

Influences on Academics' approaches to Development: Voices from below

Dr. Karin Crawford*

University of Lincoln, United Kingdom

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative case study research was to explore faculty-based academics' views on what influences their behaviours and attitudes towards their development. Informed by critical realist ontology, the data collection was carried out through narrative interviews with academics in two contrasting English Universities. Findings, or areas for reflection, have emerged about the constraints and enablements academics perceive in respect of their professional development. In particular, themes such as the significance of professional status; misaligned initiatives and priorities; the influence of supportive networks; and emergent personal, individual concerns have surfaced. The conclusion is drawn that the significance of agency raises the importance of responding to the 'voices from below'.

Key Words: Critical Realism; Qualitative comparative case-study; Higher Education; Academic Voices; Agency;

* University of Lincoln (Hull Campus), George Street, Hull. UK HU1 3BW
E: kcrawford@lincoln.ac.uk T: +44 01482 311234 (direct line)

Introduction

‘Staff expertise is the most important asset in a university; without it literally nothing can be achieved’ (Blackmore and Blackwell, 2003, p. 23); by implication, the professional development of these staff, in this case academics working in faculties, is of significant importance. Professional development for academics occurs in a complex environment of changing national policy directives, with increasing demands on institutions, academic developers and academics themselves (Brew, 2007; Deem, Hillyard and Reed, 2008). Furthermore, the academic role has been changing to include a wider range of tasks and responsibilities (Blackmore and Blackwell, 2003), with academics needing subject, research, teaching, leadership and administrative expertise. Within this context the qualitative cross-case study research reported in this article explored faculty-based academics’ views on what influences their understandings, behaviours and attitudes towards their professional development. Informed by critical realist ontology, the research adopts a similar frame to Kahn’s exploration of early-career academics’ perspectives (2009) in that it is centred on the relationship between structure and agency and, in this instance, the ways in which the agency of academics might mediate structural influences on professional development.

The article is underpinned by an acknowledgment that understandings of ‘academic’ or ‘professional development’ lack clarity, with the concept being ‘neither innocent nor neutral’ (McWilliam, 2002, p. 289). However, whilst issues of definition and meaning were considered integral to this research, it is not possible to include this aspect here. Furthermore other research, such as Åkerlind’s (2005) phenomenographic study in Australia, has explored such issues in depth. However, whilst there is a wealth of informative literature related to academic and educational development, it is arguably limited in some aspects; this research adds to and complements the existing knowledge.

For example, the literature rarely adopts a ‘holistic perspective on development across the range of academic work’ Åkerlind (2005, p. 3), yet this research explicitly considered all aspects of the role. Moreover the voice of faculty-based academics is largely absent from the dominant discourses about academic development, there is therefore an emerging need for inclusive, participative research that enables academics to enter the debate:

Fundamentally, we cannot account for any outcome unless we understand the agent’s project in relation to her social context. And we cannot understand her project without entering into her reflexive deliberations about her personal concerns in conjunction with the objective social context that she confronts (Archer 2003, p. 131).

The research was carried out in two English universities and is therefore explicated principally within an English context. However, the findings and emergent themes expose areas for reflection about the constraints and enablements academics perceive in respect of their development, which arguably have wider implications.

Theoretical Basis

The ontological meta-theory of critical realism has informed the ideological assumptions embedded in this research, its aims and objectives, the design, process, and analytical lens adopted. ‘The essential ontological relation which educational researchers need to examine is the relationship between structure and agency or enablement and constraint’ (Scott, 2000, p. 3). Indeed the interplay between influences from the social system, its rules and resources (the structure) on academics’ approaches to development and the power of individual human action (agency) was of primary interest in this research. Within the broader paradigm of critical realism, Archer’s (1982, 1995, 2003) morphogenetic approach, which proposes that society is continually reshaped by the interplay between structure and agency, this taking place across time, was particularly influential. It is argued that ‘causal powers’, also known as ‘generative mechanisms’, defined as ‘potentialities which may or may not be exercised’ (Hartwig, 2007: 57), result in constraints or

enablements. However, according to Archer, these will only have impact if ‘in the light of their objective circumstances’, individuals perceive them as being relevant to their actions. Thus ‘for anything to exert the power of a constraint or an enablement, it has to stand in a relationship such that it obstructs or aids the achievement of some specific agential enterprise’ (Archer, 2003, p. 5). As such, structures may mediate, but they do not determine (Sayer, 1992).

Methodology

This research was undertaken in two case study universities in the north of England; a traditional ‘old university’ (University A); and a ‘new university’ (University B). These institutions were sampled to reflect a potential contextual difference, or ‘binary line’, between the original English ‘old’ universities, established before 1992 by Royal Charter or Act of Parliament, and ‘new’ universities, former polytechnics or colleges given the status of universities under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (Deem, 1998, p. 48). The pre-1992 ‘old universities’ are recognized as focussing more on research activity, with larger numbers of research students and postdoctoral researchers who also engage in teaching work. By contrast, the ‘new universities’ have generally developed an emphasis on teaching, or knowledge exchange rather than production, alongside more varied routes into higher education and stronger connections with industry (Stevenson and Bell, 2009).

Between September 2007 and March 2008 a total of 36 narrative interviews with academics were carried out, 18 in each institution. Narrative interviews are defined by Reissman (1993, p. 70) as interviews that enable the ‘systematic study of personal experience and meaning’. Indeed, the interviews in this study were designed and conducted with a loosely structured format, more akin to ‘guided conversations’ (Yin 2003, p. 89) that sought to reflect the research aims, empirical elements of the literature review and the theoretical framework. Thus, following Rubin and Rubin (1995, cited in

Yin, 2003), the actual flow of questions was changeable, despite adhering to the following consistent line of inquiry. At the start of each interview, participants were asked to outline their understanding of professional development. This was followed by three sets of prompts or questions, the first eliciting information about the participant's professional and career background and how they perceived that development activity may have contributed to it. The second set of prompts explored how national / international issues may impact on the participant's approaches to development. The final set of prompts asked the participants to share their views on how their institutions internal approaches to supporting academic development had influenced the participant's approach to development and in what ways their professional relationships both internally and externally had impacted on their professional learning. As a summary closing question, all participants were asked to summarise the key things that make a difference to what they do in respect of professional development. This format enabled participants to explicate how circumstance and context may be of significance to them (Sayer, 1992).

Consistency and comparability were assured by attention to the following four variables through the sampling process:

- Gender;
- length of academic experience;
- disciplinary focus ('pure' or 'applied' subject areas as defined by participants);
- professional status in respect of whether the participant had a subject-related external professional development framework.

For critical realists, 'variables' are themselves conceptual interpretations (Cruickshank, 2007), thus attention to key variables ensured that the '*range* of meanings within the sample [was] representative of the *range* of meanings within the population' (Åkerlind, 2005, p. 9 italics in original). The characteristics of the resultant sample of participants from each case study institution are provided as appendices to this article.

The process of analysis commenced with the full transcription of all interviews.

The analysis of data is ‘inescapably a selective process’ (Miles and Huberman 1994, p. 55) with coding and classifying being the means by which such selection and data reduction can be effected. In this project, codes were created in two phases: first with reference to the underpinning theoretical basis and literature; and secondly through structuring and reduction in the data. In this second phase, the data was initially scrutinised for ‘patterns of choice’, which ‘surface[d] some generalisations’ (Cohen *et al.* 2000, p.295) and highlighted additional concepts as a precursor to further more in-depth analysis, after which ‘similarities and differences’ were drawn out. Following Kitwood (1977, cited in Cohen *et al.*, 2000) items were grouped together, where they covered similar themes or areas. In this way, the data was reduced and restructured to aid the process of understanding and identifying emerging themes. This form of analysis enabled comparative exploration between the case study institutions and between different variants within the sample. Additionally analysis through ‘categorization of content’, where a particular aspect or question in the data was examined across the entire sample, further illuminated trends and commonalities. The emerging information was then examined and compared to the theoretical concepts, with new categorisations being developed as necessary. In a similar way, but starting with the category or theme, the data was examined for all traces of that theme. This method, according to Cohen *et al.* (2000, p. 296) ‘transcends the rather artificial boundaries which the items themselves imply.’

Additionally, in order to address the research purposes and questions for this project, as important as the identification of occurring themes, the ‘study of omissions’ (Kitwood 1977, cited in Cohen *et al.* 2000, p. 296) was undertaken. This stage of analysis required clarity about expectations and anticipations in respect of issues that may emerge. Kitwood (1997, cited in Cohen *et al.* 2000, p. 296) describes another analytical strategy as ‘generating and testing hypotheses’ which, it could be argued, is interlinked with the other analytical processes. Through iterative engagement with the data and a detailed, recorded

process of reflection, the researcher developed provisional propositions at different stages in the research process that allowed for explicit hypothesis testing.

The study was managed using qualitative data analysis software, which enabled a cross-case comparison and thematic analysis to emerge. This ‘intensive’ research design (Sayer, 1992) was heuristic, as it generated further understanding of individuals’ perspectives in their current context, with ‘the primary questions concern[ing] how some causal process works out in a particular case or limited number of cases’ (Sayer, 1992, p. 242). Tentative explanations have been reached through iterative engagement with the data, the theoretical frame and the literature. These explanations, or themes, are presented in the following sections of this article.

The Significance of Professional Status

Professionalism in academia is positioned between the tensions of a ‘government-imposed form of “expert professionalism” ... focused on skill and standards’ (McLean, 2008, p. 124), and the concepts of academic autonomy and critical social engagement. The voices of academics raised through this research indicate concerns and confusions about professional status. These ‘constellations of concerns’ have significance for defining action and determining practices (Archer, 2007, p. 17) related to professional development.

...professions embrace professional development in order to survive ... Any profession that wants to maintain its status ... its power base, has to demonstrate to society that they are engaged in a process of development, that their staff are up to date and have contemporary knowledge ... On one level CPD is about people developing ... but if you look at the profession as a body, I think CPD is there for another purpose, it’s there for survival basically, as a professional, that’s my take. (Sven, University B)

Sven’s view is illustrative of the work of Rothwell and Arnold (2005), who suggest that where it is perceived that a profession has less robust foundations, it is more likely that vigorous, explicit, professional development policies will be implemented. Linked to this is the debate about trust or mistrust and coercion, which is aired in the literature (Cullingford, 2002; Deem *et al.*, 2008) and the influence of mandatory or non-mandatory

professional development. This debate was also evident in the University B data, where more of the sample worked in applied subject areas with mandatory, discipline-related professional development requirements;

No one within the university can say ‘Patrick have you done your CPD?’ My professional body can say have you done it, and if I have not evidenced it, I can lose my status. (Patrick, University B)

Additionally, the University B data reflects change in the external environment of the discipline as a significant factor affecting academics’ development priorities.

For me it’s more to do with the national issues driving the professions that we are serving. They are very dominant drivers because most of our business is commissioned.... (Patti, University B)

It is important, therefore, for academic developers to be mindful that academics’ allegiances to professional bodies in conjunction with the weight academics give to being knowledgeable and up-to-date in their subject area, can significantly influence their approaches to development. Yet a different picture emerged when exploring the example of the Higher Education Academy (HEA), a United Kingdom external body that seeks to lead, support and inform the professional development of staff in higher education (HEA, cited in Oakleigh Consulting Ltd, 2008). The HEA also operates a ‘professional recognition scheme’ underpinned by a Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education (UKPSF). Data in this research indicates that the academy has limited influence on academics’ development with professional recognition being largely perceived as a driver for institutional strategy and policy. Asked broadly about the HEA, Verna (University B) replied ‘I haven’t got the time to read the e-mails’, similarly Diana explains:

I get regular e-mails from them, I get regular things through the post from the HEA for me to vote on things, that I don’t read, I just bin them normally, which is awful but ... (Diana, University A)

Josh (University A), a student on the post-graduate teaching programme, was the only participant, of the 36 academics interviewed, who showed awareness of the UKPSF (HEA 2006), and his understanding was limited. Josh explained that he had heard of the standards *‘through the PG Cert, that’s the kind of things that would get discussed at teaching committees that I wouldn’t understand’* (Josh, University A).

The Influence of Extra-institutional Initiatives and Priorities

In both case study institutions, participants described negative influences arising from the internationally-recognised trends of increasing managerialism (including audit, quality assurance and ‘league tables’), simultaneous reductions in collegiate governance (Clegg, 2009; Dill, 2005; McWilliam, 2002) and the ‘push ... into market and marketlike behaviors’ (Slaughter and Leslie 1997, p. 111). Notably, however, the potentially contrary forces of academic autonomy (Karran, 2009) and self-regulation were given little significance.

... demands on academics are so great these days, constant efficiency, increasing student numbers, decreasing staff numbers, more assessment, more auditing, greater performance management regimes, where do you find time to do any of that [continuing professional development]? (Phillip, University A)

... quantifying and measuring things that mean that you can then influence quality; people generate numbers, they do what they need to do and tick the box. It only works in some areas, but in teaching it doesn’t, particularly not if it’s to the detriment of your available time to do the job properly. (Patrick, University B)

Further to this, the data also identifies variable influence from specific English political and policy initiatives such as the National Student Survey, a survey that aims to gain feedback on the academic experience of final year undergraduate students (<http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/>) and the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). The RAE is a UK-wide activity that assesses the quality rating of research to inform the selective distribution of public research funding through the four UK higher education

funding bodies (RAE, undated); it has been described as the ‘national research game’ (Lucas 2006: 29).

With regard to the National Student Survey, many participants described being aware of ‘*a lot of fuss*’ (Josh, University A), and went on to discredit the methodology of the survey and distance themselves from it. There was consensus that survey results may trigger policy change at institutional level with potentially a few procedural changes, but that it has limited impact individual’s development.

I have heard about it ... but I am not really involved, it is something which is happening ...
(Brandon, University A)

The university has just said you have got to return all essays to students within three weeks and that’s the only impact that’s had on us.
(Arthur, University B)

Interviewees also made frequent reference to the RAE, which may have been expected as the data collection period coincided with the closing date for submissions to the RAE 2008. Thus participants felt ‘*that in terms of external influences...the RAE process is a big influence which you cannot ignore*’ (Dawn, University A). The experience of the RAE, however, was recounted differently in the two institutions. Data from University A, a member of the Russell Group (www.russellgroup.ac.uk/) and therefore recognized as a ‘research intensive university, reflects the strength of institutional and managerial response to the exercise, resulting in significant influences on academics’ priorities and approaches to professional development. Within the University A data, 55% (n = 10) of academics interviewed agreed that the impetus to meet the RAE requirements, resulted in a ‘*disastrous process*’ (Dawn, University A) and was ‘*very counter-productive*’ (Marie, University A) with regard to academics’ approaches to professional development. Martin (University A) offered the following example:

We write books, or students share [authorship] as part of their CPD; we have been actively discouraged from writing books with students, because they are not research, because they cannot be entered [in the RAE]. So this causes awful tension (Martin, University A).

By contrast, academics in University B largely reflect little influence from the RAE. Chandra, Arthur, Judith and Sophia (all University B) stated that the RAE had no impact on them, although Sophia added that she felt that the lack of engagement from her subject area could be detrimental to herself and colleagues if they were looking to develop academic careers in other institutions.

The Influence of Intra-institutional Initiatives and Priorities

Participants primarily expressed intra-institutional influences on their approaches to professional development through perceptions of institutional philosophy and strategy in this regard. Whilst, in both institutions, there was no awareness of written policy statements on academic development, participants described institutional approaches as largely ‘supportive’ and ‘encouraging’. Formal programmes offered in the institutions, commonly linked to teaching and learning (Åkerlind, 2005; Clegg, 2003; Gosling, 2008) were highly influential in shaping participants’ concepts of professional development and became the focus of their interpretation of ‘institutional approaches’.

James (University A) describes the institutional approach as ‘kind of like a big development buffet, courses are all there you just go and help yourself’ (James, University A). Similarly in University B, Arthur suggests ‘in effect it has a central sort of ... “we will provide certain training courses, and I think having done that that’s our responsibility and that’s development”’ (Arthur, University B). Further to this, many academics, in both institutions, qualified their perceptions of central functions and approaches by explaining that they experienced the most tangible, supportive culture for development at departmental, school or team level. Yet, it is apparent that this devolved approach may also result in inequalities; Sophia’s example being expressed in different ways across both institutions:

I think that there are differences between schools depending on how well the schools do financially. I think that my school does well financially and therefore we possibly have more money for academic staff development than other schools. (Sophia, University B)

Importantly, within the data there is broad agreement that institutional strategies have limited influence across the academic body; their impact being dependent upon academics proactively engaging with the processes and opportunities.

It depends on your own initiative, other people are not pushing and encouraging.
(Brandon, University A)

There are opportunities there if people want to take them on, is what I would say. I would say that it was led by the academics, in my experience. (Imran, University A)

I think that it has [a philosophy for CPD] because I have looked for it and I think there's a difference, I've looked for it for me. I don't know how much they shout about it ... so there is a culture there but you have to look for it and once you find it it's wonderful. (Jessica, University B)

Another important message for academic developers is that it is apparent that the experience of institutional support for professional development differs between 'new starters in the last five years' and those who have been working in academia longer (Pamela, University A). Thus Phillip, who has over 21 years' experience, suggests that '*for established staff it's much more difficult*' (Phillip, University A) and George also suggests that institutional emphasis is on newly appointed staff as he feels that '*the university encourages development of staff on "probationary level"*' (George, University A). Whilst this view is not universally apparent in the data, it is interesting that Thomas, who has between 6 and 10 years' academic experience, suggested that University A is developing a coherent approach to academic development, but that '*it's building...from new staff*'.

Throughout the data there are examples of academics' deliberations being consequent upon the ways in which they confront and mediate their employing institution's response to extra-institutional structural mechanisms. Within these processes, policies and priorities, which are experienced as being misaligned, can have negative influences on academics' attitudes and behaviours in respect of their development. Perceived incompatibility and lack of correlation between institutional and individual priorities are particularly constraining. Academics perceive their employers as having, at

best, different priorities and, at worst, competing priorities. This research suggests that it is possible for structural causal powers, in the form of extra- and intra-institutional approaches, to be more facilitative, aligned and responsive in order to generate enablements wherever possible.

The Influence of Supportive Networks

Whilst academics respond favourably to having individual control over their development, they often experience support from extra- and intra-institutional networks as enabling and influential. With regard to extra-institutional networks, academics described being highly motivated to develop, maintain and grow external subject-related networks to support a range of academic endeavours, including professional development and career progression. There is overwhelming consensus from academic voices in this research that ‘externality’, often achieved through discipline-related connections, is significant in shaping professional development.

‘the majority of it [my professional development] happens, putting aside the PG Cert, outside the university. (Josh, University A)

[My colleagues] would see some of their intellectual stimulation coming from having seminars with people involved from other universities. (Dieter, University B)

Over 80% (n = 29) of all academics interviewed referred in some way to the importance of networks, most commonly (53%, n = 19) describing discipline or subject-related networks as influencing not only research work, but also enabling important associations with the external environment of the subject. However, whilst external networks were described as ‘*very important and they’re probably stronger...than the relationships within the university*’ (Diana, University A), they had very different influential foci in each institution. In University A, academics described stronger influences from networks that supported research-related activities, whilst in University B there was more significance given to those associated with teaching and learning.

We have research collaborations
but not teaching collaborations.
(Thomas, University A)

I'm a member of the [discipline
association] which has a section
devoted to the teaching and
learning of [the subject] ... I'm
on the mailing list for that, I
attend conferences and the
meetings ... (Arthur, University
B)

Academic participants also attributed variable levels of significance to intra-institutional networks, teams or 'communities of practice' (Wenger 1998). Wenger argues that such networks 'are privileged locus for the creation of knowledge' (Wenger 1998, p. 214, italics in original), but for critical realists, these networks, teams or groups of like-minded academics can themselves become micro structures capable of generating causal powers. In both institutions, internal networks, whilst commonly discipline-related, were either research or teaching focussed and appeared to reflect the recognised differential status accorded to each activity (Barnett, 2003; Malcolm and Zukas, 2001). The data also revealed that teaching networks were experienced as pragmatic, business and organisation-led, whilst research-related communities were considered to be collegiate and discursive.

It's about who's going to teach what, what's the syllabus going to be, is it going to change, have we lost somebody and if staff are teaching other modules would they want to change the syllabus. It tends to be dominated by things like that.
(Josh, University A)

It's about the organisation but ... if that's not done then sometimes sessions are not covered. There are many members of staff; delivering lectures, seminars and tutorials to groups and it's extremely complicated so we do need to sit down as a group and go through the timetable. (Verna, University B)

It's highly collaborative; so we have a team approach ... we are a research-led university and it's research with a very big bold capital R that tends to dominate most discussions.
(Phillip, University A)

We have lunchtime research presentations where people are invited and discussion flows off the back of that ... we are in research groups...
(Patrick, University B)

Further to this, newer members of academic staff, particularly those with fewer than ten years' experience, describe working with others as highly significant for their

professional development. Diana (University A), has between 6 and 10 years' experience and states that

It's mainly the younger staff who perhaps have been more sort of encouraged to think about these things and having courses and been the person who is being reviewed quite a lot of the time...so we talk amongst ourselves about teaching methods, assessment methods, doing bizarre things in lectures and so on and ways to get attention and trying out new things, using on-line resources, but our more senior colleagues don't do. (Diana, University A)

Importantly for academic developers therefore, is the evidence that informal and *ad hoc* networking can result in empowering relationships which are influential in shaping approaches to practice and professional development. This is particularly apparent where a sense of friendship and like-mindedness are also felt, with networks being most effective when they are small and come together naturally in collegiate, joint spaces, for discussion and sharing of good practice. Within both case study institutions, however the approach to facilitating such networks or mentoring was inconsistent. Academic developers can, therefore, facilitate engagement through a coherent approach to enabling informal networks and mentoring through, for example creative use of space.

The Significance of Agency

Evident throughout the data are the ways in which academics use their own personal powers to mediate structural influences and make decisions on intent and future actions. For the academic and educational development community this finding signifies the importance of being ever mindful of the significance of agency in influencing decisions about engagement. Whilst structural properties, such as the extra-institutional context of higher education, are shown to have generative causal powers that 'might impede or facilitate' action (Archer, 2003, p. 7), these are mediated at the intra-institutional level. They then only become realised or 'activated' when academics respond to them. The 'reflexive, agential deliberations' (Archer, 2003, p. 130) of the 'voices from below' confirm that 'for anything to exert the power of a constraint or an enablement, it has to

stand in a *relationship* such that it obstructs or aids the achievement of some specific agential enterprise' (Archer, 2003: 5, italics in original).

As well as the mediation of structural extra- and intra-institutional, the data demonstrates the influence of the immediacy of a range of very personal, less tangible, value-based concerns. These concerns significantly influence how academics respond to professional development; examples include being interested, or stimulated, having a personal philosophy that values professional development, being able to see a 'fit' with personal circumstances, 'performative competence' (Archer, 2000, p. 198), and being able to make autonomous decisions about the direction of their development.

Thus, the individual's concerns and deliberations, act as a conduit to the influences on their approaches to professional development. It is therefore argued that for the community of academic and educational developers, the significance of agency highlights the importance of opening the debate and responding to the 'voices from below', 'ensuring that academics are not evacuated of all their personal powers' (Kahn, 2009, p. 206).

Conclusion

The research reported in this article set out to explore what faculty academics consider to be the main influences on their behaviours and attitudes towards their professional development. In doing so, the analysis offers an explanation of the interplay between structure and agency in the context of academic development in higher education. The project adopted a comparative, case study approach in recognition of the two main types of institutions that characterise the English system of higher education. However, the analysis of the data showed that an institution's historical context is not necessarily a significant influence. Indeed, interestingly for those involved in supporting academic development, other variables such as the academic's professional background and allegiance to subject-related professional bodies become evident as being more dominant and powerful in influencing professional development.

Institutional context does become relevant, though, in relation to how each institution responds, or activates, extra-institutional initiatives in setting its values and priorities. However, the ways in which the specific institutional responses influence academics' attitudes and behaviours towards professional development can be seen as indicative symptoms of the three broader themes, which were experienced in common across both institutions. Whilst this research was undertaken within an English context, these broad tensions and challenges that emerge from the research findings are likely to resonate with academic developers internationally.

- the significance of professional status;
- the influence of misaligned initiatives and priorities;
- the influence of supportive networks.

The voices of academics participating in this research reveal all of the complexities of human deliberations and decision making, 'using their own descriptions' (Archer, 2007, p. 12) that result in intentions and expectations. It is therefore evident that institutions through academic and educational developers, might achieve a more inclusive and holistic approach to academics' development by responding to the concerns of academics and engaging them in a construction of academic professionalism. However, the status of 'professional' 'needs to be earned' and includes 'responsibility' (McLean, 2008, p. 125). Therefore whilst there is a right to participate and be listened to, there is a corresponding obligation to engage. The implications of what might be termed 'academic citizenship' (Macfarlane, 2007) would include responsibilities related to one's own and others' professional development through overt engagement, articulation, supportive and sharing practice, and mentoring.

eschew[ing] managerial and technical versions [of professionalism] for a construction that includes acting expertly, critically, morally and responsibly in respect of *all* the functions of the university ... could lead to involvement in shaping the future (McLean, 2008, p. 125, italics in original).

Acknowledgement

This research was made possible by the hospitality, interest and honesty of participants in the case study institutions; their receptiveness to this research has been very much appreciated

References

- Åkerlind, G. S. (2005). Academic growth and development – How do university academics experience it? *Higher Education*, 50, (1), 1-32.
- Archer, M. S. (1982). Morphogenesis versus Structuration: On Combining Structure and Action. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 33, (4), 455-483.
- Archer, M. S. (1995). *Realist Social Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Archer, M. S. (2000). *Being Human: The Problem of Agency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Archer, M. S. (2003). *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Archer, M. S. (2007). *Making our Way through the World: Human Reflexivity and Social Mobility*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barnett, R. (2003). *Beyond All Reason: Living with Ideology in the University*. Berkshire: SRHE and Open University Press.
- Blackmore, P. and Blackwell, R. (2003). Academic roles and relationships. In R. Blackwell and P. Blackmore (Eds), *Towards Strategic Staff Development in Higher Education* (pp 16-28). Berkshire: SRHE and Open University Press.
- Brew, A. (2007). Evaluating Academic Development in a Time of Perplexity. Editorial in *International Journal of Academic Development*, 12, (2), 69-72.
- Clegg, S. (2003). Problematism of Ourselves: Continuing Professional Development in Higher Education. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 8, (1/2), 37-50.
- Clegg, S. (2009). Forms of knowing and academic development practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, 34, (4), 403-416.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2000) *Research Methods in Education* (5th ed.) London: RoutledgeFalmer
- Cruikshank, J. (2007). *Critical Realism: The Difference it Makes*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Cullingford, C. (2002). Institutional Development and Professional Needs: Some Reflections. In G. Trorey and C. Cullingford (Eds), *Professional Development and Institutional Needs* (pp 223-235). Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.
- Deem, R. (1998). "New Managerialism" and Higher Education: the management of performances and cultures in universities in the United Kingdom. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 8, (1), 47-70.
- Deem, R., Hillyard, S. and Reed, M. (2008). *Knowledge, Higher Education, and the New Managerialism: The Changing Management of UK Universities*. Oxford: Open University Press.
- Dill, D.D. (2005). The Degradation of the Academic Ethic: Teaching, Research and the Renewal of Professional Self-Regulation. In R. Barnett (Ed), *Reshaping the University* (pp 178-191). Berkshire: Open University Press
- Gosling, D. (2008). *Educational Development in the United Kingdom: Report for the Heads of Educational Development Group*, [Online] London: Heads of Educational Development Group (HEDG). Available from:

www.hedg.ac.uk/documents/HEDG_Report_final.pdf [accessed 14 December 2009].

- Hartwig, M. (2007). *Dictionary of Critical Realism*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Kahn, P. (2009). Contexts for teaching and the exercise of agency in early-career academics: perspectives from realist social theory. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 14, (3), 197-207.
- Karran, T. (2009). 'Academic Freedom: Essential Liberty or Extravagant Luxury?' In L. Bell, H. Stevenson and M. Neary (Eds), *The Future of Higher Education: Policy, Pedagogy and the Student Experience* (pp 17-30). London: Continuum.
- Lucas, L. (2006) *Research Game in Academic Life*, Buckingham: Open University Press
- Macfarlane, B. (2007). Defining and Rewarding Academic Citizenship: The implications for university promotions policy. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 29 (3), 261-273.
- Malcolm, J. and Zukas, M. (2001). Bridging Pedagogic Gaps: conceptual discontinuities in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education* 6, (1), 33-42.
- McLean, M. (2008). *Pedagogy and the University*. London: Continuum.
- McWilliam, E. (2002). Against Professional Development. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 34, (3), 289-299.
- Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis* (2nd ed.), London: Sage Publications
- Oakleigh Consulting Ltd. (2008). *Interim Evaluation of the Higher Education Academy: A report to HEFCE, HEFCW, SFC, DELNI, GuildHE and UUK*. Manchester: Oakleigh Consulting.
- Reissman, C. K. (1993) *Narrative Analysis*, London: Sage Publications
- Research Assessment Exercise (undated) *RAE 2008*. [Online]. Available from: www.rae.ac.uk [accessed 14 December 2009].
- Rothwell, A. and Arnold, J. (2005). How HR professionals rate "continuing professional development". *Human Resource Management Journal*, 15, (3), 18-32.
- Sayer, A. (1992). *Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach*. (2nd Ed). London: Routledge.
- Scott, D. (2000). *Realism and Educational Research: New Perspectives and Possibilities*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Slaughter, S. and Leslie, L. L. (1999). *Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University*. Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Stevenson, H. and Bell, L. (2009). 'Introduction – Universities in Transition: Themes in Higher Education Policy' in L. Bell., H. Stevenson and M. Neary (Eds) (2009). *The Future of Higher Education: Policy, Pedagogy and the Student Experience*. London: Continuum.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yin, R. K. (2003) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (3rd ed.), London: Sage Publications

Appendix: Research participants' characteristics from both case study institutions

Table 1. Academic Participants University A

Pseudonym	Gender	Length of experience as an academic	Disciplinary focus ('pure' or 'applied')	Is required to comply with a subject related professional framework?
Brandon	M	1 - 5 years	Both	No
Cameron	M	21 years +	Applied	No
Carl	M	6 - 10 years	Applied	No
Dawn	F	16 – 20 years	Pure	No
Diana	F	6 - 10 years	Both	No
Dieter	M	11 – 15 years	Applied	No
George	M	6 - 10 years	Applied	Yes
Imran	M	21 years +	Applied	No
Josh	M	1 - 5 years	Applied	Yes
James	M	1 - 5 years	Applied	No
Marie	F	16 – 20 years	Applied	No
Martin	M	11 – 15 years	Applied	No
Naomi	F	16 – 20 years	Applied	No
Phillip	M	21 years +	Pure	No
Pamela	F	11 – 15 years	Pure	No
Renata	F	1 - 5 years	Applied	No
Sarita	F	11 – 15 years	Applied	No
Thomas	M	6 – 10 years	Applied	No

Table 2. Academic Participants University B

Pseudonym	Gender	Length of experience as an academic	Disciplinary focus ('pure' or 'applied')	Is required to comply with a subject related professional framework?
Arthur	M	6 - 10 years	Pure	Yes
Chandra	F	1 - 5 years	Applied	Yes
Hazel	F	11 - 15 years	Applied	No
Jessica	F	16 - 20 years	Applied	No
Judith	F	6 - 10 years	Applied	Yes
Jameela	F	11 - 15 years	Applied	Yes
Jennie	F	21 years +	Applied	No
Jakob	M	1 - 5 years	Applied	No
Max	M	21 years +	Both	No
Norma	F	16 - 20 years	Applied	No
Patti	F	16 - 20 years	Applied	Yes
Patrick	M	16 - 20 years	Applied	Yes
Phillippa	F	21 years +	Applied	No
Sandra	F	21 years +	Applied	Yes
Sharon	F	11 - 15 years	Applied	Yes
Sophia	F	16 - 20 years	Both	No
Sven	M	16 - 20 years	Applied	Yes
Verna	F	16 - 20 years	Both	Yes

