, but only minimally and I began to experiment with ways of capturing multiple voices and narratives. The questions I asked from the first stage continued, but by focusing on using the third person in my field notes I was able to more fully understand other individual's outlooks and pursue questions that were relevant to them. This meant I was asking less of what I thought was going on, to adding notes to ask different participants what they thought was taking place. This process of 'ongoing sense-making' (Cloe, Crang & Goodwin, 2005, p.197) shaped my research journey and I felt I was entering the third stage of participant observation 'Selective Observations' when I began to reproduce dialogue as accurately as possible and could share the insights from the first two stages with my participants in semi

structured interviews. I had found a routine that allowed me to reflexively consider my own position in the field and balance it with the other actors present and those who were not present but whose role was also tied up with the practices of the Writing Cafe.

By this time, my relationship and the rapport with my research participants had grown on both personal and professional levels and I felt that the Writing Café community saw me as a 'friend' and 'potential advocate' (Walford, 2001). Whilst this made me feel uneasy at times, my aim as a researcher was to have honest and open relationships that were built on trust and confidence. I focused on reproducing dialogue through direct quotations, paraphrasing and verbatim, each person identifiable in my field notes in order to sense check, and the transcriptions were identified by the use of double quotation marks and italics. I found that verbatim quotes transcribed from audio recordings reflected the flow and dynamic nature of the discussions I was involved in and witnessing much better than my jottings or recollections of what was said. They also allowed me to explore the language that was being used by the participants in line with the actions I witnessed. For Spradley (1980), the verbatim principle is frequently violated in ethnographic research as it is hidden and when this happens it can hide the differences in language used in the actual field situation and the language used of the ethnographer. This was not the case throughout this research as I found a way to balance different voices and narratives (Mason, 2002). In this sense I was making informal ethnographic interviews which were naturalistic and 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess, 1984, p.102). I would start conversations with a wide range of people and ask questions relevant to the conversation. This method of creating field notes and data contributed to the myriad of individuals own stories of

their experiences in relation to their views and perception of the Writing Café, something which felt far more powerful when writing up my research notes at the end of each day. That is not to say that I found the process easy though. I decided early on to transcribe all of my own recordings, which was a time consuming and laborious endeavour at times, but one which I somehow managed to keep on top of each week, despite the recordings permeating my sleep and encouraging me to dream about how certain questions might be phrased the next time I was in the field. This process was also considerable emotional labour, and I was guided that this should not be considered as burdensome but the positive and negative emotions would help guide a deeper analysis and contribute to data connectedness (McInch, 2020).

Semi Structured Interviews

The formal ethnographic interviews differed from informal interviews, or purposeful conversations, as these were scheduled at appointed times and with a specific request to interview. Whilst they were formal in the sense of the appointed slot, they were in line with ethnographic interviewing as they were reflexive rather than standardised (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). I prepared a guide and list of topics to discuss shaped from previous observations and conversations, but this acted more of an aide memoir rather a directed set of questions to ask or structure the time. This allowed for an iterative approach with each interviewee and allowed the interview to flow and ebb so stories could be told, memories be recalled and *how* individuals talked about their experiences could be analysed (Miller & Brewer, 2003). Interviews allow for generating and sharing a variety of knowledges. As some of the topics I discussed could be considered as attributing individuals to reproduction of inequality it was important the participants trusted me and felt that I was listening to them with an unconditional

positive regard for their views (Bondi, 2005b; Bondi, 2005a). I was careful to ensure that the questions were of a non-threatening kind and each interview began by outlining the general focus of my research and the social networks that the interviewee was involved in that I intended to explore (Crang & Cook, 2007).

Throughout the interview process I was guided by Denzin and Lincoln's position that:

'[I]nterviews are part of the dialogic conversation that connects all of us to [a] larger moral community. Interviews arise out of performance events. They transform information into shared experience. This reflexive project presumes that words and language have a material presence in the world; that words have effects on people. Words matter (2011, p.24).'

One of the challenges I faced throughout the research was that of language, finding the right name or label for individuals that helped the research make sense, but did not prescribe an identity on individuals that they, or I, would be uncomfortable with. I settled on the following naming categories and descriptions:

The Actors

These categories are fluid and individuals move through different roles.

Writing Mentors

A team of 25 students from a range of disciplines and levels of study employed to work as Writing Mentors from 1-4pm daily in the Writing Café. They are paid for this role.

Students

A phrase used to identify those actors who attend the Writing Café specifically for support with their academic writing. These may be students in the traditional sense of undergraduate and postgraduate, but they may also be members of staff who are enrolled on courses of learning, including the Postgraduate Certificate of Practice.

Visitors

This phrase is used to identify people who have been observed as they entered the physical boundaries of the Writing Café, but have not come to seek support from the Writing Mentors, nor is their position within the University known. They may be

members of staff from the Schools and Faculties, Professional Services staff and/or individuals studying at the University.

Professional Services Staff

This refers to members of University staff who are not directly engaged in teaching and learning activities. They may be stakeholders in the Writing Café including the catering staff, Estates team and marketing department.

Academic Staff

These individuals work directly on programmes of study within the Schools and Faculties. They too may be stakeholders in the Writing Café.

The first two stages of observation helped to inform the questions I used in semi-structured interviews, and the selective observations particularly helped to identify which topics were important and relevant to the research community I was working alongside. During the selective observation stage, I used the transcriptions to explain the context of the interview, the particular ideas that would guide our conversations. After 6 months in the field I invited all of those who had helped to shape my research to a session where we explored the emerging themes in the data. Although I had always made the field notes available to anyone who was represented in them, and often used these to strike up conversations, during this sharing session the Writing Mentors, students and staff members were given the opportunity and space to identify areas that felt important to them. I also shared with the participants the memos and initial codes and themes that I had identified.

Data Analysis

Alongside moving through the iterative stages of descriptive, focused and selective observations I was also simultaneously trying to unpick, think and rethink the data and ideas, as well as the concepts and connections between them (Brewer, 2000). The process of bringing order to the data and looking for patterns took place as I was in the

field and was transcribing the audio recordings and typing up any field note observations each day. Whilst in the field the data analysis did not reach an interpretation stage where I could explain the patterns or relationships, but rather was a memoing approach, where selected text was highlighted with different colours to show repeating ideas and overlaps (Brewer, 2000). I colour coded the transcripts and created observation categories in order to begin to provide an initial structure to the varied forms of data. Appendix Six demonstrates how this process took shape, with the grouping together of similar observational ideas into categories.

From this, I had an excel spreadsheet that formed the analysis by theming together repeating areas within the interviews, observations and reflexive journal entries. Data was coded, categorised and sorted into themes. It was a sense making activity of course, one that looked for repeating patterns, commonly discussed ideas or observed behaviours, phrases or ways of being. Throughout the interpretive phase of the research process I remained open to what emerged, being prepared to change my mind and think again and again how and why people did the things I had observed. Attaching meaning and significance to these themes was a 'messy' process (Murchison, 2010) and the 'artful and political' practice of interpretation continued into the writing up stage of the thesis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p.15).

Although this research was not a Bourdieusian analysis in the traditional sense that it was analysed *with Bourdieu*, but rather a thematic analysis, Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992) framework did guide the structuring of the data and in particular the written thesis itself:

1. Analysing the position of the field in relation to the field of power
2. Mapping out the actors within the field who are competing for authority

3. Analysing the habitus of these actors

The use of Bourdieu was also employed to make sense of the thematic analysis and explain the implications of the research in chapter 5. Much like the analysis of data, writing the thesis also became a method of inquiry and a way of knowing (Richardson, 2005). Throughout the three stages of observation (descriptive, focused, and selective) and during the analysis of the data I encountered a number of ethical tensions, which will be discussed in the following section.

4.5 Ethical Ethnography

Ethics in ethnographic research can be considered in two ways, the ethics with a capital E that comprise the broad, fixed principles that shape our plans and research proposals and the second, those with a small e that shape our everyday interactions (Crang & Cook, 2007; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Firstly, I will deal with Ethics in the sense of the former as the second are messier, ongoing and were continually balanced with each decision made in the research project. As previously mentioned, I was granted Ethical Approval from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities Research Ethics Committee in early November 2017 (Appendix Four). The application outlined my intended aims, objectives and methods for the research project and included copies of the information sheet that would be available for all potential participants (Appendix One). It also included a poster that was displayed in the Writing Café and the entrance to the building in which the social learning space is situated informing visitors that observational research was taking place (Appendix Three). Finally, it included a copy of the consent form that I asked individuals who participated in any lengthy audio recordings, group discussions or semi-structured interviews to sign (Appendix Two). Whilst this ethical approval was gained from an ethical body, this did not mean I

intended to hide behind a 'traditional veil of objectivity' (Crang & Cook, 2007, p.26) and ignore an honest engagement with ethical issues arising throughout the research process. One of the guiding questions that stayed with me throughout the process was 'who benefits from the study?' I faced ethical dilemmas every day and many 'sliding doors', or ethically important moments took place both during the ethnographic observations stage and throughout the analysis and writing up of the thesis (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; McInch, 2020). Social research is a dynamic endeavour that can depend on multiple factors, including responsibility to colleagues and the institution as well as successful relationships between researcher and participants:

'The ethics of social research is about creating a mutually respectful, win-win relationship in which participants are pleased to respond candidly, valid results are obtained, and the community considers the conclusions constructive' (Miller & Brewer, 2003, p.95).

Ethical Tensions and Informed Consent

Madden states that ethnography as a methodology is a commitment to ethics from the outset which is in line with how I viewed the process, but we will now turn to consider those sliding doors moments, particularly around the notion of informed consent which were of particular ethical consideration (2017). Informed consent can be understood as a dynamic process that shifts throughout the research process and demonstrates that whilst I had formal Ethical approval (Appendix Four), there were many ethically messy moments. One of the ethical dilemmas that I faced was the audio recording of conversations at the Writing Café and the positioning of myself within the spectrum of overt or covert. Whilst covert research is seen as something deceptive and dishonest (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) and something I was not trying to adopt, there were considerations to the consciousness of participants awareness of my

presence and purpose as a researcher. As outlined, my position as a researcher was highlighted in the posters on display at the Writing Café for the duration of the fieldwork, yet whether these allowed visitors to be truly informed about the nature of the research troubled me (Barbour, 2010). As the recordings were taking place in a shared, public and open area, there may have been individuals who were not comfortable with their voices being captured on tape and forming part of the data for this thesis (Walford, 2005). I also considered the possibility that there may be discussions taking place that were confidential and would put me in the uneasy position of knowing about breaches of academic conduct, as an example. I had specifically designed a written consent form for those who did agree to have their conversations and voices audio recorded, but what of those who were unknowingly captured? In order to mitigate this I decided to use a recording device, older technology than I had available to me, in order to capture the immediate discussion but to minimise the background noises and ensure that other conversations were not captured and overheard. This was a sense of managing the ethics *in situ* and viewing ethics as a process that evolved throughout the fieldwork (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

Another moment of ethical consideration came in the presentation of myself as an observer-researcher. Again, the Writing Café is a busy and dynamic environment, particularly designed with no expert, reception or person 'in charge'. This was also true of me as a researcher, how visible was I to the participants in the research setting. It was not for the fear of being outed, or for being dishonest with them, but it was not possible or practical to inform all participants of my role due to the nature of the field (Mason, 2002; Spradley, 1980). The ethical protocols posters were displayed for the

duration of the 8 months, and participant information sheets were left in clearly visible areas of the Writing Café, but I questioned whether the connection between myself as researcher and the research project taking place could be equated together. These themes appeared in my reflective journals and moments were captured when I particularly considered my own positionality reflexively. This notion of consent was an ethical dilemma that I came to understand as an ongoing negotiation that led to communal interests being centre stage, ensuring the wider community of the Writing Café was not negatively impacted by the methods (Strathern, 2000).

4.6 Reflexivity

Crucial to the methodology of critical ethnography is analysing our own positionality, acknowledging our own power, biases, and privileges (May, 1997). The position of my research and my journey to higher education, both in terms of my study within a higher education setting and now my role as practitioner and researcher, has been laid out within the first chapter. This position played a positive role in building relationships with students and contributing to successful field work as has been the case for many educational researchers (McInch, 2020). However, critical ethnographers have been critiqued for providing 'openly ideological research (Lather, 1986), raising concerns about the validity of the research and its pursuit of moving towards emancipatory practices (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Yet, the purpose of this research is not to ensure my own ideology is replaced with the current social practices of the Writing Café, but rather to call to attention the vantage point of myself as a research and that of the voices in this research (Anderson, 1989; May, 1997). For Bourdieu, stepping back and gaining objectivity within social science research is unfruitful and the

particular practices under investigation are better understood in articulating one's relationship to the site of study (Bourdieu, 1998). In addition, Cloke argues that a good ethnographer is someone who is able to undertake research that is suitably reflexive in that they are able to learn and present something that can provide meaning in other people's lives (Crang & Cook, 2007).

Throughout the research, particularly during the observations and analysing of data or meaning making phase, I was guided by the notion of reflexivity and being aware of my involvement as well as also stepping back to embrace it as multi-layered (Crang & Cook, 2007). Shacklock and Smyth (1998) describe reflexivity as the conscious awareness of the researcher's own beliefs and values and ensuring a transparency around the researcher's position and assumptions. The use of research diaries and field notes helped me to question and consider this position and how it was impacting my practices as a researcher (Burkholder & Thompson, 2020). As Tricoglus explains, the use of a research diary can enable a researcher to stay self-aware, critically analysing his or her involvement and reflecting throughout the various stages of the research (2001).

Reflexive Research Diary

In order to be a reflexive researcher that weighed the impact, effect and perception as well as limitations of the data, I captured observations, interpretations and analysis within the field notes. These include reflexive notes that form part of the data, and suggesting there are distinctions between field note data and my own reactions has been described as 'misleading' (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011). I was performing dual roles within the Writing Café as researcher and a coordinator and the process of taking field notes increased my reflexivity as it provided the space to consider assumptions

and understand the narratives and meanings and practices of both myself and those of the participants (Burkholder & Thompson, 2020).

There were times in my field notes that made this dual role and positioning evident as I questioned the pedagogic practices we were encouraging at the Writing Café, which were reinforcing the exclusion of certain students. As James (2015) argues, most professionals within education like to think of their work and daily efforts as an educator as something positive, and thinking of them as part of a system that reproduces inequalities can be challenging. I tried to keep this at the front of my mind, recognising that I needed to think about my role critically and have a method for 'internal dialogue, or thinking aloud' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.192). In this sense it is no surprise that I found this research challenging. I was particularly aware of trying to 'hear' situations where the Writing Café was reinforcing inequality of experience and there were situations where I felt decisions I had made as the coordinator of the space had excluded perhaps the most vulnerable students. Those whose habitus was confronted with such a different sub-field to what they were used to led them to feel that they did not know how to participate. There were days during my observations when I wanted to help bring them into the space and discuss and explore why they could not enter, but felt perhaps this was abusing my position for the purpose of the research. I noted this in my journal:

"I've just watched a student walk past the entrance to the Writing Café 3 times. At first I wasn't really focused on her as I was watching the Writing Mentors who were trying to host an event. But the third time she came past I made eye contact with a Mentor to suggest they go and invite her in. I want to talk to her about why she didn't enter, but feel this might be abusing the role I have here. She is talking to the team now, so at least she's included. [Extract from fieldnotes]"

This was a moment that Barbour describes as a stop moment, one where I found it particularly challenging to switch from being a researcher into the Writing Café coordinator (2010). As a coordinator I was pleased that the student was now able to participate and engage in something that she had wanted to, but had not felt able to. Yet, as a researcher I was curious about why she was not able to enter, I wanted to hear from her about what she was thinking when she walked past on those different occasions, separated only slightly in time. I considered arranging a time to talk to her and capture her words on the recorder; I thought her voice would be valuable to the research. On reflection after the event, and on further reading about the interests of the ethnographic pursuit, I realised I was able to still consider this student by focussing my concern for her and her lived reality towards the gaze of power and politics. I could consider her embodied reaction to the Writing Café, without hearing an explanation from her (Robinson, 2014). As Hammersley argues in relation to the validity of ethnographic observations:

‘the accounts of participants collected in the course of participant observation are more likely to be valid, and correctly interpreted, than accounts elicited in formal interviews. This is because accounts are context-sensitive, and tend to be related to features of the lives of participants of which the researcher would be unaware without participant observation’ (Hammersley, 2018, p.8).

Thus I did not need a verbal account, I was able to analyse her physical account and the observation I had witnessed in that particular instance. I was able to consider her embodied habitus. Alongside facing challenges and reflecting on my role in the reflective research diary I also faced challenges in the methods of interview and transcribing audio, beyond those already mentioned in terms of the emotional labour and physical time needed for this.

Reflexivity in Research Methods

As outlined in Chapter 2, one of the underpinning values of Learning Development practitioners is a commitment to critical self-reflection, on-going learning and a commitment to professional development and therefore reflexivity in practice is common in the profession. Learning Developers are encouraged to acknowledge the complexities of their worlds, casting doubt on knowledge production (Ball, 2007a), and this was highlighted during the research, particularly through the semi structured interviews phase. As the Writing Café is primarily used by student visitors the participant observations were appropriate to the field. Yet, as the observations became more focused during the selective observation stage I became aware that many of the individuals who I invited to be part of the research did not encounter the Writing Café practices directly. This was particularly true of the academic staff members and senior managers of the University. At first I considered them as ‘informants’, someone who was knowledgeable about behaviours and customs surrounding academic writing practices from their position in the field, yet as time went on I began to see them also as respondents (Levy & Hollan, 2005). How they responded to the interview setting, how they reacted to questions or topics of discussions were also important to understanding their positioning (Levy & Hollan, 2005). Initially, I had thought that some of the interview participants were aware of the power they had over the practices of the Writing Cafe, but as I developed the approach and was careful to be non-directive it became clearer through taking this approach that although they were telling me a great deal about the control they feel in their everyday work lives, they did not make the connection to the sub-field of the

Writing Cafe. This was not always a conscious consideration and their power was wielded without their conscious knowledge.

Reflexivity in Theory and Academic Writing

Another area that felt particularly challenging for me during the writing up phase of the research and indeed the prior stages to the Doctorate was in relation to my own academic writing. Analysing the academic writing practices of the University, whilst also having to conform to many of them through the assignment phase was a personal challenge. Working at this intersection and being in the position of someone who supposedly had expertise in the conventions and purposes of academic writing did not make the process of actually committing word to paper any easier. Despite knowing that academic writing is really identity work, there felt like there was a higher expectation for me to be able to demonstrate my mastery of this. At times this was stifling. It was not just in the actual writing of this research that there were challenges, this was also true of the theoretical framework adopted. Although many researchers have commented on the impenetrability of Bourdieu's writing I was critically conscious of how I was using Bourdieu's theory to think with. I was careful not to use his theory in a superficial way and perform my own misrecognition (James, 2015). Researchers have been criticised for their overuse of individual elements of his thinking terms, as Reay described as the 'habitual use of habitus' (Reay, 2004). Hey (2003) also criticised the way Bourdieusian concepts have been used in educational research and referred to them as 'intellectual hairspray'. I was conscious of trying to think through each stage of data analysis through these connected elements of the lens, rather than applying them individually. It was also challenging to structure the analysis of the thesis given the notions of habitus, capital and field are relational and interplay with each other.

Finding a format to present the arguments was therefore iterative, but so was the analysis of the Writing Café's position within the University. I recognised that perhaps the Writing Café was not successful in its attempts for securing further staffing and resource because of the position of myself as coordinator and our team within the University. Initially, this felt like a very personal problem, but as the research progressed and I continued thinking and rethinking through the lens of Bourdieu's tools it also became a great comfort and opportunity for reflection. Thus, applying Bourdieu's framework helped on many levels and throughout many different stages and was valuable from different perspectives as it allowed for ongoing sense-making.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion

5:1 The Writing Café as Sub-Field

In light of the empirical research, this chapter will explore the autonomy of the Writing Café as a sub-field within the wider field of the University. Analysing the different spheres, actors and practices that interact with those of the Writing Café, and how in turn the Writing Café also impacts those will demonstrate how particular conditions are played out within this sub-field. Analysing the structural properties of the Writing Café in relation to these interconnected fields highlights the variation in autonomy and allows us to consider the other practices that contribute to governing this particular space (Bourdieu, 1993). As Krause argues 'we can distinguish forms of autonomy based on different positions a field as a whole might have in the overall architecture that it is embedded in' (2017, p.12).

Thus, how autonomous the Writing Café is as a sub-field is multifaceted and striated, influenced by the inter-relations between fields and their permeable boundaries and practices. Moving beyond categorising different fields as good or harmful helps us to

consider how they may provide different conditions for students to learn (Krause, 2017; Maton, 2005) and offer different opportunities for actors to understand the affordances and constraints of these conditions.

Today I walk across the campus, passing different buildings, spaces, fields. I enter the building to the Writing Cafe and the lift is broken, a common occurrence. So I head up the uninspiring 4 floors, 8 flights of stairs. Breezeblock walls fill the view. It's such a vast amount of space to be empty, neutral. The only visual interest, to me anyway, is the peeling handrail. Once painted yellow, then red, and now a sort of blue green. It's faded and unloved, but heavily used. Finally, I reach the top floor and the smell of coffee and toast hits my senses.

We are surrounded by white cubed teaching rooms set up with Formica table and chairs in a line and the Writing Café sits nestled amongst these formal teaching spaces in an open access area. The mismatched tables and chairs here had a previous life before they came here. In someone's home perhaps. There are marks in the wood, stories to be told. Objects sourced from various disciplines provide something to look at, much needed after the white walled ride to the top floor.

The space is busy today. The Writing Mentors are already talking to students, although you wouldn't be able to tell who is who. Around 20 people are in the small space, some in groups of 5 or 6 where the chairs have been pulled up for conversations to flow. People lean into each other to talk above the sound of the coffee machine whirring in the background. Some quietly working alongside each other, papers strewn across the table. There is a tutorial taking place between an academic tutor and a student on the brown leather sofa, they both have a piece of cake and a warm drink in front of them. You can't tell what disciplines students are studying at first glance, but the space feels purposeful (Extract from field notes).

The cold stairway and white cubes of the formal teaching spaces are in stark contrast to this social learning space, yet they are not really separate nor are they truly distinct from each other. Whilst the Writing Café physically appears to be different to the surrounding areas, these fields and in particular the practices within them are relational. Bourdieu argued the social world is made up of interconnected fields and we can think of the Writing Café as one micro field, social space or sub-field and particular set of practices within another, the University (Bourdieu, 1998). Bourdieu's

notion allows us to consider the University as a sphere of social life made up of different fields, different disciplinary specialist areas, the micro fields of classroom interactions and formalised teaching spaces given over to the curriculum, the offices of academics, the spaces only students access, the activities only staff participate in. The nature and structure of these fields are different, they have different rules, narratives and truths (Thomson, 2005). The actors across the University traverse these different fields, students navigate across these invisible borders and the different physical environments and there is an ongoing struggle. It is only in this navigation across fields that students identify differences and the structural location allows for variation in experience. Whilst some places might seem homogenous, others, like the Writing Cafe are visually demarcated. Throughout the research, students articulated that the Writing Café looked different to the other spaces they used. This quote illustrates how the Writing Café stood out as 'different' to the other spaces on campus:

Taylor: When I first saw this place I was doing the international orientation they mentioned that the Writing Café was here as we went round.

Researcher: So you had physically been shown where we were?

Taylor: Yes, and it is totally different from the rest of campus, so I kind of remembered it.

Researcher: How do you think it is different?

Taylor: Well it feels like its nice comfortable space to learn I guess, it isn't just the same as the other parts of the uni. I just come here to study, it feels different. More like I am at home.

Taylor is a student who visited the Writing Café and is comparing the sub-field of the Writing Café to the other environments he has encountered at the University, concluding that for him this feels more like his personal space, than something aligned

with the University. His habitus felt at ease in the Writing Café as he likened it to a home environment. Traditional teaching and learning spaces were not described in this way and the analysis demonstrated that actors entering the Writing Café were able to translate their familial habitus to the specific sub-field. Whilst Taylor was not alone in discussing the physical attributes of the social learning space in comparison to other areas, the field is more than the physical space. In thinking of fields we also need to appreciate that there are what Bourdieu terms 'laws', the governing practices and experiences of people within these fields. These laws exist through the configuration and distribution of multiple capitals across different actors which ultimately determine the structuring of practice and the boundaries of the field (Naidoo, 2004). Thus, the field can be thought of as the setting in which people and their social positions are located. The Writing Café as a sub-field, supports students and staff from across the University, serving as a space to write, a place to refresh, a place to discuss academic writing practices, and as such it allows us to view it as a lens into the other sub-fields and governing practices across the university and importantly to the field of power (Thomson, 2005). It is an intersectional field and as such the practices that take place here are afforded the chance to differ from those within the sub-fields it interacts with, whilst simultaneously trying to acknowledge those sub-fields to create a welcoming environment.

Alessandro: Hi, can I talk to you about this please? [holding a printed out draft paper, covered in handwritten notes, markings of edits and ideas].

Writing Mentor: Of course, sit down and lets have a chat.

Alessandro: So, like, this is the first time I've been here. What subject are you?

Writing Mentor: Well, I'm Psychology but we are all from different subjects and we speak to students who might be studying Ocean Science, or Literature or Architecture or anything really. What are you studying?

Alessandro: I'm a student on the PGCAP.

Writing Mentor: Of I haven't heard of that. That's ok though, we can still think about what you are writing and how it communicates. We really just question things together, if that is ok?

Alessandro: Yes I wrote er, a first case study and just finished yesterday to write 500 pieces of words. I didn't know that all these subjects were here.

Writing Mentor: Yes, we see all sorts of writing from all sorts of programmes. It actually makes it really interesting because usually you're sort of in your own subject.

This interaction between a staff member studying for a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice and student Writing Mentor highlights how the theme of social learning at the Writing Café can be considered as an intersection of sub-fields. It is a place where different fields, with different conditions are evident (Krause, 2017). In a sense, the traditional roles of academic staff member supporting students has been flipped in this instance, despite the Writing Mentor being unaware of this change in positioning. The Writing Mentors are not always actors directly located within these connected sub-fields themselves as they do not have access to the different disciplinary areas in a formal way through studying the same courses of those they are talking to. Nor are they explicitly playing the game and learning the rules of each, but rather they are exposed to the different laws of these fields through their role in the sub-field of the Writing Café. The logic of practice at the Writing Café is against the norm of the fields it interacts with (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) precisely because it is connected to so many other disciplines, but also because the relationship between student and staff is not the dominant culture. The work of the Writing Mentors

supporting students and staff gives them insight into the different logics of practice and governing principles of various sub-fields as they are positioned in a way that flips their authority and are able to question the logic of other disciplinary areas. This position within the sub-field of the Writing Café provides the condition for being able to consciously consider what games are actually being played in relation to academic writing across the institution.

Field Specific Practices: Who Sets the Rules of the Game?

Beginning to answer the question of who sets the rules of the game within the Writing Café is multifaceted. The analysis of the ethnographic observations, field notes and interviews concluded that as an intersectional site many games are being played in relation to academic writing practices, and the dominant players in the field, the ‘incumbents’ as Bourdieu would term them, were largely responsible for maintaining their field in its current form (Bourdieu, 1986). One of the affordances of the Writing Café operating outside of the other sub-fields within the institution is the positioning of the different actors together. The Writing Mentors, students and Learning Development team all share a cross disciplinary physical space to discuss writing and the development of linguistic and academic capital. The practices of the Writing Café and the cultural production of capital is relational, thus it is situated within and constituted in relation to the more culturally dominant disciplinary fields of study. In this sense, whilst the Writing Mentors, Learning Developers and students may have decreased linguistic capital in relation to specific disciplinary practices, they have an increased version of the capital in their awareness of the differences across the disciplines. This theme emerged from the analysis as students articulated that

understanding the specific capital valued within a discipline varied, even within the discipline itself.

Lauren is still talking to the same student about reflective writing. They've been talking for around 25 minutes, mostly about the point of reflective writing but the conversation moves on to discussing not knowing what the lecturer is looking for. "It sort of changes depending on which tutor you ask" the student remarks. Lauren agrees. "I know, that can be hard, we hear that a lot and I know what you mean from my course". The student start talking about the different key points the tutors on her course focus on, some want you to really engage with the literature that backs up your reflections, others just say it needs to be referenced, "like is that the same thing". The student shares a story of a previous piece of work she did where the academic teaching her asked for clear, academic language as a the main focus, but then her tutor said she needed to focus on researching the topic. When asking about the assignment in another lecture the group were told that really the point to take notice of was answering the assignment question. "We were all so confused" the student concludes [Extract from field notes].

The actors in the field of the Writing Café may legitimise the authority of the sub-field by participating in conversation such as the one between Laura and the students, this may not always influence or change the rules of the game, or the rules of the *games*, within the surrounding sub-fields. For example, when supporting students to understand "*what their academics are looking for*" or what the governing principles of academic writing within their discipline are, some students learn there is a game to be played, that is shifting and the rules are different according to the different incumbents and actors involved. Some academics may look for x and others y, suggesting the structure and principles of the fields are organised differently even within the same subject and disciplinary area. Whilst they may disagree on exactly what constitutes good academic writing, it is clear that academic staff members marking students' written work hold power within the field as the incumbents. An interview with a programme leader in the Faculty of Health acknowledged that

different academics may be looking for different things with their students in relation to marking written academic assignments.

Anna: So this year will be using online feedback, I've never used it but again it's a rubric with the same comments going in all the time and I'm not sure how I feel about that.

Researcher: I think that will be interesting. My instinct is that a students won't like that they see exact comments on a peer's work, because I think they like it personalised.

Anna: Same. Yes, because of the amount of work you put in. Even though you might say the same things, which you do do, because you always ask why, where did you get that from, what do you mean by that. And my feedback is always like that, I'm not a correctionalist and I think that is partly because of my own insecurity about my ability to write something right.

Researcher: Yes, so you wouldn't correct grammar or sentence structure because you are not entirely sure yourself?

Anna: Exactly. Precisely. Whereas a colleague of mine will absolutely do that, they are looking at different things. But I will never do that, but also does it matter? I'm not sure that it does. For me it is about that knowledge and understanding. So my feedback is always why, what do you mean by that, where did you get the evidence from, who says that, who are the media or whatever it may be.

Researcher: The bigger questions perhaps, over the instructional observations?

Anna: Yes, so rather than these big blanket terms all the time, let's try and break it down a bit and drill down what you are talking about here.

Researcher: That is what we try to encourage with the Writing Mentors but I do wonder if there is more practice out there that looks at grammar and referencing and those kind of instrumental areas of writing. Do you work as a team to review others feedback and think about what you value as a marking team?

Anna: No, no we don't. And I think that would be something that is helpful. We do often talk about team meetings having time to doing, even peer marking, so all grading the same paper and seeing what we would do, and we encourage that in clinical practice but we are not very good at doing it ourselves. But it is a time thing. But I think it is something that is helpful. I think policy wise it is a good practice thing, I mean just having your teaching observed can be a useful thing.

Researcher: Yes, because it makes you think again about why you are doing what you are doing?

Anna: Yes, it does. So having your marking reviewed by a colleague is also... and also you end up with habits of confidence that develop over time, so you think you are right and you keep doing the same thing, but actually it is not until someone has looked at it with fresh eyes and said have you thought about this, or.

Researcher: We do find that this impacts students understanding of the expectations of their teams. They try to figure out what is more important and what they should focus on.

Thus, there is a degree of consensus amongst these actors on one hand, but also contestation within this disciplinary sub-field. Whilst there is no doubt that a range of different expertise from academic staff members contributing towards a programme of study is beneficial, in this example they do not discuss collective approaches to marking practice. This in turn makes it challenging to explain to students or support them to understand the collective expectations. This provides an unclear understanding for the students of how to develop the capital required and what capital is valued amongst their wider programme team. As a collective, the academics hold more academic and symbolic capital than their students or those involved in the Writing Cafe to set the rules of their disciplinary field and what constitutes academic writing, yet this is not always consciously considered or agreed, despite Anna recognising that to do so would be of value. As Anna identifies, the laws of her field hold the prioritisation of professional practice of higher value than the articulation, discussion and agreement of what constitutes constructive and developmental written feedback for students. Thus, their consideration and development of professional practice has an advanced position in relation to the consideration of teaching and learning interactions, particularly around what constitutes written knowledge. In this

sense it makes perfect sense for Anna to value and develop her professionally-orientated capital precisely because it is valued within her sub-field and thus rewards her with a stronger position (Grenfell & Lebaron, 2014). Anna's comments highlight that the disciplinary area as a sub-field is in turn governed by their professional practice bodies, adding elements of external, relational power to the consideration and positions them to emphasise and agree clinical content and supervision practices, over scaffolding student feedback and consideration of teaching practices. These variable properties of the different disciplinarily sub-fields are evident at the Writing Café due to its positioning across the University's various sub-fields. In other words, the space can be considered as a site that situates itself as sub-field connected to numerous other cultures.

The Writing Mentors have shared values, encouraged by the Learning Development team, to openly question the logic and these taken for granted practices around academic writing, without risking their own position in the sub-field. They are positioned to question these practices with little threat to their own position or progress on the course. Throughout the ethnographic observations students spoke of finding it helpful to question certain decisions and rules governing academic writing outside of the sub-field of their discipline. They found asking questions at the Writing Café to be different in terms of notions of power, precisely because it was separate from their discipline and it was away from the direct actors and incumbents within that sub-field.

Student: Thank you, that's helpful. I'm glad I can ask anything here without being judged.

This student's comment around judgement can be considered not as inherently identifying a negative relationship between their academic teaching staff and the student, but as an articulation of the positioning of that relationship and how the student perceives the role of the programme team is to judge him. Rather than suggesting that these individuals do not care to provide an environment for the student to ask silly questions, it is possible to think of the Writing Café offering the affordance of positioning the student and the academic staff within their disciplinary sub-field in an alternative way. Whilst academic staff members can use their resources and power within the discipline to set the rules, the Writing Cafe as a field could be thought to provide the space for students to develop cultural capital in questioning these rules (Bourdieu, Passeron & Martin, 1994). This allows for the relationships between the actors in the Writing Café to be freer from the power of the expert novice relationship that students perceive between themselves and their teachers.

Writing Mentor Amy: So, does that make more sense now?

Jonathon: Yes, thank you so much. I really wanted to find out more about this, but you know, there was no way I was going to ask my lecturers.

Variation in Positional Autonomy & Structural Properties of the Writing Café

Today we held an event at Writing Café encouraging students from the Sciences to come and explore creative writing as a way of communicating their subject knowledge and understanding. The Writing Mentors have changed the layout of the tables and chairs to create one large group space, rather than individual clusters. They also set the agenda and time as they thought was best suited to when students from these programmes would be around. There was a sense of excitement in the air as they moved furniture around, considered how the session might run and created a draft plan for the day. Julia commented that "I love the fact we can think about how we want to do this".

The Writing Mentors were given the freedom to create the environment for this event which suggests the relational autonomy is strong within the Writing Café, particularly when compared to the formal teaching spaces of the institution. The Writing Mentors are active participants in the sub-field who hold positions of power, they are asked to draw on their pedagogic knowledge to provide the best environment or culture to learn, thus their positioning as Writing Mentors within the Writing Café affords them the power to decide how the space is set up. This is encouraged by the staff who work there. However, this power is only possible again when considered in relation to the other spaces these Writing Mentors occupy as students. Formal teaching spaces are governed by timetabling policies, varying historical teacher centred pedagogic approaches and thus students are positioned as having weak autonomy within these fields. The autonomy of the sub-field of formal spaces given over to the curriculum is also weaker, for staff, as well as for students. They are impacted by a myriad of practices; the policy of timetabling that places the actors in the space every hour on the hour, with little time or choice in selecting the best seating and room configuration. The IT equipment that is structured by a central team who oversee the requirements, installation and set up; the little legend on the wall that shows how 'best' to lay out the room. Lower autonomy is afforded to the students, academics and other actors who physically use these spaces day to day, despite the laws surrounding them largely being set by those within the wider field of higher education, relational autonomy (Maton, 2005). During the research I interviewed an individual, James, whose responsibilities included overseeing the formal teaching spaces on the University campus. He highlighted how he was positioned to have a stronger autonomy to contribute to the laws or governing rules of these spaces.

Researcher: Do you know who creates the little maps in the teaching spaces showing how to lay out the space?

James: We do. We put them there mostly to highlight occupancy and guide the cleaning staff. Stuff gets moved around.

Researcher: Ok, interesting. So do you also decide the layout according to a particular room's occupancy, or the type of activity that takes place in the space?

James: Well, it's mostly just making sure we maximise the usage of the space. That is what space utilisation is all about and the estate is obviously, well it is very costly so we have to make sure we're doing all we can.

James highlights the logic of estate and space management influences the physical positioning of teaching staff. His field dominates, thus creating weaker relational authority in the teaching space for others. This managerial governance of formal teaching spaces influences the positioning between university teaching staff and students (Maton, 2005) and thus they inform the practices that are possible. Of course, these actors are agents of the field and so are able to use their capital to change or subvert these rules, but ultimately they are also positioned by the field (Bourdieu, 1997). Bourdieu encourages researchers to put themselves in the shoes of those they encounter through their research (Grenfell & Lebaron, 2014) and in the case of James it is understandable that he and his team would design systems to control the formal teaching spaces. Given the large scale task of overseeing and being responsible for all teaching spaces, university room moves and the professional property portfolio it is perhaps not surprising that displaying a legend or map of how the room should be laid out helps to maintain uniformity and standardisation. It is a way to control a complex estate. James' role requires him to ensure that over 27,000 teaching activities are accommodated each year within these spaces and positioning the users of these spaces with increased autonomy would directly undermine his own responsibilities.

However, in doing so James has a role in determining how academic teaching staff are able to conform to these conditions or resist them (Collyer, 2015).

As a sub-field outside of these formal spaces then, the team at the Writing Café are able to set some of the structural properties of the field. Fortunately, they do not have to participate in the timetabling or booking practices, and the Writing Café is not currently considered as a social space that is 'owned' by other directorates or departments. The space was co-created with students and is largely unseen by the wider institution in terms of the Estates department, the IT department and the Registry department that provides the timetable. Whilst this allows the actors at the Writing Café to organise the daily operations of the space, it also positions it outside of institutional committees, policies and this makes it weaker in its relationship to senior management of the University. Their position affords them the power to allocate resources and make University wide decisions. As the Writing Café is autonomous in comparison to other cross university spaces, senior management decisions do impact the Writing Café. We can understand this contradictory modality of autonomy when mapping the configuration of relationships within a field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). During the time this research was undertaken, the actors of the sub-field did not have the capital or positioning across the wider sub-fields of University committees, estates planning, or engagement with University teaching and learning quality meetings. Power had been structurally created within the University in organisation hierarchies that arguably unintentionally weakens relational authority of the Writing Café.

This was illustrated in the request to provide additional staffing for the Writing Café.

The student visitor numbers were growing and there was an increasing number of

collaborative teaching sessions being held in partnership with academic staff members. This was what we had wanted to encourage in setting up the Writing Café, to move beyond solely supporting students, to creating dialogues with staff members that helped them to see ways to increase the opportunities for academic literacy development within their courses. Yet, our request for funding was not supported.

Researcher: As you know the Writing Café is becoming busier and busier and we are now finding it challenging to support students and also work in collaboration with the academic staff members who would like to increase the opportunities for developing writing as part of their programmes. You know we drafted a business case for further staffing, why do you think it wasn't supported?

Head of Service: It's all budgets. You know that I fully support the Writing Café and what you are doing, it is just fantastic. But, well, unfortunately there is a finite amount of funding for this department and we have to balance what is seen to be more of a priority.

Researcher: Where do you feel the priority lies?

Head of Service: Well at the minute, given what the university think our department do there is not very much interest in supporting the Writing Café to contribute to programme development, but just to offer support.

This interaction highlights the competition for resources that was a theme within the data. Actors within a field compete for resources and the actors coordinating and running the Writing Café were not in a strong enough position to be considered a priority. These observations illuminate how the positional authority of the staff within the Writing Café is weak within the overall institution, and highlight that these factors in turn impact the logic of practice precisely because they inhibit the ongoing ambitions of the project. Without additional staffing, the Writing Café remained at only having three members of staff to develop its

practices, which largely had to be deployed in their work with students over staff members.

Weak Relational Field Autonomy

A dominant player in the field, yet one not visible in the observations is that of the University senior management. An agent's position in society, or in this case within the University impacts the autonomy they hold. Whilst as a co-ordinator of the space I have strong autonomy over the practice of the day to day operations of the sub-field, the sub-field is impacted by other sub-fields and their actors. The Writing Café may be afforded some agency in relation to its design and governing rules but these interplay with the free market and the forces of the recruitment into higher education. When interviewing a member of the University with responsibility for the campus estate, it was revealed that the building in which the Writing Café is located was part of a 10 year campus masterplan, and this building was one of the first in line for change:

James: We are just starting this journey of reviewing our estate and our buildings. The first big project will be the engineering and arts building. We are also looking at creating a student hub to replace the services in [another building].

Researcher: That's interesting, I haven't heard anything detailed about the plans for campus, what is the engineering and arts building?

James: A business case has already been approved to completely change the...building so it is redesigned and replaced with an engineering and arts building.

Researcher: So will that replace the site of [the building in which the Writing Café is located]? I had heard rumours of a gentle refurbishment.

James: Yes, one option was to refurb, but another was to completely redevelop the site which would take 3 years in total.

Researcher: Ok, that is interesting and will have an impact of course on the Writing Café.

James: Yes but there will be another café in a different building. We are doing a decamp solution and that is going through now. That is just going through now. We will be starting work on that imminently, it will effectively replace the Writing Café whilst we redo the work.

Researcher: From my perspective the Writing Café isn't just a café service though. We purposely designed and built the space to support a community of writers. We have trained students working there every week day facilitating conversations around writing and see around 1000 students a year.

James: I see. I wasn't aware of this before now.

This dialogue illustrates how power operated on the Writing Café and decisions were made that would influence its future outside of the knowledge of the team. It was only through this particular research interview that as the coordinator of the Writing Café I was informed that there were changes to the sub-field that would completely alter our opportunity to provide academic writing development within the physical space of the Writing Café. He articulates that spaces are in flux and shift over time, yet the actors within them are not positioned to be part of the decisions. The Writing Café as a sub-field could be considered as too weak in its autonomy to even be made aware of these plans and the institutional strategy (Naidoo, 2004).

Marketing the Illusio

UK higher education institutions in competition with each other and the competition across the globe for fee paying students promotes a culture of neoliberal values and marketisation. The University actively markets itself and its products as part of the international marketplace and this is achieved in different ways, but the effect of marketing practices on the everyday experiences of those engaged with the Writing Café became a constant source of discussion between the Writing Mentors and Learning Developers. Whilst much research has highlighted the marketization of higher education in a neoliberal age (Molesworth, Scullion & Nixon, 2010; Sidhu, 2006) these findings are a university level analysis, whilst this research highlights a localised experience and the potential effects at the level of the Writing Café as a sub-site.

Students shared their experiences of feeling frustrated that the results of the national surveys silenced their voices, but they were also frustrated at the University's commitment to valuing these surveys in their marketing practices. There were numerous comments and discussions around how the product of these surveys were emblazoned on the front of web pages, used in marketing materials and generally highly regarded by the institution, even when they did not reflect a student's experience. It was a common joke amongst students visiting the Writing Café when any mention of marketing came about in discussions, and there was a deep dissatisfaction with the institution for participating and being led so strongly by their position in league tables. Student visitors commented *"I don't even look at the website anymore, it's not for me"*, or that *"if you don't have the experience they [other students in success stories] share, you're not good enough and it's your fault"*. Visitors to the Writing Café discussed how it felt like the University was *"wasting money"* on marketing itself when it should be investing *"in its current students"*. During a conversation between the Writing Mentors, the idea of the University's commitment to national rankings and league tables to demonstrate their prowess was mocked:

Adrienne: It just shows they don't care about their students and they just care about stats. And I think that is something that really makes students struggle.

Kirsty: We are in the top 10... of drinking and fast food.

Adrienne: And on top of that we are charging 71% more for it.

Both Adrienne and Kirsty were politically active students, engaged with the Student Union and possessed the knowledge and cultural capital to understand the effects of the marketing doxa. In particular, Adrienne was interested in social justice and had led campaigns for student rights across campus. Her voice on various groups across the

institution, including equality and diversity and student partnerships gave her the social capital and network to develop her understanding around how the University operates, or the rules of the field. Kirsty was also an active student in the University community, as a course representative and a student ambassador. Both of these students had different views of what was important to them and their student experience and it did not directly involve the university having a strong position within league tables. They did not see the relevance of league tables and surveys as current students. The idea of humour or mockery for Bourdieu would be formed in their habitus (Bourdieu, 1998), inclining them to react in this way without being overly conscious. For both Adrienne and Kirsty the joke was funny in this setting or sub-field, with this particular relationship and positioning. Their willingness to challenge the practice of HE suggest confidence in their position within the sub-field of the Writing Cafe, but this did not extend to confidence in different sub-fields of the university. Whilst discussing the marketing of the University they clearly did not share the same commitment to the marketing strategy and the value placed upon it. They felt a sense of injustice that they were not being represented, as current students. When I asked Kirsty if she had previously discussed her dissatisfaction of the marketing of the University in any other forums, including the course representative meetings she replied:

"Of course not, they clearly believe it all and these people mark my work!"

Whilst Kirsty was happy to talk with me, the other Writing Mentors and visitors about her beliefs and attitudes, her habitus, she did not feel this was something she could share in other sub-fields of the University. Not only does this highlight the variation of fields within the University setting, but also how she was able to negotiate and

contribute to some areas more successfully than others. This in turn calls for us to question the structures of those spaces that give students 'voice', such as being a student representative on a programme committee.

The process of marketization means more than a change in terminology and rhetoric, it entails a shift in policies and practices. Whilst student representatives may be used to provide insight into individual and collective experiences of courses, it is clear that the very structure of these meetings does not always position students as strongly as the other members of the field. There is still a risk to their position if they disagree. Kirsty outlined how her voice within the student rep meetings were only called upon at specific times and that there was already an agreed agenda, which usually included measuring rankings and student progression in multiple areas. Whilst she has obtained the institutionalised capital to access these groups, her position within the field was weak. She did not have the same social capital, thus positioning as the others in the meetings and so she was unable to challenge the dominant thinking.

Weak Marketing Autonomy & Playing the Game

Whilst the marketing practices of the University were discussed in the interactions between students and writing mentors, the marketing practices of the Writing Café as a sub site were also called into question during this research. Whilst the Writing Café was historically free from the pressures to conform and be '*on brand*', with the team overseeing the space having a strong positional authority in structuring its practices, this changed when a member of the University's marketing team requested a meeting to '*review*' our branding. The member of staff explained that they would like to help the Writing Café to "*clarify its messaging*" and make sure "*it works well*".

During the meeting, the marketing officer explained that *“anyone who didn’t work here, they’d think it was for literature students.”* Despite demonstrating the student visitors to the Writing Café came from all of the Faculty and Schools they were unconvinced the marketing was *“on point”*. The sub-field also came into question as much of our marketing material focused on the physical draw of the space as well as the writing development opportunities that can be sought there:

Alex: So I wanted to clarify something really important, is it a space or is it a service? Because at the moment the messages are mixed, incredibly mixed. The way I’ve understood it is that in theory the Writing Café is a service for helping students it isn’t, other than in name, it is a service that isn’t tied to a venue. It probably could have been called something without the café. Like if for some reason you couldn’t have this space then the service you offer could move. I know you don’t want it to, but, the service offer is not the café.

Researcher: I see what you mean, but actually I don’t think simply separating the writing development support from the space in which it takes place is helpful because they both work together to make the Writing Café.

Alex: This is where the confusion comes from though. So if we are trying to get people to come here though, they don’t know if they’re coming to a coffee place or if they’re coming for the service.

Researcher: Well I’m not sure the sole drive is to get people to come here but I think if I wanted to clarify anything in the marketing of the Writing Café it would be the range of ways it can benefit students from different areas and levels of university study.

Alex: Yes, my bottom line is this is the confusion. Is it the service or is it the venue? If it’s the space, then that’s a different thing to what you’re actually helping with your mentors and things. So I think, it’s partly because, erm, of the name, the way it’s been presented I think is why there is confusion. For instance, you don’t need to say it’s a café, it’s informal, etc etc. Who cares about that, they don’t want to know that.

Researcher: Ok, so who says that it is confused because I hadn’t realised there was confusion.

Alex: From a branding point of view it is very confused. You’re not a café, not really. We’re not sure where you fit within our branding and it doesn’t look like something that other universities have. So we are going to market you as a service, but ignore the space.

This view of the Writing Café as a service alone, not a space or field connected to other areas of the University's practices was an uncomfortable experience and highlights the strong institutional and arguably sector wide habitus of divorcing physical fields from the activities which take place in them and the people that engage in these activities. Despite the emergence of social learning spaces within the sector, we have not collectively found a way to communicate the purpose and educational value of them. The dominant culture of providing 'services' for students is evident in this conversation as the marketing officer tries to separate and narrow down the Writing Café to reflect the doxa of language used in marketing. This makes the Writing Café as a sub-field, a site of conflict as it is positioned to as a service for students, reinforcing the doxa of deficit. Those from within the sub-field are under increasing pressure and their relational positioning is weakened as their autonomy in decisions such as how they market their practices is impacted by others from the wider institutional field. As the marketization of education is such a dominant discourse, the positioning of marketing teams to set the principles and values of these practices is stronger and more dominant across the field of higher education.

In addition, the comments reveal the intentions of the marketing review: *'if we're going to get people to come here'* suggests there is an overall performative drive to market the Writing Café, to increase numbers of the student population visiting. Yet those involved in the coordination of the Writing Café also contribute to this doxa of marketing, featuring in the publications sent to prospective students and advertising the University as a welcoming and supportive environment. Contributing to these publications is an attempt to raise the awareness of the variety of activities that take place in this social learning space, in order to gain capital at an institutional level. This

act serves to increase the social capital of the team, yet it was in conflict with the purpose of Writing Café. Whilst the space was designed in partnership with students to reflect the spaces they would like to write and feel comfortable exchanging ideas with others, as already mentioned, it looks different and distinctive both within the University and within the HE sector, thus is it marketable, and reinforces the doxa as well as recognising this precarious position. During the interaction with Alex, I was unable to find a common understanding of the purpose of the Writing Café and articulate how the space, Writing Mentors and discussions that took place all formed part of the 'offering', which led to a reproduction of promoting a service for students who needed additional support. Finding a way to marry institutional agendas, with more local ones was not successful.

This notion of maximising student numbers as a primary drive, rather than focusing on building a sense of community between writers and learners and providing opportunities to see writing as a social act is an unhealthy ambition for any social learning space, not least one that is focused on creating a culture of collaboration and building peer relationships. As writing is relational, so too is the space in which these groups gather to engage in discussions, yet to try to successfully compete for resources the Writing Café needs to try to gain a higher institutional positioning and be of value to the priorities of senior managers. This section has demonstrated that the Writing Café as sub-field is layered and complex. Overall, the Writing Café has strong positioning within the wider field of the University to provide the opportunity to hear about students' experiences in relation to their courses and wider university agendas. It is an intersectional site that can view the practices of teaching and learning across the disciplines, yet as it is not always able to directly share these with all of the

disciplinary teams the practice is reinforced. The Writing Café also has weak relational authority in other areas of its practices, notably those of marketing and space management. The actors within the sub-field do not have the necessary capital to contribute to the strategic ambitions of the University, except to reinforce the illusion to try to compete and bid for resources. This allows for decisions to be made that change the way the Writing Café can function, and indeed if it can function at all when the building is refurbished.

5:2 A Pedagogy of Learning, Developing Capital

Academic writing takes centre stage for many postgraduate and undergraduate degrees and is one of the dominant assessment methods for demonstrating learning (Lillis, 2001; Lillis & Turner, 2001). Indeed it is a central feature of an academic's professional life as they are required to produce numerous reports, case studies, journal articles and research outputs. Whether staff are developing their writing for professionally orientated purposes or students are building their linguistic capital to demonstrate their understanding, interpretation and organisation of knowledge, there is no escaping how crucial it is to develop linguistic and academic capital in relation to academic writing practices within a university environment in order to be successful (French, 2020; Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis & Turner, 2001). However, despite the significance placed on academic writing for some students, the ethnographic observations demonstrated they are frequently still positioned without the capital to succeed:

Stephen is talking to a student who is worried about his assignment. The student explains he doesn't really know what he is supposed to do in his essay. He hasn't understood what the assignment brief is asking him to do. Stephen asks if they could look at it together to try to work it out and see where he might be able to help him. He says sometimes it's not easy to

understand so not to worry, he is sure they'll find a way to get him on track.
[Extract from field notes]

This extract highlights the theme that students are positioned in deficit and this student considers himself without the necessary capital to understand the assignment he has been set. An alternative way of thinking about this is that the structure of the programme of study has excluded him from that understanding, yet this is not how he articulates it. In their transition to university, it is well documented that for many undergraduate students their ability to develop academic capital in relation to literacy and essay writing is a challenging process (Gourlay, 2009; Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis, 2001). Despite the challenges, it is central to the understanding of learning outcomes, marking criteria, feedback and understanding how to present and use language that is legitimised in the field. The mismatch between students readiness to undertake assignments and academic staff members perception of students ability has already been well researched (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2004; Haggis, 2006; Lillis & Turner, 2001), although there has been little shift in making academic literacies a priority as part of the curriculum or at an institutional level.

"I don't understand why every student who starts a course can't have some teaching about academic writing. It doesn't even have to be much to start with, just some help to explain what it is all about (Ella – 2nd year student)."

This comment shows that she believes students need the opportunity to develop the capital required as part of their introduction to university. This section will demonstrate the theme of students in deficit is still the primary doxa and way of positioning them within the sub-field in relation to academic writing practices. The University's institutional habitus is one of believing students come to university

without the capital required. Yet there are opportunities to learn about the process of developing cultural capital in a more nuanced way and explore how students are subject to symbolic violence through the misrecognition of the teaching and learning practices of the university. If students' ideas for pedagogic change are not heard. Although Bourdieu himself stated that all pedagogic action can be considered as symbolic violence and those who have moved to dominant positions have been exposed to increased levels of it which positions them as in a less favourable place to see it (Bourdieu & Waquant, 1992), Ella is an undergraduate student. She demonstrates that from her position, the pedagogic approach of supporting the development of cultural capital can be encouraged in a different way to become further aware of how practices reinforce inequality as well as provide opportunity for change, simultaneously. In allowing Ella's comments to be heard and actioned, the process is enabling and not repressive. Bourdieu has been criticised for not incorporating how the micro level of fields are realised in relation to his notion that all pedagogic action is symbolic violence (Ferrare & Apple, 2015) and perhaps understanding that Ella's comments as coming from a place of care and trying to promote the affordance of the Writing Café as a sub-field where students ideas of pedagogy can be imagined would allow for transformation of University practices (Watkins, 2018). Finding a way to feed-back comments like Ella's to program teams, or inviting her into conversation around curriculum design would allow for revisiting current course practices.

Dialogic discussions allow students the opportunity to develop their cultural capital, and providing a space such as the Writing Café allows for the breaking down of power relationships for some students. In addition, whilst many would consider that students

lack the cultural capital, specifically linguistic capital for academic success, thinking about this relationally allows them to be in a position to recognise symbolic violence more easily. They are able to contribute ideas to develop the pedagogy of programmes and question what they value and how they privilege certain ways allows us to understand how the academy reproduces class, favouring traditionally educated and more privileged individuals. The doxa of students in deficit and sub-fields like the Writing Café being positioned as remedial continues and the themes emerging from this research around capital highlighted that students possess different linguistic capitals that are not valued in the academic arena. The field of HE only goes so far in helping students through the transition through a socialisation process, and largely does not change what it values. Thus, in order to succeed you must conform and therefore notions of class systems are reproduced. To succeed, students have to learn to value and accept that there is often a 'right way' within HE. In conclusion, we cannot teach academic writing as if all of our students come from one class, experience or background, nor can it be simplified to one generic approach for all disciplines. Students interact with academic writing practices are more nuanced than this, and educators need to consider how they can understand their individual students, as well as question and consider what their discipline values.

The Capital that Counts

It is no surprise that many students visiting the Writing Café during this research were aware of the need to develop their linguistic and cultural capital, but the extent of their understanding and awareness of what type of capital is valued in higher education varied. Some students were visiting to participate in conversations without any apparent real aim or purpose, perhaps just a developmental activity, whilst others

visited to find a simple 'fix' to their particular and often very specific writing problem. Students often asked for help to "sound more academic" or to discuss which words they could use that "were bigger" or find "posh linking sentences".

Lauren lets the student make any changes to the document. She doesn't do it for her. They talk about the purposes of reflective writing, and how it needs to broaden out from what the student learnt, to why that matters. Moving beyond what happened to why it matters, Lauren says. Lauren is now reading the students work out loud. The student 'hearing' where she can make changes, make her argument clearer, more concise. They talk about the words she sees in the articles she's been reading. Use this language. More 'academic' they both agree (Extract from field notes).

As well as building understanding of the language used within certain disciplines, students benefitted from talking to someone who understood practical and tangible steps to help them build their capital. In this extract Lauren does not provide corrections or focus on the instrumental fixes, but rather helps the student to understand that knowledge of the disciplinary writing process is knowledge of the discipline itself. Throughout the analysis, it was clear that the dialogic pedagogy used helped students and Writing Mentors to learn together and develop cultural capital, yet it does so by positioning students in deficit (Ferrare & Apple, 2015).

Lecturers also sent their students to the Writing Café reinforcing the idea that students need additional support, beyond the boundaries of their curriculum. Feedback is often considered a strength in developing students' learning, but over the duration of the research the number of scripts which simply stated 'please go to the Writing Café for additional help' increased. This was partly because some Schools had made a move to offer this as part of the prescribed feedback lines used on all scripts, but also because the offering of such a service for students was more common knowledge across the institution. When students arrived to the Writing Café with this feedback they were

often low in mood and embodied the deficit discourse through their language, stating phrases such as “*I’m not good enough*”. They came for help because they had been told their work was not up to the required standard. The Writing Mentors did not believe this was an empowering or helpful way to position students. They concluded that it was not an encouraging way to set up learning. In a sense, a type of misrecognition was formed on the part of those staff members sending students to the Writing Café. They are not conscious of the discourse of remedial support and in turn are complicit in the violence exercised on students through this feedback process (Bourdieu, 1988).

Lauren is frustrated by this because the student doesn’t always understand why they are even coming here. And she doesn’t think academics know what it is we do here, it’s just easy to pass them on. She says it’s a lot of responsibility being a mentor, particularly as we don’t just tell them to fix things but we try to explain where things could be different and why.

However, it is also important to consider this from the perspective of the teaching staff who send their students to the Writing Café. It could be argued that the Writing Café exists for this development thus they are justified in sending their students to learn and develop their academic and linguistic capital. It is seen as an extension of the teaching and learning offering of programme to support area. However, in not considering how the students they do send are experiencing this referral and what they may be able to do within their curriculum positions the Writing Café as being the institution’s response to student deficit and themselves as performing a form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, Passeron & Martin, 1994). It provides a way of addressing the notion that students do not have the capital required, yet does not reposition the role of education and curriculum within that understanding.

Although linguistic capital is so highly valued within the academy, and the policy shifts of widening participation have increased entry opportunities to non-traditional students including women, working-class, minority ethnic groups and disabled learners, the status quo and the subtle, unconscious and standardised ways of being within the university have not changed to reflect this. We should not only prioritise the development of capital within the curriculum tailored to the specific students within the programme, but also question what counts and recognise who is more likely to understand the taken-for granted practices. The Writing Mentors working in the Writing Cafe demonstrated a wider awareness of the differing practices across the University, praising some approaches Schools and programmes of study adopted and being highly critical of others. They questioned these taken-for-granted practice, such as 'sending students' to the Writing Café, and debated the logic of this approach. If the Writing Mentors saw multiple students from a particular programme at once, their view was that the programme was not supporting its students effectively:

Kirsty: I think it's interesting that sometimes we see most of the cohort on a particular programme. All the students come up here and talk to us and are mostly asking the same kind of questions and usually when we get down to it they've tried to ask their teaching team but they are not getting any answers.

Researcher: So, why do you think this is?

Kirsty: Well, if we see every student on a module, surely that means that module is mega confusing.

Tom: Well, yes but sometimes it's because when you're in your first year it is terrifying to have to approach your tutors for help. So you know, you might ask them a question but if they don't answer it you're not going to ask again as you don't want to be judged.

Kirsty: Yes, it could be that. It could be because some groups just don't want to keep asking, but I think it's more than that. I think sometimes it's because they're given an example of a good essay and it's like 2000 words long and these students are new, they have no idea how to even start something like that.

Tom: And you are not taught that in school.

Kirsty: No, nor are you really taught it at uni, you just have to keep trying and figuring it out. Getting marks, trying to see where you went wrong and just going from there. It would be a lot easier if we were just taught a bit more about how to approach it in the first place surely?

If not explicitly taught or discussed what the expectations are, students will only have their previous educational experiences to draw on, their cultural capital, which will privilege certain individuals over others. The Writing Mentors' expectation on Faculty staff to support their students as part of the programme demonstrates their challenging the doxa of remedial support, preferring a community approach to an individualistic one. They do not think the Writing Café should be there solely as an extra for those who are struggling, but rather there should be an embedded approach to developing students' linguistic and academic capital as part of their programme of study and being part of a wider university community of learning. Whilst the Writing Café could be considered as part of the university's wider community, the lack of stakeholders involved in its challenges and operations, reinforce it as a separate space to the core teaching and learning offer. As previously mentioned, the staff working to coordinate and run the Writing Café were not positioned to easily change this positioning. Despite these grievances the Writing Mentors were happy to support their peers, they just believed that more could be done by their programmes to develop their students' linguistic capital, rather than see it as an aside to their study. Therefore, it could be suggested that in not contributing to influence the teaching and learning and assessment practices of the programmes identified as weak, the Writing Café too is reinforcing the doxa of students being in deficit. Its very existence and positioning as a student space turns the lack of capital as a problem located within the individual student, and not the lack of design of programmes of study to support their students.

Whose Job is it Anyway?

Discussions took place between the Writing Mentors and in their conversations with students about the type of support that was offered on their programmes and the varying practices across the university. Some students outlined that there was *“none, my teachers won’t read anything we draft until its submitted”*, yet others were able to have work formatively marked and could *“submit up to 400 words and an essay outline, but the feedback only really suggests some additional reading we could do.”* For other students even on the same course, the level of support developing linguistic and academic capital varied as they stated that:

“it depends on who is teaching us really, sometimes we get feedback on writing if that academic thinks it is important, sometimes we don’t, it just depends on who you get put in a tutor group with really”.

In this variation it is clear that the academic teams across the institution hold the most cultural capital and symbolic power, setting the standards and established ways of supporting students (Bourdieu, 1988). Yet they may not be entirely aware of their role in helping students navigate these practices given the varying approaches employed across the institution and across sub-fields or disciplines. The variation in the field is huge, with some programmes of study having cohorts of 5 students, to some approaching 300. I am not suggesting that more training for individual academic staff members, or even additional staff members to support the programme would necessarily change this. Rather, an institutional culture change is needed to promote the attitudes and beliefs of feedback practices. Writing Mentors and students observed the variation in practice too:

Student Leanne: Don't you think it's just the luck of the draw, which subject you are doing as to how much they'll help you?

Student Josh: Totally, it all depends on what they've decided as a programme I think, or maybe its how many students they have. It does seem odd though as I can't see how it helps some students.

Student Leanne: Or the luck of the lecturer.

Student Josh: Yes, or that. It doesn't really make sense though. Why shouldn't you get feedback when you are writing something, that way you can make changes and you know, learn as you go.

Writing Mentor Lauren: I feel bad for a lot of the people that come here, they just want time and to discuss things, but they don't get that from their course. They just pawn them off to us.

This observation of teaching teams 'pawning' students off to the Writing Cafe and the increasing 'referral' to the sub-field suggests the development of linguistic capital for many programmes is often an afterthought and not positioned as something central to the discipline. Such teaching is not seen as important subject knowledge in its own right despite understanding and engaging with disciplinary knowledge being entirely tied up with understanding the practices of the language and linguistic capital specific to that particular sub-field (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Lillis & Scott, 2007). Whilst students from all backgrounds have access to higher education, students who are more likely to hold lesser amounts of academic and linguistic capital are not always considered in programme design and programmes do not always evolve or change in their views on how to develop and support students to progress, thus accepting the status quo. This was also supported from the programme and module administrators who were interviewed as part of this research, as they acknowledged that they did not provide opportunities to develop linguistic capital as part of their programme. Although some did recognise that this would be beneficial, there were a number of reasons why programme teams were complicit in the violence exercised on their

students, including the symbolic violence exercised on them through external regulatory bodies and the dominant pedagogic approach of content delivery. If staff were able to see these practices and how they position this they may be able to develop their own teaching capital further and in turn develop a stronger understanding of how to support students' learning collectively. The Writing Cafe team could provide the bridge between knowing how to support students' development and highlighting taken for granted practices within programme teams.

Capital Inaction as Symbolic Violence

The notion that academic writing and the development of linguistic, academic and embodied capital is considered an aside from the programme of study was echoed by an interview with a programme leader within the Faculty of Heath. From her perspective increasingly students do not come to university with the 'required' background or writing skills, thus capital, that is valued by the programme team.

Researcher: Quite often I hear from module leads that a session is needed on academic writing as the students "can't write".

Andrea: It is true, they can't. But also really tricky, ideally we would be able to spend time doing this kind of thing with students, but there are probably two reasons why we don't. We have to get through a lot of content which is overseen by our professional bodies so that takes up most of our time. To show they are clinically competent. But then there is also the fact that we don't know how to teach this stuff. You'll know that it doesn't come easy to a lot of us, so we don't know how to teach it either. That's where your team are needed.

Researcher: So you would like to be able to spend more time supporting students to develop their understanding of, say assignment briefs and what academic writing looks like within your discipline if you could?

Andrea: Yes, that would be great. It just isn't our priority I guess. We focus on knowledge and skills as that is what we know.

Researcher: But do you think that knowledge is easily separated from academic writing in your field?

Andrea: I'm not sure really, we just deal with evidence.

This reinforces the idea that developing linguistic capital is seen as an aside from disciplinary knowledge and capabilities, but also highlights that writing practices within higher education are still considered as separate to socially produced knowledge. If students do not already have the language, thus capital, that is valued by the institution then they have to seek it out as best they can, without any conscious socialisation within the curriculum nor the positioning to critique and question these practices. It also highlights that in this situation, the programme lead feels her positional authority to spend time with students exploring writing is weaker than that of the professional bodies that oversee the content which must be covered within the programme of study. As Maton (2005) argued, when the monitoring bodies are from other fields, in this case healthcare, then the relational autonomy declines. Whilst Andrea would like to address the development of academic writing capital with her students, the agency she has to do this is perceived as weaker. This brings a tension that is not easily addressed; she wants her students to develop this capital yet believes she isn't afforded the time to address this with them, thus it becomes cleaner and easier to consider academic writing as something that is separate from subject knowledge and should be left to the individual, rather than a social process that is contextual and embodied within a particular set of practices (French, 2020). If higher education institutions were better able to see the link between academic writing and what constitutes knowledge and knowledge production, perhaps we would be able to give this further consideration within our programmes of study. The question of which pedagogy is privileged within a programme of study is also relevant and we could conclude that the pedagogic action within certain programmes are themselves a form

of symbolic violence. Choosing to privilege content knowledge delivery over process exploration or discussing how it is that knowledge is valid within the discipline for instance, can obscure ways of knowing within disciplinary areas.

At the Writing Café, the Writing Mentors understood that the process of developing academic and linguistic capital was nuanced, contextual and situated. They supported students each day to think about the 'rules of the game' and what the expectations from their programmes were, but often felt this was a tension as at times these remained unclear, unspoken or implicit (Bourdieu, 1991; Bourdieu, 1993). The Writing Mentors supported students from across the disciplines and became aware that their advice and guidance needed to be situated in the discipline, and no one size fits all. Their understanding of dialogic pedagogy and giving student the space to question why certain linguistic capital was valued over others allowed them to question the dominance of the language of power (Bourdieu, 1991; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Whilst this development of capital was largely orientated towards the Writing Mentors, the students they supported also began to show an awareness too.

Student Learning to Swim

The Writing Mentors dialogic pedagogy and ways of supporting and working alongside their student peers reflects how they understood their role and the process of developing academic and linguistic capital with those they supported, whilst also perceiving the increase of their own capital through increased marks on their own assignments. Whilst there were occasions where the Writing Mentors gave simple, quick 'answers' to their fellow students questions, many of the observations during this research demonstrated that their understanding of the role and the purpose of the Writing Café shifted from developing technical skills with *a* way, not *the* way, to

writing as a social process. Despite this approach, interactions where students were asking for a simple fix were common:

Student: Can you read this and see if there are any problems with it?

Writing Mentor: Hey, yes happy to help. When you say problems, is there a particular aspect you'd like feedback on? What would you like me to focus on, how you are articulating your argument, how you've incorporated research?

Student: Just is it good enough really?

Many students understanding of the Writing Café were that it was there to help them with basic writing principles, such as grammar or proofreading. Whilst grammar and proofreading were areas the Writing Mentors were told they could not participate in, it highlights the dominant understanding of students that that is the area they need to develop capital in. They did not always consider the power of writing in relation to thinking about their learning and articulating their knowledge of a discipline.

Student: I've come to get my assignment checked.

Writing Mentor Jamie: Ok, what part of your assignment would you like to discuss? Is there a section you think we could talk about?

Student: I don't want to talk about it, can you just look at it?

Although these types of interactions were common, and ranged from a simple affirmation of the students work, or reassurance they were on track and that their work would pass many students also saw it as a place for ongoing socialisation into the academy and deeper thought about their views on a particular subject.

Student: Hey, it's me again, are you happy to talk about the section I was working on yesterday after we chatted?

Robyn: Sure, sit down it'll be good to see how it's developed.

This particular student came to the Writing Café frequently and explained to me that by discussing their work it helped them to think of different perspectives and how they could put that into written words:

"I guess it's a way of me trying to see where what I think fits into all this research that's out there and how I can write things that make sense of it".

Talking to the Writing Mentors *"just makes sense"* she told me. The student was building her linguistic capital through her programme studies, reading around the subject but also by sharing these ideas frequently with the Writing Mentors. She was using the space for discursive purposes and to participate in conversations with a peer whose linguistic practices were similar to that of her own. This student was obtaining linguistic capital and 'making sense of it' or in other words, she was learning what was valued within the university and becoming more comfortable with the rules of the game, thus swimming in water. The student self-reported that through coming to talk to the Writing Mentors she was able to *"gain the skills"* she needed for her academic writing tasks, she was learning the legitimate language required for her course. She was also increasing her social capital as she was building networks with the Writing Mentors and making use of their time and knowledge to increase her own position, engagement with her programme of studies and influence over her progression. This variation in the ways students expected the Writing Mentors to support them was a common

theme. The balance between students coming to see if they had done enough, and those who were trying to embrace the opportunities provided by the Writing Café to develop and learn. I noted in my reflective journal:

“There are many layers to a students’ expectations of the Writing Café it seems. Some come a couple of days before their deadline, perhaps just to have some reassurance that they are on the right track. Some come to think about their writing and knowledge. Some come because they have been sent, which feels the most awkward. Others come frequently and have built up a relationship with specific mentors as a kind of critical friend” (Extract from field notes).

Whether students were looking for a simple answer, or wanted sustained and complex conversations, reflects the stratified field of HE and the instrumental approach that is so dominant, but it also shows where students turn away from this dominant doxa and engage with the opportunity of the Writing Café as an extension of their course.

During one observation I had a conversation with someone who I had noticed came to the Writing Café most weeks, yet she did not talk to the Writing Mentor team. She was a lecturer who was largely based at one of our satellite sites off the main campus and explained she came to the Writing Café as she liked the environment, it was her “second office”. On one occasion she asked me to talk about the premise behind the Writing Café and how it works. She said she always gazed on at what was taking place but wanted to know more. I explained the standard information, student Writing Mentors support other students to become better writers, not fix writing. She replied with much admiration:

“I’m amazed at the level of learning that takes place in here”.

She says most days she is here she can overhear conversations taking place between students around topics, how to communicate their ideas and really debating why things are so. *“Students learn more here than in any of my classrooms”* she commented. Here, I argue she is highlighting the pedagogic approach of the Writing Café and the dialogic affordances created by the structures of the field which help provide opportunities for linguistic and academic capital development.

As the Writing Mentors are current students, their values and imperatives relate to the educational field they are also moving through, so they have a stronger relational autonomy. Whilst academics might be forced to utilise their pedagogy in a way that is complicit and reproductive, the Writing Mentors demonstrated that there is a different set of beliefs or practices that are different to the status quo (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002). There were many opportunities where they could have easily helped a student by focusing and agreeing on what they were asking for help with, but they adopted a pedagogic approach of questioning, discussing and exploring. A case of helping them to help themselves, or to understand the rules of the game and to learn to swim themselves.

Student: Can you fix my grammar, apparently it is wrong but I don't know why?

Lauren: Hi, sure take a seat. Shall we have a look together at how clearly you are making your argument, it might not just be your grammar but we can look at that too, but how you are expressing ideas might help as well. How does that sound?

Student: Thanks great, yes, because I'd like to understand what is expected and where to put my energy as I can't do it all and don't know what they are expecting.

Lauren works with the student but tries to make sure that the student is taking ownership of her learning. She asks questions, she doesn't give answers. The students are thinking about things together.

Lauren: How do you feel about saying this, does it feel comfortable to you, like a word you would use normally?

Student: Probably not no, but I see it a lot so I've used it.

Lauren: Do you know what it means?

Student: No, not really [laughs]

Lauren: Shall we find out, or shall we find something that you are happy to use?

Student: Let's find out actually. I probably should find out.

The discussion around specific language and words was common at the Writing Café. The linguistic practices of the University and how that varied across the disciplines is not something many students would come into contact with, given they largely study as part of a specific discipline and are engaged with the activities of that sub-field. Yet the Writing Café as an intersectional sub-field affords a pedagogy of dialogue that renders visible the game at play to both of these students. Rather than see this as language deficient, we could consider it as a pedagogy that supports and helps those recognises that different knowledge and ways of knowing is valued in different disciplines. Pedagogic norms of programmes vary and often favour those who already have the linguistic capital to understand and participate in these practices. Yet Lauren helped this student to decode the rules of the game and by learning to participate in the academic process communally, rather than individualistically (Moll *et al.*, 1992) both had the opportunity to learn.

Questioning Capital

A number of the students who visited the Writing Café during this research questioned the capital of the Writing Mentors. Students wanted to know why they were in a

position to help them, and what they had, either in terms of qualifications, training or experience that would enable them to do so.

“So, who are you anyway? Are you a student?” “Do you get good grades then, is that how you got the job?”

This comment illustrates some students were not at first aware that the staffing of the Writing Café was largely made up of Writing Mentors who were also students, thus they were establishing the positioning and power relations at play. It also demonstrates that their understanding of someone who can help them is largely someone with increased linguistic and academic capital to themselves. They actively sought out, individuals with increased positioning within the field. The Writing Mentors also discussed their capital being challenged and questioned by students:

Writing Mentor Rachel: I had a student the other day saying, well what do you even know anyway, what subject are you studying. I explained that my subject was different, but I was reading their work for the first time and asking questions to try to understand their line of thought, not to catch them out.

Writing Mentor Jennie: Oh yes I’ve had that, they just want to know what makes you any good. Imagine if they did that to their teaching team though?

Writing Mentor Rachel: But, it was really uncomfortable, it wasn’t like I was telling them there was anything wrong with it at all. I was just trying to encourage them to think about things a bit more. They were just quoting this, quoting that and I wanted to know what she thought of it all.

Writing Mentor Jennie: Some people just don’t care, they just want to pass so I guess they are asking to see if you can help them pass, even though they are the ones that need to open up and learn how to pass themselves.

Jennie was clearly aware that the student they were referring to needed to understand the rules of the game for herself, but she was looking for someone who would easily explain what they were, or tell her if she’d just played them enough to pass the

assignment. Through their initial training Writing Mentors are equipped with opening questions to help open these kinds of conversations with students.

Lauren talks to her. They start with small talk. "What course are you on?" "What year?" "How are you finding it?" She's established the person is working on a reflective piece of writing and starts to gently question some of the ideas that have been articulated. "So, do you think you've developed knowledge?" "So, here do you mean that you have strengths that will help you in your profession, or that you'll need them?" Because I'm not quite sure what you mean here. She's asking questions, not providing answers.

This may be simple fact finding ones, such as what course are you studying, what year are you in before delving into questions about the students writing they have brought along. Whilst for many students and conversations these appeared easy and fluid, in the ethnographic observations there were times the students wanted to ask their own questions before engaging or sitting down to discuss their work.

These concerns by students of the Writing Mentors' academic capital are understandable if we consider that academic writing within an academic literacies framework. Students without any disciplinary knowledge, which may be the case with the Writing Mentors coming from different disciplines themselves, may therefore consider writing as a technical skill divorced from the discipline and contextualised social practice (Hardy & Clughen, 2012). They may also be considered as questioning the capital that positions them in this field as someone who can help, yet they want to know specific details to decide for themselves if this capital is of value to their own studies.

Identifying Capital Differences

As well as generating pedagogies to socialise students into the writing culture of their discipline the Writing Mentors also worked alongside the Learning Development team delivering teaching sessions within the curriculum. These sessions provided the opportunity for the Writing Mentors to understand the different capital valued at a disciplinary level. They worked in partnership with academic teaching staff and Learning Developers and provided the space to question knowledge construction (Wingate, 2018). Whilst Watson poses that it is not possible to render the rules of the game entirely transparent, there are opportunities to contribute to making it more opaque (2013) and reflecting on their experience after the session, the Writing Mentors outlined the benefit of this way of working:

Writing Mentor Allegra: That was so interesting and I think it really helped the students having us all there.

Writing Mentor Anya: I know, because I think we spoke in a way the students can understand but having Simon there to talk about how it worked in Art History meant that it came to live in the subject too.

This session was beneficial to the students involved, the staff member and Writing Mentors and it served as an opportunity to develop the pedagogic practices used within this programme, but it had little impact on changing the institutional wide practices and there was not the resources to offer this to all across the University. The academic staff member who co facilitated the session remarked:

Harry: It is a shame that we can't do this with every year group on every programme. It really helps to have different expertise involved in supporting students. It has been a while since I studied so it has all changed...Also having the students from the Writing Café helps to make it feel more informal as students really struggle with these types of sessions.

This session not only served to render the game more transparent to students, but this quote also demonstrates this member of academic staff found it helpful to be supported by other staff members with different academic capital to them. Having both a Learning Developer and a disciplinary academic allowed for them each to deploy their various forms of capital in supporting the students to get a feel for the game (Bourdieu, Passeron & Martin, 1994). Whilst the academic might have had a feel for the game, he suggests it had become second nature to him (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) and his habitus was formed during his own studies as a student. Changing the dynamics of the pedagogy and offering collaborative learning allowed for transformation for both the Writing Mentors and the member of staff. It was an enabling pedagogy that allowed the student participating in the session to develop their capital of academic writing practices alongside knowledge-focused discipline discussions, yet unfortunately this type of session could not be repeated with all programmes and stages.

5:3 Changing the Game, Changing Habitus

Writing Mentor' Habitus: Learning to Breathe in Water

Student: I don't know how you know to do this so easily? Did someone teach you?

Writing Mentor Laura: Not really, well erm, I guess we had the training when I started working as a Writing Mentor and we sort of asked question, looked at different examples of essays and that kind of thing. We had to question what we knew about writing from our experience and if that would be the same for everyone. It's mostly from helping students here though, it just feels easier now I guess.

Student: It's really helpful, and you don't even do my subject!

Mentors could be considered as fish in water, not only in terms of academic writing for own studies, but also in what I consider the field of this research; the study of academic writing practices in higher education. Their collective habitus seeks to transform the academic writing practices at our institution, whilst also benefitting from their positioning in relation to understanding the games at play. Whilst the benefits of this strong understanding and academic capital may not be apparent immediately, such as if students are only required to use the linguistic capital valued by their discipline how this wider awareness helps them. However, Writing Mentors talk of increased understanding of what is valued in their discipline, precisely because they have further points of comparison and experience in seeing the varying institutional forms of linguistic capital. Nesi (2012) claims that the teaching and learning of academic writing benefits from drawing attention to differences across the disciplines and the Writing Mentors explain they are able to wield this understanding and their own linguistic capital to succeed in their own studies. They are cultivating a linguistic habitus (Bourdieu, 1997). Through their role they developed an embodied version of academic capital, or habitus that has taken time to acquire and has been fostered through their socialisation into the practices and development opportunities the Writing Café provides. Whilst not all Writing Mentors were equal in their development of capital it does highlight how undertaking the role helped their studies and understanding of what it means to be a successful writer in HE.

Writing Mentors frequently discussed their own assignments if the Writing Café was not busy, forming a collaborative writing group amongst themselves. During these moments, they remarked and reflected on their feedback and the grades they had

received, attributing them to their relationship with the others at the Writing Café and their orientation with the practices of the field.

Writing Mentor Alexandre: I got my highest mark yet the other day, look at this.

Writing Mentor Anya: Ooo, brill! Check you out. Was that the assignment we were looking at?

Writing Mentor Alexandre: [giggles] I know! I couldn't really believe it. The one we spent ages on, on the conclusion as I had totally lost the will. I moaned at Jamie too, but he listened to me trying to make sense of it [another Writing Mentor at the Writing Café]

Writing Mentor Anya: You totally deserve it, it sounded great to me. I'm so pleased for you.

By sharing their ideas and thinking whilst working on their assignments, these Writing Mentors demonstrate that they have been able to work together, rather than act on each other. This reflects the rules of the game Bourdieu articulates in team games, collaborating or playing with team mates towards a shared goal (Bourdieu, 1992), in this case the shared success in writing academic work.

Changing Habitus

The Writing Café's dialogic pedagogy evidences how there was a transformative development of cultural capital between Writing Mentors and students, rather than the reinforcement of social inequality through instrumental instruction. In this sense the Writing Mentors could be considered as helping the formation, or transformation of student habitus (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). They spoke of working with students "to make it easier" and to help them understand "what they wished they had been told". They frequently talked about wanting to change the direction of academic writing practices in their disciplines too, although they did not feel they were in a position to do so. Students also expressed their frustrations at curriculum practices:

Student: "They give us a breakdown of what should be in each section of the essay, in each paragraph, but that just makes it so boring to write."

The Writing Mentor working with this student looks at the assignment brief and agreed that it is clear, but also leaves very little room to include anything else. On discussing the exact literature it should cover and the case study it should refer to the Writing Mentor comments that it is like a *"multiple answers exam"*, rather than an essay to which the student agrees and replies; *"I'd like to actually say something, but I don't think that's what they want"*. The Writing Mentors understanding of an essay in this example may be aligned with the practices of their own discipline, but they can see that in such structured guidance there is very little room for the student to adopt their academic voice, bring their own interests, knowledges and experiences and apply those to the topic in question. The assignment brief offers little autonomy for students and it is likely that in this example the accreditation practices that govern the quality of this student's degree also play a large part in the autonomy of the curriculum design. The student's habitus was in discord with the assessment practices of the programme. They moved on to talking about referencing where this was further evidenced. *"Do you think you need to reference this same paper 3 times in this paragraph?"* The student responds by agreeing:

"Personally, no I don't. I have an internal struggle with this. But, my seminar lead says that we have to reference every time we use someone else's idea".

The Writing Mentor explains that she could do this in a different way, by opening the paragraph with clear language that these ideas came from, the research article, and that indicate that she was building on their argument. The student agrees she *could*

use this approach but highlights how she is still cautious with doing something that goes against what she has been told by the programme team.

“I still think I need to stick with over referencing it. The markers don’t look too closely at how you’ve written it and they find ways to catch you out as they try to get through the marking easily”.

Both the Writing Mentor and the student she was supporting were questioning the practices around referencing in this particular discipline and together they are aware of ‘the rules of the game’, but they were also aware of their position within the field and were not able to see how they could challenge or change this. Perhaps without realising it, the academic staff member who was advising the student had enforced pedagogic performativity. Whilst they may have tried to explain the reasoning for repeating the reference, as appropriate to the level of study, this student urged on the side of caution for fear of plagiarising. Of course, this representation of what was actually discussed in the seminar is one of the student’s recollection and may have been misinterpreted. It could have been that their teaching-learning interaction explored these in more depth and in more nuanced ways, but this does not change that the student was still trying to grapple with what academic writing looks like within this particular discipline, and how they were going to be able to reproduce it. Whilst their habitus was transformed through previous studies, they had become the ‘right’ kind of knower, understanding when to follow the rules and when to perhaps challenge them (Maton, 2005).

The student that was frustrated with this approach of “*over-referencing*” had already been to university and was now studying in a different discipline, her habitus was not aligned with the habitus of the discipline she now found herself studying (Delamont, Parry & Atkinson, 1997). She discussed how her experiences of studying at university

for the first time compared to the second time and undertaking a different degree. She explained that she had to “*unlearn*” quite a bit to succeed. She had developed the linguistic and academic capital from one discipline, which was now not of direct value to her in the sense of using this knowledge. As she was having to learn the ‘rules of the game’ again, or perhaps even learning the rules of a different game (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Developing linguistic capital is not unique to studying in higher education, but rather specific to the discipline being studied and the interplay between this student’s habitus and the new disciplinary social field she was encountering were at odds (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

The habitus of the student is mutating and changing. The individual student’s habitus, is being taken in by the *illusio* of having to learn new ways of writing within the particular disciplines, thus demonstrating how the *doxa* on academic writing practices within the overall field remains stable (Bathmaker, 2015; Bourdieu, 1977). Although many professionals and academics within the University are aware that there are different disciplinary norms and practices that do not translate to other sub-fields, this is not something students commonly encounter unless they are part of a transdisciplinary course or participate in practices like those at the Writing Café.

The curriculum content and style is tailored to the language of people who hold high cultural capital within this field, and whilst this interaction demonstrates that individuals might question the practices and would like to push back against what is valued, they do not have a strong position within the field to do so. Whilst her previous degree would have helped her to develop a more sophisticated repertoire of academic language, the way she presented this had to be adapted on this occasion suggesting there is an element of a ‘right way’ within each discipline, as set by the practices of the

discipline and the actors with the most capital. She had a feel for the game in general and had the cultural capital to adapt to the differing requirements, but the doxa positioned her in a way that there was no other option but to conform.

Other students did not have this awareness and understanding and were simply looking for a simple answer on how to make sure they succeeded: *"I keep getting lost"*, *"Nobody has ever explained it to me"*, *"Why can't someone just tell you that before you spend days going round and round in circles."* By being more explicit with what is expected, yet allowing for conversations to challenge the status quo and critically debate and discuss why it is so could open up the potential for allowing students to bring their own habitus and capital to practices. The Writing Café offers the opportunity to socialise students into their course, and part of this is understanding the disciplinary requirements of their course, but to be genuine members of the academic community their voices must also be heard as members of the field, and as an institution we need to move to position them in ways that recognises the capital they bring and provides inclusive pedagogies to value their habitus.

Students Habitus as Fish Out of Water

There were multiple occasion during the research observations where students would explain to Writing Mentors that they were *"not academic"*. On one occasion a student was struggling to understand why they were not able to write an assignment using language and knowledges that were available to them:

Student: It's just really difficult. I'm not academic so this makes no sense to me.

Writing Mentor Allegra: I don't think any of us start off feeling academic, it's just about taking your time and going through the article to try and find what they are saying.

Student: I have to Google every other word though

Writing Mentor Allegra: But that's ok, just take your time and go through it. I can help.

Student: But I just feel stupid. I don't know why I'm here, I'm too old for all of this.

This mature student explained that she had returned to education now her children had grown up as she wanted a new challenge. Her previous experience of education was around 15 years ago and although she had enjoyed school, she had found it challenging academically. She had come to study social work as she had experience of the system and she thought that it would be an interesting course as well as a profession that would make a difference. She explained how she was doing well in the practical elements of her course and was enjoying the placements, but that she found academic writing and reading in particular extremely different. Her sense of finding the vocational aspect of her course easier than the academic side could demonstrate the complexity of her habitus operating in a similar field to the one she had personally experienced, in comparison to finding learning difficult (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). The challenges in changing identity were strong for this students, whose embodied habitus left her feeling “*I’m too old...*” and that it was her failing. Her professional or vocational habitus was more aligned with the placements she was taking than the academic habitus thus in a sense, the university field forces her to consider her habitus as one that is deficit, one which she needs to transform in order to conform and succeed (Reay *et al.*, 2001).

This view of students’ habitus not aligning with the culture of university study was also highlighted by academic staff members, particularly in relation to

schools not adequately preparing students for higher level study. Discussions with staff members demonstrated that their understanding of students feeling like fish out of water when arriving at university is due to inadequate preparation:

Researcher: Students at the Writing Café often explain that they find academic writing very challenging, is that also your experience?

Jon: Yes, well I guess it differs really between different students but I don't think any of them come to university ready to write how we expect them to.

Researcher: I guess if they haven't been to university then we can't really expect them to have these capabilities, can we?

Jon: I think we can certainly expect them to be able to write sentences. Some of them just do not have the experience of writing from school and then we have to pick up the pieces. They either have to learn how to do it, or they fail.

This interaction illustrates how the dominant discourse in higher education of fitting in, or failing ultimately reinforces and ensures the reproduction of the social practices of academic writing (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Jon expects students to understand how to write at university, without having engaged with higher level study previously. He has positioned the role of schooling as contributing to the students' academic deficit, demonstrating the strength of the doxa of remedial support and highlighting how the institutional habitus is to place students in the position of having to 'catch up' or fall behind. As part of this conversation, Jon and I agreed that we would develop a collaborative workshop to be held at the Writing Café for the students enrolled on his course. We would join together to create an optional session for his students to come and consider what it means to be a writer in higher education. Arguably, undertaking this collaborative pedagogic work reinforced the idea that students should

understand their place within the system and that they needed to accept these values and the culture, ultimately creating an unequal social order (Archer, Moote & MacLeod, 2020). The session we had designed resulted in the embodiment of pedagogic action working to socialise students' habitus (Archer, Moote & MacLeod, 2020; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

On reflecting on the session with Jon, I mentioned that I had been grappling with the purpose of the Writing Café, beyond socialising students into the accepted language and practices of their disciplines and asked if this was something he too considered in his role as an educator:

Jon: Well, erm, yes I think that part of teaching students is trying to make them understand what they have to do.

Researcher: So do you ever question the logic of what you have to do. For instance, as a researcher you also have to adopt your written language for different journals and make sure it conforms, but do you question that at all.

Jon: I didn't before now! I think I've always thought of it as a necessary evil and part of the process.

Researcher: I think I've been considering who these rules are for, and how we might be able to talk more as a community about which of the rules make sense to us and which just feel like bureaucracy.

Jon: I get what you are saying and I edit a journal too and we require formatting and other regulations that articles have to conform to. I'm going to have to have a think about that.

This discussion with Jon illustrates the theme of dialogic collaboration across sub-fields contributing to understanding how certain rules are reinforced, and that this can often be done unconsciously. The doxa is strong and renders the game invisible. However, his habitus was transformed through the discussion and he questioned the game that he already had a feel for (Bourdieu, Passeron & Martin,

1994). He had also taken steps to provide socialisation into higher education study for the students he supported, helping them to feel more at ease with the expectations of writing, and helping them feel like fish in water.

Transforming Habitus

Student: Excuse me, how does this work?

Whilst the Writing Mentor team works to reinforce the principles of the Writing Café as a sub-field being open and accessible, for some students their habitus was in discord with this sub-field as seen through how they acted, moved and talked in the social space. It could be argued that as the social sub-field is in conflict with structural properties of formal teaching spaces, students have not developed the habitus to interact with it as they have a lecture theatre or classroom (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). They do not know how to encounter it in the same way as the other fields and spaces they are more familiar with, as highlighted by the students questioning how they should enter and participate in the conversations taking place at the Writing Café. In essence, this student was asking, what are the rules of this game? How do I participate? The Writing Café was not well suited to their cultural disposition and on this occasion the Writing Mentor was able to intervene and explain the purpose of the Writing Café and how the student could interact with her:

Writing Mentor Alexandro: We can help with anything really, but we mostly talk about assignment ideas and look at writing together. We just have a conversation together around the table.

Reay suggests that habitus is multi layered and not static, but rather 'permeable and responsive' (2004, p.434) thus it can be layered through their experiences. For this particular student on returning to the Writing Café their habitus may be more aligned with the space. In this sense, the Writing Mentors have worked as pedagogic agents working towards a transformation of habitus in relation to the social learning sub-field. Whilst many students observed at the Writing Café were able to navigate the positioning of the people and practices in this space in a similar manner with the support and encouragement of the Writing Mentors, for a number of students this was a barrier that they found problematic, and some were unable to traverse through the social space easily.

The Writing Mentor finishes her conversation with the group of students and goes to get a cup of tea. A student from the boundary of the Writing Café walks tentatively forward and asks if she can talk to someone. "Of course" the Writing Mentors says, just give me a minute and I'll come and sit down. The student explains that she had been sat waiting for an hour watching and wondering how it worked [field notes].

The principles and structures of the sub-field have not helped this student access it easily, yet rather they have almost prevented her from participating. Some students are happy to sit and wait for instruction, their habitus and experience of former education does not invite them to come and immediately open a conversation, yet eventually they are able to engage with some guidance. There is no reception desk at the Writing Café, no clearly marked Learning Development Advisor or Writing Mentor, no holder of knowledge. This particular student's embodied habitus dictates her behaviour as she tries to enter the Writing Café space. Bourdieu argued that the habitus has incorporated the structures of the work, and that a crucial feature of the habitus is that it can be express in peoples

feeling, thinking, walking and standing (Bourdieu, 1992). In this observation, the student was sitting outside of the physical Writing Café space, perhaps feeling and thinking they did not know how to engage in the activities. As habitus is an interplay between this student's previous history and her current situation when she encountered an unfamiliar experience, she had to re-structure her habitus. The Learning Development Advisors and Writing Mentors had talked of this as a common occurrence in the Writing Café, students gathering outside the physical boundary of the space or queuing up waiting to be invited in, rather than joining in with a conversation.

Jess Writing Mentor: It happens all of the time, we see students who just sit and wait.

Learning Development Advisor: Yes, we've talked about it as a team a lot and have tried to grapple with how we make it clear for students without changing what we are doing here.

Jess Writing Mentor: It's just different I guess, isn't it? Everywhere you go around campus you know who is going to give you information.

The Learning Development Advisor is referring to the Writing Café trying to work as a social space for staff and students to come together to discuss academic writing practices, each learning from the other. If there were a clear facilitator in the social space we feared that the Writing Café would further encourage students to come expecting answers, rather than enabling the discussion of ideas. Jess highlights how the students' habitus in relation to the culture of the wider University are familiar with other spaces, but in this sub-field some do not know to approach the collaborative pedagogy. Other students who visited the Writing

Café remarked that their habitus was challenged and they were confronted with an unfamiliar experience

Student: You should have a ticket system like they do at the supermarket, then we'd know when to come and talk.

Stating that this student would benefit from a system or process that helped him to understand how to participate demonstrates that perhaps his habitus changed through his engagement with the sub-field. Whilst initially he was unclear on how to participate, he was able to join in and reflected that this was challenging. Yet, due to the fact he did join in demonstrates he was able to adapt and evolve how he encounters the social space was restructured through his habitus. The Writing Mentors also discussed the students that they noticed who hovered at the edge of the Writing Café as an unusual phenomena, given they were well versed in how to participate themselves.

Writing Mentor Ellie: Isn't it weird how some days student just hang back before they talk to us?

Writing Mentor Liz: I know, maybe we could just have hats that flash (jokingly).

Their collective understanding and habitus resonated with the social space and they found it challenging to see why it might hold others back. As a team we had numerous conversations about trying to be aware of students and how they might find the threshold to the space a barrier. They did not understand that this social context was not second nature to others who were not as familiar with it as they were. The Learning Development team encouraged them to actively look for students trying to understand how it worked, smiling and inviting them in. On

many occasions students waited and watched, their habitus operating in a self-questioning and conscious way until they were able to get a feel for the game and develop a new awareness of how to encounter the Writing Café (Reay, 2004). However, for some, when their habitus encountered the sub-field they were not familiar with, they walked away. It was too much of a difference to their previous experiences to move through.

Today I sat at the edge of the Writing Café where some students sit and wait to speak to the Writing Mentors. I am specifically looking to see if there are any students who did not participate, but may have wanted to [Extract from field notes].

Although on that occasion there were not any students embodying a habitus that excluded them from the social space, I did make further observations where this took place:

A student just came out of the lift, holding a document which I am presuming is an assignment. She slowed down by the edge of the Writing Café, then carried on walking past and back around to the other side of the building. The Writing Mentors were all talking to students or each other across the 3 tables they are occupying. The café is busy today so although I know who the Writing Mentors are, I doubt anyone else would [Extract from field notes].

At times the Writing Café excludes and relies on students to use their agency and embodied habitus to engage with it, yet this could exclude them from participating in conversations and learning about academic writing. In this sense the pedagogic habitus of the Writing Café defined who had access to it and positioned those who did not have the habitus or capital to engage, as outsiders. As the coordinator I had tried to ensure that the Writing Café was designed to value the differences students brought to their education, enabling engagement

with dominant approaches, yet this was not universal to all students and we had socially and cultural reproduced inequity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Unintentionally, students had been excluded.

The Illusio of League Tables

The illusio of league tables and rankings, popular amongst the sector leaders and senior management of the University were not as positively framed by the student participants in this research. The students who talked of national surveys and their experiences demonstrated that they were not taken in and by the game (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). They did not demonstrate an unreflexive commitment to the rules, some did not believe the game was worth playing. Overall, throughout the theme of national rankings and student feedback students objected to the practice, disagreeing with its design and its principles. Students and Writing Mentors made reference to both institutional practices and sector wide student surveys that aimed to 'hear' their voices, particularly in relation to the National Student Survey but also in institutionalised practices, including staff and student liaison meetings, module feedback forms, the ways the Writing Café captured data about visitors and how the university allocates resources to different areas. Julia's critique of the use of national evaluation surveys evidences how she was unsatisfied with the framework of the survey, which silenced what she really wanted to say.

Julia: We're just so over surveyed, it's so annoying as it's totally not true stuff. I felt that, because they have pre-written answers [on the NSS] then you only really answer what they think is important. And I actually had to fill out the SPQ [Student Perception Questionnaire] which you do at the end of the 3rd year and I felt like there were a lot of things that you didn't have the chance to say. That I really wanted to say.

Researcher: Do you think there is a better way of evaluating your experiences then?

Julia: Yes, for sure. Stop making it so boring and generic. It has no meaning when you can't say what you want to say. You may as well just be silent.

Researcher: What makes you say it's generic and has no meaning?

Julia: Well, the fact that you have to answer in those dry ways, definitely agree, mostly agree, what does that even mean? How can you know my definitely is the same as everyone else's? We just fill it in because were told to thousands of times.

Julia clearly felt dissatisfied in not being able to share what she felt were her experiences, but rather answer questions which felt removed from what she deemed important. Her frustration at the ways in which the survey is designed to be comparative to other data sets removed any sense of it being specific to her, or of being of value. Julia's capital was not valued by these practices, what she wanted to contribute was not what the institution was asking of her, excluding her from the field. In making her voice and experience quantifiable she felt it was no longer her voice, no longer reflective of her experience, which leads us to question whose interest the NSS serves and how we can participate and still provide space for students to feel valued. In this example Julia does not succumb to the *illusio*. She is in a weaker position within the field and whilst this might mean she does not have the cultural capital to understand there is a game at play, it also may demonstrate that this position and her *habitus* provides her with the space to question the *illusio*, unlike those who embody the rules of the game. Julie demonstrates she doesn't have a malleable *habitus* as she does not embody the game of these neoliberal evaluation practices, nor has she internalised the external structures that are shaping the field, yet others, 'have the game under their skin' (Bourdieu, 1998, p.80). Julia's objection to the NSS and her frustration at the questions demonstrate that she could not find a way to work the system, was not aware of her position in the system and yet this allowed her the space

to views the opinions of others and how they interacted with these structures in a different light. She explained on another occasion that her friend also '*hated the NSS*', but unlike Julia he was aware there was a game at play and was able to consider his position in this game and the field. Julia explained their discussion:

Julia: A friend of mine said, I remember once when I was really upset and I was discussing it with him, and I told him that I'm going to put really bad feedback in one of the module forms and he was like, you don't want to do that. Because if everyone did that and you put that on all of the surveys then it would just reduce the reputation of the uni and devalue your degree. And I was like, yes that is actually true. So I was like, what do I do.

Researcher: So you are sort of stuck, if you are honest about your experience, then you think your degree might be worth less?

Julia: Mmm. I guess it is the same when you leave a job, where you were unhappy, you're still not going to tell your boss.

Researcher: Because you want a reference?

Julia: Yes, so you have to be professional.

Julia's friend was able to demonstrate to her some of the principles of the game which left her feeling like she was a 'fish out of water', her friend had lifted the veil of the game, but she did not know how to play her next move. In this conversation, Julia's friend was using his cultural capital to influence and explain a different perspective to her, contributing to the development of her capital but also leaving her feeling like she was not able to understand the doxa of these practices. Julia was the first in her family to go to university and was very critical of the teaching on her course, the prospects of getting a '*proper job*' and her experience of university life. Her disposition was that of an outsider, who had no authority over or on the field and she felt frustration in this positioning. She had started to see her positioning in the field but was in a disadvantaged position when compared to her friend who was able to wield his capital for his own benefits.

On another occasion, the discussion of national surveys and their influence on league tables came up in relation to academic staff members trying to explain the doxa to their cohorts, to influence them for the benefit of the programme and for future students experiences and opportunities. Whilst these academic staff members are taken in by the *illusio*, they do not have an unquestioning commitment to it, instead are using their positioning acquired through their cultural and social capital to challenge it.

Kirsty: It's all over the university as well though. It's not just the big stats. We are always told that you need to say this, blah blah something positive, in your module evaluation, because that determines the budget going forward, and depending on how many people from our course fill in these surveys depends on how much budget they get from the university to pay the lecturers and stuff. The less lecturers the less contact time etc. So if you're not positive you get a crap course next year.

Kirsty's account of the faculty staff member being so direct with their students is particularly interesting. Whilst academic staff members may encounter and be influenced by the institutional culture, shaped by the national and political field and those who have internalised and embody this agenda, it is clear in this account that some individuals are positioned in a way that gives them the ability to mediate the formal culture of the institution with the students they meet. The clear agenda of trying to steer students' feedback and their efforts to explain the negative effects on how they can deliver the programme suggest a stronger positioning and authority within the field. This member of staff was taken in by the *illusio*, but weakly. They do not have unquestioning commitment to it, but rather that they were objecting and disregarding it. Yet, they were willing to spend time and energy with their students not for social reproduction and belief in the *illusio*, but for social change. They were able to use their social capital, their connections and interactions with student cohorts, and

put them to their advantage. They were comfortable in their environment and were able to utilise that positioning.

Understanding the rules of the game is a central component of navigating the field and in these different scenarios we can see the difference in how a student and academic staff member is able to position themselves within the field. Julia's working class habitus and level of capital have reproduced her position within the social space.

Although influenced by her friend she has demonstrated that she has a very low level mastery of the neoliberal game and a weak strategy for building her capital. However, the academic staff member has clearly understood their capital can influence the field dynamics. They have social capital that is context rich and when considered in relation to Julia it highlights the relational picture of positions within social space. This structured power relates to the habitus as it legitimises how individuals respond, and in the case of the academic staff member it allows for agency and transformation.

Perhaps not unsurprisingly the Writing Mentors collective habitus was closely aligned with the sub-field and they used this to develop their capital and internalise this and embody it in their language of supporting students and in their actions. There was some evidence of changing habitus of students, but there was also clear signs that students have internalised and embody the notion of them being in deficit as fish out of water. Academic staff too saw students as without the capital to succeed, although there were times the Writing Café's conversations with these individuals' mutated habitus as they began to think about the rules of the game from a different perspective.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The focus of this thesis has been to undertake a relational analysis of the Writing Café as a sub-field to explore and inform future academic writing development practices across the University. It aimed to develop an understanding of the culture and positioning of academic writing development within one University, and offer suggestions for informing future practices. By applying Bourdieu's thinking tools of field, capital and habitus it has provided an empirical understanding of the approach of the Writing Café and how this impacts and is impacted by the University and wider field of higher education. In focusing on how the sub-field is realised and how practices are maintained it also demonstrates how it may be transformed. This research has made a strong contribution to understanding how the practices of the Writing Café, and the development of academic writing practices are both a site of affordance and constraint. Incorporating Bourdieu's concepts provided a productive way of analysing and understanding the day to day activities and practices that embody and reproduce the idea of academic writing development within the University. It has highlighted both the opportunities and tensions of practices operating within informal teaching and learning spaces and the persisting notion that students are in deficit of the academic and social capital required to succeed at university. The use of critical ethnography has provided the framework to consider how power operates on and in the Writing Café and how students can embody the doxa of requiring remedial support. Furthermore, it has argued that the Writing Café has a stronger autonomy to change the way the University considers academic writing practices than individual lecturers may do, but only if it is considered this way by senior figures and positioned to contribute to this change. In articulating the practices of the Writing Café the

metaphor of a tree feels apt. It is obvious that students are socialised into writing practices and the support available in this regard is visible to others, like the branches and leaves of the tree. However, the Writing Café also operates below ground in that it is connected to multiple sub-fields and disciplines and also shapes these practices, within and outside of the curriculum. If only the flourishing foliage is viewed and valued by the University then writing development is understood as remedial and instrumentalised, thus a shallow approach to supporting students writing will continue. Therefore, I recommend the team behind the Writing Café develop the social capital and language to relate their work to senior managers and faculty teaching and learning teams of the University to find ways to position themselves within these sub-fields. In finding ways to feel at ease in these spaces, the mission and overall ambitions of the project will be more fully achieved. Whilst it could be argued the success of the Writing Café to date has partly been due to its invisibility as it is allowed to maintain its freedom, this also becomes a barrier to transformation. Without further resource and senior backing it will continue to reinforce the doxa. If those who work within the Writing Café are able to contribute to spaces of power, greater institutional change may be possible. Working collaboratively with curriculum teams and sharing the understanding of how students learn, how they perceive their assessments and how programmes of study can develop to meet students where they are, will contribute to further progress across the overall University teaching and learning landscape.

The thesis has contributed to knowledge in a number of ways. Firstly, it is the first empirical analysis of the Writing Café using a Bourdiesian lens to understand how power operates within and on the field. Analysing this localised sub-field has demonstrated that power and position-taking takes place in multifaceted ways. It

argues that there is an institutional habitus that currently accepts the game of academic writing as separate to the curriculum, but it is evident that the attitudes, beliefs and values can change with partnership working. Secondly, it contributes to the scholarship of Learning Development as it provides evidence that those within these roles are positioned by students differently to their academic and programme teams. It demonstrates that they are positioned to challenge, question and at times change the rules of the game. This can be further realised if they are positioned by their own universities to do such a thing. Thirdly, this thesis contributes to our understanding of the complex interplay between social spaces and student and staff learning. It demonstrates who benefits from participating in the practices of the Writing Café and how the Writing Mentors were able to feel like fish in water. Yet, it also demonstrated that pedagogy is experienced differently by different students and at times some were excluded entirely. This complex picture of the relation between students, learning and space is evident throughout the thesis, as no single story or experience is the same.

6:1 The Writing Café as Sub-field

Analysing the Writing Café as a sub-field within the University has helped to understand where overlaps in priorities and interest lie. The Writing Mentors were particularly aware of the rules of the game in relation to what constitutes understanding of good academic writing and at times felt frustrated more was not done by the academic teaching staff of the University. However, these staff members are positioned differently to the Writing Mentors and faced different pressures on their time, what they believed they are afforded to do within the curriculum and in their own acquisition of academic and linguistic capital. Whilst they might hold more academic capital than students in terms of their credentials and positioning in the

University, this did not directly relate to their understanding of how students encounter learning around academic writing. Those who are involved in the Writing Café are positioned with more autonomy to question these different standards and rules, they are valuable agents for change. They are positioned at an intersectional site which allows them to make comparisons across disciplines and pedagogies, yet this knowledge currently remains within the sub-field of the Writing Café and would be beneficial to share with others.

It was argued that the Writing Café has a weak positional authority in relation to the structural properties and overall campus planning and decisions made by the wider Estates team in relation to building design, occupancy and usage. Whilst actors were able to use the furniture in ways that were best suited to the particular activity taking place, there was little control over the overall purpose of the building. This research evidences that these teams, whilst not physically involved in the Writing Café have a stronger relational autonomy than the individuals who use these spaces day to day. As they are governed by fields external to higher education, how they operate and evidence their roles are at times in discord with educational ideas. I would recommend universities place further emphasis on understanding informal learning spaces as contributing to the teaching and learning strategies of their University. To do this, they need to shift their thinking of what students' lack, and consider how the University can adapt and increase the opportunities for students to engage in fields such as the Writing Café. Thus, a recommendation is that students and teaching and learning staff members are invited into wider University discussions around the development of pedagogic space. The thesis also highlighted how actors directly outside of the Writing Café practices have a strong autonomy and power over the practices that take within

it. This manifests in the pressures to promote the Writing Café to new students entering higher education within marketing materials, and in performative notions of increasing numbers of attending students. Therefore, everyone involved in working within a university setting is involved in pedagogy whether they understand that to be their role or not. Working as a community that is responsible for teaching and learning and advocating for prioritising the educational mission of the University lies with every member of staff as they shape what is possible and what the future of dominant approaches may be. This is not a one way relationship, and those within teaching and learning roles also need to find ways to work within the system of a marketised field of education. I need to find a way to market the Writing Café to new students, without falling into the traps of positioning it as a deficit support service.

As Krause (2017) explains researchers will remain interested in the specific attributes and practices that make their field unique and further research exploring comparative Writing Centres coordinated by the national Learning Development community could add interesting insight into this area. In relation to the Writing Café as a sub-field, it is both a sub-field that is implicit in its agenda to support students to understand the rules of the game, but it is also afforded the potential to contribute to changing the game if it is able to continue to articulate how the doxa reproduces social inequality through the reproduction of hierarchy of positions and capitals. Researchers in this area, including myself, have to continue to critique and recognise their own position and position-taking and how they too may be complicit in the doxa, as has been evidenced through this research. Whilst this is a precarious place to be at times, it is only in recognising the affordances and constraints in our practice that we can critically

move forward in designing opportunities for students to encounter their studies and knowledge in an inclusive way.

Whilst French (2020) argues that Writing Centres do not go far enough in supporting institution change, it is evident that there are opportunities for them to do so, as is the case with the Writing Café. They need to be valued and positioned in this way by their own Universities. Researchers like myself have to be part of this conversation, advocate and critique current practices for our current positioning to change. This leads to a greater chance for ventures such as the Writing Café to be resourced and funded to contribute to the pedagogic and educational aims of the University and not just seen as support for struggling students. Social learning sub-fields can operate as valuable intersectional sites that are ideally positioned to question, critique and crucially support the development of academic writing practices university wide. Yet researchers have to have the courage to engage with how they too contribute to the reproduction of practices. Critical reflexivity is essential for change.

6.2 Pedagogy of Learning and Capital

This research has demonstrated that the University considers students as in deficit in relation to their linguistic and academic capital and positions them to seek it out with little strategic oversight. This is a form of symbolic violence on students which was, at times, reinforced by the Writing Café. As staff members sent their students to the Writing Café, they embodied the deficit doxa and doubted their ability to acquire the capital that is needed to progress on their programme of study. The Writing Mentors questioned the symbolic violence as they saw further opportunities for students to develop this capital through dialogic pedagogy and pedagogic curriculum change. They also saw opportunities to change the structure of the programmes of study, yet did not

hold the necessary positioning in the field to bring about these changes.

Demonstrating how the team supporting the Writing Café are better positioned to bridge the knowledge that takes place in the Writing Café and share it with programme teams in comparison to the Writing Mentors. This would be a beneficial area for further research. Whilst the Writing Café reinforced inequity, at times it also demonstrates transformative learning, particularly amongst the Writing Mentor team. They resisted the requests for instrumental support and the development of simple technical skills alone, and rather encouraged an approach of exploration, discussion and questioning. Although the students visiting the Writing Café also questioned the capital of those involved in facilitating conversations, highlighting that they were under the illusion of the game, the Writing Mentors, despite their weak position in the overall field were able to transform this dominant repeated action and were able to influence students to consider the game differently.

Harnessing social capital and changing the positioning of Learning Development team, including myself, is crucial in furthering the ambitions of the Writing Café. The Learning Developers and those positioned as on the edges of teaching and learning occupy multiple fields within the field of higher education. They are not seen by their Universities to have the capital of a specific subject knowledge of a 'traditional' academic, yet their knowledge of working directly with students and in understanding how students learn could be of value to the entire University mission. They have knowledge of other domains and disciplines' cultures in ways that are not revealed to core teaching teams, precisely because they are outside of the disciplinary sub-field. This affords them the opportunity to build bridges between disciplinary specific knowledge, and knowledge of student transition, learning and success in university.

Therefore a recommendation is that curriculum design is a collaboration between subject specialists, wider academic staff members, Learning Developers, Educational Developers and administrators at this University. All need to work together to provide opportunities for their students to interact with subject knowledge and explicitly address how this is articulated through academic writing practices. Simultaneously, social learning spaces positioned outside of their discipline are powerful for students as they perceive this as a less threatening environment. In ensuring the curriculum is shaped to allow students to encounter how disciplinary knowledge is constructed and articulated, alongside spaces to question, critique and challenge this construction would go some way to better provide student centred education in this area.

6.3 Habitus

The research demonstrated that the collective habitus of the Writing Mentor team was changed through their time working as Writing Mentors. Their social exchanges as a team allowed them to develop the capital that helped them to question different disciplinary practices and they began acting as a collaborative team. This capital was produced within the sub-field of the Writing Café, and valued within that sub-field thus giving their habitus structure within this particular setting. Together, they collectively sought to change the habitus of the students they supported, resisting the reinforcement of an individual requiring remedial support. Yet, many of the student visitors to the Writing Café demonstrate how they viewed the Writing Café as offering a study skills approach, which they could use to develop the capital they needed to succeed. Their habitus had internalised that they did not hold the necessary capital required and this manifested itself in an embodied way, through the language they used, the way they articulated their request for help and how they moved through the

space. For some students, they found the Writing Café as a sub-field to be in such discord with their habitus and their previous educational experiences they found entering and participating in conversations challenging. For others, they were entirely excluded from the Writing Café as the social configurations of actors within the space confronted their habitus with unfamiliar ways of being and doing that they could not align. In its efforts to provide a less hierarchical space, the Writing Café has unconsciously excluded certain students from the game. The unsettling views around students in deficit require institutions to think about the habitus of historically marginalised students and focus on the knowledge and skills they bring, rather than those they do not. The Writing Café also has to further consider how to include those who are not currently able to participate.

The habitus changes of academic staff members, such as Jon who became aware of the doxa of students' lack of readiness for higher education from their schooling also demonstrates that teaching practices could be developed through the process of engaging with collaborative teaching sessions, between the Learning Development team, the Writing Mentors and academics. Their capital in understanding how they could alter and adapt the curriculum to increase the opportunities for it to meet students where they are was strengthened through the activities of the Writing Café. The individuals working collaboratively demonstrated they found these sessions beneficial for identifying opportunities for change, suggesting a shift in their habitus and disposition to understanding their roles as educators. They indicated that they were unable to see through the doxa before being in dialogue and sustaining these conversations could prove useful for re-thinking *their* role and ability to change how they approach teaching and curriculum design.

6.4 Limitations of the Research

The scope of the research was confined to one particular University and as previously outlined it was not the ambition to create a thesis that applied at a macro level to each different university within the sector and produce generalizable research. Therefore, it is not the hope that you read this thesis and agree with all the voices that are present, but that perhaps the analysis sparks ideas and questions in your mind that help to raise these ideas into our shared dialogues. It is my hope that together we continue to think about how students encounter academic writing practices, and ask ourselves and our institutions what else can be done.

This research could be considered as constrained by being located within one particular sub-field. Given the nature of analysing the practices in a micro way it was not appropriate to look to other university cultures in any meaningful way, but further comparative research which investigates the different applications of writing development support and how this is positioned institutionally could prove insightful. There were also undoubtedly voices that were not reflected in this research as they had never heard of the Writing Café, did not visit it during the ethnographic observations and their views of the social practices could be insightful if further exploring who is excluded from the space and how this exclusion occurs.

6.5 Contribution to Scholarship

The findings of this thesis contribute to current thinking and scholarship in a number of areas. Firstly, perhaps, most notably, the research contributes to the growing body of research that aims to understand the field of Learning Development as a practice and profession. Much of the scholarship to date has focused on showcasing projects and the development of resources to support student learning, yet this thesis has

demonstrated the role of Learning Developers in working alongside students in Higher Education from a critical perspective. The findings demonstrate that Learning Developers are positively positioned by students as 'outside' of their disciplines, yet their knowledge remains unconnected at an institutional level. Whilst the literature to date has focused on embedding the work of Learning Developers into the curriculum this thesis highlights that further consideration is needed in this complex positioning. This research highlights that being positioned by students as outside, but by institutions as entirely connected to student learning and development could prove a fruitful position to occupy. The question of how this is to be achieved would warrant further exploration within local settings and further research across the Learning Development community. In relation to the literature on Learning Development practices, the findings also demonstrate an uncomfortable truth that certain practices are exclusionary for some individuals. As shown with the Writing Café, certain students are unable to access the support, in this research this manifested as being unable to enter the Writing Café at all. By focusing further research on *how* their work also excludes students, balancing out the positive and empowering research with critical analysis that can be an uneasy space, but one that we should not shy away from.

Secondly, the research contributes to the body of literature focused on social learning spaces and the emerging understanding of the relationship between space and learning. Previous work has focused on students' evaluations of social learning spaces, as environments, but has not focused on the relationship between space and learning. Neither has it explored the pedagogic practices in relation to spaces. Demonstrating that the transformative learning opportunities at the Writing Café are multifaceted and striated and the possibilities are bound up at an institutional and sector level has

implications for the very design and purpose of social learning space development and understanding. By considering social learning spaces, not as separate sites with contained practices, allows the rendering of their affordances more apparent. For the Writing Café, this manifests as an intersectional site where students learn together across disciplinary boundaries, alongside peers and Learning Developers. For this particular research, students articulated how this is not a common occurrence for them at University and it was transformative to their learning. Researching students' experiences of social learning space has also demonstrated that there is no single experience of a particular social learning space and how it contributes to pedagogic practice, yet a more nuanced understanding can be gained by considering spaces like the Writing Café as a moving image within a much larger network.

Thirdly, this thesis contributes to the literature focused on understanding student engagement and student voice. The positioning of those involved in the Writing Café as outside of the student's own discipline allowed participants to share views that they stated they would not share in other forums. It is commonplace across the sector, for example, to have course representatives to feedback on the programme design, assessment practices and teaching. Yet, the students in this research articulated that whilst they would like to critique and suggest ideas for development, their positioning within that sub field does not provide the space for them to do so. Considering spaces such as the Writing Café as a way of connecting with students perceptions of teaching and learning provides an alternative addition to understanding student experience. The literature in this field has identified a priority for understanding the differences in experiences of partnership between students and staff, which this thesis contributes towards. The Writing Mentors involved in facilitating the Writing Café conversations

worked to foster a sense of community and their ability to swim in water contributes to our understanding of learning communities for student engagement. Finally, in relation to student voice, this thesis demonstrates that student's habitus and their voice can reflect back their positioning. Students throughout this research positioned themselves as in deficit of the capital to succeed at academic writing. Thus any theoretical considerations of student voices should not be seen as capturing just what is said, but the dialogic relationship between them and the role of power in any given sub-field.

6.6 Concluding Thoughts

Reflecting on the research journey, there are a number of challenges I have faced over the course of the last 6 years. My own habitus has changed throughout this research. One of the sliding doors moments throughout this research was in reflecting on my own personal biography and positioning within the University. I came to see my experience as a first generation student, at times as having a shared identity with the students and Writing Mentors that were part of the research. The challenges I faced with understanding the rules of the game in higher education were aligned with what they described as their challenges too. Although I was still a student in the sense of studying for a doctorate, I was no longer an undergraduate student, I was also a researcher and full time professional within the University. So I also related to the academic staff members and professional service staff members I interviewed and shared purposeful conversations with. I was critically aware of how this biography influenced what I observed, particularly by analysing what I *found interesting* to observe. The use of reflexive diaries ensured I engaged with this positioning and these

ideas fully and deeply. This is something I believe will I continue to use, not only in further research but also in my everyday role.

One area that has not been given much space within this thesis is the reflection of Learning Development as a discipline and my own positioning within the University. Whilst I think of myself as an academic, and undertaking this doctorate is a step towards me searching for the symbolic capital, recognition and legitimacy within the University, there is also value in being positioned outside of the disciplines. Currently these two are not easily compatible given the structures of organisational charts, contract types and views on the purpose of roles. Whilst this feels a precarious place to be at times, this thesis demonstrates that it is also a valuable position in understanding and changing the learning experiences of students from this position. As well as understanding students' experiences, my own habitus has changed during the research process and the critically reflexive nature of my practice is a strength, but also one that does not feel comfortable at times. This is not the thesis I imagined I would write when I first set out on this journey. There are different stories that could be told, through different lenses. Ones perhaps more positive. This story, at times, is uncomfortable but I have come to realise that culture and change does not just happen to us, we are also a part of it. I wanted to critique in order to change and that required a necessary state of feeling uneasy.

Post Pandemic Remarks

A large proportion of the writing up of this thesis took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. As with all areas of life, the pandemic shifted the landscape of higher education, moving to large scale online teaching and learning and a questioning of practices. The once freedom, or positional autonomy in coordinating the Writing Café shifted as the focus on students' learning and their support came under the spotlight. Whilst government pressures through the Office for Students decreased the relational autonomy of universities as it called for them to respond, arguably this too increased the visibility of those involved in the Writing Café. I was called to help respond to the COVID-19 plans for teaching and learning, and the lessons of my experience coordinating the Writing Café and knowledge of students learning were given voice to inform our practices and how to respond to the differing challenges for both students and staff alike. A fundamental change in the field had changed the game. I too had gained the institutional capital valued at this particular time and I was able to use this capital to negotiate a different position within the field. Undertaking this research and writing up greatly helped to consider how we could move forward as a team and as a University. It also helped me to recognise how I was positioned and how this previously served as a constraint. Awareness of this positioning enabled me to consciously articulate how the Writing Café could contribute to the strategic educational values of the University. I was able to share with the University community the insights that students shared about their teaching and learning changes, in real time. Discussions around the long term use of our campus have also come to the fore, as the campus was largely left empty and questions around its future use were highlighted University wide. Conversations around how best to use the architectures

and estate were played out in ways I could not have imagined before the pandemic and it was hard to write elements of the thesis as the practices and culture shifted so considerably from the time of the ethnographic observations and interviews. As we sit and write we are not removed from the political and social world around us and that was certainly true for me. As Bourdieu states, fields change and power and positioning changes over time and is not static (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). During the writing up of this research, my role changed in the University and our institution changed too.

As writing is socially generated, contextual and embodied within practices there are implications on this thesis, not only of the time of the ethnographic observations, interviews and immersed time in the Writing Café, but also of the time spent writing up. I am an embodied writer who has continued to talk about these experiences with others in the HE community and this has undoubtedly shaped the overall thesis and truly demonstrated the real is relational. It is my hope that the field shifting so substantially will allow for continued conversations around students' learning and a raised awareness of the pedagogic value of the Writing Café with senior managers. Increased collaborations with academic teaching staff will continue to enhance the teaching and learning offering of the institution. I would like to see the Writing Café move from being largely positioned as a support service for students and considered as a sub-field where academic staff are encouraged to engage in some of the thorny issues of academic and literacy practices across the disciplines. As Bourdieu stated:

“What appears to us today as self-evident, as beneath consciousness and choice, has quite often been the stake of struggles and instituted only as the result of dogged confrontations between dominant and dominated groups. The major effect of historical evolution is to abolish history by relegating to the past, that is, to the unconscious, the lateral possibilities that it eliminated. Legitimation and stability are not inevitable therefore. They are the contingent and observable effect of a dying down of struggle and a

forgetting of it from historical memory. More to the point, such struggles are not buried for ever.(Bourdieu, 1998, -57)

Bourdieu's words are particularly powerful in highlighting the personal drive I had in encouraging change at our University. At times during this research I felt complicit in the reproduction of academic writing practices and struggled to see the value in continuing with a doctorate, perhaps the pinnacle of academic capital, yet reproductive in its constraints. The struggles of undertaking this research and recognising how challenging it is to advocate for change on the field, whilst in the field have greatly helped me to feel more at ease in this uncertain and messy space. I now appreciate how constant balancing and reflexivity is required within any field as they are simultaneously sites of transformation and stability. Trying to advocate for changed practices and to transform the education of the University will remain an ongoing mission for me.

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Figures

Figure One: Timeline of activities in the field

Figure Two: Diagram showing the 3 stages of participant observation.

Appendices

Appendix One – Participant Information Sheet

Appendix Two – Consent Form

Appendix Three – Poster

Appendix Four – Ethical Approval

Appendix Five – Timeline of Activities in the Field

Appendix Six – Early Data Themes

Appendix Seven – Theme Coding Process

Appendix One: Participant Information sheet

Project title: Relational Space at the Writing Café: Neoliberalism, Learning, Community and Power Relations

Name of Principle Researcher: Christie Pritchard, Plymouth University

The Writing Café is currently part of a field study research project. Please read this information sheet to ensure that you understand the purpose of the study, what it involves and how you can refrain from taking part. If you would like to ask any questions or would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me on the details at the end of this document.

What is the purpose of the project?

This research project aims to understand the lived experiences from the perspectives of those who use the University of Plymouth's Writing Café. In a sense, the Writing Café can be seen as an alternative space as it is not a traditional learning space like a lecture theatre. The researcher would like to map the experiences of those who participate in the activities of the space to further understand them.

Do I have to take part?

No. It is entirely up to you whether you not you choose to be involved in the study. Taking part in this study is voluntary and your decision will have no impact whatsoever on your involvement with the University of Plymouth. If you do not wish to be involved in the study then there is alternative writing support available in the corridor adjacent to the Writing Café

If you are asked by the researcher to be interviewed then you will be asked to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part. If, after you have decided to take part you change your mind, you are still free to withdraw until June 2018 without giving

a reason, after this time analysis will have commenced and it will not be possible to withdraw your data.

What will happen if I take part?

You can support this study by allowing the researcher to undertake observations of the Writing Café. You may also be asked to discuss your experiences in a semi structured interview with the researcher, you may decide to consent to being observed, but not consent to being interviewed. This is fine and your level of participation is entirely up to you.

What are the benefits of being involved?

There are no risks to participating in this study. If you decide to take part, you will be able to contribute to further understanding the complexities of social learning spaces on our university campus.

What are the possible disadvantages?

You will be asked to give up some of your time to take part. No risk to participants is inherent in the research methodology and if you do not want to take part in the study, then no further action will be taken.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Yes. Procedures for the handling, processing, storage and destruction of your data will be compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998 and in accordance with the research ethics policy of the University of Plymouth. No names will be used in the writing up and pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and ethics has been approved from the Education Research Ethics Sub-committee of the Faculty of Arts of Humanities at Plymouth University.

What do you intend to do with the research?

The research will contribute to my Education Doctorate and will be submitted as part of the thesis. I intend to present the findings at suitable conferences and publish in peer reviewed journal articles. If you would like to be informed of these then please contact me on the details below.

Thank you for taking the time to read about the study.

If you have any further questions please contact:

Christie Pritchard, Learning Developer

Plymouth University, Room 102, 3 Endsleigh Place,

Plymouth, PL4 8AA

Email: christie.pritchard@plymouth.ac.uk

Appendix Two: Consent Form

Project title: Relational Space at the Writing Café: Neoliberalism, Learning, Community and Power Relations

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask relevant questions. Yes/No

2. I understand that participation is voluntary and will not affect me in any way. Yes/No

3. I am aware that any personal information collected during this study will be anonymised and remain confidential. Yes/No

4. I understand that some of the data I have provided will be used verbatim in future publications or presentations but such excerpts will be anonymised. Yes/No

Name of participant:

Date:

Signature:

Name of researcher:

Date:

Signature:

Field Study in Progress



**We are working to understand the Writing Café further.
In order to do this, we are undertaking observations of the
space and the way it is used.**

**If you would like further information regarding the research project, please contact the
project lead and read the information sheet printed out below:**

Christie Pritchard: christie.pritchard@plymouth.ac.uk

Appendix Four: Ethical Approval

Dear Christie

Application for Approval by Education Research Ethics Sub-committee

Reference Number: 17/18-201

Application Title: Relational Space at the Writing Café: Neoliberalism, Learning, Community and Power Relations

I am pleased to inform you that the Education Research Ethics Sub-committee has granted approval to you to conduct this research.

Please note that this approval is for three years, after which you will be required to seek extension of existing approval.

Please note that should any MAJOR changes to your research design occur which effect the ethics of procedures involved you must inform the Committee. Please contact Claire Butcher on (01752) 585337 or by email claire.butcher@plymouth.ac.uk

Yours sincerely

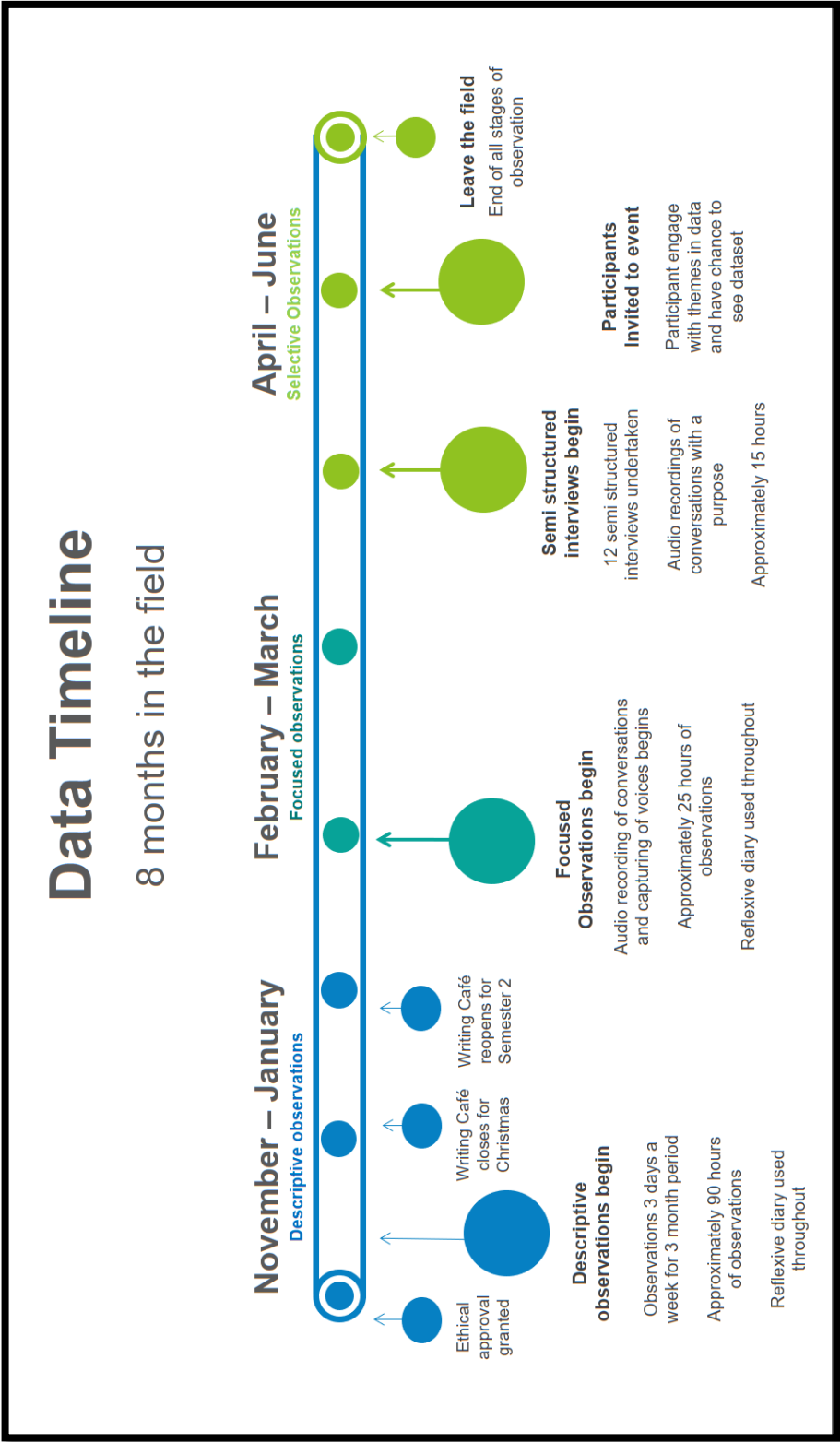


Professor Jocey Quinn

Chair, Education Research Ethics Sub-committee -

Plymouth Institute of Education

Faculty of Arts and Humanities



	<p>"Feels like we are paying to sit in a room for 3 years!"</p> <p>PhD student more passionate about sharing their research</p> <p>Lectures more engaging if based on the lecturers topic of interest.</p> <p>Academics too busy to offer better feedback, come through references as easy way to mark. *</p> <p>Writing being different in different disciplines</p> <p>Have to write how your programme wants you to.</p> <p>Academics not available easily to access</p> <p>Multiple ways of engaging with students writing, different levels of learning</p> <p>No support from programme team on academic writing within Criminology.</p> <p>Student at dissertation stage doesn't get any of her work looked at.</p> <p>Academic posters, but really time spent analysing research posters</p> <p>Student prefers to wait for individual discussion.</p> <p>Don't like sharing work with course mates as they may judge/compare</p> <p>High variance across the disciplines. Mentors think perhaps if writing isn't important within field then isn't really addressed in programme.</p> <p>Weak feedback is not useful. *</p> <p>Students never being able to judge how well they will do on a written assignment.</p> <p>Powerful having someone who isn't on your course providing feedback as can see things from a different perspective. *</p> <p>Students not always clear on what is expected of them</p> <p>Students visiting the cafe, asking, "who are you then?"</p> <p>Mentors being asked who they are</p> <p>Pressure being put on the mentors</p> <p>Expectation mentors know about all programmes</p>
Identity of mentors	

• What the participants think are significant and should be further explored

	<p>Isn't a "typical" student who comes to the Writing Café</p> <p>Students are prepared differently for university (particularly across different education systems & international bac. but still not the same as writing within the discipline)</p> <p>Students are given different academics to discuss their work – EC&AP team focus on teaching, but not what writing is like within education.</p> <p>Discuss differences in Italian and British engineering programme. More of a focus on empirical research, but not the same as engineering underpinning. Students are given a short piece of their literature that is good enough to publish and would like some help.</p> <p>Big emphasis in Conservation Biology on communicating with varied perspectives.</p> <p>Merging and overlapping of the disciplines, can question things from another perspective.</p> <p>Student who took a year out and now doesn't know anybody on her course</p> <p>Student voice used in negative way*</p> <p>Mental health on campus is particularly negative</p> <p>Students can come to the Writing Café but not be engaged there. They may have been sent, but are not taking it seriously.</p> <p>More likely to talk at the Writing Café than a lecture theatre because isn't as scary. Don't ask questions in lectures as may look stupid</p>
Feasibility of Mentoring Programmes	<p>Questioning approach</p> <p>"They just pawn them off to us!"</p> <p>Students largely motivated by assignments</p> <p>Students mentoring EC&AP participants</p> <p>Students concerned with Turn-in percentages</p> <p>Constricting guidance "they give us a breakdown of what should be in each section" – students are not given the opportunity to question and challenge international students' expectations – grammar but led into questioning and critical analysis</p> <p>* varied marking practices across the marking team. *</p>
	<p>Bad feedback for development*</p> <p>Supporting students from different educational cultures</p> <p>If it is a programme thing, then it should be down to the programme to address*</p> <p>Group feels impacting experience – not just small equals good</p>

Observation categories from initial review of the observations/recordings/conversations.					
+	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Space/environment</th> <th>Space as relevant to the service provides</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td> <p>Contrast of space to other parts of campus (journey over/classrooms)</p> <p>The Writing Café as a place for the normal. Academics from BAHC settle here because they don't have office space.</p> <p>Lunch breaks (TIS and Midwives)</p> <p>Less intimidating environment - writing is personal</p> <p>Students/staff sit on the periphery if only staying a short while</p> <p>Sally 'controlling' the space/catering order</p> <p>Opening up about mental health/ isolation</p> <p>Writing Café as a neutral space, as a separate from course</p> <p>Not a 'centrality' to go, because of 'catering'</p> <p>Architecture student discusses how she would redesign learning spaces, without hierarchy on spot levels</p> <p>Don't feel intimidated coming here like do when meeting academic</p> <p>Success framed as increase in visitors*</p> <p>Blackboard paint</p> <p>Finances of the Writing Café.</p> <p>Mentors feel there should be more mentors to help with the load*</p> <p>Students feel like statisticians*</p> <p>Not a set good reflection of how students really feel because of the power imbalance, being fed what to say and not being able to raise their course honestly. *</p> <p>Universities all turning in to the same thing and competing in league tables as</p> <p>Student numbers not a fair representation of the mentoring that takes place.</p> <p>Stets can be used to hide the real stories.</p> <p>Difference between wanting a degree and being educated in your field.</p> <p>Looks like is for English/Creative Writing Students</p> <p>Perception of proofreading</p> <p>PALS scheme not that useful</p> <p>People come to build confidence and have reassurance</p> <p>Transition from school to HE</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Space/environment	Space as relevant to the service provides		<p>Contrast of space to other parts of campus (journey over/classrooms)</p> <p>The Writing Café as a place for the normal. Academics from BAHC settle here because they don't have office space.</p> <p>Lunch breaks (TIS and Midwives)</p> <p>Less intimidating environment - writing is personal</p> <p>Students/staff sit on the periphery if only staying a short while</p> <p>Sally 'controlling' the space/catering order</p> <p>Opening up about mental health/ isolation</p> <p>Writing Café as a neutral space, as a separate from course</p> <p>Not a 'centrality' to go, because of 'catering'</p> <p>Architecture student discusses how she would redesign learning spaces, without hierarchy on spot levels</p> <p>Don't feel intimidated coming here like do when meeting academic</p> <p>Success framed as increase in visitors*</p> <p>Blackboard paint</p> <p>Finances of the Writing Café.</p> <p>Mentors feel there should be more mentors to help with the load*</p> <p>Students feel like statisticians*</p> <p>Not a set good reflection of how students really feel because of the power imbalance, being fed what to say and not being able to raise their course honestly. *</p> <p>Universities all turning in to the same thing and competing in league tables as</p> <p>Student numbers not a fair representation of the mentoring that takes place.</p> <p>Stets can be used to hide the real stories.</p> <p>Difference between wanting a degree and being educated in your field.</p> <p>Looks like is for English/Creative Writing Students</p> <p>Perception of proofreading</p> <p>PALS scheme not that useful</p> <p>People come to build confidence and have reassurance</p> <p>Transition from school to HE</p>
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Appendix Seven: Theme Coding Process

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Institution Practices	Sector Practices	Writing Café Autonomy	Identity of Writing Mentors	Identity of Students	Transformative pedagogy
2	13th Nov - J	13th Nov - J	7th Nov - J	12th Nov - J	15th Nov - J	14th Nov - J
3	15th Nov - J	21st Nov - J	21st Nov - J	15th Nov - J	21st Nov - J	21st Nov - J
4	21st Nov - J	23rd Nov - J	13th Dec - O	13th Dec - O	13th Dec - O	23rd Nov - J
5	November 18th - J	7th March - O	20th February - O	15th Dec - O	15th Dec - O	13th Dec - O
6	November 20th - J	15th February - O	15th March - O	9th February - O	15th February - O	16th February - O
7	16th February - O	9th March - O	9th February - O	10th Feb - J	9th April - O	9th March - O
8	8th February - O	15th March - O	16th February - O	20th February - O	13th April - I	15th March - O
9	9th February - O	7th March - O	16th Feb - J	20th Feb - J	17th April - O	18th April - I
10	20th February - O	7th March - J	20th February - O	13th April - I	18th April - I	19th April - J
11	9th March - O	14th March - O	13th April - I	8th May - I	8th May - I	8th May - I
12	15th March - O	17th April - O	17th April - O	10th May - I	8th May - J	8th May - J
13	15th April - I	18th April - I	18th April - I	16th May - J	2nd June - I	2nd June J
14	8th May - I	8th May - I	8th May - I	2nd June - I		
15		2nd June - I	10th May - I			
16			2nd June - I			
17						
18	Reflexive journal	J				
19	Interview	I				
20	Observations	O				
21						
22						