KNOWLEDGE AND KNOWERS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT (ELM) MASTER'S PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA

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FARHANA AMOD KAJEE

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Declaration

I, Farhana Amod Kajee, hereby declare that the work in this thesis is my own idea and where ideas from other writers were used, they were acknowledged in full using references according to the Rhodes University Education Guide to References. I further declare that the work in this thesis has not been submitted at any other university for degree purposes.

Signature

8/02/2018
Date

Abstract

This dissertation examines the knowledge and knower practices in the Master's in Educational Leadership and Management (ELM) coursework programmes at South African public universities. This study was prompted by my growing awareness of problems and tensions in the field of ELM generally, and at the level of programme design of the M Ed degree in particular. Many of these had been identified by a national audit of coursework M Eds in ELM (CHE, 2010), and this study sought to find a way of theorising these with a view to improving both course design and teaching. To this end I employed Maton's Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) which enables critical engagement with knowledge and knowers in programmes, how they are positioned, and how this positioning may be problematic. Hence my first research question sought to discover and critique what counted as knowledge in these programmes and why, while the second asked how knowers were positioned, and why this had come to be the case.

LCT has its roots in the work of Bernstein and Maton, whose preoccupation with curriculum was/is driven by a sense of social justice: if we can understand how and why the curriculum is organised and presented in a particular way, it becomes possible to re-imagine teaching and learning, making it accessible to a broader, more inclusive body of learners. The study also drew on critical realism as an underlabourer. This philosophy provided a nuanced understanding of ontology, encouraging and enabling me, as researcher, to unearth causal mechanisms driving the status quo.

Only seven South African universities currently offer the coursework option of a Master's degree in ELM, compared to thirteen when the audit was conducted in 2010. Six of the universities agreed to take part in the study. Data was gathered through content analysis of the six course outlines and interviews with individual co-ordinators or academics centrally involved in the programmes. Through the development of a translation device I was able to establishing that a knower code was dominant in the programmes. Using this point as my departure, I interrogated the knowledge practices and found that different types of knowledge were being privileged across the programmes, with some having a practical/professional leaning and others a more academic/theoretical orientation. The resultant tension does, I argue, restrict knowledge building and helps to account for the fact that the field is generally considered to be under-theorised. The fact all of these programme are registered with the

same national qualifications authority, ostensibly following the same national guidelines for Master's degrees is worrying. The study attempts to find underlying, historically significant reasons for this unevenness.

An analysis of the programmes revealed a leaning towards supportive pedagogical approaches. While all programmes promote a cultivated gaze their purposes are not always the same. While a cultivated gaze can enable transformation, it can also encourage hegemonic practices that can impede real change and empowerment. The study has the potential for opening up much needed debate on what is meant by a Master's in ELM, what counts as knowledge, and what kinds of knower are envisaged.

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Abbreviations

C	Classification
CHE	Council on Higher Education
ELM	Educational Leadership and Management
ER	Epistemic Relations
F	Framing
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Commission
LCT	Legitimation Code Theory
SR	Social Relations
SG	Semantic Gravity
MEd	Master's in Education

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CHAPTER ONE

CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY: SETTING THE SCENE

1.1 Introduction

This study focuses on coursework Master's programmes in Educational Leadership and Management (ELM) in South African public universities. I begin this chapter by providing a rationale for the study and then draw on literature to provide a sense of the context of higher education in South Africa, particularly with respect to knowledge and curriculum. This leads to making explicit the focus of this research and the research questions addressed in the study. Finally, the chapter concludes with an outline of the thesis.

1.2 Rationale

My rationale for undertaking this study is manifold. I embarked on this research with a few inter-related goals, both personal and professional. The initial impetus for this research lay in my personal motivation as a newcomer to higher education in the field of ELM in 2013. After spending a number of years as a high school educator, I was provided with an opportunity to pursue a doctoral study and to teach at a higher education institution. My first step was to familiarise myself with the field of ELM by reading widely. This early reading highlighted many problems the field was perceived to be struggling with, one of the most significant being the theory/practice tension which arises from field members' different roles and needs. Many of the academics in the field had been professionals (often school teachers) for a long time prior to joining academia (e.g. van der Mescht, 2008; Grant, 2014), and as a result their shaping of the field was heavily practice-based. The literature is replete with references to a tension with regard to the dual pursuits of academic and professional interests (e.g. Bush, 1999; van der Mescht, 2008; Grant, 2014).

Another related problem I identified is that the field generally lacks a strong theoretical base. A feature of much leadership 'literature' is the tendency to turn ideas (or theories) into simplistic prescriptive steps, "tips for teachers or a guide for managers" as Bush (1999, p. 9) calls them. This is mostly because ELM is not strongly theorised. As I show in Chapter Two, the field has been characterised by simplistic, formulaic explanations and prescriptions, rather

than posing the kinds of questions that demand scholarship and critical engagement. Although a place may exist for "tips for teachers" literature, it is no substitute for analysis supported by rigorous research and interpretation using appropriate theory. A leading scholar in the field, Helen Gunter (2010), acknowledging this weakness, suggests that social theory could be adopted to promote critical thinking in the field. This idea seeks to address a weakness of research in the field, namely that it is dominated by small-scale case-study research, often based in students' workplaces and weakly theorised (Heck & Hallinger, 2005).

Another leading scholar, Tony Bush, writing in the UK (1999, p. 246) argues that the "absence of theory from the discourse of ELM contributes to the allegation of managerialism". He calls for a re-structuring of Master's programmes to enhance the use of coherent theory, research and analysis. In the South African context, questions surrounding Master's programmes have also been raised. Van der Mescht (2008, p. 7) highlights the question posed by a senior education official: *When someone has a Master's Degree in ELM what does it mean? What can we assume this person knows or can do?* Questions of this nature point to a lack of clarity, perhaps even confusion, about the purpose and substance of a Master's degree in ELM. The National Audit Review in South Africa (CHE, 2010), a project investigating Master's courses in ELM in South Africa, exposed similar tensions.

The review was driven by the Higher Education Quality Commission (HEQC) and took place in 2010. The audit report focused on MEd ELM coursework programmes and findings pointed to design challenges in the development of research competence and theoretical engagement (CHE Monitor No. 11, August 2010, South Africa). Naturally one would expect a research degree (such as the MEd) to foreground research rather than professional practice, but MEd programmes typically try to incorporate – and frequently foreground – workplace knowledge and experience in curriculum design (CHE, Monitor no. 11, August 2010). This seems to be a manifestation of the debate discussed above. Course coherence was also found to be wanting – an indicator of the difficulty of deciding what counts as valid knowledge – and many programmes failed to meet the intellectual requirements of the appropriate NQF level (level 8 on the previous HEQF), perhaps because the field draws on theory that lacks rigour as described earlier on as one of the major problems in the field.

Another reason for embarking on this study was that I thought it necessary, as a newcomer, to understand the nature of the MEd coursework programmes in ELM as I knew I would be involved in teaching and supervision in this field. I felt an informed understanding of the MEd programmes would be a strong foundation on which to build my own teaching and possibly in the future, the development and implementation of such a programme. So in many ways this study was also a strategic way of entering the discourse.

Unlike the audit – which set out to identify the quality of programmes for purposes of accreditation – my interest was in gaining insight into what is taught in the MEd (ELM) coursework programmes. This arose from both of the tensions I outlined above: the practice-theory tension, and the absence of a sense of what counts as knowledge. Since both of these interests lie in the field of curriculum, I elected to work with Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) which I believed would provide an explanatory framework to provide insight into what is valued in the programmes and what counts as legitimate knowledge. I also believed LCT would help to show how students are positioned in these programmes in terms of the knowledge and knower practices. The research has no evaluative perspective. Drawing on LCT, against the background of the history of the field, I set out to provide a scientifically rigorous account of knowledge and knowers in ELM MEd coursework programmes.

Armed with a new knowledge of LCT, and especially the work of Karl Maton, which focuses on both knowledge and knowers, I began to see a proliferation of questions concerning knowledge in ELM literature. These questions were more pressing than a quick look at a course outline could reveal. Knowledge, or content, is one of the key criteria used by the Higher Education Quality Commission [HEQC] (2010) to decide whether or not programmes are to be accredited. The HEQC provides no guidelines in terms of what knowledge should be included, or, more importantly, why. But several scholars in the field do, notably Bates (2013) who raises questions such as: *What counts as knowledge? How is what counts as knowledge organised*? In this way questions surrounding knowledge became the central focus of my interest. Similarly, the concept of knowers is also significant in this study. The knowers or students in this study are usually mature, part-time students who generally have full-time jobs at educational institutions. Some of these students occupy management positions (Grant, 2013). The programme designers are also knowers who likewise come with their experiences. Later in Chapter Six of the thesis I elaborate on the concept of *knowers* in the study, and it will become evident why it became even more significant.

In the next section, I look at knowledge and curriculum in higher education, within which this study is located. I provide a macro contextual background within which these programmes are located which is the South African higher education context. The account I provide shows how this landscape has gone through a number of changes and how this has influenced South African universities on a number of different levels.

1.3 Higher education, knowledge and the curriculum

This section briefly describes the South African higher education context as the macro environment where the Masters programmes I focus on are conceptualised and pedagogised. The focus of this discussion is on changes and challenges within this landscape, specifically aspects that relate to or influence knowledge and programmes because of this study's interest as described earlier.

1.3.1 The South African higher education context

> A university finds itself in a complex environment and its relationships are far from static. It remains 'integrally part of a social world' and there is a reciprocal relationship of influence on how society and the university constructs itself. (McKenna, 2012, p. 16)

Few would argue with the claim that universities are constantly changing in order to keep abreast of the changing needs of society. In South Africa, these changes were brought about chiefly by market-related factors and political and policy imperatives. This context has implications for various programmes offered at the universities, to which my attention now turns.

1.3.1.1 Globalisation, economic issues and knowledge

Internationally and nationally, the literature on higher education is preoccupied with imperatives such as globalisation, economic issues and the knowledge economy. Universities have always been a part of the global village, "more open than most sectors because of its immersion in knowledge" (Marginson & van der Wende, 2006, p. 4). Post 1994, globalisation would have widened and deepened in the South African context, as the country moved out if its political and moral isolation. In global knowledge economies, higher education institutions are more important than ever as media for continuous global flows of people, information,

knowledge, technologies, products and financial capital (Marginson & van der Wende, 2006). The massification of higher education institutions and the concomitant influx of students made it even more important that university programmes should meet standards nationally and internationally, hence the establishment of the Higher Education Quality Commission and universities' sudden obsession with quality control. But the phrase 'knowledge economies' has financial connotations too, and this discourse is linked to business. McKenna argues that "knowledge is increasingly conceived of in much the same way as any other product and the university is well positioned to produce, package and sell this knowledge product" (2012, p. 16). A more utilitarian view of knowledge as "the organization of data for immediate problem-solving, with the goal being an increase in the overall efficiency of the social system" (Webbstock, 2016, p. 14) emerged. This essentially practice-based notion of knowledge lies at the heart of the key tension in ELM, as will become apparent later in this study.

The conceptualisation of the university in such economic terms is a concern for the future. Robert's (1998) reference to the "commodification" of knowledge points to the heart of the issue. The emphasis on producing graduates that are ready for the work-place at the expense of focusing on other purposes of a university was seen to constrain possible roles universities might play, and indeed had played before the "death of the professor" (Roberts, 1998). With these market-related demands, individuals tend to view the key to prosperity as knowledge and skills. As Corbel (2014, p. 105) puts it, there is a tendency of the "voice of knowledge" to be silenced as skills are emphasised and specialised aspects of a discipline overlooked. This is due to market-related demands and economic endeavours which result in academic values being subsumed by money-making initiatives (McKenna, 2012). The implications for higher education programme designers are obvious: in ELM, a programme that ignores practice would be failing at a fundamental level. How to include this element without compromising the main purpose of an academic programme is the challenge.

1.3.1.2 Policy changes: The impact of massification and merger-thinking on issues of knowledge in programmes

This section attempts to reveal how policy changes have led to massification and merger-thinking which directly influence the curriculum at higher education institutions. In addition, I argue that issues of knowledge become highly contested, and this has a direct bearing on what is included and excluded in a university programme.

The reforms in higher education post-1994 (termination of the apartheid era) introduced by the new South African government saw fundamental changes to governance and curricula in teacher education programmes. The White Paper on Education and Training in 1995 which focused on transformation, highlighted the need for various audits in teacher education. Jansen (2002, as cited in CHE Monitor No. 11, August 2010) suggests that these papers highlighted the issue of massification, which focuses on expanding the higher education system and increasing access. Here too, the question of widening access to higher education is foregrounded in the HEQC referred to earlier. However, limited resources among the disadvantaged has meant that, almost a decade later, the issue of increasing participation rates in post-school education is still on the table (Webbstock, 2016, p. 23). While the motivation for increasing the participation rate is to "bring about transformation through increasing access" (*ibid.*), Webbstock (2016, p. 19) argues that massification has serious implications for rethinking organisational culture and pedagogy and this needs to be addressed. This, in turn, has implications for how university programmes are designed and pedagogised. Significant increases in enrolments into MEd (ELM) coursework programmes was the chief reason why the National Audit (CHE, 2010), referred to earlier, selected this programme as its focus. At that stage 14 higher education institutions offered the MEd (ELM) coursework programme. However, by the time I launched this research in 2014, only seven universities were still offering the coursework option, an interesting development which I discuss much later in this thesis.

Policy imperatives of widening access and massification led to "merger thinking" and the higher education landscape in South Africa was dramatically re-arranged (Jansen, 2003). He mentions that there was an attempt to resolve the segregation of universities, technikons and colleges created during the apartheid system, through the creation of a single co-ordinated system. This resulted in the development of comprehensive universities and the creation of institutions with multi-site campuses (CHE Monitor No. 11, August 2010, p. 13). With these mergers, curriculum matters were highly contested. Jansen (2003) describes one of the tensions and frustrations pertaining to the integration of teaching in an education degree as being premised on the argument that "teaching is a practical, professional activity as opposed to a theoretical or academic qualification" (p. 41). Those in education would of course argue that it is both, but the absorption of former college lecturers into universities – as a result of the merger – essentially brought these two views of knowledge into conflict within the

merged institutions. Naturally, in these circumstances coherence becomes a real challenge. These changes have led to a much more critical and questioning engagement with the question of knowledge – what it is, where it should be 'placed' and how it should be taught. What ultimately becomes legitimised in the programmes is therefore influenced by a number of factors, the merging of unlike institutions being one of them. Webbstock (2016, p. 5) argues that there is a real need for interrogating the knowledge that is "preserved, produced, cherished, disseminated, which is fundamental to a University's identity". This is what this study seeks to do, though admittedly in only one small but growing field.

Finally, with these shifts in how knowledge is understood, the role of universities is also changing. The 2016 *Report on South African higher education: Two decades into democracy* reveals that knowledge has become contested and more egalitarian and this has a direct influence on the role of universities which can no longer be seen as autonomous. Similarly, the different knowledge-types "gain parity of esteem with theoretical and practical knowledge becoming equally important" (CHE, 2016, p. 14). It is evident that *what counts as knowledge and the purpose of higher education institutions* is in a state of flux. These shifts in construction of knowledge at universities have implications for curricular-related matters. My study attempts to seek clarity on this problem by focusing on the MEd (ELM) coursework programmes at universities to excavate issues of knowledge and students (knowers) in these programmes. My attention now turns to why knowledge questions are important.

1.3.2 Why knowledge questions are important

Against this backdrop of a rapidly changing South African higher education landscape, the question of curriculum becomes a key issue (le Grange, 2011). Furthermore, Webbstock argues that curriculum is a neglected area of discourse and what counts as knowledge is in "rapid flux and this has major implications for how higher education is organised, for curriculum, for research and teaching and learning" (2016, p. 15).

Knowledge lies at the heart of curriculum and research into knowledge as an object of what is being learned, is viewed "as integral to the fundamental knowledge base of education research and policy" (Maton, 2014). Maton (2014) argues that educational thinking adopts subjectivist understanding of knowledge and there is a tendency to explore how students/knowers act or feel. This way of thinking generally reduces knowledge to knowing or to power. According to Maton (2014), our failure to look at "relations within knowledge"

limits our understanding of knowing and power (p. 7). To avert "knowledge-blindness", an exploration of "relations to" and "relations within" knowledge could be brought together (Maton, 2014). Therefore, there is a need to understand "what knowledge is being created, pedagogised, taught and learned" (Maton, 2014, p. 5). According to Bernstein, the term 'pedagogised' refers to the selection and transformation of discourses from the field of production to become pedagogic discourse which is able to be taught and learned (1996, 2000). Maton argues that the educational field requires a theory of knowledge.

In direct response, social realism argues for a stronger theory of knowledge (Maton & Moore, 2010). Social realism affirms that all knowledge is socially produced but, unlike a more subjectivist belief, believes that knowledge can be separated from the social conditions of its production (Barrett & Rata, 2014, p. 2). A social realist approach suggests that knowledge "possesses emergent properties that allow it to move beyond the social and historical context of its production" (Barrett & Rata, 2014, p. 2). This is not to suggest that knowledge is incontestable or absolute. Knowledge is seen as fallible (e.g. Bhaskar, 2008). However, "its objectivity can be guaranteed – it is a guarantee of the provisional truth made possible through collective procedures for the independent evaluation of knowledge claims" (Barrett & Rata, 2014, p. 2). This becomes possible by making knowledge accessible to the public for scrutiny. The critique provided by academic communities helps facilitate the development of knowledge. Social realist arguments will be helpful in this study, providing a heuristic to make sense about knowledge in a Master's curriculum. A useful concept aligning with these arguments is the Future-3 type knowledge which advocates that "knowledge has its own status beyond those who produce it" and "questions surrounding worthwhile knowledge is shaped by disciplinary norms or practices in fields" (Morgan, 2014, p. 139). Issues pertaining to worthwhile knowledge or the knowledge that is valued in a curriculum is of importance. This study interrogates issues of knowledge in the programmes, by focusing on the bases of legitimation in these programmes and the forms of knowledge privileged.

1.4 The focus of this study

This study focuses on six of the seven (one institution failed to respond) existing coursework MEd (ELM) programmes offered by South African universities. The study is located in the field of recontextualisation, which is described as the arena where knowledge is selected,

reorganised and transformed to become pedagogic discourse (Singh, 2002). In this study academics/course designers at the different universities are positioned as key role players in the recontextualising of the ELM knowledge. I decided to focus on the field of recontextualisation to deepen my understanding of the phenomenon under study, which is an under-researched area. Historically, the focus of research in higher education has been on descriptions of practice by analysing events or activities (Luckett, 2011, p. 135) which would be located in the field of reproduction (what happens in a classroom). However, focusing on practice by analysing events or activities would have limited me to one or two programmes, and I was determined to present a national overview.

1.4.1 The research questions

The central research question of this study is:

What knowledge and knower structures characterise the MEd coursework programmes in the field of Educational Leadership and Management at public higher education institutions in South Africa?

Sub- questions:

- *What constitutes legitimate knowledge practices in the MEd (ELM) programmes/ curricula and why is this the case?*
- *How do programmes position and envisage knowers in the field, and how has this come to be?*

By exploring the research questions I hope to:

- Contribute to an emerging scholarship that strives to obtain an in-depth understanding of academics' knowledge practices in the field and to try to understand what knowledge is privileged and why;
- Impart an understanding of the dominant code in the MEd (ELM) programmes and its implications, by making explicit what gets legitimised in the programmes;
- Contribute to an understanding of curriculum practices, an under-researched area in the ELM field. (In fact, other than the Audit Review described earlier, there seems to be no other study of this nature in South Africa); and
- Engage the research participants and myself in critical reflection on our own curriculum practices, so that we as a community of ELM scholars can grow.

In the final section of this chapter, I provide an outline of how this thesis will be organised.

1.5 Outline of the chapters in the thesis

This chapter, Chapter One, set out the broader field of the study and provided a background to the study. After writing a rationale for the study, I sketched the macro context of the South African higher education setting, with particular reference to current trends and their influence on institutions, knowledge and curriculum. Issues surrounding 'curriculum' were elaborated upon. Questions about knowledge and the importance of focusing on knowledge were examined through the work of key knowledge theorists. Finally, the key to this chapter was the legitimising of the focus of this study, locating itself within the field of recontextualisation (curriculum practices) in order to argue for a study of this nature.

Chapter Two provides an overview of the genealogy of the intellectual field of ELM, gives a sense of the field and highlights the tensions experienced. This helps to create an argument for the adoption of social theory to address aspects of social justice, through the transformation of education.

Chapter Three discusses the theoretical and explanatory framework for the current study. I work from the premise that each field has its own norms, values and practices (Arbee, 2012) and that these are influenced by the field's underlying knowledge and knower structure (Maton, 2014). The study embraces LCT as a social realist explanatory framework which is underlaboured by the philosophy of critical realism. In this chapter, I address the key concepts of critical realism as a meta theory and then focus on knowledge theories, such as the work of Bourdieu and Bernstein, upon which the foundations of Legitimation Code Theory are built. Possible shortcomings of these theories are highlighted and an argument for the need to adopt LCT is made.

Chapter Four presents the research design. The case study approach, data generation methods and the data analysis processes which include the development of a translation device are discussed. The research participants and selection strategies are highlighted in this chapter. Included are also issues of validity, quality, positionality and the ethical considerations.

Chapters Five and Six describe and discuss what was found in response to the research focus and questions of the study. The data collected from course outlines and interviews with academics support the issues discussed in these chapters. Chapter Five addresses the first research question: *What constitutes legitimate knowledge practices in the MEd (ELM) programmes/curricula and why is this the case?* This chapter focuses on knowledge selection, organisation and the types of knowledge prevalent in the MEd (ELM) programmes. Chapter Six offers a presentation of data and a discussion in response to the second research question: *How do programmes position and envisage knowers in the field, and how has this come to be?* In both questions, the reasons for current knowledge and knower practices are surfaced and discussed in the final chapter, Chapter Seven.

Chapter Seven is the concluding chapter. It summarises and synthesises the findings in Chapter Five and Six. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks, with particular reference to critical realism, this chapter provides an in-depth explanation by trying to surface the underlying mechanisms of curriculum practices in the field of recontextualisation in MEd (ELM) programmes. This final chapter also discusses the implications of the study and suggests possibilities for further research and recommendations for practice.

CHAPTER TWO

A GENEALOGY OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT (ELM)

2.1 Introduction

Educational leadership and management is a fairly new field in South Africa and has only gained prominence in the last few decades (van der Mescht, 2008). Against the backdrop of international and national debates on the nature of the field, it is evident that there are pressing problems. Because it is difficult to comprehend the contemporary field as it stands today without some familiarity of its origins and development, this chapter provides a genealogy of the field. It highlights challenges inherent in the field and argues the need for the adoption of social theory to address aspects of social justice through the transformation of education.

The reader is alerted to the distinction between the field of production which is described as a site where new knowledge is created and the field of recontextualisation which is the site where knowledge from the field of production is selected, re-organised and transformed to become pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 2000). A further elaboration of this distinction is provided in Chapter Three. Thus, a starting point for me to interrogate the ELM coursework curriculum at a Master's level (at the level of recontextualisation), requires a review of the field as depicted in the field of production since the fields of production and recontextualisation are interdependent.

2.2 Frames governing thoughts in the field

Every knowledge field has seminal works that guide what academics and practitioners think and do during a particular time. ELM is no exception. Even though some of these works in the international literature on ELM may seem dated, for example, works by Foster (1986) and Smyth (1989), I draw on them because they represent key moments in the history of ELM. The purpose of this section is to depict the conceptual landscape of the history of the field of ELM by discussing the major eras marked by distinctive thinking and/or publications. The discussion in this section provides a brief overview of the line of thinking over time

influencing the knowledge base of the field and providing an understanding of the development of the field internationally. Various authors have provided different labels for these eras, but for the purposes of this discussion, I draw on Foster's (1986) use of 'frames' (paradigms) because he works in the critical dimension which aligns with the approach adopted in this study. Foster posits that frames provide boundaries for research questions and areas of concern (Foster, 1986, p. 54). He cautions that evaluating each frame and choosing one compatible to one's views could be a mistake because a frame "is as much a set of blinders as it is a lens" (Foster, 1986, p. 57). Furthermore, he argues that "objectively no one paradigm is as good as any other, yet each is subjectively better" (p. 57). This alludes to the notion that shifts in the frames happen through insight and discovery and not through neutral evaluation.

The discussion below is linked to the theoretical tenets of the field. In a field like ELM, theory and practice are directly related. According to Hoy and Miskel (1996), theory forms a frame of reference for the practitioner by providing practitioners with the analytic tools whereby events can be analysed and decisions made. Theory and practice exist in "dialectical relation" to each other (Foster, 1986, p. 12). Hence what we do depends on how we see, and how we see depends on what we do. A theory comprises concepts, assumptions and generalisations which help to describe and explain phenomena, and this promotes the further advancement of knowledge. This chapter delves into the organisational thought that has continued to develop and change due to the complexity of educational organisations. It provides an overview of the evolution of ELM by focusing on what Foster (1986) calls the functionalist, subjectivist and critical frames.

2.2.1 The functionalist frame

The functionalist frame has its roots in classical organisational thought. The father of the scientific management movement was Frederick Taylor (1815-1915) whose seminal work, *The principles of scientific management,* was published in 1911. Taylor's ideas of scientific management were widely accepted. This frame embraces the assumption that the social world is "objective, real and concrete and that scientists standing outside of this world can record facts about it" (Foster, 1986, p. 55). The key premise of this thinking was to "use people effectively in organisations" (Hoy & Miskel, 1996, p. 9). The metaphor synonymous with this period was that of a machine with a strong focus on increasing the yield. The discourse was managerial with intense connotations of control, rigid conceptualisations of organisations and

management associated with vigorous authority. This view of organisations and management was developed in a context of industry and business, hence the notion of organisations as 'machines' and the relentless pursuit of increased production (Hoy & Miskel, 1996). Taylor believed that devices such as time and motion studies and division of labour would result in increased productivity (e.g. Hoy & Miskel, 1996). He was interested in human relations but chose to focus on people as cogs in a machine because of the prevailing climate which was industry oriented. In this way, the field of management and leadership was dominated by the principles and practices of business and industry and schools also embraced similar trends (Hoy & Miskel, 1996).

Many concepts that have arisen in business administration have been incorporated into education with the emphasis on school effectiveness, examination results and the role of the principal (Angus, 1989, p. 63). As a result, educational administration university courses aimed to prepare principals "who were going to scientifically manage education" (English, 2008, p. 149). According to Codd (1989, p. 159), this industrial model with an emphasis on efficiency "treats teachers as workers rather than professionals, thereby diminishing their commitment to the values and principles which define the field of educational practice".

Taylor's influence continues into the present day and has been absorbed into American management: contemporary manifestations are strategic planning and total quality management (English, 2008, p. 149). Griffiths (1983 as cited in Foster, 1986, p. 59) argues that the functionalist frame of mind still dominates research and training. In fact, Griffiths argues that "aside from being less rigorous at present, there is little difference between the past and present researchers in the nature of the theory they espouse" (*ibid.*). Research in a functionalist paradigm assumes that a systematic study of organisations and people will contribute to a knowledge base that is reliable and predictable. Watkins goes further, warning that the "functionalist researcher and manager are joined in a search of predictability and control" (1989, p. 9), driven by positivistic orientations. Ultimately, this results in a kind of over-simplification of a complex phenomenon. Angus argues that in a school situation with an undue emphasis on the role of school leaders a "functionalist perspective is tacitly assumed" which has a tendency "to reduce complex educational problems to administrative issues" (Angus, 1989, p. 63).

In a functionalist paradigm, research could be described as positivistic, based on scientific ways of

> measuring inputs and outputs in school systems as a tool of management to elaborate ways in which the school might rationalise its structure and curriculum to fit industrial and social conditions. (Tyack, 1974 as cited in Foster, 1986, p. 39)

Foster argues that administrative theorists depend on a positivist framework, premised on the notion that "scientific knowledge which is verifiable is true knowledge and [can] be expressed in a logical and therefore true form" (1986, p. 35).

The obvious shortcoming of this approach is that it does not take cognisance of the human element in organisations, schools in particular. Hoy and Miskel (1996) point out that when theory is based on systems that are logical, rational, explicit and quantitative, practice will be seen to be similarly rational. But for learners, teachers and administrators, school life is anything but logical, rational and quantifiable, and the danger is that a rational, simplistic approach glosses over the dark face of school life that managers and leaders sometimes prefer to ignore – as Foster (1986, p. 60) puts it, "practitioners need a science of administration based in functionalism to rescue them from their own humanity". Bush warns that one needs to be cautious when drawing on business principles, as thinking about relationships within an educational institution in these terms, runs the risk of people behaving in "ways that are antithetical to certain fundamental educational values" (1999, p. 239).

In summary, during the scientific management era ELM was heavily reliant on concepts drawn from the business and industry. As a fledgling field, the approach was functionalist. In this approach, knowledge workers were positioned as "borrowers who take up translation and delivery positions" (Gunter, 2012, p. 338). These programmes ensured that practices of management, control and bureaucracy were perpetuated. It was about running schools efficiently, linked to the productivity notion described earlier.

2.2.2 The subjectivist frame

This frame is also known as the social science or human relations approach (Hoy & Miskel, 1996). This approach draws on perspectives from psychology, sociology, political science and economics. Various scholars have contributed to this school of thought by including experiences from many disciplines, government and industry. They went beyond Taylorist notions of efficiency and confronted a range of more complex issues experienced by leaders in an organisation. In the discussion below I draw on key thinkers of this frame, namely

Follett, Mayo, Barnard, Simon, Weber and Greenfield. I then discuss research trends representative of the subjectivist frame.

Mary Parker Follett made an important contribution to human relations thinking in several publications in the 1920s. She developed ideas on management ahead of her time, many rediscovered as late as the 1960s and appreciated for their "depth and consistency" (Massie, 1965 as cited in English, 2008, p. 151). Her work focused on achieving a sophisticated understanding of human relations, with particular reference to inter-group co-ordination. Furthermore, she was the first to integrate the idea of organisational conflict into management theory by drawing on the concept of the law of situation which she introduced. This concept was based on the premise that authority was not solely determined by hierarchy but by the situation itself (English, 2008). Follett laid the groundwork for organisation development (French & Bell, 1973 as cited in English, 2008). In a 1924 essay she coined the phrases "power over" and "power with" to differentiate between coercive power and participative decision-making (Follett, 1924). Considering how topical the issue of power is in leadership thinking today, Follett's contribution to an understanding of these dynamics was remarkable. This seminal thinking sowed the seeds of contemporary leadership theory, evident in the movement away from headship to more distributed forms of leadership.

Elton Mayo is widely recognised as the progenitor of the human relations movement and his work formed the basis for later management and organisational thinking (Marsh, 2013). Mayo was involved in the Hawthorne Studies which focused on the relationship between physical working conditions and productivity. His research was initially intended to extend Taylor's work by investigating industrial conditions that led to an increase in productivity. By varying the physical environment of factory workers, such as the level of lighting, researchers hoped to find a correlation between these variations and productivity. However, they found that production increased whatever the environment (Foster, 1986, p. 40). In further studies to explain this anomaly the researchers found that the manipulation of the physical conditions in the work environment did not affect productivity. In fact, researchers found that "being the subject of attention coupled with the type of social relations that emerged in the test group influenced the output" (Foster, 1986, p. 40). The experimental groups developed their own group norms and ways of working. This study concluded that human relations were more important in the workplace than was reflected in the work of Taylor and other functionalist theorists.

This interest in the social element of organisational life featured strongly in the work of Chester Barnard. As early as the 1940s, Barnard was promoting a social science approach to management. He believed in three functions of the executive. Firstly, the purpose of an organisation must be created as a requisite for unifying the organisation. Secondly, he stressed the importance of effective communication to ensure that the mission was clearly understood by all. Thirdly, he believed that a place must be created where all members of the organisation could participate together (English, 2008, p. 151). His work focused on cooperative behaviour in organisations and acknowledged the distinction between formal and informal organisations. Barnard's grasp of the importance of communication and joint decision-making resonates strongly with contemporary theory.

Herbert Simon extended this work by seeing administration as a process of rational decision-making that influences the behaviour of members in the organisation. His behaviouristic thinking attempted to blend human relations thinking with rational decision-making. His view was that "no best solution to a problem exists, but rather some solutions [were] more satisfactory than others" (Hoy & Miskel, 1996, p. 16). The basis of his theory was derived from a model of efficiency with a strong focus on the "maximisation of profit with the lowest possible cost" (English, 2008, p. 153). Ultimately Simon's thinking, pragmatic and apparently useful as it seemed, chose to ignore the human dimension. As English puts it, "Simon engages in a false bit of posturing when he declares that a science of business has no ethical content" (2008, p. 152).

Similarly, Max Weber's theory of the ideal bureaucracy has a scientific tendency. For him the dominating logic of social organisation is constructed through a new organisation of power and knowledge which he refers to as an "iron cage created through bureaucracy" (Bates, 1989, p. 99). He argues that bureaucracy develops "more perfectly … the more it is dehumanised and removes personal and irrational elements from business which escape calculation" (Bates, 1989, p. 147). However, Weber's ideal bureaucracy is not helpful in accounting for educational organisations. Bates (1989, p. 150) argues that his thinking is incomplete because of not "recognising that the rationalisation of society takes place through a dialectic between ethics and culture and the structures of power". Hence, while promoting the notion of organisation as social structure, Weber's interest was in how one interprets or makes sense of social structures, hence juxtaposing subjective and functionalist views.

Up to this point, organisation theory has been dominated by the objectification of the organisation, whether through behavioural science or bureaucracy. Organisations are seen as 'real', and open to objective scrutiny and study. The first and most radical criticism of this approach came from Thomas Greenfield.

In 1974, Greenfield attacked the notion of organisation as ontological reality. He argued that organisations were not objectively real phenomena but rather constructs created by our imagination, the products of individual perception and group agreement. He argued that organisations did not have a life of their own; they were not things and did not have an ontological reality. He felt that "organisations have reality through human action" (Greenfield, 1986 as cited in Smyth, 1994, p. 136). Organisations were seen as "being the product of human will" (Foster, 1986, p. 60). Contrary to functionalism, which creates a dichotomy between objective facts and subjective values, this subjective view argues that there is a need to understand and acknowledge values *as facts*. He called for a humanising of the organisation and an acknowledgement of the human face of organisations, evident in an interview with Peter Ribbins (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993), where he posits:

> the wielding of power is terrible … I am convinced that there is a kind of horror in administrative rule … if there is to be a kind of humanising of that power, a contemplative, philosophical dimension should be brought to it. Perhaps to do the thing at all requires the kind of withdrawal which I advocated and a need for a mediation on values. (p. 262)

Greenfield argues that administration science does not work as a science since it has not brought increased understanding and control of organisations. Greenfield's orientations towards the subjective resonates with phenomenology and the experiences of the heart. In the same way as phenomenology honours lived experience as the most important source of data, Greenfield's radical subjectivism privileges individuals' perspectives and experiences as the true reality of organisational life.

Of course his work is not without its detractors and critics. According to Bates (1989, p. 137), Greenfield leaves us with "a world of illusion where leaders embody the values of particular groups and grapple with each other through symbols and moral preferences". He cautions that the rejection of behavioural science would deteriorate into the adoption of "moral relativism, mysticism, existentialism and organisational voluntarism" (1989, p. 138). These insights of

Greenfield can be detected in the work of contemporary theorists such as Giddens and Foucault, particularly in the renewed interest in agency that characterised contemporary social theory. However, the fact that Greenfield played down the role of structure can hardly be denied.

The prevalent research approach in this frame departed from positivism and the notions of objectivity and neutrality. Research came to be dominated by interpretivism, the organisation considered to be a "social construct rather than an objective reality" (Foster, 1986, p. 56). Organisational life involved constructing and interpreting meaning (*ibid.*). The methodology involved questioning natural structures and events and probing how individuals came to understand one another and their environment. The role of the researcher was "trying to understand common sense notions" (*ibid.*). Unlike the functionalist frame, the subjective frame acknowledges organisations as value-laden, conflict-ridden phenomena. This research approach also had implications for the development of the knowledge base in the field of ELM. The knowledge base was widened as psychology, sociology and anthropology provided frames of reference for the more human elements of organisational life.

In summary, in the subjectivist frame, the individual is valued and individuals' actions, language and biography must be taken into account as they play a vital role in the organisation. However, the approach has obvious weaknesses. Power is virtually ignored, and the over-emphasis on subjective experience runs the risk of relativism. As Angus (1989, p. 80) puts it, there is a need to focus on inequality in power relationships which could be disguised and not surfaced in human relations theories. Subsequently, a number of critical alternative approaches have developed to facilitate an understanding of organisations. A brief discussion of this now follows.

2.2.3 The critical frame

In response to the emphasis on the human element in organisations and the interpretive approach in research, a number of alternative critical perspectives developed. They pose a major challenge to earlier knowledge on organisational behaviour and problems. In essence the critical frame allows us to see society differently by "helping to demystify through critique" (Hoy & Miskel, 1996, p. 19). A critical theory requires us to reflect on "what we do and how what we do affects all who encounter us" (Foster, 1986, p. 70). There are many

theories that fall under the umbrella of a critical paradigm (e.g. – feminist theory, post modernism, critical race theory, and queer theory). However, for the purposes of my discussion I focus on generic aspects pertaining to the critical frame.

The development of critical theory in organisational contexts, especially in the arts and education, has a distinguished history. Dewey, Kant, Hegel, Marx and others were amongst the American and European thinkers who contributed significantly to this thinking. According to Dewey (as cited in Angus, 1989, p. 66) a critical theory is more than a conscious self-reflection: it is a structured reflection on economic and cultural conditions and the ideologies that support them. Angus hopes that administrators can turn to critical theory as it helps them to understand how technical and bureaucratic forms of management have come to dominate institutions (1989, p. 67). An adoption of a critical stance is premised on the underlying assumption that social structures are constructed, echoing Greenfield's thinking, which highlights that they are man-made conventions that serve somebody's interest (Angus, 1989, p. 67), which was not part of Greenfield's thinking. For Greenfield, the key interest was in individual's conceptions of reality; for critical theory, the interest lies in understanding social conceptions. If structures are man-made, it follows structures can be changed (re-made). This requires individuals taking up an agential role and bringing about the necessary transformation required after engaging critically with issues at hand. Giddens and Foucault's work builds on Greenfield's critique and also contributes to a critical way of thinking.

Giddens' focus was on the relation of the individual to the organisation, which he expresses as structure and agency. In organisations, 'agency' refers to the individual actors' ability to act and bring about action, while 'structure' refers to rules, regulations, norms and policies (Bates, 1989). Giddens developed a theory of structuration which accounts for the reciprocal effects of agency and structure. In this regard, he posits that "all human action is carried out by knowledgeable agents who both construct the social world through their action, but yet whose action is also constrained by the very world of their creation" (Giddens, 1951 as cited in Bates, 1989, p. 139). Hence neither the organisation nor the individual has primacy and their existence is defined and redefined in terms of each other. His work highlights how social practice plays a role in the constitution and reconstitution of individuals and he argues that these dialectical processes must be understood historically. As a way forward, Bates

(1989, p. 140) suggests that "any adequate theory of agency and structure on which an appropriate theory of leadership is built must recover historical memory and situate its explanations in time and place". This is because social change can be understood through a historical analysis of individual and social life.

It is evident that educational administration has largely ignored power relations by focusing on administrative problems, in the process overlooking major substantive educational problems (Bates, 1989). Foucault observed that history has studied those who held power but power as an object and the relationship between power and knowledge have not been studied (Bates, 1989). The heart of Foucault's work is the relationship and constitution of power and knowledge with "power creating knowledge and knowledge inducing effects of power" (Foucault, 1980, as cited in Bates, 1989, p. 52). Foucault posits that power must be analysed as something that circulates; individuals are the vehicles of power. Foucault's contribution of discourse on power applies to many sites of research such as institutions, medicine and mental health. One of the interesting observations made by Foucault is the concept of "subversion", that a more generalised or abstract a discourse becomes, the more likely alternative forms of power will develop (*ibid.*). These alternative forms, 'subversions', are opportunities for specific knowledges which have been marginalised by the scientific discourse or centralised power to emerge.

The unequal power relations within organisations must be challenged as a critical frame is embraced. Smyth (1989, p. 194) points to the need for practitioners to make this shift in mindset and embrace the tenets of criticality:

> Teachers do not see themselves as active learners, inquirers and advocates of their own practice – nor are they encouraged to become critical theoreticians of their own teaching, its traditions and structures within which it is located … the pedagogy of question needs to be embraced and one needs to distance oneself from bureaucracy.

Smyth (1989) further argues that class relations are inherent to a superordinate and social hierarchy within a school. The critical paradigm thus requires a movement away from functionalist approaches and beyond subjectivism to identify and work against the unequal power relations within an organisation. Critical thinkers take up "activist" and "transformational" roles (Gunter, 2012, p. 338). A curriculum premised on this way of thinking should challenge the students to ask new questions that perhaps link professional

practice to wider societal issues. There will be a tendency to break away from drawing on business practice and the organisational theories that were developed for business contexts.

Taking into consideration the discourse of the concepts in this frame such as 'transformational', 'activist', 'critique' and 'power', it is evident that a critical frame, and the research approaches within this frame, seeks the moral base of decision-making and challenges us to make a difference in the lives of individuals in our institutions. Following a critical frame will inevitably lead to questioning the way we do things, the first step in any change process. Research in this approach requires a deeper interrogation and "examination of forms and expressions of power with an end goal of creating more equitable and just social structures" (Foster, 1986, p. 57). Researchers will be encouraged to transform their practices by questioning social domination and repression. The moral aspect will focus on values and one will critique "how created social structures impede the attainment of values such as democracy and freedom" (Foster, 1986, p. 72). In summary, the critical frame is future-oriented by addressing inequality and social justice issues.

Finally, while the genealogy outlined above tells a seemingly coherent story of moving from unquestioning acceptance of effective ways of structuring, managing and leading organisations to a more critical, broader view of these phenomena, the story is by no means without issues and challenges. My attention now turns to some of these.

2.3 Challenges revealed by the genealogy

The literature reveals that educational leadership and management as a field experiences problems pertaining to its knowledge base (e.g. Oplatka, 2008). This manifests itself in different forms which all then contribute to a diversified and fragmented knowledge base. In developing this argument, the discussion below focuses firstly on the paradigmatic shifts of the frames and the lack of continuity in developing the knowledge base. Secondly, the practical and managerial orientation of the field coupled with political interference are discussed and the implications for theory development will be addressed. Finally, I turn to the terrain of research in the field and consider how it restricts knowledge-building of the field. While these challenges are discussed separately to facilitate understanding, I see them as

integrated, with the strands of research, knowledge and orientations all feeding into each other.

2.3.1 Paradigmatic shifts: Does it hamper continuity in the development of the knowledge base?

The first challenge I address is that fact that knowledge workers in different frames have different conceptions of research. Providing a brief overview of the field, Oplatka (2007, p. 93) identifies several different ontological orientations, including the field as a science, politics, craft, moral philosophy, caring practice, problem-solving and policy. During the era of the functionalist frame we saw a reliance on concepts from industry with a strong focus on the mechanistic aspects of management (Bush, 1999). Functionalist research would have been driven by positivistic hypothesis testing. The subjectivism frame required the development of new literature focusing on human relations in educational institutions, asking 'how' questions. This would have necessitated an interpretive approach to research, where researchers sought understanding rather than clear answers. Similarly, the critical frame asks different, more critical questions with a strong focus on bringing about change. As a result, the foci in the literature during the different frames differed. Furthermore, fields and forms of knowledge should be thought of as "more than simply intellectual constructs" (Musgrove, 1968 as cited in Ribbins, 1999, p. 229). They are "social systems sustained by communication networks, material endowments, ideologies, communities of people competing and collaborating, defining and defending the boundaries" (*ibid.*). What emerges here is a picture of discontinuity.

This is neither surprising nor undesirable. Maton (2014, p. 58) describes that new times require new thinking since "existing ideas are no longer legitimate". Furthermore, he mentions that on a field's "fresh page of intellectual history, the field's past is redundant and only nostradami whose works are proclaimed to foreshadow the change may survive" (Maton, 2014, p. 58). The "nostradami", in the case of ELM, are the luminary figures referred to earlier whose work is still regarded as seminal since it often sets new trends and pushes the field forward, intellectually. Maton goes on to describe a situation experienced in the field of British Cultural studies, where there was a tendency *not to build* upon previous knowledge. There was a tendency for knowledge workers "to declare new beginnings, re-definitions and even complete ruptures with the past … with the intellectual field giving the

appearance of undergoing a permanent revolution" (Maton, 2014, p. 39). Can the same be said of ELM? And if so, what are the implications?

ELM scholars have highlighted "the absence of clear boundaries and a unified, cumulative knowledge base, coherent conceptual unity and consensus over theoretical issues in the field" (Oplatka, 2009, p. 2). As a result, topics in scholarly work as well as in programmes in ELM vary widely: ELM does not come across as a "unified profession" (Hills, 1978 as cited in Oplatka, 2009, p. 2). Hoy (1994) points out that knowledge workers in the field are, at different times, focused on different issues. These include social and cultural influences on schooling, teaching and learning processes, organisational studies, leadership and management processes, policy and political studies, legal and ethical dimensions of schooling and the economic and financial dimensions of schooling. While these issues are all central to ELM, the fact that they have received – and continue to receive – unequal emphasis at different times strengthens the notion that the knowledge base appears to be diverse.

Even more worrying is the belief that research does not impact on the field and address substantive problems and hence does not advance knowledge and practice (e.g. Foskett, Lumby & Fidler, 2005).

In summary, the knowledge base in the field of ELM lacks continuity for the reasons described above. Oplatka also confirms this by mentioning that "little cumulative building of knowledge" has taken place in the field (2008, p. 13). It would be unfair to say that the field has no theory: rather, the notion of a central unifying theory is a pipe-dream.

2.3.2 Politics and a practice orientation: Implications for the field

The second challenge relates to the role of the state. ELM – more than most other fields – is often strongly driven, even shaped, by politics. This is because education is a world-wide public right, and providing schooling is universally acknowledged to be one of the state's most important obligations. Naturally then, the state will want to control and guide schooling, which it tries to accomplish through policy.

There are obvious dangers in this scenario. Hoy and Miskel (1996, p. 73) warn that politics can become so powerful "that it creates its own configuration, becomes the dominating process which could be exercised in illegitimate ways". Nevertheless, the political nature of

education cannot be ignored (Smyth, 1989). This manifests itself in a number of ways in the educational context through the implementation of various policies. Policies tend to influence the field of ELM through the provision of practical, professional guidelines, which tend to be included in programmes which feel the need to stress the professional/practical purpose of post-graduate qualifications. Since the policies tend to dictate best practice, they are inclined to promote programmes leaning towards a managerial and functionalist perspective. As Bush (1999, p. 246) warns, the ideologies of the government "drive the agenda, replace the values of practitioners to the implementation of prescribed agendas".

An example of this may be detected in South Africa's obsession with results at school level. In South Africa, a political need for efficiency and results seems to be a priority. The state sees its role in this process as interventionary and monitoring, as seen in this extract from a speech given by the South African Minister of Education (4 January, 2017):

> We are therefore increasingly prioritising interventions and policies that target an improved quality of learning and teaching, and implementing accountability systems to ensure that quality outcomes are achieved.

The use of "accountability systems" suggests a surveillance role for the state, one resting on punishment and reward, and one that few academics may want to subscribe to. But inevitably, this kind of rhetoric shapes the nature of how we think about ELM. The managing of results has a strong leaning towards a functionalist approach with a focus on controlled practice. In line with this way of thinking, principals are held accountable for the performance of their institutions, rather than teachers themselves; hence the emphasis is on control and monitoring, rather than professional growth. Bush argues that this notion of accountability could be regarded as a "comeback of bureaucracy" due to its very nature which serves as a "mechanism for delivering reform rather than a vehicle for institutional initiative and innovation" (1999, p. 247). Even more worryingly, Christie argues that South Africa's policies are mainly suited to well-functioning schools and have unintentionally widened the inequalities between 'good' and 'bad' schools, thereby acting as impediments to growth (2010, p. 708).

The prevalence of a functionalist and/or bureaucratic emphasis, feeds the on-going debate on whether ELM is a substantive, scientific field, or an applied field. Researchers seem to support the notion that ELM is an applied field (Oplatka, 2008). Research on applied fields

suggests that the knowledge base in such fields is problem-oriented seeking to improve practice (e.g. Oplatka, 2008). Much of the literature also alludes to the notion that ELM tends to be practically oriented (e.g. Bush, 1999; Oplatka, 2008). Similarly, Gunter (2012, p. 338) mentions that the emphasis in ELM is less on the body of knowledge and more on professional problem-solving. Ribbins (1999) supports this view by describing the field as technicist and managerial. This orientation has been challenged by scholars, such as Hoy, from the late 1970's. Hoy (1978, as cited in Oplatka, 2008, p. 14) posits that:

> The 1970s bear witness to the vitality of the practice orientation. There is a visible press to focus on practice – a press to train leaders to practice, to perform research to inform practice, and to make decisions to shape practice, a press for development and for practical research.

The focus on addressing practical problems also indicates that knowledge producers borrow from functional approaches, usually from business where description and explanation are the norm (Gunter, 2012, p. 338). Bush (1999) extends this argument by mentioning that the field is "accused of managerialism by stressing procedures at the expense of educational values" (p. 240). This leads to the utilisation of theory in a normative sense which works against pushing intellectual boundaries.

Practice-orientation coupled with theory used normatively has also led to the publishing of a plethora of educational leadership texts which cite popular business texts (English, 2008). The challenge of such texts lies in their oversimplification and a promise of rationality which does not exist in reality (English, 2008). This results in "complex organizational situations to be decontextualized and dumbed down or for them to fit" (English, 2008, p. 160). Furthermore, English (2008) questions the reliability of such texts on the basis of a lack of research. For example, Stephen Covey's best seller *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* which sold over 10 million copies offers research claims, but there is no reported data to support these claims (English, 2008). Samier (2005, p.37) cited in English (2008, p.160) dismisses these texts as "Kitsch management", the "pulp fiction" of the world of management which are works that usually have a "high emotional appeal". In summary, offering tips is not useful to advance a complex field faced with challenges. Although a place may exist for literature of this nature – airport bookshops come to mind – it is no substitute for analysis supported by rigorous research and interpreted through the lens of theory that asks different questions. This is because literature of this kind does not trouble or question what we know

and do – hence it does not contribute to intellectual growth. This discussion on the need for a theoretical lens will be further elaborated upon in Section 2.4. My attention now turns to an elaboration of the research challenges experienced in the field.

2.3.3 A troubled research terrain

Finally, the last challenge relates to significant shifts in research orientations through the various frames (functional, subjectivist and critical). Scholars have highlighted the difficulties experienced by theorists and researchers in the ELM terrain. The question both internationally and in South Africa seems to be: Is research sufficiently related to theory or is it largely a technical activity? Is research rigorous? Are methodological orientations keeping abreast of dynamic contexts? Is small case study research sufficient to contribute to the field's knowledge base? (e.g. Fitz, 1999; Le Grange, 2007; Oplatka, 2008; Christie, 2010). Writing in the South African context, Grant argues that to strengthen the field "there is little choice but to build its scholarship through high quality, relevant and large-scale research" (2014, p. 89). Gunter (2006, p. 6) argues the need to "resuscitate research" as the field "is terminally ill in England". This harsh opinion possibly holds true in other parts of the world. Drawing on Ribbins (2007, p. 19) she says that good research:

> aims systematically, critically and self-critically to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and in doing so has a key purpose … the informing of leadership judgements and decisions in order to improve the educational action.

Oplatka (2008) argues that previous debates on the field's knowledge base, methodologies, and paradigms generated a need to understand what field members studied and researched. It was evident that it "covered a multitude of ideas and activities representing considerable differences of views between various groups within the profession" (p. 15). This is attributed to the varying frameworks guiding research and field members' allegiances to them. In fact, due to this fragmentation, studies are often replicated – without academics even realising – and this does not help to build the knowledge base coherently. This point on research methodology echoes an earlier discussion on a lack of continuity in the development of the knowledge base. Although more research is conducted, it is still insufficient as it lacks robustness (Oplatka, 2008). Unpacking his reference to 'robustness', Optlatka suggests the need for research to be "rigorous and relevant scholarly work that enhances linkages among and utility of educational policy, practice and research arenas" (p. 24).

One of the weaknesses inherent in research in the field – voluminous though it is – is that it is dominated by small-scale case-study research, often based in students' workplaces and usually quite weakly theorised (e.g. Heck & Hallinger, 2005; Grant, 2014). Similarly, the 2009 Audit Review of Educational Research in South Africa also reveals that there is a tendency to focus on research that is small-scale, qualitative in in nature and often descriptive of their practice (Deacon, Osman & Buchler, 2009). Heck and Hallinger (2005, p. 239) argue that we need to be able to separate what moves the field intellectually from what continues to "spin it in ideological and methodological circles". The contribution of small-scale case study research is in my opinion, often restricted to orbit in 'methodological circles' around a nebulous and ill-defined 'sun' (knowledge in and of the field). The small-scale case study provides the depth of understanding but rarely the breadth of the picture that will meet the current demands on methodology (eg. political demands) (Foskett et al., 2005, p. 246). Describing the challenges experienced in the field, Fitz (1999, p. 7) captures the challenges summatively by stating that:

> The lack of an 'ology' and the tendency for management to be situated in isolation from other domains is strongly represented in that genre of writing we call the MEd dissertation. My experience suggests that the genre tends to be dominated by the small case study, qualitatively focused, analytically descriptive accounts of practice. In the main, the genre lacks theoretical ambition and in general fails to explain very much. These accounts also suffer because they do not seem to measure very much, by virtue of their sampling sizes and their research design.

His reference to 'ology' clearly points to what he perceives to be a need for stronger philosophic engagement, an intellectualising of the field through appropriate research. Small scale case studies usually pay insufficient attention to the philosophical, social and moral elements of leadership and management – case studies tend to isolate the case, often in ways which are reminiscent of experimental research conducted in laboratories where all outside influences are neutralised. In the social sciences there are no 'outside' influences that can be ignored. Every force which acts upon the case is part of the complex relationship of the case with its environment, and are therefore paths into the really important questions concerning political, social and moral elements of organisational life.

As a result, field members need to understand the interplay between researching, theorising and practicing in educational settings. In this regard, Gunter and Ribbins (2003, p. 254) argue that "agency to make choices within practices as researchers, theorists and practitioners is

exercised within a complex setting of cultural, organizational and social structures". As a way forward, writing in the South African context, le Grange (2007) posits the need to re-imagine method and methodology due to the nature of the field. He argues that due to the complexity and multiplicity of the field, method should not be enacted so that it produces singularity but "should perform modes of crafting that apprehend multiplicity" (p. 428). This is in alignment with the call for embracing different philosophies. What comes to mind is the philosophy of *Ubuntu* as discussed by Makgoro (1998) which is a fundamental value in the South African Constitution. This value focuses on people, togetherness and 'being good', resonating in some respects with moral leadership. In essence, there is a call for researchers to widen their lenses and theoretical tenets to advance the field. In this regard, Christie (2010) suggests that instead of "singular or monolithic constructs" it may be useful to seek multiple perspectives of the phenomenon studied (p. 695). Another suggestion recommends that agency must be practised in the close-knit relationship of theory, research and practice (Gunter & Ribbens, 2003).

2.4 A way forward: The need for social theory

Theories that have dominated ELM seem incapable of enabling researchers to ask the important questions. Very few theories have, for example, seriously engaged with the notion of power in the management / leadership relationship. Similarly, problems arising from gender or race are often ignored with some exceptions, for example the work of Moorosi or Hall. Traditional leadership theory seems to lack the tools or discourse to adequately engage with issues of social justice and address issues of diversity (Lumby & Coleman, 2007, p. 68). Foster (1986) argues that in constructing an educational theory in ELM, the democratisation of knowledge, social relations, communication and cultural concerns must be considered (p. 21). Taking this argument further, Bates (1989) argues that the implications of a democratic political theory on schooling and ELM must be considered. Issues examining the distribution of knowledge are crucial and organisational members require a critical analysis to ensure that our educational institutions are more humane and equitable places. Supporting this notion, Foster (1986, p. 32) posits that ELM is a "moral science, which means no easy answers, no prescriptions to follow, no recipes, scientific or otherwise, to guide behaviour". This highlights that ELM is about working from a value-laden premise and elements of

understanding and critical inquiry are necessary. ELM is about social change, transformation and empowerment (social justice).

The earlier discussion of the critical frame revealed the need for individuals to take up an agential role to bring about the necessary transformation. The discussion of Giddens' theoretical contribution of structure and agency as well as the theory of power as advocated by Foucault, are seen as tools for thinking in the field of ELM. Similarly, Gunter in her paper "*Thinking theory: The field of education management in England and Wales*" published in 2000, illustrates the value of utilising social theory (Bourdieu's theory of practice) in her intellectual analysis of the field. She mentions that the inclusion of social theory enables "issues of power and social justice to be included" (2000, p. 632). Furthermore, Delanty (1997 as cited in Gunter, Hall & Bragg, 2013, p. 202) affirms that the social sciences need a theory of society which interprets and guides the changes that prevail in our modern societies.

Various knowledge workers internationally and in South Africa support a socially critical approach. For example, in South Africa, social theory such as Cultural Historical Activity Theory is included amongst others, in knowledge work (e.g. Grant, 2017). Social theories are utilised in socially critical projects to "ensure that researchers are not both busy and blind" (Gunter, 2012, p. 339). Furthermore, operating as a critical theorist will assist in an "in-depth analysis of the context within which institutions exist and the object of study" (Fitz, 1999, p. 319). Finally, socially critical approaches will help challenge the unjust realities and bring about the transformation required in educational contexts.

2.5 Concluding thoughts

This chapter has argued for the need to draw on social theory in the field of ELM, since management and leadership theory has been chiefly concerned with efficiency and organisational functioning. In this context, leadership is reduced to an organisational phenomenon, whereas it needs to be viewed as a social phenomenon. Scholars such as Fitz (1999), Gunter (2012) and Grant (2017) amongst others, suggest a way forward, namely that social theory should be drawn on to promote critical thinking in the field.

In line with Kemmis' (1983) argument (as cited in Bates, 2013, p. 198) that if social justice is to be achieved in society, then a focus on curriculum is necessary – I undertake this study on ELM curriculum at a Master's level at South African Universities using social theory underpinned by a critical approach. By utilising social theory, I hope not to fall prey to a "lack of an 'ology' and narrow technicist writing identified in Masters and Doctoral writing" in my study as suggested by Fitz (1999, p. 318). For the purposes of my study, Bhaskar's Critical Realist philosophy will be drawn upon as an under-labourer, as it enables a search for the real structures and mechanisms that lie beneath practices, helping to provide a nuanced understanding of the way practices are shaped and change over time. In addition, Legitimation Code Theory is employed as an explanatory framework to uncover the organising principles that shape and change educational fields, with the field of recontextualisation being the focus in my study. By making such organising principles visible, "LCT enables these bases of achievement to become accessible to more actors, promoting social justice" (Maton, 2016, p. 3). LCT helps to surface concepts and principles which are embedded within practices. By making these explicit, access is achieved which brings about transformation. The use of social theory of this nature will allow me to ask the right questions, and hopefully find helpful answers. My attention now turns to the theoretical perspectives underpinning my study.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Both Bourdieu and Bernstein…hold the position that empirical research without an explicit theory is blind and theory without empirical research is deaf and dumb.

Maton (2005, p. 58)

3.1 Introduction

This study aims to understand and describe the disciplinary knowledge and knower structures that shape ELM at a Master's level at South African universities. Since experiencing and observing a phenomenon and having some knowledge of the practices does not necessary lead to an understanding of what causes it to happen (Danermark, Ekström, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002), I felt the need for tools that assisted me in providing an in-depth account of the knowledge and knower structures in the MEd (ELM) coursework programmes. In order to look at these pertinent aspects, and to establish what was happening beneath the surface or level of experience in my study, I chose a particular theoretical underpinning and a related explanatory and conceptual framework. The study needed to go beyond the empirical level (a level of understanding and interpretation) and social constructivism to surface the underlying principles of the phenomenon under study. Hence, I adopted a social realist approach to theorise knowledge/ knower practices in the MEd (ELM) coursework programmes.

Against this backdrop, in developing the discussion on the theoretical framing of the study, the following will be addressed: firstly, a discussion of critical realism as an under-labourer is provided. Secondly, my attention turns to the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein upon which the foundations of Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) lies. Finally, LCT as an explanatory framework (providing the tools for the study) for understanding, conceptualising and theorising ELM programmes will be explored. In the following sections, I elaborate on how these theoretical positions played a role in the study.

In summary, the diagram below provides an overview of my levels of theorising:

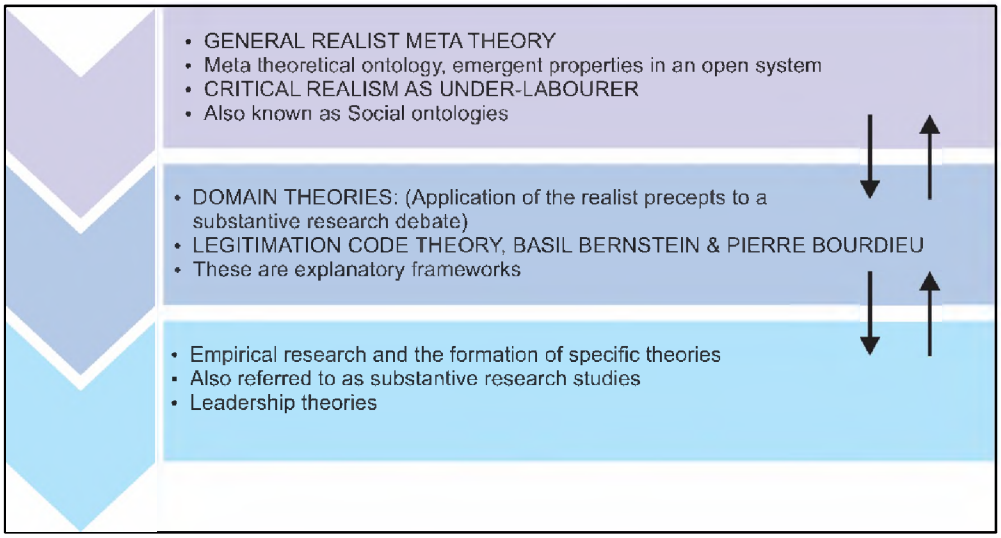


Figure 1: Levels of realist theorising (Adapted from Cruickshank, 2003, p. 144; Maton, 2014, p. 15)

3.2 Critical realism as underlabourer

Critical realism has a realist ontology (a belief that the real world exists independently of our beliefs and constructions) and a constructivist epistemology (a belief that our knowledge of this world is based on our own constructions) and therefore it is "impossible to achieve a purely objective account" (Maxwell, 2012, p. vii). Critical realism advocates that the world is structured, differentiated, stratified and changing (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 5) and that a differentiated reality or depth ontology helps to explain social phenomena by enabling the uncovering of causal mechanisms that have produced them.

3.2.1 Bhaskar's stratified depth ontology

Bhaskar advocates that reality consists of three strata/levels or domains, namely the real, actual and empirical. Bhaskar developed the following table to depict this ontology.

Table 1: Three levels of reality (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 13)

	Domain of the Real	Domain of the Actual	Domain of the Empirical
Mechanisms	✓		
Events	✓	✓	
Experiences	✓	✓	✓

Critical realist research goes beyond the empirical and the actual in order to develop an understanding of the mechanisms that make an event possible. This study investigates the knowledge and knower structures of the MEd (ELM) Masters coursework programmes in South Africa. It is not my intention to only focus on what appears in course outlines of these programmes at face value; I also have an interest in the experiences of the academics involved in the programmes in relation to the documentation. Ultimately, I aim to uncover the generative mechanisms that have given rise to these events or experiences.

The domain of the real exists independently of our knowledge of it. This domain is relatively unchanging and is intransitive. Structures, mechanisms and relations which possess tendencies exist at the level of the *real* and are unobservable, though their effects are felt (Shipway, 2011). In this study, the 'real' would include forces or influences which have shaped and are still shaping ELM curriculum practices. Of the three strata of reality, the domain of the real is of utmost importance and encompasses the domain of the actual and empirical. At the 'actual' level, events caused by structures and mechanisms emerge. These events may or may not be observable and the level is transitive, because human affairs are socially constructed, interpreted and subject to change. In this study, the curriculum and its attendant practices are at the level of 'actual'. Finally, we experience and observe the effects of mechanisms at the empirical level, which is transitive because it is socially defined (Danermark et al., 2002). The academics' understanding and interpretation of their courses is at the level of 'empirical'. However, as Bhaskar (2008) argues, there are relational ties among the three domains and they are not separate entities.

The proposition of a stratified ontology is aligned to the notion of emergence. Critical realism argues that "emergence" is a characteristic of the world (Sayer, 2000, p. 12). This simply

means that the interplay of mechanisms gives rise to new phenomena which cannot be reduced to their constituents – usually a feature in an educational field which is part of the social sciences. The understanding of reality as being stratified and emergent, shows that there is a difference between the worlds studied by the natural and social sciences and this could be the difference between closed and open systems respectively (Danermark et al., 2002). A characteristic of an open system is that there exists different factors that influence experiences and events (e.g. Bhaskar, 2000; Shipway, 2011). The coursework Master's programmes developed by academics are part of an open system and the findings will therefore be fallible / tentative. In my study through the processes of abduction and retroduction (see Chapter Four) it is possible to provide an understanding of structures and mechanisms that cannot be directly observed at the level of the empirical.

In terms of the notion of a stratified ontology, proponents of critical realism posit that in addition to analysing the empirically observable events, there is a need to analyse the generative or underlying mechanisms (Danermark et al., 2002). This philosophical position underpins Maton's Legitimation Code Theory. A critical realist approach thus provides a means through which to explore the research question in my study, by moving beyond the observable events in the empirical domain, to the level of the real. Furthermore, there is an alignment of a critical realist view of knowledge and LCT. LCT draws on the notions of ontological realism, epistemological relativism and judgemental rationality as proposed by Bhaskar (Maton, 2014). Ontological realism acknowledges that there is a real world that exists independently of our perceptions, theories, and constructions of it (Maxwell, 2012, p. vii). This does not suggest that knowledge is an unmediated reflection of reality. In other words, knowledge is about something other than itself and it is more than the "arbitrary expression of power and … reality may react back on knowledge" (Maton, 2014, p. 10). The principle of epistemic relativism states that "all beliefs are socially produced, knowledge is transient and neither truth values nor criteria of rationality exist outside historical time" (Hartwig, 2007, p. 238). This implies that knowledge of the world is not universal and we know the world through socially produced knowledge that changes over time. Furthermore, the "world can be known under particular descriptions" (Sayer, 2000, p. 2). However, this does not mean that all descriptions are equally valid. Judgements among different knowledges is possible (Maton, 2014, p. 10). This issue of judgements brings us to the concept of judgemental rationality which means that we can make a reasoned judgement "which preserves the possibility of rational theory choice" (Shipway, 2011, p. 63). As a

researcher, careful thought must be given to choices so that an informed decision can be made as to why a particular claim about reality was chosen above others.

These tenets have important implications for our views of knowledge. They highlight that knowledge of the world is constructed, "not just as we please, not perfectly or simply by ourselves … it draws on existing knowledge and is produced and judged by socially situated actors" (Maton, 2014, p. 11). Furthermore, Maton highlights the need to explore how knowledge comes to be defined in social and historical contexts: this shows that "knowledge practices are both emergent from and irreducible to their contexts of production" and the "form taken by these knowledge practices in turn shape these contexts" (2014, p. 11). By focusing on the knowledge practices and with "knowledge mediating relations among knowers in a field of practice" (*ibid.*), this study hopes to surface the organising principles of the relations to subjects and objects. Maton (2014, p. 23) uses the term 'knowledge practices' to describe the structuring of knowledge, such as in a curriculum, where knowledge becomes the medium for learning.

In the next two sections, I provide a broad overview of the concepts from the theories of Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein which are pertinent to this study and the development of LCT. The work of these two theorists is integrated into Maton's theory (Legitimation Code Theory) and therefore it is important to consider their work. LCT as an explanatory framework will be discussed in detail later in the chapter.

3.3 Bourdieu's concepts of 'field', 'capital' and 'habitus'

Although I discuss these concepts separately, they are inter-related and provide an overall understanding of field and participants. Bourdieu's is a dynamic theory that evolved over time. I do acknowledge the complexity of these concepts, but for the purposes of my study I address only the concepts appropriate to this research. Hence, some aspects of the notion of 'field' will need to be understood in simpler terms, to maintain the focus of the study. The concepts of habitus, field and capital are the most significant in trying to make sense of the relationship between objective social structures such as institutions, discourses, ideologies and fields and the everyday practices of what people do and why they do it (Webb, Schirato

& Danaher, 2002, p. 1). Hence, these concepts will be useful in making sense of these relationships within the context of my study.

3.3.1 The notion of 'field'

According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), the notion of *field* is "to think relationally" and in analytical terms it is seen as a "network or configuration, of objective relations between objects" (p. 96). Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 98) provide a useful analogy of a "game" to describe a field. They make the point that rules are generally tacit in nature: there are also no global rules for all fields. It becomes necessary for agents to internalise these tacit rules to enable them to make informed choices. The analogy focuses on the example of a good rugby player who can anticipate where the ball will fall and which players will be there before the ball touches the ground. As a field member it is important to understand the rules of the game to ensure successful participation.

There seems to be general consensus in defining the Bourdieusian concept of field. Calhoun, LiPuma and Postone (1993) re-iterate that the concept 'field' helps to provide a relational analysis of the various positions taken by field members. This is in alignment with the notion as advocated by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) who argue that a field is not a "dead structure" or "empty space" (p. 19) but a space where there are agents. In addition, Calhoun et al. (1993) highlight that these positions (within fields) vary socially and historically and each field is "semi-autonomous characterized by its own determinate agents, its own accumulation of history, its own logic of action and forms of capital" (p. 5).

The field of ELM is no exception, revealing all these characteristics of 'field'. The academics and students involved in the MEd (ELM) coursework programmes are the agents who enter the field with their own forms of capital and historical backgrounds. This heightens the diversity in the field, as academics privilege certain knowledge and knower practices in the development of programmes at the various higher education institutions in South Africa. In addition, one would need to take cognisance of the degree of autonomy a field possesses or the degree of permeability of the field. As discussed in the previous chapter, it is evident that ELM draws on other fields and disciplines. Within the field of recontextualisation (the arena where curriculum is developed) with the presence of agents involved in the process, external influence cannot be avoided. The degree of fluidity, that is, the ability to be changed by

internal practices and the external environment (Webb et al., 2002), will have implications for the field's autonomy.

A field as a territory or space has boundaries where activity is structured and there exists an element of control. Fitz (1999, p. 313) draws on Bernstein (1990) and Bourdieu (1988) in defining 'fields' as "scholarly arenas, each of which has their special interest, with their own rules of access, privilege and regulation". For him, they are "dynamic arenas of conflict as occupants seek to determine what knowledge and practices are to be regarded as legitimate and in what knowledge forms and practices they are prepared to invest" (Fitz, 1999, p. 313). Fields are also characterised by "power differentials among the actors who make them up" and this becomes a "battleground where interests, power and prestige all operate" (Houston, 2002, p. 157). In short, a field is not a neutral space. As Gunter (2004) puts it:

> A field is a competitive arena where agents struggle for position and to position others and as a result knowledge production is not about a disinterested pursuit of truth but is a process through which agency and structure interplay (p. 34).

In a similar vein, Bourdieu helps us to conceptualise an educational or intellectual field, in terms of "relationally positioned struggles over status and resources" (Maton, 2010, p. 37). These struggles over the control of an arena as a whole, occur between and within fields. Thus, agents try to maximise their positions in a field, struggling over resources. The relation between these positions gives the field its structure. The field exerts a power of its own over its agents by helping to shape practices occurring within it. Issues of the relative power of the occupants or knowers also heighten the complexity in the field. Naturally, if a field is indeed a 'battleground', one would expect to find tensions and these play a key role in shaping educational programmes, and in this study, ELM programmes, and indeed, the field as a whole.

3.3.2 Capital

Varying types of capital can be employed in a field: economic capital, which focuses on financial resources, social capital (membership of influential social networks) and cultural capital, which is the values associated with tastes, consumption patterns and attributes (e.g. Webb et al., 2002; Maton, 2005). Who you are and what you bring with you, will have a bearing on your membership and participation. Academics in the field of ELM, responsible for the design of the MEd (ELM) coursework programmes, come with capital that influences

what gets legitimated or valued. The knowledge practices are by and large influenced by the academics. Many ELM academics have been professionals for a long time prior to joining academia (e.g. van der Mescht, 2008; Grant, 2014) and as a result their professional experience and the capital they possess, play a significant role in shaping the field. The status of different kinds of capital in a field, raises questions of what becomes legitimate. Bourdieu's approach embraces questions of 'who', 'where', 'what', 'when' and 'how' (Maton, 2010, p. 37). This is linked to the notion of power differentials and Webb et al. (2002, p. 23) argue that the amount of power a person has within a field, depends on his or her position and possession of capital.

3.3.3 Habitus

The concept of habitus refers to socialised norms or tendencies that guide behaviour or thinking. It is the "way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of depositing trained capacities to think, feel and act in determined ways which guide them" (Navarro, 2006, p. 16). Therefore, a deep understanding of individuals' habitus will require an interrogation of how the individual has developed his or her dispositions and attitudes, and how they became who they are (Webb et al., 2002). Habitus is created through a social process and can only be changed by an "unexpected situation and over a long period of time" (Navarro, 2006, p. 16). The relevance of this discussion lies in the fact that the "socialized subjectivity" of individual academics influences the knowledge practices in the programmes (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 126). In addition, Bourdieu highlights that there is a two-way relationship between fields and habitus: the field structures the habitus and habitus contributes to constituting the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

In terms of viewing the field of ELM, these concepts show how the habitus (the capital of academics who design programmes) influences what is considered as legitimate knowledge practices in the field (the programmes). In this way, Bourdieu provides a conceptual discourse to discuss what is empirically evident, the programme content. However, as a tool to explore underlying mechanisms or principles that structure these programmes, the theory has limitations. Maton (2014, p. 20) posits that the field theory is an "unfinished conceptual revolution" which does not reveal the organising principles of academic practices, dispositions and disciplinary fields. Similarly, Grenfell (2004) as cited in Maton (2014, p. 20) argues that the concepts of 'field', 'capital' and 'habitus' help to understand practice, but that there is a need to move beyond surface features to explore the organising principles and

emergent properties in a relational manner. This is where LCT proves useful, since it enables research to move beyond empirical descriptions, to explore the organising principles underlying practices (Maton, 2016, p. 7).

I now turn my attention to the work of Basil Bernstein to discuss those aspects of his work upon which the foundations of the theory of LCT are built.

3.4 Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing, the pedagogic device and knowledge structures

Bernstein's framework is a relational theory which moves beyond empiricism by focusing on the organising principles of dispositions, practices and contexts, to explore the mechanisms generating those phenomena. The following sections explore Bernstein's work on classification and framing, the pedagogic device and knowledge structures which form the basis of LCT. Although these codes and concepts are subsumed in LCT, I deem it necessary to provide an understanding of these concepts because some of his discourse will be utilised in my discussions of the MED (ELM) programmes.

3.4.1 Classification and framing

Classification and framing are used to analyse issues of power and control in pedagogic settings (Bernstein, 2000). *Classification* focuses on the organisation of knowledge and the extent to which a category of knowledge can insulate itself from other categories of knowledge. Therefore, it has to do with the strength of boundaries between categories of knowledge. Stronger boundaries are depicted with a plus sign (+C) and weaker boundaries with a minus sign (-C) (Bernstein, 2000, p. 6). In the context of my study (the field of ELM), there is a tendency to draw on knowledge from other disciplines such as psychology, philosophy, management and education. As a result, this has an influence on the strength of boundaries of categories of knowledge of ELM. Therefore, classification regulates the 'what', which is the content selected and acquired in a pedagogical relationship. *Framing* refers to the locus of control between transmitters and acquirers of knowledge (the ELM academics and students) and this is linked to the selection of knowledge, sequencing, pacing and evaluation as well as the social base. A stronger framing (+F) is indicative that the transmitter has control while a weaker framing (-F) suggests that the acquirer has stronger control (Bernstein, 2000, p. 12). Put simply, framing regulates the 'how' – which focusses on the

transmission of the content and the approach utilised in a pedagogical relationship. These concepts help to shed light on the selection of knowledge and pedagogical approaches embraced in the Master's programmes. These are modalities which reflect the underlying structuring principles which are encompassed in a code (Bernstein, 2000). Classification and framing provide the means to analyse these codes. In the discussion of the pedagogic device which follows, I provide a means of understanding how these codes are established and transformed in different fields of practice.

3.4.2 The pedagogic device

Bernstein poses the question whether there are any general principles underlying the transformation of knowledge into pedagogic communication (1996, p. 39). He developed the notion of the pedagogic device to explain the construction, transformation and communication of the pedagogic discourse. It focuses on the relaying of knowledge across different fields (Bernstein, 2000). This device comprises three fields of practice: the field of production, where new knowledge is produced; the field of recontextualisation, where knowledge is transformed into the curriculum; and the field of reproduction where pedagogic practice (teaching and evaluation) occurs (Singh, 2002).

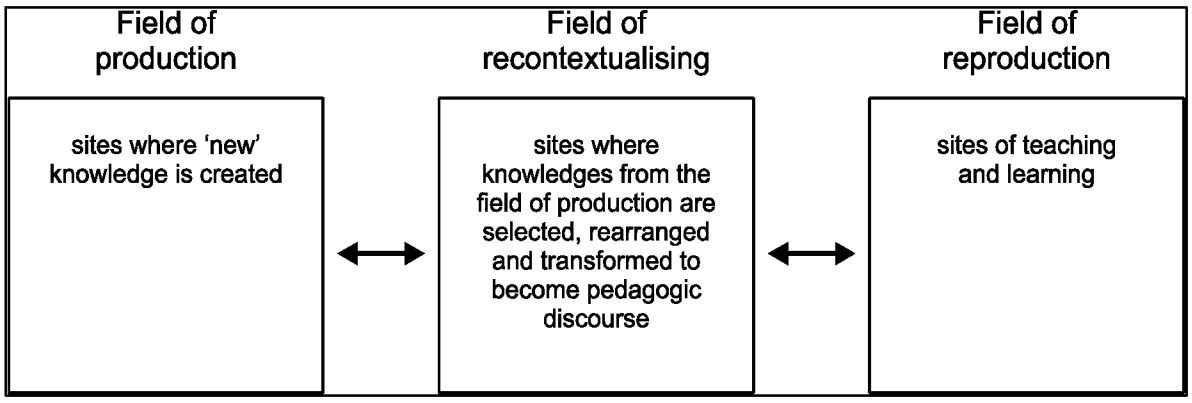


Figure 2: Arena of the pedagogic device

The primary focus of my study is on the field of recontextualisation, where knowledge is transformed so that it can be taught and where decisions are made in terms of the nature and content of the curriculum. Bernstein observed that each field has its own logic which differs from the discourse in the field of production. In this regard, Bernstein posits that "pedagogic discourse is constructed by a recontextualising principle which selectively appropriates, relocates, refocuses and relates other discourses to constitute its own order" (2000, p. 33).

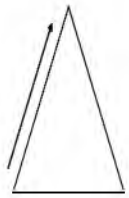
This can lead to a 'discursive gap' which occurs when knowledge is relocated from the field of production to the field of recontextualisation. The academics' understanding and ideologies of knowledge and learning will influence the curriculum they develop. Recontextualising emphasises the 'what' and 'how' of curriculum. In this field, Bernstein differentiates between two sets of recontextualising rules, namely, instructional discourse and regulative discourse. Instructional discourse is linked to framing, which focuses on the selection, assessment and sequencing, as previously mentioned, whereas, regulative discourse focuses on the selection of knowledge to be recontextualised (Bernstein, 2000).

Bernstein's approach attempts to understand the mechanisms and tendencies that give rise to events and experiences. An example is the pedagogic device, and the rules that underpin and act as mechanisms that give rise to events and experiences in each level of the device. His interest was the dynamism of the structure of knowledge which has its own properties (e.g. Bernstein, 1999; 2000). In this regard, Bernstein (1975) as cited in Maton and Muller (2007) acknowledges that the social context shapes knowledge, but emphasises that knowledge has its own properties which shape "social practices, identity, relation and consciousness" (p. 25). The focus of my discussion now turns to knowledge structures.

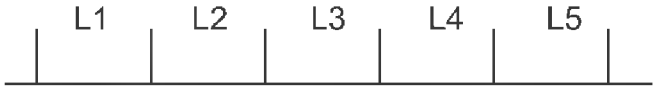
3.4.3 Knowledge structures

Bernstein's later work on knowledge structures is particularly relevant to my study. In this work, he focuses on "how knowledge is organised in different fields, and how the structure of these different knowledge forms impacts on the shaping of educational contexts and the production of identities" (Arbee, 2012, p. 42). Bernstein differentiates between two forms of discourse, horizontal and vertical. Horizontal discourse refers to the everyday, context-dependent, segmentally organised knowledge. All segments of knowledge are not of equal importance. Vertical discourse is hierarchically organised and context-independent (Bernstein, 1999).

Within vertical discourse, Bernstein differentiates between hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures. A hierarchical knowledge structure is a hierarchically organised "coherent, explicit and systematically principled structure" (Bernstein, 1999, p. 159). This form of knowledge integrates knowledge from lower levels and moves to abstraction. The pyramid-like shape depicts the integration of knowledge as one progresses to the higher levels or the apex.



In contrast, a horizontal knowledge structure, takes the form of "a series of specialised languages with specialised modes of interrogation and specialised criteria for the production and circulation of texts" (Bernstein, 1999, p. 159). Visually they can be depicted as:



Within horizontal knowledge structures, each language may have a strong or weak grammar. Strong grammar utilises an explicit language and empirical descriptions; specific theories, tools and procedures must be mastered by an acquirer (Bernstein, 1999). In knowledge structures with weak grammar, the language is not always clearly distinguishable and there is no consensus on what is considered legitimate knowledge (Bernstein, 1999). In addition, the acquirer will have to interact with those with the 'right' knowledge to learn what valued knowledge is (Bernstein, 1999). Below is a diagrammatic summary of Bernstein's concepts thus far (Bernstein, 1999, p. 168)

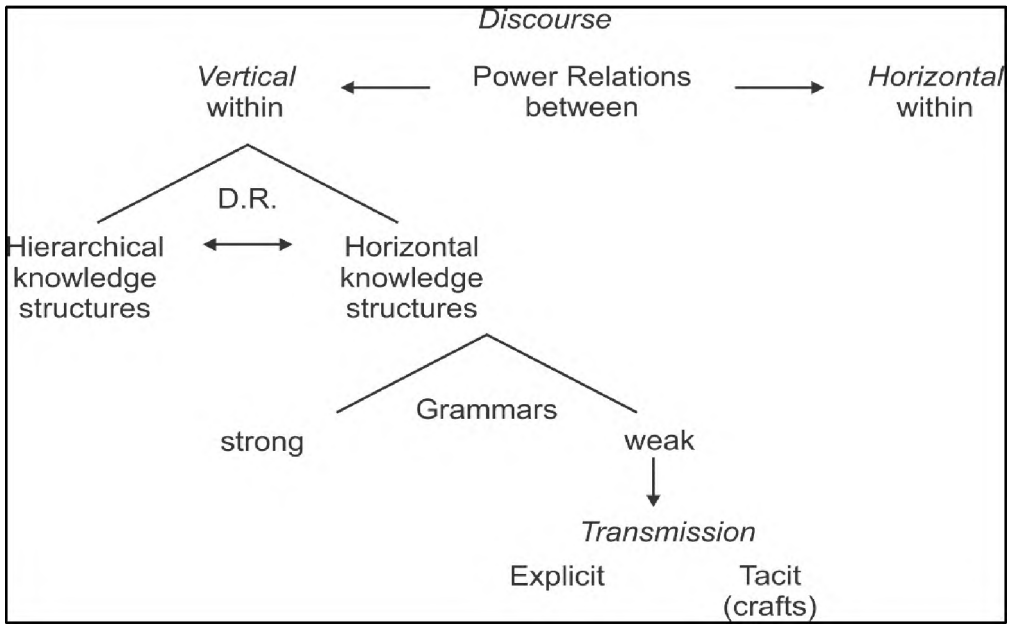


Figure 3: Bernstein's concepts

Any study of a curriculum – as this thesis is – must inevitably answer the question of what constitutes legitimate knowledge, particularly in a field with weak grammars, such as ELM. This question is further complicated by a tension discussed in Chapter 2, namely the tension between professional and academic interests in the field. Here Bernstein's notion of 'region' is helpful. A region is "constructed by recontextualising disciplines into larger units which operate both in the intellectual field of disciplines and in the external field of practice" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 52). Furthermore, "increasing regionalisation is a weakening of the strength of discourses…so there is a change of identity towards greater external dependency" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 52). Power dimensions will have a tendency to become complex and questions about whose interest is being served will need to be asked. This discussion has implications when considering the ELM programmes with respect to what is privileged or valued. The identity of the inhabitants in the field will have a bearing on where the emphasis is placed. More usually, regions are designed to support professional practice. However, as Muller (2009) points out, regions are in no way 'inferior' to 'fields'; but he cautions that "weak regions will serve both the professional community and academia, and therefore deserve strengthening" (Muller, 2009, p. 215).

3.4.4 Maton's critique of Bernstein's work

In developing Bernstein's work, Maton points out that Bernstein does not address how knowledge may develop in disciplines with horizontal structures where knowledge is not always explicit (Maton, 2014). This "makes it difficult to fully understand fields where knowledge is less explicit" (Maton 2009, p. 160). This applies to ELM which, as a social science, has a horizontal knowledge structure because ELM knowledge has grown through a series of specialised languages which is typical in the Humanities and Social Sciences (Bernstein, 1999). The knowledge is not explicit and hierarchically organized. The fact that the knowledge base has developed through the interaction of various field members, adds to this notion. Maton also argues that Bernstein only focuses on knowledge structures and that this does not take into account fields or disciplines where legitimation lies with the knower (Maton, 2010). Finally, Maton (2007) points out that Bernstein's educational knowledge codes account for the "epistemic relation" of knowledge, but not the "social relation" (p. 91). The epistemic relation is between knowledge and its proclaimed object with a focus on what can be claimed as legitimate knowledge and how. Social relations exist between the knowledge and its subject, author or actor who is making the claim (Maton, 2010).

This supports the argument for an account of both knowers and knowledge in the study of curriculum. Legitimation Code Theory is relational and it breaks the false dichotomies and allows one to see options which Bernstein and Bourdieu did not provide for. It draws relations between positivism (absolutism) which is decontextualised and does not always work with humans, and constructivism (relativism) which is contextual and aligns with views of the Humanities. In this way Maton's LCT extends Bernstein's theory as it enables a deeper exploration of knowledge structures and the inclusion of knower structures. This exploration extends beyond intellectual fields to curriculum and pedagogic practice by facilitating an analysis through the provision of concepts for empirical research. The strength of extending Bernstein's 'pedagogic device' into the 'epistemic pedagogic device' as illustrated by Maton, lies in the establishment of a framework for the theorisation of the underlying organizational principles and practices of knowledge and knowing. With the conception of practice as knowledge and knowing, often termed 'languages of legitimation', issues pertaining to the epistemological dilemma are addressed (Maton, 2014).

By incorporating knowledge-knower structures, LCT addresses the issue of how intellectual fields of production and educational fields can be analysed within the same conceptual framework. This nuanced understanding of the framework was critical to my study which focused on curriculum practices in the educational field of recontextualisation. Furthermore, this framework facilitates the study of practice within one field. The diagram below depicts the epistemic-pedagogic device, as advocated by Maton. Although all the fields are closely related, for the purposes of this study as previously mentioned, my interests lie with the field of recontextualisation, with a focus on all South African public universities offering the MEd (ELM) programme. I am aware that the fields influence each other as depicted in the Epistemic- Pedagogic Device (EPD). The EPD is constituted by four logics as represented in the diagram, with the recontextualising logics regulating the *delocation, pedagogising and relocation of knowledges to become pedagogic discourse* (Maton, 2014). On the other hand, distributive logics which govern who can get into a field must be taken cognisance of since it regulates access to transcendental meanings in the domain of all three fields (Maton, 2014). The arrows indicate that knowledge circulates around the arena in reciprocal directions.

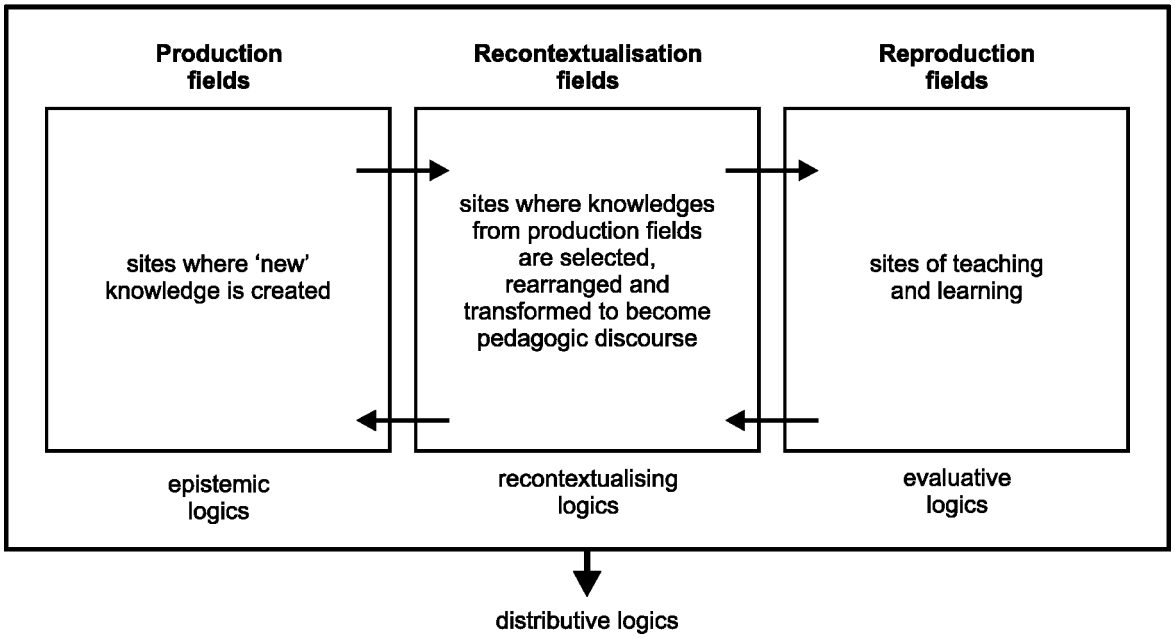


Figure 4: The arena of the epistemic-pedagogic device (Maton, 2014, p. 51)

In summary, Bernstein and Bourdieu lay the theoretical foundations of my study. Bernstein provides useful tools such as the pedagogic device and the structuring of knowledge for thinking about and researching knowledge. His theory emphasises the role played by the structuring of knowledge in shaping explanatory power and the play of positions in fields. Bourdieu focuses on the actors and the various dispositions and capital they bring to the fields by focusing on practices. In this way, they complement each other and in my study they assist to shed light on the issues surrounding knowledge practices in the MEd (ELM) programmes and the type of knower privileged or envisaged. These theories are a part of the foundation of my study which focuses on both the relations *'to'* and *'within'* knowledge. The challenge of bringing both these theories together has been accomplished by Legitimation Code Theory. The analytical sophistication that LCT provides, facilitates a means to deeply examine the coursework Masters programmes by focusing on knowledge and knowers. It is to this theory that I now turn my attention.

3.5 Maton's Legitimation Code Theory (LCT)

LCT is an explanatory framework that is regarded as a practical theory which provides a conceptual toolkit for "analyzing actors' dispositions, practices and contexts, within a

variegated range of fields" (Maton, 2014, p. 17). This practical theory enables one to characterise knowledge practices, highlight the organising principles of the practice and investigate their effects (Maton, 2014). As discussed earlier, the theory has built on Bernstein's code theory and Bourdieu's 'field approach'. This framework draws on critical realism as an underlabourer, thus facilitating my need to examine the underlying structures and organising principles shaping practices at a curriculum level. Issues pertaining to curriculum and knowledge are important. As a researcher, in addition to possessing a particular gaze of seeing, the right "conceptual tools" are required for "analysing this object of study" (Maton, 2014, p. 14).

Maton's theory has been developed around knowledge practices and the dispositions of actors. A key tenet of his work is the concept of 'legitimation'. In this regard, Maton (2010, p.37) posits that:

> When actors make knowledge claims or engage in practices they are at the same time making a claim of legitimacy for those practices. Knowledge claims can thus be understood as languages of legitimation: claims made by actors for carving out and maintaining intellectual and institutional spaces within education.

The rationale for using LCT stems from numerous insights, but more especially from a need to view educational knowledge as legitimation, which is drawn from a statement from Maton (2000, p. 149) that asserts that:

> By conceiving educational knowledge as legitimation, an awareness of the structured and positioned nature of strategic position-takings within a field may be brought together with an emphasis upon the structuring and non-arbitrary nature of potentially legitimate knowledge claims, i.e. embracing 'relations to' and 'relations within' analyses of knowledge, the knower and the known.

My rationale for using LCT is further strengthened by its ability to focus on codes which provide a means to conceptualise the structuring principles of intellectual and educational fields. This was of particular importance as the focus of my study was at the level of recontextualisation (curriculum) which is a part of an educational field. This facilitates an analysis of the underlying structuring principles of curriculum. In addition, Maton's shift of Bernstein's concept of field 'rules' to 'logics', contributes to my understanding that fields and practices will operate in different ways and hence there is flexibility in terms of how practices operate. To re-iterate, Maton does not replace Bernstein and Bourdieu's concepts, but rather

subsumes and develops them further, by the provision of an elaboration on knowledge-knower structures.

LCT offers a nuanced framework for theorising the knowledge and knower practices that are valued at a Master's level in ELM programmes. In this regard, Bernstein (2000) posits that the theory and empirical contexts must be brought together and that this relationship is mutually beneficial because the context can be theorised and the theory will then be able to develop.

As previously mentioned, LCT is an explanatory framework which has a number of tools which contribute to solving problems. These tools are also referred to as dimensions of legitimation (Maton, 2014). The five dimensions of legitimation are: Specialisation (relations between practices and the object and the subject); Semantics (structuring relations to context and the condensation of meaning); Autonomy (structuring in terms of external relations to the field); Density (structuring relations within the field) and Temporality (the structuring of temporal aspects to these relations). These dimensions are built on the concepts of classification and framing, developed by Bernstein. Each dimension can be set to different modalities which, in combination, form the legitimation code (Maton, 2005a).

It is likely that more than one dimension could have been used in my study. However, I have taken the advice of some academics who mention that "one should travel light" (Boughey, 2014) and Maton who posits that "you only need as much theory as the problem-situation demands" (2014 & personal communication, 2015). This means that I will draw only on those tools/dimensions that help to shed more light on my research questions. My attention now turns to ***specialisation*** as the main dimension of the study. This tool will be discussed first because of its relevance to later discussions and because of its particular importance in my study. Thereafter, a brief discussion of ***semantics*** and its relevance to my study is also provided. While semantics is not the main tool for my analysis, I do touch on some of the semantic concepts to strengthen my discussion. Finally, I consider some concluding thoughts on the theoretical underpinnings of my study.

3.5.1 Specialisation

A social field of practice has both knowledge and knower structures. This type of conception facilitates a greater understanding of "how practices specialize identity, consciousness and

relations" (Maton, 2014, p. 66). The discussion below describes the two cultures' debate (science and humanities characteristics) of intellectual fields and argues that a focus on knowledge and knowers provides a comprehensive account of the field in an open and connected manner, which Maton refers to as a "topological account" (Maton, 2014, p. 67). I extend this discussion into educational fields.

3.5.1.1 Knowledge- knower structures in intellectual fields

The two cultures' debate of C. P. Snow (1964) focuses on knowledge structures and knower structures and the role they play in specialising insight and identity in terms of legitimation codes. This debate highlights a struggle for the control of the epistemic device (Maton, 2007). This alludes to the notion that whoever controls this device, legitimises what is acceptable in the field. Below is a summary of this debate in a tabular form.

	Humanist culture	Scientific culture
Epistemic relation	-C, -F	+C, +F
Social relation	+C, +F	-C, -F
Legitimation code	knower code (ER-, SR+)	knowledge code (ER+, SR-)

Figure 5: Summary of debate (Maton, 2007, p. 94)

Note: Classification (C) refers to relative strength of boundaries *between* categories or contexts; framing (F) refers to relative strength of control *within* these categories or contexts; ER refers to epistemic relation and SR to social relation; '+/–' indicates relatively stronger/weaker. The notation for legitimation codes condenses, eg. 'ER (+/–C, +/–F)' to become 'ER+/–'.

Briefly, in the humanist culture, the emphasis is not on knowledge (possession of procedures and skills) and as a result the epistemic relation to the knowledge structure is weakly classified (ER-). The humanist culture represents a horizontal knowledge structure and a hierarchical knower structure. The basis of specialisation is possessing a certain kind of disposition. Thus, the social relation to the knower structure is key to the field. The basis of specialisation in the humanistic culture is not explicit knowledge, but the development of an

ideal knower with strongly bounded knowers, each with "specialized modes of thinking, being, feeling based on different experiences and trajectories" (Maton, 2014, p. 71). On the other hand, the scientific culture emphasises knowledge with the epistemic relation to the knowledge structure strongly classified (ER+). A hierarchical knowledge structure and a horizontal knower structure highlights that the basis of specialisation in the sciences, is knowledge of scientific principles and procedures, regardless of the social backgrounds of individuals. The diagram below represents this discussion.

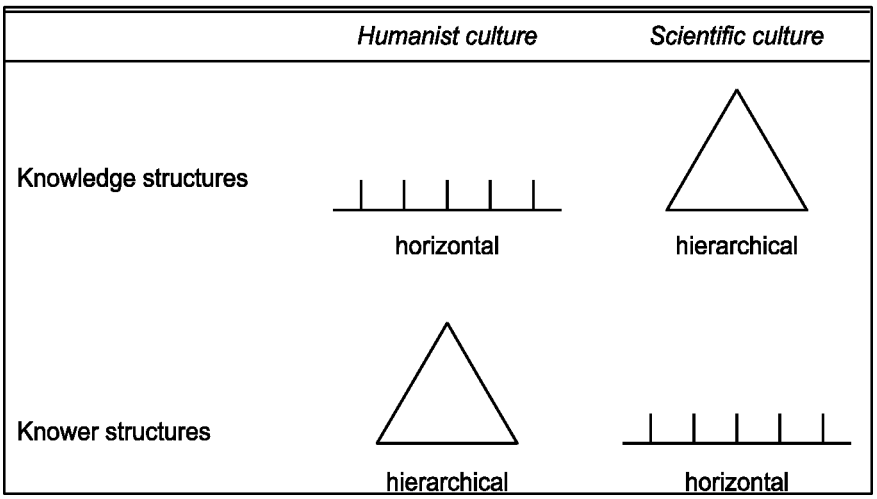


Figure 6: The two cultures as knowledge and knower structures
(Maton, 2014, p. 70)

3.5.1.2 Knowledge-knower structures in educational fields

Bernstein (1977) as cited in Maton (2005), found that two principal modalities dominating educational systems exist. He identified a collection code with relatively strong classification and framing and an integrated code of weaker classification and weaker framing. Hence, Bernstein coded the epistemic relation of educational knowledge codes. Based on the classification and framing of these codes, Maton inverted this assumption and developed the social relation to educational knower structures. This leads me to a discussion of educational knowledge-knower structures.

Drawing on the discussion of classification and framing in section 2.4.1, the educational knowledge-knower codes provide a useful lens for analysing curriculum. A collection code with a strong classification and framing emphasises the possession of educational knowledge, and specialisation is based on the possession of it with the dispositions of knowers playing a

lesser role (-C, -F). On the other hand, educational knowledge is weakened in integrated codes and the dispositions play a stronger role. Bernstein's collection and integrated codes are described as knowledge codes and knower codes (Maton, 2014, p. 75). Engaging with concepts related to knowledge will help me understand issues pertaining to the epistemic relations in the MEd (ELM) programme.

Maton (2009) emphasises that there are always knowledge and knowers, always epistemic and social relations; the question is which of these relations is emphasised in practices and knowledge claims. Underpinning LCT (specialisation) is the notion that educational practices set up what is legitimate to know and who the ideal knower is. Indeed, specialisation refers to the basis of distinctiveness, authority and status, or "what makes actors, discourses and practices special or legitimate" (Maton, 2007, p. 98). This dimension is relevant to my study as it provides an insight into what the basis of legitimacy in the MEd (ELM) programmes is or what is valued.

3.5.1.3 Specialisation: legitimation codes

Languages of legitimation are realised as epistemic and social relations that constitute specialisation codes. Specialisation refers to the notion that human practices are about or positioned towards something and are concerned with the relations to subjects. Maton (2014) argues against dichotomising typologies in educational research and consequently the epistemic relations and social relations must be visualised as intersecting continua that generate a Cartesian plane. The relative strengths comprise the legitimation code of specialisation (ER+, ER-, SR+, SR-). Of significance to my study is the argument that epistemic and social relations can be used both to describe the focus of the curriculum, as well as to analyse the basis of practices (Maton, 2014, p. 31).

The figure below depicts the specialisation codes developed by Maton (2014). There are four specialisation codes namely:

- Knowledge codes (ER+, SR-), where possession of specialised knowledge of specific objects of study is emphasised as the basis of achievement and the attributes of actors are downplayed. There is no social restriction on who may claim legitimate knowledge as long as they master the accepted procedures of knowledge building.

- Knower codes (ER-, SR+), where specialised knowledge and objects are less significant and instead the attributes of actors are emphasised as measures of achievement, whether they are viewed as born, cultivated or socially based.
- Elite codes (ER+, SR+), where legitimacy is based on possessing specialist knowledge and being the right type of knower.
- Relativist codes (ER-, SR-), where legitimacy is determined by neither specialist knowledge nor knower attributes.

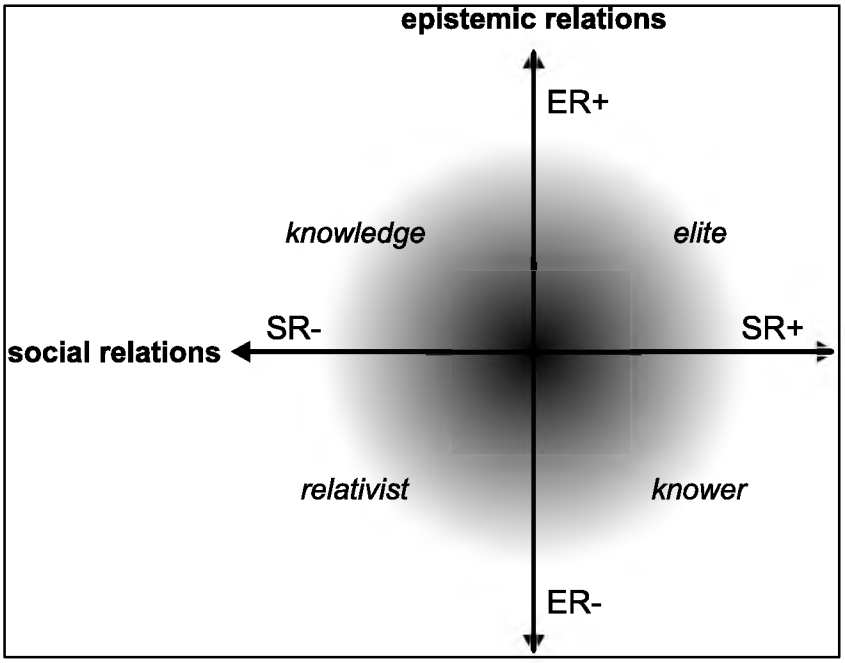


Figure 7: Specialisation codes (source Maton, 2014, p. 30)

Different specialisation codes are associated with different possibilities and constraints and therefore the specialisation codes underpinning Master's programmes in ELM will explicate the principles shaping practice by addressing the question of the relative strength of knowledge, social relations/disposition, neither or both.

For a field like ELM, a strong possibility exists (education is a part of the humanities) that these codes are not based on explicit structures of knowledge but rather a knower structure. Therefore, the structuring of knower structures must be interrogated. Maton (2014) posits that in terms of non-scientific dispositions, the horizontal knower structure can be represented in a

similar manner as a horizontal knowledge structure (discussed in Section 2.5.1.1) as k^1, k^2, ... k^n.

The humanities also possess a hierarchical knower structure. This is represented by a triangle of knowers which is based on the view of an ideal knower which develops through the integration of new knowers at lower levels and expanding across a range of different dispositions. This discussion can be summarised in the graphic representation below.

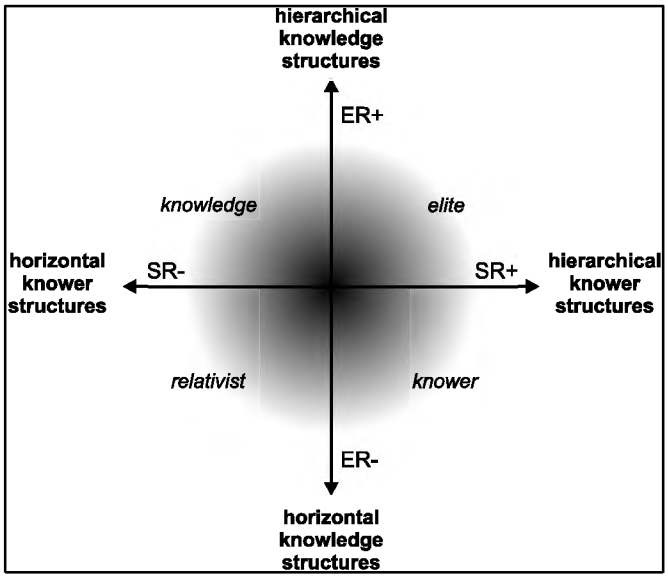


Figure 8: Knowledge- knower structures and specialisation codes (Maton, 2014, p. 93)

3.5.1.4 Illuminating knowers, knower structures and gazes

Maton (2014, p. 87) argues that cumulative progress is possible in fields (such as the humanities) with horizontal knowledge structures and weak grammars. However, a different way of viewing fields is required. This brings in the concept of 'gazes' because knower structures in the humanities express a stronger sociality. Knower structures are based on legitimate knowers. Knowers can achieve this legitimacy through the development of a gaze. The strengths of knower grammars help shape the conditions for entry and progress in the field: progress is vertical in the knower structure. The weaker the knower grammar (SR-), the more open the field is to receiving and inducting new knowers into its practices (Maton, 2014). The diagram below maps these gazes. Maton (2014) distinguishes between four possible gazes. Each gaze represents different strengths of social relations, ranging from relatively weak to strong.

The figure below depicts the continuum of gazes in relation to the strengths of their social relations.

Figure 9: Continuum of gazes (Source Maton 2014, p. 95)

I now turn to addressing the key tenets of these gazes.

A born gaze is linked to natural ability/talent that an individual possesses. The knower is born with the disposition to play music or create art. On the other hand, a social gaze is acquired by belonging to a social category. Race, social class, gender and sexuality are relevant categories. Moving towards the weaker SR on the continuum is a cultivated gaze. Legitimacy in the field is acquired through a particular way of being, seeing or acting. This gaze can be taught or learnt. Finally, a trained gaze can be acquired by any individual who is willing to be a part of learning procedures related to knowing in a field. As Maton puts it, "social fields are knowledge-knower structures" (2014, p. 96).

This shows that all fields will include gazes. Knowledge-code fields involve a trained gaze and knower-code fields involve born, social or cultivated gazes (Maton, 2014). The kind of gaze underlying a field's knower structure will influence a field's capacity for progress. A born gaze is difficult to attain: one needs to be a part of the privileged knower group. Social gazes are less fixed but relatively strong, restricting members to particular social categories, whereas legitimacy through a cultivated gaze can be acquired through prolonged immersion in a way of "being, seeing or acting" (Maton, 2014, p. 96). Knower dispositions can be inculcated from prolonged exposure (*ibid.*). Research also indicates that a particular type of pedagogy is required to achieve this gaze. Furthermore, developing a cultivated gaze is shaped by experience, shared engagement and exposure to cultural works (Maton, 2015, p. 97). A trained gaze is relatively the weakest and can be gained through training in specialised principles or procedures. Maton (2014) posits that a trained gaze is applicable to a knowledge-code field (p. 96).

Figure 10 below illustrates the growth of a hierarchical knower structure with a cultivated gaze. The degree of the interactional and subjective relations will have a bearing on cultivating a gaze. Interactional relations refers to the ways of engaging with legitimate knowers so as to be inducted into the field (Maton, 2014). For example, in this study the pedagogical approaches and assessment practices embraced in the MEd (ELM) programmes, will determine the strength of these interactions with the knowledgeable other. Subjective relations on the other hand are specialised in terms of who they are and are based on social class, gender, or any other possible category for defining knowers (Maton, 2014, p. 185).

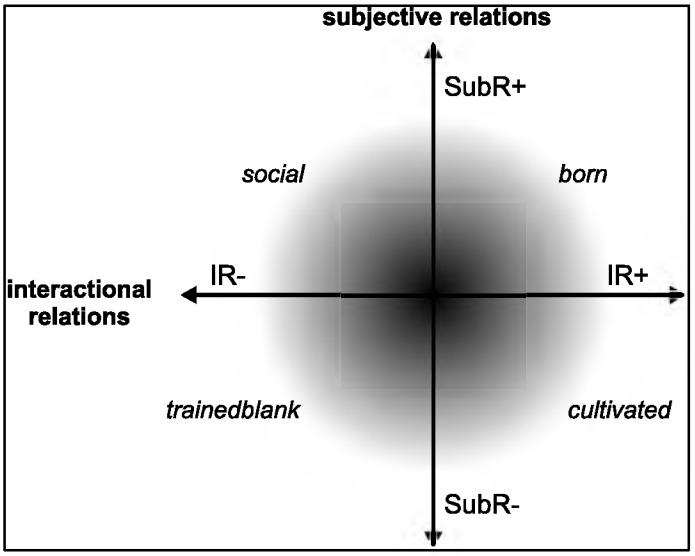


Figure 10: The gazes' social plane (Maton, 2014, p. 186)

It made sense for me in my study to embrace the concept of gazes as it would help clarify my understanding and surface the underpinning principles of pedagogical and assessment practices in the programmes. Engaging in a discussion of gazes and knower-related aspects of the specialisation codes would provide clarity on the social relations aspect of specialisation.

To contribute to my understanding of what promotes legitimacy in a field, I now briefly discuss semantics, as this will also provide a theoretical lens to view curriculum and its related practices and a language to describe some of these practices.

3.5.2 Semantics

Shay (2013) argues that Bernstein offers a language of description for intellectual fields which are the fields of production. His focus was not to describe what happens when

knowledge gets recontextualised for curriculum purposes. Maton's codes of semantics can be used to describe the internal and external relations to educational knowledge.

Semantic gravity provides a tool to understand the type of learning taking place. Although my study is not of the field of reproduction, this tool will help provide insights into the field of recontextualisation from my data sources (course outlines and interviews).

Semantic gravity (SG) can be described in terms of the degree to which meaning relates to context. Semantic gravity is thus defined as stronger when meaning is more closely related to its social or symbolic context. One can describe the process of strengthening semantic gravity as moving from abstract and generalised ideas toward concrete and delimited cases. Weakening semantic gravity will involve moving from concrete particulars towards generalisations and abstractions, whose meanings are less dependent on the context (Maton, 2014, p. 110). Maton argues that "movements in semantic gravity provide a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for the recontextualisation and recontextualisation of knowledge and thus the possibility of cumulative knowledge-building and learning" (2014, p. 123).

Figure 11 illustrates semantic gravity and the structuring of knowledge. Maton cautions that one must not assume that hierarchical knowledge structures result in cumulative learning. The outcome needs to be established though empirical research.

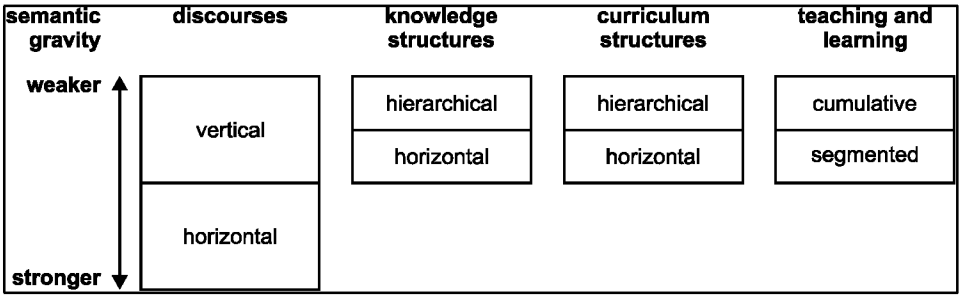


Figure 11: Semantic gravity and the structuring of knowledge (Maton, 2014, p. 111)

Gamble (2009, p. 11) takes the discussion of horizontal knowledge (especially the practical forms) further, by bringing in the concepts of "procedural" and "principled" knowledge. Shay (2012, p. 316) expands on Gamble's work by devising a knowledge typology by referring to context-bound knowledge as "procedural knowledge" and the conceptual scientific world/ context independent knowledge as "conceptual knowledge". In Figure 12 it is evident that procedural and conceptual knowledge can be principled. Shay argues that the procedures themselves have a direct bearing on the principles emerging in "principled procedural knowledge" and that they emerge from a codification of practice. On the other hand, in proceduralised conceptual knowledge, the principles emerge from the theory/conceptual domain (Shay, 2012). This highlights that there is a distinct difference between procedural and conceptual knowledge. The illustration below provides a summary of the discussion.

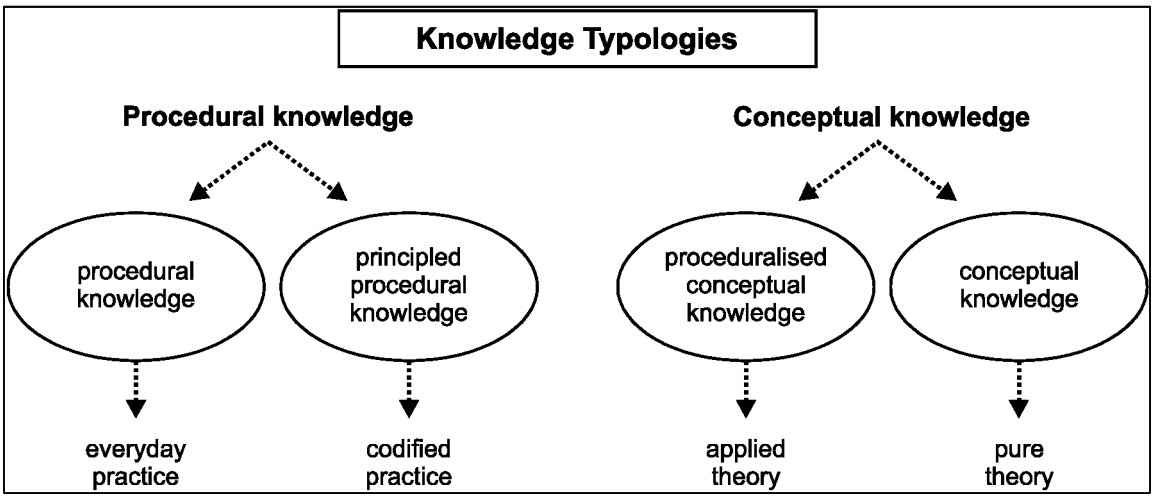


Figure 12: Knowledge typologies (Shay, 2012, p. 316)

A curriculum can also be distinguished on the basis of its conceptual or contextual coherence (Muller, 2009). Conceptual coherence refers to curriculum where the logic is derived from the conceptual building blocks of the discipline, where a hierarchy of conceptual difficulty and abstraction exists. This is relevant in a vertical curriculum where sequencing, pacing and logic also matter (see Figure 11). On the flip side of the coin, to achieve contextual coherence the logic comes from the external purposes/requirements of the curriculum. Parts of the curriculum are segmentally connected, where each segment is for a purpose appropriate to the context. In this case, the sequence does not matter and the more modularisable the curriculum becomes. As previously mentioned, programme designers can impose whatever curriculum logic they prefer. However, Muller (2009) argues that the curriculum logic must be

compatible with the disciplinary knowledge structure. The above discussion on these logics must not be thought of as dichotomous, but rather along a continuum thus the issue of relativity is important. There will always be elements of both (conceptual and contextual coherence) in a curriculum. The question that arises is: *Which is privileged?* In fact, Shay (2012) argues that at different points in the curriculum/programme, different logics can exist. Furthermore, a study conducted by Shay (2012) indicates that by plotting the relativity of a course either being conceptually or contextually coherent along a continuum and differentiating between the types of knowledge, she was able to establish different curriculum possibilities in the modules between a Journalism Degree and a Journalism Diploma. Figure 13 below depicts these possibilities.

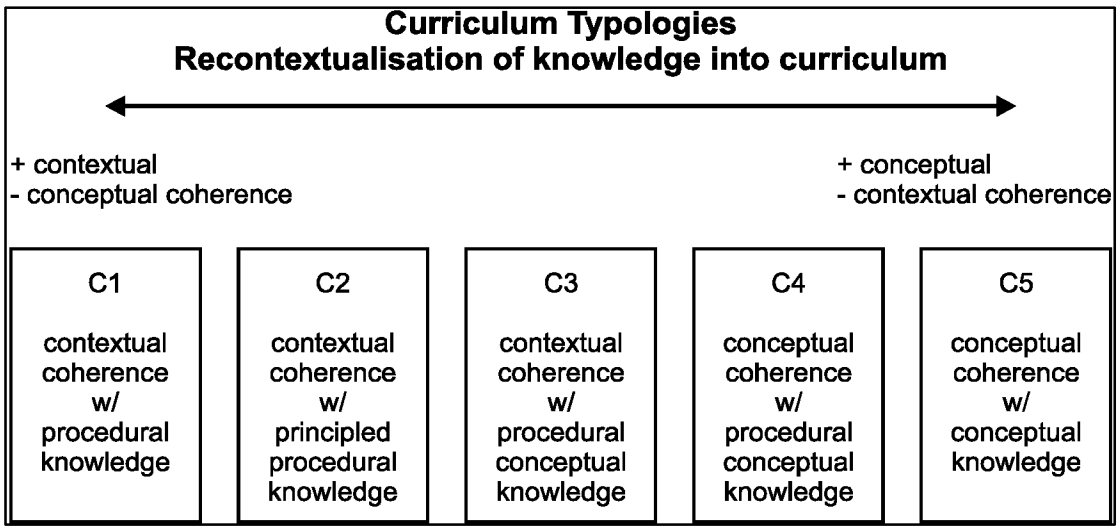


Figure 13: Curriculum typologies (Shay, 2012, p. 318)

The discussion thus far on the types/forms of knowledge, raises important questions for my study. For example – *do ELM academics in developing their course outlines, draw on procedural knowledge (practice) or conceptual knowledge (theory) or both? Are programmes more conceptually or contextually oriented?*

Semantic Gravity as a tool and other related concepts would help me identify the nature of knowledge in the programmes. Furthermore, a semantic analysis of assessment tasks would shed light on student learning experiences and the possibility of knowledge-building.

Semantic Density (SD) is defined as the degree of condensation of meaning within socio-cultural practices (terms, phrases, concepts, expressions, gestures, actions). The stronger the semantic density (SD+), the more meaning is condensed within symbols; the weaker the semantic density (SD-), the less meaning is condensed (Maton, 2014, p. 129). For example, in ELM an everyday understanding of the term leadership will display a weaker semantic density, whilst an academically informed understanding will reveal a stronger semantic density.

In summary, semantic codes have implication for the type of knowledge and knowledge-building in the field under study. The movements in semantic gravity and semantic density is a concept Maton refers to as the semantic wave. Semantic codes can be represented diagrammatically as follows:

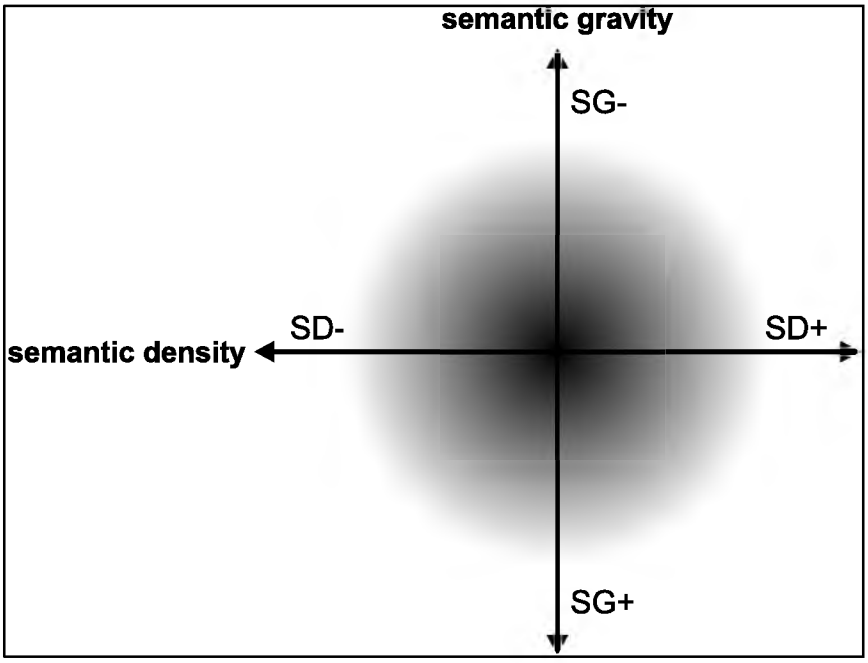


Figure 14: The semantic plane (Maton, 2014, p. 131)

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have introduced the reader to the theoretical underpinning, explanatory framework, and related concepts supporting and guiding my study. I have argued that it is

necessary to use critical realism as an under-labourer. Legitimation code theory is the explanatory framework of the study. The discussion has shown that LCT has drawn on Bourdieu's field theory and Bernstein's code theory. Bourdieu's concepts such as habitus, capital and field which contribute to understanding issues of power, were addressed. Bernstein's theory which focuses on educational knowledge codes, the pedagogic device, vertical and horizontal discourses, including knowledge structures were also elaborated upon. Thereafter, I have argued that Maton's LCT which integrates and extends the work of Bourdieu and Bernstein would provide a nuanced understanding of curriculum-related matters in my study. LCT integrates and extends Bernstein's and Bourdieu's work by looking at the epistemic and social relations both to and within knowledge was elaborated upon. In this study, LCT facilitates finding out the principles underlying the practices in the MEd (ELM) programmes. The dimensions of specialisation and semantics together with other concepts drawn from Gamble (2009), Shay (2012) and Muller (2009), extended the discussion on the relevant theoretical concepts for the study.

In summary, this chapter provided an overview of the theoretical concepts pertinent to answering the research questions of my study. The next chapter focusses on the methodological considerations embraced in trying to answer my research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Three provided the reader with a discussion of the theoretical foundations of the study. The explanatory framework and concepts underpinning the study were highlighted. This chapter provides an overview of the methodological and analytical practices the study employed. Since the theoretical and methodological underpinning in the study go hand-in-hand, there needs to be a clear alignment between them. In this chapter, I examine the research design and methodology of the study. According to le Grange (2007, p. 422) methodology is the theory of knowledge and the philosophical framework guiding a particular research project. Taking cognisance of this definition, I start by looking at the methodological approach adopted in the study. I then move on to describe the research design, providing a rationale for the decisions made with regard to the selection of participants, as well as data generation methods. Issues of validity, trustworthiness and positionality are also addressed. I then describe how I analysed the data.

4.2 Methodological orientation

As mentioned in Chapter Three, this study adopts a realist orientation, with critical realism being the underlabourer. The purpose of this section is not to provide a description of critical realism but to alert the reader to its relevance to this study. However, as a reminder of what was discussed in Chapter Three, I offer a few points. As an underlabourer, critical realism facilitates an "understanding and an explanation of events and also provides a possible direction of how we should respond to events" (Houston, 2010, p. 77). Critical realism contributes significantly to studies in the social sciences and is premised on the notion of a stratified ontology with the 'empirical' being the level of experience, the 'actual' the level of events and the 'real' the level of generative mechanisms (e.g. Houston, 2010, p. 88). Contrary to positivism, proponents of critical realism posit that there is no direct relation between cause and effect. Instead causal analysis is underpinned by a number of mechanisms (Danermark et al., 2002), mostly hidden and exposed only after careful analysis and abductive processes. Human agency and social structures exhibit causal powers in an open system (Houston, 2010). As a researcher it is imperative, therefore, to understand the

interconnection between these dimensions and accept that a reality exists independent of our knowledge of it (ontological realism). In this sense, critical realism rejects the relativism that inevitably accompanies interpretivist research findings.

An independent reality exists which is not always readily observable (Danermark et al., 2002). Legitimation code theory (my explanatory framework) aligns with a critical realist depth ontology by allowing researchers to get, metaphorically speaking, "under the surface" of appearances to reveal the organising principles (Maton, 2014, p. 16; Maton, 2016, p. 7). This approach helped me uncover the organising principles in terms of specialisation codes (knowledge and knower structures underpinning the Masters programmes in ELM at higher education institutions). Furthermore, in trying to unravel what is below the surface, LCT helps to move beyond the context-dependence and segmentalism of empiricist models (Maton, 2016, p. 7). Therefore, critical realism as the underlabourer and LCT rejects the notion that knowledge of the reality can be objectively established. Furthermore, both these approaches value issues of social justice and transformation (e.g. Maton, 2016, p. 3).

Critical realism is particularly well suited as a companion to case study research (Easton, 2010). As Sayer (2000) argues, "In both everyday life and social science, we frequently explain things by reference to causal powers" (p. 14). Critical realism mirrors the language and procedures we routinely adopt and the explanations that we create. We use causal language without thinking. Similarly, Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 20) posit that case studies provide the "possibility for understanding latent, underlying or non-obvious issues". The term 'case study' may refer to several different epistemological entities (e.g. Easton, 2010, p. 118). In this study, the case, and unit of analysis, is the coursework MEd programmes in ELM. Furthermore, in a critical realist approach, a distinction is made between extensive and intensive research designs. An extensive research design has to do with quantitative data collecting and statistical analysis, whereas an intensive approach focuses on generative mechanisms (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 166). In this study, I was mostly concerned with understanding the underlying organising principles of the Masters ELM programmes, and thus I embraced an intrinsic research design, using a qualitative research approach. In summary, a case study allowed me to "retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" such as understanding the knowledge and related practices of academics (Yin, 2009, p. 4).

Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach and tries to understand phenomena in context-specific, real world settings (Golafshani, 2003). It is an open approach to research with a variety of understandings, depending on the philosophical paradigm of the researcher (Golafshani, 2003, p. 600). There is a strong focus on the real world and peoples' everyday practices.

A case study approach seeks to engage with and report the complexity of social and educational activities by asking the basic question 'what is going on here?' (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 53). As a result, a qualitative research approach allowed me to study the knowledge and knower structures of the Masters ELM programmes by trying to make meaning of the practices in the various programmes. Furthermore, this approach provided me with the flexibility of investigating 'real' situations in natural settings, data drawn from multiple sources and a holistic description provided through an iterative research process (Easton, 2010). There are no specific requirements guiding case study research (Yin, 2009) which allows the researcher flexibility and creativity – an approach which could be seen as a strength or a weakness. It is therefore imperative to demonstrate rigour in the research design through attention to aspects such as reflexivity, which will be addressed later on in the chapter.

Stake (1995, p. 45) expresses a commonly held reservation about qualitative research, namely, that it is "subjective". Even in this study where a carefully framed analytic code was applied in the process of data analysis, it was impossible to eradicate elements of bias and pre-conceived notions. Moreover, the usual critique of case study research, namely that "it is difficult to generalise from a single case" (Bassey, 1999, p. 36), does to some extent apply to this study. It can of course be argued that this study looked at the majority (six out of seven) MEd ELM programmes in South African universities and that findings are then likely to be valid for higher education in South Africa as a whole. Nevertheless, a more powerful argument springs from Bhaskar's notion of "judgmental rationality" (Scott, 2013, p. 36) which is the third premise of critical realist reasoning (the first two being *ontological* realism and *epistemic* relativism as discussed earlier). Judgmental rationality holds that while competing explanations (theories) of phenomena and events are all fallible, some are more rational (and convincing) than others. Bhaskar (as cited in Scott, 2013, p. 36) argues:

> However, if the relation between the theories is one of conflict rather than merely difference, this presupposes that they are alternative accounts of the same world, and if one theory can explain more significant phenomena in terms of its descriptions that the other can in its, then there is a rational criterion for theory choice. … In this sort of way critical realism claims to be able to combine and reconcile ontological realism, epistemological relativism and judgmental rationality.

4.3 Restating the goals and research questions

The chief goal of the study was to interrogate ELM knowledge practices recontextualised as curriculum at the Master's level, focusing on:

- What counts as knowledge and why;
- The structure and the underlying principles of the knowledge and knowers in the programmes, employing Maton's LCT.

The central research question of this study is:

What knowledge and knower structures characterise the MEd Coursework programmes in the field of Educational Leadership and Management at public higher education institutions in South Africa?

Sub-questions:

- *What constitutes legitimate knowledge practices in the MEd (ELM) programmes and why is this the case?*
- *How do programmes position and envisage knowers in the field, and how has this come to be?*

4.4 Sites of research, participants and ethical considerations

This study investigated programmes of all higher education institutions which offer the coursework of Master's in ELM and who were willing to participate in the study. My reasons for focusing on the Master's level are similar to those put forward by the HEQC study mentioned earlier in Chapter One. The HEQC chose to focus on Master's ELM programmes since this was where student numbers had experienced rapid growth. The Master's was also considered to be the earliest level at which knowledge creation, dissemination and theorising was likely to receive attention (CHE, 2010). The HEQC Audit Report also proved helpful in identifying the HEIs that offer a MEd ELM coursework programme in 2010. The review

found 14 sites at which the programme was offered, though a few programmes were being 'taught out' at the time.

However, a lot changed after the review. After the painstaking effort of contacting all the universities, it was revealed that many South African universities had abandoned the coursework Masters ELM programme and only offered a Masters in ELM through a full thesis. Initially, I had envisaged that approximately 14 programmes would be the focus of the first phase of the study. However, in reality only seven universities in the country offered the coursework programme, of which six universities were willing to participate in the research. The seventh university never responded to my requests and questions. I could therefore claim that the sample was representative of coursework Master's programmes in ELM at public South African universities. There are two guiding principles in selecting settings and participants in qualitative research. Firstly, "to identify group settings and individuals that best exhibit characteristics or phenomena of interest" and secondly "to select those who are more accessible" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 94). In my selection of the site and participants, I was aware of these principles. The universities that participated in the research were mainly traditional universities, with one being a comprehensive university. In the South African context, a traditional university offers theoretically-oriented degrees and a comprehensive university offers a combination of academic and vocational diplomas and degrees (CHE, 2016, p. 6). In each of these universities the participants were the co-ordinators of the Masters' (ELM) programme or an academic who had taught on the programme and was willing to talk about the programme. In two universities, two academics were willing to participate in the research. In total, there were eight research participants: four research participants were at professor level and the other four participants possessed doctoral degrees, thus indicating all were qualified in the field.

Access was negotiated through careful consideration of the research participants. Cavan (1977) as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p. 58) argue that "although ethics has been defined as a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others and while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better". Bearing this in mind, careful attention was given to ethical issues that confronted me as a researcher. To conduct the research, I gained ethical clearance from Rhodes University – where the study was registered after going through a stringent process. Access was then negotiated and consent obtained from the institutions and participants. I sent out a letter inviting the academics to participate in the research, together

with the ethics approval letter from Rhodes University. The letter provided details on the nature of research and participants completed informed consent letters (e.g. Appendix A & B). Issues of access differed amongst the institutions – at some it was a simple process to negotiate access, whereas others had strict gate-keeping processes. I had to obtain consent from the research participants and, in some cases, the Deans of the Faculty at the different institutions. This was a challenging and time-consuming process. One particular institution required me to complete the necessary forms and submit an extensive 100 page document. It was an iterative process with many questions being raised, but finally consent was obtained.

However, negotiating access was not only seen as a technical aspect. I was also guided by the arguments of Maxwell (2013) who posits that it is also about negotiating a relationship, as it structures your interactions. Furthermore, the "on-going contact with research participants including data collection continually restructures these relations" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 90). This is in line with Hammersley and Atkinson (2007 as cited in Maxwell, 2013, p. 90), who argue that "the fact that the researcher is part of the social world that he or she studies and can't avoid influencing this or being influenced by it" requires reflexivity due to the complexity of relationships. In this regard, I ensured that in addition to the procedural ethics as described above, ethics in practice was also considered. The day to day ethical issues that arose during the journey were addressed in an appropriate and morally acceptable manner. The three ethical principles of autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence as identified by many authors (e.g. Bell, 1999; Cohen et al., 2007) were given utmost priority. The discussion on ethics is on-going and will be included in various sections further on in this chapter.

A pilot study of the research process was conducted at the university where I am currently employed, prior to the fieldwork. This was necessary to develop the methodology, trial the tools and amend the tools as required.

4.5 Data generation

Data was generated in two phases. During the first phase, the MEd (ELM) coursework documents of all six South African universities participating in the study were analysed to get an overview of the programmes and in response to the central research question. The document was a course outline from each of the six universities which also included some

assessment tasks and rules pertaining to the overall expectations of the programme. The analysis of these documents informed the second phase of the research. These were differences in terms of the structure, length and attention to detail paid in the course outlines, with some course outlines providing more information than others; some included all assessment tasks whilst others not.

The reason for embarking on the second phase of the research was to dig deeper into the case by hearing the voices of programme designers and lecturers. Allowing the voices to be heard in the study is in keeping with Fataar's argument for the need to include the social-subjective in our theorising (2016, p. 10). The second phase took the form of a more rigorous exploration through individual interviews with participants. Another reason why interviews were necessary is that the course outlines did not adequately capture what was envisaged in the programmes. Initially, I had planned to choose particular universities or cases to interview for the second phase. However, due to there being only six universities in the first phase, I decided to include all six institutions in the second phase. A detailed description of these data generation methods now follows.

4.5.1 Document analysis

A review of purposefully selected documents was conducted through a systematic procedure for reviewing printed and electronic material (Bowen, 2009). Documents as part of a case study approach are very useful in data generation because of their stability, unobtrusiveness, breadth and precision (Yin, 2009). In this case, documents were key evidence sources. A systematic review of course outlines, which included assessment tasks and expectations, provided by ELM lecturers was conducted. The documents included course outlines for each module if the university adopted a modular approach. As previously mentioned, the course outlines varied across the universities, with some providing more detail than others. Even within a university the depth and style of the course documentation varied. Close textual analysis provided rich insights into how programmes selected and organised knowledge and how they positioned students and lecturers. Both Bernstein and Maton's theory were used to shape this analysis. The information contained in documents facilitated the development of additional and specific questions that needed to be asked during the interview process. I viewed the documents provided as empirical knowledge, as they provide an account of the knowledge and knowers in the curriculum. An early analysis of the documents "reduces the problem of data overload by selecting out the significant features for future focus" (Cohen et

al., 2007, p. 462). Initially, the document analysis was conducted in an inductive manner and at a much later stage the research question guided the process. See Section 4.6 for more detail on the analytical approach adopted. Even though I could learn through documents, I found it necessary to recognise the voices of the respondents to fully understand the phenomenon under study.

4.5.2 Individual interviews

The purpose of a research interview is to "probe a respondent's view, perspectives or life history, i.e. the exchange should be far more in one direction than another. It is rather more than a conversation with a purpose. A voice is given to the respondent" (Wellington, 2000, p. 72). Through interviews one can probe and the interviewees' perceptions, thoughts and views can be established. The interview is a critical strategy in generating the intersubjective features of social life (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 65). Since the approach adopted in the study is realist, peoples' accounts are important to explore the level of the real (Maxwell, 2012). Based on the first stage of analysis which was a document analysis, I prepared an interview schedule to probe the respondents' understandings of and insights into how their course outlines or curricula, position knowledge and knowers. In developing these questions, I drew on Maton's methodology in his study of music (2007) and Chen's study of online learning (2010). A pilot interview was conducted with one of the academics at the institution where I am employed. This together with my research interest and context, facilitated the development of my final questions (see Appendix C). The pilot interview provided me with an opportunity to revisit some of my questions and made me realise that some of the questions were directly driven by my framework and were perhaps too theoretically loaded.

Following the pilot phase, eight participants were involved in my study and I interviewed each participant once. The interview attempted to develop and clarify ideas gleaned from the course outlines. Interview questions were prepared to guide the discussion. Generally, similar questions were asked at the different institutions. However, it was necessary to probe certain specific aspects as found in the respective course outlines. A discussion of the course outline with respect to what was included and why, lecturers' views on the interplay of the practical and theoretical nature of the field, their teaching and assessment practices and their views on social theory, were amongst the questions probed. The nature of the interview was fairly structured in terms of the framework I was using and the research questions I was trying to answer, but a degree of flexibility in terms of the sequence of responses and probing for

additional information was catered for. This could be referred to as a focused interview, which according to Yin "still remains open-ended but you are more likely following a certain set of questions" (2009, p. 107). Bell (1999, p. 13) argues that an advantage of an interview is "its adaptability and a skillful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings, which other methods may not be able to do".

The initial questions on the schedule were designed to put the participants at ease and to get to know the participants. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet the ELM academics as I was a newcomer to higher education. I was aware of power differentials during the data gathering process. Therefore, it was important to build a relationship prior to the interviews. Email correspondence during the collection of the documents assisted in this regard. Furthermore, going through the documents prior to the interviews, also assisted in understanding the topic prior to the interview. The interviews were conducted in person, audio recorded – because "it provides a more accurate rendition of any interview than any other method" (Yin, 2009, p. 109) – and transcribed. Unfortunately, when I visited one of the provinces to collect data, the participant was unable to meet due to student protests. As a result, that interview was conducted through Skype and then telephonically, when technical problems were experienced. The interviews were completed within a three month period.

A second round of interviews only took place with four respondents, where further clarification was required. This was conducted through e-mail correspondence. I also contacted the participants electronically as the need arose, for any additional documents (such as the policy that regulated the design of their programmes) or input that was required. Interviews were transcribed and checked. The transcriptions were given to participants as a process of member checking via e-mail. This is a way of soliciting feedback from the research respondents. According to Maxwell (2013, p. 126), this is the "single most important way of ruling out the possibility of mis-interpreting the meaning of what participants say and do" and enhances credibility (discussed in the next section). However, he cautions that both the interview and the feedback should be taken "simply as evidence regarding the validity of your account" (p. 127).

In summary, interviews were used to interrogate and expand on codes that emerged though document analysis. While document analysis led the data analysis process, interviews, being a more responsive process, facilitated more discussion and debate and hence richer findings.

4.6 Validity, trustworthiness and positionality

Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research have been debated extensively and various understandings have been presented in the literature (e.g. Golafshani, 2003). Maxwell (2012) advocates that ethical and validity issues require a responsive and reflexive approach within the study, of which I was fully conscious. Brinberg and McGrath (1985 as cited in Maxwell, 2012, p. 129) argue that "validity is not a commodity that can be purchased with techniques … rather it is like integrity, character, and quality, to be assessed relative to the purposes and circumstances … it pertains to the accounts or conclusions reached using a particular method, not to the method itself". Houghton, Casey, Shaw and Murphy (2013) argue that there are different criteria to assess the rigour in qualitative research. I embraced these conceptual ideas of credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability, to promote the rigour in my research. Drawing on the work of Houghton et al., (2013) and Maxwell (2012), I will demonstrate how these principles were addressed in my study.

Credibility refers to the value and believability of the findings (Maxwell, 2012). In this regard, I had engaged with the research participants during the interview and was constantly in e-mail contact with them to clarify matters during the write-up, till the submission of the thesis. Also, using more than one data source helps with the trustworthiness of the data (Yin, 2009). As discussed in the section above, I provided an opportunity for the participants to engage in member-checking and had also engaged in a debriefing of the analysis with one of my supervisors. All of the above discussion is closely linked to Maxwell's *descriptive validity* which focuses on the accuracy of the account of the researcher, thereby ensuring that they are "not making up or distorting the things heard" (2012, p. 134). As previously mentioned, audio- recordings were carefully transcribed and checked. I tried to ensure that the data was an accurate reflection as portrayed by the research participants. The thick description described under the discussion of transferability, promoted a realistic interpretation of the data through constant checking and reviewing. My earlier references to judgmental rationality needs to be highlighted here, as I suspect the plausibility (rationality) of my explanations to a large extent support the validity of my findings.

Dependability refers to the stability of the data and *confirmability* which is closely related to dependability, focuses on the neutrality and accuracy of the data (Houghton et al., 2012, p.

13). This was achieved by making explicit the choices I made during the research process and being reflexive. This encouraged me to address issues of positionality, as highlighted by Sultana (2007, p. 380):

> It is critical to pay attention to positionality, reflexivity, the production of knowledge and the power relations that are inherent in the research process in order to undertake ethical research.

Positionality reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt, within a given research study, in relation to the subject, participants, research context and process (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). As mentioned earlier, I was a newcomer to higher education when I embarked on this study, and as such, every day was (still is) a learning experience. I did not enter the research with experience of the research focus or with pre-conceived findings. However, the literature provided me the initial basis of understanding the field and programmes (e.g. Audit Review, 2010). I was reminded of the concept of *interpretive validity* (Maxwell, 2012) which encouraged me to comprehend what was going on in curricular-related matters, based on the situation and perspectives of the research participants and not on my beliefs. Hence, a realist perspective constantly encouraged me to take into account any values, beliefs and dispositions I was bringing to the study (Maxwell, 2012).

I was reflexive in an ethical sense which translates to acknowledging and being sensitised to the micro-ethical dimensions of research practice and in doing so, being alert to and prepared for ways of dealing with the ethical tensions that arise (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 276). As a researcher, I internalised all my research encounters, choices, decisions and reasons during the doctoral journey – at times I even made notes, for reflexivity is "not a single or universal entity but a process – an active on-going process that saturates every stage of research" (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 276). This encourages one to "describe phenomenon as they are, not merely how we perceive them or would like them to be" (Hammersley & Atkins, 1995, pp. 17-18). This attitude flowed into data analysis which will be described in the next section.

Another challenge I need to mention is that one of the research sites I used was the institution at which I was employed. While I was not actively involved in the programme under study, my familiarity with the research participants did of course make for easy access and open

communication channels. To ensure that I reported the nuances of this programme in an ethical manner without being influenced by possible pre-conceived views about the programme, I engaged in critical reflection.

Transferability refers to whether the findings can be transferred to another similar context (Houghton et al., 2012). I have provided thick description of the data (see Chapter Five and Six) for this very purpose – to provide the reader with an overall sense of the context and findings. In addition, a translation device was drawn up: this provides examples of the raw data and how interpretations were made (see Section 4.7). In terms of linking the theory to the research findings – this was done in a careful and informed manner. An in-depth reading into knowledge, knowers and related concepts was done. As a result, the theoretical frameworks and methodology were carefully chosen and applied to the study in a rigorous manner – ensuring that aspects of theoretical validity, as advocated by Maxwell (2012), were not compromised.

4.7 Data analysis

This section provides a description of the process I followed to make sense of the data. Maton cites Conan Doyle to emphasise the reliance of research and theory on each other. The quote that follows emphasises this mutual relationship. "Data! Data! Data! I can't make bricks without clay" (2016, p. 1). Research highlights that "one cannot proclaim without evidence nor assume that the facts will speak for themselves" (Maton, 2016, p. 1). It is at the stage of data analysis, that I had to connect the theory described in Chapter Three to the data collected. Without such an attempt, "theory remains free floating and empirical data remain mired in minute particulars, unable to reach beyond the specificities of the study" (Maton, 2016, p. 1). I will commence by describing some of the technical considerations of data storage and index coding. Thereafter, I move onto to a discussion of the iterative process I encountered from empirical data to theory.

4.7.1 Storage of data and index coding

In the previous section a discussion of how data was generated was discussed. Raw data was stored safely on my personal computer and flash sticks. The transcripts and coded data are securely stored and filed. Data will be able to be retrieved if necessary. It has also been saved

on Dropbox – an online service that keeps all files safe and accessible to the researcher. As Yin argues – "documents must be readily retrievable for later inspection or perusal" (2009, p. 120). To ensure that there was consistency and some sort of systematic representation of data, index coding of participants and data sources was done. This ensured that the anonymity and confidentiality of participants and their institutions were not compromised. This process was conducted in a systematic way so that I could "work effectively within the ethic of trustworthiness and within the ethic of respect for persons" as suggested by Bassey (2009, p. 80). In addition, initially in Chapter Five, I utilised tables highlighting the content in the various modules covered at the various institutions. Upon careful reflection, I removed those tables as readers would be able to identify the institution and participants if one conducted an internet search. Below is an indication of how index coding was utilised in the study.

For interviews:

Eg: A1, I, p. 7

A- Programme
1- First participant (in some institutions there was more than one participant)
I- Interview
p. - Page number in transcript

For course outline/document:

Eg: B, CO, p. 2

B- Programme
CO- Course outline
p. - Page number

In summary, alphabetical letters A - F were used to represent the six programmes (in no particular order), numbers 1 - 2 for the respondents at each university, I for interview and CO for course outline.

After the completion of index coding and transcription, inductive coding processes commenced. I began with the course outlines and through several readings I began to write a story of what I had found in the outlines of the different modules of the MEd (ELM) programmes, using a soft description. This was a type of mapping overview. I followed the

advice of Maton and was wary of imposing the theoretical framework onto the data too quickly (personal communication, June 2015) and understood the importance of allowing the data to speak for itself. In a personal communication, Karl Maton (2016, p. 33), cited Bernstein's helpful reminder that "the researcher must be prepared to live with the muddle of unordered data and enjoy the pleasure of its potential". During the second phase, I collected the interview data and transcribed it and continued to inductively analyse it.

4.7.2 Data analysis: modes of inference

Critical realism uses modes of inference which are complementary (Danermark et al., 2002): induction, abduction and retroduction. Therefore, my next step of analysis was an inductive analysis. According to critical realists, induction takes place at an empirical level "when conclusions are drawn on observed occurrences" (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 85). However, they also highlight the limitation of this mode of inference as restricted to conclusions at an empirical level, which cannot be analytically or empirically certain (*ibid.*, pp. 86-87). By looking at both the data sets, through coding and categorising, I was able to identify themes. Initially basic themes were identified, then an organising theme – which organises basic themes into clusters of similar issues – was identified (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 389) and finally global themes which are macro themes, and provide a summary of the main themes, were constructed. Although this was done inductively, it spoke back to my overarching research question. To promote reliability during this process, my one supervisor and I independently looked at a sample of the data sources. We then met to discuss it and discovered there was consensus during the discussion. Furthermore, reflexivity, as well as having an opportunity to re-examine the data, codes and themes, enhanced the trustworthiness of the analysis. For me, the advantages of using this approach was to let the data speak for itself. This could be described as 'zooming' which is a wide-angled analysis of the bigger picture (Maton, 2016). This inductive approach takes place at the level of the empirical (Danermark et al., 2002).

I also embraced an abductive mode of inference in the study. Abduction involves a "movement from a conception of something to a different, possibly more developed or deeper conception of it" (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 91). This is a form of recontextualisation "by observing in a new framework" (*ibid.*). In this study, I used critical realism as an underlabourer and Legitimation Code Theory as a different lens through which to look at the data.

The tools of specialisation from LCT were used to reveal the dominant code in the programmes and the principles underpinning knowledge and knower practices were surfaced. The data was coded according to the specialisation codes (ER+ or ER- and SR+ or SR-). The analysis revealed the basis of legitimation in the MEd (ELM) programmes. To briefly recap what was discussed in Chapter Three, specialisation explores the practices in terms of knowledge-knower structures, where the organising principles are surfaced. Each relation may be more or less emphasised as the legitimate basis of practices (Maton, 2016, p. 12). Furthermore, specialisation highlights the role of ideal knowers and possible gazes required to become such a knower. The concept of semantic gravity was utilised in the analysis by looking at the relative strengths of semantic gravity in the programmes, with particular reference to assessment and the forms of knowledge privileged.

This was the moment which Maton and Chen describe as "transcending the divide between theory and data" (2016, p. 27). It was a challenging period thinking about the theory and how it was enacted in my study and what the relationship was. According to Bernstein (2000, p. 209), this is termed the discursive gap, where the process of analysis becomes less visible. I had a grasp of the internal language or theory but needed to find a way to explicitly translate between theory and the data. According to Maton and Chen (2016, p. 29), Bernstein acknowledges the discursive gap and offers a means for traversing the gap through the development of a translation device. I then engaged in developing an external language of description or translation device for my study. The importance of a translation device cannot be overemphasised as it makes explicit one's theory and how it was enacted. Development of the translation device facilitated the abductive process. The theoretical concepts could manifest themselves differently in studies. The translation device enables others to recreate the analysis for themselves and helps prevent the "veracity of one's knowledge claims remaining obscure" (Maton & Chen, 2016, p. 29). This enhanced the trustworthiness and validity of my data analysis.

The development of a translation device was guided by the work of Chen (2010), Arbee (2012) and Ellery (2016) and adapted to suit the particularities of my study. Maton supports this practice by mentioning that "one can begin from or adapt an existing language of

description" (2016, p. 33). A presentation of the translation device developed for my study now follows:

EXTERNAL LANGUAGE OF DESCRIPTION

An exposition of the epistemic and social relations in this study based on the classification and framing of knowledge at the field of recontextualisation

Theoretical concept (Specialisation)		**Emphasis on-**	**Description of the concept**	**How concept manifests in study**	**Empirical data from course documents and interviews**
Epistemic relations (ER)	**ER+**	Knowledge/ Content in the curriculum	Knowledge, skills, procedures and techniques are strongly bounded and controlled with a specific object of study **(+C, +F or ER)**	Emphasis is placed on student's possession of : • Substantive ELM knowledge • Research knowledge, skills and procedures • Meta/ Social theory • Academic practices knowledge is valued (skills for the thesis).	• See Course outlines for outcomes and content / topics to be covered listed • (The knowledge as described in previous column was not strongly bounded)
	ER-		Knowledge, skills, procedures and techniques are weakly bounded and controlled and the object of study is not clearly defined or made explicit **(-C, -F of ER)**	• The possession of knowledge is downplayed as less important in defining legitimate knowledge. A degree of overlap exists with other disciplines.	• "*For me ELM is not a discipline, it draws on disciplines, and so it's got tentacles ... so that would be one reason I think why it's not clearly theorised, because it is drawing on so many traditions*" (B, I1, p. 15). Students given reading lists … resources could be accessed electronically (CO & I, A, D, E). • "*I bring in readings as required"* (C1, I, p. 13). • Modules like Financial Management, Human Resource Management have common topics which overlap with other fields like commerce.
	ER+	Assessment practices	Knowledge, skills, procedures and **techniques** are strongly bounded **(+C, +F or ER)**	• Assessment criteria are very explicit. Little or no choice on assessment types and criteria.	NO Data
			Knowledge, skills, procedures and **techniques** are weakly bounded **(-C, -F of ER)**	• Explicit criteria are less significant.	• Examples from course outlines … no rubric ... questions just asked or rubrics open- ended. • "*I ask my students to critique their own work/ understanding ... self- assessment*" (C1, I, p. 14). • "*Peer assessment is used for presentations*" (B1, I, p. 22).

Theoretical concept (Specialisation)		Emphasis on-	Description of the concept	How concept manifests in study	Empirical data from course documents and interviews
Social Relations (SR)	**SR+**	Personal knowledge/ experience (Everyday knowledge)	The subject and their identity is acknowledged **(+C, +F of SR)**	• Personal/ work-based experience are viewed as legitimate knowledge.	• "Think about your experience … what is it that makes schools unique organisations" (F, CO, p. 4). • "*Their coming in with the practices of leadership, their coming in with this wealth of knowledge*" (A1, I, p. 7) • "*It is important that the student brings his practical knowledge … and can relate it when they do the modules*" (E1, I, p. 5).
	SR-	Personal knowledge/ experience (Everyday knowledge)	The subject and their identity is downplayed **(-C, -F of SR)**		No Data
	SR+	Students' dispositions, attributes, characteristics and backgrounds are emphasised		• Who the student is matters.	• "*So I think the first prize is having students with experience* (B1, I, p. 8) "*Their performance at honours must be 60% and above, thereafter we look at leadership experience and this quite broad … and if you served as a classroom teacher for five to six, we bring you onto the programme*" (A1, I, p. 5). • Attributes such as "*becoming independent, critical thinking, ability to write, agency, motivation*"(F1, I, p. 6) are some of attributes that are valued … "*commitment and computer literacy*" also mentioned (D1, I, p. 4). • " *With these attributes … ultimately the course prepares them to be researchers*" (F1, I, p. 10). • "*Add value to their institution*" (D1, I, p. 5). • "*Adapt to challenges in the environment*" (A1, I, p. 7).
	SR-	Students' dispositions, attributes, characteristics and backgrounds		• It does not matter who the student is. • Attributes and characteristics downplayed.	No data (generally, years of experience, previous marks or position restrict access). Evident across all data sets.
	SR+	**Approaches in pedagogy	The subject/ student is considered	• Pedagogies that promote learning. • Students are considered in approaches adopted.	Interview Data • "*Promoting a socially just pedagogy is central … within the teaching and learning dimension … the learner is the most important*" (C1, I, p. 12). • "*I use a community of learning approach … also using Fiske's work which acknowledges difference* (F1, I, • p. 12). • "Adult learning and constructivist … pedagogy" (B, CO, p. 2 & 3).
	SR-	Approaches in pedagogy	The subject/ student's needs are downplayed	• The needs of students are down played in this regard.	No data
	SR+	Assessment practices	The subject/ student is considered in the assessment	• Creative and supportive practices are embraced. • Feedback on drafts.	• "*Students are provided with an opportunity to present their work in progress once a month at seminar presentations. Assessment is largely formative … we cater for multiple modes of learning in the assessment strategies employed*" (A1, I, p. 10). • "*Students are allowed to ask their own questions for assignments … yes they will discuss it with me but it allows them to demonstrate a deep understanding of what they have actually learnt*"(C1, I, p. 13). • Reflective journals, a future search conference and an assignment on a topic of their choice were amongst other assessment practices (B, CO, p. 4)
	SR-		The subject/ student is downplayed in assessment practices	• Traditional exams still prioritised. • Less opportunity for feedback.	"Feedback *not provided on drafts*" (D, I1, p. 14) There are some traditional exams (e.g. D1, I; E1, I).

External language of description: Semantics

Theoretical concept (Semantics)		Emphasis on- Assessment tasks and academics views on theoretical and practical knowledge	Description of the concept	How concept manifests in study	Empirical data from course documents and interviews
Semantic Gravity	**SG+**		Meaning is closely bound to its context. **(+C, +F of SG)**	Emphasis is placed on practice and the relevance and the usefulness of knowledge in specific contexts	**Course outlines and interviews… some examples:** "*People won't be threatened coming in, because people can draw on their common sense understanding of what they mean … so it is useful in making people feel safe and giving them a voice into the community, drawing on from where they are, what they know* "(F1, I, p. 15). "*We only take students who are HOD's, Deputy Principals, Principals or district officials*" (D1, I, p. 4). "*We want to see people in it because we feel that if you have the practical experience, you will be able to add value from the theory back into the school"* (D1, I, p. 4).
	SG-		Meaning is less dependent on its context. **(-C, -F of SG)**	Practice is downplayed and the focus is on abstract meanings and theory	No Data (Where focus is only on abstract knowledge. There is a movement).

** The reader is reminded that the study is in the field of recontextualisation and the data reveals what is intended and not enacted. The responses from the participants reveal what they value in terms of pedagogy. The evidence was clear that pedagogical approaches took the knower into consideration.

Finally, a central aim of critical realist research is to surface the causal mechanisms: put simply, to find out what makes something happen in the world. The inference of retroduction facilitates this. Retroduction can be described as "reasoning which allows us to obtain knowledge of what properties are required for a phenomenon to exist by seeking those qualities beyond what is immediately given" (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 206). In this study, retroduction facilitates the identification of causal mechanisms. Some of the questions addressed include: *What gets privileged or is valued in the MEd (ELM) programmes and why is this the case? What are the possible implications for the field?*

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the methodological approach and research design embraced in the study. A detailed description of every step of the research process was highlighted to ensure that sufficient detail was provided to the reader. The first part of the chapter re-stated the aims, questions and setting of the research. Thereafter, a discussion was provided on the methodological approach, with a focus on the case-study and critical realism as an under labourer. The next logical step was to elaborate on the data generation methods and tools. Issues of validity, trustworthiness and ethics were also made explicit. Finally, data analysis was addressed and the translation device was presented. Although le Grange (2007) argues that methods cannot give coherence to a field like ELM which is largely incoherent, I think a careful consideration of methods and methodology will lead to a credible piece of research which will help inform the field.

The following chapter, Chapter Five, is the first of two chapters in which I present data and discuss findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERROGATING THE KNOWLEDGE PRACTICES IN THE MEd ELM PROGRAMMES

5.1 Introduction

The previous four chapters provided the foundations of this study. Chapter One provided a context by focusing on the rationale for, and possible contributions of the study. Chapter Two furnished an overview of the genealogy of the field of ELM, to give a sense of the nature of the field and its theoretical and methodological challenges. Chapter Three contributed to an understanding of the theoretical framework of the study by examining the conceptual tools that facilitate making sense of what was discovered in the research. Chapter Four reported on how the research was undertaken by answering the 'what', 'how' and 'when' questions. This is the first of the two chapters that present and discuss the findings from the data.

This study focuses on the suite of Master's (ELM) coursework programmes and not on the institutions or individual programmes. My intention in this chapter is not to compare programmes but rather provide an understanding of the knowledge practices inherent in the coursework of ELM Master's programmes at the universities which offer them. Therefore, the findings and discussion are not provided per programme: rather, I present and discuss data across all six programmes. This way of presenting the findings helps to minimise repetition and focuses on the phenomenon itself. At times though, stark differences between programmes may result in comparative comments. Whilst it would have been useful to present the content of course outlines in a tabular form, a decision was taken not to do so due to issues of anonymity being compromised.

The chapter is organised in response to the first research question: *What constitutes legitimate knowledge practices in the MEd (ELM) programmes and why is this the case?* I focus on issues pertaining to knowledge (epistemic relations) as they manifest in the six course outlines and interview transcripts. In the next chapter, I turn to knower-related issues. I am mindful of the danger of dichotomising inter-related concepts such as knowledge and knower. I know they are closely related, interdependent in fact. However, for analytical purposes I discuss them separately. Theoretically, this apparent separation is acceptable practice,

supported by Archer's (1995) concept of "analytical dualism" which recognises that the concepts are interdependent, but argues that one could unpick them analytically to understand their internal causal dynamics (le Boutillier, 2003, p. 143). At this stage I focus only on describing and making sense of knowledge and knower practices: the *why* and *how* parts of the research questions are addressed in Chapter Seven.

This chapter is structured by a presentation and discussion of the data considering the explanatory framework of Maton and where possible, literature on the field of ELM is drawn upon. At this stage, abductive inference was applied to allow the data to become findings, answering the first research question after inductive processes during earlier stages of analyses. In critical realist terms, abduction focuses on re-interpreting the findings (Danermark et al., 2002). The use of LCT in particular, facilitated the movement of my research beyond empirical descriptions to an exploration of the organising principles underlying the knowledge practices. This, in turn, required me to surface the underlying mechanisms, drawing on the underlabouring role of critical realism.

Against this backdrop, the chapter commences by providing a discussion organised around three key themes. These themes were arrived at after a careful, iterative inductive process of coding and categorising as described in Chapter Four. The themes are: firstly, how knowledge is organised across the programmes; secondly, an overview of the content in the ELM programmes; and thirdly, the manifestation of ELM as a region.

5.2 How knowledge is organised

This theme focuses on the organisation of knowledge. Since five of the six programmes are structured in modules, I examine arguments for and against this approach and then discuss possible implications of this approach.

5.2.1 The basis of legitimation of how knowledge is organised

As mentioned above, five of the six programmes adopt a modular approach to programme organisation, where content is allocated to discrete compulsory and/or elective modules (programme A, B, C, D & E). The programme that does not adopt this approach uses themes which are derived from the outcomes as an organising framework. Since the modular

approach is clearly a popular trend, it needs to be interrogated. The respondents felt that a modular approach was beneficial.

> *I think modular approaches are appropriate, particularly in this age and time. We have some students who will come to a course and not necessarily finish it. We like to make sure we credit their knowledge and understanding in those modules. They can continue their studies when they come back. (C1, I, p. 7)*

The reason given above implies that modularisation supports students' needs and facilitates access during different times of the academic year. This helps to improve completion rates, especially considering the fact that the student who typically enrolls for the programme is a mature-age part-time student in full-time employment. From this point of view, modularisation could be said to favour the part-time student. Respondent E1 (I, p. 6) made two points:

> *I think we've got focal points which I think we could discern. But of course the modules are integrated. We did feel that there is a need for law and policy to stand on its own and also for the few theoretical aspects that deal with methodology.*

The above response highlights the need for integration as well as the need for isolating some aspects for special emphasis.

The next extract speaks to the weakness of the modular approach. Respondent F1 (I, p. 3), who has experience of a modular approach, but does not currently follow it, said:

> *I like the [current] course outline, it is holistic and not modular... well the university I come from held it [a modular design] together... but I think one of the weaknesses of a modular system is that it might not build on and develop and you will have discrete modules that don't speak to each other and so student experiences could differ. ... This course outline [thematic] works well; it flows and develops ... it is more holistic.*

This highlights the need for integration of the modules to ensure that students do not have different experiences of the programme. In this regard, one programme addresses the integration of the modules in a way which ensures alignment and coherence across modules in the programme (A, CO). However, the respondent concerned acknowledged the onerous and rigorous process that university A had undertaken to fine-tune the modules and templates to get the programme aligned to the NQF level 9 (A1, I). As French (2015, p. 6), commenting on the dangers of modularisation points out: "Academic staff could be alarmed, especially if they hold a rigid definition of coherence and progression".

Respondent B1 (I, p. 13), expressed an entirely different concern and raised other issues surrounding a modular approach:

> *I don't actually know what the history of that [the modular approach] is. I have always wondered and thought about finding out what the background to that is, but I never did. ... For me it is about prescription or being as precise as possible about things ... control and not trusting others. But these are my thoughts, I could be wrong about that.*

This is a particularly critical attitude to modularisation which hints at institutional control and surveillance. I return to this argument later.

A key issue raised in the findings is the notion of modularisation benefiting students who have to leave the course before completing it. These students can come back and continue their studies when their circumstances have improved. Hence it could be argued that the modular approach takes into account the reality of the part-time working student, disadvantaged by circumstances, and in that sense can be more accessible and hence actively work for equal opportunity. In this way, a modular approach is more socially equitable. The literature on modularisation also highlights the rationale for modularisation as a means of catering for more diverse student groups by creating greater flexibility and mobility (French, 2015, p. 3). The mature working student's educational needs can be accommodated through this flexibility. Therefore, the students' personal situation is the basis for legitimating a modular approach and not the object of knowledge itself: this displays a stronger social relation and a weaker epistemic relation (ER- SR+).

5.2.2 The implications of modularisation for knowledge-building

Modularisation generally positions knowledge as discrete bits or segments of knowledge. The programmes have different modules usually taught by different lecturers (see course outlines). According to Lee (1991, p. 206) "modularization is an acceptance of polycentric knowledge – which facilitates the division of content into chunks of equivalent sizes and levels of attainment where the integrity of knowledge as the guiding structure could be abandoned". The abandonment of "the integrity of knowledge as the guiding structure" (*ibid.*) suggests a compromise of the coherence of a programme.

One of the consequences of modularisation is that the course outlines can present the programme as discrete bits of content taught by individual academics. Since ELM is a humanities field, one would, in any event, expect a horizontal knowledge structure. Associated with the horizontal knowledge structure in the ELM curriculum is the concept of a weak grammar because "of the weak powers of definition and empirical description" (Luckett, 2010, p. 4). Hence, when a programme seems to be nothing more than a list of seemingly unrelated topics, and also organises learning on a problem/practice-based approach focusing on a real-world context, cumulative knowledge building in the field (Maton, 2014) may be compromised. However, a modularised programme does not necessarily fall into this trap. Programme A, while modularised, makes an attempt to show links between various modules, thereby strengthening coherence. The programme description draws attention to the fact that *"The learning outcomes at module level are assessed in an integrated way to ensure the achievement of the overall programme learning outcomes"* (CO, p. 5). In the interview, the programme designer showed acute awareness of this issue. He said that programme development was "*an onerous process ... working through all these programme and module templates and there was this to-ing and fro-ing, back and forth processes to align module templates and the programme template*" (A1, I, p. 4).

5.3 Overview of content knowledge (epistemic relations) in programmes: Is there a common canon? What forms of knowledge are being privileged?

Maton (2014) uses the concept of epistemic relations to refer to practices which place firm boundaries and control around what can legitimately constitute objects of study and what procedures may be used. Epistemic relations exist "between practices and that part of the world towards which practices are oriented" and stronger epistemic relations indicate that the "possession of specialized knowledge, principles or procedures concerning specific objects of study is emphasized as the basis of achievement" (Maton, 2016, p. 12). A question worth asking then, is to what extent programme content is general, and to what extent it refers to areas of specialisation, "specific objects of study" (*ibid.*).

The titles of the various programmes already suggest varying emphases: Master of Educational Leadership and Management, Master of Educational Leadership, Management and Policy, Educational Management, and Educational Leadership of Teaching and Learning.

But an analysis of the six course outlines revealed that there were three common modules or themes: ELM, which focuses on aspects of leadership and management, research and organisational theory. The findings also revealed that five programmes focused on law and policy (A, B, C, D, E, CO) and three included resource management in the programme (B, D, E, CO). The discussion below examines the content in the various modules or themes in the form of arguments pertaining to the epistemic relations in a programme. Five key arguments are discussed: Is it about leadership or management?; the privileging of practical/utilitarian knowledge; the relative prominence and varying understanding of social theory; the centrality of research knowledge and skills; and the need for academic literacies.

5.3.1 Is it about leadership or management?

In this section I provide a discussion of the inclusion of leadership and management content in the programmes across the universities. As will become evident, there appear to be differences in terms of the content selected across this integral component of the programme.

In all six MEd ELM programmes there is either a module or a theme on educational leadership and management. Two programmes focus more strongly on management than leadership (D, E, CO). In these cases, topics include *"strategic planning in Education"*, *"quality and accountability in education"* (E, CO), *"the core function of principals and the school management team"*, and *"conflict and its effects on the management and leadership of effective teaching and learning"* (D, CO). The topics are reminiscent of the basic management tasks of planning, organising, leading and controlling which can be found in any management textbook. In one case the content covered is described as *"management skills to ensure effective task execution"* (D, CO, p. 9-10). Furthermore, the title given to both these programmes emphasises the management of education. This form of knowledge has a leaning to being utilitarian in nature, suggesting a business rather than educational foundation. This links to the discussion in Section 2.2.1 where the literature highlighted that management, control and bureaucracy is about running schools efficiently, which is linked to the productivity notion. As Bush warns, one needs to be cautious when drawing on business principles because thinking about relationships within an educational institution in these terms runs the risk of people behaving in *"ways that are antithetical to certain fundamental educational values"* (1999, p. 239). The other four programmes have a stronger focus on leadership to which my attention now turns.

Leadership features in all six programmes. Programme D focuses on the definition of leadership and instructional leadership, while programme E provides an exposure to modern leadership thinking. In four programmes (A, B, C & F), the ELM focus includes a much deeper exposure to the evolution of leadership thinking and leadership theories (CO). In one case a course outline claimed that *"the heart of our approach is leadership"* (F, CO, p. 8). Furthermore, programme A and C have two modules that include aspects on leadership. Programme A has a module entitled '*Leading professionals in learning communities'* which covers *'Theories on educational change; evolution of leadership theory; leadership for organisational learning; stakeholders in the change process; leadership and diversity and challenges and constraints amongst other topics'* (A, CO). The other module entitled '*Theoretical and methodological approaches to ELM*' also covers topics related to leadership such as '*Theory and practice in educational leadership; leadership and management of educational organisations; leadership and management, culture, structure and roles, leadership development and leadership, diversity, transformation and power'* (A, CO). Similarly, programme C also has two modules focusing on leadership. The first module focuses on leadership issues with a particular interest in "*theories of leadership and also the challenges that schools and leaders face in schools"* (C1, I, p. 16). The other ELM module displays a slightly more nuanced interest in the module *'Leadership and management of teaching and learning'* (C, CO). When asked about this, the respondent said: "*We believe that teaching and learning is the most important role of school leadership*" (C1, I, p. 9).

In summary, there is little correspondence or similarity across the programmes in terms of management and leadership content. Programmes are designed in terms of what the academics value rather than what is commonly agreed upon as important knowledge in the field. In other words, knowledge is not strongly bounded, characterised by *weak* epistemic relations (ER-).

5.3.2 The privileging of utilitarian knowledge

Five of the six programmes have included modules on either educational policy and law or resource management, human resources, financial or both (A, B, C, D & E). These modules focus on workplace knowledge and are context-oriented. Utilitarian or functional knowledge facilitates the development of a practitioner. In this study, it alludes to the development of educational leaders to take up their roles as managers of an institution, usually school principals. This section explores the prominence of educational policy, law and resource

management, highlighting the focus on 'school' rather than 'field' across many programmes. I examine how the implications of these practices feed into the discussion on the overall nature of knowledge in the ELM programmes in Section 5.3. To develop this argument this section will focus on the importance given to educational policy and law in the programmes, the inclusion of managing resources and the privileging of the everyday experience, all of which focus strongly on work-place knowledge.

5.3.2.1 The importance given to educational policy and law in programmes

In five out of the six programmes, the study of education policy and law is a key component (A, B, C, D, E & CO). Programme A looks at the theoretical and methodological approaches to educational leadership, management and policy (A, CO) rather than educational law as a stand-alone module. Three programmes have a separate educational law module (B, D, E & CO). Some of the topics covered include the foundations or sources of law, labour relations, school discipline and human rights in education. The topics covered in these three programmes are very similar, the only difference being that there is an explicit inclusion of sports law as a topic in programme B (CO). The need to include this topic in the module stems from school learners' engagement in sporting activities and the need to familiarise educators and students with the legislation governing this activity.

There is strong support in two of the programmes to view policy as important knowledge. This view in support of policy as knowledge and its relation to practice is captured in the interview data presented below (D1, I, p. 10):

> *I think the knowledge we want the students to get is based on policy and policy is related to practice. All other knowledge brought in is for continuous professional development ... it is knowledge they will need to make decisions wisely; academic knowledge gives you the edge into the decisions you make.*

It is evident that policy is regarded as the 'book knowledge' (the respondent calls it "*academic knowledge")* required for decision-making. Another programme that focuses on policy also requires students to have the knowledge of the policy, as is evident in the following: *"Write an essay of not more than 3000 words in which you fully discuss the different roles the governing body and the HOD play in the appointment of educators at public schools"* (E, CO, p. 34).

Policy, in this case, is directly linked to professional practice, suggesting a utilitarian approach to knowledge, where the 'field' is presented as problem-solving in the professional arena. Interestingly, one respondent's comment that "*there are lots of similarities in law and policy courses at ACE, Honours and Masters*" (Personal communication, April, 2015), suggests a 'sameness' across HEQF levels, suggesting a lack of progression. The emphasis on professional training in post-graduate courses is not unique to South Africa. Gunter (2012), writing in a UK context, claims that some sort of professional training is still prevalent in most programmes.

Nevertheless two decades ago, writing in a USA context, Foster (1986, p. 62) argued that history and law were appropriate ingredients of postgraduate courses "to train administrators because these disciplines/fields recognise both the failings and accomplishments of individuals and provide a perspective on the course of events that guide our lives". This comment is clearly about more than professional training, suggesting a level of critical engagement that points to personal growth. Whether the level of critical engagement – suggested by Foster's remark – accompanies policy and modules in the programmes under discussion, is difficult to judge from the course outlines; one would need to experience the teaching, which was beyond the scope of this study. Prioritising the need to focus on policy runs the risk of dealing with policy in an unproblematic way. But as Foucault reminds us, notions of governmentality underline the role of power as inevitable ingredient of policy, manifesting as surveillance. As Gillies warns, a political agenda creeps into these knowledge forms (2013). For Foucault then, as for Foster, 'policy' knowledge needs a critical lens.

5.3.2.2 Managing resources: towards a professional Masters

Management of resources is also a strong focus in three of the six programmes (B, D, E & CO). Two of the three programmes (B, E) offering modules on resource management, have made a distinction between the management of human resources and financial management. The modules on human resources cover similar content featuring topics such as conflict management, staffing and managing industrial relations (B, E & CO). Programme D combines human and financial management into one course. The stark difference is that this is the only programme that includes financial management in an explicit way in the programme with an emphasis on budgeting as a topic (D, CO & I, p. 8). In this regard, a respondent mentioned that "*policy, law and human resources are geared to just that ... the South African schooling system which is in keeping with professional development*" (B1, I, p.

6). This corroborates the earlier finding that some programmes foreground management training rather than leadership development. It seems that this knowledge has a 'how to' focus which aligns with the knowledge base of Business Administration to prepare managers to scientifically manage education (English, 2008).

This knowledge is what Shay (2012, p. 318) calls procedural conceptual knowledge which has a practical and conceptual focus. In the context of educational development she argues that this procedural conceptual knowledge belongs in a Master's which has a professional purpose. Furthermore, the choice of financial and managerial perspectives as knowledge in these programmes, links to the utilitarian perspectives of course designers (HEQC, 2010) and one is left wondering if the inclusion of such knowledge forms in ELM programmes is also geared for a professional Master's programme.

5.3.2.3 The privileging of the everyday experience of the 'school' made explicit

All the programmes draw on the everyday professional experience of their post-graduate students. Some examples include: The raising of key questions throughout the course outline to encourage reflection on their experiences as an entry into the discourse (F, CO). A respondent acknowledged *"the wealth of experience students bring into my teaching: their opinions are sought and their practical experience forms part of the discussion"* (B2, I, p. 4). This trend suggests that the knowledge is quite context dependent. Respondent D1 (I, p. 5) mentioned that:

> *Without everyday experiences it is going to be difficult for them to grasp the theoretical aspects ... for example if they do not experience drawing up a budget ... they are not going to understand why I am setting out variances or why are school fees increased or decreased.*

There is evidence in two other programmes as well of prioritising the "*training of administrators*" (B2, I, p. 5) and "*improving the management skills of educators*" (E1, I, p. 10). This strong professional bias is clearly captured here:

> *My course prepares students to be teacher administrators, teacher school leaders. It prepares them to be teacher decision makers in the field of educational leadership and management, having understood the theories, concepts and practices of educational leadership and management. (B2, I, p. 5)*

Another respondent shared a similar sentiment on the educational leadership and management aspect by mentioning that "*students should add value to practice, rather than*

theory and obviously the self-upliftment of the students is important" (D1, I, p. 4). And finally, a respondent from university B mentioned that students come into the programme thinking they will be better leaders and managers at their institutions, so they come "*expecting some kind of professional development*" (B1, I, p. 6). He also mentioned that "*his colleagues have seen the Masters intended for schools and the Head of Department says we are a department of schooling and not education".* Interestingly, this respondent stated that "*It was anathema to me so I never did that"* (B1, I, p. 6). The programme at institution B would definitely experience differences in the orientation of the various modules due to academics having very different philosophies. With the theoretical underpinning in the design of the modules varying, this then raises issues of students' experiences within the programme in the different modules being varied as well. Disagreement per se is of course healthy as it promotes criticality. However, these differences could result in students experiencing conflict in terms of what is expected of them, referred to as a code clash (Chen, 2010).

Luckett (2010) recognises that the "knower's history, culture, interests, experiences inevitably enters all forms of knowledge; and that knowledge draws on experience, but crucially, it is not determined by and should not be reduced to it" (p. 11). Programmes designed with a strong focus on school have a leaning to being professional programmes. Therefore, a strong focus on school experiences with the intention of training professionals could be problematic in terms of achieving the outcomes of an academic Master's programme (See Appendix D), which has a strong focus on preparing researchers to contribute to the development of knowledge at an advanced level. In fact, some programmes are described as training programmes for principals (D1, I, p. 5, 6, 10). On the other hand, other programmes draw on the practical experience to induct the students into forms of knowledge that are more theoretical or abstract (A, C, F).

In summary, the data presented in this theme suggests that programmes, especially those with a stronger focus on utilitarian knowledge, draw on the experiences of students and expose the students to conceptual knowledge for the workplace, focusing on how to complete activities in their roles as administrators or managers. Adam and Cross (2011, p. 128) observe that programmes which have a stronger focus on practice at the expense of theory with a stronger contextualisation are generally characterised by "a low reliance on theory and a high reliance on experience, and concerns lie with the professional rather than the academic dimensions of the curriculum". Drawing on the work of Shay, it can be argued that this form of knowledge

displays contextual coherence and could be classified as procedural conceptual knowledge (2012, p. 313) (see Figure 13 in Chapter Three for more details). This type of knowledge is strongly contextually bound indicating a stronger semantic gravity (Maton, 2014). Shay (2012, p. 319) further argues that "while procedural knowledge can be applied in increasingly complex contexts, the knowledge remains trapped in its context of application". This raises the question of whether knowledge-building can occur when knowledge remains at a level of practice. Maton suggests that there needs to be constant movement from everyday knowledge or the practice to the abstract and vice-versa, to ensure cumulative learning and knowledge building. One cannot remain at the extreme ends of either context dependent practice or abstract knowledge for cumulative learning or knowledge building to take place (Maton, 2014). As a result, this type of knowledge restricts knowledge building (Maton, 2014). Furthermore, in a broader sense the choice of knowledge selected has implications for the development of the field in terms of its knowledge base because the field of production is closely linked to recontextualisation and reproduction. Finally, access to powerful forms of knowledge which is "capable of taking them [students] beyond their experiences" helps to address issues of access and social justice (Barret & Rata, 2014, p. 3). As a form of knowledge capable of taking students beyond their experiences, my attention now turns to social theory.

5.3.3 Relative prominence and varying understandings of social theory

According to Harrington (2005, p. 1) social theory is:

> The scientific way of thinking about social life. It encompasses ideas about how societies change and develop, about methods of explaining social behaviour, about power and social structuring, class, gender, ethnicity, relationship between people … any other concept of human life.

It is self-evident that social theory has its roots in sociology. Since the field of ELM concerns itself with people, their interactions and issues of power amongst other aspects within the structures in which they operate, drawing on social theory would be a powerful tool for the analysis of management and leadership practices and thinking. Social theory makes it possible to understand social behaviour, group dynamics and the structures of organisations in a systematic manner, through well-defined concepts and techniques (Harrington, 2005). Hence, as argued in Chapter Two, there is a need for social theory to be included in programmes (e.g. Gunter 2000; 2012), chiefly because the substantive theory of ELM offers

little – if anything – in the way of analytic power and potential. This notion was fully discussed in Chapter Two.

If we believe – along with Harrington (2005, p. 5) - that "empirical observations are impossible without theory", it would make sense to include some form of social theory in ELM programmes to provide the theory necessary for useful empirical observations and meaningful reflection. Leonardo (2013, p. 12) further points out that the relationship between practice (ELM) and social theory is a reciprocal one. Theory promotes an intellectual engagement which targets institutional arrangements, how and by whom they are created and how their harmful effects could be ameliorated. Social theory could, for example, provide a lens to address injustices and ensure practices are transformatory. In addition, adopting social theory to theorise about practice encourages one to think about "social constructs which is a reflection on the function of science in human existence" (Harrington, 2005, p. 12). This form of reflection promotes critical thinking which is in keeping with the purposes of a Master's degree, namely to "provide students with intellectual capabilities that empower them and enrich the societies to enhance development" (HEQF, Act no. 101, 1997, p. 3). So it seems appropriate that my attention now turns to social theory, and how it is included in programmes.

The course outlines revealed that only two programmes (A, F) included social theory. The work of social theorists such as Foucault, Bourdieu and Giddens are included in programme A and F, in terms of what their work says about the field. The inclusion of concepts such as 'structure', 'agency', 'personal subjectivity' and 'power' indicates that the intention is to expose students to a critical frame or way of thinking, premised on notions of social justice. Again, Foster (1986, p. 72) provides an accurate and helpful description of this process, referring to the need for a moral base which challenges one to make a difference in the lives of individuals or in their institutions, by critiquing social structures. In this regard, respondent F2 mentions that *"you can't produce anything new if you do not ask critical questions"* (I, p. 25). The literature in Chapter Two alludes to the notion that a critical frame is future-oriented by addressing equality and social justice. How respondents view the need for social theory, as well as their different understandings of the phenomenon made for interesting reading in my study.

While only two programmes explicitly included social theory in their programmes, all but one respondent (B2) agreed that there was a need for social theory. This respondent, B2, felt that leadership theory was sufficient: *"We have so many theories in leadership, we do not have to use social theory ... we could use systems theory"* (I, p. 9). But while there was virtual unanimity on the need for social theory, there were several different understandings. The following extracts from the data support the finding that there exists a need for social theory.

> *Well I think the field of ELM is stuck in terms of its knowledge base. I think the field is very constrained by the fact that we only refer to theories of management and leadership in the schooling system and we ignore that the school is a part of the social environment and a lot of work in ELM is de-contextualised ... unless we speak to social theory and place what is happening in schools back into the social context, we're not going to find answers to the problems that exist. (F1, I, p. 4)*

This comment reflects the respondent's understanding of the need for social theory to provide a lens for understanding the problems that exist and to find appropriate solutions to the problems. The point made is that education and hence ELM is a social phenomenon and hence the need for social theory. Respondent C1 (I, p. 12) said:

> *Education is a social practice. Social theory, particularly in terms of social justice is extremely important. If we teach, we teach mainly for some kind of social justice and therefore in my view social theory is very important in leadership. ... Students are exposed to colonial and post-colonial ways of thinking which facilitates an understanding of our times and how these have shaped what we have and continue to shape what we are experiencing today.*

The respondent is alluding to the importance of understanding the historical and political face of ELM and how embracing principles of social justice may shape thinking and actions.

An interesting angle on social equity emerged from respondent D1. She posited that "*students from privileged backgrounds need to be transformed ... they need to realise that the majority of schools in South Africa are not so well resourced*" (D1, I, p. 11). This amounts to a strong statement of support for social theory in programmes, so that those who benefit from education may gain insight into the stark reality of widespread inequities in South Africa. But her understanding of social theory differed markedly from the examples cited above. She saw the "*school government and school governing bodies ... the social aspect of communities*" as social theory. She also explained that in research proposals, students are looking at "*parental involvement which brings in the social aspect*" and a "*study on the values of the constitution*

is linked to social justice" (D1, I, p. 12). It is unlikely that this notion of social theory can lead to the kind of critical questioning envisioned by those who draw on theorists such as Foucault and Bourdieu. Another respondent acknowledged that he drew on a wide-range of fields and disciplines. He had been exposed to this practice in America. He mentioned that social justice and critical ways of thinking "*fires thinking*" (B1, I, p. 19).

Thus the findings revealed that social theory was understood differently by different respondents. Programmes where social theory do not include the kinds of intellectual tools provided by theorists may in fact be excluding their learners from potentially powerful analytic tools, suggesting weak epistemic relations in terms of the adoption of social theory. The discussion in the next section moves on to the research component of the degree by examining the knowledge and skills of this component.

5.3.4 The centrality of research and research knowledge

A feature that all programmes had in common – understandably – was an independent research component which results in a mini-thesis, that is, a thesis of limited scope. *"*A Masters of Education degree comprises a significant research component which comprises of 60 credits out of 120 credits (50%)" (Government Gazette No. 38487 of 2015, p. 47) (see Appendix D). There seems to be general consensus among respondents that the MEd (ELM) programme is research based. In strong support of this notion respondent F2 maintained that *"this is not a training course, it is a research based degree"*. He elaborated: *"If you look at my outcomes, you won't find one that will make you a better leader or manager"* – the emphasis is on intellectual development through research (F2, I, p. 6). He also mentioned that a Master's degree is regarded as a kind of license that entitles you to do research – *"now do your doctorate"* (p. 9). A similar sentiment is expressed by C1: *"This is a very selfish way of thinking about it, but a Master's degree in my view is supposed to be a preparation for doctoral work"* (I, p. 3). Respondent C1 also explicitly posited that the programme does not prepare students to go and be principals in schools, but rather it prepares them to *"think critically through research around academic and professional issues of leading schools"* (I, p. 7). Like the previous sentiments expressed, respondent A1 (I, p. 4) pointed to his noticeboard as he said:

> *Well the purpose is clearly laid out in the revised HEQF ... it is to prepare researchers who contribute to the development of knowledge in the field of education. So, it has a strong research focus, which is its purpose. Furthermore, the Master's*

coursework requires a high-level of theoretical engagement and intellectual independence.

Respondents A1 and F2 stressed that to undertake research one needed the knowledge about the phenomenon as well as the necessary skills to engage in producing knowledge, through the completion of the thesis.

According to respondent A1 (I, p. 9):

> *The type of knowledge engaged in should also equip students with skills, values and attitudes in order to engage with the dissertation. A problem-based approach is adopted. As you know, engaging with a dissertation involves knowledge creation. The dissemination and the creation of knowledge is on-going and these strands feed into each other.*

Respondent F2 felt that, in light of the importance of knowledge creation, there is a need to think critically to engage in knowledge production. He mentioned that *"if you can't ask questions like what is wrong here, why is it not working ... the problems in education are deep-seated, you won't be able to produce new knowledge"* (I, p. 24).

Clearly, research knowledge and skills are regarded as important in this programme. As a result, all six programmes focus on teaching research design to equip students to gain the necessary skills to undertake research. For example, programme A documents this as *"the ability to conduct independent inquiry in Educational Leadership, Management and Policy and to report research findings in academically appropriate ways"* (CO, p. 4). There are strong similarities across programmes in respect of research knowledge; all refer to the research proposal, the role of literature reviews, data generation tools and data analysis, and research design. This is arguably the most stable component of the degree course. Similarities were evident in the role of theory in research. Programme A refers the need to engage critically with appropriate theoretical frameworks and specifies the outcome of applying theoretical understandings. The following excerpt from Programme D (CO, p. 4) is typical:

> *The course aims to assist you to develop your research proposal. This includes defining and finding a good research question, conducting a literature review, identifying and selecting an appropriate research design, drafting an appropriate theoretical/conceptual framework, collecting and analysing data as well as taking into account issues of validity, reliability, ethics and politics.*

It seems that both the knowledge of research and the skills of enquiry are the impetus of this programme which is in keeping with the National Guidelines of a Master's qualification.
There seems to be an exposure to a range of methodologies such as qualitative and quantitative approaches in some of the programmes (B, D, E & CO). Programme B exposes students to a positivist research orientation in an in-depth manner. For example, the topics covered include the quest for quantitative literacy, from research questions to descriptive statistics, sampling, hypothesis-testing and inferential statistics, data analysis, validity and reliability measures and correlational studies (B, CO). An entire study unit is dedicated to each of these topics. These programmes appear to be, perhaps inadvertently, filling the gap of "hardly any large scale and quantitative research over the past 12 years" (Deacon et al., 2009, p. iv).

An exposure to more critical approaches and methodologies seems to prevail in some of the programmes (F, website). One such example is a document on research traditions and new niches. This document has a table which provides a mapping overview of research traditions with the current focus on a critical realist orientation (website: on-line learning material).

In summary, although programmes exposed students to the knowledge pertaining to methodology of research, the knowledge the students are exposed to varies in terms of intellectual engagement, some embracing a more philosophic approach than others. The knowledge is not specific or distinct to ELM. Hence, weaker epistemic relations (ER-) of this knowledge exist.

5.3.5 Academic literacy skills and other generic skills: weaker epistemic relations

In this section, my attention turns to the development of other skills focused on in the programmes. According to Bathmaker (2013, p. 91) embracing "generic, personal and other skills are deemed to enhance employability". Furthermore, Corbel (2014) shows that a focus on skills can result in the "downplaying of specialised aspects of disciplinary concepts, subject matter and learning sites" (p. 105). In this regard, I argue that some of the skills in the programmes are not unique to the ELM domain, but are skills that could apply to workplace contexts as well, thereby highlighting a weaker epistemic relation. These skills are at times termed "soft skills" which could be described as "employability skills" (Adam & Cross, 2011, p. 127). The data below highlighting generic skills such as computer literacy skills, is

indicative of this. Furthermore, Corbel cautions that there needs to be a distinction between the terms knowledge and skills; the danger of conflating these could result in a weakening or loss of access to knowledge (2014, p. 118). The development of skills therefore, is not a substitute for exposure to theoretical knowledge. A discussion of generic and academic literacy skills now follows.

Generic skills were raised by two respondents. One of them felt that "*the use of the computer is absolutely essential"* (D1, I, p. 4), and the other said: "*attributes such as being computer literate are important*" (E1, I, p. 3). The fact that these requirements are mentioned at all, suggests that prospective students do not necessarily possess these skills. It is difficult to imagine how any student can get to a Master's level without some level of computer literacy, but it may well be that these are mature students who qualified some time ago when learning and teaching were less technologically dependent. Other generic skills such as time management were also mentioned as an "*important skill that is required and needs to be developed due to the pressurising nature of the programme"* (D1, I, p. 4). Respondent B1 also mentioned that *"students need to acquire the basic skills of enquiry of understanding what is going on around them"* (I, p. 7). I argue that these generic or basic skills do not represent specialist knowledge, even though the reality is that students need them to succeed. The fact that they are not acquired along the way is of course a reflection of the country's unequal educational history, and is an indictment of its system. In this sense, programmes which draw attention to these generic skills consciously adopt an approach which promotes equity and social justice.

The development of academic literacy skills is a different and, in my opinion, a more important component, more obviously supporting the academic project. Many programmes described the importance of literacy skills. Respondent B1 mentioned that "*basic competence in working with information and being able to critique and write ... not just reproduce ... is necessary* (I, p. 9). Similarly, in keeping with literacy skills, the findings also revealed that the student should be able to "*collect his/her own sources, not necessarily prescribed sources and interpret these sources. ... And then lastly, the student must be able to present his work in a linguistically acceptable manner"* (E1, I, p. 3). It is evident that literacy skills are important skills that students should possess and develop, for the successful completion of their thesis.

Important as these skills may be, it would seem necessary to move beyond a focus on the everyday skills, to the need for or the development of more academically challenging skills, so that students are exposed to more theoretical forms of knowledge. The National Policy Framework insists that a Master's programme requires a high level of theoretical engagement and intellectual independence and students who graduate should be able to reflect critically on theory and its application (CHE, 2013, p. 47). This illustrates the need to move beyond everyday skills to the development of critical skills, which are being informed by intellectual and theoretical forms of knowledge. Overall, the presentation and discussion of findings on skills displays a weaker epistemic relation (ER-), as these skills are not strongly bounded and do not focus on specialised disciplinary knowledge (See also translation device Appendix E).

The next section focuses on the juxtaposition of theoretical and practical knowledge in the programmes by drawing on the discussions thus far. The placing of practical and theoretical knowledge side by side reminds one of the very nature of the field, which points in the direction of being a region.

5.4 ELM as a region: how this manifests in the programmes

In providing a discussion of the nature of knowledge in the programmes I begin by capturing the views of respondents pertaining to theory and practice in their programmes. Next, I provide a theoretical discussion of the characteristics of what Bernstein (2000, p. 55) refers to as a region (rather than a field) and discuss the implications of this for ELM. Finally, I provide a diagrammatic representation of the ELM programmes I examined.

5.4.1 The theory-practice tension in programmes

It is evident throughout the literature and data, that ELM programme designers are aware of the fact that the field is characterised by a tension between theoretical and practical or professional dimensions (e.g. CHE, Monitor 11, 2010). In fact, Shay (2012) writing in an educational development context, mentions that programmes need to be designed in such a manner that students develop an ability to move between theory and practice and not be stuck in either. Shay's (2012) explanation suggests an interplay rather than a tension; so it is not a question of whether both theory and practice are present, but the extent to which they speak to each other. This effectively dispels any sense of conflict or tension, stressing that both elements are both necessary and desirable for learning to take place.

Three programmes A, C, and F – were extremely conscious of the theory-practice dimension of the field. One of the course outlines alerts the student to this, whereas others have a subtler approach. The course outline in question (CO, F) raises key questions throughout, stimulating reflection on their experiences, including practice and theoretical aspects. This also creates an awareness of this challenge in the field and leads to an informed understanding which is important at a Master's level. The key question below is an example of how course outlines may explicitly acknowledge this interplay in the field.

> *Key Question 1: This dual (theory-practice) nature can sometimes lead to tensions in the purposes of ELM qualifications. Undergraduate qualifications sometimes lean more towards practice and has elements of training, post-graduate qualifications are often more theoretical and are usually research based. What are your expectations of this course? Do you expect to grow professionally or academically? (F, CO, p. 4).*

The data below revealed the inter-relatedness of theory and practice in the design of programme A: (A1, I, p. 7):

> *I see it in an integrated way that is what I was exposed to. Theory informs practice and practice informs theory. Both the craft knowledge of the professional and academic knowledge is valued. You can't have one without the other, they are inextricably intertwined. In the development of our programme we wanted to move the field from being largely practice-based to show that there is quite a bit of theory that supports leadership and management.*

The above quote also highlighted that academics are attempting to balance these dimensions in the programmes. The response below (F2, I, p. 5) captured the very nature of the field:

> *Everyone talks about the fact that there is this tension, so obviously, because it is there and everyone is conscious of it, it shapes the field. So if you look at ELM programmes all over the world – which I have done, all of them have the same mixture of doing and thinking. Some more thinking than doing, but it is in all of them. But I don't think we should be unhappy about that, I think that's what characterises the field and it is probably a good thing.*

This final response sums up the debate: It is the nature of the field to point inward towards practice as well as outwards towards the field and this is not a weakness but a strength, typical of regions. The evidence highlights that programme designers are aware of this challenge and attempt to balance these dimensions in their programmes. However, it is also true that programmes with a stronger focus on practice appear to favour utilitarian

knowledge, with a stronger focus on developing the students to become practitioners in the field. In these cases, developing the students as 'thinkers' is less important, a feature that conflicts with what is expected in a Master's programme.

5.4.2 The implications of thinking of ELM as a region

Drawing on the discussions thus far, it is evident that programmes include both theoretical and practical/professional knowledge. Furthermore, programmes also draw on the experiences of students. Therefore, I would argue that ELM is a region. Regions "are recontextualisations of singulars and face inwards towards singulars and outward towards external practice" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 55). Muller (2009, p. 214) argues that regions are often "strong on practice-oriented know-how" necessary for professional tasks, but without a disciplinary core, the knowledge base will be weak on "know-why". Chapter Two indicated that the field literature lacked theory or know-why. Gunter (2010) makes the point that there is a need to draw on theory for critical engagement. It is not surprising that the findings and discussion are indicative of this. Similarly, the 2010 CHE report in South Africa, also found that many programmes were privileging practical problem-solving approaches in their course design.

Muller's (2009) warning of the danger of paying greater attention to the "know-how" than the "know-why" conflicts with arguments made in leadership discourse. If, as Foster (1986, p. 32) claims, leadership is indeed a moral science, it means that ELM is working from a value-laden premise. As a result, there will be a tendency for programmes to be axiologically charged which according to Martin, Maton and Matruglio (2010), are fields where there is an emphasis on moral, ethical and ideological concerns. This can result in a weakening of the epistemic charging which emphasises the explanatory power of knowledge. Maton (2014) indicates that while all regions have both epistemological and axiological charges, the dominant charge influences the type of knowledge and approaches embraced. The more one leans toward dealing with ELM as a value-laden (and value imparting) field, the less likely one is to do justice to epistemology. No-one would argue with the fact that ELM needs to embrace, develop and build on social values, but one also needs to consider knowledge and the development of the knowledge base. It is also possible to argue, however, that the *either-or* dichotomy presented here is false. Leadership needs to be axiologically biased; it needs to be morally aware, morally driven, and geared to impart moral ways of living. That this mindset should of necessity hamper the production of knowledge, seems highly contestable.

Finally, in this section I attempt to diagrammatically represent ELM programmes in the study. Drawing on the work of Shay (2013), I argue that ELM programmes generally display a stronger semantic gravity (SG+). The discussions and evidence in previous sections indicate that utilitarian knowledge and workplace experience is privileged – thus indicating a stronger semantic gravity. To remind the reader, semantic gravity is the degree of context dependence of meaning described as a relative strength along a continuum (Maton, 2016, p. 242). The reliance on the experience of students and the focus on utilitarian knowledge as described earlier on in this chapter, suggests a strong context-dependency. As a result, there is also a leaning to contextual coherence in the curriculum as discussed in Section 5.3. Furthermore, the knowledge/concepts of ELM are dense – for example, the unpacking of the concept of leadership theory differs from an everyday understanding of the concept. The degree of semantic density which refers to the condensation of meaning (Maton, 2016, p. 241), is relatively stronger because the field has its own concepts which differ from an everyday understanding. Diagrammatically, ELM programmes can be represented as follows:

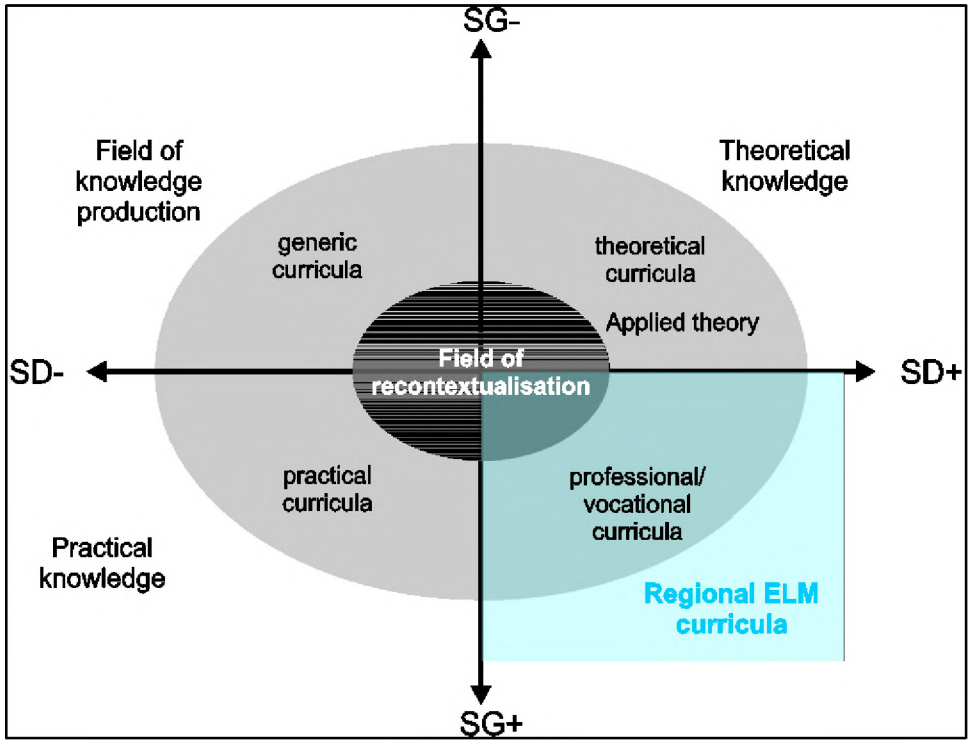


Figure 15: Diagrammatic representation of ELM programmes (Adapted from Shay, 2013, p. 572)

The ELM programmes fall into quadrant two depicting a stronger semantic gravity and density. I have renamed this quadrant Regional ELM programmes because of the theory/practice challenge facing the field of ELM. Regions are the interface between the field of production of knowledge and any field of practice (Bernstein, 2000, p. 9.) The classification of knowledge becomes weaker due to recontextualising principles and the space for ideology to play (*ibid.*). This section focused on the regional nature of knowledge in the ELM programmes, thereby alerting us to weakened forms of knowledge that exist (ER-). In the final section of this chapter, I conclude my thoughts on the epistemic relations in the programmes.

5.5 Pulling the threads together on the epistemic relations (ER) in the programmes

In this section, I attempt to synthesise the arguments and discussions in the chapter. I also draw on ELM field literature and theoretical tenets underpinning my study to synthesise the arguments on epistemic relations across the programmes. Of particular relevance is the strength of these knowledge practices. In other words, ***is the possession of specialist knowledge of specific objects of study as the basis of achievement emphasised or downplayed?*** Firstly, I focus on the difference in knowledge selection, the possible reasons for this and the implications thereof. Secondly, my attention turns to the contestation with regard to the focus on different knowledge forms. Thirdly, I address skills as displaying weaker epistemic relations (ER-).

Firstly, the findings revealed that knowledge selection across the programmes differed. It appears that there was no *common* body of ELM content knowledge that constituted an ELM Master's programme. There was an absence of a canon, a "body of texts and rules that serve to establish and define a particular discipline and set of practices" (e.g. Jubber, 2006 as cited in Luckett, 2009, p. 446) on which ELM programmes draw. The knowledge base on which programmes draw appeared to be vast and fluid. As a result, the knowledge selection in the programmes also varied considerably from programme to programme. The following statements also highlighted this point. *"Knowledge is not fixed in the curriculum and is brought in on the needs of the student"* (C1, I, p. 13). *"Readings are not prescribed; we keep supplementing them: it is not fixed"* (A1, I, p. 15).

The field of ELM is not insulated from other fields and draws from a range of other fields. Respondent B1 (I, p. 14) confirmed this by stating that:

> *I draw on a wide range of fields and disciplines. For me ELM is not a discipline, it draws on disciplines, and so it's got tentacles. It's a field with tentacles all over the place, so that would be one reason I think why it's not clearly theorised, because it's drawing on so many different traditions. Which I think is healthier, I think it's great. I'm not too fussed about Education, Leadership and Management being clearly defined in a clearly demarcated area that has got lots of loose ends – I'm fine with that.*

The review of literature in Chapter Two, is also indicative of this notion of differences in knowledge selection and weaker epistemic relations. ELM scholars have highlighted "the absence of clear boundaries and a unified, cumulative knowledge base, coherent conceptual unity and consensus over theoretical issues in the field" (Oplatka, 2009, p. 2). As a result, topics in scholarly work as well as in programmes in ELM vary widely: ELM does not come across as a "unified profession" (Hills, 1978 as cited in Oplatka, 2009, p. 2). Hoy (1994) points out that knowledge workers in the field are, at different times, focused on different issues.

The evidence and discussion provided in Section 5.3 revealed the differences that exist in terms of knowledge selection. Bernstein's concept of classification focuses on the organisation of knowledge and the extent to which a category of knowledge can insulate itself from other categories of knowledge. In the case of ELM, the boundaries between categories of knowledge are weak and unclear (Bernstein, 2000). This weakness could be attributed to the role played by course designers who draw on an array of sources, including several not obviously integral to ELM. In Bernsteinian terms this makes the knowledge in the programmes more weakly classified (-C) as it is not insulated from other bodies of knowledge. This concept is subsumed in Maton's development of the tool of specialisation. Hence, this translates to the epistemic relations being weaker (ER-) because the knowledge selected is weakly bound, and specialised knowledge is less significant. This notion of there being no strong objective basis for the knowledge selected, could be attributed to the horizontal knowledge structure in the field of production (Luckett, 2009, p. 449).

Another reason why the selection of content across these programmes differ, is that the knowledge choices and practices in the programmes rely on programme designers or

academics who come from varied backgrounds and have different interests. A further elaboration of this follows in Chapter Six. Their backgrounds shape the programmes they design: so what gets included or excluded is a consequence of this as well as a number of other factors. This is in keeping with Bernstein's (2000, p. 38) line of thought, that "whoever appropriates the device [turning knowledge into curriculum] has the power to regulate consciousness and it is a crucial site for symbolic control". In other words, the authority to decide on what counts as knowledge lies with the programme designers who engage in the relocation of knowledge from the field of production to recontextualisation. Bernstein (2000) refers to this as the discursive gap where curriculum developers have a space for their ideology to pan out, which will be premised on their ideas of the purpose of education. This is generally an acceptable practice in the academic territory. However, le Grange (2011, p. 81) cautions of the possible dangers when curriculum becomes a private domain where individual lecturers determine what is being taught. The other extreme could be equally undesirable. As mentioned in Section 5.2.1 by respondent B1, there could be other less academically oriented reasons for programme design selections and decisions, such as institutional control. In this situation, similar dangers could also perpetuate where academic decisions are made for unacademic reasons such as surveillance and institutional control. In summary, knowledge in the curriculum can vary, based on what programme designers see as worthwhile knowledge, sometimes driven by external factors. This discussion indicates that the framing of the programmes is weak. As a reminder to the reader, in Chapter Three, framing was defined as "the locus of control within contexts or categories where stronger framing indicates greater control" (Maton, 2014, p. 29). This makes the framing (-F) or epistemic relations of the programmes on a whole weaker because what should get legitimated in the programmes lies in the hands of programme developers.

Secondly, knowledge forms in the programmes seem to be contested. The academics' views on the purpose of the programme influences the knowledge types privileged. Those who view ELM as an organisational phenomenon have a tendency to privilege only functional or practical knowledge. They see the purpose of the programme as developing students as practitioners in their leadership roles. This knowledge form generally lacks the intellectual depth expected in an academic Master's programme. In Chapter Two, I showed that Angus argues that in a school situation with an undue emphasis on the role of school leaders, a "functionalist perspective is tacitly assumed" which has a tendency "to reduce complex educational problems to administrative issues" (1989, p. 63). Programme D and E display a

leaning towards embracing this tendency. As a result, knowledge forms in these programmes have a tendency to display a weaker epistemic relation due to the strong focus on workplace experience and demands. On the other hand, programme A and F expose the students to more theoretical forms of knowledge, one such example being social theory, as illustrated earlier. Similarly, programme B and C depict a leaning to expose students to some theoretical forms of knowledge as well.

Thirdly, a stronger focus on skills in the programmes, some of which could be referred to as employability skills, suggests weaker epistemic relations (ER-) because the nature of the knowledge is not theoretical or one that would be found in the disciplinary domain. Furthermore, programme designers are also confronted with this on-going challenge of balancing the theoretical and practical dimensions in their programmes, thereby displaying a weakening of the epistemic relations (ER-). Although some programmes had a relatively stronger emphasis on knowledge than others, the overall basis of legitimacy was not in the knowledge. Overall, weaker epistemic relations were prevalent.

The knowledge differentiation which exists in these programmes suggests that ELM is not a cumulative field: the constant change, knowledge that is contextually-bound and the lack of theory hinders vertical knowledge-building. This is perhaps why theorists such as Gunter (2013) ask for stronger theorising, possibly by introducing social theory. Shay argues that "the development of elaborated languages of description – whether it be Activity Theory, Bernstein, Bourdieu, Vygotsky – will help a field not only emerge as a recognised field of practice addressing critical problems … but doing so from a strongly theorised multi-disciplinary knowledge base" (2012, p. 321). Similarly, Grant (2017) expresses that "innovative social theory bridges the gap between theory and practice and moves beyond superficial investigating … and enhances the field of ELM" (p. 15).

One must be reminded that there is "always knowledge and knowers" in each of the programmes (Maton, 2014). However, the question that arises is: *What is the basis of legitimacy or what is dominant or privileged across the programmes?* This chapter has discussed the weaker epistemic relations that the knowledge in the programmes displayed.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented and discussed the theoretical aspects of the MEd ELM coursework programmes and was guided by the research question*: What constitutes legitimate knowledge practices in the MEd (ELM) programmes and why is this the case?*

It began by briefly providing an outline of how the chapter would unfold. A presentation and discussion of how knowledge is organised across the programmes was provided. Thereafter, the knowledge and content selected was provided, highlighting the differences in the knowledge selected. These differences point to an absence of a common view of what counts as ELM knowledge in the programmes. This discussion also indicated that knowledge was not strongly bounded and what was included was left to the prerogative of academics. The privileging of functional/utilitarian knowledge was interrogated. Thereafter, the nature of knowledge in the programmes was discussed. It seemed that although programme designers were aware of the need to balance the theoretical and practical dimensions of the programmes, practical/utilitarian considerations sometimes won the day. Finally, the chapter has through various arguments demonstrated that Master's (ELM) programmes have a weaker epistemic relation and that legitimacy lies elsewhere in the programmes. My attention in the next chapter turns to knowers.

CHAPTER SIX

THE LEGITIMATION OF KNOWERS IN THE MEd ELM PROGRAMMES

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter was the first of the presentation and discussion of the findings of my study. Chapter Five was organised in response to the first research question: *What constitutes legitimate knowledge practices in the MEd (ELM) programmes and why is this the case?* The focus was on issues pertaining to knowledge. The findings revealed that knowledge across the programmes displayed weaker epistemic relations (ER-). Although some programmes have a relatively stronger presence of knowledge than others, the overall basis of legitimacy is not in the epistemic relations and it is not a knowledge code. Furthermore, with the knowledge forms displaying a weaker epistemic relation, a possibility exists that the programmes are amenable to stronger social relations. To remind the reader, social relations exist between practices and their subject, author or actor, and they can be relatively stronger or weaker along a continuum (Maton, 2016, p. 242).

This chapter is organised in response to the second research question: *How do programmes position and envisage knowers in the field, and how has this come to be?* This chapter provides the argument that social relations are relatively stronger than epistemic relations across the various programmes. As mentioned earlier, at this stage I focus only on describing and making sense of knower practices: retroductive explorations of underlying reasons are addressed in Chapter Seven.

Against this backdrop, the chapter commences by providing a discussion organised around three key themes. These themes were arrived at after a careful, iterative process of coding and categorising as described in Chapter Four. The presentation and discussion of findings will be organised under the following themes: firstly, who you are matters; secondly, the pedagogical approaches adopted across the programmes and the type of gaze privileged; thirdly, the assessment practices that will be explored through the conceptual lens of semantics.

6.2 Who you are matters: stronger social relations

A *knower* is someone who may claim privileged insight into the objects of study of an intellectual field (e.g. Maton, 2000; 2014). Put simply, it is anyone who is legitimately recognised within the field as knowledgeable. It is not only restricted to academics, but it also includes the students in the programme who may become legitimate knowers after their interaction with knowledgeable others.

This section is divided into two parts, the student as knower, which is the predominant focus of the chapter, and the academic as knower, which hopes to provide an understanding of the capital academics possess, that influence the experiences and opportunities provided to students.

6.2.1 Students as knowers

In the first part of this section my attention turns to the student as knower. I provide a discussion of who gets access to the programmes and on what basis these selections are made. I also comment on the respondents' views on the range of qualities that students should possess in order for success in the programmes. As will become evident, there appears to be a stronger focus on the students' backgrounds and dispositions indicating stronger social relations (SR+) which implies that the attributes of actors are emphasised as measures of achievement, whether they are viewed as born, socially based or cultivated (Maton, 2014, p. 31).

6.2.1.1 Access, selection and qualities required: strongly classified knower

6.2.1.1.1 Access and selection

This section outlines who is accepted into the MEd ELM programmes and on what basis they are selected.

In most of the institutions in this study, anyone who has some experience of teaching in an educational context has access to the MEd ELM programmes. This is in keeping with the practical dimension of the programmes and the need to draw on students' personal experiences. The number of years of experience and the post level of the students are also considered. The various data sources all point to the importance of experience. As one respondent mentioned: "*It just helps to make sense of what you are reading, to contextualise*

concepts and so on ... so the first prize is having people with experience" (B1, I, p. 9). Further evidence of this expectation is provided below:

> *We look at what leadership and management experience you have; here it is quite broad; we know that leadership is contextual and I mean if you served as a classroom teacher for five years, we accept you into the programme. If you are a deputy principal ... or if you are at a higher education institution, you served in some leadership capacity, you are taken into the programme. (A1, I, p. 5)*

> *I think generally the more experience one has had in a leadership or management practice ... you have space to reflect on that practice and you are thinking about theory ... so it's important but not essential... we took in a teacher with only three years of teaching experience. He was such a novice and yet he was a really good scholar in the field ... reflecting over the number of years on my students, I think the best scholars are those often not stuck in a senior management position ... they are better academics ... thinking at a level of critique and not just following policy to improve practice. I think people coming in with a position and a management identity have to work much harder to be able to bring a level of scholarship and critique to their work. (F1, I, p. 6)*

This last observation raises some interesting reservations about experience and seniority, suggesting that these are not necessarily requirements for success in the programme. This finding alludes to the notion that often the freedom to think laterally, or out of the box, leads to success, and these qualities are often more likely to occur among relatively inexperienced teachers, not yet socialised into organisational practices.

While some experience at an educational institution is usually a prerequisite to join the programme, there also seems to be flexibility in terms of who gets access to the programme. Programme D has taken experience to mean the highest level of experience based on a formal school management position occupied. To gain access to this programme in institution D, one needs to be in a formal management position: "*We only take students who are HOD's, deputy principals, principals or district officials"* (D1, I, p. 4). The respondent explained: *"We feel that if you have the practical experience, you will be able to add value from the theory back into the school"* (D1, I, p. 4). The selection process of students is dependent on marks at an Honours level, an interview and, in some cases, a written test. Student marks at an Honours level are generally considered prior to admission. One respondent mentioned that *"generally if you attain 60% and above at an Honours level, we then consider you for the coursework Masters*" (A1, I, p. 4). Interviews are also a selection tool many institutions adopt in the process. Responses all revealed a deliberate attempt to be more stringent in the selection

process. As one academic explained: *"We have tightened up quite a bit here; it used to be, come one, come all ... I have got quite a stringent interview and selection process now"* (B1, I, p. 4). This is clearly a point of tension, since more stringent selection procedures work against the national expectation of widening access in various programmes. This is one of the criteria in the HEQC Programme Evaluation Schedule, and of course it is perfectly in keeping with the national drive for transformation and equity. Access appears to be treading the fine line between the "recognition of prior learning" (Castle & Attwood, 2001, p. 60) and previous qualifications.

One may conclude that a particular type of person gains access to the programme. While previous qualifications play a role – often a critical one where cut off points are mentioned – there is also a strong focus on experience, disposition and capabilities of the student. The entry requirements to a certain extent serve as an initial basis of legitimation. Furthermore, experience is valued, indicating that students' personal experiences legitimise them as knowers. In this regard, the programmes displayed relatively strong social relations (SR+). Arguably, this aligns with the focus of ELM: emphasis on the type of person developed. Much of the leadership literature accounts for the attributes and styles of individuals which influences leadership practices – hence a focus on *the person* in the *task-person* dichotomy (e.g. Jogula, 2010). The dispositions of students are important because leadership is closely linked to values, morals and politics amongst others (Jogula, 2010). In programme D, the criterion that one must be occupying a management position to gain access, indicates that access is restricted and this naturally has implications. Using formal management positions as the basis of legitimation for access, suggests a social gaze, which "restricts legitimacy to social categories that may be difficult to join" (Maton, 2014, p. 96). The 'social category' in this case is the formal position of school principal, deputy or HOD, and clearly not everyone has access to these positions. According to Maton's schema, this suggests an exclusive openness to potential knowers, which limit the potential of knowledge to progress through cumulative knowledge-building (2014). This is similar to the case of British Cultural Studies reported by Maton (2014, p. 30) where the degree of control exercised in the field also indicated that only certain people were let in or gained epistemological access indicating (SR+) with the emphasis being on "giving voice to the primary experience of knowers". With the legitimate knowledge being defined and restricted to the voice of specific individuals who are given access, issues of "breaking down boundaries and subjectivist epistemologies are some of the problems experienced in the field" (Maton, 2014, p. 27).

6.2.2.2 Students' qualities count

There was general consensus amongst the respondents that certain attributes or qualities possessed by the students definitely lead to success in the programme. Attributes such as commitment, a sense of curiosity, independence and self-motivation were revealed as important qualities necessary for success in the MEd ELM programmes.

The data below captures these findings.

"*Commitment, commitment, commitment and dedication are essential*" (D1, I, p. 4). Similarly, there was also mention of being self-directed (E, CO, p. 5). Another respondent felt that "*a student should possess desire in the sense of curiosity ... not just for their CV or climbing the promotion ladder but wanting to grow personally and make a difference in one's professional context*" (B1, I, p. 9). Similarly, other respondents mentioned "*self-motivation*", "*the ability to work independently*" and "*self-direction*" as important attributes that students should possess and develop (e.g. F1, I, p. 7; E, CO, p. 5). These views depict a student as a whole, growing individual, arguing for a student knower who needs more than training, but is in fact developed as a fully rounded human being.

The findings revealed that some programmes talked about an ideal student as one who not only possessed the necessary attributes or skills, but also one who could be developed. The emphasis on these attributes of a knower and the possibility of developing the resourcefulness of students indicates a strong social relation (SR+). I return to this issue later in Section 6.3.

In the next section, my attention turns to a discussion of the academic as a knower.

6.2.2. Academics as knowers

6.2.2.1 Social and cultural capital of academics

I argue that the social and cultural capital of academics influence the way students are socialised in and through their learning experiences. The identities of individual academics and what they value, shape the pedagogical (which includes teaching and assessment) encounters experienced by the students. In this regard, it is important to understand where these academics come from.

Interestingly, the experience of the respondents revealed similar career pathways. All of them joined tertiary education after spending a number of years teaching in schools. Most of them had also occupied formal management positions in schools e.g. as HODs, deputy principals and principals. The following extracts from the data sources provide evidence of some of their prior experiences:

> *I taught English for 25 years at a high school, ended up as a principal, had completed a Masters in English, then took up a post at the University and started up ELM which was not at the University... I was always intrigued by ideas, by an intellectual life ... living in my head has always been appealing to me. (F2, I, p. 1, 3)*

> *I had taught Physical Science and Biology at a high school level ... had examined at matric level for a number of years ... completed my Masters and PHD in ELM ... and have taken up my current position after my supervisor left. (A1, I, p. 1)*

> *I started off teaching in a secondary school then taught at a University in another country ... then completed my PHD and started teaching at a South African university. (C1, I, p. 1)*

> *I was the HOD, deputy principal at primary schools, I also was in the district and provincial departments ... studied and I am currently a senior lecturer at the University. (D1, I, pp. 1-2)*

In summary, the respondents, who are programme designers, module co-ordinators and lecturers, commenced their career paths teaching and occupying management positions in schools before joining academia. This suggests that their identities as academics may – or probably would – have been shaped by their professional experiences (e.g. van der Mescht, 2008). Similarly, Gunter (2003, p. 262), drawing on Bourdieu's concepts, posits that "field members have revealed a practitioner-academic habitus through relocating their practice from the school or government into higher education". That this is likely to be a contributory factor to the practice-theory tension that the field exhibits, can hardly be denied. Practical experience is likely to have inculcated a sense of pragmatism with a tendency to focus on ideas relevant for practice. Evidence in the previous chapter indicated just that: practice-based knowledge ('how to' knowledge) was privileged. This is of course not a weakness of the field; indeed, Gunter (2003) acknowledges that "universities are the few authentic spaces left to engage with the nature of practice" (p. 262), but it does also indicate a need to find and create spaces to engage theoretically with the field or with practice.

The academics' knower status – the sum total of their philosophic orientations and their previous experiences – influence their way of being. These "belief systems", as Maton describes them, "underlie the way actors select and arrange stances which in turn shape what is viewed as legitimate within a field" (Maton, 2014, p. 149). Since the knowledge forms are contested and diverse, as highlighted in the findings of the previous chapter, "who you are, your inner dispositions as well as social and cultural capital that you bring to your knowing is what counts" (Luckett, 2010, p. 15). Hence the knower status of academics has significant bearing on the knowledge chosen. This, together with the academics' way of being (academics), will have a determining influence on student experiences, development and progress in the field.

I now move on to discuss the second theme which focuses on pedagogical approaches embraced in the programmes.

6.3 Pedagogical approaches: 'giving voice to students' (SR+)

The pedagogical approaches as discussed in the data sources displayed student-centred approaches. Since it is likely that student-centred teaching creates an environment conducive to learning, the learning experiences created have an important bearing on the development of the knower. Therefore, in this section I argue that the pedagogical approaches embraced in all of the programmes are progressive, support student learning and development and make advances to privilege a cultivated gaze. In developing this argument, I will broadly discuss the development of an authentic learning environment and the nuances in the gaze (rules of the field).

6.3.1 Development of an 'authentic' learning environment: building on prior learning

An authentic learning environment claims to "create cumulative learning experiences by building on students' prior learning experiences" (Maton, 2014, p. 111). Furthermore, for students to learn knowledge that will remain valuable beyond education, tasks are required that encourage students to reflect the realities of practice – thereby facilitating access to the knowledge of experts (Herrington & Oliver, 2000 as cited in Maton, 2014, p. 111). Authentic learning is usually associated with problem-based, case-based or project-based pedagogies.

The theory/practice conundrum of ELM programmes as discussed in the previous chapter is a reminder that theory and practice are inter-related: students are practitioners and draw on their practical experiences in the learning environment. The respondents in the study highlighted the need to draw on practice in the learning environment:

> *When we receive the ELM students we don't see them in a deficit mode. In fact, we use what we call an asset-based approach. Because remember they're coming in with the practices of leadership; they're coming in with this wealth of knowledge which they don't view as knowledge. But they've got the knowledge of practice and we as academics, we generally have the knowledge of theory; but what a lovely mix this is. I mean when you start engaging with students it is theory meeting practice. We're learning from their practice, they're learning the theory from us as well. (A1, I, p. 7)*

This response highlights the reciprocity of theory and practice and the learning space that is mutually beneficial. Similarly, respondent F1 (I, p. 15) described the benefits of drawing on the students' experiences: *"People won't be threatened coming in, because people can draw on their common sense understanding of what they mean ... so it is useful in making people feel safe and giving them a voice into the community, drawing on from where they are, what they know*".

And respondent E1 (I, p. 9) explained:

> *Students draw on their own experience. ... And they draw on it so that they can later relate it to the more formal theoretical aspects. So, it's a reflective practice pedagogy. You would have noticed that we very often in the tutorial letters make reference to their experience or their situation.*

Respondents further elaborated on a sharing and exploring pedagogy – discussed below – which potentially leads to a more socially just learning process, facilitating the development of an authentic learning environment.

6.3.1.1 Learning through 'sharing and exploring': towards a scholarly community of learners

All six programmes adopted a pedagogical approach that promoted learning by focusing on creating an environment that facilitated the learning process. Group-work, sharing experiences and motivation amongst others, were included in this approach. Research indicates that group-work encourages students to work towards a joint understanding through active processes such as critical thinking and developing arguments, rather than merely

gathering information. Furthermore, working in groups and adopting a community research learning approach, can grow a committed body of field members (e.g. Grant, 2014, p. 93).

The findings below revealed that the notion of student participation and learning together was supported across all the programmes. Respondent B2 (I, p. 9) emphasised the need to value student participation which could be achieved through a strategy of positive re-inforcement. He mentioned:

> *For me it's about creating an environment for my students to learn ... prepare them to learn and then use the best method. I use a questioning and answering technique, presentations, videos, group work ... I never tell the students you are wrong ... they could be disenchanted ... it is about positive re-inforcement.*

The adoption of group-work seemed to be a popular approach. In this regard, respondent D1 mentioned that "*we use a lot of group-work; students present articles to peers ... it's a very learner-centred approach ... very Outcomes Based Education based*" (I, p. 13). Although the first response focused on the physical arrangement of learning together (group-work), the notion of learning together is mediated learning which is a Vygotskian concept. According to McCombs and Whisler (1997, p. 1):

> The learner-centred perspective begins with a focus on knowing and understanding each learner in the context of a deep understanding of the learning process itself. It couples a focus on knowing and respecting individual learners with the best available research and practitioner experience about learning.

This definition highlights that this pedagogical approach has a stronger focus on the student and knowing, thereby suggesting stronger social relations. Similarly, extending on this notion of working in a group but in a manner that is pedagogically more oriented to exposure to the ELM discourse, respondent F2 (I, p. 21) explained:

> *It is the style I kind of insisted on, that you read for a Masters ... so the pedagogy behind that is that you learn through reading and discussing ... through sharing and exploring ... you throw out ideas, interrogate them ... this is how you get into the discourse of ELM.*

This notion moves beyond sharing to the interrogating of texts, which is necessary to develop students into a particular way of being. In a similar vein, Luckett (2010, p. 19) propounds that "learning is about becoming and transforming oneself". Respondent A1 and F1 discussed this approach of sharing and learning in a theoretically informed manner.

Respondent A1 (I, p. 12) described this approach as:

> *Using a problem-based approach, I get students to draw on the repertoire of skills that they have ... it also gets them to draw on the different types of knowledges that they have and work collaboratively with their peers ... we are trying to inculcate it is the journey of the group ... it's about we... we don't believe in René Descartes's philosophy that I think therefore I am ... as I mentioned earlier we believe in an Ubuntu philosophy which influences the way we teach.*

The pedagogical approach takes cognisance of the different types of knowledge students need to be exposed to. The philosophy of Ubuntu which is premised on teamwork – working collaboratively and a bond of sharing – seems to underpin the pedagogical approach adopted in programme A. This is similar to a community of practice, where students come together, working together through many collaborative pedagogical techniques to achieve the desired outcome. In fact, the respondent mentioned that Ubuntu was similar to a community of practice philosophy (A1, I).

Similarly, respondent F1 also supported this notion of learning together and described the benefits in her response: "*I embrace a community of learning approach, but it is more than Wenger's theory of community of practice: it is also acknowledging a community of difference. We have a purpose of coming together*". She also highlighted that some students may be on the periphery of practice. However, through support they can reach the centre by "*being independent and taking over their learning*". Furthermore, she acknowledged the need for differences in the student group to promote a greater level of learning and, in this regard, she mentioned that "*acknowledging Ranson's work on community of difference, cautions us against homogeneity which could prevent us from growing or changing ... we will be stuck* (I, p. 15).

The findings allude to the notion that student participation in such a community is beneficial and increases participants' confidence. A very interesting point is that diversity in student groups is regarded as a strength. The acknowledgement of diversity is linked to issues of transformation and social justice which is discussed in the next section.

6.3.1.2 Towards a socially just and inclusive pedagogy

The previous section focused on the adoption of learning together as an approach, with a discussion on the need to acknowledge diversity. In this section, I show that the pedagogical

approaches embraced have the student at heart and considers their dispositions and situations. This tendency exhibits strong social relations (SR+). In support of a socially just pedagogy Giroux (2003, p. 10) posits that "educators … should reject forms of schooling that marginalize students who are poor, black and least advantaged". This points to the need for "school practices that recognise how gender, class, race and sexual orientation can be used as a resource for learning rather than being contained in schools through a systemic pattern of exclusion, punishment and failure" (*ibid.*). In line with Giroux's (2003) argument, the data presented below revealed that three programmes have an explicit leaning to address social justice challenges. In this regard, respondent E1 (I, p. 8) mentioned that, "*The world is a multi-pluralistic entity and the study material should be presented in such a way that it makes provision for people in different situations to incorporate what they experience into what they do*".

The respondent is perhaps alluding to the notion that students from different contexts are supported through the design of the curriculum and its pedagogical principles which are generally more inclusive. Respondent B1 described his teaching philosophy as *"one of constructivism and adult learning. I also use a future search conference as a teaching approach ... my approach is an open one, introducing people to ideas, ways of thinking, concepts and how to find out more for themselves"* (I, p. 19). This approach seems to promote the development of an enquiring mind. By encouraging students to find out more for themselves by exposing them to a conference, they also become active constructors of their own knowledge. Furthermore, embracing a constructivist view means that "learning is an inherently social-dialogical process" (Duffy & Cunningham, 1995, p. 18). The goal of working in groups is to share alternative viewpoints, challenge and develop them, thereby promoting "dialogical interchange and reflexivity" (*ibid.*).

Finally, the third respondent was concerned about societal imbalances which form the basis of various facets of his pedagogical approach.

In this regard, he (C1, I, p. 13) mentioned:

> *I think it is to do with promoting some kind of a socially just pedagogy that for me is central. A socially just pedagogy as far as I am concerned has a number of elements focusing on the students. It is more than the zone of proximal development ... it is trying to engage them to say where are you in reflection to this field, or to this*

> *knowledge and understanding. We then start off what knowledge exists ... how has the students' way of thinking been changed ... has their practice changed or remained fixed? It is all about social justice.*

The findings revealed that the development of an authentic learning environment across the programmes was fostered through the pedagogical approaches embraced. There was a sense of "giving voice" to experiences of students/knowers which Maton classifies as a social knower code (2014, p. 33). Furthermore, programmes adopted socially just pedagogies which have the potential to be transformatory.

The approaches discussed above privilege the student as knower, and what the student knows as legitimate starting points for the pursuit of knowledge and learning. What makes the environment authentic is the fact that learners, as knowers, are at the heart of the process, and learners' growth is the chief agenda. As learners, as novice knowers, grow in knowledge and stature, they attain a gaze, cultivated through layers of learning and growing, developing a *way of looking, a way of being* in the field. According to Luckett (2010), a cultivated gaze leads to transformation, to which my attention now turns.

6.3.2 A cultivated gaze: why does it matter?

Chapter Three provided a description of the concept of gazes. To remind the reader, a gaze is "a particular mode of recognising what counts as an authentic reality" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 165). Maton (2014) expands on the concept by describing different gazes (see Section 3.5.1.2). In summary, a *born gaze* is based on biological explanations and is the most exclusive, a *social gaze* is relatively exclusive based on the social category one belongs to, a *cultivated gaze* is a more inclusive gaze with the rise of legitimacy of the new knowers acquired through the right kind of education and socialisation and lastly, a *trained* gaze is an inclusive gaze that is open to all knowers which is based on training in the procedures of knowledge (Maton, 2014).

A programme can foster a particular way of knowing, or gaze. The discussion thus far has focused on how students are positioned by programmes, and the kinds of knowers programmes wish to develop through the pedagogies embraced. I argued above that the programmes promote a cultivated gaze. However, the programmes are not all identical in this regard, and the gazes developed differ subtly. These nuances are captured in Section 6.3.3. This discussion on cultivated gazes is based on my understanding of pedagogical approaches

embraced by the programmes, which have a strong leaning to student-centred approaches, supporting student learning by developing the appropriate social disposition (ways of *thinking* and *being* through exposure to the field through education) (SR+).

Furthermore, the discussion also revealed that there was a movement away from transmission to an engagement in a community, drawing on students' experiences. Drawing and building on personal experiences typifies constructivism, in itself indicative of stronger social relations. The experience discussed in the findings above allude to a *problem-based approach* (A1, I). The references to *changing of student's thoughts and practice* (C1, I), *introduction to new ideas* (B1, I) and the *need to grow and change* (F1, I) highlight opportunities for interactions. Through these interactions with each other, the lecturer, and the materials chosen, the students immerse themselves in a community. Through prolonged immersion, along with knowledgeable others and the re-shaping of dispositions, a cultivated gaze is developed (Maton, 2014). The level of engagement with academics, students (field members) and materials, facilitate the engagement with ELM discourse in the programmes. The emphasis is on knowing or learning. This is in line with respondent B1's (I, p. 23) argument:

> *Philip Hallinger said something helpful on that last week, he said: 'You're not experts, you're expert learners, you know how to learn'. Our students are resources. We look at learning as a two-way thing, we learn from them, they learn from us ... so that's what makes our interactions very enriching.*

A cultivated gaze requires careful planning on the part of the programme designer or else it could result in "sloppy relativism" which does not extend students because of the preconceived notion that that all students are doing wonderfully (Maton, 2014, p. 98). Furthermore, in terms of careful planning of the curriculum, Maton (2014) posits that the choice of readings is important. Exemplary works in the field must be chosen.

Furthermore, a cultivated gaze could enable the building of cumulative knowledge in a field like ELM. This is possible because of the pedagogical approaches and attempts at enhancing the learning opportunities of students in the programmes, thereby increasing the opportunity for greater cumulative learning. Although there are access requirements (which seem to be flexible) across most of the programmes, overall the programmes are more inclusive, "based on a socialised disposition that could be acquired through the right kind of education and

enculturation" (Luckett, 2010, p. 5). Furthermore, knowledge-building starts with the community of experience and sharing as described earlier with a greater range of knowers. The potential for the development of new knowledge increases through the cultivation of knower dispositions as they ascend towards the legitimate gaze (Maton, 2014, p. 98). This could be represented diagrammatically as follows:

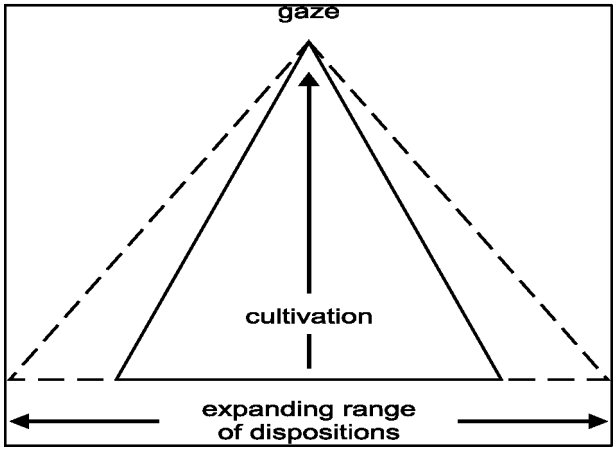


Figure 16: Hierarchical knower structures with a cultivated gaze (Maton, 2014, p. 99)

The preponderance of a cultivated gaze and the consequent implications for the development of the field ELM, demonstrate a strong alignment with social relations (SR+). This is not to suggest that all the programmes I looked at were identical in this regard. While one may argue for a cultivated gaze across the programmes generally, differences did exist. My attention now turns to this.

6.3.2.1 Nuances in the cultivated gaze

According to Maton (2014, p. 186) a cultivated gaze displays practices that base their legitimacy on strongly bound and controlled legitimate interactions with significant others (IR+) and weakly bound categories of knowers where subjective relations exists between practices and the kind of actors engaged in them. This is represented as (IR+, SubR-). Firstly, I will describe the interactional relations in the programmes and then move on to subjective relations.

The figure below illustrates the slight nuances in the cultivated gaze which is discussed below.

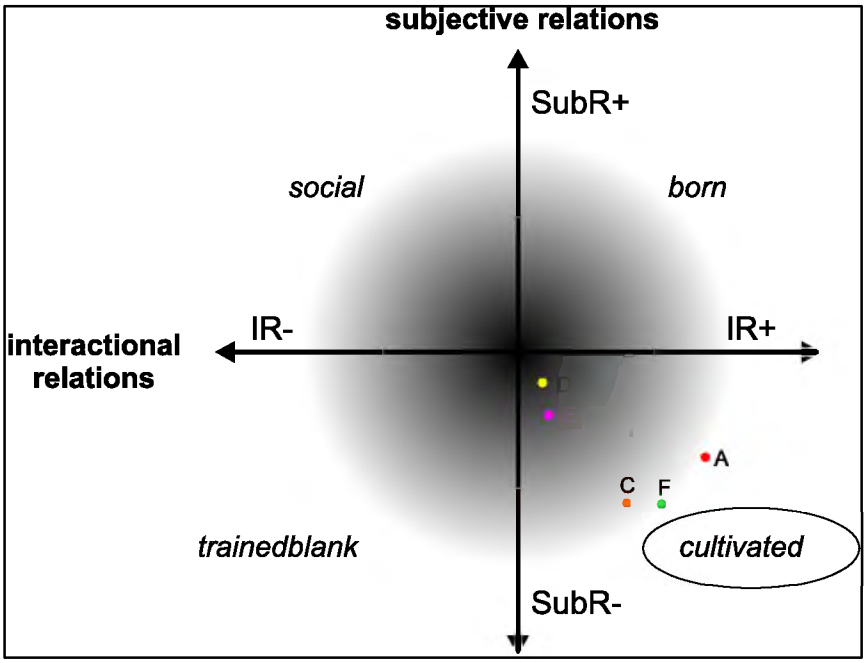


Figure 17: The gazes' social plane (Adapted from Maton, 2014, p. 186)

The differences referred to above pertaining to the programmes are evident in the varying strength of interactional relations exhibited by the programmes. I begin by discussing those with stronger interactional relations, and then those where these relations are weaker. I then consider the implications of these variations.

6.3.2.1.1 Stronger interactional relations

The previous section argued that a cultivated gaze could lead to growth and development in the field. It is also the case that the nature of the interactions in the learning environment will have an influence on students' experiences and growth in the field. According to Luckett (2010) curriculum is a social practice and it has ideological roots and values … it is about becoming … and identities and norms are valued. Hence the sociality of students through pedagogical approaches and the nature of interaction is important. The data below revealed that some programmes socialised the students towards becoming an ideal student who is a scholar in the field, one who brings him or herself into the field, and has acquired more than knowledge and skills:

> *A student should develop a desire in the sense of curiosity; wanting to grow personally and make a difference … and then basic competence in working with information; so, you data-base bibliographic kinds of things, working with*

> *information sources; being able to critique and write. Not just reproduce, but write one's own stories. Very important is the passion, the curiosity, the student who immerses themselves in what they do and reaches a point and says wow this is amazing stuff! I want to do more, and read more. (B1, I, p. 9)*

This response shows how the respondent values curiosity, immersion in the material and the ability to write and create new knowledge.

It is similarly evident that in programme F (F1, I, p. 7) there is greater emphasis on who students become through engagement in the programme:

> *For me it is entry into a discourse, so it's not so much about what they come with but it is being able to respond to what I teach or the ability to respond to the feedback I provide ... so it's agency and motivation ... after hearing their voice, it mustn't end there. It's then problematising it and then moving them into a more academic discourse, a theorised discourse, thereafter.*

Respondent A1 (I, p. 5) expressed similar sentiments:

> *A student should be self-directed; they don't follow the crowd; they trouble what they read, question what they read and the students must want to engage in academic conversations, not only with their lecturers but with other people in academia.*

In a similar vein, respondent C1 (I, p. 5) mentioned that:

> *An ideal student is one who quickly moves from being closely supported, monitored by me, to one who increasingly becomes independent and I think we can achieve that by training them to become researchers. Research is a liberating experience ... it allows them to think about their own questions... it is a very liberating way of thinking and knowing rather than sitting in class being taught about various people's theories and then perhaps being given an opportunity to reflect on them ... that's another way but it's not as liberating as research itself.*

The picture that emerged was of a student who works towards independence of thought, who challenges and critiques, who is critically reflexive. Learning moves beyond acquisition of book knowledge, but rather encompasses a life-long learning disposition. There is also the suggestion of an emancipatory agenda. Lecturers see the possibility of transformation of their students; they want them to become different people. This is in keeping with policy which suggests that critique is an important skill at a Master's level (South Africa, Government Gazette No. 38487 of 2015, p. 47).

In summary, the data revealed that these programmes privilege the development of students into particular ways of *being*, rather than simply *knowing*. Interactions with texts, lecturers and colleagues (knowledgeable others) were described as important in student development. Furthermore, by developing academic skills such as reading, critique and research, the students could be developed into a particular way of being which they described as an ideal knower. This trend became evident through the presence of the exceptionally strong social relations exhibited (SR+). The discussion in this section alluded to the notion that the practice was specialised by how students/knowers know (such as cultivation). This translated to having stronger interactional relations because of the specialisation of their way of knowing. Interactional relations are between practices and the ways of acting involved (Maton, 2014, p. 184). These programmes based their legitimacy on students possessing a cultivated gaze with a strong emphasis on interactions with significant others. As described earlier the approaches of working in a community and the exposure to exemplary works, all point to a stronger interactional relation. The interactions in programme A, B, C and F displayed tendencies of stronger interactional relations because they inducted their knowers/students into the field.

6.3.2.1.2 Weaker interactional relations

In programme D and E, while still displaying a leaning to a cultivated gaze as described earlier through the adoption of progressive pedagogical approaches, the interactional relations are weaker. Firstly, respondent D1 (I, p. 4, 14) mentioned that:

> *Due to short duration between modules ... we don't have time for drafts but students are provided with an opportunity to re-submit an assignment if their mark is lower than 50%, we do feel sorry for our principals in the programme because they put their institutions first before their studies ... which we do appreciate and so there is an opportunity to re-write if their marks are borderline.*

This absence of formative feedback is likely to inhibit student development and hamper growth in their writing. Furthermore, in the case of programme D and E, neither the course outlines nor interviews with respondents emphasised the importance of relationships in the learning context to the extent that the other programmes did. In fact, programme D showed a leaning to a stronger subjective relation. A stronger subjective relation suggests that legitimacy is based on membership of a social category regardless of past or future interactions (Maton, 2014, p. 185). I base this interpretation on the following evidence.

Respondent D1 described her ideal student as "*a principal who has time to dedicate to his/her study and is very, very concerned about school improvement*" (I, p. 4). She also referred to the "*shaping of the students ... here you're looking at taking your leaders and getting them to practice in a particular way*" (D1, I, p. 11). The focus on practice and belonging to a particular social group suggests stronger subjective relations than interactional relations. Respondent D1 was concerned about how the knower may bring about school improvement. Hence there was a greater focus on practice or the professional dimension in the programme. The discourse of 'principal only as a student' and 'school improvement' seems to limit the vision of the ELM student to that of practitioner. In terms of the theory/practice tension discussed earlier, this suggests exposure to knowledge and skills that are strongly utilitarian in nature. The nature of knowledge students were exposed to was also indicative of this (see previous chapter). This pronounced sense of subjective relations – and concomitant weakening of interactional relations – paints a very different picture of the knower in ELM MEd programmes. It seems hardly possible to construct a synthesised sense of this knower.

Programme D has a weaker IR and a stronger SubR. Also, diagrammatically I have represented it closer to the trained gaze quadrant because of the greater exposure to procedural (*how to*) knowledge students are exposed to, as discussed in the previous chapter. Similarly, programme E, although to a lesser extent, also displayed a leaning to this notion of being trained into a particular way of being and doing (see previous chapter on the type of knowledge legitimated in the programme). The interactional relations of this programme are also weak. Students are provided with resources some of which are accessed electronically. Respondent E1 mentioned that students are supported telephonically and through video conferencing (E1, I).

Finally, the gaze privileged in programmes must be made explicit by the academics so it facilitates access to learning (Luckett & Hunma, 2014). This section provided a discussion of the nuances in the cultivated gaze, in terms of interactional and subjective relations represented across the programmes. This provided an indication of what academics value in their programmes.

The discussion of what is valued continues in the next section where my attention turns to the assessment practices. I include this section on the understanding that assessment practices are inherently part of pedagogy; indeed, one may argue that assessment practices provide a useful

window into the pedagogic heart of a programme. Furthermore, assessment practices provide opportunities for interpreting social relations through the concept of semantics. I have chosen to discuss assessment practices separately because there was a significant focus on this in the data – hence this discussion must be given its due care. Assessment practices embody both knowledge and knowers. However, in this study I focus on assessment as pedagogy that enables or inhibits learning. Furthermore, semantics is a useful tool to shed light on these practices and the application of one tool at a time was recommended (Personal communication, Maton, June 2015). To remind the reader briefly, semantic gravity relates to how closely meaning is tied to its context. Stronger semantic gravity denotes meanings that do not make much sense or cannot be easily transferred beyond their contexts; weaker semantic gravity denotes meanings that are fairly abstract or generalisable and applicable beyond their contexts. Changes in the semantic gravity of an individual item can be described as the processes of either gravitation, where meaning is contextually bound, or levitation, where meaning is free from contextual (Maton, 2014, p. 129). Applying the concepts of semantic gravity to analyse assignments, makes it possible to see what is happening beneath the level of the empirical.

6.4 Assessment practices: What is the basis of legitimation? / How do programmes obtain their specialisation?

The assessment practices of many programmes are made explicit in their course outlines. I provide a brief description of them and focus on how and to what extent these assessment practices support the development of the knower. Furthermore, I interrogate the assessment practices to establish whether they could be considered as authentic tasks that enable learning or not.

I must, at the outset, point out that assessment practices differed markedly across modules within a programme and across programmes. But there are, of course, many similarities. For example, all programmes revealed that assignments and an examination or an exam equivalent formed the basis of their assessment. Assignments varied in length from 1000 words to 5000 words and generally two to three assignments and the examination were the components that counted toward the final mark in each of the modules/programmes. Two programmes have exams in the traditional, sit-down format (D, E & CO). The other programmes have adopted a take-home examination option (A, B, C & F). However, having

said this, I cannot claim to have accessed all the examination options in all modules in each of the six programmes. Other possibilities may exist.

In developing this discussion, this section will provide a semantic analysis of assignments, a description of how reflective pieces address the theory practice conundrum in ELM programmes. I also address other novel assessment forms as a means of promoting sociality. In this way, it will be possible to see the flow of discourse in the assignments which can be viewed as shifts in strengths of semantic gravity, previously defined as "the degree to which meaning relates to context" (Maton, 2014, p. 107). Using this concept, the profiles of the assignments can be illustrated: with movements from the experience or practice of knowers to abstract or academic forms of knowledge. This will further inform our understanding on the development of the knower through assessment as a part of pedagogy.

6.4.1 A semantic analysis of assignments

Assignments are a popular conventional form of assessment embraced in all six of the MEd programmes. Most of the course outlines included details on assignments. I have chosen one assignment per programme for illustrative purposes to subject to an analysis using the conceptual lens of semantic gravity.

On the next page is a summarised version of an assignment question from the various programmes.

Table 2: Comparison of assignment question

Example 1 *Programme A*	**Example 2** *Programme B*	**Example 3** *Programme C*
Write an essay in which you discuss the role of leadership and management in managing change within an educational organisation. Your essay should refer to national and international literature and should include a discussion on some of the theoretical perspectives that inform the role of leadership in the management of educational change. Your essay should include, where relevant, references to change innovations that have been introduced in your organisation/ school and the role played by the organisation's leadership (A, CO, p. 15)	*A literature study. Select any organisation behaviour topic of your choice. In the introduction, tell the readers what topic you have chosen, why and how you have organised your essay (structure). The body should include key theories and concepts about the topic- the kind of research associated with your topic; the knowledge gaps. End with a conclusion where you reflect on the experience of writing this literature review. What did you learn about the topic and about yourself and do you think what you have learnt will make a difference to your professional practice?* (B, CO, p. 21)	*Students need to negotiate their topics with their tutors and seek formative guidance on the structure and format of the assignment. In addition to guidance given by the school, assignments at Master's level are judged fundamentally on the level of critical engagement. Each assignment is a reflective and a critical piece. A cumulative record of learning must be submitted as part of the portfolio.* (C, CO, p. 4)

Example 4 *Programme D*	**Example 5** *Programme E*	**Example 6** *Programme F*
The theme of this assignment is school marketing. A scenario is presented about a particular school regarding the conflict that has been present between the conservative staff and the staff that participated actively in the struggle. The image of a divided school is perceived negatively by the community. As a principal of the school you wish to rectify this. What would you do in order to achieve this? You may use the following guidelines: *-An analysis of the school's product and service;* *-Convincing the staff and learners that marketing is an activity in which they need to be involved;* *-Thirdly, which approach would you use "Big bang" or "slow creep"?* *Conclusion* *Bibliography* (CO, D, p. 15 & 16)	*A statement is provided.* *"School principals need to strike a healthy balance between the bureaucratic principles of operating the school as an organisation and the teachers need to be a part of a professional learning community. A balance between the bureaucratic and professional aspects of the school must be achieved.* *-Write a logically coherent introduction on the need for sound school management practices;* *-Schools are complex organisations. Study the literature and discuss the reasons for organisational complexity;* *-Study the literature on the school as both a bureaucratic and a professional organisation. Provide a review of literature.* *-Practical research activity- You want to determine whether both the bureaucratic and professional features are applied flexibly to your school with a view to optimising teaching and learning. Conduct qualitative research; identify a research problem; all steps of research highlighted; student to present research report.* (E, CO, p. 29)	*Pre- course assignment.* *Write an essay in which you:* *Critically describe and discuss the shift in educational management and leadership thinking that has taken place in the country since gaining its independence or in recent years.* *Discuss the implications of the 'new' approach to education management and leadership, both at a system and organisation level.* *Provide examples of what you mean by referring to your own institution.* (F, CO, p. 15)

The data above revealed that all six assignments across the programmes have a theoretical and practical dimension. However, differences do exist in terms of how these two dimensions are emphasised. Furthermore, there are also differences in terms of the cognitive level of questions. Some of the assignments demand higher order thinking skills by engaging students in critical thinking, whilst others demand basic skills and remain at a level of practice. A discussion of this now follows.

The figure below heuristically illustrates the profile of six assignments. The profile embodies a wave to show the movement between the concrete and abstract (after Maton, 2014, p. 119).

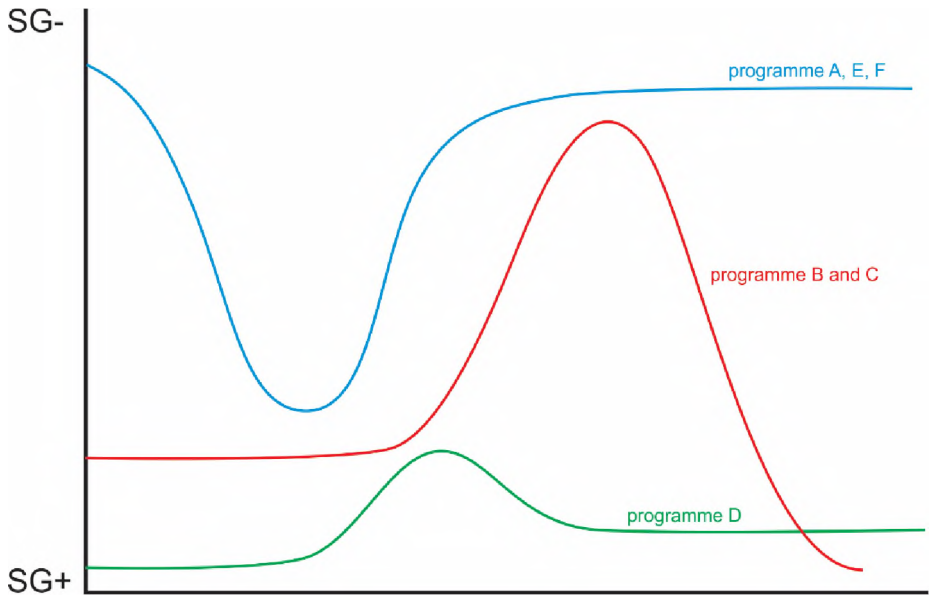


Figure 18: Profile of semantic gravity for assignment questions

The assignment question in programme A, E and F starts from a position of a relatively weaker semantic gravity by focusing on the theoretical aspects which are generally abstract (see Table 2 for questions). For example, *"Your essay should refer to international literature and should include a theoretical discussion"* (A, CO), *"Study the literature and discuss" (E, CO) or "Critically describe and discuss shifts in ELM thinking"* (F, CO). These assignments then move down to the concrete by requiring students to focus on the practice or the relevant context. Examples of this from the data include *"References to change innovations introduced in your organisation must be introduced"* (A, CO); *"Engage in a research activity to determine whether … the theoretical features are applied flexibly in the school"* (E, CO) or *"Provide examples by referring to your institution"* (F, CO). However, a careful analysis of

these three assignments also revealed that dipping into the context to provide examples was done in an integrated manner. Therefore, the questions did not then remain at a level of practice, but a gravity wave was embodied. Furthermore, these assignments incorporated a number of levels of difficulty from understanding of the content or practice to analysis and synthesis, very high order skills reflecting the purposes of a Master's programme. All three questions embodied a range of movements, which could be regarded as a good or favourable question that could promote cumulative learning. In this regard, Maton posits that the greater the movement (wave) and semantic range, the greater the possibility of cumulative learning (Maton, 2014, p. 121).

Programme B and C allows students to choose their own topics. When asked about the rationale for this practice respondent C1 (I, p. 13) said that:

> *I do things slightly different here ... and I am always in trouble with my colleagues here and I find myself in a very interesting position because it provides me with an opportunity to explain things ... learning is a combination of formative learning and summative learning and must be guided by those principles and you find that students do well in my assignments ... I ask them to identify their own questions within a topic that I have taught. This is not a flimsy belief ... it is a belief rooted in the sense that it is only when somebody is able to ask questions about what they have learnt that they actually demonstrate a deep understanding of what they have actually learnt ... so this habit of setting questions for me is an outdated way of trying to gauge people's understanding ... they meet with me and I have to approve of it because I know the different levels of questions.*

Relinquishing the power of prescribing the assessment topic and being very transparent about it, helps to promote an ownership of learning and values what the student brings. This level of student-centredness in assessment practices indicates a stronger social relation (SR+).

By allowing students to choose their own topics, the assignment can start from a stronger semantic gravity because the knower commences the task by focusing on their contexts and what is relevant. Thereafter, there is an upward movement to theory which should usually be the case, for example *"The body should include key theories and concepts"* (E, CO), especially since the assignment is a review of the literature (B, CO). Finally, the question requires students to reflect on their engagement in the assignment, thereby taking a dip into the context specificities: *"End with a conclusion where you reflect on your experiences"* (B, CO). The specificities of the assignment in programme C were not provided in detail. However, the table and previous discussions and the discussion in the next Section 6.4.2,

show that the respondent engaged students to reflect on their practices in a theoretically informed manner. Hence in these two examples there is evidence of semantic waving which facilitates learning.

By contrast, the assignment question in programme D suggests a stronger semantic gravity (SG+). It commences with a scenario of a school highlighting that *"the image of a divided school is perceived negatively"* (E, CO). There is a reference to theory by requiring students to choose the approach of the *"big bang or slow creep"* marketing strategy (E, CO): so there is a weakening of semantic gravity. However, the question does not move to very high levels of a weakened semantic gravity (or an abstract level). Although waving does occur, the curve is flatter. The level of thinking required to complete such an assignment could be found on the lower levels of Bloom's taxonomy, with a stronger focus on understanding for problem-solving in the context (e.g. Forehand, 2010). This is reminiscent of one of the findings of the national Audit Review which concluded that *"many programmes put practical problems in front of students and the next level of reflection on the conceptual utility of methodologies and practices was largely absent"* (CHE, 2010, p. 35). In the case of the review this was seen as a fundamental weakness of a programme purporting to operate at the second highest level of the NQF.

Finally, in all of the assignments there is a focus on drawing on the experience of knowers which signifies that experience is valued (SR+). However, interrogating the assignment questions revealed that certain assessment practices in programmes A, B, C, E and F confirm that achievement is measured in terms of integrating meanings from experiences and theory and the range of movements is extended. The extension of movements between a weaker and stronger semantic gravity results in academic achievement (Maton, 2014, p. 123) with a greater degree of cumulative learning being promoted. These practices facilitate the development of the knower and a cultivated gaze. By contrast, the assessment practice of programme D, although focusing on the knower, is restricting, resonating with an earlier discussion of what is valued in the gaze. I am reminded of Maton's argument that "actors who feel the weight of the world may also experience the weight of semantic gravity" (2014, p. 124). Thus, alerting us that in order for cumulative learning to occur and for society to be more inclusive, a weakening of semantic gravity must occur. The reader is reminded that these discussions are based on the varying strengths of variables along a continuum and it is

all relative in nature. In the next section, the use of the conceptual tool of semantic gravity will be extended with a focus on reflective writing.

6.4.2 Reflective writing: addressing the theory practice conundrum of programmes and developing the knower

Three of the six programmes included journaling as an assessment form (B, C & F). Journaling is described as a process of "recording personal thoughts, daily experiences and evolving insights" (Hiemstra, 2001, p. 19). According to Hiemstra (2001), this learning method aids in personal growth and critical reflections which promote the challenging of worldviews. They are used both formatively and summatively and promise to be a useful tool to gauge the learning that is happening. The findings below revealed that journaling enabled real-life experiences to be interpreted through the theory that students engaged in. By being reflective the students were able to make judgements of their journey of learning which also enabled the cultivation of the ELM gaze.

Respondent F1 (I, p. 14) described the benefits of journaling below:

> *Journals bring in real life experience and personal knowledge. It is a DP requirement. A mark is not awarded because they are reflecting on practice and the moment a mark is awarded they will mediate those thoughts ... and we are trying to develop that skill of reflexivity, reflection, critical thinking and that only comes through practice.*

This response indicates that journal writing can provide authentic, deep reflections on the learning that is happening, provided a formal mark is not allocated to the task. The awarding of a mark may restrict the students from engaging honestly and lead to a contrived reflection of what academics might want to hear. This points to the notion that assessment could be informal and formative and a mark does not need to be allocated. This is in alignment with assessment as learning, where the student reflects critically – using this as a yard-stick for the student and academic to understand the learning that is happening (Brown, 2005). In this regard, Knight (2001, p. 8) posits that "good formative assessment therefore implies thinking about learning, teaching and assessment, not just about assessment".

The purpose of journal writing is discussed at length in the course outline of programme B. Below is an extract of some of these writings (B, CO, p. 12):

> *It is a medium through which you reflect on all aspects of your professional training, learning, practice and development ... it is a continuing conversation with yourself about the theory you touched on and how it might inform practice ... it also provides a vehicle to improving on one's writing practice. They provide learners with a critical reflection of their development and they provide the lecturer with an evaluation of the course from the learners' perspectives.*

A student's response to journal writing shared by respondent B1 revealed that *"I have grown tremendously this year and the journal was a reflection of that. ... I laughed at some of the entries I had written earlier on"* (Email, 12 October, 2015).

The above data revealed that there are multiple educational benefits of journaling for all parties in the learning environment. It promotes student learning and keeps teachers informed. In this was journaling can be a powerful vehicle for curriculum revision. The literature alludes to it being a proactive approach to learning that enhances the ability of individuals to take responsibility for their development (e.g. Hiemstra, 2001, p. 25).

Similarly, programme C (CO, p. 5) used reflection as a cumulative record of the learning on the course. Students are provided with questions guiding the process. Some of these questions included:

- *My original understanding of the concepts that underpin this topic;*
- *How these concepts operate in my own school;*
- *My reflections on the reading for the topic;*
- *My own contribution during the session;*
- *What have I learnt from other people's contributions?*
- *What have I not quite grasped and how will I fill the gaps?*
- *What the tutor could do to enhance the quality of learning;*
- *What could I do to improve the quality of my learning?*

Thereafter, these reflective pieces together with assessment tasks are submitted as a final portfolio to assess the coursework component of the Master's degree (C, CO). I have included the questions that guide their reflective writing for the reader to get a sense that the questions help surface critical and deep thoughts on student development during the programme.

I also argue that journaling could also be considered as an authentic learning task. Authentic learning claims "to create cumulative learning experiences by building on student's prior experiences and providing knowledge relevant to their future work" (Herrington & Oliver, 2000 as cited in Maton, 2014, p. 111). The data presented above draws on the experiences of students. For example "*reflecting on practice "(*F1, I, p. 14), *"reflect on all aspects of your professional training, learning, practice and development"* (B, CO, p. 12*)* and *"my original understanding and how do these concepts operate at my school"* (C1, I, p. 5) highlight that students' personal experiences are valued in the task. Furthermore, the data revealed that they then make theoretical connections: *"It is a continuing conversation with yourself about the theory you touched on and how it might inform practice"* (B, CO, p. 12), *"trying to develop critical skills"* (F1, I, p. 14). This back and forth motion of engaging in theory and practice as illustrated in the set of questions in the programme at institution C, indicates that the reflective journaling tasks facilitates deep learning in ELM programmes. Furthermore, the task embodies a knower code with a stronger emphasis on the student with words such as *"you, "my"* and *"what have I learnt"*. But the task also gets the students drawing on their own experiences through the engagement with theory to critically reflect on their learning and the implications thereof on the practice. Diagrammatically this task of reflective journaling can be represented as:

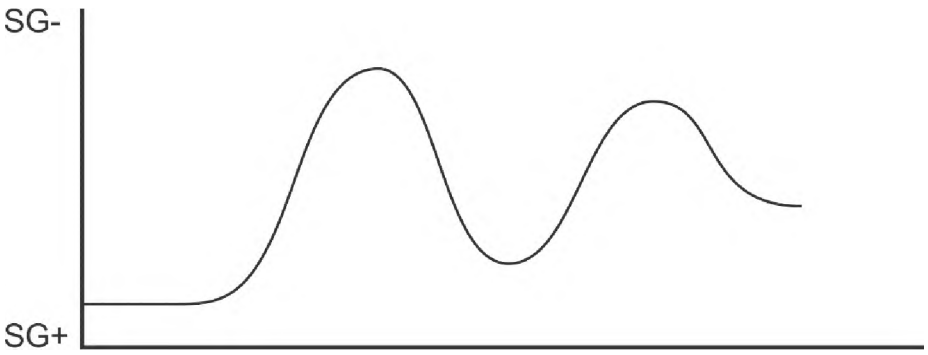


Figure 19: Profile of semantic gravity for reflective task

The graph highlights that semantic gravity is stronger when students draw on their personal experiences, then moves up (weakens) when they engage with the theory they are exposed to and are able to use theory to inform their practices. Maton (2014) feels that the key to academic achievement lies not with stronger or weaker semantic gravity, but rather with extending the range of movements between them, with both strengthening and weakening

semantic gravity, by decontextualising and recontextualising knowledge, thereby resulting in cumulative knowledge-building and learning. Hence semantic waving is occurring which, according to Maton (2014), is essential for cumulative learning and knowledge-building as previously discussed under the assignment as an assessment practice section. There is evidence also that this task through critical reflection, helps develop the gaze of the knower which, as described earlier, is trying to develop a particular way of being: a cultivated gaze. I do acknowledge that subtle differences exist across the three programmes embracing the task of reflecting. However, the intention of this section is to highlight that this novel assessment as a formative assessment connects theory to practice and brings in the knower. Edwards, Ranson and Strain (2010) acknowledge that reflexivity commences on small scale reflection. Through reflexivity and self-regulation, the student's practice and learning is likely to improve due to their judgements being enhanced (e.g. Boud, 2007). Reflective assessment tasks focus on the knower, the learning experiences and development to progress as an active participant in the ELM discourse and community: thereby displaying stronger social relations (SR+).

In the next section my attention turns to other assessment forms that also promote sociality of knowers.

6.4.3 Other novel assessment practices: promotion of the sociality of the knower

In this section, I argue that novel assessment practices help develop dispositions of the knower through supportive learning situations. The purpose of these assessments is not merely to grade student work as was also the case of reflective pieces, but to inculcate learning which develops the student to participate in the scholarly community.

One such practice is seminar or class presentations which generally take the form of student-led presentations on prior readings and a discussion and debate on key issues. (e.g. course outlines for university B, C & D). A respondent posits: "*The seminars weigh more towards the academic, but there would be a criterion where they could relate it to practice*" (F1, I, p. 15). These seminar presentations seem to develop various skills such as engaging with academic texts, constructing one's argument and developing the confidence to present to others.

In addition, in support of presentations, one programme (B1, I, p. 18) organises a mini-conference and students are assessed:

> *Besides the content, this is intended to give you some practice in presenting at a conference ... whatever format you use make it interactive ... you may use the rubric provided or design your own that better suits your presentation. The class will assess your presentation. I will abrogate to myself the liberty to moderate the marks.*

A mini-conference has similar merits. In this regard Grant argues that inducting postgraduate students into scholarly communities by exposing them to certain methodologies could facilitate "communicating, generating and the publishing of new knowledge" (2014, p. 96). It is a more exciting format which exposes students to the arena of conferences where they may engage in scholarly debates. Students are also provided with an opportunity to assess. Gielen, Dochy, Onghena, Struyven and Smeets (2011) believe that peer assessment facilitates the discovery of interesting ideas or alternate approaches which leads to self-reflection and improvement in one's own work. This also encourages them to understand the criteria and improve upon their own presentations. The lecturers' willingness to relinquish the power of assessment and being very transparent about it, helps to promote an ownership of the learning and assessing practices. The students' exposure to this community of experience created by the academics is likely to increase their socialisation ability. Students acquire knowledge and it shapes them into a particular way of being. However, note that the emphasis is on the students' development and exposure.

Formative assessment was referred to as a practice by many respondents. This refers to a "systematic process to continuously gather evidence about learning – which leads to further learning" (Heritage, 2007, p. 141). These practices included feedback offered on multiple drafts and reflective pieces which are not awarded a final mark. This approach means designing learning sequences that afford plenty of opportunity for good learning conversations that arise from feedback on tasks that are usually matched to learning outcomes (Knight, 2001, p. 8). In this regard respondent A1 (I, p.14) mentioned:

> *Our assessment is largely formative ... you do little tasks that build ultimately to a particular outcome ... it's about reading skills, synthesising, presenting arguments and every assessment task has an assessment criteria and up-front we believe that our students should know how they will be assessed. We spend copious amount of time explaining to them the assessment criteria and exactly what is needed of them ... our assessment is not only about the student who learns best through reading and writing.*

... It's about the oral learner ... visual learner... we cater for multiple modes of learning. This is taken into account when we developed our assessment strategy.

Finally, it is evident that these nuanced assessment practices are progressive strategies that have teaching and learning at the core of the programme. The students are positioned actively and one gets a sense that there is a strong focus in the programmes on developing the student through these practices. I do acknowledge this is relative in terms of the different programmes, with some offering greater support and development opportunities through their practices. In the final section of this chapter, I present an overview of what this chapter tried to accomplish.

6.5 Pulling the threads together on the social relations in the programmes

In this section, I attempt to synthesise the findings and discussions in the chapter so that the reader can be reminded about the findings, discussions and arguments pertaining to the privileging and acknowledging of student dispositions, attributes and the drawing on everyday experiences. In summary, I have found that the student or knower is valued across the programmes: indicating stronger social relations (SR+).

Selection and access criteria were discussed and it became evident that who the students were mattered. Although programmes were flexible in this regard, student qualities and experiences were valued, revealing stronger social relations. Similarly, the social and cultural capital of academics had a bearing on curricula, particularly with reference to the pedagogical and assessment practices students are exposed to. The discussions also emphasised the point that student-centered approaches drawing on practice to create an authentic learning environment were valued: thereby strengthening the social relations in the programmes (SR+). This sentiment is expressed in liberal humanist ideas which define education as "the inculcation of students into a way of life through cultivated specialised sensibilities" (Maton, 2004, p. 222). The findings also revealed that approaches embraced were supportive of students to enter the ELM discourse and through the sociality develop and hence grow the field. This pointed to the strong privileging of knowers in the programmes.

Similarly, assessment practices also revealed a tendency towards supporting the learning process through the development of a cultivated gaze. This discussion has also alerted the

reader to nuances that exist in programmes in the development of the cultivated gaze. The immersion in scholarly communities, exposure to certain forms of pedagogical and assessment practices, focuses on developing the student into a particular way of being. In summary, the successful participant in these programmes is based on knowing: the knowers are legitimated through these practices. Overall, the findings and discussion revealed that programmes exhibited stronger social relations.

The dominant code or the basis of legitimation across these programmes is the development of the person and not knowledge. As discussed in the previous chapter, knowledge was contested and programmes displayed weaker epistemic relations. The MEd (ELM) programmes possess stronger social relations and weaker epistemic relations (SR+, ER-). Therefore, the dominant code across the programmes is a knower code. This is in keeping with the argument made in the Robbins report "that a key aim of higher education should be to produce not mere specialists but rather cultivated men and women" (Robbins, 1963 as cited in Maton, 2004, p. 225). The question that guided the process of establishing the dominant code across the programmes was: *Was there a focus on the person you become or knowledge that you should know?* However, one must be reminded that there is 'always knowledge and knowers' in each of the programmes (Maton, 2014). However, the basis of legitimacy across the programmes requires a specialisation of knowers. This is not to say that there is no knowledge in the programmes: it is what is dominant or privileged across these programmes.

Another way of also justifying the existence of a knower code is to focus on the translation device discussed in Chapter Four. Drawing on Bhaskar's notion of 'absenting the absences' which he refers to as real negation, this notion explains that for everything absent there is a symmetry between absence and presence (e.g. Bhaskar, 2016). Applying this notion to the translation device, the presence of data in weaker epistemic relations (ER-) suggested an absence in the stronger epistemic relations (shown as no data on the table). Similarly, an absence of data in weaker social relations also suggested the presence of stronger social relations (SR+). While this notion was used to elicit a point on the translation device, the data sources were still carefully coded and categorised.

In summary, an educational practice with a knower code (SR+, ER-) as represented in the diagram below, has a relatively stronger SR but a relatively weaker ER. In this case,

legitimacy is based on the dispositions or 'gaze' of the knower and specialist knowledge is down- played.

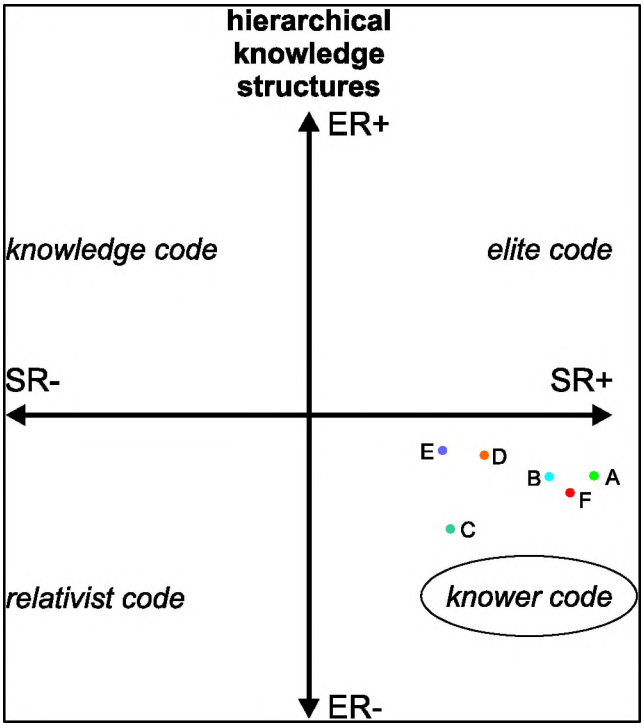


Figure 20: Knower codes across programmes

6.6 Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter was in response to research question two: *How do programmes position and envisage knowers in the field, and how has this come to be?* This chapter provided an argument that social relations are relatively stronger than epistemic relations (which was discussed in the previous chapter) across the various programmes. This conclusion was reached after an interrogation of pedagogical and assessment practices amongst others, which revealed the value or emphasis placed on knowers across the programmes. Although nuances did exist, programmes were privileging a cultivated gaze. Finally, the discussion described the dominant code across the programmes as a knower code.

In the final chapter of this thesis, key insights from both Chapter Five and Six will be drawn together to synthesise the findings in relation to the research questions. Furthermore, a deeper nuanced reflection on the findings and their implications will be provided.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS: WHY ARE THINGS THE WAY THEY ARE?

7.1 Introduction

This research study set out to examine MEd (ELM) coursework programmes at South African universities. The study was prompted, in part, by the Audit Review discussed in Chapter One (CHE, 2010), which identified several problems inherent in these programmes. In examining the six coursework programmes currently on offer in South Africa, I drew on Bernstein's concept of fields, locating it within the field of recontextualisation. The central research question that guided this study was:

What knowledge and knower structures characterise the MEd coursework programmes in the field of Educational Leadership and Management at public higher education institutions in South Africa?

I was further guided by the following sub- questions:

- *What constitutes legitimate knowledge practices in the MEd (ELM) programmes and why is this the case?*
- *How do programmes position and envisage knowers in the field, and how has this come to be?*

These research questions are indicative of the theory I drew upon in the study. Bernstein's theory of education codes (Bernstein, 2000) and Maton's legitimation code theory (Maton, 2014; 2016) helped surface principles underpinning the knowledge and knower practices. I followed a case study approach to enable a deeper understanding of and engagement with the complexity of social and educational activities by asking the basic question "What is going on here?" (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 53). I worked with data derived from course outlines and individual interviews with academics directly involved in the design and/or the delivery of the programmes.

The chief purpose of this final chapter is to crystallise the key findings uncovered in Chapter Five and Six and to provide a nuanced understanding through a process of retroduction.

Retroductive analysis is concerned with establishing explanations of what must be the case for things to be the way they are (Danermark et al., 2002). Furthermore, Houston (2010, pp. 82-83) points out that retroduction moves from "a description of something that produces it or is a condition for it" to a focus on questions like, "What must be the case in order for events to occur as they do?" As a result, there is a move from observation – the empirical level of critical realism – to an exploration of what has to be in place for an event to be what it is or for an event to happen – the level of the 'real' *(ibid.)*. Kadyakapita (2013, p. 256) makes the helpful comment that retroduction as a mode of inference in analysis is challenging and "it tends to be an endless circular activity". He suggests that given that critical realist research "uncovers tentative and fallible causes of events – or non-events – intelligent guesswork may well be a highly appropriate and creative approach to adopt" (2013, p. 256). Retroduction is thus speculative in nature, looking for plausible and likely explanations for explaining the status quo in an attempt to plan a way forward.

A second purpose of this chapter is to discuss the implications of how the theoretical orientation adopted in the study played out, highlighting its value and shortcomings.

Finally, I discuss the contributions of this study to the field of ELM and to higher education. I also elaborate on possible future research in this field. My attention now turns to a deeper interrogation of some of the key findings.

7. 2 Key insights emerging from the findings

This section presents and discusses the key findings of this study, expressed as analytical statements.

7.2.1 In the absence of a common canon, the ideology of programme designers influences the knowledge selected across programmes

In Section 5.5 the findings revealed that knowledge selection across the programmes differed. These differences were attributed to the fact that the knowledge base that programmes draw on is vast and fluid, mostly because there is no ELM canon, which indicates weaker epistemic relations (ER-). Chapter Two revealed that ELM as a field has experienced problems pertaining to its knowledge base (e.g. Oplatka, 2008). This manifests in a

diversified and fragmented knowledge base. The field is characterised by major paradigmatic shifts and significantly contrasting research orientations.

It is not surprising then that the authority to decide on what counts as knowledge, lies in the hands of programme designers – and at times the institution and its own strategic agenda, as discussed earlier – so that the programme becomes a space for ideologies to find avenues of expression. This is not unusual. The notion of the academic as expert designing a programme according to what he or she sees as powerful knowledge is a hallmark of higher education. But of course, programme designers do not all operate from the same place, ideologically and academically; they have been shaped by, and in turn, shape the knowledge that is included in their programmes. It is also the case that the evolving higher education landscape has played a role in shaping academics' thinking and programme design.

In South Africa the higher education landscape is complex. The country's political history gave rise to different kinds of institutions, and until 1994, many were structured along racial lines. It is common cause that one of the most damaging consequences of apartheid was the fact that some population groups received education and funding that was significantly inferior to others (e.g. Booyse, le Roux, Seroto & Wolhuter, 2011). Muthivhi and Broom (2008) for example, explain that the school curriculum designed for the black population had the distinct purpose of equipping learners to participate in menial tasks in the labour market. Coupled with this watered-down curriculum was the economic situation of these schools. Inadequate funding led to over-crowded classrooms, with teachers having to adopt impoverished pedagogical approaches such as rote learning, encouraging an uncritical adherence to and dependence on state sanctioned and ideologically loaded textbooks.

It is probably fair to assume that similar kinds of differences and inequalities characterised higher education in South Africa. Muthivi and Broom (2008) argue that individuals can experience a conflict of interest in terms of what they were culturally socialised into in the previous dispensation, with the values of the current dispensation. This to a certain extent would have shaped the orientation of some of the programme designers. Muthivhi and Broom (2008) found that "past forms of schooling and classroom teaching and learning continue to be instantiated within the presently evolving practices of schooling" (p. 98). Similarly, programme designers, having been influenced by their past, may still be displaying a tendency to prepare their students for the needs that were dominant in their own higher

learning. The practice of preparing students for the work place, for example, may well be driven by higher education teachers' own experiences, as well as reflecting the perceived purpose of some HEIs, as I will show later in this chapter.

7.2.2 The focus on utilitarian knowledge promotes the training of principals rather than the development of academics

In Section 5.3.2 of this thesis, the findings highlighted the privileging of utilitarian knowledge across five of the six programmes. Functional knowledge is work-place knowledge and promotes the development of the practitioner. This is a bias that is still prevalent in the field of ELM as a whole, rather than being solely a South African phenomenon (e.g. Gunter, 2012). Against this backdrop, I move on to explore why this might be the case.

The purpose of including law and policy in programmes is to train administrators to be policy implementers. Moreover, since policy is the mouthpiece of managers and governors, modules in law and policy tend to emphasise power and compliance. The choices made here align with a functionalist frame (discussed in Section 2.3). Policy is synonymous with control, by its very nature of regulating behaviour. Trying to unpick the discourse in modules like 'educational law', 'educational policy' and 'management of resources' helps to identify the rationale within them. It is evident that there is a distinct focus purely on functional imperatives. These are narrow, internal, managerial elements in programmes that hope to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of organisations (Gillies, 2013). Programmes which privilege law and policy thus shape the development of students in the programmes in a particular way, presenting a potentially rigid view of leadership practice. If compliance and conformity are the aim, programmes may tend to produce practitioners who may be insensitive to the nuances of educational contexts and practices. In a system often perceived as managerialist it is possible to argue that programmes which promote conformity and compliance are likely to perpetuate a managerialist view of leadership.

The inclusion of modules such as managing of financial and human resources is also indicative of the form of knowledge privileged in many of the programmes, namely procedural conceptual knowledge aligned to the work place. This form of knowledge provides leaders in their schools with the know-how of managing their resources which is a daily requirement of their profession. This links to the notion that field members see the field

as an applied field, focused on problem-solving with a functional orientation (see Section 2.3.2). In fact, the Department of Basic Education has developed a programme for developing leadership and management of school leaders (South Africa, *Policy on the South African Standard for Principalship,* 2015). This policy includes acquiring competencies such as management of resources, law and policies (*ibid.*, p. 10). The inclusion of these modules in MEd (ELM) programmes is a response to policy requirements, so that it seems in some instances that the MEd (ELM) programme designers are addressing the need to train principals. While this need clearly exists, a level 9 Master's qualification is perhaps not the appropriate home for it. Indeed, an official document outlining the role and purpose of Master's programmes makes no reference to 'training' (South Africa, HEQSF, 2013, p. 13). Instead, the degree is described as a *research* degree whose primary purpose is "to educate and train researchers who can contribute to the development of knowledge at an advanced level" (South Africa, HEQSF, 2013, p. 36). Programmes which lean heavily towards utilitarian view of knowledge are therefore unlikely to be complying with the national expectation of the MEd. One may argue that these programmes may be professional, rather than academic qualifications. But even then, the professional Master's programme outlined in the document referred to, also requires a deeper theoretical and critical engagement (e.g. South Africa, HEQSF, 2013, p. 37) and not merely the learning of procedural content knowledge and policy.

There are several likely reasons for this 'professional' trend in Master's programmes, one of which lies in the restructuring of higher education in South Africa. The main impetus for this restructuring was to "overcome the legacies of an apartheid-engineered landscape as quickly as possible (CHE, 2016, p. 38). This led to three broad categories of higher education institutions, namely: universities, universities of technologies and comprehensive universities. Higher education institutions experienced a merger between traditional universities and technikons to form comprehensive universities, and the colleges of education were incorporated into universities (CHE, 2010, p. 13). These mergers affected the higher education landscape in South Africa, in most cases negatively (CHE, 2010. p. 13). Institutions were grappling with problems of restructuring. Curriculum challenges were emanating directly from this restructuring, hardly surprising when one considers the enforced marriage of purely academic pursuits and the more practical, utilitarian purposes of technikons. The purpose of technikons was to equip students for the work place and hence a technical orientation privileging utilitarian knowledge would very likely have found its way

into university programmes. But this is not likely to be an important driver of functionalist curricularisation, since even universities which have not experienced merging, have programmes which are strongly functionalist.

Market-related conditions could also be an underlying cause. The number of students enrolling for a Master's in ELM is high (CHE, 2010), and students' reasons for enrolling for this programme are nearly always linked to professional practice and career advancement (van der Mescht, 2008, p. 14). Since increased numbers make programmes economically viable, addressing these needs of students would clearly play a role in shaping programmes in ways which would ease and even promote career advancement, where practice counts more heavily than theory. Hence economic and market-related factors result in programmes serving the needs of students, needs which are not always academically defensible.

A further driver of this utilitarian trend lies in South Africa's history. In spite of large scale reform after 1994, the reality of poorly resourced schools and disappointing results seems to stubbornly refuse to show signs of real improvement. Bloch (2009) identifies the challenges facing education post-1994 and takes the teachers and the government to task in this regard. Principals are held accountable for the performance of their schools. It became imperative that principals were able to fulfil their duties as a manager, leader and administrator. Perhaps in response to this crisis, the government regarded the preparation of principals as a priority, giving rise to the Advanced Certificate in Educational Principalship. This course was, for a few years, regarded as an obligatory qualification for principals. The course itself is mostly a training manual, designed to develop school managers. While a certificate programme such as this one seems an appropriate home for a training programme, the very fact that its existence was deemed necessary, even compulsory, suggests a mindset far removed from critical enquiry, creative problem solving and dealing with the kinds of ambiguity schools constantly throw up as leadership challenges.

7.2.3 Students' experience: the beginning, not the end

The findings reveal that all programmes draw on the work experience of students (Section 5.3.2.3). The assessment practices also reveal this tendency (Section 6.4.1). The privileging of personal experience and knowledge that is legitimated suggests a strong social relation (SR+). The concept of semantic gravity was very useful in highlighting the role experience

plays in knowledge and assessment. Programmes typically leaned heavily on students' professional experience to initiate learning practices and then moved to other, more abstract and applied forms of knowledge and knowing. In terms of semantic gravity, one could detect a movement from SG+ to SG-.

However, this was not the case in all the programmes. Some programmes, while displaying a weakening of semantic gravity through moving beyond the experiences of students, did not reach abstract forms of knowledge. Ultimately, one is left with the impression that experience was the purpose of these programmes, and not more critical thinking or forms of knowledge which should underpin Master's programmes according to the policy guidelines (HEQSF, 2013). Programmes that focus too heavily on experience often fail to expose students to knowledge and skills that make it possible to critique and analyse experience, and thus fail in one of the key purposes of the qualification (HEQSF, 2013). In this regard, Barret and Rata (2014) argue that "the major task of teachers is to assist students in bridging the gap between everyday knowledge and academic knowledge and to introduce students to the powerful knowledge that can enable them to transcend experience" (p. 16). Powerful knowledge is knowledge which enables students to develop a critical awareness of the forces structuring their own lives and to imagine alternatives beyond their everyday experiences (Beck, 2014).

Experience was also a strong selection criterion across all programmes, and one institution was rigid in this regard, prepared to accept applicants who occupied management positions only (Section 6.2.2.1). This reinforces the tendency discussed earlier of programme designers privileging knowers, and the practical, professional knowledge they bring in the sense of experience. It also reinforces the tendency of privileging utilitarian knowledge as part of the process of preparing school administrators.

This practice has an impact on the development of the field of ELM which will be addressed in a subsequent section. My attention now turns to modularisation and what has given rise to this approach.

7.2.4 Modularisation as a response to historical based educational and social needs

The findings in Section 5.2 revealed that five of the six programmes adopted a modular approach. The section discussed the benefits and challenges of this approach and the implications for knowledge-building and coherence in the programmes. The findings

suggested that modularisation may be a response to several hard realities in the South African educational landscape.

The underlying reasons for modularisation are complex and interlinked. The economic situation and the need to increase student numbers may be the most significant underlying cause. A modular approach enables a range of pedagogical strategies not readily available in the conventional non-modular or full thesis programme. In the first place, it facilitates the on-line transmission of programmes, thus attracting more students who live in rural areas and would not normally be able to afford traveling to centres to access physical university resources. Carefully planned modules could thus serve as distance programmes, which can boost university income by attracting a larger number of students.

While it is obvious that modularisation would widen access in this way, the question of scaffolding epistemological access also needs to be considered. Here the quality of materials – in particular to what extent they have been shaped as distance materials – becomes an issue. Of particular importance here is the need for coherence across the modules, a criterion highlighted by the HEQC criteria for programme evaluation (HEQC, 2004). A lack of coherence can result in students experiencing the modules as discrete items, raising important questions about epistemological access. The fact that only one of the programmes adopting a modular approach made available a document showing the alignment across the various modules suggests that institutions are perhaps not considering the potentially harmful effects of adopting a modular approach. In this sense, some of the programmes fell short of the expectation that epistemological access needs to go hand in hand with widened physical access (HEQC, 2004).

A second, and more sinister, driver of modularisation emerging from the data suggests that it is an institutional strategy of control of academic staff, since it becomes prescriptive. It suggests a lack of trust in academics' ability to write programmes that reflect their own understanding of the field and their research interests. Surveillance of this kind is inherently part of South Africa's history. The apartheid regime was based on principles of control and prescription. Curriculum was prescribed and, more generally, people were controlled in terms of policies drawn up along racial lines (e.g. Booyse et al., 2011). This practice has perhaps shaped the current practice at universities where there is still a need to control people and the

content of programmes. Foucault's notion of governmentality is particularly useful in the context of ELM.

Gillies (2013, p. 70) points out that in phrases such as:

> how to govern oneself, how to be governed, how to govern others, … if one only has to substitute 'govern' with 'manage' or 'lead' it becomes evident … just how these same preoccupations have come to be so widespread in educational leadership discourse today.

Gillies is not writing in a South African context though, so the tendency to favour rigidity and control is perhaps intrinsic to the field as a whole. Perhaps academics on the programme are comfortable with this notion of control since ELM embraces this discourse and adopting modular approaches would certainly enable high levels of control and surveillance. Whether it results in more effective learning is doubtful, especially where little or no attempt seems to have been made to scaffold and mediate materials to promote epistemological access.

7.2.5 Current knowledge practices are shaping the field in a particular way

Clearly ELM as a region needs to service both the academic and practice orientations of its field. However, I have shown that the knowledge practices across the programmes displayed weaker epistemic relations as a result of the privileging of certain forms of knowledge as described. This tendency shapes the field in a way that weakens academic content and also conflicts with policy. An undesirable consequence of this is the apparent downplaying of the importance of knowledge, an issue argued by sociologists in education (e.g. Wheelahan, 2010; Maton & Moore, 2010). As du Toit (2011, p. 59) argues, knowledge is central to a curriculum: the *what* that needs to be learned or discovered must be carefully considered in the planning of the curriculum. He adds that exposure to appropriate content knowledge and social issues increases the ability of students to act as responsible citizens, adds value to society, the economy and political life (du Toit, 2011, p. 61). Few would argue with the contention that the knowledge that Master's students are exposed to should be empowering and facilitate the understanding of highly complex situations contributing to the development of life-long learners. The kind of knowledge that can have this effect clearly needs to be more than, or other than, utilitarian knowledge of 'how to' manage and lead. Wheelahan (2010) argues that theoretical knowledge is essential to "provide humankind with a greater understanding of the world and enriches our capacity to live sustainably, purposively,

equitably and creatively" (p. 67). In this sense, strengthening the epistemic relations (ER) in programmes becomes a social justice issue. Denying students access to powerful forms of knowledge which enable critical engagement and development is likely to stultify growth and is ultimately, defeating the purposes of socially just education.

This study has revealed that social theory needs to feature more strongly in programmes, particularly in light of the absence of meaningful substantive ELM theory, as discussed in Chapter Two. An exposure to social theory would facilitate a stronger theoretical base driving ELM programmes, where students can draw on social theory in an informed manner to make sense of practice as a social phenomenon, rather than an organisational function. This notion of the need for social theory is embraced by Shay who posits that by adopting social theory "we are more likely to understand and resolve the seemingly intractable problems facing us in higher education" (2012, p. 312). Hence, exposing MEd students to social theory explicitly provides them with access to "understand what happens, what does not happen and what potentially could happen" (Wheelahan, 2010, p. 68). Students are inducted into thinking the unthinkable (*ibid.*) which then implicitly has implications for knowledge-building because of the close relation between the field of recontextualisation and the field of production. The knowledge base in the field of production would then be strengthened, resulting in stronger epistemic relations. The research which flows from these programmes is more likely to be critical and meaningful, drawing on broader conceptions of what we mean by schooling, management, leadership and governance. Hence, rather than consisting of isolated, small case studies – as discussed earlier – research produced by Master's programmes may begin to constitute a body of knowledge promoting cumulative growth.

As the study has found, however, the programmes all display stronger social relations and hence a knower code is dominant. I discuss this in the next section.

7.2.6 Privileging of a cultivated gaze: to what purpose?

The findings reveal that the pedagogical approaches embraced in the programmes are progressive, support student learning and development and make advances to privilege a cultivated gaze (Section 6.3). The gaze may increase sociality and capacity for growth within a knower structure (Maton, 2014). This could facilitate the potential for knowledge-building through the cultivation of knower dispositions, as they ascend to the legitimate gaze with the possibility of the knower structure affecting the knowledge structure (Maton, 2014). This

alludes to the possibility of progress in the field of ELM which is a knower code. My attention now turns to a few specificities pertaining to the cultivated gaze, which require deeper interrogation. Firstly, I focus on the issue of being exposed to exemplary works, and secondly, the knowledgeable other and the notion of master-apprentice.

Pedagogical approaches adopted in the programmes display a strong leaning to support teaching and learning. This increases the sociality of students towards achieving the legitimate gaze. The basis of legitimacy in the programmes is to develop knowers. The findings reveal that programmes do exhibit differences within a cultivated gaze and students can realise the gaze to varying degrees. But the question for me is: 'For what purpose is the gaze cultivated?' For example, to what extent is criticality promoted? Earlier discussions highlighted that some programmes' prerogative was to develop practitioners for the work-place. Hence the works these students are exposed to would be different from those selected by academics who see the programme differently, for example, as a course designed to promote critical thinking. Hence the notion of what is exemplary is not a universal one in the field of ELM, due to the absence of a common canon and the reliance on the knowledgeable other. Therefore the library that is shared from the vast array of materials is based on the individual academics' culture, history and beliefs.

The danger of this practice is that the reliance on the knowledgeable other in trying to cultivate a gaze could in certain situations result in hegemonic practices. A master-apprentice relationship could be problematic in perpetuating certain practices. While it is acknowledged that an awareness of social justice would counter hegemony, this awareness was not apparent in most of the programmes examined. According to Chisholm (2015), "hegemony is maintained through the winning of the consent of subordinate groups by the dominant one (s)" (p. 2). What is important then, is to enquire after the nature of the gaze being cultivated, and to what extent the gaze may promote liberatory enquiry and practice.

7.2.7 The demise of the coursework Master's ELM programmes

In the methodology chapter I explained that I had contacted all South African universities who had previously offered the programme. In 2010 when the National Audit Review of the ELM programmes was conducted, 14 institutions were offering the programme. In 2014 when I embarked on my research, only seven institutions were offering the programme, one

of which chose not to participate. It seems appropriate and perhaps important to investigate the reasons for this move away from coursework.

What seems most likely is that some institutions found the National Audit recommendations too demanding to follow, and hence chose the softer option of abandoning the programme. But other reasons emerged in my study. One institution mentioned that they were working on the programme and it would be ready for implementation during 2017/2018 (email dated (22/04/2015). Another responded that they had offered coursework up to 2013, but stopped for financial reasons. Coursework students seemed to take up to five years to complete, while the institution received subsidies for two years only. The same institution was also concerned about the calibre of student doing coursework, since their criteria for full thesis was more demanding and hence guaranteed a better calibre student more likely to complete within the funded period. The move away from coursework seems largely to be driven by financial, rather than educational reasons.

However, the original motivation for offering coursework and theses of limited scope was chiefly educational as well as social in the sense of attempting to widen access. It was argued that students who lacked the necessary theoretical background could access this through a carefully constructed coursework programme, where an experienced academic would build a curriculum sketching theoretical evolutions in the field, supported by well-chosen readings. However, designing such a curriculum is a demanding task, requiring vast and rich knowledge and experience. As alluded to earlier, after the HEQC Audit of MEd coursework programmes, several institutions chose to discontinue their coursework programmes, probably because they lacked the expertise and experience to write a meaningful, coherent, cutting-edge curriculum. Indeed, lack of rigour and coherence was identified as one of the key shortcomings of coursework programmes (CHE, 2010). In a full-thesis Masters, there is no need for a curriculum: students choose what they want to look at and the supervisors guide and support them. In other words, supervisors are responding to student work. In a coursework programme, students are responding to lecturers' work, especially in the coursework component (van der Mescht, 2017).

One may conclude that the move away from coursework to full-thesis suggests confidence in students' knowledge of the field, and ability to navigate their own way through the complex historical, political and social evolution of educational leadership and management theory

and practice. But this is probably not the case. Indeed, from what has emerged in this study, the move is driven by financial reasons: as mentioned above, full-thesis students complete more quickly, thereby 'saving' institutional resources, and, secondly, full-thesis students earn bigger state subsidies. Further evidence is the fact that some institutions have opted for a hybrid degree, full-thesis but heavily scaffolded by lecturers. So, while there are no coursework examinations, there are regular contact sessions where students are guided through set readings: not full-thesis, in the classical sense, but also not coursework.

The causal mechanisms driving these changes are complex, and multiple. It is true that universities find themselves in a position where market-related forces are important. The recent 'fees must fall' protests highlighted a reality that is inescapable in South Africa: poverty. Many students cannot afford to study, but would like to be able to access higher education. Hence the demand that the state must find the money – but their protests are directed at universities, and it is universities that suffer vandalism and abuse. Universities cannot afford to allow students admission to courses without payment. So poverty, coupled with a sense of social justice drives educational decisions.

Equally significant for this study is the apparent reality that HEIs may lack the capacity to design and deliver programmes at an appropriate level, programmes which address local and national educational needs, but also articulate with international thinking; programmes which address the practical business of leading and managing education through a lens of theory that enables and promotes criticality and the consequent empowerment of the student.

In this section, I expressed the key findings of the study as analytical statements and then suggested possible underlying causes for what was found. The discussion thus moved from an empirical level to a deeper exploration of the key findings. In terms of critical realism, the surfacing of causal mechanisms is in keeping with the more general goal of "enhanced reflexivity or transformed practice (or both)" (Bhaskar, 2016, p. 4). While it is beyond the scope of this study to be in any way instrumental in bringing about better practice, I do include some recommendations for practice later in this chapter. In the next section my attention turns to how my theoretical orientation informed the study.

7.3 The implications of the theoretical orientation of the study

All theories have their strengths and weaknesses. In Chapter Three I created a rationale for LCT as the explanatory framework for the study. In this section, I reflect on this decision.

As a reminder to the reader, this study was underpinned by a critical realist philosophy which is relevant to the challenging encounters we face and "can tell us something new" (Bhaskar, 2016, p. 2). This philosophy as an underlabourer aligns with LCT in surfacing underlying principles. The surfacing of possible causal mechanisms facilitates the "description of a newly identified level of reality and a further round of discovery and development follows" (Bhaskar, 2017, p. 7).

Similarly, LCT as an explanatory framework provided a language to describe the phenomenon of the study and an alternative means to also understand what was happening in the MEd (ELM) coursework programmes at South African higher education institutions. LCT has played an invaluable role in this study. The framework has enabled me to identify the principles underpinning and shaping the programmes I studied. I was able to see what was valued and legitimated in the programmes. LCT then provided a language to describe these knowledge and knower practices. The tools of specialisation and semantics were very useful in this regard.

The tool of specialisation and the development of a translation device provided a means to show that social relations were stronger than epistemic relations across the programmes. The methodology of LCT (using specialisation) enabled me to establish that in the case of the MEd (ELM) programmes, a knower code dominated with a strong focus on students' dispositions, thereby indicating stronger social relations. The theory also enabled me to establish that in the case of the programmes, knowledge was weakly conceptualised and presented, a common problem in the humanities (Maton, 2014). Without the LCT framework, an analysis of this kind would have been difficult, and a description of the findings even more so. In this sense, LCT is a very useful theory that can provide both analytic and explanatory power as well as a language with which to describe what the researcher finds.

Drawing on LCT and the conceptual work of Shay (2012) and Gamble (2009), I was also able to take the discussion on forms of knowledge further; for example, I was able to

recognise workplace knowledge as a knowledge form. In this way it was possible to show that many programmes privileged utilitarian knowledge which contradicts with the social justice agenda as described above in Section 7.2.5. In this manner the theory helped me to see that knowledge practices in the Master's (ELM) programmes were problematic and needed attention.

Through the concept of gazes, LCT also helped me to focus on the *knowers* in the programmes. Having established that programmes have a leaning towards a cultivated gaze, I was able to question the nature of that gaze, uncovering for example, hegemonic practices by considering academics' personal history and culture. Here LCT and critical realism as an underlabourer combined to enable a layered account of how a particular gaze gives rise to particular practices. This nuanced account was also facilitated through the use of semantics, which is also a LCT tool. This tool provided an invaluable means of also identifying the knowledge forms and learning valued in the development of the knower, through assessment practices. It facilitated an understanding of being either context-dependent or displaying a tendency of moving to more abstract forms of knowledge. This back and forth movement from context-dependency to abstract forms, semantic waving (Maton, 2014), is a powerful lens illuminating the kind of learning taking place.

In summary, LCT as a theoretical and analytical framework allowed me to look both at knowledge and knowers in the programmes in new and interesting ways, enabling a critical analysis of what follows in a field where legitimation lies in the knower. This fed into one of my most important findings, namely, that knowledge is hugely underplayed in programmes or interpreted as kinds of knowledge that lack the power to bring about any meaningful transformational learning. So, while initially, I had conceptualised the study as utililising the tool of specialisation only, I found using broad brush strokes of semantics extremely beneficial in explaining the theory/practice tension inherent in the programmes and the field and the nature of learning taking place. In terms of methodology, I also found the translation device "which acknowledges the discursive gap between theory and data and offers a means of traversing that gap" indispensable (Maton & Chen, 2016, p. 29).

Finally, while the findings of this study are statistically non-generalisable, the use of LCT has raised findings to a level of theoretical transferability. The use of the 'universal' language provided by LCT positions this study within a community of scholars who will recognise and

perhaps draw on these findings, or at least consider them in terms of their own curricular interests.

7.4 Contributions of the study

I trust that my findings may lead to serious interrogation of Master's programmes, not coursework only, but also the full-thesis and the new hybrid discussed earlier. There is certainly cause for concern about MEd ELM programmes, borne out by the list of key findings listed below:

- The findings revealed that programmes were overtly uneven in terms of cognitive levels and the nature of knowledge students were exposed to.
- All programmes betrayed a strong leaning towards social relations at the expense of epistemic relations. In terms of a knowledge-knower continuum, programmes generally display stronger knower codes. This suggests the need to strengthen knowledge in the programmes, and then, together with the strong knower, an elite code may be possible.
- Furthermore, the knowledge forms prevalent in many programmes were both dubious and open to question, begging the question of whether more 'powerful' knowledge such as social theory should be included. This would strengthen the exposure of students to forms of knowledge that promote criticality and embracing social justice as envisaged in MEd policy documents.
- Programmes do not reflect a common purpose in keeping with national imperatives. The programmes generally try to do too many things, stretching from the professional to the academic, with some programmes falling at the extremes.
- This study has found that ELM is a region, rather than a field, and programmes should therefore present a balance between the academic and practical dimensions. The most common weakness identified in this regard is the absence of intellectual rigour in several programmes which favour job training above academic development.

This study also adds to an under-researched area in the field. In fact, I am unaware of a study in ELM of this nature using LCT. It helps to fill the research gap described in Chapter Two by focusing on almost all the programmes in South Africa. This addresses the issue of small-scale research conducted in ELM usually in one site. Furthermore, the research used social

theory and methodological approaches that have thus far not been commonly used in ELM, which addresses the need for resuscitating research as described in Section 2.3.3. This research has made it possible to join conversations on LCT which is a rapidly growing field. Using LCT as a lens in educational practices sheds light on important issues such as knowledge-building and cumulative learning.

This study was not initially framed as an emancipatory study. However, in a critical realist research orientation, social justice is always potentially on the agenda, and this study is no exception. The discussions on the forms of knowledge students are exposed to raise important issues of epistemological access to powerful knowledge. Epistemological access to powerful knowledge addresses social justice concerns (e.g. Wheelahan, 2010). If this study encourages readers to interrogate the kinds of knowledge included in programmes in terms of the potential power of that knowledge to lead to transformatory learning, the thesis will have succeeded.

7.5 Further possibilities for research

This is where this research stops. I will be leaving you with possibilities for future research. This was a complex research project and there were a number of issues that I did not examine due to the delimitation of my study. I had to make quite a few decisions pertaining to the research during the initial stages. I had chosen to focus on all the MEd (ELM) programmes at South African universities in the field of recontextualisation (site where knowledge from the field of production are selected, re-arranged and transformed to pedagogic discourse – see Chapter Three). The study was extensive, thereby facilitating an overview of the programmes which represent the South African context.

However, a few other research possibilities come to mind. Firstly, the research scope could include the field of reproduction where one could focus on the actual teaching and learning enacted through observation. This would facilitate a drilling down into pedagogic practices and how the specialising of knowers actually occurs. Student experiences of the curriculum would also be useful to identify aspects such as code clashes and matches using LCT. This could be achieved by a careful analysis and comparison of expectations as described in curriculum documents and students' actual experiences of the curriculum. Any contradictions

could shed light on code clashes experienced by the students/knowers. This study does incorporate a discussion of the field of production (see Chapter Two). However, this could be done in a more nuanced way by looking at the knowledge produced by South African ELM academics in journal articles and their students' theses.

Secondly, theoretically I have utilised two LCT tools out of a possible five. There is scope for using the other tools on the data. I had taken the advice of Maton not to use too many tools at one time (personal communication, 2014). The tool of autonomy and the concepts of positional and relational autonomy could shed light on who the actors are and the origins of the principles underpinning the field.

7.6 Final reflections

Personally, the PHD journey has been challenging but rewarding. It has provided me with the opportunity to read widely and reflect deeply. Along the way, my interactions with the field of ELM, the framework of LCT and scholarship generally was enriching and contributed hugely to my growth as an academic. As a fairly new field member, this research provided me with the opportunity of meeting and establishing relationships with academics in ELM. Hopefully this research will serve as a stimulus for wider reflections, discussions and debates on the MEd (ELM) programmes in South Africa, allowing us to think differently about Master's programmes in ELM, thereby facilitating the improvement and transformation of our practice at higher education institutions.

I leave this project with mixed feelings. There is no doubt that the field is in trouble. It seems trapped in an *either-or* practice-theory discourse, suggesting youth and immaturity. A more mature and more helpful discourse would be a *both-and* discourse, which embraces both theory and practice as indispensable and mutually interdependent at both the recontextualisation level (programme level) and the field of production as an interplay of theory and practice (after Shay, 2012). This thesis will hopefully play a role in elevating the issues besetting the field to a level of seriousness that demands scholarship and deep reflection. This may enable us to recognise problems in our programmes and realise that we as an ELM community need to be proactive in bringing about the transformation required to have an effect on the field of production. In 1999, Bush – in an article entitled *Crisis or*

Crossroads – wondered what ELM's future would be. While he was writing chiefly in a UK context, the concerns expressed were, in some ways, similar. This study suggests that we too are at a point where we need to wonder about the way forward, certainly for the Master's degree in ELM, and probably for the field as a whole. Hopefully this thesis can play a role in this process.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Ethics approval

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

EDUCATION FACULTY □□PO Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140
Tel: (046) 603 8385 / (046) 603 8393 □ Fax: (046) 622 8028 □ e-mail: d.wilmot@ru.ac.za

22 September 2015
To Whom It May Concern
Re: Proposal and Ethics approval for Farhana Amod Kajee (14K0001)

The minutes of the EHDC meeting of the 11th December 2014 reflect the following:

CLASS A MATTERS
2014.08.3 DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROPOSALS
To consider the following research proposals for the degree of doctorate in philosophy in the Faculty of Education:
Farhana Amod Kajee 14K0001

A realist investigation of knowledge and knowers in the field of ELM: A case study of coursework Master's programmes at all South African Universities. Appointment of Professor Hennie van der Mescht and Dr Carolyn Grant as supervisors.
Approved. Comments were noted by the supervisor.

This letter confirms the approval of the above proposal at a meeting of the Faculty of Education Higher Degrees' Committee on the 11th of December 2014.

In the event that the proposal demonstrates an awareness of ethical responsibilities and a commitment to ethical research processes, the approval of the proposal by the committee constitutes ethical clearance. This was the case with this proposal and the committee thus approved ethical clearance.

Yours truly

Prof. Mellony Graven
Chair of the EHDC, Rhodes University

Appendix B - Letter to research participants

Dear Participant

I am currently a PHD scholar in Education at Rhodes University, Grahamstown and I am presently engaged in an independent research study on the MEd (ELM) coursework programmes in the country using a Maton and Bernstein lens. The provisional title is: A realist investigation of knowledge and knowers in the field of ELM: A case study of coursework Master's programmes at all South African Universities.

Please note that this is not an evaluation of performance or competence of academics. The identities of all who participate in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by Rhodes University. You are welcome to contact my supervisors or myself should you have any queries or questions you would like answered.

Professor Hennie van der Mescht (supervisor)
Email: h.vandermescht@ru.ac.za
Professor Callie Grant (co- supervisor)
Email: c.grant@ru.ac.za
Farhana Kajee (student)
Email: f.kajee@ru.ac.za

CONSENT

I am aware that:

- I will be used as a participant and need to submit my course outline and this letter;
- I am willing to be interviewed;
- The information will be used as part of Farhana Kajee's PHD;
- If I am involved in the interview, I will have to make some time available and I provide consent to the audio-recording of the interview;
- I am also aware that the information divulged by me will be kept strictly in confidence but that the findings of the research will be published in the form of a thesis and be reviewed by others;
- This data will also be utilised in publications;
- The identities of all who participate in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by Rhodes University;
- I undertake to uphold the autonomy of all participants and they will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves.

- I also understand that I shall not receive any payment for my participation in this research; however, I will be contributing to a body of knowledge which will be made available upon completion of the research.

Having taken note of the above information, I freely and voluntarily agree to take part in the research process and acknowledge that I have not been forced to do so. I have agreed to a Skype interview.

DECLARATION

I _____ (full names of the participant)

hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I consent to participating in the research project.

_____ _____

_____

Signature of participant Date Institution

Yours faithfully

F.A. KAJEE (MS)

Appendix C - Interview Questions

Interview: MEd ELM Coursework Programmes at South African Universities 2015
Individual interview example

Questions:

1. Please tell me something about yourself:
    - Tertiary Education (yes, especially try to establish if ELM was studied).
    - The journey of your career till the current position.
2. Briefly describe the roles you fulfil in your current position.
3. How did you arrive at the MEd ELM coursework programme you now use? (perhaps consider the putting together of the course/programme). What informed your choices and decisions? [*I think it is crucial here to dig for the lecturer's thinking about the purpose of a Master's degree – the course conveys how they see the MEd]*
4. Reflecting on the programme and students:
    - Which particular attributes are needed for success in this programme?
    - How important are students' background experiences and exposure to the practice of leadership and management in terms of doing a successful Master's programme? *(importance of professional and everyday experience)*
    - How would you describe the 'ideal' student?
5. In your opinion, which statement best describes the Master's ELM student as a legitimate participant/contributor in the field:

The student has or needs to possess natural talent or ability (what kind of talent or ability?)
The ability is possessed by belonging to a particular social class category.
The student displays a particular way of being, seeing or acting which could be taught or learnt.
Any student who is willing to be a part of learning procedures related to knowing could be a participant in the field.

6. What do you assume a Master's student brings to the course in terms of academic and or professional knowledge? Which is more valued in your programme?
7. After the completion of the qualification, what type/kind of a student is envisaged? Or what do you think your course prepares the students for?
8. Your programme is designed as having a number of modules and the research component. What was the reason for adopting a modular approach? / or your programme is designed

as one unit – other universities adopt a modular approach – discuss the rationale for the current design.

8.1 Briefly describe how do the various modules feed into the programme as a whole?

9. In your curriculum, how do you see the relationship between theory and practice? Has it shifted over the years?
10. Do you see this as a challenge in the design of the curriculum? Share your thoughts on this issue. Do you see the MEd (ELM) course as theoretical? Or practical? Both? Which is privileged?
11. Do you think academic/theoretical knowledge can improve leaders' professional practice? How?
12. The literature alludes to the field being weak and under-theorised and the need for the adoption of social theory. Do you think there is a place for social theory in an ELM Master's programme? Share your views.
13. Briefly describe your philosophical orientation/underpinnings in terms of the teaching and learning approach adopted in the programme. *(position will highlight if students are active participants or not – probe example of a session with your students)*
14. In terms of assessment practices, could you speak generally to this for the entire programme?
    - Briefly provide a rationale for the forms of assessment.
    - The method of assessment: Do you evaluate content?
    - Does the assessment bring in real-life experience and personal knowledge? Mention of a simulation or a written piece of work where an appropriate course of action in relation to a particular context and resources is undertaken. Elaborate.
    - What kind of student is likely to excel in these practices?
15. Looking at your course outline, I have made some interesting observations. Please comment on the following:

    The questions varied depending on what I wanted to find out a bit more after analysing the course outlines (For example:)

    - The leadership and management module places a great emphasis on management. Please share your thoughts on that.

- Comment on the inclusion of discussions and debates on African ways of knowing … texts by African scholars … keeping in line with the Universities Transformatory Agenda.
- The inclusion of readings from the Business Management Journal … please comment on the choice of readings.
- Another interesting observation was the raising of key questions throughout the course outline. Please share your rationale for this.
- I notice that there is an emphasis placed on social theory. Why?
- I find it fascinating that you have a critical reflection theme. Would you like to share your reasons for this inclusion?
- There is mention of theory being applied to practice … would you please elaborate how this is achieved in the course and its purpose.
- Questions pertaining to knowledge in the curriculum were also raised.

16. Is there anything that I have not asked you about, pertaining to the course that you would like to discuss?

Thank you!

Appendix D - Extract from policy document

What follows are a few excerpts from the policy:

- The primary purpose of this degree is to prepare researchers to contribute to the development of knowledge in the field of Education, including knowledge about professional practice at an advanced level.
- A Masters of Education degree comprises a significant research component which comprises of 60 credits out of 120 credits (50%).
- The students should be able to deal with complex issues in education both systematically and creatively, act autonomously, and continue to advance their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Government Gazette No. 38487 of 2015, p. 47

Appendix E - External language of description

EXTERNAL LANGUAGE OF DESCRIPTION

An exposition of the epistemic and social relations in this study based on the classification and framing of knowledge at the field of recontextualisation

Theoretical concept (Specialisation)		**Emphasis on-**	**Description of the concept**	**How concept manifests in study**	**Empirical data from course documents and interviews**
Epistemic relations (ER)	**ER+**	Knowledge/ Content in the curriculum	Knowledge, skills, procedures and techniques are strongly bounded and controlled with a specific object of study **(+C, +F or ER)**	Emphasis is placed on student's possession of: • Substantive ELM knowledge • Research knowledge, skills and procedures • Meta/ Social theory • Academic practices knowledge is valued (skills for the thesis).	• See Course outlines for outcomes and content / topics to be covered listed • (The knowledge as described in previous column was not strongly bounded)
	ER-		Knowledge, skills, procedures and techniques are weakly bounded and controlled and the object of study is not clearly defined or made explicit **(-C, -F of ER)**	• The possession of knowledge is downplayed as less important in defining legitimate knowledge. A degree of overlap exists with other disciplines.	• "*For me ELM is not a discipline, it draws on disciplines, and so it's got tentacles ... so that would be one reason I think why it's not clearly theorised, because it is drawing on so many traditions*" (B, I1, p. 15). Students given reading lists … resources could be accessed electronically (CO & I, A, D, E). • "*I bring in readings as required*" (C1, I, p. 13). • Modules like Financial Management, Human Resource Management have common topics which overlap with other fields like commerce.
	ER+	Assessment practices	Knowledge, skills, procedures and **techniques** are strongly bounded **(+C, +F or ER)**	• Assessment criteria are very explicit. Little or no choice on assessment types and criteria.	NO Data
			Knowledge, skills, procedures and **techniques** are weakly bounded **(-C, -F of ER)**	• Explicit criteria are less significant.	• Examples from course outlines … no rubric ... questions just asked or rubrics open- ended. • "*I ask my students to critique their own work/ understanding ... self- assessment*" (C1, I, p. 14). • "*Peer assessment is used for presentations*" (B1, I, p. 22).

Theoretical concept (Specialisation)		Emphasis on-	Description of the concept	How concept manifests in study	Empirical data from course documents and interviews
Social Relations (SR)	**SR+**	Personal knowledge/ experience (Everyday knowledge)	The subject and their identity is acknowledged **(+C, +F of SR)**	• Personal/ work-based experience are viewed as legitimate knowledge.	• "Think about your experience … what is it that makes schools unique organisations" (F, CO, p. 4). • "*Their coming in with the practices of leadership, their coming in with this wealth of knowledge*" (A1, I, p. 7) • "*It is important that the student brings his practical knowledge … and can relate it when they do the modules*" (E1, I, p. 5).
	SR-	Personal knowledge/ experience (Everyday knowledge)	The subject and their identity is downplayed **(-C, -F of SR)**		No Data
	SR+	Students' dispositions, attributes, characteristics and backgrounds are emphasised		• Who the student is matters.	• "*So I think the first prize is having students with experience* (B1, I, p. 8) "*Their performance at honours must be 60% and above, thereafter we look at leadership experience and this quite broad … and if you served as a classroom teacher for five to six, we bring you onto the programme*" (A1, I, p. 5). • Attributes such as "*becoming independent, critical thinking, ability to write, agency, motivation* "(F1, I, p. 6) are some of attributes that are valued … "*commitment and computer literacy*" also mentioned (D1, I, p. 4). • " *With these attributes … ultimately the course prepares them to be researchers*" (F1, I, p. 10). • "*Add value to their institution*" (D1, I, p. 5). • "*Adapt to challenges in the environment*" (A1, I, p. 7).
	SR-	Students' dispositions, attributes, characteristics and backgrounds		• It does not matter who the student is. • Attributes and characteristics downplayed.	No data (generally, years of experience, previous marks or position restrict access). Evident across all data sets.
	SR+	**Approaches in pedagogy	The subject/ student is considered	• Pedagogies that promote learning. • Students are considered in approaches adopted.	Interview Data • " *Promoting a socially just pedagogy is central … within the teaching and learning dimension … the learner is the most important*" (C1, I, p. 12). • "*I use a community of learning approach … also using Fiske's work which acknowledges difference* (F1, I, • p. 12). • "Adult learning and constructivist … pedagogy" (B, CO, p. 2 & 3).
	SR-	Approaches in pedagogy	The subject/ student's needs are downplayed	• The needs of students are down played in this regard.	No data
	SR+	Assessment practices	The subject/ student is considered in the assessment	• Creative and supportive practices are embraced. • Feedback on drafts.	• "*Students are provided with an opportunity to present their work in progress once a month at seminar presentations. Assessment is largely formative … we cater for multiple modes of learning in the assessment strategies employed*" (A1, I, p. 10). • "*Students are allowed to ask their own questions for assignments … yes they will discuss it with me but it allows them to demonstrate a deep understanding of what they have actually learnt*" (C1, I, p. 13). • Reflective journals, a future search conference and an assignment on a topic of their choice were amongst other assessment practices (B, CO, p. 4)
	SR-		The subject/ student is downplayed in assessment practices	• Traditional exams still prioritised. • Less opportunity for feedback.	"Feedback *not provided on drafts*" (D, I1, p. 14) There are some traditional exams (e.g. D1, I; E1, I).

External language of description: Semantics

Theoretical concept (Semantics)		Emphasis on- Assessment tasks and academics views on theoretical and practical knowledge	Description of the concept	How concept manifests in study	Empirical data from course documents and interviews
Semantic Gravity	**SG+**		Meaning is closely bound to its context. **(+C, +F of SG)**	Emphasis is placed on practice and the relevance and the usefulness of knowledge in specific contexts	**Course outlines and interviews… some examples:** "*People won't be threatened coming in, because people can draw on their common sense understanding of what they mean … so it is useful in making people feel safe and giving them a voice into the community, drawing on from where they are, what they know* "(F1, I, p. 15). "*We only take students who are HOD's, Deputy Principals, Principals or district officials*" (D1, I, p. 4). "*We want to see people in it because we feel that if you have the practical experience, you will be able to add value from the theory back into the school"* (D1, I, p. 4).
	SG-		Meaning is less dependent on its context. **(-C, -F of SG)**	Practice is downplayed and the focus is on abstract meanings and theory	No Data (Where focus is only on abstract knowledge. There is a movement).

** The reader is reminded that the study is in the field of recontextualisation and the data reveals what is intended and not enacted. The responses from the participants reveal what they value in terms of pedagogy. The evidence was clear that pedagogical approaches took the knower into consideration.