'It'll look good on your Personal Statement'

A multi-case study of self-marketing amongst 16-19 year olds applying to university

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Declaration

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration, except where specifically indicated in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or will be submitting, for a degree or diploma or any other qualification at any university. The length does not exceed the word limit as given by the Degree Committee of the Faculty of Education.

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Abstract

The aim of the study presented in this thesis was to understand how 16-19 year old students within three different types of educational institution, approached the process of having to 'market' themselves in the context of applying for university places, and why discourses and practices of self-marketing have become more prominent in recent decades. The research focused particularly closely on the role of the Personal Statement as part of the Higher Education application process, and the ways that the particular characteristics and situations of different schools and colleges may shape distinctive self-marketing practices among their students.

A multi-case study model was used, in which interviews were conducted with 36 students and various key members of staff, across three institutions and over three successive research phases. This interview data was supplemented by further data gathered from field observation and documentary analysis. The final interview with each respondent used the student's Personal Statement as a resource to explore their self-marketing behaviour in more detail.

Drawing on a Bernsteinian theoretical framework it was found that each institution had developed a pedagogy of self-marketing that was strongly embedded within and shaped by the dominant pedagogic code of that institution - both pedagogies being part of an ongoing strategic response to the conditions of the local education market-place. Self-marketing in the context of making applications to Higher Education institutions involved: firstly the recognition of a 'destination habitus' (a combination of institutional status and disciplinary habitus), and secondly the realisation of that destination habitus through the use of particular discourses in the production of the Personal Statement and, in some instances, performance in selection interviews. Crucially, the 'imaginary subject' projected by the dominant pedagogic code of the school/college was a reflection of the 'destination habitus' of the typical university/course that students from that institution in the main applied to. Individual student's orientations to self-marketing were then summarised in, what I have termed, a 'self-marketing profile', which shaped the discourses they deployed on their Personal Statement, and was itself shaped by the institution's pedagogy of self-marketing.

The primary conclusion of this thesis is that the far-reaching education reforms of the late 1980s in England and Wales have created market pressures which powerfully constrain both 16-19 institutions and Higher Education institutions to create market 'niches' for themselves, which then significantly influence students' self-marketing practices. These practices are therefore strategic responses both on the part of the institutions that students are currently located in, and also those they are applying to, and demonstrate that the institution 16-19 year olds attend makes a very significant difference to their orientation toward and experience of self-marketing.

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One
Introduction

1.1 Introduction

"Ever since I accidentally burnt holes in my pyjamas after experimenting with a chemistry set on my 8th birthday, I have always had a passion for science". In 2007, 234 students used this line to open their Personal Statement in application to university (The Times, 8th March, 2007). The Universities and Colleges Admissions System's 'Copycatch' system (which scans applicants' Personal Statements for similarity to previous applications and online exemplars), found that five per cent of the 50,000 students surveyed had plagiarised others' work (UCAS, 2007). The very existence of such a system suggests that some students are now experiencing greater competitive pressure than previous cohorts in their application to university, particularly when it comes to the need to make a good impression through Personal Statements or interviews.

This thesis is an attempt to understand how 16-19 year old students within three different institutions approached the process of having to 'sell themselves' to universities, and why. In particular, it argues that the far-reaching education reforms of the late 1980s have intensified market pressures which increasingly constrain 16-19 institutions and Higher Education institutions in England to create 'niches' for themselves, which then shape students' self-marketing practices. These practices are therefore presented as strategic responses, both on the part of the institutions that students are currently located in, and in relation to those they are applying to, and demonstrate that the institution 16-19 year olds attend makes a significant difference to their orientation toward and experience of self-marketing.

1.2 Rationale for study

There are three main rationales for undertaking this study, which I will address in turn.

1. To contribute to the *theorisation of self-marketing*, by looking at it within a range of pedagogic contexts.
2. To *investigate the role of different types of 16-19 institutions,* set within a wider context of quasi-market competition, in influencing self-marketing.
3. And through doing these, to arrive at some tentative conclusions about *the significance of self-marketing* as a set of 'soft skills'.

Despite being embedded in the experience of many twenty-first century citizens, self-marketing as an object of study for *sociologists* has been largely overlooked. It is under-researched, under-theorised and under-defined as a practice, and while this may create opportunities for 'original contributions' to our knowledge, it also requires some work to be done in framing it as a research problem that is worthy of study. Perhaps the prime reason that self-marketing has eluded a satisfactory theoretical and sociological conceptualisation thus far is that it is largely an *actor's* concept, emerging as part of the lexicon of those seeking employment or promotion (along with the more readily recogniseable idea of 'selling yourself'), and strongly associated with particular recruitment practices such as CV writing and selection interviews. As a result, literature concerning self-marketing can be broadly divided into: that which is concerned with the validity of recruitment tools such as interviews; that which concerns the application of marketing principles to people; and that which aims to help people market themselves more effectively.

Firstly then, it needs to be recognised that psychologists have been studying some of the practices now described as 'self-marketing' for nearly a century (Campion, Palmer, & Campion, 1997). Here, concerns range from the low validity of the interview as a recruitment tool (Mayfield, 1964; Schmitt, 1976; Arvey & Campion, 1982; Harris, 1989; Marchese & Muchinsky, 1993), to the effects of various psychological and social factors on interviewer/interviewee behaviour (Dipboye & Wiley, 1977, 1978; Dipboye, 1982; Fletcher & Spencer, 1985; Posthuma, Morgeson, & Campion, 2002). Secondly, a significant part of the academic literature on self-marketing is (perhaps unsurprisingly) located within marketing studies, where it remains rare and mainly theoretical (Bendisch, Larsen & Trueman, 2007). The primary concern for these authors is therefore to establish a sound theoretical framework for a field in which literature is produced by 'informal' and 'intuitive' approaches and where practical approaches and job-related advice predominates (Shepherd, 2005). The literature ranges from that which addresses the general

theoretical basis for self-marketing (Shepherd, *ibid;* Rein, Kotler, Hamlin & Stoller, 2005; Bendisch et al. *ibid;* Hughes, 2007) to the pseudo-experimental application of branding principles to specific people e.g. celebrities (Herzberg, 2003; Woischwill, 2003). Thirdly and finally, the term 'self-marketing' only really emerged strongly in the 1980s with the publication of large numbers of books intended to help individuals become more 'employable' through enhancing their self-presentation skills. This has become a well established and lucrative business, spawning companies, consultants and resources urging people to embrace the process of self-marketing in order to improve their chances in the labour market. One particularly visible sub-section of this 'practitioner's literature' concerns 'personal branding', a term coined by Peters (1999) and which has inspired a great deal of similar literature (Andrusia & Haskins, 2000; Peters, 2000; Roffer, 2000; Spillane, 2000; Graham, 2001; Arruda, 2002; McNally & Speak, 2002; Montoya, 2002, 2003; Kaputa, 2006).[1]

Sociological studies of self-marketing are therefore few and far between. In 1992 Metcalfe could write that the CV had "…apparently, come to stay", and in his 'speculative' account of the historical development of self-marketisation, Cremin (2003) shows that personality requests (in job advertisements) were relatively rare until the mid 1980s when they significantly increased across every sector and in both the public and private sector. In a rare example, Lair et al. (2005, pp. 309-310) offer some critical reflection on the "startlingly overt invitation to self-commodification" that, they argue, is presented in various of the personal branding texts listed above. Significantly though, very little academic attention has been afforded this activity that is so pervasive across advanced capitalist societies (in various forms), and so this study will, I hope, contribute to the ongoing research and theorisation of self-marketing from a sociological perspective.

Secondly, this study seeks to investigate the role of different types of educational institution in influencing 16-19 year olds' self-marketing practice as they apply to university. A great deal has been written about the performative pressures on *teachers* as a result of the introduction of quasi-markets into education (Woods, Jeffrey, Troman & Bovie, 1997; Jeffrey & Woods, 1996, 1998, 2000; Ball, 1998, 2003a; Smyth, 2000; McGuire, 2001; Blackmore, 2004; Gleeson, Davies & Wheeler, 2005; Leaton-Grey, 2007). For example, it is well documented that the publication of SATs, GCSE and A' Level grades orients teachers' and school managements' behaviour strongly to these performative measures of educational success, even if it is to the detriment of a broad and balanced education (Deforges, Holden & Hughes, 1994; Reay & Wiliam, 1999; Ball, 2003a). However, relatively little research has considered how the 'marketisation' of public education in

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1 Although this thesis will not address the 'personal branding' phenomenon, Lair, Sullivan and Cheney (2005) offer an initial critique of some of the implications of this particular marketing discourse.

England affects students themselves. This is likely to be in part because it is more difficult to compare attitudes and experiences pre and post reform, but also perhaps because teachers experience the impact of governmental policy in a more direct way. On the basis of such research, one might expect that students themselves are similarly shaped by the discourses and technologies of markets (Ball, *ibid*) as they impact schools and FE colleges - and that the process of 'selling' oneself through a Personal Statement might be one practice where such influence would manifest itself. Recent research has focused on the role of educational institutions or 'institutional habitus' in influencing 16-19 year old students' attainment (Kettley, 2007b) and choice of university (Reay, David & Ball 2001, 2005). There is scope, then, for further research into the role of institutions in influencing the *application* process as well as attainment and choice.

Finally, empirical research into the phenomena of self-marketing will hopefully help us to better understand its role in regulating access to Higher Education. A recent headline in the Times read "Personal Statements mean nothing, says Cambridge admissions head" (Frean, 2009), and went on to explain that (based on quotes from admissions tutors) the Personal Statement was given radically lower status at the University of Cambridge compared to Oxford - raising questions about the "worryingly opaque" nature of various universities' admissions policies. There are questions to be answered, therefore, about the role that such self-marketing texts perform for different students and institutions. Students now make their UCAS applications within the intersecting conditions of: the 'massification' and stratification of Higher Education (Scott, 1995; Tapper & Palfreyman, 2005; Brooks, 2006); New Labour's aspirational target of 50 per cent of young people going to university; the persistence of credential inflation; and the growth in importance of 'soft' or 'transferable' skills that, it is hoped, will prepare students with the competences they need to take responsibility for themselves and their career progression in a world where change and competition may be the only constant. What role, then, does an individual's ability to present or 'market' themselves to various universities play in such moments of competition?

1.3 Self-marketing: defining the focus of the thesis

Although 'self-marketing' is not a very familiar term, the concept of 'selling yourself' is more widely recogniseable. A cursory search of the term on the internet yields website after website offering tips, advice and guidance on how to effectively 'sell yourself' to potential employers. Similarly, professional development training in the form of courses or manuals are highly likely to contain a module or section on the importance of selling oneself for career progression. This popular description is useful for helping the reader orient themselves to the research topic and

recognise it within their own experience, but a more specific definition will be necessary to delimit the research presented here. Shepherd (*op cit,* p. 590) defines self-marketing as "…those varied activities undertaken by individuals to make themselves known in the marketplace, usually (though not exclusively) for the purpose of obtaining gainful employment".[2] This is a relatively broad and useful interpretation that appears to cover the use of interviews and CVs. Nevertheless it is not entirely sufficient for the purposes of this thesis, and in the following section I will therefore propose my own definition of self-marketing.

1.31 Defining self-marketing

Marketing has been defined as "…the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large" (American Marketing Association, 2008). This broad definition accounts for the wide range of processes that have come to be associated with marketing since the 1950s, when it was more narrowly understood as *economically* based exchanges between producers and consumers (McKitterick, 1957). The term 'offerings' is inclusive of far more than simply a tangible and inanimate 'product' and recognises that marketing has moved "…beyond the selling of toothpaste, soap and steel" to include services, organisations, ideas and even persons (Kotler & Levy, 1969, p. 10) It also captures the argument that it is exchange which forms the core phenomenon for study in marketing (Bagozzi, 1975). Finally it underlines that marketing is a process that includes more than simply the promotion or advertisement of such offerings.

It is not difficult to apply this to a person in order to define *self*-marketing. In their argument for broadening the concept of marketing, Kotler and Levy (*op cit*, p. 12) suggest that a 'product' can take the form of a person and that 'personal marketing' is "…an endemic *human* activity, from the employee trying to impress his boss to the statesman trying to win the support of the public" (original italics). So people can certainly be included as "offerings" to which certain *claims to value* can be attached within the AMA's definition. And while there are many different types of exchange, self-marketing can also then encompass the exchange of symbolic and intangible goods (i.e. the person themselves) between two or more parties (Bagozzi, *op cit*). In their discussion of personal branding, Lair, et al. (*op cit*, p. 309) write that "…the concepts of product development and promotion are used to market persons for entry into or transition within the labour market", highlighting that self-marketing is typically linked to occasions of transition.

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2 Shepherd (2005) proposes that self-marketing is most visible where vocational specialists in educational institutions help graduates find work, and in the recruitment industry as part of advice offered by employment agencies.

1.32 A working definition

Drawing on these various conceptions of marketing and personal branding, I shall adopt the following definition of self-marketing for the purposes of this thesis. Self-marketing then, is:

> *The process of creating professional projections of an ideal self, which constitute a technology of 'career' progression for the individual and are associated with some form of exchange.*

This particular choice of terminology is explained below.

1. It is a process

Marketing is necessarily a process, involving a sequence of activity that enables a projection, or advertisement, to occur. Traditionally commercial 'products' go through the process of market research, product development and promotion, and likewise a job-seeker will be advised to research the company they are applying to, tailor or develop their qualities as a response to the perceived demands of the employer, and finally, adapt and control their image to project those qualities through an interview, for example.

2. It is about professional projections

The process of self-marketing concerns the self, 'projected' outward, to be viewed by some external other. In this respect it involves a performance, a production, some sort of projection that is visible to the intended observer. These projections and transitions are also 'professional' inasmuch as they relate to an individual's career. The use of 'career' here follows the Oxford English Dictionary definition of "A course of professional life or employment, which affords opportunity for progress or advancement in the world" (OED, 2006). While it is usually used to describe paid work, it is sometimes extended to refer to formal education. Crucially, in the present context 'professional' is contrasted with an individual's personal life, where other aspects of an ideal self are no doubt projected (Goffman, 1959).

3. It is an ideal version of the self

This projection is 'ideal' in the sense that the individual is reflexively and consciously creating it in order to make a positive impression on the observer, and therefore deliberately excluding that which might create a negative impression.

4. It is a technology of progression

By 'technology' I mean that the process of self-marketing has a specific and active intended function within the machinery of various markets in late modern society. For example, the

information provided by self-marketing contributes to the allocation of workers to jobs. While the term was not chosen for its Foucauldian associations, self-marketing can also be seen as a technology of the self; a means by which the self is constituted, reflected upon, projected, performed and known (Foucault, 1988). It is a technology of 'progression' insofar as it is the career (as a course of progress across successively different situations) that necessitates the transitions requiring an individual to create a professional projection in order to enter a new field or progress within one.

5. The goal is some form of exchange

Finally, at the core of the concept of marketing are resource exchanges between two or more entities (Bagozzi, *op cit*; Hirschman, 1983). In the case of self-marketing the end goal, in terms of the 'exchange', may take a variety of forms. For the self-employed, self-marketing may be toward the exchange of one's service for payment while for those seeking employment with a company, self-marketing serves the ongoing exchange of their labour for a wage. In this regard, self-marketing must be identifiable not only as an intentional process but also by reference to its outcomes. Where there is no monetary exchange there must still be some form of social or symbolic exchange in order for the individual to know whether their self-marketing has been successful.

This definition therefore excludes a number of potentially very interesting applications of the notion of self-marketing, including the ways in which individuals create projections of themselves amongst their peers and within life-spaces other than occupational or educational careers. Within the terms of reference of this thesis, it describes a very specific process occurring as individuals seek to progress from one stage or role to another within their professional careers and this distinguishes it from comparable but broader concepts such as impression management.[3] It is particularly important to be able to empirically recognise the realisations of such a construct, and for this reason this definition will direct the subsequent presentation of literature, theoretical framework, methodology and findings.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into three sections. Part One positions the research within a body of relevant literature; Part Two presents the theoretical framework and methodology within which

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3 Impression management is associated with a psychological construct called 'self-monitoring' (Snyder, 1974), that is, "…the extent to which individuals strategically cultivate public appearances" (Snyder & Gangestad, 2000, p. 530). It is therefore a much broader concept, referring to individuals' concern for situational appropriateness across a wide variety of situations rather than specifically at moments of professional transition.

the research was conducted; and Part Three presents and then critically discusses the research findings.

Part One: a review of the literature

Chapter Two acts as a prologue to the main literature review, which is presented in Chapter Three. In it I suggest that there are a number of highly influential sociological frameworks, each of which interpret in distinctive ways the broader context of the kinds of social phenomena relevant to this thesis. In particular, I briefly consider the work of Giddens, Gregory, Beck, and Rose as possible theoretical frameworks through which to research students' self-marketing practice. However I decide instead to draw on a more tightly focused body of literature produced predominantly by Basil Bernstein that, I argue, most appropriately complements my ontological and methodological approach.

Chapter Three then presents this framework, arguing that Bernstein's attempt to analyse the underlying structure of Thatcher's radical reforms of the late 1980s provides a penetrating analysis of how the macro levels of curriculum and organisational reform interact with, shape and change individual consciousness in terms of pedagogic identity. It concludes by locating the emergence of pedagogies of self-marketing within a Bernsteinian analysis of the rise of 'generic modes'.

Part Two: theory and methodology

Chapter Four offers a theoretical framework for the research, outlining Bernstein's theory of educational transmissions, certain complementary concepts drawn from Bourdieu and the ontological foundation of critical realism.

In *Chapter Five* I describe my research methodology. A multi-case study was undertaken over eighteen weeks in which I spent six weeks at each of the three different 16-19 institutions, over three distinct research phases. A tutor group at each site formed a sub-sample of approximately 15 students, who were interviewed three times over the course of completing a UCAS application. Supplementary data was also gathered through observation and document analysis.

Part Three: findings and discussion

Chapters Six, Seven, Eight, Nine and Ten comprise my research findings.

In *Chapter Six*, the dominant pedagogic codes of the three case study schools/colleges are presented in terms of the 'imaginary subject' (Bernstein, 2000; Ivinson & Duveen, 2006) that is projected by each institution's pedagogy. This chapter re-introduces the analytical tools of

classification and framing and aims to contextualise the findings related to individual students within the social worlds of the tutor group, sixth-form and wider school/college environment.

Chapter Seven suggests that particular disciplines within particular Higher Education institutions, or types of institution, combine to create degree courses which each project a distinctive 'destination habitus' to prospective applicants. Students then need to be able to both recognise the contours of this destination habitus, and realise an appropriate response when marketing themselves through their Personal Statements and, on occasion, interviews. Crucially, it is the destination habitus that relays the level of status of (and therefore extent of competition in accessing) the course, which then governs the 'signals' in terms of disciplinary and other competences, that will be preferable to transmit (Spence, 1973).

In *Chapter Eight* the transmission of the pedagogic discourse of self-marketing at each case study site is considered, as a strategic response to both the destination habitus of the receiving institution, and the dominant pedagogic code of the school or college itself.

Chapter Nine outlines four dimensions of the ideal self/imaginary subject that students drew upon in order to realise a legitimate self-marketing text. It concludes with a demonstration of how the selective use of these discourses was a collective strategy that was related to each site's pedagogy of self-marketing.

In *Chapter Ten*, four 'orienting principles' to the process of self-marketing are presented: Passive/ Active, Internal/External, Retrospective/Prospective, and Segregated/Integrated, which combine to form 'profiles'. A series of student profiles are then presented, with an analysis of the distribution of profiles within and across cases and how such distributions relate to each site's transmission of the pedagogy of self-marketing

Chapter Eleven then offers critical reflection and discussion of these findings, arguing that our understanding of inequalities in access to Higher Education should include reflection on the role of self-marketing in application as well as other more widely researched aspects such as attainment and choice.

Chapter Twelve concludes the thesis by reflecting on the contribution of the study to wider research agendas, its limitations, and possible avenues for further study.

Two
Prologue to literature review

2.1 Introduction

There are, available in the sociological canon, certain major theoretical approaches which analyse social, educational and other changes within contemporary societies. These broad and influential frameworks each address the issue of how the governance of education in advanced industrial societies has been radically reformed in the last thirty years. But while their substantive diagnoses overlap, their interpretations and evaluations of such change differ significantly. In this prologue to my literature review I consider, in particular, the analyses offered by three representative theorists: Anthony Giddens, David Harvey and Nikolas Rose. The brevity of this overview is intentional. I have not employed any of these perspectives consistently or systematically in this thesis, nor do I evaluate them here to the extent that others have done (e.g. Clarke, Newman, Smith, Vidler & Westmarland, 2007). My intention is rather to acknowledge the potential that each presents for framing this study, before moving on to focus in Chapter Three on a narrower body of theory that addresses more closely the specific issues that concern this thesis.

2.2 Reflexive modernisation and the reflexive biography of the self

Anthony Giddens has argued that contemporary society has moved into a 'late' phase of modernity in which heightened reflexivity undergirds significant shifts in culture, the economy and politics that sociologists have sought to describe over the last forty or so years. In the introduction to *Reflexive Modernization* (1994)*, these shifts are described in epochal language.

> If simple (or orthodox) modernization means, at bottom, first the disembedding and second the re-embedding of traditional social forms by industrial social forms, then

> reflexive modernization means first the disembedding and second the re-embedding of industrial social forms by another modernity.
>
> Beck, Giddens and Lash (*ibid*, p. 2)

Within this new form of modernity time and space have become separated.[4] In *Modernity and Self-identity* - a pre-internet text - Giddens (1991) argues that the global map, mechanical clock and universal time-zones exemplify radical transformations in social and cultural reality. This 'emptying' of time and space - rendering them abstract and universal categories - is crucial for the disembedding of social institutions wherein 'abstract systems' have disembedded social relations from their local contexts and re-articulated them "…across indefinite tracts of time-space" (*ibid*, p. 18). These systems comprise firstly 'symbolic tokens' (e.g. money) which are exchangeable across a variety of contexts, and secondly, 'expert systems' e.g. the apparatuses staffed by scientists, counsellors etc., on which we now depend for all manner of applied professional knowledge in order to live successfully in a post-traditional, or 'de-traditionalised', world.

The separation of time and space, (which in turn has created a global/local dialectic), the disembedding of social life from the dominance of local kinship groups, the forces of detraditionalisation, and the advent of mass education etc., have created a need for constant reflexivity. Giddens (1994, p. 7) argues that this social reflexivity "…is the key influence on a diversity of changes that otherwise seem to have little in common", including post-Fordism (where high reflexivity leads to higher worker autonomy) and certain political re-definitions of citizenship (where the relationship between state and citizen moves from subject to consumer to co-producer). Such change is therefore both *institutional,* where social life is constituted through the reflexive use of knowledge within conditions of constant uncertainty, and *individual*, where this uncertainty requires individuals to live with "…a calculative attitude to the open possibilities of action, positive and negative" that they are daily confronted with (Giddens, *op cit*, p. 28).

Such reflexivity is also experienced as heightened individualism. Self-identity is no longer anchored in collective categories such as ethnicity, gender, age or social class, but is "…routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual…It is *the self reflexively understood by the person in terms of his or her biography*" (*ibid*, pp. 52-53 original italics).[5] A fundamental part of the daily activities of late modern individuals is therefore heightened, and in a sense 'compulsory', *choice*. Drawing from a range of guidance, people make multiple choices (consumer

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4 It should be noted that this is conceptualised as continuous with modernity rather than assuming the radical discontinuity postulated by post-modern approaches.

5 Giddens (1986) has proposed a theoretical framework that is complementary to this perspective in his 'structuration theory' in which social structure and social action are mutually constitutive and mutually constrained. Here, individual actions contribute to both the reproduction and transformation of society. Reflexive awareness of social structures informs actors' decisions, and this may result in stability or ruptures to social systems.

and otherwise) which construct lifestyles - more or less integrated sets of practices - which "…
give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity" (*ibid*, p. 81). Giddens describes this as
a 'politics of choice' or 'life politics', in which those who enjoy a certain level of political
emancipation are now concerned with "…the development of forms of social order 'on the
other side' of modernity itself" (*ibid*, p. 214).

While life politics refers to daily and individual choices, Giddens (1994, 1998, 2000) has also
applied the theory of reflexive modernisation to politics at the national and transnational
(European and global) levels. The emergence of New Labour, he argues, is a political response to
both the dissolution of the welfare consensus, and an attempt to renew social democracy by
means of a 'third-way' project. With conservatism in retreat in the late 1990s, Giddens argued
that the 'monolithic' and 'statist' bureaucracy of Old Labour could not respond reflexively to the
conditions of late modernity described above. Rather a 'new progressivism' was emerging, the
cornerstones of which were said to be…

> …equality of opportunity, personal responsibility and the mobilization of citizens and
> communities. With rights come responsibilities. We have to find ways to take care of
> ourselves, because we can't rely on the big institutions to do so. Public policy has to shift
> from concentrating on the redistribution of wealth to promoting wealth creation. Rather
> than offering subsidies to business, government should foster conditions that lead firms
> to innovate and workers to become more efficient in the global economy.[6]
>
> Giddens (2000, p. 3).

In essence, this political vision seeks to use the powerful means of markets, or more often quasi-
markets, to achieve state-directed socially just ends.[7] The implications for education included: a
continued focus on 'customer' (i.e. parental) choice; the promotion of a wide variety of
alternative 'providers' including faith schools, Academies, and specialist schools; and, crucially, a
strong emphasis - at least rhetorically - on meritocracy in terms of opportunity structures and
incentives, and forms of education that seek to equip individuals to take greater responsibility for
themselves.

It is the last point that is perhaps most relevant to this study. Within this 'third-way' project (and
wider assumptions about reflexive modernisation), individuals must learn to take responsibility
for their own 'outcomes', and must regard their educational and professional careers as a

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6 The term 'new progressivism' was initially popular with the New Democrats in North America and mutated into the now more popular 'third
way', which Tony Blair also adopted - putting his name to a pamphlet with the same title in 1998 (Giddens, 2000)

7 It is worth noting that successive New Labour governments' relationship to these forms of market have shifted over time, from a focus on the
state setting targets that providers must achieve, toward a focus (at least rhetorically) on 'citizen empowerment'. A recent Cabinet Office
publication argues that the next phase of public service reform "…must put power directly into the hands of citizens, driving services to become
more responsive and personalised to each individual's needs and aspirations – and provide a strong set of incentives for the system to innovate
and improve" (Cabinet Office, 2008, p. 17). The vision here is of a welfare system where consumers (i.e. citizens) rather than state targets are
directing the activities and outcomes of the market. How and if this threatens shared goals of social justice and equality of opportunity remains
to be seen.

calculated and reflexive construction of a biography of the self. This includes developing the capacities to calculate the costs/benefits of various possible paths to take, and to make the necessary 'investments in the self' that would make such paths possible. In the context of this study, 16-19 year olds are therefore viewed as having significant agency, able (if they wish to) to choose where and what they want to study at university. Self-marketing, particularly through a Personal Statement, would be perceived as symptomatic, of both heightened individualism and of the self taking control of shaping and narrating its own coherent biography.[8]

2.3 Marxist critiques of neo-liberalism

A number of those criticising Giddens' interpretation of these conditions identify themselves within certain traditions of Marxism, and include, among others, the influential Marxist Geographer, David Harvey. For these critics, shifts toward greater individualism, reflexivity and consumption are not the democratising forces that Giddens believes them to be, but are symptoms of the far-reaching colonisation of social, cultural, political and geographical spaces by the logic of advanced or global capitalism.

This colonisation is the result, they argue, of the rise of neo-liberalism, a theory of political economic practices that believes well-being can be best achieved by "…liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade"(Harvey, 2007, p. 2). Harvey (*ibid*) identifies the rise of Den-Xiaoping in China, Thatcher in England and Reagan in North America between 1978 and 1980 as symbolic of various 'epicentres' from which the revolutionary tremors of neo-liberalism shook and re-made the world. These leaders interpreted high unemployment, crippling inflation and ongoing struggles with trade unions as symptomatic of the breakdown of the political and economic consensus which had reshaped nation states in the postwar decades. Keynesian economics had been found wanting, and so too the role of the state in attempting to achieve equitable outcomes through redistributive fiscal policies and welfare provision.

Harvey (*ibid*) argues that in order to embed neo-liberal economic frameworks as a solution to these problems, these governments appealed to 'seductive' ideas about the rights of individuals to choose how to live their lives, over collectivist judgements and policies to promote welfare. To frame such individualism as 'reflexive' or 'democratising' (Giddens, 1991) is therefore to be seduced by the "benevolent mask" of neo-liberalism "…full of wonderful-sounding words like

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8 Giddens argues that autobiography, in the sense of an interpretive self-history produced by the individual is "…at the core of self-identity in modern social life" (1991, p. 76) - central to sustaining an integrated sense of self.

freedom, liberty, choice and rights", which obscures the "…maintenance, reconstitution and restoration of elite class power" (Harvey, *op cit*, pp. 119, 189). From this perspective, any barriers to the free functioning of markets (and the inequalities they create) are torn down, be they welfare systems, which have classically been sites of citizens' 'decommodification' (Esping-Andersen, 1990), or, in the most radical globalist visions, entire nation states (Ohmae, 1996). In their place, these Marxist critics identify the rise of powerful international (and often American-led) institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, that have protected global financial markets, extended the influence of major transnational corporations, and worked to promote capitalism in developing, war-torn and even communist states (e.g. South Africa, Iraq, China), often through 'imposed austerity' (Harvey, *op cit*).

These global institutions and forces are therefore perceived as the aggressive imperialistic extension of a particular capitalist ideology intent on subjugating "…the public to the private, the state to the market, and the social to the economic" (Clarke et al., *op cit*, p. 17). The result, argues Beck (2000, p. 1), is that we risk the possibility of the 'Brazilianisation' of the West: the "…spread of temporary and insecure employment, discontinuity and loose informality into Western societies that have hitherto been the bastions of full employment". The faster work-relations are deregulated and flexibilised the faster work society changes into 'risk society', creating financial, political and ecological risks that we witness as, among other things, natural disasters, financial crashes and the reduction of civil liberties (Beck, 2006). Ultimately, Beck (*ibid*, p. 4) argues, "The neo-liberal utopia is a kind of democratic illiteracy. For the market is not its own justification; it is an economic form viable only in interplay with material security, social rights and democracy, and hence with the democratic state".

Beck's identification of markets as 'an *economic* form' in this particular sense, exposes the primary critique of the use of markets and quasi-markets in education. Harvey's (1989, p. 343) concern is that neo-liberalism demands that "…cultural life in more and more areas gets brought within the grasp of the cash nexus and the logic of capital circulation". So where British education had been somewhat insulated from economic priorities, the establishment of quasi-markets initiated by Conservative governments and continued under New Labour is viewed as the explicit promotion of neo-liberal ideology, with its accompanying notions of citizenship. This agenda has seen the 're-agenting' of educational provision, away from state and local authority providers and toward increasingly privatised and de-politicised forms that include the sponsorship of Academies by business entrepreneurs, religious groups and private companies (Hatcher, 2006), as well as the emergence of a broad market in extra-school educational services, described by Ball (2007) as 'Education plc'.

The alleged need for individuals to market *themselves* would be the result, these critics would suggest, of the dominance of neo-liberal frameworks that create insecurity in labour markets, undermine collective action through trade unions and promote individualism and competition. Within education, this domination is perceptible in the promotion of regimes which seek to render state employees and institutions more effectively accountable, in both budgetary and performance terms, thereby undermining more autonomous forms of professionalism/employee influence. Harvey (*op cit*, p. 345) concludes that while crises in the experience of space/time, in financial institutions, or the economy at large may be necessary to enable a critique of such systems to emerge, it is the "…internalized dialectics of thought" that are the real sites of potential struggle and change.

2.4 New modes and technologies of governing: the 'governmentality' approach

The third theoretical framework is similarly concerned with the rise of neo-liberalism, but focuses distinctively on what is identified as the emergence of new modes of *governing* both individuals and institutions in an 'advanced liberal way' (Rose, 1999). Rose (1993) argues that conventional political sociology, including Marxist analyses such as those discussed above, have not been successful in accounting for or evaluating the new forms of *rule* that have emerged as a result of the social revolutions of the late twentieth century, and suggests that Foucauldian conceptualisations of 'governmentality' have greater potential to provide more powerful analyses of the mutations of liberal rule.[9]

As with Giddens (1991), Rose (1999) acknowledges that 'globalisation' and 'localisation' have transformed contemporary society, but claims to reject epochal explanations in favour of a historical (but actually Foucauldian) analysis of the challenges this presents to notions of the nation state, territorial unity and citizenship, and thus the capacity of those who would rule, to 'govern' individuals and institutions in new ways. Where the welfare state superseded nineteenth century 'liberal' solutions to managing citizens' conduct, Rose proposes that 'advanced-liberal' rule has now superseded the 'rule of welfare' and consequently the role of those experts whose professional authority was directly promoted and legitimised by the state. Within these new social and economic conditions, governments lack the information necessary to directly and

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9 Rose (1993, p. 286) argues that the dualisms that "haunt" and "animate" such authors (including state/market, domination/freedom, public/ private, and compulsory/voluntary) are "…the ghosts of liberal political philosophy", making it extremely difficult for Marxist critics in particular, to analyse their conditions of possibility.

successfully manage their citizens and the risks they face, and instead seek to govern less directly - notably through those citizens' 'responsibilisation' and 'entrepreneurialisation'.

Here, claims Rose (*ibid*, p. 289, 295), expertise is dispersed across a variety of sites (and amongst more and more actors) and power operates through the deployment of a range of 'technologies' that act upon individuals in new ways, "…through shaping and utilizing their freedom" to produce '…the subjective conditions, the forms of self-mastery, self-regulation and self-control, necessary to govern a nation now made up of free citizens". Governing happens not through 'society' argues Rose (*ibid*, p. 285) "…but through the regulated choices of individual citizens", who subject themselves to new networks of expertise "…within a market governed by the rationalities of competition, accountability and consumer demand".

Educational institutions are rendered governable partly through these processes of marketisation, which attempt to regulate less through planning and compulsion from 'above' and more through the decisions of consumers 'below' (Rose *ibid*), although as Bernstein (2000) points out, this is, in effect, 'centralised decentralisation'. Governance from above is now experienced through various technologies of both target-setting and 'audit', which have become crucial mechanisms for governing at a distance and which, through their emphasis on the specific, standardised and measurable, have increasingly displaced trust in professionals and bureau-professional regimes within these institutions (Rose, *op cit*).

As well as being responsibilised as employees, individuals are also subject to these pressures as citizens. Within education this includes the pressure to, for example, adopt healthy life-styles or embrace lifelong learning, through injunctions to 'Stay Healthy', or 'Enjoy and Achieve' - two of New Labour's aims within the Every Child Matters initiative. Within this rhetoric parents need to make wise and prudent provision for the costs of their children's education or Higher Education, and face the penalties of not doing so, and students themselves need to take responsibility for the costs of their own education in various ways.

> The new citizen is required to engage in a ceaseless work of training and retraining, skilling and reskilling, enhancement of credentials and preparation for a life of incessant job seeking; life is to become a continuous economic capitalization of the self.
>
> (Rose, *ibid*, p. 161)

In terms of the main focus of this thesis, 'governmentality' approaches therefore present a powerful critique of the function that self-marketing plays within an advanced-liberal framework in which the citizen has to endlessly improve and market themselves. To become an active, independent neo-liberal agent is to become a capitalised self, a position captured perfectly in the

individualised and *economic* language of 'self-marketing'. Furthermore, through self-improving and self-marketing actions such as voluntary work, the viability of a variety of not for-profit alternatives to statist provision is promoted, and the individual is weaned away from an 'unhealthy' dependency on a 'paternalistic' state.

Writers like Rose, and to a lesser extent Stephen Ball[10], are highly critical of these processes, especially of the impact they have on those inevitably positioned as 'irresponsible' by the 'normalising' effects of these governmental discourses, including those students who resist or do not take responsibility for improving and marketing their skills. They hope, through their critique, to "…destabilize and denaturalize that regime of the self which today seems inescapable" (Rose, 1996, p. 2). However, in the view of critics like Clarke et al. (*op cit*), it is the seeming inescapability of such regimes (which 'governmentality' accounts depict as near-totalising) that is their greatest theoretical weakness - interpreting practically every policy development as 'instances' of the (already identified) new form of governing.

2.5 Conclusion

I have presented here outline accounts of three major bodies of theory, each of which acknowledges major shifts in the ways that our social worlds are now constituted and organised, but which evaluate the implications of these shifts very differently. Where Giddens (1991) optimistically describes a qualitatively new *epoch* of 'high' or 'reflexive' modernity, Harvey (2007) and Rose (1999) highlight instead new *modes* of neo-liberal domination or of advanced liberal governmentality. While Giddens views the self in these new conditions as having the ability to reflexively pursue its own goals, for both Marxists and Foucauldians the self is, in essence, subjugated (even if actors come to believe themselves to be 'free choosers'), either by the political and economic machinery of late capitalism or by the political discourses and technologies that have come to be associated with it. Consequently, perspectives on the practice of self-marketing are similarly varied. For Giddens it may represent a competence that enables the self to reflexively author their own professional career, where for Harvey and Beck it is symptomatic of the personal and economic insecurity created by marketisation, and for Rose it is evidence of the 'responsibilisation' of neo-liberal agents.

In choosing to draw upon Basil Bernstein's theory of educational transmissions to frame this study (discussed in Chapter Three), I have purposely relied upon a narrow body of literature. The

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10 Ball (1990) describes his approach as 'eclectic' and 'pragmatic', and for this reason his approach can be seen as located partly with the critics of neo-liberalism and partly within this focus on discourse and governmentality.

purpose of this prologue was therefore to acknowledge some of the various theoretical frameworks that *could* very fruitfully have been deployed, and to indicate how they might have analysed the phenomenon of self-marketing in education.

Three
Bernstein and the control of education

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter Two I acknowledged the wide range of influential theories in relation to which a study of self-marketing in education could reasonably be positioned. While each approach has its merits, I have elected to situate the research within a Bernsteinian theorisation of education and educational transmissions. Although this entails the exclusion of a great deal of intrinsically interesting literature, I hope to use Bernstein's ideas to frame a coherent account of certain significant developments in secondary education in Britain in relation to competition for entrance to Higher Education, by examining a range of relevant changes in the structuring of pedagogic processes (and the forms of consciousness they effect). To set this within a broader context, this chapter begins with an account of the Education Reform Act of 1988 (hereafter ERA), analysed partly via Bernstein's concepts of visible and invisible pedagogies, and later his more general work on pedagogic codes and modes and the recontextualisation of knowledge. Other theorisations and critiques of the marketisation and managerialisation of education in Britain will be introduced to complement this account. The narrative then moves on to discuss Bernstein's later work on the 'dehumanisation' of knowledge, especially in regimes that have prioritised what he calls 'generic modes' - and the related production of more diverse pedagogic identities within the educational arena. These more specific aspects of Bernstein's later work will be used as a basis for understanding the emergence of pedagogies of *self*-marketing within education - which forms the substantive focus of this thesis.[11]

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11 It is worth noting here that many of Bernstein's well established theoretical concepts (classification and framing, recognition and realisation rules) are discussed in Chapter Four as part of the theoretical framework of the research. This demarcation relates purely to the different functions performed by these parts of his theory in this thesis. These concepts were 'put to work' in the analysis of my data and are therefore located in Part Two, which deals with methodology.

3.2 The reshaping of education in England and Wales in recent decades

In his final writings, Bernstein (2000) acknowledged that the overarching concept informing his work was that of *boundary*; centring, where boundaries are strong, on the reasons why and the ways in which things are kept apart, as well as the consequences such demarcations have for personal identity, consciousness and social order both external and internal to the individual. And it is through this lens - a concern with the maintenance of or disruption to various sets of established boundaries - that Bernstein analysed and critiqued the radical changes to British education that occurred in the late 1980s. Many years earlier he identified the strength of *insulation between the economy and education* as the fundamental determinant of the possibility of relative autonomy for the field of education, and of the capacity of agents within what he later termed the PRF (pedagogic recontextualising field) to effect innovative reform (Bernstein, 1975a, 1975b).[12]

3.21 Education, relative autonomy and contestation: 1967-1988

It is not difficult to apply these ideas to the educational reforms of the Thatcher governments, and identify explicit *economic* policy concerns at their heart, tied to political agendas that sought to refunctionalise education and to help achieve certain sorts of economic transformation.[13] The ERA marked the culmination of 15 years of debate that had already weakened the previously established stronger insulation between education and the economy. The creation of the Manpower Services Commission in 1973 had brought interests from industry, trade unions, local authorities and education together for the first time; and the oil crisis of the same year precipitated a recession and fiscal crisis that saw not only the contraction of public services, but also a restructuring of labour forces through the shedding of 'surplus capacity' (Ranson, 1990). Concerns about the ability of the education system to respond to these shifting economic priorities prompted James Callaghan's call for a national debate in which he enquired to what extent deficiencies in the system were '…the result of insufficient cooperation between schools

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12 Bernstein identifies the origin of the strong classification between education and production in the Medieval period, "...where we find that the official pedagogic device excluded manual practice from its recontextualising rules. Manual practice was acquired through local pedagogic devices within the family and guild. Thus mental and manual practice was historically strongly classified, and this has left its mark on the European pedagogic device" (1990, p. 2000)

13 Kenneth Baker's description of the education system as 'producer-dominated' in his opening speech in the Second Reading debate of the Bill in December 1987, clearly reveals these concerns and their discursive sources (quoted in Flude & Hammer, 1990)

and industry?'[14] One result of this economic crisis, Ranson argues, was a range of 'steering problems for the state' which helped legitimise greater government control in education, the promotion (in some respects) of vocational preparation over personal development in schools, and a determination to make education more accountable to central government and employer interests (*ibid*, p. 6). In Bernstein's terms, these were causes and/or symptoms of a weakening of the strength of *classification* between education and economy, which had profound effects by redistributing power away from education professionals (as well as local education authorities) and towards central government and its many agencies and quangos.

The autonomy enjoyed by education professionals prior to this 'Great Debate' of the late 1970s was experienced alongside a wider challenge to 'traditional' hierarchical social boundaries that represented a parallel attack on the strong insulations associated with 'collection code' curricular.[15] In the context of various generational challenges to 'The Establishment' (including second wave feminism, the civil rights movement and the sexual revolution), educational theories emerged that placed the child at the centre of the pedagogic process, and were officially legitimated in the Plowden Report of 1967. Bernstein (1975b) identifies the particular contributions of Piaget, Freud, Chomsky, Gestalt theories and Ethological theories of critical learning among the more theoretical sources of what he termed 'interrupters of cultural reproduction', which had '…progressive or even revolutionary' potential' (*ibid*, p. 25). For Bernstein, the pedagogies these theories engendered treat the learning process as *internal* to the child and, partly for that reason, as invisible. As a result of their basis in developmental theories, these 'invisible pedagogies' involve tacit rather than explicit control of the child, and require the educator to facilitate the 'natural' development of learning and growth through structuring young children's play whilst allowing them apparent freedom over the sequence, selection and timing of their activities. Crucial to this process then, is the theoretical knowledge that allows educators to decode children's activity in terms of their developmental 'readiness' for progress to another stage of learning and play. In such contexts, "Only the professional judgement of teachers in the classroom could identify the learning needs of each pupil and release their talents and capacities" (Ranson, *op cit*, p. 6).

Crucially, however, these invisible pedagogies required the relative freedom of education professionals from close direction and supervision by the state. Bernstein (*op cit*) further argued that the conflict between visible and invisible pedagogies had as its *social* source an ideological conflict between old and new factions of the middle-class, and that support for invisible

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14 Callaghan, Ruskin College, Oxford, October 1976.

15 'Collection code' curricular are those where both classification and framing are strong. For further explication of these terms, see Chapter Four.

pedagogies emerged as the result of the complex division of labour of cultural or symbolic control, appropriated by the new middle class.[16] This enhanced autonomy therefore created the conditions for *various kinds* of educational innovation and, inevitably, the criticism that some of them attracted - particularly when influenced by more overtly ideological influences such as neo-Marxism and feminism.[17] So then, the 'secret garden' of the curriculum, to which the state (at that time) had surrendered the key, harboured a range of different pedagogies - including visible *and* invisible.[18]

3.22 The ERA: The re-emergence of the ORF

In his later work, Bernstein, (1990) re-conceptualised his analysis of these different pedagogies and their relations to the strength of classification between education and the economy, by introducing the concepts of 'official knowledge' and 'recontextualising fields'. Here he described educational agents and agencies as comprising a pedagogic field in which contestations over what counts as 'legitimate' or 'official' knowledge continually take place.[19] Within this broad field he distinguished the three fields of 'production', 'recontextualisation' and 'reproduction', each of which proceeds from the former. Within the recontextualising field he then identified two 'sub-fields'; the official recontextualising field (ORF) and the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF). The former, he argued, is regulated "…directly by the State, politically through the legislature, administratively through the civil service" (*ibid*, p. 196) and comprises the central department of education, and its various agencies. The latter comprises university faculties of education and their research, pedagogues in schools and colleges, specialised education media, and private research foundations (*ibid;* 2000).

The educational reforms of the late 1980s can therefore be understood as both a symptom and cause of the waxing power of the ORF and the corresponding waning power of the PRF. Bernstein (2000) proposed that it was the PRF's ability to influence pedagogic discourse *independently* of the ORF that enabled autonomy and struggle over pedagogic discourse. Despite

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16 For Bernstein (1975b, p. 27), the new middle class are concerned with the *person* rather than the *individual* and so with meritocracy and social mobility rather than reproduction. And yet, he insightfully argues, their theories are at variance with their class position, and so "…deep rooted ambivalence is the ambience of this group" and they ultimately settle for the visible pedagogy of the secondary school in order to reproduce their position in the class structure.

17 In his Ruskin speech, for example, Callaghan highlighted '…the unease felt by parents and others about the new informal methods of teaching which seem to produce excellent results when they are in well-qualified hands but are much more dubious when they are not'.

18 A metaphor famously used by Lord Eccles, Conservative minister for education in 1960.

19 Singh (2002) notes that Bernstein's (2000, p. 62) concept of field - "…composed of positions (oppositional and complementary) constructing an arena of conflict and struggle for dominance" - is similar to that of Bourdieu.

the slightly tautological nature of this insight, it is nevertheless true that in the 1960s and 70s the PRF enjoyed considerable power and autonomy over pedagogic contexts and processes, whereas the ORF had almost no direct control at all.[20] The dissolution from the mid-1960s of a large number of grammar schools (characterised by Bernstein as displaying 'performance' modes which are based on concepts of knowledge deficit among passive learners), created spaces for 'pedagogic appropriation' at both primary and secondary stages toward 'competence' modes. These are based on concepts of empowerment, are therapeutic in orientation, and have already been described in part in the previous discussion of 'invisible pedagogies'. Their increased influence in the 1960s and 70s, especially in early years education and with some 'less able' secondary students, represented a 'remarkable convergence' across the social and psychological sciences and across the ORF and PRF (Bernstein, *ibid*, p. 41).[21]

The movement by the ORF to control education and steer it away from these competence modes was slowly emerging *before* the late 1970s, according to Bernstein (*ibid*), but was given crucial impetus under Thatcher's first two administrations. The ERA represented an unprecedented marriage of *dirigisme* and marketization. Crucially, the introduction of a National Curriculum, the erosion of the powers of Local Education Authorities, and the establishment of large numbers of ministerially directed committees and quangos, dramatically reduced the autonomy of the PRF. This was further weakened, according to Bernstein, by the shift to more school-based teacher training, which oriented teachers away from the theoretical basis of competence modes and "…towards practical and policy interests" (*ibid*, p. 58). Literature abounds on the effects of the ERA and I will not consider it extensively, except to draw out that it was certain 'neo-liberal' economic assumptions, alongside strong 'neo-conservative' elements within the New Right that were the primary driver of the legislation (Bernstein, 1996). Perhaps as a result of this peculiar and internally contradictory alliance, criticisms of the ERA have been primarily directed at its unintended consequences.[22]

Brown and Lauder (1992) argue, for example, that far from 'levelling the playing field', open enrolment dictates that educational access to over-subscribed schools is determined by the economic and cultural capital of parents through its false rhetoric that consumer-parents have equal access to the information and resources necessary for making the 'best' choices. Similarly

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20 While comprehensivisation may have changed the organisational form of schooling, Bernstein (2000) argued that it created even more space for curriculum innovation through the abolition of selection, which had powerfully regulated curriculum at the primary school level.

21 Although, as Bernstein points out, this convergence masked a number of opposing positions within the overarching 'competence' mode, including 'populist', 'radical' and 'liberal'. For more on these sub-distinctions see Bernstein (2000, pp. 53-63)

22 Many of these critics are clear that despite some attempts to redress negative consequences of the ERA (i.e. Education Action Zones, Choice Advisors), the New Labour government elected in 1997 represented marked continuity with the policy direction set by the Conservatives before them (Hartnett, 1998; Powell, 1999; Power & Whitty, 1999; Phillips & Furlong, 2001)

Bailey (1995) maintains that the introduction of 'choice' through the establishment of CTCs, City Academies and GM schools only increased the likelihood of state schools becoming hierarchicised alongside the existing division between state and private education. This hierarchisation is then compounded, critics argue, by the exacerbation of existing social segregation in terms of race and class as a result of parental choice (Apple, 2001; Bradley & Taylor, 2002; Burgess, McConnell, Propper & Wilson, 2004), and the masking of selection by the more acceptable policy discourses of specialisation, choice and diversity (Edwards & Whitty, 1997). The rhetoric of decentralisation was, Brown (1990) argues, actually a cover for *greater* centralisation of decision-making, and the promise of greater autonomy for parents only masked greater government control, according to Whitty (1989). Finally, this centralised decentralisation was achieved through the mechanism of 'New Managerialism', (Clarke & Newman, 1997), characterised by strong accountability and auditing mechanisms and defined by Gerwitz (2002, p. 32) as "...the smooth and efficient implementation of aims set outside the school within constraints also set outside the school". The result is that in contrast to previous decades, head teachers in the post-ERA era have become the curriculum's curators rather than its architects (Fergusson, 1994), and are required to prioritise their own school results before their commitment to wider citizenship responsibilities (Blackmore, 2004).

3.3 Markets in education: a crisis for knowledge and the knower

A paper written by Bernstein in the early 1990s and published in 1996 reveals his earliest response to the 1988 act. In contrast to the more detached tone detectable in the rest of his work, Bernstein employed somewhat 'apocalyptic' language in this paper (Beck, 1999), to describe what he perceived to be happening to the *self* as a result of the reforms. While literature abounds on the effect of Thatcher's legacy on the education system in terms of institutional or policy analysis (Bash, 1989; Ball, 1993, 1994, 1997, 2000, 2003a; Whitty, 1989, 1997, 2000; Fergusson, 1994; Tomlinson, 1994; Puglsey, 1998; Gorad, Fitz & Taylor, 2001; Gerwitz, 2002), there has been less academic conversation explicitly reflecting upon the impact of marketisation on selfhood, and Bernstein's commentary is therefore particularly pertinent in this respect.

3.31 A new dislocation

In a paper, entitled 'Thoughts on the Trivium and Quadrivium: the Divorce of Knowledge from the Knower' (1996, 2000), Bernstein argued that as a result of the ERA, knowledge itself was

being fundamentally restructured, and was in danger of being colonised by the 'profane'.[23] His analysis rested on a comparison with the medieval Christian curriculum, which, he argued, fostered a *humane* relationship between the knower and the known that is still visible in the liberal tradition of scholarship. Specifically, he developed Durkheim's analysis of the Trivium (grammar, logic and rhetoric) and the Quadrivium (arithmetic, astronomy, music and geometry) - the first dealing with 'the word' and the second with 'the world' - by arguing that 'the word' was not just a matter of learning the principles of thought before applying them, but was concerned with developing "…a distinct modality of the self" (*ibid*, p. 83). It was to constitute that self not just in the word, but specifically in the word of the Christian God, in order that the individual could then study 'the world' in light of this inner source of validity. This of course drew on Durkheim's (1977, p. 29) portrayal of Christianity as cultivating "…a certain habitus of our moral being", and Bernstein's ideas here also rest on the distinction between the inner and outer selves, as expressed by the specialisation of these two curricula. This distinction then became "…a dislocation as a precondition for a new creative synthesis between inner and outer" generated by the Christian principle of conversion, and creating a coherence in which knowledge was intimately related to the knower (Bernstein, *op cit,* p.83).

Arguably this coherent relationship between inner and outer, between knower and knowledge, is a recognisable mark of the liberal tradition of education. There is not space here to do justice to a discussion of this tradition and its relationship to more recent managerialist reforms. However, it may be worth highlighting that both Durkheim and Weber produced sociologies of education that rooted the Enlightenment education project with its liberal humanist values in *religious metaphors* of conversion or sanctification, where the goal of education was "…a question of getting down to these deep recesses in the soul" (Durkheim, 1977, p. 30), or "…to educate a man for a certain internal and external deportment of life" (Weber, 1967, p. 121). From this perspective, the capacity of the individual for self-transcendence is enlarged through the socialising work of education to create the kind of identity that is desirable in liberal democracies (i.e. rational, autonomous and selfless), by shaping the habitus. What is significant is the extent to which both Durkheim and Weber stress the enduring nature of the habitus, whereby external behaviours reflect its stability and integrity. Moore (2004, p. 79) comments that "…the individual's actions have an integrity that is located within the very nature of the self…that accompanies the self transformed (reborn) by the kind of pedagogy that Weber describes as a 'planned methodology of sanctification".

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23 While the sacred in a pre-modern context was religious, Bernstein (2000) redefines it more broadly in a contemporary context as displayed in professionalism. Pedagogic identities insulated from the profane therefore display a loyalty to their subject, which is typically bounded by its own rules and language within a particular academic community.

So where education within this tradition had created a dislocation between inner and outer that made possible a coherent synthesis of the two, Bernstein (*ibid*, p. 86) argued that:

> Today the market principle creates a new dislocation. Now we have two independent markets, one of knowledge and one of potential creators and users of knowledge. The first dislocation between the Trivium and the Quadrivium constituted inwardness as a prior condition of knowing; the second dislocation, the contemporary dislocation, disconnects inner from outer, as a precondition for constituting the outer and its practice, according to the market principles of the New Right.

Bernstein (*ibid*, p. 86) described these reforms as indicative of the "…latest transition of capitalism" in which knowledge has become like money, to be moved to wherever it can create advantage - a "truly secular concept". As a result, he contended, "Knowledge after nearly a thousand years is divorced from inwardness, from commitments, from personal dedication, from the deep structure of the self" (*ibid*, p. 86). His short paper warned that as knowledge is divorced from the knower, the selfhood that had been fostered by liberal humanist values within educational institutions was being eroded and re-made and "…we have, for the first time, a *dehumanising* principle, for the organisation and orientation of official knowledge" (*ibid*, p. 86 my italics). Edwards (2002) identifies the prioritisation of 'basic skills', government's obsession with targets and the constant monitoring of progress towards them as evidence of this potential dehumanising of education.

3.4 The pedagogic palette: sketching possible pedagogic identities

This dramatic death knell to 'humane' learning may appear excessive (Beck, 1999), but is nevertheless an illuminating perspective on the impact of marketisation and managerialisation. In the late 1990s Bernstein addressed the issue more closely (and less hyperbolically) by developing a new set of concepts through which to analyse how and where such 'inwardness' might still be preserved, and to analyse the character of, and changes within, the regulation of education and the formation of 'pedagogic identities', under the aegis of a 're-centred state'. Where others have analysed the *impact* of these neo-liberal reforms, Bernstein appears more concerned to provide us with theoretical tools to understand *how* such reforms are structurally possible (in terms of the influence of the ORF and PRF in the recontextualising field), and also to make visible the competing interests, positions and pedagogic identities arising from these policy shifts.

3.41 The state and pedagogic identities

In commenting upon these later works, Beck (2002, p. 623) remarks that "…what is most original and insightful is the way he goes beyond analysing institutional change to focus on the State's efforts to produce pedagogic identities congruent with the new policy priorities". Bernstein's approach to the construction of what he calls 'pedagogic identities' is fundamentally Durkheimian - concerned with the ways in which order (or disorder) internal to the individual is related to and results from external orderings (or modalities of symbolic control) in society (Beck, *ibid*). Having argued that the introduction of market culture into British education threatened a humane relationship of the knower to knowledge, Bernstein then located this particular market discourse as just one among many that the state could project. In his final book, Bernstein (2000) produced a 'sketch' of four positions, each differing in their bias and focus, that represent various groups' struggles for control over policy and practice. He argued that curriculum reform as it represents 'official knowledge' constructed and distributed by the state emerges out of this struggle and constructs different *pedagogic identitie*s: "Thus the bias and focus of this official discourse are expected to construct in teachers and students a particular moral disposition, motivation and aspiration, embedded in particular performances and practices" (*ibid*, p 65). For Bernstein, such curricula reform is a response to the perceived need to manage economic and social change, so that different ways of doing so "…become the lived experience of teachers and students through the shaping of their pedagogic identity, thereby making educational institutions into critically important sites for shaping social consciousness and maintaining or challenging social inequality" (Bernstein, 1999, p. 247).

3.42 Four positions

In the aforementioned 'sketch', Bernstein's four 'official' identities (that the state could project as congruent with its policies) are generated by either the past or the present and are further distinguished by their relation to the centre (i.e. the state). Both 'retrospective' and 'prospective' identities are constructed from central (and often national) discourses, shaped by the past, but while retrospective identities are grand narratives that do not engage in an exchange relationship with the economy, 'prospective' identities selectively recontextualise the past to stimulate performance in a market culture with reduced welfare. In contrast, 'therapeutic' and 'de-centred market' identities draw from the local and the present. However, therapeutic identities relate to progressive education and are produced by complex theories of personal, cognitive and social

development, while de-centred market identities are neo-liberal, working according to the principle of 'survival of the fittest'.

3.43 The de-centred market position

Of the four positions, the commentary focuses most extensively on the de-centred market position (hereafter the 'DCM' position). Its "complex and profound consequences" (*ibid*, p. 70) include a loss of inwardness in the learner - the result of a new concept of knowledge, as separated from the deep structures of the self. Although Bernstein's description of some of the features of an institution whose identity conforms to the DCM is in some sense futuristic and could be seen as an ideal type, it is worth considering here:

> We have here a culture and context to facilitate the survival of the fittest as judged by market demands. The focus is on the short-term rather than the long term, on the extrinsic rather than the intrinsic, upon the exploration of vocational applications rather than upon exploration of knowledge. The transmission here views knowledge as money. And like money it should flow easily to where demand calls. There must be no impediments to this flow. Personal commitment and particular dedication of staff and students are regarded as resistances, as oppositions to the free circulation of knowledge. And so personal commitments, inner dedications, not only are not encouraged, but also are regarded as equivalent to monopolies in the market, and like such monopolies should be dissolved. The D.C.M position constructs an outwardly responsive identity rather than one driven by inner dedication. Contract replaces covenant.
>
> (*ibid*, p. 69).

Here Bernstein describes the regulative principle of the DCM position (survival of the fittest), the kind of culture and values that must be created in order to allow such competition to flourish (short-term, extrinsic), as well as the acceptable ends of such education (vocational application).[24] Crucially however, he then suggests that the kinds of identities that have previously been desirable (dedicated to the intrinsic value of knowledge) are fundamentally restructured by this discourse to become 'outwardly responsive'. To be outwardly responsive, an institution, or individual within it, is positioned to face toward the field in which they operate. This is not preference as much as necessity, because any such institution (e.g. school or college), which does not produce what consumers desire, will quickly be excluded from and shut down by the market. Bernstein suggests that to be outwardly responsive means that the identity of staff and students are formed and then operate through 'mechanisms of projection', as opposed to introjection, that is "…the identity is a reflection of external contingencies. The maintenance of this identity

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24 Bernstein is not here favouring 'academic' education over 'vocational', but recognising that knowledge only has value for the DCM position insofar as it is directed toward economic ends

therefore depends upon the facility of projecting discursive organisation/practices themselves driven by external contingencies" (*ibid*, p. 70). At the heart of this identity then, is an *external* orientation that sits in contrast to the inwardness fostered by 'retrospective' and 'therapeutic' official pedagogic identities.

3.44 Generic modes and external orientation

While Bernstein recognised that the DCM identity was not yet fully recogniseable in many local contexts, it is possible to identity a number of ways in which recent educational reform reflects the kinds of restructuring he describes. Beck (1999) suggests that such market responsiveness is the guiding principle behind recent teacher training reforms that require institutions to be constantly prepared for shifting demands from agencies such as the QCA, TTA and OFSTED, as well as moves toward semestarisation and modularisation. Another manifestation of these cultures of projection is the rise of 'regions' of knowledge over 'singulars'. Singular academic subjects (mathematics, history, etc.) have traditionally been strongly insulated from one another, thereby creating (for successful students) pedagogic identities that were socialised into 'sacred' knowledge communities. However Bernstein (*op cit*, p. 55) suggests that increasing regionalisation of knowledge (especially 'modern regions' like computer studies or journalism) creates identities which "…face outward towards fields of practice" so that "…their contents are likely to be dependent on the requirements of these fields". To quote Bernstein directly:

> Generic modes…are based on a new concept of 'work' and 'life'…which might be called 'short-termism' This is where a skill, task, area of work undergoes continuous development, disappearance or replacement…Under these circumstances it is considered that a vital new ability must be developed: 'trainability', the ability to profit from continuous pedagogic re-formations and so cope with the new requirements of 'work' and 'life'. These….it is hoped, will realise a flexible transferable potential rather than specific performances. Thus generic modes have their deep structure in the concept of 'trainability.
>
> (*ibid*, p. 59)

New Labour have launched a number of initiatives aiming to imbue just such 'flexible transferable potential' in children - a form of insurance against the perceived unpredictability of the labour market. Policy terms such as 'key skills' and 'lifelong learning' find their source in Further Education institutions, youth training schemes and prevocational education, according to Bernstein (*ibid*), which are all positioned more explicitly toward the labour market. Bailey (1984) points in particular to the influence of the Manpower Services Commission in the creation of a skills training approach - itself heavily influenced by behavioural objectives thinking which holds

that teaching and learning objectives are only meaningful if they are expressed in terms of directly observable performance or behaviour. As Beck and Young (1999, p. 190) have suggested, the concept of 'generic skills' can now even be found in doctoral programmes - characterised by such terms as 'core skills', 'thinking skills', 'problem solving' and 'teamwork'. Bernstein argues that underpinning this genericism and trainability is a curious emptiness: "...an emptiness which makes the concept self-referential and therefore excluding", in the sense of having no intrinsic content that allows self-definition or self-recognition (Bernstein, *op cit*, p. 59).[25] This restructuring of knowledge and the language of genericism therefore has particularly significant implications for personal identity. While the National Curriculum is still mainly what Bernstein calls, a 'collection of singulars', he argues that the DCM position has transformed the 'regulative discourse' of the school, making it difficult for this structure to offer a genuinely alternative basis for the formations of pedagogic identities.

> The DCM oriented identities toward satisfying external competitive demands, whereas the segmented, serial ordering of the subjects of the curriculum oriented the identities towards the intrinsic value of the discourse...This tension between the intrinsic and the extrinsic is not, of course, new. What is new is the official institutionalising of the DCM and the legitimising of the identity it projects.
>
> (*op cit*, p. 71)

3.45 The 'pedagogic-schizoid' position

Bernstein did not suggest that these four positions are the *only* ones that could be projected, or that educational policy will always be a pure projection of the values of just one of the positions. Rather he allowed that: "In any one case there can be opposition and collaborations between these positions in the arena of reform, alternatively, some positions may be illegitimate and excluded from the arena" (2000, p. 67). It is "...as if a pedagogic palette was available for the construction of such pedagogic identities (*ibid,* p. xii). Indeed he proposed that the ERA may be understood as an interaction between the DCM (neo-liberal) and prospective (neo-conservative) identities through "...the integration of a decentralised device of management embedded in a curriculum emphasising national enterprise" (*ibid*, p. 71). The peculiar effects of the conjoining of neo-liberal and neo-conservative elements has continued to dominate education policy and practice since the ERA, creating ongoing tension between the inwardness fostered by a curriculum largely constructed of singulars (especially for educationally successful students), and the outwardness fostered by generic modes in the form of transferable skills. This 'curriculum-

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25 Beck and Young (1999, p. 229) have described such empty terms as 'modernising' and use Readings (1996) analysis of the discourse of 'excellence' in American universities as an example of this 'dereferentialisation'; that is the use of terms having no intrinsic meaning but that can be mobilised to legitimise whatever priorities markets or managements require.

janus' has been otherwise described by Bernstein (*ibid*, p. 71) as "the pedagogic schizoid position", a 'pathological' identity that orients individuals to both the intrinsic value of knowledge and the instrumentalities of the market by leaving the instructional discourse of the institution untouched, but radically transforming its regulative discourse "…*as this affected its conditions of survival*" (original italics), and disseminating an "enterprise, competitive culture" (*ibid*, p. 71).[26]

3.5 Institutional survival in the educational market place

Whether or not it is always welcome, Bernstein argues that this competitive culture has become crucial for survival in the field of education, where an institution's capacity to maintain or increase its 'market share' of students, results and resources (Grace, 1995), and to market *itself*, is a key indicator of its stability and success.

3.51 Strategy and competition

The combination of state-directed performativity and audit requirements, the publication of performance data to parents (in Ofsted reports, league tables, brochures), and the shifts to school funding tied to student enrolments have powerfully incentivised schools to see their reputation, or 'market position' as all-important (Youdell, 2004). Institutional managements (at all levels) now need to inform themselves as accurately as possible about the characteristics of the relevant local educational market place, and the positioning strategies of their chief competitors within it. In 1992 only 16 per cent of head-teachers described their local markets as 'competitive' (Bullock & Thomas, 1997), whereas in 1998, 86 per cent regarded their relationships with other schools as 'fairly' or 'highly competitive' (Levacic, Woods, Hardman & Woods, 1998). In short, promotional and marketing behaviour in schools has increased (Foskett, 1999; Maguire, Ball & McRae, 1999, 2001; Gerwitz, 2002) and institutions are experiencing greater pressure to differentiate their 'product' and 'brand' themselves more clearly and distinctively.[27] This pressure should not, of course, be conflated with the *ability* to respond effectively in such a way. Although schools now accept the need to operate strategically in an active market, research has shown that such activity

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26 Bernstein describes rules of social order (or the regulative discourse) and rules of discursive order (the instructional discourse). The regulative discourse regulates the forms that hierarchical relations take and "expectations about conduct, character and manners", while the instructional discourse regulates the "selection, sequence, pacing and criteria of the knowledge" itself (2000, p. 13).

27 New Labour's policy of 'choice and diversity' is a key driver of this pressure to differentiate, and has at its heart the specialist school programme, the academies programme, and various other mechanisms of choice that were already established by previous Conservative governments.

tends to be reactive, ad-hoc and short-term, that successful schools quickly become complacent, and that despite the pressure to differentiate, many schools still seek to be 'all things' to potential students (Glatter, Woods & Bagley, 1997; Edwards & Whitty, 1997; Foskett, 1999).

A significant aspect of this competitive orientation is the way in which students are differentiated in order to serve a school's strategic positioning. Gillborn and Youdell (2000) describe this as 'educational triage' - the targeting of students who have the potential to increase a school's percentage of A-C grades. Here, children become a means to an end (Ball, 2004), and some students (girls, middle-class or South Asian students, as well as the 'able', 'gifted' or 'committed') are seen as particular 'assets' (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992; Gewirtz, Ball & Bowe, 1995; Ball & Gerwitz, 1997). Concomitantly, schools are less incentivised to welcome children with special educational needs, despite the financial premium that, if 'statemented', they bring (Bowe et al., 1992).

Finally, where schools had been administered as relatively closed systems, they now have to manage their various external relations much more strategically (Foskett, 1999; Oplatka, Foskett & Hemsley; Brown, 2002). Despite more recent attempts to highlight the role of local partnerships between schools, the promotion of parental choice and its associated funding regimes still creates strong competitive pressures on schools and positions them as rivals with other local institutions.[28] Some schools are now using their intellectual property rights to market their curriculum developments to other schools, positioning them not just as competitors, but also as customers (Ball, 2004). And where institutions are not in *direct* competition with one another their relationships are nonetheless still tailored to wider competitive strategies - for example, where strong primary and secondary schools partner together in strong or weak 'federations', somewhat akin to the mergers and acquisitions of corporate business, each being strengthened by association with the other.

3.52 16-19 institutions and Higher Education

At the other end of formal schooling, 16-19 institutions (and especially their senior managements) are also pressured to locate themselves in 'realistically achievable' niches in the local educational market place. While schools in Key Stages 1-3 are constrained from differentiating themselves by their curriculum, 16-19 provision has become increasingly diverse. In 1993 only 25 per cent of 11-18 comprehensive schools offered vocational courses in their

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28 For example the recent White Paper "Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system" (July 2009) majors on the role of partnerships between schools to raise standards.

sixth-forms, but by 1998 this reached 74 percent (Davies, 2002), and the introduction of vocational qualifications tends to be a response to competitive pressures within the sector. (Woods, Bagley & Glatter, 1998).[29]

These niche strategies encourage institutions to recruit certain types of students and parents, and therefore also position them towards certain 'appropriate' types of Higher Education institution. Reay et al. (2005) draw on a powerful range of data within their multi-case study to demonstrate that 'choice' in Higher Education is strongly conditioned by the intersection of these familial and institutional habituses. The independent influence of institutional habitus (i.e. the school) is evidenced in differential levels of resourcing for careers advice; distinctive curriculum offerings (traditional academic 'singulars' vs. new 'regions'); the degree of 'coupling' between these and certain 'appropriate' Higher Education institutions; students' level of awareness of the subtle dynamics of the field of Higher Education; and the presence of collective versus individualised processes of choosing. Reay et al. found that while the private schools in their sample provided clear procedures to follow and paths to take, state students in sixth-forms (unless they were recognised as 'Oxbridge material') "…were more likely to be negotiating a morass of choices they often felt ill-equipped to deal with", while the predominantly working class sample in the FE college and mixed community school "…were involved in a process of finding out what you can't have, what is not open for negotiation and then selecting from the few options left" (*ibid*, paragraph 8.1).

One key driver of these differentiating processes is the expansion of both 16-19 and Higher Education provision - partly in response to government policy which has incentivised higher participation in both sectors. New Labour's declared target of 50 per cent of young people going to university by 2010 (though now revised downwards) is likely to have resulted in increasing pressure on 16-19 institutions to encourage young people toward university, and on universities to accept them.[30] Indeed, Reay et al. (*ibid*) found that it was imperative for the under-funded working class community school in their sample to encourage students (with their attached funding) to 'stay on', despite a recognition that transition to university would be extremely difficult for many students. It is in this context that the field of Higher Education has expanded significantly and, at the time of research, more young people than ever before were applying to university.[31] The stratification and differentiation of Higher Education also has a powerful racial,

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29 Research has shown that competitive behaviour in FE colleges ranges from "…keeping an eye on the activities of competitors, to 'poaching' and direct copying" (Ball, 2004, p. 20).

30 More recently this may have been tempered by public spending constraints but these were not operative at the time this research was undertaken.

31 The proportion of young people studying in Higher Education in England and Wales has increased almost sevenfold since the early 1960s, from only 6 per cent of 19–20 year olds in 1961 to over 40 per cent of this age group in 2004/05 (Brooks & Everett, 2009)

as well as class, element with white middle-class students persistently over-represented at universities (particularly the prestigious research oriented universities that have emerged as a top layer of elite institutions) while those of Caribbean origin are over represented by 43 per cent in new universities, Asians by 162 per cent and Africans by 223 per cent (Reay, Davies, David & Ball, 2001).

Debate continues as to the merit of such expansion. Brown and Hesketh (2004) posit that 40% of graduates are in jobs that do not require degrees but are carrying increased burdens of debt, and Brynin (2002) argues that graduate density has a negative, rather than positive impact on wages. Such a situation has long been attributed to credential inflation, with Collins (1979, p. 192) suggesting that the credential system went into crisis in the 1960s and that after a bout of reform proposals the…

> …idealistic rhetoric of curricular alternatives has been replaced by a manipulative cynicism. Students electing to remain within the system have adopted the goal of high grades, irrespective of content and by any means whatsoever, producing inflation in college grades.

Education therefore becomes more costly and promises a lower return for given levels of credentials than previously. But it is the need to insure against unemployment that has created a culture of increasing instrumentalism, especially among middle-class students (Brown 1990). Even those students who acknowledge that a degree is necessary but insufficient for employment accept the inevitability of credential inflation and the necessity to "…compensate, specialise and 'gain the edge" (Brooks & Everett, 2009, p. 345).

3.6 Marketisation: new subjectivities for students

Having considered the influence of the DCM position on institutions and their conditions for survival, I will now consider students *within* these institutions. Ball (2003a, p. 217) proposes that the ERA and its subsequent developments came as a package comprising the three 'policy technologies' of market, management and performance, in which are embedded new identities, new forms of interaction and new values that all play their part in 'making us up' differently from before. Ball's interest, (which resonates with Bernstein's although informed by a somewhat eclectic but broadly post-structuralist stance) lies in the ways in which these reforms are re-forming subjectivities and relationships in the education process, particularly in ways that are implicit, tacit or even unintended. Table 3.1 reveals some of the ways that individuals are discursively repositioned by these policy technologies of education reform.[32]

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32 Blackmore (2004) also argues that collectively, these reforms reposition parents as 'clients', teachers as 'providers' and students as 'consumers'.

Table 3.1 Market subjectivities

	Market	Management	Performance
Subject positions	• Consumer • Producer • Entrepreneur	• Manager • Managed team	• Appraisee • Comparitor • Competitor
Discipline	• Competition • Survival • Income maximisation	• Efficiency/ effectiveness • Corporate culture	• Productivity • Target achievement • Comparison
Values	• Competition • Institutional interests	• What 'works'	• The performative worth of individuals' fabrication

Table 1 'Discursive interventions into the public sector' (Ball 2003a, p. 218).

A great deal has been written about the repositioning of teachers as producers, in particular the restructuring of notions of professionalism and the impact of accountability and cultures of performativity (Woods, Jeffrey, Troman & Boyle 1997; Ball, 1998; Jeffrey & Woods, 1998; Beck, 1999; Smyth, 2000; Mcguire, Ball, & Macrae, 2001; Edwards, Gilroy, & Hartley, 2002; Ball, 2004; Blackmore, 2004; Beck & Young, 2005; Gleeson, Davies, & Wheeler, 2005; Wilkinson, 2005; Leaton-Grey, 2007). Similarly, critics have argued that parents have been repositioned as consumers who need to act strategically and competitively in order to enhance their children's chances of educational success (Brown, 1990, 1995; Reay, 1998; Apple, 2001, Ball, 2003b; Devine, 2004; Furlong, 2005). Much less has been written, however, about the impact of these neo-liberal reforms on students themselves, and in this section I will consider how students appear to have been multiply positioned in three key ways: as products, as consumers and as entrepreneurs of themselves.

3.61 Students as products

While the direct 'correspondence' between education and economy posited by Bowles and Gintis (1976), has been questioned (Moore, 2004), there remains a sense in which students are constructed as products - to be 'consumed' in various ways by the economy. The increasing presence of generic modes, for example, points to an ongoing concern within education that students are prepared with the competences deemed necessary to take their place in a 'global skills race' - a point which is regularly highlighted by employers bemoaning the lack of

'employable' students in the labour market.[33] Students can be similarly 'consumed' by the education system itself. Ball et al. (1994) argue that the coupling of market forces with performance indicators and league tables forces schools to find ways to attract motivated parents with able children and so advance their competitive position. This involves a subtle shift, "…from student needs to student performance and from what the school does for the student to what the student does for the school" (*ibid*, p. 17). With the introduction of specialist and GM schools, and more recently academies, some of which can select up to ten per cent of their intake on academic criteria, it would seem that at points of entry to secondary school, schools will seek to 'consume' successful students who will further their reputation in the local market.

3.62 Students as consumers

With 'choice' as a key organising principle of the education system, the 'choosers' tend to be parents. Still, students themselves may be involved in this process by attending education fairs, open days and consultations with career advisors, and some argue that students increasingly become consumers of education where its borders blur with those of advertising or entertainment (Kenway & Bullen, 2001). However Ball (1990, p. 125) suggests that it was the introduction of Local Management of Schools (LMS) giving schools a financial incentive to provide every student an individualised path through schooling that has ultimately developed "…a new, individualised (and generalised) consumption orientation" in both the teacher/pupil relationship, and the students' acquisition of consumption habits and values. Ball's more recent work has highlighted the visibility of this consumption relationship in the expansion of consumption beyond formal education to a "…diffuse, expanding, and sophisticated system of goods, services, experiences and routes – publicly and privately provided' (2004, p. 7).

3.63 Students as entrepreneurs

Youdell (2004, p. 10) argues that the education market place is necessarily underpinned by a deeply embedded, hegemonic individualism, that "…functions to further legitimate practices that locate responsibility for educational success and failure in the person of the individual student". This notion is, of course, very close to Rose's (1999) concept of 'responsibilisation', which was discussed in Chapter Two. One particular expression of attempts to promote such individualist

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33 Gordon Brown made this point in a speech to business leaders on the 28th January 2008 in which he said: "A generation ago, a British prime minister had to worry about the global arms race. Today a British prime minister has to worry about the global skills race - because the nation that shows it can bring out the best in all its people will be the great success story of the coming decades".

identities has been the introduction of enterprise education in 2001 as a key part of work-related learning and now of PSHEE.[34] Although the National Curriculum is almost entirely a collection of singulars, New Labour introduced significant new statutory programmes that could be classified as exemplars of Bernstein's generic modes, including enterprise education. Its introduction and further ratification by the QCA (Qualification and Curriculum Authority) National Curriculum reforms of 2008, made explicit the weakening classification between education and economy demanded by the DCM position by virtue of its intention to develop 'enterprise capability' in students at Key Stage 4. In a significant signal, the programme was introduced as a result of a review conducted by Howard Davies, the then chair of the Financial Services Authority (FSA), and published by the Treasury rather than the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). According to a governmental website, enterprise education involves the development of enterprise capability, which is described as:

- the ability to handle uncertainty and respond positively to change, to create and implement new ideas and ways of doing things, to make reasonable risk/reward assessments and act upon them in one's personal and working life (Davies report, 2002)
- innovation, creativity, risk-management, and a 'can-do' attitude and the drive to make ideas happen (DfES, 2005)

Enterprise capability is an example, then, of the 'flexible transferable potential' that Bernstein (2000, p. 59) argued is at the heart of genericism and that is meant to prepare students to "… cope with the new requirements of 'work' and 'life'". This concern is made explicit in the summary of the Davies review (*op cit*, p. 7) which argues that "The world of work is changing fast" as more people are self-employed and fewer work for large firms and "…therefore, young people seeking work in the future are likely to need to be more flexible and entrepreneurial in their attitudes". By enabling students to "handle uncertainty and respond positively to change", the government is seeking to prepare them for a world in which 'labour market flexibility' has become a political mantra (Beck, 2000). These new economic conditions have been variously characterised as globalization, post-fordism (Hall & Jacques, 1989), neo-fordism (Brown & Lauder, 1992), 'the second industrial divide' (Phillimore, 1996) and flexible specialization (Sabel & Piorre, 1984). Enterprise education, then, is an attempt to prepare students for the 'new requirements' of work that is perceived as temporary, flexible, individualised and demanding of a high level of initiative. In such a world, initiative is necessary, not only to seek out clients, but also to retain a competitive edge and stay ahead of the market. This competitive, 'can-do' attitude will

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be fostered it is suggested when young people are given opportunities "to be enterprising through applying their knowledge, skills and attributes - to 'make their mark" (Teachernet, 2007).

3.7 The emergence of pedagogies of self-marketing

Crucially then, reform does not just change external behaviours, it also changes who we are and become - our 'social identity' (Bernstein, 2000, p. 73), and at different moments in their educational career, students may be positioned as products, consumers and/or entrepreneurs as a result of the ongoing impact of neo-liberal market reforms. We may remember that Bernstein (*ibid*) characterised the official dominant pedagogic identity projected by the educational reforms of both Conservative and New Labour governments as the "pedagogic schizoid position", leaving the instructional discourse of the institution untouched (i.e. a traditional National Curriculum remains - though increasingly attenuated at Key Stage 4), while transforming the regulative discourse (so that institutional survival requires an external and competitive orientation). However the emergence of generic modes, in particular enterprise education and 'education for economic well-being', suggests that the impact of the DCM position has also become evident in the instructional discourse, i.e. within the formal curriculum. Bernstein has suggested that the very survival of the DCM identity depends on its ability to reflect and respond to external contingencies, in turn making the identity projected empty of intrinsic enduring content. If we are witnessing the growing influence of the DCM in schools, we might expect that at the level of individual students, the projection of various desired identities becomes a key skill for the enterprising individual who needs to adapt constantly to the actual or perceived fluxes of the market in which they find themselves. It is this concept of identity projections, or what I have described as 'self-marketing', that forms the substantive topic of my thesis, and to which I now turn. In this section I will consider self-marketing as it concerns both the regulative discourse of the institution (because market dynamics require students to *behave* a certain way), and the instructional discourse (in terms of the self-marketing *skills* that institutions seek to transmit).

3.71 Self-reflection and self-presentation: 'competencies' for employability

At the heart of generic modes, then, is a concern to develop what Bernstein (*ibid*, p. 59) has termed 'trainability'; a "flexible transferable potential" that allows students to "profit from continuous pedagogic re-formations". Returning to the claims of the Davies Review (*op cit*, p. 15), "…greater economic uncertainty and more frequent change in their future working lives" means that "…all young people will need more enterprising skills and attitudes, not just to set up

businesses (or enter self-employment), but also to build their own careers and to stay employable". These skills are widely referred to as 'soft', and, it is argued, will empower individuals to take responsibility for themselves in a changing world. For example, at the time of my research, the National Curriculum goals for 'social development' at Key Stage 4, included the subtitle: 'Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities', and were as follows:

• To be aware of and assess their personal qualities, skills and achievements and potential, so that they can set personal goals
• To have a sense of their own identity and present themselves confidently in a range of situations

The ability to reflect on and then to present oneself confidently in a range of situations are two such 'soft skills', that, I would argue, are core to the 'competencies' needed to reflect external contingencies by marketing oneself.

Despite using the same term, this notion of 'competencies' differs radically from the competence modes described by Bernstein (2000), which are therapeutic in orientation, oppose processes of stratification, and are concerned with emancipation and empowerment. Jones and Moore (1995) argue that in place of this 'holistic' definition, the notion of competence as it is carried within generic modes is atomistic, behaviourist, simplistic and regressive. Maclure (2003) perceives the influence of Hymes' (1966) holistic notion of 'communicative competence' in the National Curriculum goals for English at Key Stage 4 which state that pupils should be able to: "Speak fluently and appropriately in different contexts, adapting their talk for a range of purposes and audiences, including the more formal". But where she argues for teaching 'oracy' in classrooms as part of an agenda toward democratising education she reflects that such goals "…took on a new inflection with the introduction of the 'new vocationalism' which aimed to equip students with the 'flexible' skills required for the 'enterprise' society" (*op cit*, p. 83).

Pupil Progress Files (PPFs) and Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are examples of tools which aim to develop competencies related to certain forms of self-reflection. They have their origins in particular managerialist practices wherein personal development profiles and plans are used to orient daily work toward assessments where workers must provide evidence of their wider competencies. In a similar way, the generic skills that pupils are expected to develop included (at the time of writing) 'planning, monitoring and reviewing' and 'self-awareness and self-presentation', as part of the curriculum of personal and social development. Specifically, topics covered within the guidance and working material associated with PPFs included:

Metcalfe (1992, p. 625) draws on Foucauldian notions of the self constituted as a subject through the act of confessing to an evaluating 'other', to argue that in education such disciplinary technologies are used to lead students to "…avow the truths proclaimed about them in school". Looking at a variety of advice from the then Department for Education and Skills (DES) and various careers advice bodies, he shows that in the mid to late 1980s students were required to know themselves by developing competence in self-analysis. In one example, a 1986 workbook called 'Know yourself' listed ten categories (activities, achievements, values, interests, needs, temperament, abilities with people, data, ideas and things) drawn from employers' application forms and "certain debatable paradigms in psychology" (*ibid*, p. 629) on which students had to reflect. After considering their answers to 36 questions, students then interpreted this information about their "natural competences" by drawing it together into a 'self portrait'. Metcalfe concludes that the influence of pervasive concepts of meritocracy consign students to take responsibility for the ways that they are objectified through such evaluations and confessional technologies by obscuring truths about students' real starting points, or the distance they have travelled. Here, such self-analysis of one's competences is less for personal empowerment in its widest sense, and more competence for competition and comparison within performance modes that "…serve economic goals and are considered here as instrumental" (Bernstein, *op cit*, p. 54). Indeed, they can give the appearance of freedom through an opportunity to 'take responsibility' for ones life, while actually monitoring individuals ever more closely via new means of self-regulating regulation i.e. appraisal systems, target-setting, output comparisons (Ball, 2003a).

Ball (*ibid*, p. 216), taking inspiration from Lyotard (1984), describes this as a culture of performativity whereby "…the performances (of individual subjects or organizations) serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of 'quality', or 'moments' of promotion or inspection. As such they stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organization within a field of judgement". This flow of performativities and identity projections requires individuals to fabricate versions or accounts of themselves. He writes that:

> These fabrications are selections among various possible representations or projections. In that sense fabrications are versions of a person which does not exist – they are not 'outside the truth' but neither do they render simply true or direct accounts - they are produced purposefully in order 'to be accountable.

The constant recording and evidencing of productivity therefore results in the individual producing behaviours for the very purpose of being recorded and judged. The truth (in the ordinary use of that term) of such fabrications is not the point, Ball (*ibid*, p. 224) reminds us; "…the point is their effectiveness, in the market or for inspection or appraisal".

3.72 National Records of Achievement

One such 'fabrication' is the National Record of Achievement (NRA). Originally introduced in the late 1970s and becoming mandatory in 1993, the NRA was a document finally given to students at the end of Year 11 that functioned as an educational CV, containing personal information, qualifications, educational and extra-curricular achievements. In 1996, the Dearing Review recommended restructuring and renaming it the Progress File, and the NRA was due to be entirely phased out by 2009. Although now redundant, the NRA was a significant 'confessional technology', and its influence is still visible in PPFs and ILPs, in particular, in the role of the student 'avowing truths' proclaimed about them in school (Metcalfe, *op cit*).

Cremin (2005) investigated the principle of self-marketing within the context of schooling by analysing 49 such NRAs. Focusing on the description of work experience and extra-curricular activities written by the teacher in consultation with the student, and the 'Personal Statement' written by the student as an evaluative account of themselves, he found a strong comparability between the language of NRAs and that of most workplaces. His analysis led him to identify three stages displayed in the writing, which he describes as a 'hierarchy of personality' that students are required to demonstrate. The first is 'Organisational discipline', wherein teachers and students wrote about punctuality, dress and their relationship to authority. Cremin (*ibid*, p. 324) writes that this stage "…predates a mature personality culture", since such behaviours are the basic codes of conformity that will enable an individual to endure the environment of the workplace. The second is '(Demonstration of) transferable skills' where students produced evidence of teamwork, flexibility, initiative, networking, leadership and communication; skills that are deemed necessary for competing in and adapting to a flexible labour market. The third stage is 'Extra-curricular/lifestyle equivalence/compatibility' and is broken down into the three subcategories of:

1. Organised trips or activities displayed through the filter of school as evidence of "compatibility to enterprise" (*ibid*, p. 327), with voluntary work such as helping on open days differentiating those willing to 'go the extra mile'.

2. Organised leisure activities, reframed as essentially 'productive' which indicate an individual's potential to be a career 'all rounder'.

3. The socialising profile, which locates the student between the poles of shy and outgoing, with students going to some lengths to avoid saying they are shy. "Thus" writes Cremin, "… reflexive exploitation configures the self to a corporatised ideal of the person by discounting or re-interpreting certain qualities so that they are either transformed or managed through advice" (*ibid*, p. 329).

Finally, Cremin (*ibid*, p. 330) adds an ideal-hypothetical fourth category wherein a person "… knowingly and enthusiastically gains validation as an individual in that which effectively denies them a heterogeneous moment", i.e. they fully identify, or even conflate, themselves with the organisation itself. Although he did not find evidence of such a stage in his sample, Cremin nonetheless questions the underlying rationale of self-objectification and identification with 'enterprise culture' as a means to remaining 'employable' that the NRA represents.

3.73 Applying to university: the Personal Statement

Progress Files and Records of Achievement are often used to help students make applications to university when writing a personal statement within their application form. (Ofsted, 2002). This Personal Statement is essentially a miniature curriculum vitae (CV) of around 500 words. It can include reasons for applying to a particular course, personal interests, extra-curricular activities, voluntary work, other qualifications, non-accredited key skills and future plans - and therefore presents significant scope for self-marketing. Within my concern for examining pedagogies of self-marketing in different schooling contexts, the Personal Statement is therefore a good 'data-near device' (Moore & Muller, 2003) through which it is possible to investigate self-marketing.

In 2006 the UCAS website told students that:

> This is your chance to tell the universities and colleges you have chosen why you are applying, and why they should want you as a student…A good personal statement is important – it could help to persuade an admissions officer to offer you a place. In many cases, applicants are not interviewed, so this may be your only chance to make the case for your admission.

The extent to which Personal Statements are important may differ from application to application, but some commentators (particlarly in North America) suggest that students are increasingly responding as if they are highly significant. In the States, excellent SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) scores have traditionally been the passport into a good college, but young people are increasingly 'branding' themselves to impress colleges in more onerous ways, including choosing "…their extra-curricular activities as a means to sculpt a more attractive profile for college admissions counsellors" (Quart, 2003, p. 194). Quart concludes that rather than "… becoming themselves, these teenagers are pouring all their energy into constructing marketable teen brands, such as 'the altruist' or 'the athlete' in order to appeal to that other long-branded entity – the Ivy League college" (*ibid*, p.194).

The use of extra-curricular activities to shape 'attractive profiles' is not uncommon in Britain either. 'Enrichment' was a key feature of Curriculum 2000, and has become increasingly important in the language of educational provision in recent years, with the QCA website reporting in 2006 that enrichment "…provides relief from a diet of qualifications". However there is a simultaneous acknowledgement that an 'enriched' pupil is an attractive commodity to be consumed by Higher Education or the labour market, and consequently enrichment can be pursued for its utility in giving children that competitive edge that will set them apart. Here we find a marked tension between the acknowledgement that such activities are intrinsically worthwhile, and their claimed instrumental utility at moments of transition. Indeed, the QCA website also suggests that "…to raise the status of enrichment activities, schools and colleges can produce records of participation that are used for references and UCAS applications".[35]

It is not just extra-curricular activities *in* school that can be used instrumentally for self-marketing on the Personal Statement in transition to university. The 'gap year' has also come under scrutiny as more and more young people do something 'fun' but also ideally 'worthwhile' before further study, and often abroad. The number of students deferring entry to university in order to take a gap year doubled between 1994 and 2004, and in response a niche gap-year industry has emerged (Heath, 2007). Heath argues that the parallel expansion of Higher Education and gap years is due to the latter becoming a significant means by which certain groups of students (disproportionately white, middle-class, female and independent school students) 'gain the edge' over their peers in competition for places at elite institutions. This is particularly the case with the emergence of 'third-world' volunteer-tourism, which "…seeks to combine the hedonism of tourism with the altruism of development work" (Simpson, 2004, p. 681). Promotional material

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35 Quotations accurate at time of retrieval

from this industry positions such activities as both 'productive' and 'liberating'; acting as "…injunctions to be enterprising, to enjoy and to be ethical" (Cremin, 2007, p. 526). Such a person, it is perceived, is more likely to be attractive to admission tutors, not least because such experiences are deemed to engender a maturity that inhibits students from 'dropping out' or becoming too distracted by the freedoms of a university life (Heath *op cit*). The types of citizenship encouraged through the gap year therefore "…give primacy to the ability of the individual to compete in social and employment market places" such as the competition for places at university (Simpson, 2005, p. 55).

3.8 Conclusion

The fact that little or no research has been undertaken in the field of self-marketing within the transition to university makes it difficult to frame my subject of study in any real detail in relation to a significant corpus of similar studies. Nevertheless my intention in this chapter has been to demonstrate, through a Bernsteinian account of the marketisation of education supplemented by studies from a range of complementary perspectives, how it is that pedagogies of self-marketing, as an aspect of generic modes, may have emerged. I am not, of course, suggesting that such pedagogies are equally present or well-developed in all 16-19 institutions or that they are officially described as such. Rather, I would argue that where local education markets are particularly competitive, 16-19 institutions are incentivised to support students' successful self-marketing through Personal Statements (sometimes supplemented by interviews), in order to ensure their own survival - all within the context of New Labour's policy on widening participation.

Four
Theoretical Framework

4.1 Introduction

The theoretical assumptions that underpin the relationship between a piece of data and a claim about its meaning need to be made explicit, justified and qualified if necessary (Dressman, 2008). This chapter will therefore present the theoretical framework which guided my research. Theory was utilised differently in the various phases of the research program. Rather than use theory purely inductively or deductively, I attempted, pragmatically, to collect data that could be viewed through a variety of theoretical lenses. One implication was that my research questions continued to evolve, an indication of the various theoretical issues that I deemed to be significant at various moments of the research process (Stake, 1995). Appendix 1 summarises the various iterations that these questions went through.

The main part of the chapter will present Basil Bernstein's theory of pedagogic codes as providing the primary theoretical tools through which I conceptualised and analysed my data.[36] The scope of his work was ambitious, but not exhaustive and for this reason I then argue for the use of certain complementary concepts drawn from Bourdieu (notably habitus, capital and field), before discussing the limitations of these theoretical decisions and offering critical realism as an ontological framework that is compatible with these theories.

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36 It was not until the analysis phase of my research that I decided to employ Basil Bernstein's (2000) theory of pedagogic codes as an interpretative framework for my data. I therefore partially reconceptualised the data in the light of this body of theory rather than it having framed my initial approach.

4.2 Macro-formal theories: ontology and epistemology

There is an increasing acceptance that research, especially but not solely social research, is not value-free and that this would not be desirable even if it were possible (Humphries, 1995). Therefore researchers increasingly seek to make explicit not only their values but also certain fundamental theoretical presuppositions, by identifying their assumptions about the world and aligning themselves with particular research 'paradigms'. Such explicitness is particularly important in the case of 'grand' theories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) or 'macro-formal' theories (Hammersley, 2007) that attempt to describe the fundamental nature of social reality and the possibility of knowledge. A number of commentators then also argue that the use of theory at different levels should be both logically and epistemologically consistent, so that an ontological paradigm should determine what kinds of theory are available for the researcher to draw on at lower and thus dependent levels (Archer, 1998; Grix, 2004). Archer (*ibid*), for example, argues that the following formula is universal:

Social Ontology (SO) $\longrightarrow$ Explanatory Methodology (EM) $\longrightarrow$ Practical Social Theories (PST)
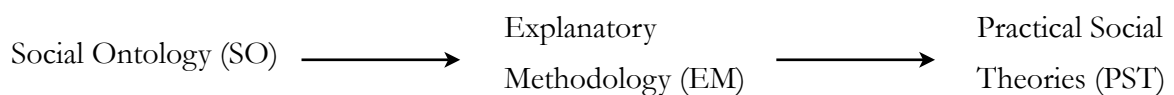
In other words, that ontology regulates methodology by virtue of its decisions concerning the constituents of reality, and methodology then becomes a necessary link between ontology and practical theories (Zeuner, 2003).

While I fully accept that these levels should be logically and epistemologically consistent, I am sympathetic to Bernstein's (1974, p. 145) concern that an obsession with "approach paradigms" sometimes leads to the "news of much contemporary sociology" appearing to be "…news about the conditions necessary for creating acceptable news". This is particularly the case where these conditions are so narrow that some 'paradigms' permit only a small range of 'compatible' methodologies, and where "…students are socialized into approaches rather than encouraged to create news" (*ibid*, p. 145). As such, in the work reported in this thesis, I have been more concerned with effective ways of researching and analysing the research problem itself rather than with 'settling' (in the sense of offering elaborate justifications for) my choice of theoretical and methodological approaches. Consequently, while I will discuss ontological issues towards the end of the chapter, the main focus will be on relevant aspects of the theories of Bernstein and Bourdieu, and the ways in which they have informed the research.

4.3 Bernstein's pedagogic theory as an interpretative framework

Bernstein's theory as a whole is wide-ranging in its scope; able to move between the macro-levels of institutional discourse to the micro-levels of pedagogical interaction and forms of consciousness. This is primarily the consequence of his concern with exploring the processes by which these various levels interact and act on people, and as the result of the explanatory power of his twin concepts of classification and framing, which can be used to analyse pedagogical forms at a number of levels. The theory is therefore hard to classify, because Bernstein did not uphold conventional divisions of academic labour between macro and micro-sociology (Edwards, 2002). One could use it to analyse "…linkages across the structure of a national society" (*ibid*, p. 188) in terms of how knowledge moves from sites of production to transmission, or to examine more local forms of organisation e.g. by analysing the principles of classification and framing in one classroom. Bernstein (*op cit*, p. xiv) suggested that it was possible to "…confine research activity to any one level. There is no need to 'buy into' all the levels; a certain democracy of access". Yet at the same time, the overall theory of 'the pedagogic device' makes possible "…the integration of macro levels of analysis with institutional and interactional levels" (*ibid*, p. xvii).[37] It is the breadth of the theory's reach that makes it such a useful conceptual tool in my attempts to understand students' self-marketing within a framework employing specific case studies.

While I was impressed by the explanatory power of this multi-level theory, I was nevertheless aware of the importance of an ongoing commitment to trying to achieve fidelity to the perspectives and lived experiences of the participants of the research. I was not seeking, then, to generate new theory *or* to verify existing theory, but more modestly, to employ certain of Bernstein's concepts to illuminate and organise my research data.[38]

4.4 Outline of the theory

At the heart of Bernstein's theory are the central concepts of power and control; analytically distinguished but empirically embedded in one another, and sitting behind his more clearly

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37 Bernstein writes that his theory has no pretensions toward being a "general social theory", but may be "…a sociological theory of the pedagogising of communication, part of a more general theory of symbolic control" (2000, p. 189)

38 It is important for such an enterprise to remind ourselves that several of the key concepts comprising the theory have had a career of their own, with some appearing in some of his earliest works and undergoing later refinement and revision over a number of decades. But for the sake of clarity of presentation I have drawn primarily on his summary of this work presented in the second edition of his final book, "Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity - revised edition" published in 2000, and unless otherwise stated this is the source of the work discussed and cited in the rest of this thesis.

specified constructs of classification and framing. It is power, he argued, that creates boundaries by producing "…dislocations, punctuations in social space" between groups, categories and agents and establishing "…legitimate relations of order" (*ibid*, p. 5). But control then operates to create forms of communication that are legitimate within those established categories, carrying the "…boundary relations of power" and socialising individuals into those relationships (*ibid*, p. 5).

4.41 Classification: boundaries, identities and discourse

Behind every such division or categorisation, argued Bernstein, is some form of power, working either to retain difference, or to institute some new circumstance that privileges particular groups or individuals in relation to others. This particular outworking of power he termed 'classification', i.e. the ways that different social phenomena are organised in relation to one another. Classification may be strong where there is a high degree of insulation between these, or weak where boundaries are more permeable, and can be internal or external depending on whether it applies within or between given pedagogic contexts. Crucially, Bernstein claimed, it is the social division of labour (a term that sometimes signifies social class hierarchies) that underpins these classifications, and power relations that hold these boundaries in place. The principle of classification, especially where it is strong, distributes different modes of social consciousness by positioning agencies, agents, discourses or practices as one thing and not another. Therefore, "If the insulation is broken, then a category is in danger of losing its identity," (*ibid*, p. 6). These insulations therefore create order, both internally within the individual and externally in society, which is maintained by the suppression of "…contradictions, cleavages and dilemmas" externally, and "…a system of psychic defences" internally (*ibid*, p. 7). Where such boundaries shift there is a redistribution of power, and therefore the potential for social change.

4.42 Framing: communication, texts and transmission

Framing refers to the processes through which individuals are socialised into the 'legitimate' forms of behaviour and communication created by classifications, and which are necessary to maintain them. It relays how control is realised in any pedagogic context through its transformation into "…specialised regulations of interactional discursive practices" (*ibid*, p. xvii). As with classification, framing can be strong or weak, according to the nature and distribution of control over: the selection of the communication; its sequencing; the pacing; the evaluative criteria; and the control over the social base which makes the transmission possible (*ibid*, p. 13).

Strong framing marks clear boundaries and makes them explicit, while weak framing allows learners a higher degree of (apparent) control over the 'internal logic' of their learning (e.g. pace, criteria etc.).[39] Bernstein then went on to posit two systems of rules that are regulated by the relative strength of the framing; rules of social order (or the regulative discourse) and rules of discursive order (the instructional discourse). Regulative discourse regulates the forms that hierarchical relations take and "…expectations about conduct, character and manners", while the instructional discourse regulates the "…selection, sequence, pacing and criteria of the knowledge" itself (*ibid*, p. 13). He expresseed this as; framing = ID/RD, because, he argued, the instructional discourse is always embedded in the regulative discourse, and the regulative discourse is therefore always dominant.

4.43 The acquisition of codes (recognition and realisation rules).

Taken together, particular combinations of stronger or weaker classification and framing operate as a pedagogic code. The principle of classification that is operative in any particular code relates to what Bernstein termed 'recognition rules', belonging to the acquirer, so that any change in the strength of the classification affects an individual's ability to recognise the specificity of the context they are in. Just as the strenth of classification is the result of certain constellations of power, "…certain distributions of power give rise to different social distributions of recognition rules" (*ibid*, p. 17), meaning, for example, that some children are less able to recognise the meaning and functions of various elements comprising the context of the classroom, and, consequently, what counts as legitimate communication.[40] However it is also the case that it is possible for some children to recognise a context without having the resources to realise the correct response. Without the relevant 'realisation rules' it is impossible for someone to produce the text that is legitimate to that particular context, and here the 'text' can be anything that attracts evaluation and may be as apparently trivial as the correct way to sit. Principles of framing determine who controls what in a pedagogic context, and it is realisation rules that enable the learner to respond appropriately to that regulative or instructional order, and to enact a legitimate text.

To summarise then, principles of classification and framing (as expressions of power and control) regulate recognition and realisation rules at the level of the acquirer, which together can

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39 It is possible for framing values to vary across these elements, with some weak and some strong

40 Likewise a "…weakly classified context can create ambiguity in contextual recognitions" (2000, p. 17) because it may not be obvious where the boundaries are, and therefore what behaviours are appropriate.

be expressed as a pedagogic code.[41] Figure 4.1 puts these elements together to demonstrate how the pedagogic context is interactional and dynamic, defined by the principles of classification and framing.

Figure 4.1 A Bernsteinian model of transmission and acquisition[42]
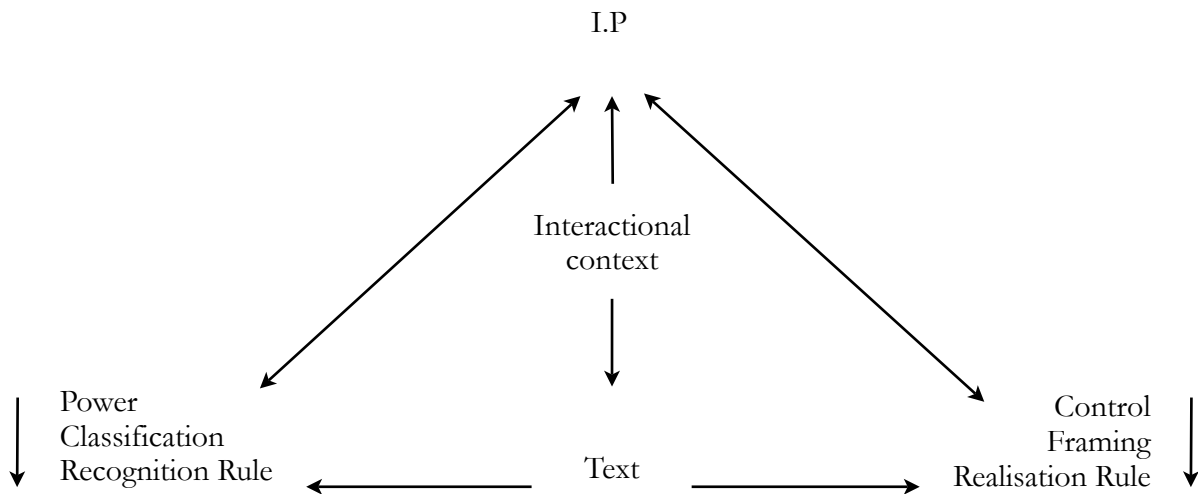
Figure 1.2 Transmission Context (Bernstein, 2000, p. 16)

4.5 Pedagogic codes and the imaginary subject

While countless theorists recognise the role of the school in reproducing or challenging social structures (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Willis, 1977, Bourdieu & Passerson, 1990), Bernstein wanted to demonstrate systematically how particular pedagogic environments regulated forms of consciousness at the level of the individual through the principles of classification and framing. In this sense he refined the study of reproduction by identifying the 'semiotic device' that mediates between the external relations of power and social class and the internal relations of cognition and consciousness (Moore, 2004; Diaz 2001). He summarised this as follows:

> We have seen how these classifications disguise the arbitrary nature of power relations, create imaginary identities, replace the contingent by the necessary and construct psychic systems of defence internal to the individual (*op cit*, p. 12).

The 'imaginary identities' that these principles create are a key theme throughout Bernstein's later work, and one which will be central to my own study.

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41 Bernstein defines 'code' as "A regulative principle, tacitly acquired, which selects and integrates relevant meanings, the form of their realisation and evoking contexts" (2000, p. 109)

42 IP = Interactional Practice

When Bernstein used the term 'imaginary' it was to relay the way that, through a process of recontextualisation, discourses are abstracted from their sites of production (and therefore their social base, position and power relations) to a pedagogic site.[43] And because all pedagogic discourse is recontextualised, it is all, in this sense, 'imaginary'. It then follows that "From this point of view, pedagogic discourse selectively creates *imaginary subjects*" (*ibid*, p. 33 original italics). In one of the only studies to draw on this aspect of Bernstein's work, Ivinson and Duveen (2006) contrast the discourses produced in three classrooms, each with different principles of classification and framing, to describe the diverse 'subjects' that were projected. For example, using a thematic analysis of a teacher's discourse, they describe the imaginary subject in a classroom with weak classification and framing (-CF) as 'self-actualising'. This particular teacher drew heavily on metaphors that signalled interiority, where achievement was understood as simply the result of accessing the natural energy and collaborative synergy produced by the brain. In contrast, the imaginary subject produced in a classroom with strong classification and framing was described as an "other-realizing agent" (*ibid*, p. 117). The result, they argue, is that children develop (or in some cases fail to develop) representations and constructions not only of the curriculum and the form of knowledge legitimated in each context, "…but equally of the type of person who is legitimated by the particular form of pedagogic discourse in a classroom" (*ibid*, p. 124).

In his last book Bernstein (*ibid*, p. 125) briefly mentioned that it was Althusser's (1971) theory of the imaginary subject that best resonated with the problems he sought to address. We might reasonably infer from this, that the idea of pedagogic discourse projecting an imaginary subject that may or may not be successfully recognised and realised, is congruent with the idea of the individual becoming subjugated as they turn (or not) to the hail of the teacher.[44] Similarly, the concept clearly shares some features with Becker's (1952) more straightforward, though also more generalised, notion of the 'ideal client' which describes the behavioural benchmarks by which professionals judge and evaluate their clients, (in this case students) as more or less 'desirable' and rewarding to interact with. I will use this Bernsteinian concept throughout my findings chapters in attempting to demonstrate how the pedagogic discourse of the three sites projected in each case a different imaginary subject that was paradigmatic, both of the institution itself, and also of those Higher Education institutions to which its students 'typically' applied.

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43 Bernstein offers the example of the practice of 'carpentry' which, when recontextualised, becomes the 'imaginary' pedagogic discourse of 'woodwork'.

44 Of course Bernstein's under-theorisation of this term obscures a lack of resemblance in certain key respects to Althusser's concept (which was embedded in his theory of ideology and ideological state apparatuses).

4.6 Bernstein and Bourdieu: habitus, capital, field

Bernstein, at certain points positioned his work in contrast to 'Parisian' theories of reproduction, which, he argued, treat education as a pathological device that simply carries external power relations, where he was concerned with the internal logic of the carrier itself. For example, of Bourdieu's (1984) concept of 'habitus' he wrote that while it may be "…good to think with…it is not described with reference to the particular ordering principles or strategies, which give rise to the formation of a particular habitus" (*op cit,* p. 133). Although this is an insightful critique of Bourdieu's work, the concepts of habitus, capital and field *are* nevertheless very 'good to think with' and because I will refer to them later, it is worth discussing them briefly.[45]

Notwithstanding Bernstein's charge against habitus that "…there is no necessity between the concept or what counts as a realisation" (*ibid,* p. 133) there are few concepts which communicate so concisely how the collective becomes inscribed within the individual. As the "…generative unifying principle of all practices" (Bourdieu 1984, p. 173) habitus is perhaps most valuable insofar as it captures the less-than-conscious dispositions, formed in early years, that equip social actors with a range of 'generative' responses to situations they have not previously experienced. For Bourdieu, education enforces the distinctions of habitus learned first in the family, to further legitimate the unequal distribution of resources (economic/social/cultural capital) by unequally bestowing institutional capital (a sub-set of cultural capital) in the form of qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986). The theory strengthens the recognition that students with certain class-based dispositions have the ability to 'decode the code' of objectified cultural capital (books, paintings, instruments etc.) both within and outside the school environment, giving them a 'head start' (Moore, 2004). This ability can be seen as somewhat analogous to the Bernsteinian concepts of recognition and realisation rules, but for Bourdieu, these are described as social rules of the 'game' of life, and of particular fields, and amount to a tacit understanding of appropriate practices within which individuals act strategically over time to maximise their material and symbolic profit.[46]

The concept of field, while not systematically employed in this study, nevertheless illuminates the specific contexts in which agents struggle to maximise their position, enabling one to make sense of the strategic behaviours of schools, students and universities in self-marketing practices.

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45 I should confess at the start that by using Bernstein's theory as my primary analytical framework, I probably fall into the category of those who appropriate the concept of habitus to explain data rather than work with it, although I hope I don't do so solely for its 'gravitas' (Reay, 2004).

46 Bourdieu developed the concept of 'strategy' "...as a way of introducing agency...and to convey that action involves uncertainty even in normative situations" (Swartz, 1997, p. 99). Harker and May (1993) see this as a more flexible notion in comparison to what they perceive to be Bernstein's structuralist concept of 'rule'. For a thorough refutal of this accusation see Bernstein (2000, pp. 175-1990)

Bernstein (*op cit*, p. 188) acknowledged that he had "…gained much from reading Bourdieu; in particular, the concept of field", and this is visible in his own construct of 'arena' or 'field', which arises "…out of the construction, appropriation, defence, resistance and challenge of code modalities by social groups/social classes". The concept of field is pivotal to Bourdieu's relational model of social action, where individuals are defined by their position within a field's particular distribution of capital and where its structure is given by the relations between those positions (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The notion of field is particularly useful for considering the role that self-marketing plays in struggles over access to Higher Education where the sometimes less-than-conscious decisions made by individuals exclude certain possibilities and practices that are unfamiliar to the cultural groups to which they belong. The role of habitus in regulating access to certain kinds of universities is beginning to be well documented (McDonough, 1997; Reay et al., 2001, Reay 2001; Thomas, 2002; Reay, David & Ball, 2005). I hope to complement this work by demonstrating how the process of self-marketing in Higher Education application works alongside processes of choice as yet another moment when habitus and field (and sub-fields) interact to structure life chances. In particular, I will draw on the notion of 'institutional' or 'organisational' habitus (McDonough, 1997; Horvat & Antonio 1999; Reay, David & Ball, 2001), to demonstrate how the relative position of institutions (both schools and universities) in the educational field interacts with individual habitus in the process of self-marketing.[47]

Taken together then, these concepts provide a model which, in certain respects, complements Bernstein's theory of pedagogy. Bourdieu (1984, p. 101) brought all the elements of his theory together in the following formula "(Habitus X Capital) + Field=Practice", essentially arguing that social practice is the result of the activation of the habitus and its accompanying capitals in relation to a specific field. The production of legitimate texts as the product of the forms of consciousness shaped by specific classification and framing principles at the level of the home and school shares some features with these concepts of practice and habitus. In particular, the projection of an imaginary subject (produced by those principles) helps to ground the notion of an institutional habitus in relation to an empirically developed language of description.

4.7 Criticisms and limitations of this framework

The main charge levelled at both Bernstein and Bourdieu is that their theories lean toward structuralism and therefore an excess of determinism (Lyons, 1973; Jenkins, 1992; Harker & May,

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47 The concept of 'institutional habitus' can be seen as an extension of the work of Halsey, Heath and Ridge (1980) in identifying the school as having causal properties in relation to pupil's life chances, independent of family background.

1993). Both theorists explicitly defended their work against this reading, arguing instead that they had intentionally attempted to steer a route between overly agentic and overly structuralist explanations. Bourdieu, for example, was ever insistent that habitus solved the agency/determinism dilemma, by making sense of the reproduction of lifestyles and possibilities while also allowing a space for improvisation and change. However, as a result of his more highly clarified position at the level of macro-formal theory, Bourdieu did ultimately reduce all agency to the requirements of the economic by viewing habitus as always adjusted to the objective possibilities for those within certain class positions (Alexander, 1995; Moore, 2004a; 2004b).

Bernstein avoided becoming the target of such charges to the same extent partly as a result of his persistent reluctance to engage systematically with questions of ontology and epistemology in the way that Bourdieu did; instead leaving traces of the influence of a variety of disciplines and approaches in his work (Moore, 2004). As a result he has sometimes been read as underestimating the role of social action in favour of descriptions that identify deep social structures as the cause of inequality in education (Lyons, 1973; Cherkaoui, 1977), and also of rooting his concept of code (especially in its early application to language) in Piagetian genetic structuralism (Atkinson, 1985; Harker & May, 1993) - both of which readings he rejected. In chapter 10 of "Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity" (2000), he presented answers to these misreadings by identifying where, in his theory, individual agency and social action are foregrounded.

Within Bernstein's theory, then, there are two signficant sources of change that are themselves inseparable from the processes of pedagogic transmission. First, that in the acquisition of pedagogic codes that are designed to instill some form of order, the potential for disorder is also acquired; and second that these contexts of acquisition themselves represent "…the struggle to dominate and change codes" (*op cit*, p. 125). In the latter case, he argued, the very process of recontextualisation of discourses into pedagogic discourses "…points to both the openness of discourse and the attempts to close it by regulating its legitimate shaping and reading" (*ibid*, p. 125). But he also drew attention to the possibility of change within the core concepts of classification and framing, describing the boundaries sustained by classification as creating the 'voice' of a particular pedagogic identity, while framing relays the 'message'.[48] It then becomes possible that the outcomes of particular framing relations (message) can affect and change how power is distributed through classification, thereby creating the possibility of new and challenging voices.

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48 Bernstein (2000, p. 155) went on to suggest that his concepts of classification and framing themselves are an attempt to seek analysis at the level of both structure and social action, writing that: "The concept 'classification' is a structural concept. It points to that which is to be repeated. However, whether it is or not depends on the strength of the 'frames' at the interactional level". As such classification exists at a separate and irreducible level of social or cultural reality.

On another count, though, Bernstein does fall short. His often dense description, and what some see as his difficult language, lends itself to charges of "…highly abstract and largely unintelligible theorizing" (Musgrove, 1979, pp. 20-21), which do indeed sometimes need to be overcome if one is to grasp the richness of his contribution to ongoing debates. Bernstein employed rather abstract terms, sometimes inconsistently, and his choice of terminology (e.g. code, rule) did not always help to avoid misinterpretations, including strongly structuralist readings of his work. Finally, his persistent reluctance to engage systematically with key epistemological questions can make it difficult to understand the nature of what might be the deeper theoretical underpinnings of this theory, despite his providing clues here and there. Perhaps this is understandable in someone who rejected wider tendencies toward "epistemological botany" (*ibid*, p. 192) - though this was hardly a satisfactory defence.

4.8 Critical realism

Despite leaving many questions unanswered then, it is clear that Bernstein offered an analysis both at the level of structures that were conceived as (in some significant sense) real, irreducible and as partial determinants of action, and at the level of social action that had the potential to change those structures to some degree. In this section I will propose that 'critical realism' (also referred to as 'social realism') provides an ontological framework that is, to a considerable degree, compatible with the Bernsteinian theoretical framework presented thus far. Although my research was not systematically conceived or planned from an explicitly realist position, the theories discussed above (while predominantly structuralist), both claim to take account of and make theoretical space for actor agency, allowing research employing aspects of their theoretical approach to be broadly consistent with a realist ontology and epistemology.[49]

Realism rejects both constructionist relativism and positivist reductionism (Moore, 2009), the poles between which most social research positions itself. It does so, however, by sharing with interpretivism the importance of individual meaning and agency without ruling out the irredicible reality of social and cultural structures or the claim that both these structural levels possess distinctive causal properties.[50] This is made possible because of realist's belief in a stratified ontology, differentiating between the 'empirical', 'deep' and 'actual' levels of social reality. The

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49 Maton (2001) also argues that Bernstein's theory of the pedagogic device and Bourdieu's field theory provide frameworks that are particularly compatible with the kind of research programmes that realists are concerned with.

50 However causation is not based on the model of a regular succession of events. Instead structures contain causal powers that are emergent of their constituents, so causation cannot be proved by looking at repeated incidences and realists do not look for social laws (Sayer, 2000).

actual here refers to states of affairs that occur and exist independently of the empirical level; the empirical level consists of people's perceptions, observations and experiences of the actual level; and the deep level involves the underlying mechanisms or powers which generate these events, which we would recognise as structures (Bhaskar, 1978). These levels are not necessarily synchronised, and there is no direct or necessary correspondence between them - the result, realists argue, of the emergent nature of the social world. In other words, this world is an 'open system', generating "…situations in which the conjunction of two or more features or aspects gives rise to new phenomena, which have properties that are irreducible to those of their constituents, even when the latter are necessary for their existence" (Sayer, 2000, p. 12).[51] Furthermore, the emergent properties of underlying mechanisms may be unexercised, or unrealised as a result of the interactions of various contingencies (Archer, 1998). Consequently, while realists argue for a unity of method between the natural and social sciences they reject a Humean concept of causality and attribute reality to theoretical entities which are not immediately observable due to a lack of synchrony between the actual and the deep levels (Baert, 1998).

In contrast to the purely analytical distinction between agency and structure proposed by Giddens' structuration theory, realists identify structures as ontologically distinct at the deep level from the world of action. Sayer (*op cit*) therefore argues that we cannot collapse structures and actions into one another just because they produce one another. Nor do structure and action happen simultaneously. Structures, as partly constituted by actors in the past, pre-exist and therefore condition the behaviour of actors in the present. A number of realists have argued that it is therefore possible to maintain the distinction between structure and agency without denying the activity-dependent nature of structure (Archer, 1998; Collier, 1998; Popora, 1998), and Bhaskar (1989, p. 35) himself insists that people can be distinguished from societies because "…the properties possessed by social forms may be very different from those possessed by the individuals upon whose activity they depend".

In reflection on what constitutes a 'structure', Archer (1998) concedes that sets of interpretations, where they are relatively enduring, do have the same properties as structures, but resists the implication of concept-dependence, i.e. that people always understand/have knowledge of the concepts that structure their lives. Instead, in her recent work, Archer (2003), has proposed that it is agents' diagnoses of their situations, their interests and the 'projects' they design as appropriate for attaining those ends that are key means through which structures have constraining and/or enabling effects. It is, she contends, essential that agents exercise real degrees

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51 Archer (1998) argues that this is necessarily so, because of the innate creativity with which people negotiate and act upon the social environments they inhabit.

of self-determination in responding strategically to such constraints and enablements, and that the causal power of agency may operate even where agents' knowledge is mistaken (such knowledge being always potentially fallible). The point, however, is that "…agents enjoy their own powers of reflexive deliberation" (*ibid*, p. 7) and that when structure and agency are conflated (as in structuration theory) the differentiation between them that is necessary for genuine agential reflexivity toward society is lost. This development within realism begins to answer charges of an internal bias toward order rather than change, and of its ignorance of 'reflections of the second order' (Baert, 1998), i.e. people's ability to step back from structures and develop discursive knowledge about tacit rules and assumptions. So then, social realism, attempts (if still less than perfectly) to create real theoretical space for agency in which individual reflexivity has genuinely causal powers that are irreducible to social structures.

This theoretical position is therefore compatible with the more limited and less tightly and fully theorised framework I have employed in this study.[52] I cannot, of course, claim to have been seeking to fully trace, let alone account for, the generative mechanisms of students' self-marketing practices, but I have attempted to describe how, what I have conceptualised as institutionalised pedagogies of self-marketing in different kinds of schools and colleges are related to individual students' strategies of self-marketing, both of which are strategic responses to the dynamic field of Higher Education.

4.9 The theory and my research questions

In this chapter I have outlined the overarching theoretical framework and the main theoretical tools developed primarily by Bernstein that I will use to analyse and describe my research findings in subsequent chapters, and which will be complemented at various points by the Bourdieuian concepts of habitus, capital and field. Bernstein's basic theoretical stance as well as his specific conceptual language is sympathetic to my interests in the phenomenon of students' self-marketing because self-marketing can be conceptualised as an explicit exercise in recognition and realisation of a legitimate text. It concerns students' varying degrees of ability to both recognise the particular context of Higher Education in terms of what a given type of university 'wants' in its ideal candidate, and also their ability to realise that ideal through their Personal Statement, or through an interview. Furthermore, Bernstein's concern with the ways that certain code modalities privilege certain social groups on entry to the school is of relevance at this juncture of transition from school to university, where students once again carry their stock of

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52 Albeit less with Bourdieu, in whose theory structures still powerfully determine the possibilities of action by constraining choice through the creation of a habitus that tends to reproduce its own conditions of existence.

recognition and realisation rules into a new context to which they need to adapt. I have therefore designed my research questions explicitly in terms of this theory, in the hope of strengthening the clarity of my findings as a result.[53]

My main research question was therefore as follows:

In what ways are discourses of self-marketing (as an instance of generic modes) transmitted, recognised and realised in these three institutions, and why?

This main question was then divided into the following four sub-questions.

1. **How is the pedagogic discourse of self-marketing transmitted in each case?**
   - Where can one find self-marketing in the curriculum? Is it present in the instructional or regulative discourse, or both?
   - How is it classified and framed, and why?

2. **How is it recognised?**
   - What is the distribution of recognition rules within and across these schools in terms of self-marketing?
   - How, and how effectively, do students acquire the recognition rules that distinguish a self-marketing context?
   - Are the recognition rules developed further by the school? How?

3. **How is it realised?**
   - What is the distribution of realisation rules within and across these schools in terms of self-marketing?
   - How do students acquire the rules that enable them to realise a legitimate self-marketing text?
   - Are there common/different realisation strategies across the sites/subjects/contexts and destinations?

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53 I had initially wanted to consider how pedagogic discourses of self-marketing were 'recontextualised, transmitted, recognised and realised' in each case study, and wrote sub-questions to expound on each theme. However, it quickly became clear that I lacked the data to consider the *recontextualisation* of such discourses in any depth. Chapter two has, to some extent, already reflected upon the sites of production of such discourses (i.e. management consultancy and marketing theory), but I have not here sought to show empirically how such discourses were recontextualised into educational institutions as pedagogic discourses. This aspect of Bernstein's theory is therefore excluded from the final set of questions.

4. **How do these findings relate to other code modalities in the school?**
   - i.e. to what I shall term the *dominant* pedagogic discourse of each institution, and to the narrative that each institution projects about itself and its character.

Five
Methodology

5.1 Introduction

Chapter Four outlined the ontological and theoretical frameworks within which the research was framed. Grix (2004) suggests that the researcher should build upward from the foundational block of ontology to epistemology, methodology, methods and finally, sources. This chapter is structured in similar 'blocks' so that the reader can judge the logic of the decisions made and whether or not they add up to a coherent whole. That said, research is not in reality a linear process. Much of the tidying of experience and organising of the data into a narratable sequence was done after data collection, and by setting this chapter out sequentially I do not mean to suggest that these research decisions were actually made in chronological order. Rather than being a set of blocks built one upon the other, my experience was more of a conversation back and forth between different elements until something coherent began to take shape. It is likely that I would have designed a potentially quite different study had I known at the outset that I was going to be using a Bernsteinian theoretical framework to analyse my data. The substantive part of this chapter begins with a discussion of the merits and limitations of a qualitative multi-case study, and how this fits with the ontological and theoretical positions I have already outlined. It then describes my sampling procedures, the three-phase research design, my methods and analysis processes, before ending with a consideration of the different types of validity I have attempted to achieve.

5.2 Methodology: Multi-case Study

According to Bogden and Biklen (1992, p. 35), methodology is "…a more generic term for the general logic and theoretical perspectives for a research project" and in this case refers primarily

to the decision to undertake qualitative research. It is the research 'problem' that principally defines and shapes the research design and the tools used to collect data, and for me this was students' experiences of self-marketing, and the influence of their educational context on those experiences. I realised that this problem was conceived of and perceived through a 'qualitative' lens from the very beginning, as I sought to explore processes, practices, explanations, meanings and interactions.

My design drew on Stake's (2006) 'multi-case study' model, which comprises the broad phenomenon to be studied (the 'quintain'), and a set of chosen cases that, it is anticipated, will exhibit its manifestation. In this instance, the quintain was 16-19 year olds' self-marketing practices, and the cases were three contrasting institutions catering for such students. In order to make more sense of these practices it seemed most fruitful to study them in their primary context, and to attempt to examine the ways that discourses of self-marketing, particular to each context, were transmitted to the students.[54] From start to finish a case-quintain dialectic enabled various issues that had been generated from the literature review to be shaped by and shape the experience and activity of the field. In this sense my approach correlated with what Yin (1984) describes as an 'explanatory' case study, and what Merriam (1998) calls an 'evaluative' project; i.e. it was seeking to explain and evaluate rather than simply describe or narrate.

Each 'case' is "…a specific, a complex, functioning thing" (Stake, 1995, p. 2). It acts as an arena, host or fulcrum (or all three) in which different functions and relationships are brought together for study (Stake, 2006; Merriam, 1998). It is, *inter alia,* the ability of case studies to consider interactions and relationships within a bounded world that have made them particularly popular for researchers within fields such as the sociology of education. Foster et al. (2000) noted the popularity of case study rising as the attention of the research community moved from extra-school to intra-school processes as a primary source of social inequality in education. While Bernstein does not make such a claim, his theory is both interactive and oriented towards institutional processes and mechanisms, whilst also considering the movement of pedagogic discourse from beyond the school, through recontextualisation and transmission, to recognition and realisation through principles of classification and framing. Despite choosing to analyse my data through the lens of Bernsteinian theory *after* data collection, it therefore lends itself well to case study research.

The holistic nature of case study encourages the collection and analysis of multiple sources of data, and allowed me to triangulate my findings by using different tools for data collection, and

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54 It is not simply that a consideration of context illuminates the real focus of study by showing it in a different light, or that preserving multiple realities strengthens the validity of our understanding (Stake, 1995), but that these contexts proved to be essentially *productive* of different self-marketing practices.

by sampling different actors within the school system (see section 5.7). This triangulation not only increased the validity of my interpretations in what was a very new research area, but also served the fundamental hermeneutic process of considering the part and the whole in conjunction, (Gadamer, 1975). Furthermore, having identified self-marketing as a process, a multi-case study approach allowed me to have an ongoing presence within the schools in order to begin to recognise, observe, record and analyse a range of aspects of that process, and to refine my data collection methods in the light of my emerging findings. I therefore developed a phase model that allowed me to investigate the process of self-marketing, embedded in a particular school culture over a period of time (see section 5.4).

I chose to employ a *multi*-case study in order to, at least to a limited extent, move the research away from the particular and *toward* the general. I expected that by comparing the quintain in different settings and looking for correspondence and correlation (Stake, 2006), I would better understand the extent to which discourses of self-marketing within education differ, and the implications for students. Again, a Bernsteinian framework supported this agenda in providing theoretical tools through which I could describe the principles and codes existing in different cases. This focus on difference may move my study further away from the 'radical particularism' of many case studies, but still not satisfy those critics who accuse case study research of being 'logically weak' (Smith, 1991), failing to contribute to cumulative knowledge (Delamont & Atkinson, 1985), and making implicit and inappropriate use of values around concepts of 'inequality' and 'discrimination' (Foster et al., *op cit*). These concerns will be addressed in due course.

5.3 Sampling

In this section I will describe how I chose the age group I wanted to research, the cases themselves and the sub-sample of students I interviewed within each case-study site.

5.31 16-19 year olds

16-19 year olds are an appropriate sample for this study, partly because late adolescence is a fundamentally transitional period. Transitions away from full-time school education to some form of Further/Higher Education or employment are likely to be the time in which young people experience the need to present themselves positively in, what I shall term, a *professional*

context, through self-reflection, the production of a CV or Personal Statement, and interviews.[55] Alongside these social and institutional transitions, psychological research has shown late adolescence to be a significant time in the development of and integration of multiple social selves (Byrne & Shavelson, 1996; Waterman, 1988). Late adolescents are thought to be better able to integrate an increased number of different selves than younger adolescents (Harter & Monsour, 1992), and progression toward more abstract thinking during late adolescence makes it possible to resolve apparent contradictions within one's self-theory (Harter, Bresnick, Bouchey, & Whitesell, 1997). Arguably, the increasing stability, complexity and integration of the self-concept at this age makes it easier and more meaningful to conduct interesting, useful and valid semi-structured interviews requiring some reflection on self-identity and the process of projecting an 'ideal self'.

5.32 Schools and Colleges

I sought access to six schools/colleges with the hope of conducting ongoing research in three of them, and succeeded in this aim. Stake (2006) argues that in order to examine how the quintain performs in different environments, cases in both typical and atypical settings should be selected. For this reason I chose to draw a 'purposive' sample of cases; i.e. cases that were not 'typical', but that presented an opportunity to better understand self-marketing through a focus on contrasting cases. By selecting cases in or close to the city where I lived, I could be said to have employed 'convenience sampling'. However, I did not *simply* choose the most convenient, but those that were most suited to my interests. Below I have rated the factors that directed this process, from my perception of the order of their importance:

1. School with sixth-form or college for 16-19 year olds
2. Co-educational
3. Within or close to the city
4. Interesting for the purposes of the study
5. Fairly typical of the indigenous population of the city[56]
6. Fairly typical of their kind[57]

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55 By 'professional', I simply mean to draw a contrast with students' personal lives

56 E.g. I rejected sixth-form colleges that were solely for foreign students and looked for co-ed schools etc.

57 Schofield (2000, p. 78) acknowledges that it is highly unlikely for a case-study researcher to find cases that are typical on every dimension, and that claiming typicality is not a 'quick-fix' for the perceived problem of generalisability. However 'as a guiding principle designed to increase the potential applicability of research' she finds it useful.

7. Contributing to the overall balanced final set of schools in terms of difference/similarity/ interesting features[58]

8. Ease of access

Using these criteria, I used education 'league tables', local government information and school websites to draw up a shortlist of possible sites and then drew on Ball's (1997) typology of 'local', 'cosmopolitan' and 'independent' schools to try and find a balanced set of cases.[59] By drawing on performance tables, Ofsted reports and other online information I identified site A as 'independent', B as 'cosmopolitan', and C and D as 'local'. Site E was not clearly local or cosmopolitan, but was chosen because its results were average for the area and it had a developed programme of guidance for students applying to Higher Education. Site F was chosen because of its unique ethos, which could have proved to be a particularly interesting context in which to study self-marketing.

The initial sample was therefore as follows:

Table 5.1 Initial sample of cases

A	High-performing 'Independent' school
B	High-performing 'Cosmopolitan' state-funded sixth-form college
C	Low-performing 'Local' comprehensive
D	'Local' Further Education college
E	Averagely performing comprehensive school with sixth-form
F	Independent Steiner school with sixth-form

After writing to all six, the final sample comprised sites A, D and E (see section 5.6 for more details). I have created pseudonyms for these sites, which will henceforth be referred to as a) The Grange d) Eastern Community College (ECC) and e) Leabury High.

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58 "Even for collective case studies, selection by sampling of attributes should not be the highest priority. Balance and variety are important: opportunity to learn is of highest importance" (Stake, 1995, p. 6)

59 This was in no way a precise science. I initially classified one school that was 24th out of 27 schools for A' Level results in the performance tables as 'local' (Site E), but on further reflection decided that it did not really fit Ball's description.

Stake (*op cit*, p. 23) suggests that there are generally three main criteria for selecting cases. A) is the case relevant to the quintain? B) do the cases provide diversity across contexts? And c) do the cases provide good opportunities to learn about both complexity and contexts? I would suggest that by choosing three different sorts of educational contexts for 16-19 year olds that are nonetheless familiar as 'types' of school or college, these questions were addressed satisfactorily.

5.33 Individual sub-sample

Having identified my three cases, I then worked with an initial contact at each site to locate a sub-sample of 16-19 year olds to observe and interview over the course of the year. For Bogden and Biklen (*op cit*, p. 60) the case study researcher has to narrow the subject matter to make the research manageable, and so although detaching a piece of the whole may distort understanding, the researcher therefore "…attempts to choose a piece that is a naturally existing unit" i.e. one that the participants themselves recognise as having a distinct identity. An obvious strategy was therefore to work with one tutor group in each institution - for five reasons. Firstly, tutor groups are often created alphabetically, thus providing a sub-sample that contained a fairly even gender mix; an example of what Creswell (1998) calls a 'random purposeful' sample, enhancing validity when the potential purposeful sample is too large. Secondly, tutor groups are permanent elements of the administrative system thus allowing ease of access to the same groups over a long period of time. Thirdly, it enabled me to access a tutor who knew each student well and was guiding them through the process of applying to university. Fourthly, tutor groups were appropriately sized for my requirement of interviewing no fewer than ten and no more than 20 students at each site; and fifthly, working with tutor groups enabled me to observe the students interacting with other another in a 'natural' and ongoing social environment. Finally, in order to more adequately answer my research questions about the sites themselves, I also interviewed a number of members of staff. In every case I interviewed the tutor, and in two of the sites I also interviewed heads and deputy heads of the sixth-form as well as various other members of staff who were either directly involved in the UCAS process, or who could help me understand the case better. This was in some cases 'chain sampling' in that one member of staff would often advise me on who else I should interview.

5.4 Research Design

My fieldwork comprised three phases, each with a distinct focus. In the first phase I attended the three different sites for a fortnight each before returning to the first site to begin the second

phase and so on, until I had spent about six weeks at each of the sites over the course of one calendar year (see Figure 5.1). The intention was that with each successive circuit, the research problem would come into sharper focus through comparison between sites and the distance between visits. Much like focusing a camera, I gradually moved from viewing the context the object was in, to the object itself. However, having pre-identified my interest in the process of students' self-marketing, I cannot claim to have engaged in the kind of 'progressive focusing' endorsed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), as part of the generation of 'grounded theory', or the 'open phase' without selectivity or judgement that Nisbet and Watt (1984) recommend at the beginning of any research project.

Rather this approach served four purposes:

1. It allowed me to sample the sites across an entire year and witness the different elements of the annual cycle in terms of the UCAS process.
2. I was able to conduct multiple interviews with the same students, each with different themes. By leaving and returning, these interviews were more discrete and less predictable to the students than if they had occurred in one continuous six week cycle.
3. It lightened the burden for those various staff who were assisting me at each site.
4. It gave me time to reflect on what I had seen, to transcribe interviews and consider how best to approach the next phase.

The main disadvantage of designing my research this way was that I did not benefit from the more gradual accumulation of trust and openness that would probably have occurred in one site over six weeks. Nevertheless, to study self-marketing as a process required considering it over a longer period of time, rather than simply taking a snapshot, as some quantitative research is wont to do. Paying attention to where a phenomenon is in its life cycle does not guarantee that one can predict how it will evolve, but it is easier to avoid making possibly false extrapolations from one point in time to another, when the same conclusions may not apply (Schofield, 2002). Schools are different at the start of the year than at the end, so by spreading my enquiry over a longer period in each site, I hoped to get a more balanced view of each case (Bogden & Biklen, *op cit*).

Figure 5.1: Three-phase model of multi-case study

The Grange

ECC

Leabury High

Phase 1

Phase 2

Phase 3

The time in-between visits to the three sites was spent transcribing, reading and preparing for the subsequent phase
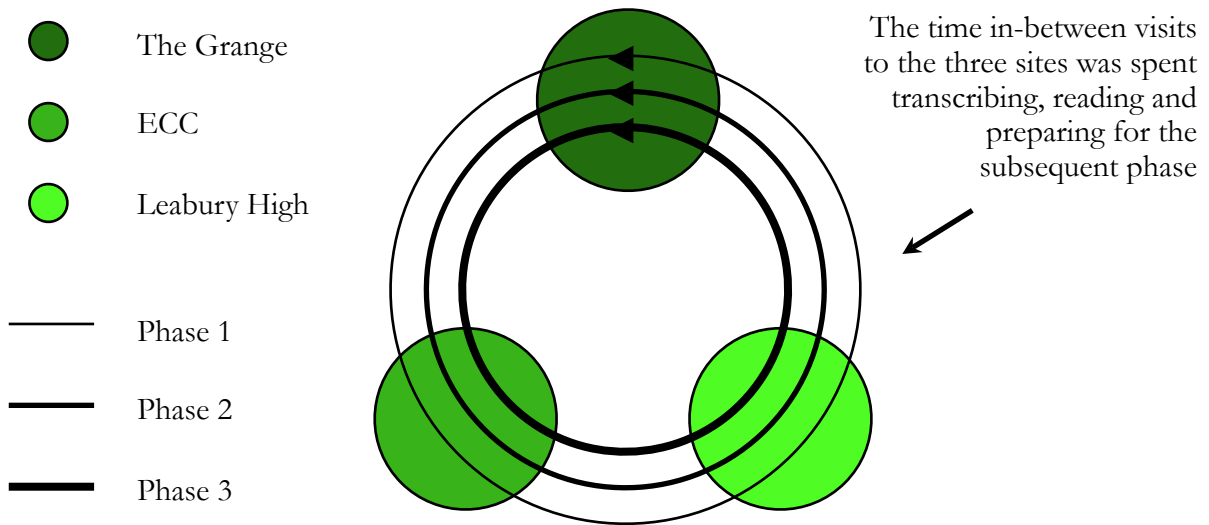
5.41 Phases

My aim was to interview the students in each tutor group once in every phase i.e. three times over one year, whilst gathering further data in the form of staff interviews, observation, field notes and documents.

Table 5.2: Phases of research

	Purpose	Interviews	Interview focus
Phase 1	• Contextual information on the students and school	• Students • Staff	• Student and school context/background
Phase 2	• Deeper understanding of school and students • Observation of application process	• Students • Staff	• Attitude and identity
Phase 3	• Understanding perceptions and practices of self-marketing	• Students • Form tutors	• Self-marketing

5.42 Timeline of Research

I conducted my research between January 2007 and January 2008. As shown in Table 5.3, access to the schools could not always be arranged in the order I desired. This was particularly the case at ECC, where I was given access to a group who were in their final year, meaning that I could only interview them over two phases rather than three.[60]

Table 5.3 Research timeline

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
G	■					■					■		
ECC		■				■							
LH			■				■						■

5.5 Methods

Of the many tried and tested research designs, case study usually involves the widest array of data collection methods as the researcher attempts to build a relatively in-depth picture of the case (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 2000). Case study methodology is eclectic, and will often make use of diverse techniques and procedures including observation (participant and non-participant), interviews (conducted with varying degrees of structure), audio-visual and/or audio recordings, field note taking and document collection (Adelman, Kemmis, & Jenkins, 1980).[61] Alasuutari (1995) makes a useful distinction between 'testimonies' about the subject of study, which may include the habits or beliefs of a community, and 'indicators', which are indirect evidence and often naturally occurring data. Testimony is foregrounded in my study, through the use of interviews, while indicators (including observation and document analysis) further contextualised and deepened my understanding of each case.

In Figure 5.2 these different methods are presented as interlocking - not simply because they were not always discrete (i.e. observation continued during interview, and documents were used

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60 Despite this set-back I was still able to ask the ECC students all my questions by making the second interview longer

61 Statistics and numerical data are relatively rarely used (Cohen et al., 2000), despite the increasing vogue for 'mixed methods' research, which can combine case study and quantitative approaches in illuminating ways.

as the prompts for interview) - but because the data generated from them came together to present a fuller understanding of the research problem. The strongest findings, which were confirmed by all three methods, would be represented by the centre of the diagram where the three circles overlap.

Figure 5.2: Methods
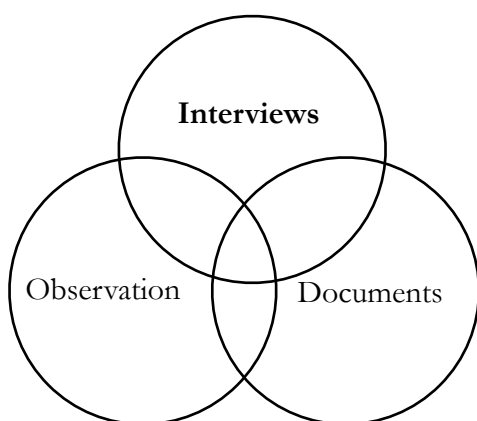
5.51 Interviews

For Stake (1995), case study should aspire to be non-interventive and empathic, requiring the interviewer to disturb the normal activity of the case as little as possible and ideally not to interview at all. But if necessary, he writes, "…an interview should be less about the interviewee than about the case" (*ibid*, p. 31). However, my interviews were less about each case than about the quintain - self-marketing. Since I was not able to directly witness students marketing themselves to universities or employers, I had to access these experiences through students' accounts of them. Interviews were therefore judged to be the most appropriate tool for gaining a more in-depth understanding of their experience, feelings, attitudes, beliefs and shared meanings, as well as making sense of other data, such as their Personal Statements (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). Having decided to research in three different sites, I also needed a fairly quick and easily comparable method of data collection, and semi-structured interviews are often used within multi-case studies for this reason (Hannerz, 2003).

Attempts to categorise and describe different kinds of interview can yield upward of fourteen types (Cohen et al., *op cit*), and there are undoubtedly more that could be distinguished. I found myself drawn to a 'semi-structured interview format' as a useful compromise between the common structure that enables comparison, and the situational flexibility, which can yield greater insight (Bodgan & Biklen, 1992). The clear advantage of this method was that, while I worked

from a set of identical questions, I retained control over how and if I choose to ask them, and how I followed them up with additional questions and prompts. This format put greater pressure on me as the researcher to adapt the questions and their order and to respond sensitively to verbal and non-verbal feedback, but often yielded unique and interesting data. The types of questions themselves varied depending on the particular purpose of the research phase. In phases one and three the questions were open-ended in an attempt to elicit as much information as possible in the interviewee's own words, and in the hope that a more conversational style would develop a degree of rapport. In phase two I used a Likert scale, a set of verbal items that the interviewee responded to by indicating degrees of agreement.

I conducted the interviews in various different locations around the sites. Often I would ask the interviewee where they would like to sit and if they had no preference would suggest somewhere myself. My priorities were their comfort and privacy, and the familiar and 'natural' features of the space, which were sometimes played off against each other.[62] Finally, each interview was recorded on an MP3 player with the interviewee's consent for the purpose of more accurate transcriptions.

5.52 Designing the interview schedules

The content of the interview schedules progressed as follows:

Phase 1: Questions about context
Phase 2: Questions about attitude and identity
Phase 3: Questions about self-marketing

Phase 1: Questions about context

The aim of this phase was to build up an initial picture of the student's lifestyle, family background and orientation to education. This interview provided some of the context within which later remarks could be understood and referenced, as well as a basis for comparison between the types of students that were to be found in the three different sites. The questions can be grouped in the following categories (see Appendix 2):

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62 While classrooms and offices were private and silent they were not always conducive to easy conversation. On the other hand cafes, common rooms and picnic areas were the students' domain, but while they were relaxed we were more likely to be exposed to their peers in a noisy public place. Tutors and staff were therefore much easier to interview in their teaching rooms or offices.

- *Educational background*: orientation to study, educational choices, plans for university, information about the sixth-form/college, extra-curricular activities
- *Identity*: focused mainly on adjectives the students chose to describe themselves
- *Lifestyle*: hobbies, use of media and technology, alcohol and drugs, clothing, and part-time work
- *Family background*: parents' occupation and relationship to education

Phase 2: Questions of attitude and identity

The second phase consisted of a questionnaire of 30 likert items to which the students were asked to respond (see Appendix 3). These statements were grouped into the following categories:

- *Social positioning*: social confidence, relationship to family
- *Orientation to school*: school discipline and culture, knowledge, teachers
- *Position in relation to future employment/imagined futures*: ambition, self-confidence
- *Experiences of and feelings about self-marketing*

This questionnaire format was chosen primarily in order to make possible a more direct comparison between the attitudes and orientations of the different students. I created and refined my list of statements used in the questionnaire after considering the literature I had read, and what it suggested about the kinds of attitudes that might accompany particular orientations to self-marketing. So, for example, I suspected that competitive, popular people might be more comfortable in self-marketing scenarios than shy and reclusive people (Snyder & Gangestad, 2000). While the sample remained too small for a valid comparative statistical analysis, I was looking for a different way to capture some of the more specific attitudes to work, education and self that I suspected might be related to the practice of self-marketing. I had intended to analyse these as written questionnaire responses, but in practice I asked them the questions orally and they responded in kind. Furthermore I asked them to elaborate on their answers so that I could understand their reasoning. When I began analysing it became clear that this extra contextual information would make it hard, as well as illegitimate, to compare the responses in any other way than coding them as qualitative data, despite the original format of the questions.

Phase 3: Questions about self-marketing

The final phase dealt directly with the 'quintain' of self-marketing. To return to my definition, self-marketing is "*The process of creating professional projections of an ideal self, which constitute a technology*

of 'career' progression for the individual and are associated with some form of exchange". I investigated this process in this third interview in three ways

- Questions about writing the Personal Statement, using the student's statement itself as a prompt
- Questions about the concepts of 'being yourself', authenticity, and 'making a good impression'
- A discussion of the concept of selling or marketing yourself, including their own definitions, experiences and feelings

For the interview schedule, see Appendix 4.

5.53 Number of interviews

Unsurprisingly I conducted most interviews during the first phase. In the second and third phases I was not always able to contact or meet all the students I had interviewed in the first phase, which meant that I had 'lost' eleven students in all by phase three.

Table 5.4: Interviews with students

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
The Grange	17	14	14
ECC	15	12	12
Leabury High	15	11	10
Total	**47**	**37**	**36**

5.54 Observation

Although interviewing was my primary method of data collection, almost everything else I did whilst in the field was observation in that I was attempting to relate everything I was seeing, hearing and experiencing to my research problem and record that which I thought was relevant. A distinction is often made between participant and non-participant observers (Junker, 1960), which I found hard to recognise in my own research. My 'otherness' as a researcher was obvious; it was not a recogniseable or familiar role to those in schools and so I could not fully 'participate'

in its activities and was always, to some degree, at a distance. Likewise a non-participant irreversibly changes any system's dynamics, whether they choose to speak or remain silent. My presence as a researcher was evident in different ways: sometimes silently at the back of a room, sometimes in conversation and joining in jokes, eating cake around a table in tutor times, sometimes lunching with the staff, sometimes chatting with parents. I did, in each moment, what intuitively felt possible and would enable me to best understand what was happening around me. My experience reflected Creswell's (1998) description of moving from being an outsider initially, to becoming more of an insider over time - though this was necessarily limited by the relatively brief period I was able to spend in each school.

Observation is a particularly useful form of data collection because it enables the researcher to witness, first-hand, things that they might not be told by participants, and to put into context what they learn about in interview - particularly important for case-study research. Stake (1995) writes that we choose opportunities for observation identified partly by issues which help us to make a better acquaintance with the case. I had planned to observe tutor times, lessons, sixth-form common rooms, staff rooms and assemblies, to help me better understand the 'pedagogic identity' of these sites, but I also took advantage of opportunities to focus on issues of particular interest to my research questions - which may well be described as 'semi-structured observation' (Cohen et al., *op cit*). I began by taking field notes in a very structured way using a pro-forma developed by Bogdan and Biklen (*op cit*), whereby descriptive notes are recorded on one side of A4 paper, and reflective (or analytical) notes on the other. This was useful in forcing me to distinguish between the unfolding events as I witnessed them and my thoughts and questions concerning them. However I did not sustain this throughout the whole period, and often resorted to conflating the events and my thoughts to save time. Whether 'participating' or not, I always recorded my observations as close to the event as I could in order to describe events as accurately as possible.

5.55 Document Analysis

Finally, I gathered various kinds of documents to help me understand both the cases themselves, and the students. Documents proved to be a useful way of investigating the most powerful discourses at play in these institutions and affecting individuals, both through what they say and also what they do *not* say. As published artifacts they demonstrate the ways that language, structure and evidence have been used to create arguments (Rapley, 2008).

The most important type of document that I collected and analysed was, of course, the students' Personal Statement, an excellent 'data-near device' insofar as it constitutes a semi-standardised tool of self-promotion (by virtue of its format and uses) and a physical manifestation of self-marketing. For this task I drew on the framework of discourse analysis, developed by Fairclough (1992) as an analytical methodology, and will explain this further in Chapter Nine. I also collected a range of other documentary data: promotional literature about the cases themselves (both physical brochures and text on their websites); copies of lesson plans related to applying for jobs; plans and timetables for the UCAS process; and various other miscellaneous documents that helped me to understand the school (timetables, personal development plans, papers handed out during tutor time etc.). These kinds of texts helped me to understand the way the school projected itself, as well as its position in the local educational market place.

5.56 Data

Within this study, *foregrounded* data was that which dealt directly with the processes of self-marketing and included sections of the second and third student interviews and observations of the school and colleges coaching their students about marketing themselves to universities. The length of the interviews ranged from eleven minutes to one hour depending on how responsive and forthcoming the students were, with the average duration being around twenty-five minutes.[63]

Table 5.5 Data generated

	Interviews	Observations	Documents
The Grange	14 students 3 x half an hour Tutor 2 x half an hour Head of sixth-form Deputy Head of sixth Deputy Head of school Personal Statement coach Receptionist Total interviews: 59 Total recorded hours: 31 hours, 27 minutes	Tutor times Lessons UCAS afternoon School assemblies Sixth-form common room Higher education evening Interview training day Parents evening Staff room School walk	14 students' Personal Statements UCAS advice documents Personal development profile forms School publicity

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63 The recorded hours vary between sites, in part, because some non-interview activities were sometimes also recorded, such as tutor times.

	Interviews	Observations	Documents
ECC	12 students 2 x half an hour Tutor College Chaplain 2 x course coordinator Student Services Learning Support Assistant	Tutor times One-on-one tutoring Working sessions Lunch and coffee breaks College open day Interview training session College walk	8 students' Personal Statements UCAS advice documents College publicity Lesson plans for CV writing
	Total interviews: 34 Total recorded hours: 18 hours, 50 minutes		
Leabury High	12 students 3 x half an hour Tutor Head of sixth Deputy Head of sixth UCAS Coordinator Work related learning Coordinator Careers Advisor History Teacher	Tutor times Lessons Sixth-form common room Sixth-Form assemblies Enterprise day Sixth-form results day Staff room School walk	12 students' Personal Statements
	Total interviews: 47 Total recorded hours: 20 hours, 35 minutes		

5.6 Access

I contacted the heads or principals of each of the sites with a letter of introduction and an outline of my research design (see Appendix 5). The letter introduced the topic of investigation as self-presentation, rather than self-marketing, since I suspected that the latter might be perceived as indicating that I held a critical attitude to these aspects of the school's activities.[64] I then followed these letters up with a phone call in the hope of arranging visits to the schools. In most cases, the heads passed these initial enquiries on to a more appropriate member of staff, whether the head of sixth-form or tutor, who then contacted me to arrange a discussion or dates for the first phase. It took approximately six weeks to settle which sites would be suitable and

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64 Delamont (2002) warns that specifying precisely what the researcher wants to do can create unhelpful expectations, and in this respect I wanted to wait until later in the study to talk in the language of self-marketing. However I am confident that staff at each site understood the basic aims and purposes of my study.

would allow me access, and by December 2006, three sites had turned down the approach and three had accepted.

5.7 Validity

Maxwell (1992) argues that validity is not an inherent *property* of a particular method, but pertains to the data, accounts, or conclusions reached by using that particular method in a particular context for a particular purpose. The very use of terms like 'reliability' and 'validity' is indicative of a general appropriation of the terminology of experimental designs within qualitative research, and so a number of commentators on methodology argue that it is important that concepts of validity are faithful to and evaluated in terms of the traditions in which they are embedded. For example, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that notions of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability should replace terms like replicability and generalisability for those undertaking qualitative research.

Notwithstanding its unique purpose, case study still suffers, more than most research designs perhaps, from its susceptibility to invalidity. The results of case studies are not easily or reliably cross-referenced so may be selective, personal and subjective and prone to problems of interpretive and observer bias (Nisbet & Watt, 1984). In an effort to address this, practitioners have identified almost as many types of validity as there are research tools (Cohen et al., *op cit*).[65] In this section I will consider both *external* validity (in terms of the possibility of 'generalising' from case study) and *internal* validity (that the findings were appropriately supported by data) and I will also present the ways in which I triangulated my findings in response to these concerns.

5.71 External validity

Some researchers entirely reject generalisation as a goal for the qualitative or interpretive researcher (e.g. Denzin, 1983). Schofield (2002) reminds us of the historical association of qualitative research and thick description with certain approaches within cultural anthropology and its emphasis on describing exotic cultures to the exclusion of any concern with external validity or general laws. However, Dressman (*op cit*) takes issue with the way in which many case study researchers deny the goal of generalisability but then present a great deal of taken-for-

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65 At an early stage, where I did not know the appropriate labels for certain of these approaches I was nonetheless always considering how my decisions could strengthen or weaken my ability to make claims about what I had found, and these developing decisions are described throughout this section.

granted knowledge in terms of the categories they use (e.g. social, racial etc.) or through the unreflective use of their own experience and background, to interpret their data. Such practices, he argues, amount to 'hidden generalities' that covertly instruct the reader to produce their own generalities within the situations they are describing. Where case study researchers have aimed for 'naturalistic generalisation' (Stake, 1980), there have been criticisms that its focus on the tacit, experiential and private, confuses the way in which a study should be reported to a lay audience, with the methodological principles for deriving knowledge, and fails to develop explicit and formal analysis (Delamont & Atkinson, 1985). Dressman concludes that "…although it is true that findings from a single case cannot and should not be generalised to an entire population or range of situations, it is equally true that without comparison and contrast to other cases and to generalities about these cases, little meaning could be taken from a single study" (*ibid*, p. 155).

What kind of external validity is it reasonable to expect case studies to achieve then? Schofield (2002) argues that while producing universal laws is not a useful or defensible goal for qualitative research, this does not amount to a rejection of the idea that studies in one situation can speak to or help form a basis for judgment about other situations. Cohen et al. (*op cit*), suggest that comparisons/generalisations can be drawn, with some degree of validity, from a single instance and applied to the class of instances it represents, while Bassey (1999) defends the 'fuzzy generalisations' that qualitative research produces, as long as they are supported by a detailed account of how they were arrived at. It is usually the fact that case studies rely on 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) in order to support such a process, but in this study it is the use of a well-established theoretical framework with its internal language of description that, I hope, will elevate the applicability of the research from the particular toward the general. The reader will hopefully be able to recognise these sites through description of the principles of classification and framing that comprise their dominant pedagogic codes, while the use of this 'imported' conceptual framework will, I hope, help to make this study a stronger contribution to knowledge and research in this area. In the current policy landscape it may actually be preferable to compare cases that represent various 'positions' or 'identities' in the local educational market place - precisely in order to generate differences and highlight uniqueness. Indeed Schofield (2002) suggests that findings emerging from a study of several very heterogeneous sites may well prove more robust and useful for studying other sites, than a study of similar sites.

In summary then, a *strong* concern with generalisability obscures the primary rationale for multi-case study, which is to seek to understand an issue better by seeking what is similar and different about the cases under scrutiny (Stake, 2006). This, however, does not invalidate all attempts at indicating issues where further research of a similar kind may provide supporting evidence for the interpretations offered.

5.72 Internal validity

Construct validity

This describes the degree to which the constructs I used in my interviews and analysis were understood and shared by participants, and accurate enough to avoid misunderstanding, misinterpretation and vagueness (Maxwell, 1992; Evans, 2003). Self-marketing was not always a clearly defined construct throughout the study, but it was, even at the outset, developed *enough* to have shaped my expectations of what 'counted' as self-marketing (i.e. both process and product). However this was not developed in detail until I had immersed myself in the case. I was also curious about the *students'* interpretations of the term, so asked them what they thought it meant to 'market yourself' (see Appendix 4). Most of my interview schedule was, in terms of generating categories, rooted in a wide literature review, in order to improve construct validity (Cohen et al., *op cit*), and where I was, in the event and in the light of the data, not happy with the validity of some of my constructs (e.g. authenticity) I did not employ these terms in organising and presenting my findings.

Descriptive Validity

In order to ensure that my study had adequate descriptive validity, i.e. that my data were reliably describing what people actually said and did (Maxwell, 1992), I took care to make field notes and observations as close to the time of occurrence as possible (see section 5.54). I would often ask a participant to expand when their meaning was unclear, or would rephrase their answer and reply 'Is this what you mean?', to test my initial interpretation of what they were saying. Interviews were also audio-recorded and fully transcribed to ensure that data were, in these respects, accurate.

Interpretive validity

Beyond this I needed to make sure that my interpretations had 'fidelity' to those of the researched - in other words 'interpretive validity', (Maxwell, 1992; Jones, 1995). My three-phase research design allowed me to have relatively prolonged engagement in the field (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), in the hope that researching over different moments in the year would reduce the possibility of gaining only superficial or time-limited impressions of the meanings and issues of the case. While I was not seeking to entirely privilege the interpretations of the researched over the analytical categories I developed from other sources as a researcher, I tried wherever possible to interpret and describe by reference to the participants' own words. Ideally I would have also

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attempted to check my interpretations with the participants of the research. However the challenge of contacting students who were no longer at the institutions themselves was ultimately prohibitive of this ideal, as was a lack of time toward the end of the study.[66]

5.73 Validity and the role of the researcher

Case study research can be particularly prone to bias because of its reliance on the researcher themselves as the primary research 'instrument'. Various commentators have criticised case study researchers for avoiding questions of general or external validity by not being sufficiently explicit about their own assumptions and values (Dressman, *op cit*; Foster et al., *op cit*). My own conviction is that it is the researcher's responsibility to discipline these value-driven processes as far as possible, both self-consciously and with the help of others (both participants and peers), and then to be as transparent as possible in describing the results - including being candid about their own failures and the limitations of the methods employed. Accordingly, I sought to ensure that my presence would not threaten the ecological validity of the study in unhelpful ways, while recognising that the well-documented 'Hawthorne effect' was not only likely, but was inevitable as a key feature of social life. Bogden and Biklen (*op cit*) suggest that, in fact, participants reaction to outsiders often reveals as much as their reactions to insiders. So then, "…being a clean slate is neither possible nor desirable. The goal is to become more reflexive and conscious of how who you are may shape and enrich what you do, not to eliminate it" (*ibid*, 1992, p. 38).

I noticed three main ways in which the roles I assumed in each setting (and therefore the data that were generated) were affected by the context I was in. Firstly, my role was heavily mediated by the expectations of the tutors. At the Grange, I was intentionally integrated into the life of the tutor group, while, in contrast, tutors at the other institutions were pleasant but generally left me to my own devices. Secondly, my role was mediated by the responses of the students themselves, which varied depending on the way I had been introduced by the tutor, my first contact with them, and their own readings of my role and intentions. In this last respect there was significant ambiguity. I was not a teacher, nor a student but a temporary fixture who was often hanging around and not fully expressing her intentions or expectations while doing so.[67] And third, my role (and interpretations of it) was influenced by the structure of various features peculiar to each of the three main sites. I spent my time moving between the common rooms and staff rooms at the Grange and Leabury High as I searched for potential interviewees, and found

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66 Nevertheless, students and staff who had asked to see the research when it was finished were all sent a pdf copy of the final thesis.

67 Dressing like the students when I went into the schools was a basic strategy for establishing rapport and trust. In the case of the Grange, this meant smart/business, at Leabury High it was smart/casual, while at ECC it was creative/casual.

myself more warmly received by the staff. Both student common rooms were the territory of the sixth-formers, and had their own social rules which did not always make it easy for a researcher.[68] In contrast my sample group at ECC spent entire days in one of the art rooms, and lacked any territory that was exclusively theirs. As a result I felt comfortable to sit at a table and make notes on my laptop while joining in with conversation where I could.

Interviewing raises a number of concerns in this respect and requires the researcher to be aware of the potential bias that may come through consciously or unconsciously seeking or eliciting answers that support her preconceived notions, or the danger of seeing the respondent in her own image (Cohen et al., *op cit*). There are, as with every other aspect of social life, situations in which either party may have more or less power relative to the other. Race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social class and age are all likely to exert influence over the course of an interview. Certainly I noticed my, and my interviewees', behaviour shifting depending on 'who they were' or were perceived to be by others in relation to me. For example I was interviewing one young man at the Grange when he began laughing and I turned around to discover a group of his friends behind a glass door behind me making sexual gestures at us. In contrast there were some very shy and insecure young people who may have felt more powerless during our interview and the best I could do in these situations was to attempt to sensitively give them as much confidence and power as possible. On the whole, I attempted to reduce bias by making myself aware of some of the inevitable features of interviews that may affect both the researcher and the researched - including role-playing, stereotyping, perceptions of the situation and understanding of the issues raised, etc. (Cohen et al., *ibid*).

But it was perhaps the substantive subject of my study that could have affected my findings most significantly. It proved quite challenging to elicit students' understandings and orientations toward self-marketing without affecting their relationship to it. For example, had I asked a student if they felt under pressure to do lots of extra-curricular activities for their Personal Statement, I might have risked positioning them as deficient and affecting their preparation. Likewise, to discuss a students' Personal Statement with them from a critical angle while it was still in its draft form, could have caused them to reflect in such a way as to change their attitude toward their own self-presentation. For this reason it was necessary to consider both the timing of certain questions, and creative ways to access their attitudes and orientations without risking the Hawthorne affect too much. My three-phase model addressed this, with the Personal Statement only being discussed after it had been submitted.

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68 For example the students had arranged the chairs, chosen the music that was playing, and to some extent decorated the walls. Different groups of friends tended to claim sections of the room, so that a new person would always be unsure of where it was acceptable to sit. Finally as long as it wasn't raucous, the room was devoid of teachers, making me an anomaly

5.74 Triangulation as a response

While the case study method faces validity challenges with regard to the possibility of researcher bias, it often compensates by making use of different kinds of triangulation (Adelman et al., *op cit*). Most commonly this term refers to the practice of using two or more sources of data in order to increase confidence that the analysis has not been skewed by only using one instrument. However my research design incorporated various other kinds of triangulation. For example, I was able to compare:

- Observational data with interview data and documents (*methodological triangulation*)
- Opinions and attitudes toward self-presentation at different points in time (*diachronic triangulation*)
- Opinions and attitudes from different individuals and points of view (students and staff)
- Levels of data i.e. individual, group, institution (*combined levels of triangulation*)
- Cases themselves (*space triangulation)*

(Denzin 1970 cited in Cohen et al., *op cit*)

Finally, invalidity can emerge at the reporting stage as well. In presenting my findings I sought to contextualise the 'quintain' through extensive consideration of the pedagogic codes operating in each site. But with my reliance on interview data, the challenge was to also describe the individuals whose views are presented, in order to allow the multiple voices and perspectives of those individuals to be contextualised (Creswell, 1998), and to avoid the atomisation that can otherwise accompany interview quotations. Section 5.82 will outline how I addressed this.

5.8 Data analysis

I gathered a variety of data using a number of different methods and, accordingly, I employed various analytical tools that were aligned with the overall approach of a qualitative case-study method. The process of analysis involved a dialectic between *a priori* theory and literature that had shaped the research agenda, and the data that then, in some respects, reshaped these assumptions. In this sense it made use of both inductive and deductive reasoning. I concur with Dressman (*op cit*) that data do not 'emerge' from findings, but are brought out by the particular lens of the researcher. This 'discursive gap' between the language of theory and the empirical language of description potentially allows each to be modified in light of the other (Bernstein, 1996).

5.81 Transcribing and coding

I fully transcribed all the interviews, and typed up all the Personal Statements and field notes. Although transcripts are by their nature translations - "…always selective and always partial" - they allowed me to recall far more, and more accurately than would otherwise have been possible (Rapley, *op cit*, p. 51). I used Atlas.ti software, designed for qualitative analysis, which was the most flexible package I had found. Compared with other software packages (e.g. NVivo) Atlas.ti does not create families (i.e codes and sub-codes) as the primary analytic structure, but directs the user to decide for themselves what sorts of relationships codes should have with one another. It was therefore only after I had coded most of my data that I began to create networks of concepts derived from the coding process. Figure 5.3 describes the coding process. This software also enabled me to search and sift through sets of quotations by building complex queries, and to produce word frequency lists that allowed me to see which words (and subsequently discourses) were prominent within the data.

5.82 Analysis approaches

My approach to analysis was both *multi-level* and *cross-case,* in an attempt to remain open to a number of analytical possibilities.

Multi-level
Cohen et al. (*op cit*) remark that, where possible, studies combining several levels of analysis are to be preferred (i.e individual, group and society). My study attempted to triangulate these levels by considering each of them throughout the analysis and building up a complex picture of self-marketing at these different levels. Furthermore shifting one's gaze between different analytical units is crucial to a case study where the part and the whole are to be considered together in a hermeneutic circle (Gadamer, *op cit*). It is worth noting that cases are, of course, only bounded analytically rather than self-evidently, and are 'open systems' as realists would say. In this respect the 'whole' case is not sufficient to explain all that I witnessed. Nevertheless in this study the analytic levels were a) the student b) the tutor group c) the school and d) all the students within each institution.

a) *The individual student.* To reduce the risk of fragmenting the voice of each student, I coded all three interviews together, and created a file for each student where I noted salient

features of the interviews particularly under the four headings of 'personality/identity', 'educational background', 'family background' and 'orientation to self-marketing'. Each of these memos had a section of key findings about the student with supporting quotations (see Appendix 6), and a 'self-marketing profile' (see Appendix 7). This kept each student's voice intact as a whole and enabled me to develop a sense of biography, context and narrative that helped illuminate and explain individual quotations. This level of analysis was particularly valuable in illustrating the ways in which individuals were more diverse within schools than across schools, despite their similarities in background.

b) *The tutor group.* At this level I was interested in a unit that provided a 'snapshot' of the wider case. I analysed my field notes and sections of the interviews to understand how the students *as a group* were different from the other groups I studied (i.e. at a mezzo level between school and pupil).

c) *The whole school/college.* I considered the school as a unit of analysis through categorical aggregation (Stake 1995), building up a sense of the school's identity, position, character and values through coding my field notes on the physical sites, documents, and interviews with staff. This helped me to understand various ways in which 'my' tutor groups were or were not reflective of wider school culture (e.g. where tutors resisted or embraced wider school discourses).

d) *The student body across all of the schools/colleges.* Here I was searching for commonalities and differences that were not necessarily primarily school-based (e.g. identity, style, family background, personality). It became clear that while some orientations and strategies were related to the discourse of the school, others were located externally to the school, in experiences based in class-practices, psychological profiles etc.

Cross case analysis

I also conducted my analysis by comparing the cases themselves. I considered following Stake's (2006) model for cross-case analysis, but decided that I needed to have the freedom to adopt various analytical approaches as I came to understand the project better. Nevertheless I a) analysed the data within cases first by deciding upon the most prominent themes within each case and producing case findings and then b) across cases by comparing these findings. Not only was I dealing with the complexity of analysing different levels of data, and comparing across cases but also with the tension between the cases and the quintain of self-marketing. This 'case-quintain dialectic', Stake (2006) argues, is a rhetorical, adversarial procedure, wherein attention to the local situations and attention to the program or phenomenon as a whole contend with each other for

emphasis. This dialectic involved keeping both the initial *theoretical* issues brought into the field and the *data* about activity in the field, alive throughout the analysis.

Figure 5.3 Analysis Process

Assigning codes	• There were two types of code: quintain, (about self-marketing) and contextual (all other topics) • I used free-coding for complex ideas, auto-coding for simple words, and then merged any redundant codes
Creating code families	• Codes were then organised into 'families' • Examples include all codes about a particular site, a concept (i.e. 'the subject'), or a process (i.e. 'writing the Personal Statement')
Creating networks	• I worked within and across these families to create networks by assigning relationships between codes (i.e. X 'is-a' Y or X 'contradicts' Y) • These relationships were then displayed graphically
Writing memos	• Using my own judgement, and statistics about how frequent the codes were, I then identified the most significant codes, families and relationships • I wrote memos about these, drawing in key quotations
Establishing analytic themes	• I checked that the key findings within these memos were the logical summation of codes lying beneath them, and any negative cases had been accounted for • I then cross referenced all the memos to identify the most significant themes across these findings

5.9 Ethical considerations

Throughout the course of the research I adhered to the ethical code of practice outlined by the British Educational Research Association (BERA).

5.91 CRB clearance

I undertook a Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check that had been issued through the University of Cambridge on 27th December 2006, and allowed me to work as an educational researcher in schools. I asked each of the tutors if they wished to see it, but none of them accepted the offer.

5.92 Consent

In my letter of introduction I outlined my research plans and approach in appropriate detail (see Appendix 5), but these plans and expectations were contextualised and discussed more fully during my first meetings with the tutors and heads of the sixth-form/college. I made it my approach to see consent as an ongoing process; accordingly I continued to provide feedback and make further requests throughout my time at each site, particularly as the issues under scrutiny were progressively focused. Because some participants were still under 18, I sought permission from the school to conduct the research, and took advice on whether I needed to seek permission from parents as well. Specific consent was requested in the following ways.

1. Seeking initial consent to the study.
2. Informing staff and students of my presence and intentions. This ranged from being formally introduced during a staff meeting, to approaching staff informally myself.
3. Seeking consent from individuals for interviews to be digitally recorded, analysed, and represented in my thesis.
4. Seeking consent to reproduce school mission statements, sections of marketing brochures and other relevant texts.
5. After completing my thesis, I agreed that I would send sections of my findings to those members of school staff and individual students with whom I remain in contact and who were particularly interested in the research process.

My initial letter relayed my intention of providing the college with an interview schedule. Regretfully I did not follow through on this. I suspect however that trust was quickly established after our first couple of meetings so that I did not offer and none of the tutors asked to see the schedules. Nevertheless it should have been done.

5.93 Confidentiality and anonymity

Cohen et al., (*op cit*) suggest that in some cases, anonymising reports might render them anodyne, whereas Stake (*op cit*, p. 447) writes that those whose lives and expressions are portrayed in case studies, "…risk exposure and embarrassment, as well as loss of standing, employment, and self-esteem". While I do not perceive the risks in this particular study to have been so great, I have taken seriously the importance of protecting, as far as possible, participants from being identified in the written research. Some students, for example, admitted to lying on their Personal Statement, and some staff admitted to pressurising pupils to lie, or to at least be economical with the truth. For these sorts of reasons the schools, the staff and students were promised confidentiality and anonymity in the report, and I asked each student to choose themselves a pseudonym if they wished. Finally I have taken care in the description of the participating institutions and their locations to avoid presenting information that would clearly compromise assurances of anonymity.[69]

5.94 Sharing the research

Finally, I am under an ethical obligation to share my research first and foremost with those who had willingly given me their time in a number of ways during the course of my fieldwork. A summary of my thesis (as well as a pdf copy of the full work) has been sent to those members of staff at the three institutions who are still in post and who were involved in the study, along with a final letter of thanks for their participation. There were only one or two students who expressed a desire to keep in touch so that they could receive a copy of the thesis, but the same courtesy has, of course, been extended to them.

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[69] It was not easy to balance the need to present contextual information on each of the case study sites with the need to protect the identities of those sites. I believe I have taken "appropriate precautions" to do so, but am not confident that identities are entirely protected as a result (BERA Ethical Guidelines).

5.10 Summary of Chapters Four and Five

I have summarised the theoretical and methodological decisions described in Chapters Four and Five in the table below.

Table 5.6 Summary of research approach

Ontology	• Critical realism
Methodology	• Multi-case study
Use of theory	• Bernstein • Bourdieu
Research tools	• Semi-structured interview • Observation • Document analysis (using Fairclough's Discourse Analysis)
Sampling	• Purposive • Random-purposive • Chain
Analysis	• Multi-level • Cross-case
Validity	• Construct • Descriptive • Interpretive

Six
Introducing the cases: pedagogic codes

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I have drawn upon Bernstein's (2000) theory of pedagogic codes and modes to analyse and present the three case studies that formed the focus of my research into self-marketing. The theoretical language of internal and external classification and framing is used to describe how each institution's identity, character, and position relative to other schools, is constructed and maintained, and how the distinctive pedagogic codes in each form different 'imaginary subjects' (Bernstein, *ibid*; Ivinson & Duveen, 2006) within which are "… ideological views about who children are and what they ought to become" (*ibid*, p. 109) - a reflection of each site's strategic positioning in the market, and the students' origins and intended destinations. I am discussing here, what I will term the 'dominant pedagogic code' of the school, in contrast to the more specific pedagogy of self-marketing, which will be addressed in the following chapters. While this more theorised approach does negate the inclusion of the kind of 'thick description' that might be offered had a grounded theory approach been adopted, I hope that the theoretical framework nonetheless enables the reader to recognise and 'see' the contexts of the research, whilst also providing a basis for significant comparisons between them.

6.2 The Grange

The Grange is an independent day school for boys and can be located firmly in the academic tradition of private single-sex schools in England. Its dominant pedagogic code was strongly classified and framed, although certain elements of framing had weakened as a result of a shift

towards less traditional and 'positional' forms of relationships between staff and students. In Bernstein's terms this represents a 'collection code' and a 'visible pedagogy'.

6.21 Background

The Grange was founded as a free school in 1615 and offers private education from the ages of 3-11 at both a nursery and prep school. I conducted my research at the upper school, which has around 650 students between the ages of 11 and 18. At the time of my research years 7-11 were boys only, although the sixth-form was co-educational.[70] The school itself is two miles from the town centre and situated in the middle of an attractive 27 acre green-field site surrounded by playing fields. Its prospectus lists the postcodes at which Grange pupils live, and shows that many are areas or villages outside the town centre.[71] Grange families have high economic capital, which translates into high cultural capital, displayed in a preference for strongly academic education. Mr Trevalyn, the Deputy Head, described the various constituencies of parents as those '…based around the university', 'visiting academics', 'short-term business contracts' and 'London commuters', all of whom '…take education very seriously'.[72]

Grange students achieve very good exam results; in 2008 57 per cent obtained three or more A grades. The school is currently ranked 25th in the Times league table of top independent secondary schools and, unsurprisingly, prepares around half of its students for applications to Oxford and Cambridge.[73] In Bernstein's (*op cit*, p. 57) terms, the Grange's dominant pedagogic code is therefore a 'performance' mode, which in England "…were linked to and legitimised by the selective grammar schools and their discursive organisation, codes of singulars, collection codes".[74] The school explicitly celebrates its academic tradition in the singulars. Of its five published 'aims' the first is: "To encourage and enable all pupils to achieve the best of which they are capable academically; to promote intellectual curiosity, independence of mind and creativity: and to stimulate a love of learning (which is at the heart of the school's tradition)".

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70 The whole school will become co-educational in 2010

71 Although many pupils are listed under a post code that covers a large council estate built on the North of the city, they are in fact shown to live on two wide and leafy roads at the edge of this area.

72 The Grange's last inspection report indicated that about a quarter of pupils come from university families

73 Between 2003-2006 the top five destinations for Grange students were the University of Cambridge, Durham University, University of Oxford, Medical schools (excluding Oxbridge) and Newcastle University/University of Bristol.

74 A 'collection code' is one where the pedagogy is both strongly classified and strongly framed (Bernstein, 2000)

In a 'performance mode', Bernstein argues, the pedagogic 'text' is the acquirer's performance, "…objectified by grades" where "…grading gives rise to a potential repair service and its diagnostic theory, practice and distribution of blame" (*op cit*, pp. 47-48). This was evident at the Grange, which used a 'diagnostic' system called Midius to test students' academic ability on entry, to track their grades, predict their exam results and rank them within the school as well as the the entire independent school population. Mr Trevalyn told me that students know their module scores and "…some of them will have their calculators out and will be realising 'I only need these two extra marks to push me into this grade boundary". James, one of my interviewees, confirmed this in remarking that: "At this school if you got an A at GCSE you were disappointed. If you got an A* you were like 'Ok, did I beat the person next to me?'.[75]

The remaining four official aims of the school were: to provide opportunities to develop extra-curricular talents; to form pupils who respect, work with, and lead others; to encourage pupils "…to appreciate their good fortune in life"; and to produce pupils who will look back on their time at the school with "…enjoyment, pride, gratitude and appropriate humility". These clearly reveal the imaginary subject of the Grange as one who enjoys privilege, and is learning how to display natural leadership within the social hierarchies of life, as well as how to balance pride and 'appropriate humility' in such positions. As these aims suggest, sport and cultural activities were a central part of the school's tradition of widening students' horizons and preparing them for university and life beyond formal education. Each student I interviewed was doing between three and six extra-curricular activities, chosen from around 50 clubs that were on offer at the school. The school's financial and human resources enabled it to offer a far wider variety of experiences and activities than the other sites I studied,[76] and on top of weekly activities, high economic capital also enabled students to take advantage of a wide range of excursions that were an additional cost.

6.22 External classification

The Grange was strongly classified in relation to other educational institutions in its external context by virtue of situating itself as a competitor with other local schools. Its pedagogic identity, and the resources creating and supporting that identity, constituted a highly valorised set

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75 However, in terms of the school's 'expressive order' (Bernstein 1976) there had been a perceived weakening of the strongly hierarchical framing that had existed in previous years - an adjustment to the more informal social relations now visible within schools and families more widely. I was told by Mrs Castle that not many years ago the Grange was really a '…harsh environment, an old boys place' that was '…stuck in the 50s. But, as the result of new leadership, Mrs Castle claimed that the Grange had '…sorted out our pastoral care' and was no longer perceived as an 'exam factory'.

76 Grange staff were generously reimbursed for time given in evenings and weekends.

of 'capitals' that enabled the school to thrive in this education market place. There was a familiar discourse amongst the staff and the students about the school's distinctive niche position amongst other local providers - both independent and state - in terms of its academic tradition, wealth of extra-curricular opportunities and developed pastoral structures. In one tutor-period the students spent nearly ten minutes discussing the position of the Grange in the league tables, relative to their sister school for girls, and how the schools had achieved their respective positions. These strong external institutional boundaries were furher revealed during a session in which Mr Williams prepared the students for their role in the sixth-form open evening for prospective students and their parents. Each of the 120 students was expected to attend, to show visitors around the site and answer questions. Efforts to promote a superior image were exemplified by his comments below:

> Things to point out include the size and scale of the site - take them via the astroturf, the sports hall and the fields. Remember to point out how large it is, it really makes us stand out from our competitor schools. Also point out the fitness suite and squash courts, and take a trip to the music department. Philosophy is going to be up in the economics department so that we don't have to show people the port-a-cabins (*the students laugh*) - we're going to hide those!

External boundaries were also made visible through the students social talk, where distinctions between 'us' and 'them' were articulated and maintained, and often traded on quite explicit forms of social class demarcation - in particular, references to 'chavs'. [77] Whilst sitting in the tutor room with a small group who were looking at Eleanor's 'chav' ring, Mark, seeing that it fitted on her index finger, asked 'Did a chav propose to you?' Hearing this, Dr Macintyre turned to me and said 'They're obsessed with chavs at the moment. Chavs is basically, 'Not us'.[78] However this 'othering' of different social groups or schools was also the source of some latent anxiety for some students who were keen to distance themselves from the stereotype of the private school student. For David, the culture of the Grange was the cause of a degree of social and moral unease:

> I've always felt slightly -- it's not guilt but it's a certain um -- knowledge that I go to a privileged sixth-form, and also I'm slightly alienated because I went to a public school. I think it alienates you from certain types of people and I don't like that…We're spoiled, all sitting here in suits and ties, it just feels slightly surreal.

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77 This was both in terms of schools which were similar (The Grange girls), and schools which were dissimilar (i.e. state schools)

78 Lawler (2005) argues that the establishment of middle-class identity is achieved, in part, through expressions of distaste at white working-class existence, and McCulloch, Stewart, and Lovegreen (2006) found that 'chav' was one such 'othering' label.

6.23 Internal classification

Discourses

As a collection of singulars the academic curriculum at the Grange was clearly differentiated, and the strong boundaries between discourses were maintained by demarcations of time and space as well as by the discourse itself. The school prospectus claimed that the Grange's "…curriculum reflects the school's distinctly academic character and aims to provide for the needs of potentially high-flying students".[79] Mrs Castle remarked that as a result of this extremely strong classification, when it came to choosing a degree course:

> Grange pupils don't tend to think outside the box really. You know it's all the history sciencey things. I would say that 99, if not 100 per cent go to university and most, virtually all, go to 'Ivy league' universities. Not many veer off that course.[80]

Her perspective was confirmed by data showing that, of the 291 degree courses taken by Grange students between 2003-06, the most popular were (in order), Medicine/Geography, Natural Sciences, Engineering, Economics, Modern Foreign Languages and English Literature.[81]

Each discipline was taught separately in a specifically allocated room, and the disciplinary identities that these boundaries created were modeled, and thus reinforced, by the teachers. Dr Macintyre, for example, visibly conformed to a particular stereotype of 'the English literature teacher' in choosing to wear corduroy, a waist-coat and a cravat, and sport a tidy beard. His impressive vocabulary, love of debate and theatrical manner distinguished him from other subject teachers (even if such a habitus appeared to be *particularly* caricature-like). The boundaries between these subject identities served to insulate them from 'infection' from other discourses, and preserve their power and privilege (Bernstein, 1971), in particular by providing recogniseable signs and symbols of the type of school that many affluent parents, well-endowed with cultural capital, want to send their children to, and of the type of habitus that is produced as a result.

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79 Beyond the traditional singulars of the National Curriculum, students could therefore also study Latin, Greek and Classical Civilization, or take various IGCSEs - perceived as more 'rigorous' examinations.

80 Mrs Castle told me she knew of only two students in recent years who had not gone to university. One left in 2002 and the school was now helping him to apply to university, '…and the other one was the son of a builder and he left and I think took over his fathers business -- He wasn't a typical Grange student'.

81 Although vocational, Medicine and Engineering constitute what Bernstein terms 'traditional' regions which have an unquestioned status as 'academic' unlike 'modern' regions such as journalism or sports science.

Space/time/dress

Strong classifications of time, space and dress complemented these fundamental distinctions between disciplines. Space, for example, was classified not only for its academic purpose, but also according to professional and social hierarchies within the school. The Headmaster's office, set back from the classrooms, was clearly a special, even sacred, space within the school. The staff room was, likewise, set apart from the teaching rooms and housed large comfortable leather sofas that looked out onto the playing fields, perhaps reminiscent of certain Oxbridge college's senior combination rooms. Demarcations of time similarly served these strong disciplinary boundaries, as students moved from one subject lesson to another, prompted by a bell. Significantly, time *outside* lessons was also marked by these boundaries, through assemblies, band practices or any number of productive and useful extra-curricular activities. Grange students tended to be busy, and would consult their diaries when I asked if I could arrange a lunch-time interview. Finally, students dress was also expected to reflect the strong classification between school and home, with the prospectus requiring students to dress in "…a respectable, smart and business-like fashion in keeping with the traditions and values of the Grange".

6.24 Framing: instructional discourse

Framing in the instructional discourse was stronger than at other sites, but clearly weakened as students progressed through the school,[82] and was weaker in some subjects than others according to their internal logic. The strong classification between subjects and the privileging of a certain academic tradition meant that students truly were 'acquirers': that is, teachers had control of what was to be communicated, at what pace, in what order and to what end. For example, Mr Trevalyn suggested that:

> If you've got very bright pupils with quick wits, if the lessons are slow they get bored very quickly, and if they're just engaged in endless group work activities, well again they often see the point of the activity within the first two minutes, they're just bored and frustrated, and that's why I think teacher-led, didactic, pacey works well.

This suggests that not only do most Grange students have the appropriate *recognition* rules in these lessons, but they experience group work as a hindrance to their demonstration of *realisation* rules. That is, they perceive the criteria for their success in both strongly and weakly framed contexts, but weaker framing, at least of these kinds, is frustrating. At the Grange, 'teamwork' is learned, or thought to be acquired, far more on the rugby or hockey pitch than in the classroom.

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82 Framing weakened in certain ways as the students entered the sixth-form. For example, Alistair explained that his history teacher was his favourite teacher at the Grange because '…he didn't just -- teach you facts and the dates and the order, the way he worked was you'd sit down to class and we'd discuss it. And that was the first time we'd really done that, and we hadn't done it in history in any other way. I just, yeah He treated us…he was a lot more like being at university as I'd imagine, um, than just being told directly what was happening'.

The framing of the instructional discourse also appeared to vary between disciplines. Where Mr Parker, the politics teacher, used PowerPoint to display fairly dense information in a didactic manner, Dr Macintyre's English literature lesson was far more fluid and interactive, almost improvisory, as he led them through, in his words, 'brief philosophical distractions'. The weaker framing in his lesson was perhaps more the result of personality than disciplinary norms, but nevertheless Dr Macintyre's students were evidently very happy to interrupt the lesson with insights or witty intellectual banter. While Bernstein (2000, p. 47) suggests that strong classifications "…both constitute and relay order" and that "…the mode of the instructional discourse itself embeds acquirers in a disciplining regulation where deviance is highly visible", here the measured relaxation of the framing relayed Dr Macintyre's trust in the students' readiness to engage with the ultimate mysteries of their discipline (Bernstein, 1971).

6.25 Framing: regulative discourse

For Bernstein (2000, p. 13), the instructional discourse is ultimately embedded in the dominant regulative discourse, which creates expectations about conduct, character and manner. Where there is strong framing, Bernstein (2000) suggests that the 'labels' created for the acquirer are likely to be qualities like 'attentive', 'conscientious', 'industrious', and 'careful'. While the exact labels vary, the Grange has very similar expectations of its students as a result of its highly visible hierarchies and classifications. The school's behaviour and discipline policy expects pupils to "…act with RESPONSIBILITY and show CONSIDERATION at all times" (original capitalisation), and includes specific references to 'honesty', 'integrity', respect', 'courtesy', and kindness'. This 'manner', very evident as a form of embodied habitus, was illustrated by John who was sent to collect me from reception on my first visit. He was smartly dressed, and enquired 'Miss Moore?', before taking me up to the tutor room, going out of his way to open doors and then step behind me.[83] My notes describe him as 'polite', 'discrete', and 'interested and attentive to conversation we made'.[84]

Beyond the explicit expectation that Grange students should be considerate, polite and responsible, there was also a powerful, if more latent, set of expectations that they should also be self-confident, competitive and witty. Mr Williams instructed the students ahead of their open

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83 My maiden name

84 Similar attention was offered me by the other students on arrival, who were, on the whole, at ease with a stranger and happy to make small talk if necessary. Dr Macintyre, who had previously worked in foreign diplomacy, was an excellent example of this kind of social ability, going out of his way to include me in conversation and invite me along to activities.

evening to: '…talk confidently and articulately about your subject…You need to engage with people as they come in, don't all huddle in the corner, you've gotta be confident, gotta push yourself forward, get stuck in'. Those who lacked this confidence – seen as both intellectual as well as a matter of personality - were unlikely to thrive at the school according to Mrs Castle.

> It's too academic, too fast-paced. If you're incredibly shy or withdrawn you might find it difficult. I mean you know what it's like in there! (*pointing to the common room*). You have to survive in there! It takes a certain type of person…We rejected someone because they said they thought they needed to be 'pushed' in their work and that's not the kind of person we really want.

Alongside this confidence was the importance of competition; between friends competing for the best grades, between teams in sports, or for places at university. Mr Trevalyn opined that because the boys were bright:

> The pace in lessons and the competition between kids is that bit stronger, and of course competition is a key motivator for boys, they often don't sort of pull their fingers out unless they're in a competitive environment where suddenly they want to be better than the next person.

Dylan saw it slightly differently when he told me that 'When you're in a boys school -- it sounds very gay but you're always trying to get one up on each other. And so you have to be quite confident, loud, sometimes boisterous just so you can be recognised as a person'. And finally, the informal aspects of the regulative discourse of the Grange valued quick wit and banter. This was particularly evident amongst the male students in the sixth-form who would call each other by their surnames, reinforcing both the masculine and classed nature of their social talk. The most powerful banter displayed intellectual prowess, wit and innuendo, and was sometimes sexual in nature.[85]

Regulative discourse in the tutor group

This kind of banter was particularly evident in Dr Macintyre's tutor group where he took advantage of the relatively recent relaxation of framing within and beyond the classroom (discussed above). Various students told me that he treated them like adults or friends, with John commenting that 'Dr Macintyre and I, we each think each other a bit of a joke! He laughs at me all the time and I at him'. Dr Macintyre reported the same: "With Stanton (*John's surname*) it's the same…He'd come up and say, 'Look old bean, I've left my games kit at home, do you have a pair of shorts you could lend me?', and I'd go 'Yeah, alright''. While Dr Macintyre was loosely in control of tutor times, the half-hour was usually taken up with fast-paced, light hearted,

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85 On my first day ay the school, I witnessed the same pattern of quick wit amongst the younger staff. On finding out I was researching at the school, one male teacher asked if I was coming to 'shower club' - an early morning ritual amongst some of the male teachers and similar innuendo was directed at other colleagues over the meal.

intellectual banter - as below where he was trying to persuade them to go to an American university.

Adam:	Yeah but you can only drink at 21 -- I have enough trouble.
Dr M:	And you're only twelve!
Adam:	It all started when I was a scout! (*laughter*)
Alistair:	Did you know the scouting manual is the second best-seller to the Bible? (*Dr Macintyre appears to be skeptical about this*)
Dr M:	Chairman Mao's never read a book.
Alistair:	I am the young spokesperson for the scouting organisation. (*There is geneeral disbelief at this confession*).

His distinct approach was the result of a belief that students had exactly the same rights as adults, but were simply at a different stage of life, and he therefore positioned himself far more as a 'facilitator' than as '…the kind of arbiter of everything'. He told me that he would regularly explain to students that '…the fact that you're there and I'm here, I'm Doctor Macintyre and you call me Sir, it's all a game, but you have to play the game'. Although he may have been peculiar within the school, Dr Macintyre appeared to enjoy his capacity to negotiate boundaries through improvisation, and to challenge more strongly classified and framed orderings within the school as a whole.[86]

6.26 Generic modes at the Grange

In Chapter Three I referred to the 'pedagogic schizoid' position, a combination of both 'prospective' (neo-conservative) and 'de-centred market' (neo-liberal) identities within education. Such a tension was visible within the pedagogic modality of the Grange where a strongly neo-conservative collection code and retrospectively oriented academic tradition sat alongside an externally oriented commercial orientation. However, in this case, the two were not ultimately in conflict because the retrospective identity of the school (through the maintenance of 'tradition') enabled it to successfully compete in its chosen market rather than having to evolve or reinvent itself in order to remain competitive.

However tensions still existed between the 'singular' and the 'generic' modes within the dominant performance mode. Generic 'professional' discourses of education and work ('life skills' lessons, targets, goal-setting, personal and professional development programmes) which were part of preparing students for applying to Higher Education sat alongside more traditional orientations

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86 Dr Macintyre told me that he was a 'bit of a rebel' and didn't sent his group to the 'big headmaster assembly' on Wednesdays because '…assembly is so boring, you know'.

to knowledge, albeit in forms that still reflected the independence of private schools from government control. In terms of the school's organisational culture, staff were formally observed by their line managers and were subjected to managerially identified, if individually negotiated, targets, appraisals and performance feedback. But '…where another school might send a teacher to a course' Mr Trevalyn told me that the Grange had sent a sports teacher to Australia to learn how to coach rugby and sent another teacher '…away to brush up her Portuguese so she could offer that as an Enrichment course'. Nevertheless, I observed various contradictions for both staff and students between the high trust, autonomy and professionalism that were considered appropriate to successful, academically able people, and the discourses of accountability and measurement that sometimes seemed to undermine this. Teachers were respected as academic authorities, but were also actively encouraged to do feedback questionnaires for their pupils with the rationale that '…ultimately they're the paying customers' (Mr Trevalyn). Students were treated as highly intelligent individuals and sometimes almost as peers, but were also viewed as 'products' to which the school 'added value'.

A highly visible example of genericism in operation within the Grange was the ritual of periodic goal-setting within the tutor group. This activity, designed to help students reflect on their own career trajectories and take responsibility for their self-improvement, was routinely derided by the students - who improvised a range of ironic responses in clear resistance to this 'otiose' imposition, reflective of their security in the *academic* identities they had by this stage in their careers internalised as successful students in an elite institution - as this except from my field notes shows.

> Dr Macintyre enters - 'Right, today we have to set some goals'. There are universal groans. As he hands out the forms he cautions against '…silly goals like the upper sixth last year. I had one that said 'To have a pulse at the end of the year' There is laughter and someone responds, 'That's quite a good goal really'. Dr Macintyre replies, 'No cynicism'. Amongst one or two students there is a particularly rebellious air, questions over the usefulness of the exercise, the wording etc. Adam points out that the only two options under the extra-curricular activities section are 'I'm doing too much', or 'I'm not doing enough'. He says loudly 'I'm doing exactly the right amount' and walking over to Sam after he arrives in the room says to him, 'Where it only gives you these two options, put 'I'm doing the right amount' They'll never see that coming'.

Grange students almost unanimously believed that, as ambitious and competitive people, there was really no need for them to sit down and do such an exercise, and as a result would write things like 'Destroy Mr Whittaker at badminton'. Dr Macintyre acknowledged that "They hate it. We do it, we give them an exercise in goal-setting, and they write ridiculous things like 'Get out of bed', or 'Blow my trumpet harder', and it is a waste of time".

6.3 Eastern Community College

My second case study - a National Diploma Art and Design group in a Further Education (FE) college - displayed an interesting combination of pedagogic codes and modalities. As a discipline, art (or at least fine art) is a singular, and yet in this case, as in many FE colleges, its pedagogy was embedded in a wider generic mode, which clearly also dominated students' experiences of college life in the round.

6.31 Background

Eastern Community College (ECC) is a large general FE college on the edge of the city with approximately 13, 500 learners, of whom three quarters are White, 40 per cent are under 19, half are women, and just under three quarters study part time (Ofsted, 2008). At the time of research, the college had very recently stopped providing GCSE, A and AS Level courses. With a couple of very strong sixth-form colleges in the local area, management had decided to focus on what was seen as their niche in the local education market – vocational education. A recent Ofsted report confirmed this, stating that "…the college has revised its mission to focus on employability and delivering economically valuable skills at craft, technician and management levels and in Skills for Life" (Ofsted, 2008, p. 4).

By focusing solely on vocational education the college sought to attract a particular section of the local 16-19 market, that rejected the strongly classified and framed academic education (epitomised by the Grange) that A' Levels provided. ECC's claim to have "…refined and developed programmes for young people who were not able to meet their full potential whilst in full-time education at school" (Annual report, 2007) is supported by statistics that show the largest numbers of college enrollments to be on courses that are described as 'preparation for life and work', and most of these at level 1 (Ofsted, 2008). In the opening pages of its 2007 prospectus, the college advertised a variety of support services it could offer its students.[87] ECC's 'typical client' was therefore likely to be someone who might struggle to study independently in other educational environments, and this niche positioning strategy, however worthy in itself, appeared to result in a degree of stigma. The college chaplain lamented the fact that:

> Unfortunately it's got the nickname of Eastern Cast-off College. For good reason in a
> sense -- because a lot of the students who aren't academic or couldn't be trained

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87 Including: study support, deaf support, visual impairment, physical access support, personal and emotional health issues, specific learning difficulties (dyslexia/dyspraxia/dyscalculia), study tuition, bilingual workshops, mature student support, and on-programme support.

anywhere else, come here. And you know, I think that's to the credit of the college really.[88]

Complementing its provision of vocational education was a strong focus on generic modes, a pedagogic discourse that is explicitly oriented to 'employability'. According to Bernstein (*op cit*), generic modes, or 'genericism' as Beck and Young (2005) describe it, has its *origins* in FE, and most FE institutions, by restructuring their professional culture, college management style and conditions of service, have overturned older traditions of liberal education as part of more general studies, as well as the once dominant technical craft tradition (Jones & Moore, 1995). Arising primarily from the weakening of boundaries between education and the economy, generic modes necessarily challenge the strong classifications that produce the classic academic disciplines, and so unsurprisingly, ECC's internal classification tended to be weak, as I will discuss in the following sections.

6.32 External classification

Whilst the 16-19 'market' in the city included a number of sixth-forms, ECC was strongly classified as an institution by virtue of being the only FE college. It had (as previously mentioned) emphasised this by abandoning its A' Level provision and focusing solely on vocational qualifications. When asked why they had chosen ECC, a number of students in my sample described leaving an A' Level course at a sixth-form because they disliked academic education and wanted to experience what they saw as a more independent and therefore 'adult' environment at the college. The external boundaries between ECC and other 16-19 institutions in the city were maintained by students' negative descriptions of the other two large sixth-forms colleges: Linton Road, and Winfield. Sarah, for example told me that because there was no sixth-form in her village, '…it's either Linton Road, Winfield or ECC -- and obviously I didn't want to go to Linton Road, and Winfield, I couldn't have got in. But I don't like it anyway'. As previously discussed, ECC's very explicit mission to be "First for Training and Skills" upheld the strong external classification between itself and other 16-19 institutions, but caused stigma where it was presumed that vocational qualifications were second-rate to A' Levels.

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88 The adjective has been changed to maintain the rhetorical impact of the joke, but means the same as the original. When asked if such assumptions could be made about the students' socio-economic backgrounds, he replied 'Well yes I think you can…it's anecdotal, but yeah you're getting a lot of semi-affected if not disaffected students who come in and bum around the college all day'.

6.33 Internal classification

Generic modes and weak internal classification

Because of its strong focus on the transferability of generic knowledge and skills between contexts and its role in supporting supposedly disaffected learners, ECC's disciplinary boundaries were more weakly classified than at other sites. The first few pages of the 2007/08 college prospectus were headed with titles that revealed this weak internal classification. "Build your abilities - your way", described the flexibility of the courses, so that if you wished to you could "…improve your maths and follow a career in catering" curriculum areas that would otherwise be kept apart. "Theory meets Practice", "…you can work with real people doing real jobs". However, this attempt to break down the distinction and status stratification between different kinds of knowledge actually arguably upheld it, as did the rhetorical repetition of "real people" doing "real jobs" - an appeal to practical and mundane knowledge, over esoteric.[89]

The second page in the first double spread was entitled 'Skills for life' and argued that "Key Skills are important for everything you do at College, at university, at home and at work". These skills included both recontextualised singulars (e.g. English and maths became 'Communication' and 'Application of Number') as well as highly generic skills such as 'Information and Communication Technology', 'Working with others', 'Improving your own Learning and Performance', and 'Problem Solving'. Bernstein (*ibid*, pp. 58-59) describes this generic mode as "…the pedagogic basis of 'work' and 'life' experiences", intended to realise a "…flexible, transferable potential" and "…directly linked to the instrumentalities of the market". Here, the proferred desirability of these skills is framed by what is held to be their flexibility and utility across contexts (college, university, home and work), and their ability to increase employability ("If you decide to apply for a job, employers are well aware of the benefits of employing staff that have achieved their Key Skills qualifications").

Within the college as a whole therefore, an imaginary subject was projected who could move flexibly between types and areas of learning, creating and then progressing along their own unique path. However, another sub-heading ("Start afresh", "…even if you felt switched off by courses at school, think again") revealed the 'typical' subject to be less the autonomous neo-liberal self authoring their own future and more one who, in rejecting or being rejected by 'esoteric' knowledge, needed to be wooed back into a pedagogic environment. Weak internal classification was not, then, primarily the result of an underlying 'progressive' or 'therapeutic'

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89 Here, perhaps, we see a glimpse of a desire to promote something like a competence mode, and yet it is thoroughly embedded in official discourse, which is strongly performance oriented. In it's concern with acquiring sets of 'skills' to compensate for presumed deficits it does not truly reflect the 'radical competence' modes which, according to Bernstein (2000), are found more often in adult informal education and were advocated as part of revolutionary pedagogies by writers like Freire.

orientation to knowledge (even if some elements of this might have been present), and indeed, as we shall see, framing was, in some contexts, very strong.

Differentiation of pedagogic codes within Level 3 Art and Design

The imaginary subject projected by ECC's focus on vocational and generic skills at a college-wide level was, however, more differentiated and nuanced when it came to individual courses. I hope to draw out some of these distinctions here by comparing the position of my sample - a group in their second year of a BTEC National Diploma in art and design - with another art and design course also offered by the college.

There were five art and design courses in total; one level one, two level two and two level three courses. The level three courses both prepared students to apply directly to university, and yet, respectively, enjoyed very different status as 'art' courses. The text below is taken from the course descriptions written by the course tutors for the college prospectus, and demonstrates the distinctive discourses that characterise the two courses.

Box 6.1 ECC level three course descriptions

BTEC Diploma Foundation Studies (Art and Design)	**BTEC National Diplomas (Art and Design)**
This one year intensive course develops skills for self reliant learning and a critical awareness of the contemporary visual world and methods of creative production. You are encouraged to identity and interpret your own strengths and direction by exploring skills and concepts central to Art and Design	ECC offers a wide range of Art and Design National Diplomas studied over a two year period. These programmes provide an opportunity for individuals to develop and shine as talented and creative artists and designers. National Diplomas improve your organisational skills, presentation and communication style, independent and lateral thinking, self-motivation and problem

The description of the National Diploma drew heavily from a generic pedagogic discourse, with half of the text describing transferable skills that the students will attain. As an opportunity to "…develop and shine as talented and creative artists and designers", it almost appears to position the students as children whose talents are displayed to approving adults. In contrast, the Foundation Studies course is described as 'intensive', and this text draws from a more sophisticated, and specifically artistic discourse. Students will become 'critical' and 'self reliant', building awareness of "…the contemporary visual world and methods of creative production".

The students following these contrasted level three courses were classified not by age, but by 'ability' - a strong, but partially hidden principle of differentiation that had significant consequences - especially for the perceptions held by staff working with those who *didn't* follow the post A' Level Foundation route. Despite both courses preparing their students for university, it was evident that they were designed for different types of student: the National Diploma programme for those who 'needed' to work on the transferable skills associated with learning, and the post A-level Foundation course for those who had already realised those skills and could on this basis be apprenticed into the discourse of art per se. In conversation with one of the art tutors early on in the research, this crucial boundary distinction became sharply evident:

> Have you interviewed the Foundation kids? They are an entirely different breed again… much more middle-class for want of a better word. Much more confident. Everyone wants to teach on the Foundation course because they're more committed than this lot, who are still -- still in their adolescence somehow. They're both applying to do art at uni but taking completely different routes. They're not as provincial as this lot. They're not as hard-edged professional as the Foundation group. They're really nice as individuals, really warm personalities, quite like, paternal -- but fucking stupid, Jesus Christ. Very different, but very warm.

Terry's admission that 'Everyone wants to teach on the Foundation course' suggests that it is these students who conform to their tutors' image of the 'ideal client' (Becker, 1952). In this case, it was the perceived 'confidence', 'commitment', 'professionalism' and even 'middle-classness' of the Foundation group that made them most rewarding for the practioners to work with, but then also enabled the tutors to successfully play their role of developing these students specifically as 'artists'. In Bernstein's (2000) terms, the Foundation students - as ideal clients - feed the narcissism that he claims is the hallmark of the academic identities created by singulars. It is by reference to this group that the 'othering' of the National Diploma students occurs - precisely through their *lack* of these desirable qualities, a state confirmed to me by a student who remarked '…we are considered the worst class there is apparently'.[90] Bernstein (*ibid*) describes situations in which a 'sub-voice' may be stronger than the 'pedagogic voice' that is generated from classificatory relations, and may include age, gender, ability and ethnicity. In this case, the sub-voices of 'ability', and 'social class' are the classifiers and for some of these students may always be much louder than the 'artistic' voice they are developing.

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90 It is worth noting that Terry's classification of the National Diploma group by class and ability was not accurate. It was, in reality, a rather diverse group that, for various reasons, had developed a reputation within the college. The group comprised students from very traditionally middle-class families and others from a working-class background; some who had various kinds of learning difficulties and others who could easily have studied A' levels; some who were shy and compliant and others who were disruptive and chaotic.

Dress/space/time

There was weak internal classification within the art department when it came to dress and posture. The students could wear whatever they wanted to college, and so their physical appearance in and out of college was very similar. On my first visit I saw long hair, short hair, piercings, heavy metal T-shirts, fashionable high-street wear, dreadlocks and basketball outfits. This was also true of tutors, who wore casual clothing. One assistant in biker boots, dreadlocks and oversized jewellery, displayed this most conspicuously. There was similarly weak classification when it came to the physical layout of the room. In the classrooms at the other research sites there was a clear 'front' with a white board and desk for the teacher. In contrast, these rooms had a number of work stations with chairs around them and plenty of space for the students to work on their art projects. Tutors would work around the students, and every now and then would gather everyone together for a discussion. This also affected the punctuation and classification of time. Towards the end of my time observing, for example, I arrived to find only a handful of students in the art room. When I asked where everyone was, they replied that everyone had gone home early to finish up their pieces of art and that on many days, most students had left by three o'clock.

6.34 Framing: instructional discourse

I came into the college too late in the course to observe the students being directly taught different artistic methods, but what I did see of transmission was nonetheless far more weakly framed here than at the other sites. Because their work was portfolio based, each student had a great deal of freedom in how they interpreted a brief, what they would produce, and in what medium. Tutors were ultimately in charge of how time was used, but with no 'lessons' as such, students' movement in and around the art rooms was very fluid. In this respect the tutors played the part of guides rather than teachers. Artistic 'knowledge' often appeared to be constructed between tutor and student, in response to students' interpretations of their own and others' work. As students would speak to the group about their work the tutors would comment and ask questions, often abstracting meaning from their work that the students struggled to recognise, but were quick to absorb if it would enhance their chances of creating a more legitimate (i.e more highly graded) text.

Legitimate communication in this context was predominantly reflective, meaning-making and personal. In these moments, the students proffered interpretations of each other's work and made connections between medium and message, which the tutors encouraged and refined, all the while offering recognition rules to help them recognise and then produce a legitimate text. As

a result, some students had learned to take advantage of fortuitous coincidences that could be constructed as lending a layer of meaning to their work.[91] Criteria for success in the art course were both explicit and implicit, making it confusing for some students to have confidence in their work. On one occasion I witnessed Maggie praising Gary's 'Personal and Professional Folder' for the fact that he had included his 'scribblings' in it, and then comparing it with Annalise's.

Maggie:	Yeah, it's hard when you know, all the typed up stuff, and stuff you get off the internet, you just can't tell what was yours.
Annalise:	Yeah but its all mine. Its just my style. I like it to all be neat. I do think all the same stuff I just don't need to scribble it all down.'
	(The group break up and about five minutes later Megan and Annalise have the following conversation)
Megan:	She said I should do some post-it notes and cut them up and put them in
Annalise: talking but	His is in his style, mine's in mine, but Gary's is 'better than mine'…I was to Maggie yesterday and she said mine has to be more individual to get a distinction. She likes Gary's…I think just 'cause its got handwritten stuff, mine doesn't have all that irrelevant stuff.

Annalise was fiercely defensive of her own ability as an artist, her own 'style' even, which just happened to be 'neat'. The irony was not lost on her, that to get a distinction in this course her individuality had to be conformed in order to '… be more individual.' She was not allowed to edit out 'scribbly bits' because art somehow requires the evaluator to be privy to the process, the working out, the incoherence. Annalise was learning that her ideas about art being about everyone's own 'style' are 'incorrect' - she had misrecognised the context and was not able to produce a legitimate text. Here we see an example of art as a singular, "…narcissistic, orientated to their own development", "…a specialised discourse with its own intellectual field" (Bernstein, *ibid*, p. 52).

6.35 Framing: regulative discourse

It was true at every site that students were relating to teachers in a more mature way than they had previously at school, but in the National Diploma group the imaginary subject was both more adult-like, and at the same time more child-like - at least in the case of 'problem students'. On the one hand, the weak internal classification between the personal and the professional meant that the students' (and to some extent tutors') social and pedagogic identities overlapped in the art room, and gave rise to talk that was social and at times peer-like. Here the regulative discourse and its internal hierarchies were not particularly steep nor strongly policed. The tutors

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91 Matt, for example had chosen to use a song by 'Gorillaz' to play over his animation of the group producing their final pieces. It was only later that he connected the lyrics, 'Useless but not for long, the future is coming on' with the poor reputation of the group and their trajectory to university. 'Yeah, well, say, some people say presumably it has a sub meaning? And I just say, 'Yeah...it did! Yeah! I've done that'...But it just happened to be coincidental probably'.

and students dressed similarly and often talked similarly. On the other hand, the college attracted students who were regarded as, and in some cases were, not always 'responsible' in their behaviour, and so (within their focus on generic and basic skills) key 'candidates for labelling' in the college were that students be 'punctual' and 'healthy' citizens as much as they were 'creative' and 'individual' artists.

I found a very strong regulative discourse around the generic skills associated with 'being a good student', which, in the case of 'deviants' was more rigorously monitored and to some degree enforced. This was reflected in the course material that said National Diplomas would "…improve your organisational skills, presentation and communication style, independent and lateral thinking, self-motivation and problem solving abilities", and was evidenced by a particularly persistent focus on attendance. The college chaplain explained in an interview that '…there's a lot of poor motivation, student retention is not what it might be and there's a whole industry within the college to follow up students', and at least five students told me that they had been 'in trouble' for poor attendance.[92] Where most students at the other sites had internalised the regulative discourses associated with most pedagogic contexts including punctuality, politeness and self-presentation, this group was more chaotic. Some students would leave college grounds when they got bored, to drive aound the town, and Tasha, a course assistant told me that 'They just piss around a lot…People don't turn up when they should'.[93]

ECC's policy of 'social inclusion' positioned tutors toward a more therapeutic relationship with their students, shaped in part by a focus on students who could not (or did not want to) continue their education in institutions like school or university, but also by influential governmental discourses such as 'Every Child Matters' (ECM). A conversation with Maggie helped me understand that she saw her role as a tutor largely through the ECM agenda, and that as tutors '…obviously we're encouraged to incorporate the ECM stuff as much as possible'. The five ECM outcomes ('be healthy', 'stay safe', 'enjoy and achieve', 'make a positive contribution' and 'achieve economic well-being') are explicitly central to the college's official discourse, within the 'Values' section of its website. Gleeson (2005, p. 452) writes that as a result of a perceived need to understand and address the biographies of disadvantaged students within FE, '…teachers move from being a subject specialist to a welfare or key skills function'. As a result, the two female tutors in particular were perceived to 'mother' the students, and were sometimes derided as a result. Gav told me that Susan '…was the one chasing me up the whole time, yeah…she

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92 Rob explained that if he didn't get 85 per cent attendance he would fail the course, but that '...they won't kick people off the course because they get, they get funding and stuff...so everyone's sort of laid back'.

93 On my first afternoon at the college I witnessed the group's attempt to have a discussion quickly descend into an argument, peppered with profanities. It was in this context that Maggie the course tutor introduced me as 'Lucie from Cambridge University…she is doing research on naughty children!'

kinda pressures you to do what she wants you to do sort of thing, doesn't let you go off on your own'. In contrast, a number of the young men appreciated their male tutor Terry, who was very happy to let them do whatever they wanted to, including not attend his sessions.

Whilst observing one of Maggie's six-weekly catch up sessions with her students, I witnesed this therapeutic relationship focus particularly on health. She spent a long time with two of the male students discussing low productivity, motivation and concentration, making various kinds of diagnoses ('I think you've got a bit of ADHD to be honest…Have you heard of dyspraxia?'), and offering recommendations ('The more healthy you eat, the less you tolerate bad food'). Maggie explained to me because '…Kamil hasn't got a mum, his dad is not around very much', he particularly needed the kind of practical support and advice that she could offer. Again, traditional classifications between private and public, body and mind were weakened in this half-hour session with Maggie that was far more like a counselling session than a tutor review.

6.4 Leabury High

Leabury High's dominant pedagogic code was similar to many comprehensive schools that have adopted successive changes of policy over a number of years. Its curriculum was strongly classified and there was similarly strong framing in the regulative discourse in terms of 'acceptable' dress and behaviour, although not to the same degree or within the same tradition as the Grange.

6.41 Background

Leabury High is a large mixed community school for 11-18 year olds, and a specialist sports college and training school. It comprises a lower and upper school (1350 students) and sixth-form (250 students), across two sites occupying over 40 acres. Leabury High was graded as a 'Good' school, in both its 2005 and 2008 Ofsted inspections. The proportion of students gaining at least five A*-C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, was significantly above the national average figure in 2007, while the distribution of grades at A' Level in 2007 was broadly in line with those seen nationally, which "…given the students' starting points…represents good achievement" (Oftsed, 2008). Staff described the school in similar ways, telling me that it was '…a good school, with a good reputation', although Mr Clifford the Head of Business Studies felt that the school was in something of a holding pattern as a result of having had '…three heads and two interregnums' in recent years. He told me:

It's a good school, it gets good results, it's never had a bad Ofsted, you know. But we're never excellent. We're always that bit short of where we should be. Partly marketing, and partly I'm not sure we've had the vision -- We haven't lost staff, but at the same time you just long for someone with direction.

At the time of research, the aim of the school, as stated in the Acting Principal's introduction to the prospectus, was: "To discover and develop the potential in all of our pupils so that in time they can successfully manage the challenges and opportunities of the adult world".

This discourse of 'developing potential' in order to 'manage challenges and opportunities' was suggestive of a broad intake of students in terms of both social background and measured achievement. Mrs Tomlinson, the Head of sixth-form described the school and sixth-form as '… a very broad church'. This was reinforced by Ofsted's judgement that "Students come from a very diverse range of social, economic and ethnic backgrounds", and that although the school "…serves an urban catchment with lower-than-average levels of social disadvantage…The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs". Forty languages were spoken in the school at the time of the inspection, and one third of the school's intake were from ethnic backgrounds other than White British.

An interesting reflection of this large and broad mix of students was that I was told there was no typical Leabury High student. The school as a whole contained both '…very clever children', a 'significant proportion' who were the first in their family to go to university, (Mrs Tomlinson) and those who '…are all going to be builders like their dads' (Jenny, a Learning Support Assistant). The sixth-form was similarly diverse, with '…students that go on to Oxbridge' and those '…who are at the lower end in actual terms of what they're achieving in their A Levels' (Mrs Tomlinson). Due to a variety of providers in the local 16-19 'market' there was fairly high turnover in the transition from school to sixth-form, with around half of the sixth-form comprising students who had transferred internally from Leabury High, and the rest entering from a range of 11-16 schools within the city and surrounding county. Similarly, some Leabury High students transferred out to other (often higher-status) 16-19 institutions.

A number of staff in the sixth-form described a perceived broadening, of both the social backgrounds and academic ability of the students in recent years. Mrs Bell whose tutor group were my main sample at Leabury, had worked at the school for 14 years and believed that the academic standards of A' Level students were lower than they used to be. In her opinion the high number of students 'retaking' their exams was because some students were simply not ready for

A' Level.[94] It certainly appeared that, in comparison with A 'Level students at the Grange, Leabury High students referred more extensively to 'retakes'. A third of the students I interviewed had retaken their entire lower sixth year because their grades were not good enough, and at least four students spoke about retaking modules. On results day, August 2007, a long line of students who didn't get the grades they needed waited to be advised by Mrs Tomlinson, and most were advised to retake an exam or the entire year.

In a discussion with Mrs Tomlinson I asked if she concurred with Mrs Bell's belief that academic standards had fallen in sixth-forms, and she answered with the following:

> I've got five children myself, four of whom have gone to university and students are wooed, they're wooed by banks they're wooed by universities, they are treated as special cases. In previous years, even say 20 years ago, universities were elite academic institutions to which you could gain entry as long as you fulfilled their criteria. That's no longer the case. You still have elite establishments, you still have the Russell Group, but they still have to have the bums on seats

She identified New Labour's policy of widening participation as the cause of the changing composition of the sixth-form, including the introduction of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA), which one student told me that '…loads of people are on. They only come 'cause they get paid to come to college'. This was reinforced again, in an interview with Mr Halliday who suggested that the sixth-form was particularly successful at serving students whose low grades might have precluded a successful transition to university.

> What you get here is a greater chance, I think, of surviving…I think we're better equipped at sweeping people up from the bottom, so those in the middle and the bottom, that's where I think we make a difference if we're realistic.

It seems likely then that the position of Leabury High in the 16-19 local educational market place and its evolving pedagogic identity was the result of such changes in the composition of its students and their backgrounds and achievements, which meant that the school was not in a position to project a 'typical' imaginary subject. Similarly, because of the growing diversification of courses and routes, confident generalisations about a dominant pedagogic code or the overall strength of classification and framing of the courses offered would be hazardous. Nevertheless, as is indicated below, the school had developed a quite strong and shared narrative centred on a notion of its offering a distinctive 'pastoral' mission as a 'caring' and diverse institution whose small size, relative to other 16-19 providers, enabled staff to give greater individual attention to students.

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94 She gave the example of a student in her sociology class who had achieved two Cs at GCSE (one of which was Food Technology) and who was accepted to do A' Levels on the assumption '…that she could retake GCSEs and get 5 Cs'.

6.42 External Classification

Leabury High sixth-form was strongly classified and differentiated from its competitor sixth-form colleges, and had sought to create and preserve a particular niche in the local market. I heard the identity and ethos of the school described with remarkable consistency by students and staff, which led me to believe that it was a much-rehearsed narrative. The essentials were that due to strong boundaries in terms of the numbers in each class, and in the sixth-form as a whole, Leabury High was a friendly place where students were more likely to meet new people than remain in a small and stagnant group, and where they would receive much greater support from the attentive tutors. This distinctiveness was highlighted by the drawing of direct comparisons with the school's main competitors - the two other very large sixth-form colleges in the city. Strikingly, several students used the same phrase; that because of the size of these other colleges '…you're more like a number than an individual' (Kate), whereas at Leabury High '…you're not just like a number like at the bigger ones' (Josh).

The staff rehearsed the same narrative about the sixth-form's ethos. When I asked Mr Halliday what Leabury High's strengths were in comparison to these other colleges, he replied:

> Probably that warmer atmosphere, that friendly atmosphere, that atmosphere where students might feel lost in a larger organisation…So probably nurturing that is where we work well. And that is not ability dependent, it's more that we have a certain type of student. Leabury High isn't right for certain students who want to have that experience of a massive sixth-form centre and the buzz of new faces all the time.

Reflecting the high degree of awareness and reflexivity school management teams in this city displayed about the characteristics of the educational market place and the need to position their institutions as advantageously as possible within it, this informant commented: '(The city) is a particularly competitive place for post-16s to study' and consequently '…we cannot ever hope to achieve the results that Winfield achieves, and so we have to compete in different ways'.[95] They did so, he suggested, by 'adding value' to students who came into the college with low grades.

One feature of this strong external classification was the management team's focus on marketing the sixth-form effectively.[96] In particular, the team were very aware that they would need to publish their performance against external criteria such as leaver destinations and A' Level results. On the day A' Level results were anounced in 2007 I was observing Mrs Tomlinson in her office. She was writing down the students' university destinations as they were confirmed and at one

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95 Winfield was a nearby state-run sixth-form college that achieved very good results.

96 They had just issued a glossy brochure in which Mrs Bell saw '…reflections of when I was in the marketing department in a big company, having to have the best photographer, hand-pick children who are of mixed ethnicity, both genders, equally represented'.

point declared, 'Tracy is for Lincolnshire', to which Mr Halliday replied, 'Yes, but she's not sure if she wants to go there'. Mrs Tomlinson retorted, 'Yes, but for our destination purposes, she's in'. When I asked her about marketing the sixth-form in an interview, Mrs Tomlinson made clear that the small size of the sixth-form meant that its status as an 11-18 institution was constantly precarious in relation to its much larger competitors. She told me that marketing had…

> …always been part of the head of sixth's role at Leabury High in a way that it isn't at other school sixth-forms. Because at most places the cohort just carries through. Whereas we spend a lot of time in the autumn term, I go out to as many schools as possible and deliver assemblies. We have about 16 evenings where I visit schools or their post-16 parents evenings. It is very demanding.

6.43 Internal classification

Leabury High's curriculum was predominantly a 'collection code', with the full day divided into five one-hour lessons. In the sixth-form the students were assigned some free periods in which to study, but which were usually used to socialise in the common room. The strong classification of time in order to serve the study of strongly differentiated A' Level subjects was similar to the Grange, but overall time was less strictly monitored and regulated. Students were more often late, and did not necessarily treat the hours in their day as slots in their diary to be filled with productive activity, as the Grange students were more likely to. Dress was also less strictly classified. Students in the sixth-form were allowed to wear jeans, trainers and 'hoodies', and the only guidelines were that "…students ensure that their dress is tidy and appropriate to our educational environment" (student handbook). Because of its broad intake, the school also sought to classify its own internal 11-16 students from Year 10 onwards according to their post-16 destinations. This included choosing students who they believed to have A' Level potential for workshops in Year 10, and organising one-off events for those who would likely take a more vocational route, including apprenticeship days, and visits e.g. to army barracks or car repair shops.

6.44 Framing: instructional discourse

I observed a few lessons at Leabury High and found that in all cases the teacher retained control over the sequence, pace and content of the communication, and the criteria against which it was judged, although the framing appeared weaker in terms of the regulative discourse within lessons. I have reproduced here my observation notes during a Psychology lesson, as an example.

Mrs Bell explains that the lesson will be spent planning an essay that they are going to have to write. Six boys and eight girls are sat at tables in a horseshoe and Mrs Bell is behind a desk at the front. As soon as the lesson begins there is instant interaction with her: 'What are we doing?' asks one boy, while another girl whines 'It's cold in here, I'm hungry'. The students are all dressed casually in jeans, boots and hoodies, and are chatting to each other while two boys have earphones in. At one point she leaves the room and the volume increases. On returning she tells a girl 'Put your phone away'. One boy is eating crisps, listening to his iPod and talking at the same time. Mrs Bell remarks to him, 'I thought the idea of these is they keep you inside your head'. She goes over to a group and stands over their work, and they quieten and focus as she does, aware that they are now being monitored. A girl is now listening to another boy's iPod and pulling out the earpiece says 'I'm not being attitudey, but I don't understand it. Miss can you teach this to us?' Two thirds of the group are not doing what they were told to. The lesson is cut short, and Mrs Bell says 'You can go now'

Although Mrs Bell was still in control of the lesson, the students were inattentive for most of it, and the result was that she gave up on the lesson and allowed them to leave and finish their planning later. Mrs Tomlinson had told me that if students went to the other very academic sixth-form college they '…have to be instantly an independent learner, and you have to be someone who is relatively confident'. In contrast the students in this pedagogic context struggled to work independently - e.g. 'Miss, can you teach this to us?'.

6.45 Framing: regulative Discourse

Framing in the regulative discourse at Leabury High was, again, weaker than the Grange but stronger than at ECC. Expectations about conduct, character and manner appeared to be in keeping with the tradition of such community schools - with a strong sense of 'carry-over' from the 11-16 to the 16-19 students. For example, LCD screens around the two sites rotated messages to pupils every few minutes, about events, activities and, of course, behaviour. One, with a picture of a clock said "Punctuality is important. Be on time for lessons"' Another reminded the students, "Polite respectful behaviour only. Treat others the way you'd like them to treat you". The third was about being prepared "Equipment is essential for lessons. Bring pen, paper, ruler to lessons", and the fourth about self-presentation "Uniform is important to make a good impression. No nose/lip piercings, discrete jewellery and make-up only, stud earrings". In this respect the 'candidates for positive labelling' were categories like 'punctual', 'polite', 'respectful', 'well-prepared' and 'smart'. And, while sixth-formers were allowed to be more relaxed, they were still expected to set an example to younger students.

Relatively stronger framing was also evident in efforts to regulate aspects of students' non-academic lives at a whole school level - particularly within the Every Child Matters framework. It

was clear that the school was responsive to such policy directives.[97] As with Maggie at ECC, the language of ECM had become central to teachers' reflection on their professional role and competence. In explaining her role in the sixth-form Mrs Bell remarked: 'I think my subjects give good Every Child Matters, and all these acronyms, because I think that teaching sociology, they learn about family life, they learn about politics'. There was also a visibly strong drive toward healthy eating, as part of the five ECM outcomes. Ofsted (2008) reported that "Students respond positively to the school's strong promotion of healthy lifestyles" - although various conversations in the staff room told me that not everyone was happy with the enforcement of such regimes upon staff as well as students.

Another significant aspect of the range of the regulative discourse of the sixth-form, especially as compared with ECC, was the provision for, and participation in, extra-curricular activities. Again, Ofsted (2008) reported that:

> Participation rates in the wide range of extra-curricular activities are impressive. Students are given countless opportunities to assume responsibility and to develop their leadership skills within and beyond the school community. A significant number participate in volunteer activities and Duke of Edinburgh Award and in other ways such as fund-raising for charity.

In the sixth-form this participation was presented as both worthwhile and enjoyable, but, significantly, also as very important for UCAS applications. Such insrumentalism was embraced by both staff and students, helping them to see that such activity displayed, or could be represented as, evidence of 'target' characteristics such as selflessness, perseverance and teamwork that were promoted and ostensibly valued within the regulative discourse of the universities they were applying to.

Classification/Framing in the tutor group

As with the other case studies, tutor time was more weakly framed than lessons by virtue of its function as part of a pastoral structure. The Leabury High tutor group I observed was perhaps the most weakly framed of all three contexts because of Mrs Bell's very 'easy-going' nature. She did not have to 'mother' her students to the extent of Maggie at ECC, and nor did she engage her students in the kinds of banter enjoyed by Dr Macintyre's group at the Grange. In comparison to the Grange, morning and afternoon registration mostly consisted of one or two students sitting in the classroom chatting while the rest poked their heads around the door in quick succession, only stopping long enough to say 'I'm here Miss', and wait for her nod, before

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97 One corridor housed a huge display with the ECM brand (a sheep) at the centre and the five goals shooting off it, with examples of how each of these was being 'delivered'.

disappearing again. At the other sites I was able to witness the group interact with each other and their tutor on a number of successive days and phases, but this tutor group was fairly fluid and it was rare to see them all together. As with Dr Macintyre, Mrs Bell had a reputation for being relaxed with some of the sixth-form rules, permitting her students to be late, and sometimes being late herself. One girl remarked, 'She's good, she's laid-back, she lets you arrive late to her lesson'. Her approach of treating the students as adults, and doing little to engage them if they were not interested, was popular with most, but for other students who did turn up on time, it seemed to be frustrating.

6.46 Generic modes at Leabury High

Generic modes featured strongly at Leabury High, as they also had done at ECC and at the Grange - in part, because of the school's strong programme of careers guidance and enterprise education for all students, which positioned students more explicitly toward employment, and the 'transferable skills' that would be useful to them. The school ran a number of enterprise activities within its work-related learning curriculum, including workshops, assemblies, work experience, Young Enterprise, a business simulation and a programme to identify 'natural entrepreneurs', and Ofsted reported that when leaving school, Leabury High students were "…mature young adults who are very employable and also well prepared for the next stage of their education and for later life" (Ofsted, 2008).

However, the 'flexible performances' (Bernstein *ibid*) associated with this mode were also visible beyond these more directly vocational programmes. The generic skill of self-reflection was a strong feature of the pedagogy of self-marketing at the school as a whole - from 11 to 18, largely as the result of various government policies that were intended to expand students' abilities to take responsibility for their own learning and progression. Although many of these initiatives were focused on the pre-16 cohort, they were intended to enhance students' chances of getting into employment or university post-16. Mrs Scott, the head of careers, explained to me that 'Individual Learning Planning' was intended '…to raise aspirations for students and to raise their motivational level. They have to think about their personal strengths and weaknesses and their skills, their academic goals and then their career and personal goals', and were intended to form the basis of the student's Personal Statement, as part of their application to sixth-form college. Although she explained that interviews with tutors were intended to help students identify how they were 'good at listening' or 'going to get better at maths', some kids were just 'not self-aware at all'. Mrs Tomlinson agreed that 'If you talk targets with all the kids in the school, the ones who are not particularly bright either come up with outrageous targets that don't mean anything, or

they'll say what they think you want to hear'. These staff saw limits to the value of these reflexive tools for helping students take responsibility for their own learning and career progression, particularly, ironically enough, for those who the plans were primarily intended for.

6.5 Conclusion

I have attempted, in this chapter, to present the context of my research into self-marketing through analysing the dominant pedagogic codes of each of the case study sites I visited. Drawing on a Bernsteinian theoretical framework I have shown that the 'imaginary subject' projected by principles of classification and framing differed at each site. Strong classification and framing at the Grange projected an imaginary subject who was socialised into hierarchical social relations, a retrospective 'academic' orientation to knowledge and a strong disciplinary identity. Dr Macintyre's tutor group perhaps experienced weaker framing than others in the school, on the basis that having learned the rules, they could choose when and how to 'play the game' of negotiating such hierarchies. At ECC, classification and framing were much weaker in response to the imaginary subject's imputed educational deficit, and internally, the boundaries between the National Diploma and Foundation art groups were maintained by principles of ability and class. Art, as a singular, sat uneasily alongside a strong focus on transferable/key skills - orienting students inward to its own language and field of practice, rooted in symbolic control, and outward in its concern for progress, transferable skills, and employability. Finally, Leabury High appeared to sit somewhere between the two other cases, with classification and framing being stronger than at ECC, but weaker than at the Grange. As with ECC, its intake was broad, and partly as a result its self-proclaimed niche strategy was in 'adding value' to their sixth-form students.

Seven
Self-marketing: recognition of a destination habitus

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I demonstrated how the dominant pedagogic codes of the three sites may be seen as projecting particular imaginary subjects, adjusted to both the perceived and in some respects the real characteristics of the student body of each institution. In this chapter I will describe how these imaginary subjects are paralleled by the 'destination habitus' of various university courses. I begin by suggesting that the dynamic and stratified field of Higher Education generates a destination habitus, that is a composite of both the status of the institution and the dominant discourse of the discipline studied. Drawing on signalling theory (Spence 1973), I argue that the more competitive the institution and discipline, the more important it is for the institution to be able to differentiate between students, and consequentially the more important for students to be able to send clear and appropriate signals of their quality through intentional self-marketing. Drawing on data from the Grange school, I will suggest that where competitive pressures exist, there is high investment by institutions and schools in anticipating which signals are most powerful, but that over-investment in these signals can cause them to become inflated, so that a search for more powerful signals is then begun. In essence, to maximise their chances of success students need to be able to effectively *recognise* the destination habitus, and then be able to *realise* an appropriate response in terms of creating a projection of the appropriate ideal self. This chapter will, I hope, demonstrate how the identity and position of a university course (i.e. the destination habitus) interacts with the recognition and realisation rules that are developed by an individual to shape an individuals' self-marketing practices in application to their chosen universities.

7.2 Destination habitus

The field of Higher Education is dynamic but also relatively clearly stratified (Reay, David & Ball 2001; Brooks, 2006), and students' success in accessing courses is, to a greater or lesser extent, predicated upon these characteristics, as well as on their understanding of them. Amongst other key variables, shifts in the classification and framing values of different institutions and courses within them, affect and recreate new power relations across the field, and are affected by each university's responses to the constraints and opportunities created by policy initiatives, economic considerations and various other factors, some within and some beyond their control. As a result, the status of different institutions and courses can shift, and consequently so can the requirements for entry to study. In their research on the impact of the pedagogic environment on access to Higher Education, Reay et al. (*op cit*, paragraph 1.3), use the term 'institutional habitus' to describe "…a complex amalgam of agency and structure" that "…could be understood as the impact of a cultural group or social class on an individual's behaviour as it is mediated through an organisation". Following Rupp and De Lange (1989), they argue that the status of a sixth-form or FE college is determined by the level of university education it prepares its 'typical' students for, and this status is therefore an important part of institutional habitus, along with "…other inter-related elements, most notably, curriculum offered, organisational practices and less tangible, but equally important cultural and expressive characteristics", which they suggest are analogous to Bernstein's (1975) 'expressive order' of each school.

In many ways this concept is a more inclusive, though less clearly defined, version of Bernstein's 'pedagogic code', but I will draw from it here in considering how the characteristics of the destination institution (i.e. university applied to) impact on the pedagogy of self-marketing of each of my sample schools/colleges, and thence on the practices these pedagogies give rise to. I suggest that there are two particular aspects to the destination, which together structure what will count as a legitimate text, or performance, when it comes to the students' self-marketing. These are, firstly, the status of the institution compared to others in the field, and secondly the discourse of the particular discipline that the student is applying to study. I will call the sum of these, the 'destination habitus', in other words, the habitus relayed by a particular course within a particular institution (see Figure 7.1).[98]

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98 I do not mean, by this, to suggest that the field of Higher Education is actually structured quite so simply or uniformly. It is of course the case that disciplines have different status relevant to one other, and that one institution may be perceived to be as good as another. I simply want to express that, at a very basic level, these two elements intersect to generate a habitus, much like the imaginary subject previously discussed. How exactly this habitus is relayed is another question, although position within league tables, marketing material, and general reputation will all play a part.

Figure 7.1 Destination habitus
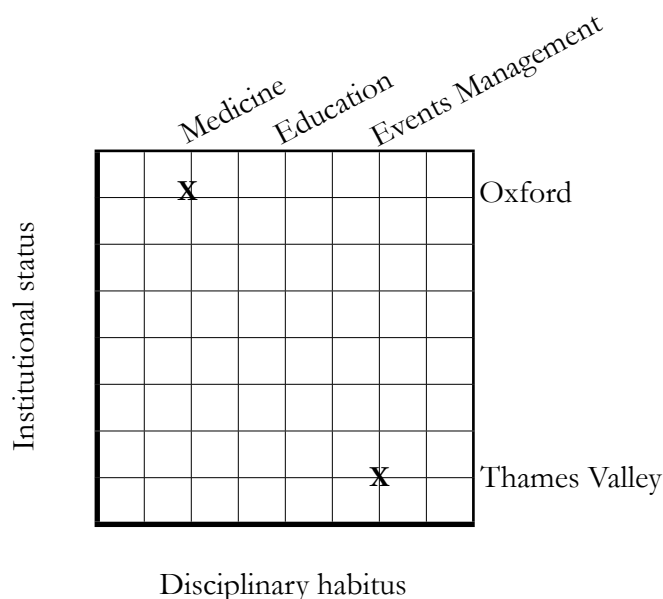
Students then need to recognise this habitus and realise a legitimate self-marketing response in their UCAS application.[99] Of course, what counts here as 'legitimate' is structured by the particular positioning of the destination habitus. The expansion of Higher Education has resulted in its increasing stratification, so that while it is easier to get into university, it can be harder to get into what some perceive to be the 'right' kind of university (McDonough, 1997). A student may have to employ different strategies to gain entry to study English literature at Oxbridge as compared with some 'new' or '1992' universities. Similarly, the requirements of studying medicine versus, say, events management will be different within a single university because of the habitus projected by each degree course. The entry requirements of medicine - a particularly competitive course - were rehearsed in great detail at the Grange, for example, where a tutor explained during an afternoon on the UCAS process:

> For medical applicants there are plenty of departments where they will score everything that is on your application. Your GCSEs, your AS, your predicted grades, your A2s, your Personal Statement, your reference. Everything is scored in the way they've worked out, and you have to get a certain score in order to qualify for an interview at all.

It is evident that the particular dynamics of the field then affect the significance or use of the Personal Statement or interview as part of the application process, so that for medicine these may well be given a numerical score and therefore require high investment from the applicant.

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99 University applicants can choose up to five courses, so there may in fact be multiple destination habituses that they will need to consider. This will, of course, depend on students' strategies and choices. Applying for one course (say Law) at five institutions of similar status would require less adaptation of self-marketing practices than hedging ones bets by applying to a broad range of institutions.

While some of these status characteristics were broadly stable (Oxbridge has always been high-status for example), others were, or were seen to be, more unstable. Moreover, where they were unstable, or had recently shifted, the changed principles of classification and framing that resulted could be more or less visible and explicit, and as a result create more or less uncertainty for schools and students in terms of what might constitute a legitimate self-marketing performance or text. Although lengthy, the following quotation illustrates well how students and schools may have access to more or less information about the dynamics and status of a particular course or institution. Here Mr Williams, the Head of sixth-form at the Grange, explained to me how the school's knowledge of both courses and colleges at the University of Cambridge enabled them to help students make strategic decisions in the course of making an application.

> We make this information available to them, and we'll sit them down and say, 'Look, you're applying to Trinity. What on earth are you applying to Trinity for, you won't get in'. And we know that Trinity, for any of their sciences, will only take people who've got over 90 per cent in their AS, because that is their biggest discriminator, and that helps them to get down to who they're going to interview. And even then 90% is not enough, you still have to be good at interview. They've got a very good correlation at Trinity between AS performance and first class degree…And it doesn't work in the arts, because arts subjects are marked so erratically, and so subjectively.

He went on to explain that they therefore didn't have such a defined matrix for art students because certain colleges '…don't take many arts students, so Trinity is virtually all natural sciences and biomedical". Such detailed knowledge of the field of Higher Education clearly advantages students at schools which can offer it.

7.3 Institutional status

The destination habitus is, then, a reflection of the particular status of the institution and discipline at any one moment in time relative to others, as well as of other less tangible qualities that are suggested by Bourdieu's original use of the term (and by Bernstein's concept of 'expressive order'). The concept of status is particularly significant here however, because it captures the means by which institutions or disciplines maintain or challenge the classifications that sustain particular distributions of power. Simply put, the higher the status an institution or discipline enjoys, the more access to its places will be regulated by competition. And where there is strong competition, the more important it is for an institution to have effective means of differentiating the best applicants from the good.

7.31 Signalling to differentiate

Here it may be useful to draw on Spence's (1973) theory of signalling. Although an economist who applied the theory originally to the labour market, Spence acknowledges that other quasi-market phenomena (including admissions procedures) could benefit from this perspective. In this early paper, he argues that hiring (or in this case accepting an applicant) is a costly investment and creates an incentive for the employer (or admissions tutor) to screen carefully for the right kind of person, using surface data that act as a proxy for the real thing of interest (e.g. work ethic, academic ability). Within this data he distinguishes between *indices* that are thought to be immutable, such as age and gender, and *signals*, which are personal attributes that a person has some level of control over, such as level of education. Individuals invest in signals to send to employers, "…if there is sufficient return as defined by the offered wage schedule", (*ibid*, p. 358), or in this context, if there is sufficient benefit to the applicant to invest in signals to send to an admissions tutor. Spence (*ibid*, p. 358) writes, "It is not difficult to see that a signal will not effectively distinguish one applicant from another unless the costs of signalling are negatively correlated with productive capability". For example, there is a time and energy cost in completing a Duke of Edinburgh award. For 'lazy' students, this cost may be deemed too high, and therefore an admissions tutor can be confident that those who display the signal of having completed the award on their Personal Statement are probably hard-working and self-reliant.

Spence then illuminates the ways in which certain signals can become more or less favourable to employers as their beliefs adjust concerning the relationship between, say, productivity and signals (see Figure 7.2). This 'signalling equilibrium' is essentially a feedback loop that confirms itself, with some small adjustments over time based on new information that is made available to employers as they better learn the relationship between signals and productivity. Each cycle generates the next one, so that this equilibrium, where self-confirming "…can be thought of as a set of employer beliefs that generate wage schedules, applicant signalling decisions, hiring, and ultimately new market data over time that are consistent with the initial beliefs" (*ibid*, p. 314).

Figure 7.2 Spence's signalling theory
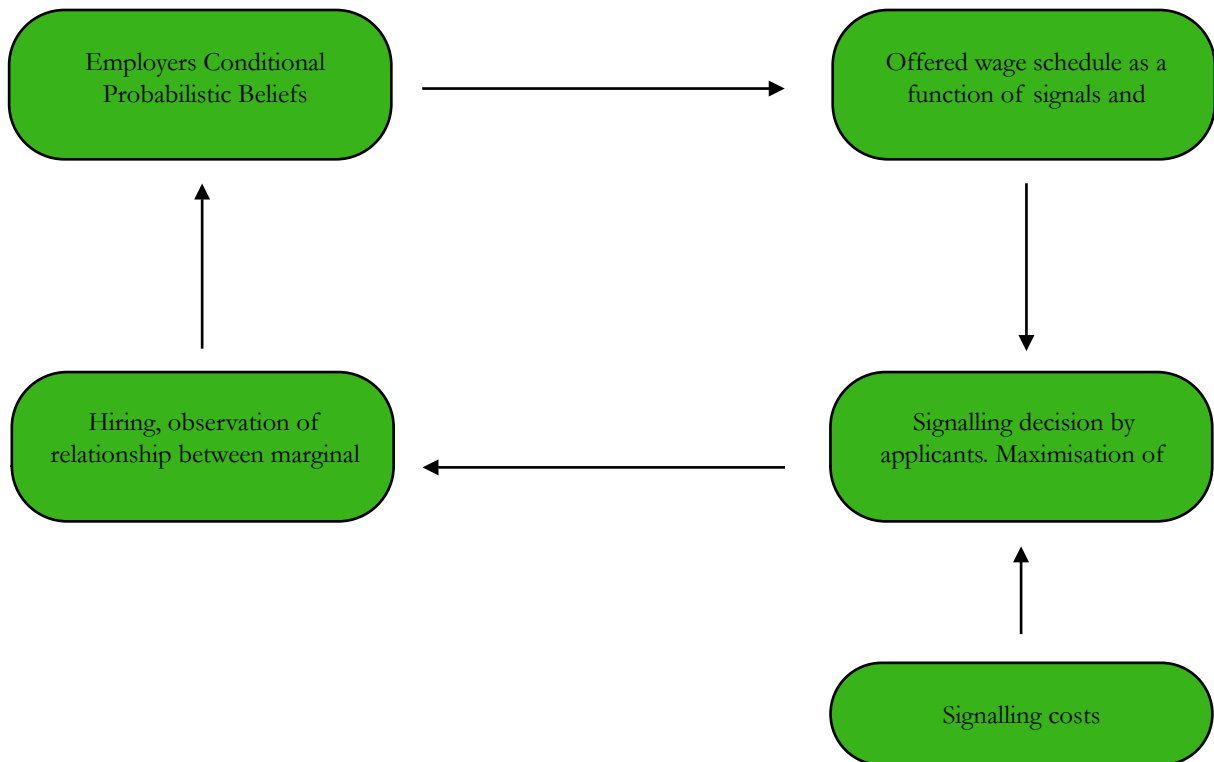
Figure 1: Spence (1973, p. 359)

This loop can be adjusted to reflect the ways in which signalling information is used in the quasi market of Higher Education. Rather than wages, students are offered the chance to gain a degree, from a university with a particular status. Students then decide whether or not it is worth their while to invest in the signals that will hopefully convince the university to admit them (which are likely to be a combination of both grades/points and Personal Statement/interview). By observing those that are admitted, the university then refines its beliefs about the quality of the signals received as a proxy of students' underlying academic and personal qualities.[100] See Figure 7.3.

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[100] To provide an example of how such a feedback loop operates, self-marketing/impression management guidance became popular in the 1980s, but so too did a parallel market in advice about *detecting* impression management. Broussard & Brannen (1986) for example, noted growing skepticism among readers of CVs, who had begun actively searching for ambiguities, questionable statements, and the kinds of embellishments, inflations and exaggerations that would provide the negative information they needed to discount an applicant. This may well be attributable to employers' observations of a lack of correlation between certain impression management signals and worker quality.

Figure 7.3 Self-marketing to universities as signalling

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┌─────────────────────┐                    ┌─────────────────────┐
│                     │ ─────────────────> │                     │
│ 1) University's     │                    │ 2) Offer of earning │
│    beliefs          │                    │    a degree         │
└─────────────────────┘                    └─────────────────────┘
         ↑                                           │
         │                                           ↓
┌─────────────────────┐                    ┌─────────────────────┐
│ 5) Admission,       │                    │                     │
│ observation of      │ <───────────────── │ 3) Signalling       │
│ relationship        │                    │ decision by         │
│ between' qualities  │                    │ applicants          │
└─────────────────────┘                    └─────────────────────┘
                                                     ↑
                                                     │
                                           ┌─────────────────────┐
                                           │                     │
                                           │ 4) Signalling costs │
                                           │                     │
                                           └─────────────────────┘
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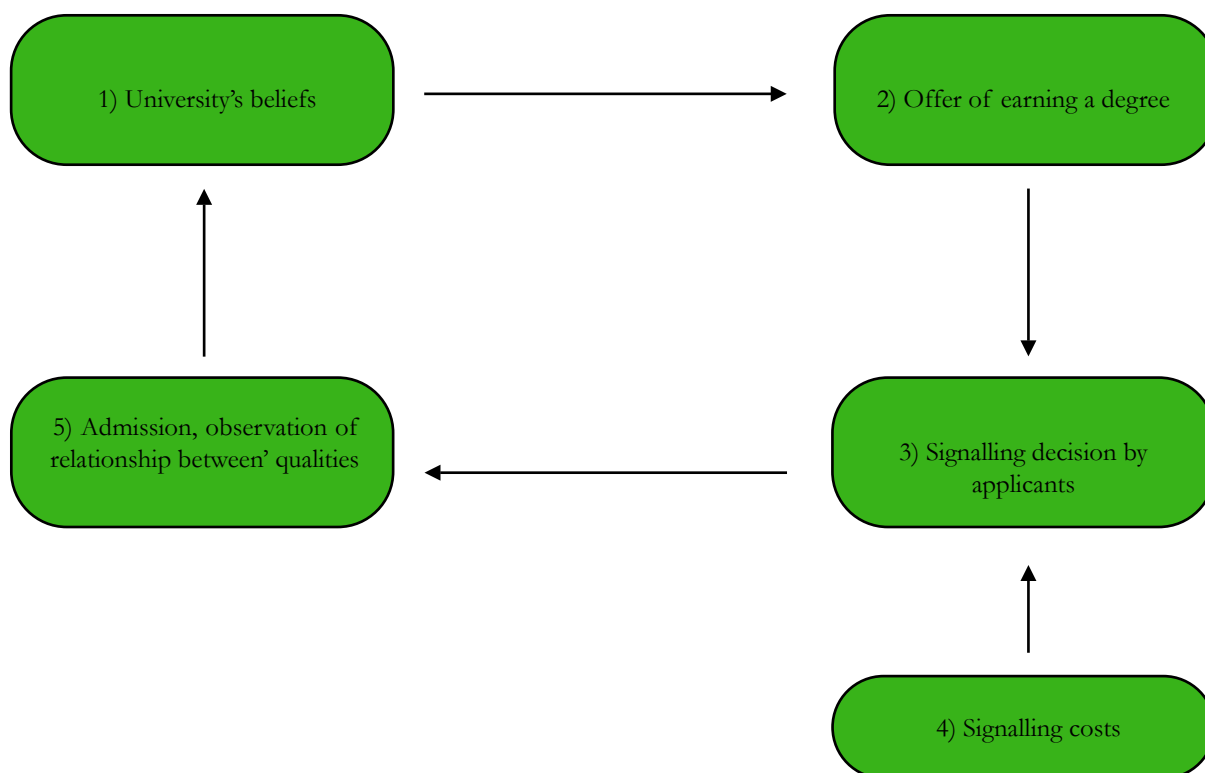
It is the dynamic relationship between 2, 3 and 4 that is the main focus of this study. In considering whether or not to seek to earn a degree in a particular discipline from a particular university (2) the student has to take into consideration the costs of sending the appropriate signals (3 and 4). It is (2) that encapsulates the idea of a destination habitus that students need to be able to recognise, while (3) and (4) represent their choice to invest in the realisation of a legitimate text, or in this language, signal.

There may be a large number of signals that the student (or their parent) invests in, not least the type of school attended, the current course studied, and grades predicted or achieved. But I am interested here in the signals that students send about themselves through practices of self-marketing, in Personal Statements and interviews, and the ways in which these differ according to the destination habitus. In particular, the theory can help to describe how students signal, or 'countersignal' to differentiate themselves from other students as a response to the level of competition for places on a course.[101]

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101 The notion of signals as I am using them here clearly has some resonance with the concept of various kinds of cultural capital (embodied, objectified, institutionalised) as they are accumulated, displayed and read by various agents (Bourdieu 1986). Both recognise the cost and investment in various kinds of capital/signal undertaken by different groups, and both recognise the non-monetary nature of these products. How self-consciously and rationally an agent invests in these signals or forms of capital is not discussed by Spence.

7.32 Institutional status and the problem of inflated signals

To illustrate the impact of institutional status on self-marketing practice, I will draw mostly on data collected at the Grange, where it was reiterated to me throughout my fieldwork that students' typical destinations were high-status institutions. Mr Parker, who had been teaching at the Grange for many years, explained to me that both parents and students '…tend to concentrate on the Ivy League ones', while Mr Williams, speaking to a group of lower sixth students, remarked that, 'Most of the universities you'll be applying to will be interested in grades not points, unless you're applying to the University of East London and some of the less competitive universities'. My data echoed that of Reay et al. (2001, paragraph 6.4) who found that students at the private schools in their study were highly aware of the "…relative ranking of elite universities" and had "…detailed, well-informed knowledge of the 'premier division". As a result of setting their sights on these 'competitive' universities, students at the Grange needed to be aware of the power of different signals, when it came to accessing university courses and marketing themselves.

Grades

A and AS Level results were still the 'gold standard' that sorted students, as the Grange students were told by an admissions tutor from Cambridge at their Higher Education evening: 'It's exam results that will really help convince us. AS grades, and in the case of Cambridge we ask for your unit marks, but Oxford doesn't'. For Cambridge, then, the problem of differentiation has led to a policy of comparing the *composition* of students' final grades, and shows that it is crucial for an aspiring Oxbridge applicant to know the different ways that these two elite universities seek to identify the most academically able applicants. As the number of applicants to universities increases, along with the proportion gaining 'A' grades, Mr Parker, a tutor at the Grange told me that '…exam results don't differentiate as well as they used to, between the good and the very good candidates'.[102] This is certainly reinforced by ongoing debates amongst Russell group universities about how to identify the best candidates, and the adoption by some universities of the new A* grade at A' Level for this purpose.[103]

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102 Applicants to universities in the UK increased by 19% between 2003 and 2008 (UCAS online statistics) and A' Level grades rose for the 27th consecutive year in 2009, with more than one in four entries receiving an A (JCQ online statistics)

103 Cambridge, for example, has adjusted its standard offer from AAA to A*AA for 2010 entry (University of Cambridge, 2009)

References and perceptions of their value

Mr Parker identified this 'credential inflation' as the reason '…universities are increasingly turning to LNAT and the BMAT, and the Oxford and Cambridge aptitude tests, because they need a reliable source of information'. He also suggested that these were more potent signals than school references or Personal Statements as a result. A Cambridge admissions tutor, speaking to Grange students at a Higher Education evening stated that the school was…

> …really good at references and tells us what we most need to know - that you're really interested in your subject, they will probably give us some indication of how you compare to your peers, we take that very very seriously.

However, Mr Parker dismissed them as, '…works of fiction. They are, literally. Essentially we have to write a positive report on everybody, no negative comments. Once you do that, you have to distinguish between two individuals of different abilities by simply upping the adjectives'. While he assured me 'they don't lie', he believed that the students right to see their reference had made staff '…worried about the lawyers, and we also are apparently desperate to get people into the right universities, and it's in everybody's interests to, individually, to up them. But it doesn't help'.

The Personal Statement as an inflated signal

At the Grange, there was an acknowledgement that while students, teachers and parents experienced great pressure to invest heavily in producing excellent Personal Statements, they were, in reality, not a very powerful signal. This arguably irrational compulsion to invest in a weak signal was the result, Mt Parker reflected, of the need to stand out.

> Now that a lot of them are getting very good grades, because good grades are easier to get than they used to be, they feel the need to distinguish themselves from other people who also have good grades. Perhaps that, and the pressure on people to do well is increasing - expectations are increasing

Such pressure and expectation ultimately originates with parents and incentivised the Grange to 'increasingly spoon-feed', which '…contributes a lot more to the whole university entrance procedure than it used to, in all sorts of ways' (Mr Parker). Intense support from the school was then supplemented by students' tendency to conform to established templates of self-marketing and resulted in various kinds of cliche as I discovered when observing Mr Parker advising students in a session on Personal Statements.

| Interviewer: | It was interesting to note how frequently you were picking up the paper and groaning at the, 'From an early age', or 'Ever since I was 11' |
| Mr Parker: what | Well in a way that actually typifies -- because they actually simply follow other people have done, or what the books say, and so that becomes the standard opening, and for some people it should be the standard opening, |

but if it's that common, there's almost no point in writing it down, because everybody does it.

Mr Parker believed the Personal Statement still performed the same function as it ever did, which for Oxbridge students was 'setting an agenda for interview', and that they were '…of importance where you have two equally qualified candidates' but '…certainly not as important as other aspects'. This dismissal was likely to be both because Personal Statements could be coached more effectively than academic performance, but also because they were less useful as a proxy for the kinds of qualities (particularly academic) that elite universities were most interested in. For Mr Parker, who had been responsible for the Grange's advice on Personal Statements for many years, they were as problematic as references.

> Personal Statements again are becoming ever more exaggerated, and only some of them are perfectly truthful. I was talking there to a Classics student who I know is incredibly interested in Latin, and classical civilisation, and I know that's true, but the majority of people that's not true, but they feel the need to say it…What they're told to do is, they have to be fascinated, mesmerised, tremendously, hugely excited by, it just doesn't mean anything.

One implication of this inflation is that a student who truly is 'mesmerised' by a subject will find it hard to describe their passion in a way that is read as authentic. I had been observing Mr Parker coaching the student mentioned above, earlier that afternoon, and had witnessed him reading the student's statement and commenting on it.

Mr P	Why do we think that starting something early, is better? I mean, for you it's probably true isn't it?
Student:	Yes, (*perching nervously on the table*).
Mr P:	But because everyone else says that, it sounds strangely manufactured…You probably are one of the few who really do look forward to Latin -- You could mention the odd trip to Greece? Hmm -- relish -- strangely enough, you do as a proper intellectual, but because everyone puts this down…

Here the problem was one of how to signal differentiation. The student could not use what was ostensibly the most appropriate language because it would fail to differentiate him. Feltovich, Harbaugh and To (2002) explain this as a 'signalling failure'. Contrary to classic signalling theory, which posits that types that are high in any valued attribute send a costly signal to differentiate themselves from 'low types', they argue that, "Since medium types are signalling to differentiate themselves from low types, high types may choose to not signal, or 'countersignal,' to differentiate themselves from medium types" (*ibid*, p. 631). This is interpreted as a sign of confidence, because "…high types can demonstrate by countersignalling that they are confident of not being confused with low types". In this sense countersignalling is often expressed as a

kind of calculated understatement whereby avoiding the hyperbole that becomes routine owing to rhetorical inflation means the more 'modest' signal has a better chance of 'getting through'. So where medium types might use words such as '… fascinated, mesmerised, tremendously, hugely excited by', to differentiate themselves from low types, high types (such as the student in the example above) may need to countersignal in order to differentiate themselves from medium types. Mr Parker told me that his advice was…

> …to say that I want it to sound true. If it sounds true, then I think that, as that last one did, it sounded really very true, he was simply describing, in very ordinary language, what he did and what he'd done, it was very good.

Similarly. Dr Macintyre told students '…to get personal straight away. I always tell them to be very, very specific about themselves and about their subject, but to start with themselves'. This meant first and foremost identifying something that connected the individual's biography to the subject.

> As opposed to 'I've always been fascinated by the classics', I would try and work them to the point where, for example, they could say, 'During a trip to Pompeii in 2007 I accidentally unearthed a piece of vase with my trainer, picked it up…', you know, that's all about enthusiasm, that's all about - you pick it up, you shine it up, you look at it, you want to know about it - you don't have to use the words 'fascinated by the classics' at all, because that's all implied.

In contrast to what has now become 'hyperbolic' language, 'ordinary' language or specific narratives can be seen as examples of more effective and strategic countersignalling. Feltovich et al. (*op cit*) suggest that high types can afford to be understated in their signals without "diminishing their perceived quality", because of the extra 'noisy' information that the receiver has access to about the sender. It is 'noisy' in the sense that the sender cannot be sure what the receiver knows about, say their background or family, but sufficient to separate high types from low types, leaving them to differentiate themselves only from medium types. In this scenario, such information might include the exclusive school that the student attends.

High status means high risk

My time at the Grange strongly impressed on me that competition for places at elite universities impacted the pedagogic environment through creating endemic insecurity. Where requirements shifted between institutions, and signals (like the reference) appeared to have become so inflated they were almost meaningless, students were not always sure which signals were the most powerful, and this created uncertainty. This theme was evident in a number of interviews where students expressed anxiety. Perhaps unexpectedly, (though in light of the fore-going analysis understandably) it was the Grange students who appeared to experience the highest levels of risk

and uncertainty in their application to university, rather then students at Leabury High or ECC - precisely because of their realistic anticipation of high levels of competition. At a UCAS afternoon, the Head girl told a room full of lower sixth students:

HG: Just to say that nothing will guarantee you a place at Oxford or Cambridge. People say to me like, 'Oh you're Head of school, so you'll get in'. Or 'Oh you play inter hockey' to other people, 'So you'll get in'…Like, nothing guarantees you a place at all.

Dr M: Yeah, so just because you're right for one year doesn't mean you'll be right for the next year…it's a risky business…it's a risky business

This uncertainty is particularly interesting in light of perceptions about public school students' ease of passage to Oxbridge, and the established links between these schools and elite universities (Reay et al. 2001). Without wishing to overstate the point, the pedagogic discourse of self-marketing within the school was not overtly one of entitlement, but rather of uncertainty, risk, strategy and above all, strong competition. Mr Allan, one of the sixth-form tutors, attempted to dispel any such attitudes of presumed privilege by explaining to the lower sixth that: 'There are thousands of people like you, who are going to be competing for these places'.

Risk was fostered in the space between universities' actual admissions policies and strategies, and the information about them that was available to students within 16-19 institutions, and at the Grange, where students aspired to elite universities, that ever-more detailed information became the key to successful applications. This was both the result of those institutions having to adjust their admissions requirements in light of grade inflation, *and* the filtering of that information to students themselves. Grange students were encouraged to uncover and interrogate information that was public but not widely known. In the aforementioned UCAS session, for example, the Head girl shared information she had about the dynamics of the field of Higher Education in order to prepare them, and encouraged them (as teachers had also done), to '…make sure you check out, like, what previous candidates have, whether they've been successful at different courses in different places'.

This was accompanied by the more informal circulation of rumour about what different universities did, said, or wanted. John, for example, told me that it was '…practically impossible to get into PPE[104] if you want to take a gap year…So I thought it's another risk that I don't need'.[105] A number of students also relayed to me the belief that Bristol University discriminated against privately educated applicants, which heightened the risk of 'wasting' an application there, including the Head girl who said that of 14 students who applied to Bristol only one got in and

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104 Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Oxford University

105 This is interesting in light of Heath's (2007) assertion that independent school pupils are more actively encouraged to take a year out than are state school pupils, (based on evidence from the early 2000s) and is perhaps an example of how signals shift.

that 'Someone with 12 A* and four As got rejected'. Revelations such as these were a powerful shock to those who believed that going to private school and doing well at exams would be sufficient investment in their educational future. Both Adam and James told me that they had been unnerved by the difficulty that their older sisters had found in applying for Medicine. James' sister achieved '11 A* for her GCSE, all As for A' level and she got denied from all the universities apart from UEA. So, it's a bit worrying' while Adam's sister was one of two Grange students who got no offers at all for medicine, and who had then taken a gap year in order to reapply. He admitted:

> I suppose my confidence was knocked because I always knew that people didn't get in to university but I never thought -- Well, me and my sister have both gone to very good schools, and I thought 'Well we've had a good education, we'll have good marks, get good grades to take through with us'…and I suppose I thought to myself 'Well if she can't get in first time round what chance have I got?'

David, who was also an aspiring medic concluded that 'The hearsay in medicine is terrible. Just about getting in…I've heard so many variations'.

What became apparent was that a significant and probably irreducible element of uncertainty also existed, to some extent, within the destination institutions - leading some of them to resort to procedures in which 'blind chance' was the determining factor - ironically confirming aspects of the applicants' own perceptions. Before the Grange Higher Education evening started, I listened to the invited speakers and a few tutors discuss the problem of differentiation over a light buffet. The admissions tutor from the University of Cambridge explained that their procedures followed the pattern of identifying '…the top 20 per cent and the bottom 20 per cent, get them out of the way and then -- the only philosophically defensible thing to do with that bottom lot is to run a lottery'. While acknowledging that they could not admit this publicly, the others present agreed that aspects of the admissions procedure were very much like a lottery in that the actual students accepted from the 60 per cent in the middle could well be different on any given day. Partially acknowledging this situation to the students later on in the evening, the admissions tutor said that taking Oxbridge as a whole:

> This coming year there will be 10,000 people who don't get in who go on to get grades AAA at A level or better. So you can be absolutely expert and not get in. And it's not your fault and actually in the vast majority of cases it's not our fault either, it's just the nature of competition. Colleagues reckon that they would quite happily take about 65% of those who apply, but we just don't have the space. And that means that our decision is very difficult.[106]

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106 I have not verified the accuracy of this statement, but it's rhetorical purpose is clear in establishing that an application to Oxbridge means enormous competition

7.4 Disciplinary habitus

The discipline that a student wished to study, also affected their approach to marketing themselves. I will present students' strategies for 'performing' their mastery of disciplinary discourses in Chapter Nine, but I will consider here the significance of recognising what would be considered legitimate communication when applying to a particular course by drawing on Maton's (2006) distinction between different 'knower structures', as a language to describe the kinds of selves that different disciplines engender, and indeed permit. Medicine and art, will be considered, as examples of different knower structures.

7.41 Knower structures

Maton draws on Bernstein's (2000) distinction between horizontal and vertical discourses and, within vertical discourses, the differentiation between vertical and horizontal knowledge structures within the field of knowledge production. Maton (*ibid*, p. 45) then goes on to suggest that there is also a *knower* structure, a sort of "…shadow structure, implicit within the theory but not explicitly foregrounded". Here, the humanities both individually and collectively are a set of horizontal knowledge structures, and, at least in Britain, display a hierarchical knower structure, while the sciences have a hierarchical knowledge structure, but a horizontal knower structure.

While individual humanities disciplines (or humanist culture as a whole) have been characterised as horizontal knowledge structures as a result of the incommensurability of different languages within them (Bernstein *op cit*), Maton argues that, at least in Britain, both historically and culturally, they have a hierarchical knower structure. This is, he argues, the result of the disposition or 'gaze' that an education in the humanities is supposed to guarantee, which is, in effect, a particular sensibility or habitus which, he claims, functions as "….a cultural veneer for a tacit social hierarchy", with (in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries) the image of an ideal knower, the English gentleman, at the pinnacle (*ibid*, p. 48; Maton, 2004). In contrast science is not seen to require any particular disposition of this sort - in theory anyone given the relevant training could become a scientist, could "…enter the sacred" (*ibid*, p. 48) Maton therefore describes it as a horizontal knower structure where each knower is strongly bounded from the other, as the result of there being no ideal shared scientific habitus. Social background is in principle irrelevant, and "…scientists could represent a series of segmented knowers, each gaze strongly bounded from one another and capable of being based on very different, even opposed assumptions" (*ibid*, p. 49).

This dualism between hierarchically and horizontally ordered knowers can only be sustained so far; indeed Maton recognises that all structures of knowledge or knowers ultimately have some way of arranging actors or discourses into a hierarchy. Similarly, not all university courses are clearly identifiable as sitting within either 'the sciences' or 'the humanities'. Nonetheless there *are* significant differences in terms of the social and epistemic relations within the production of disciplines and disciplinary areas, and the ways that they develop criteria that legitimate new entrants are required to satisfy - or 'legitimation codes' as Maton calls them.

Here he argues that actors are differentially positioned toward these knowledge and knower structures in terms of both a) an *epistemic* relation to the knowledge structure and b) a *social* relation to the knower structure, and that these relations can be strongly or weakly classified or framed. "In other words, actors may emphasise the knowledge structure, the knower structure, neither or both as the basis of distinctiveness, authority and status" (*ibid*, p. 49). So a legitimation code 'ER+' condenses 'C+F+' for the epistemic relation, and portrays an actor who, with a strongly classified and framed epistemic relation to the knowledge structure, emphasises knowledge as the basis of status. When accompanied by a weak social relation (SR-), Maton suggests that this represents a 'knowledge code', rather than a 'knower code', and has traditionally been the legitimation code of the scientific disciplines. In contrast, the humanities collectively (and most high status humanities disciplines individually), would have a weaker epistemic relation to the knowledge structure (ER-) and a stronger social relation (SR+) making it/them examples of a knower code.

7.42 Legitimation codes and destination habitus

Legitimation codes therefore convey the *disciplinary* aspect of a destination habitus and so affect the character as well as the significance of a Personal Statement or interview. That is, if the legitimation code of a particular course in a particular institution is a knowledge code, then one would expect grades to be sufficient for attaining entry, except where there is high competition. In this case institutions may well interview students, but these interviews will still be concerned with accessing and more rigorously testing a student's level of knowledge and understanding, rather than a particular set of dispositions or level of 'cultivation'. For example, the Cambridge admissions tutor assured the Grange sixth-formers that: 'We're not trying to judge you as a person, we just want to know whether you can do this Physics job, and if you can't do it, why?'. Here the contrast between 'doing' science and the student 'as a person' is explicitly made.

In contrast students who were applying in humanities subjects often talked about their Personal Statements or interviews in terms that indicated a knower code. For example, here Sarah (ECC) felt under pressure to portray a series of very personal qualities.

> With art it's quite hard, 'cause you wanna appear intelligent, but also you need to appear creative, and you wanna appear fun because you can't not wanna have fun to do their course, but then you also need to appear serious enough to actually be able to do the work.

For some of these students, self-marketing *beyond* grades was likely to be more important in accessing their desired course. Dr Macintyre, an English teacher at the Grange, explained to me that in advising applicants on their Personal Statements he…

> …often invited them to say more about themselves. And I suppose that they consider that to be a risk, to talk about themselves a bit too much…The level they want to interact at, at university level anyway, but then specifically medical school, Oxbridge, it's industriousness that's craved, but it's also variety, it's also 'think for yourself', 'think on your feet', 'communicate yourself', that's what English is.

However, the disciplinary distinctions *within* Oxbridge were then evidenced when Eleanor (an aspiring medical student at the Grange) rejected Dr Macintyre's advice to 'get personal'. For Eleanor, Dr Macintyre had misrecognised the destination habitus by under-emphasising the epistemic relation: 'Mr Allan thought Dr Macintyre's version was rubbish and that there wasn't enough science and it was too wordy which is right really because Dr Macintyre is an English teacher!'

For Isabelle, who wanted to do Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE) at Oxford University, the legitimation code, as mediated by her teachers, was an obstacle that she could not understand. She was advised by her teachers to apply for straight economics at Cambridge rather than PPE at Oxford.

> Everyone I've spoken to, all the teachers have said that I shouldn't do PPE and I probably wouldn't get in, because I just wouldn't be the right kind of person. Which wasn't even constructive 'cause its not like I can improve that, just 'You're not the right kind of person for it'

Despite being told at Oxford open days that there was no specific type of person that was more suitable for the course, Isabelle's economics teacher had told her that it was easier for those who came from a politics or philosophy background to get into PPE than for her, coming from economics. This anecdote suggests that despite being brought together in one course (PPE) there may be strong (if tacit) classifications *between* economics and philosophy/politics that might prevent someone who is successful at one, realising a legitimate text in the other. Certainly, Isabelle's teachers did not believe she would be able to realise a successful *disciplinary* habitus.

7.43 Medicine

The distinction between knowledge and knower codes was particularly interesting in the case of applications to medical schools, where both a strong epistemic and social relation was sometimes displayed. Historically, the medical profession has been associated with the model of the 'gentleman doctor', who alongside scientific knowledge displayed a range of cultural qualities, high social standing and often familial connections with the profession. Over recent decades in the UK 'knower' characteristics have become more, but not perhaps wholly, subordinated to 'knowledge' characteristics as competition has greatly intensified and a growing 'meritocratic' legitimation of entry to medical schools has become impossible for admission tutors to bypass. The result seems to be that elements of both codes co-exist in the highest status medical schools, while there may also be differences depending on how the medical training itself is structured - some courses being more practice-based from the outset than others.

Medicine was highly competitive regardless of the university, but the students experienced additional pressure as a result of institutions emphasising a 'knowledge-plus' approach. Students sent the same Personal Statement to their five universities, so had to carefully project both a particular set of personality characteristics and their strong grasp of the medical sciences. These characteristics, which may in part be a legacy from the strongly socially hierarchical medical profession, were largely familiar to the students, who all talked about needing to 'love' science and 'be good with people', as if they were familiar clichés. Rebecca relayed that the '…sort of stereotype' was of someone '…friendly, motivated, good academically, has all the extra curricular, um, yeah, wants to help'.

For James though, this created uncertainty and anxiety about whether he had the right characteristics to be successful in such a competitive field.

> I'm constantly thinking, if I don't get the grades then I won't get to university and won't get to do what I want to do. And I've also got to realise that even if I get the grades, even if I get three As, it doesn't mean that you're going to be successful. There are so many different kinds of intelligence…and if you get three As, you may not be sociable, you may not have the right characteristics for the job. It's not all to do with the scientific knowledge. I can learn things like a parrot, but can I adapt it? And it's those kinds of worries that I have, so it's kind of, to be as balanced a character as possible to fit the job.

James' acknowledgement that attaining three As was the minimum that would be necessary to study medicine demonstrates his awareness that the legitimation code for medicine contained a powerful knower code that could deny him entry if he could not display 'the right characteristics for the job'. This was particularly difficult for James, because the criteria for success and therefore security were more opaque when it came to personality.

James:	And I do, I really like the science part - I feel I understand what to do with science. Medicine is just more clear-cut somehow. So if you don't know something you can research it, and I want that security I think.
Interviewer:	So knowledge makes you feel secure?
James:	Yes, it can do -- you can find out the truth out about the thing you need to

As the standards of applicants has risen and institutions reposition themselves to find competitive advantage, the legitimation codes for entry into various institutions have shifted,. For example, the influence of traditionally elite medical establishments may have weakened as new practice-based courses emerge alongside the pure study of medical sciences and because more than half of all successful applicants are now women (Ferriman, 2002). Rebecca, for example, had used her Personal Statement to display a knowledge code, by mentioning that she read the New Scientist, but when I asked her if any of that came up in her interview at the University of East Anglia (UEA) she replied:

> No, 'cause it was more of a modern one, about me as a person, rather than the science. I had to talk about what I'd done, how I'd deal with situations. There was one that was about medical scenarios, but you can't learn very much from reading, it's more kind of what you'd do in that situation. But I know other people have been asked about what they've read.

This particular destination habitus required Rebecca to demonstrate that she was the right kind of person, in comparison to displaying mastery of more 'pure' knowledge codes. She related the distinction again when recounting that she had been advised to 'put more science' into her Personal Statement but refused to, because '…although I think that would have been helpful for a Cambridge/Oxford style medicine course, I'm not sure for some of the modern ones, which is what I was applying for, that would have been particularly helpful'. She also mentioned that her practice interview at the Grange was 'more traditional' than her UEA interview, where students moved around a series of stations for five minute interviews with seven different tutors. She was given a list of topic headings to prepare, which included 'ability to adapt to the UEA curriculum' and told me that she believed it was structured this way '…because thats the way they assess you at the end of the year on your clinical skills. You take someone's blood pressure then you do something else'. It may be that Rebecca's ability to recognise the different contexts and their legitimation codes put her in an advantageous position compared to James who felt very insecure, and she felt that her interview had gone well. Still, when she was sent feedback '…they said loads of it was average apart from the one that I thought had gone worse'.

Medicine appears to be a discipline where even those who, like Rebecca, have a sophisticated grasp of the relevant recognition and realisation rules may find it difficult to 'read' the particular ways that different institutions structure their interviews. The combination of the dominant pedagogic code and pedagogy of self-marketing at the Grange gives many students an excellent strategic sense in terms of recognition rules but in certain subjects, like medicine, where there is considerable variability between institutions, they may well misjudge the tactics. So Rebecca, despite her strategic approach was apparently unable to deploy the appropriate tactics to realise a legitimate self-marketing text in her UEA interview.

7.44 Art

Most of the students at ECC were applying for art courses at universities that were not particularly high status, and it was usually not clear whether entry required the display of a stronger knowledge or knower code. Unusually for most 'new' universities, applicants for art nearly always took a portfolio of their work to an interview, where for other subjects offers would be made solely on grades, references and Personal Statements. This enabled me to make more direct comparisons, particularly with the Grange where many students were interviewed for places at Oxbridge colleges.

There was certainly evidence at ECC of the need for the students to reflect on and relay aspects of the self in ways that suggested that the knower code was more prevalent and Matt's experience at interview appeared to confirm this. When asked if he had many questions about himself, he replied:

> Matt: Yeah the last one did. He was like 'I'm trying to get an idea of you' and I was like 'Yeah, thats not gonna happen! You have to know me longer'.
> Interviewer: What did he want you to do?
> Matt: He was like…I'm trying to remember the questions…One of them was like 'What do you want?' And I was like 'Yeah?', pausing and waiting for him to go on really, but he said 'No, you've answered that question fine'.

Similarly, Lizzy had been encouraged by one of the tutors to write about her hobby of helping to throw illegal parties in her Personal Statement, perhaps as evidence of some rebellious artistic quality. This is, again, suggestive of certain tutors perceiving a knower code in Art to be dominant, even though Lizzy felt that it '…sounds stupid, to an art college!'.

This concern about whether she had misrecognised what was legitimate to her chosen universities in terms of disciplinary competence was shared by other students, including Annalise who, although confident in her work, expressed uncertainty about the destination habitus of Middlesex Art department.

> I don't feel I know enough about them. Like reading the prospectus it just sounds like every other prospectus and that they're like every other college, but really I, my boyfriend's sister went to Middlesex and she said that it was really well known for performance art and installations, so each college is probably -- specialises in one area. So I think, well if I go in and show them all my textiles work they might think 'Well, it's not a plaster sculpture though is it?' So I think I would have preferred to know more about them, but it's hard to find out.

Sarah suggested to me that the interview itself was significant in relaying the destination habitus and helping the student make an appropriate response.

> When you're trying to sell yourself or whatever, you're trying to think what they want you to say but you can't always tell. Some interviews you can tell because they, like, smile and nod, and you think 'I obviously said something good'. But some were just completely blank and I was like 'Um'.

Sarah (as with Rebecca at the Grange) has a sense of how to act strategically when selling herself, and had mobilised her social capital (particularly family) to practice her interviewing skills. But she too had to make 'on the spot' tactical judgements (that can turn out to have been misjudgements) in a partially unpredictable situation. To some extent then, even the most gifted self-marketers (those who can recognise and realise the destination habitus) cannot ever really be certain how to impress the institution they are applying to.

7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the concept of a destination habitus, a projection comprising the institutional status and the discipline of the course applied to. I have argued that in the context of UCAS applications self-marketing is, in effect, recognition (and realisation) of that habitus. Students are differentially able to effectively recognise these sometimes subtle dynamics, with implications for their ability to access these courses. I have particularly focused on the effect that high institutional status has in creating pressure to identify and transmit powerful self-marketing signals, and on the significance of the legitimation codes of various disciplines. Chapter Eight will explore how the dominant pedagogic code of a site (and its related status, position and resources) influenced its pedagogy of self-marketing, and attempts to support students' recognition and realisation of the destination habitus.

Eight
Pedagogies of self-marketing

8.1 Introduction

I have argued in Chapter Seven that students' self-marketing practices are based on their ability to recognise and realise a destination habitus (a projection of both status and disciplinary discourse). Such recognition rules were differentially distributed, both across and within different schooling contexts, with the result that a successful transition depended not only on the student's recognition and realisation rules but also on the school or college's ability to develop or hone those rules. This in turn depended upon the institutions's ability to recognise the pedagogic codes, and more specific characteristics of the admissions criteria and procedures, of various universities and their courses within the shifting power relations of the field of Higher Education.

I suggest here that alongside the dominant pedagogic code of each school, there was a secondary pedagogic code of *self-marketing* that related, in different ways, to the dominant code. Self-marketing, as I have defined it in Chapter One, is concerned with the creation of a professional projection of the ideal self in order to successfully progress. As such, it is likely to be found within 'generic' discourses that are concerned with preparing students for life beyond the school-gates, "the pedagogic basis of 'work' and 'life' experiences" (Bernstein 2000, p. 59). I have shown that such generic modes were visible at each of the three sites, for example, within discourses of 'employability' or 'goal-setting', and I will seek to show here how self-marketing formed part of the pedagogic discourse of such transferable or generic skills at each of the three sites, albeit in different ways. [107] In this section then, I will present my findings concerning each institution's

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107 There is also a potential affinity between the concept of self-marketing and the regulative discourse of the whole school, where the imaginary subject projected by the regulative discourse is one who will leave the school fully prepared for life as an adult and a citizen. However I am interested here in the specific and explicit communication or transmission of a pedagogic discourse of self-marketing, rather than that which was transmitted as part of the wider regulative discourse, or 'hidden curriculum' of the school.

transmission of the pedagogic discourse of self-marketing as a discrete discourse, how the three cases compared with one another and then how these discourses related to each site's dominant pedagogic code.[108]

8.2 Classification and framing of the pedagogic discourses of self-marketing

Although no participant used the term 'self-marketing' unprompted to describe students' university applications, it was nonetheless still possible for me to identify where and how teachers and tutors had attempted to teach students how to successfully market themselves on the basis of my own definition. My ability to access the transmission of this pedagogy at each site was limited to staff and students' accounts of the advice and guidance given by the school, and a few opportunistic observations of such sessions. As such it was not possible for me to systematically compare specific guidance on interviews, CVs and Personal Statements either across the three sites or internally. However interviews with tutors and heads of sixth-form were largely sufficient to suggest how strongly classified and framed this pedagogy was within each site, and analysis of documents, combined with observations, did allow me to compare the kinds of advice given, and what this revealed about these pedagogies.

At each site, self-marketing as a discourse was carried within more general support for the process of transition to university and/or work, and so was not strongly classified as a skill or area of learning despite being broadly recogniseable as a generic mode. Each site had developed its own particular pedagogy for preparing its students in terms of skills that would improve their employability. So while instruction was fairly weakly classified and not labelled as 'self-marketing', it was nevertheless visible within discrete sessions entitled 'Writing your Personal Statement' 'UCAS afternoon', or 'Higher Education evening', for example. The framing of this pedagogy tended to be similar to that of the dominant pedagogic code, and so was strongest at the Grange and weakest at ECC, with Leabury High positioned somewhere between. But in all three institutions, teachers and tutors were explicitly guiding the pacing, sequence and instruction of this self-marketing pedagogy, either during lessons where they provided guidance, or by setting out timetables and deadlines for each part of the UCAS process. The only - and significant - way in which framing was weak across all sites was that students had control over when they wrote

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108 There is a question concerning whether self-marketing here would be seen within the instructional or the regulative discourse. Earlier in the school it is clearly part of the instructional discourse where students have timetabled sessions about CV writing for example. But at sixth-form, or in tutorials, it is part of what schools would now term 'IAG' (Information, Advice and Guidance). Although more weakly classified (and focused on skills and manner), this pedagogy is probably still best located in the instructional discourse, which Bernstein argues, is ultimately embedded in the regulative discourse anyway.

their Personal Statements, and certain students had actually completed theirs before the 'official' timetable had begun.[109]

8.3 Guidance offered from the school/college

Each of my case study institutions was operating within different conditions as the result of its own position in the local education market. Each was under pressure to successfully launch students into their university careers and publish destination figures, although typical destinations varied. The Grange was expected to send as many students as possible to Oxbridge and other elite institutions; Leabury High staff were attempting to increase their university entrants and reduce the number leaving sixth-form and becoming 'NEETS' (Not in Education, Employment or Training); while at ECC the goal was, similarly, *progression* to another course, and ideally university.

Within this pedagogy of 'self-marketing for progression', there were many aspects of the transmission itself that were common across all sites. Transmission at each site included elements that were both formal (where students attended a session on CV writing or practiced their interview technique), and informal (where teachers sat down with students to edit their Personal Statements). It was also both verbal (as with the former examples) and written (as with handbooks on making a UCAS application). In each case it was concerned with helping students to recognise what the university 'wanted' and to realise an appropriate response i.e. supporting the acquisition of relevant recognition and realisation rules.

However, the guidance from each institution varied very considerably in terms of the resources at the students' disposal. In the following sections I will compare these resources, and consider how they related both to the dominant pedagogic code of the school, and the kinds of typical destination habitus of the courses their students applied for. The extent to which the resources devoted to these tasks were unequal across the three sites is evident in the length of the sections below. I was able to gather less data on this pedagogy at ECC and Leabury High than at the Grange, and although some of this was attributable to methodological issues, it became clear that it was the Grange that invested most heavily in the business of preparing students for their university applications, and this is reflected in the analysis.

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109 Although it may be surprising to find that these self-marketing pedagogies were fairly strongly classified and framed for generic modes, it is worth remembering that the institutions had a very strong incentive to explicitly coach their students toward making successful applications to good universities.

8.31 ECC transmission

Because of its size, ECC had quite a large and well resourced 'Student Services centre' at the heart of the college, whose 'raison d'être' was UCAS, according to one member of staff. While tutors on individual courses steered their students through the UCAS process, it was this centralised team that delivered sessions on the Personal Statement or interview skills, at the request of tutors. There were four or five members of staff in the centre, and a large amount of literature including university prospectuses, booklets and handouts. The team had produced two handbooks for the students on how to make a successful application. From Tom's perspective (a member of staff in the centre) this was useful because 'Some students are very on the ball, others are not. Um, and some tutors are very helpful and others are not. So we do tend to pick up a lot of work and take them through it'.

However, of the students in my case study group, only one or two had made use of Student Services. This may have been mostly because of the size of the college and the perceived distance of the centre from the art rooms, so that students tended to rely on the immediate advice available from the teacher on hand, rather than make an appointment. I had learned from Maggie that weekly tutor sessions in the students' second year of the National Diploma were heavily focused on the UCAS process, and the students themselves reported that any assistance they received from college, came almost exclusively through the tutors on their course. They had practiced their interview technique in one such session, but had not been to one of the centrally organised training sessions. Unusually, most of the students who were applying for art courses went to interviews where they had to present portfolios of their work. So while it was perhaps *more* important for them to practice interviews, in comparison to the Grange's impressive day on interview training, only one tutor session at ECC had covered this.

Although the students in my own sample did not attend it, I was able to observe an interview training session organised and run by Student Services, in which students listened to a presentation by Tom. As a centrally administered training session, this was an example of the professional guidance given generally to ECC students, and was less impressive and specific than that offered by the Grange, despite the college's size and resources. The students were taught about the purpose of interviews, and then taken through the sorts of questions that a university might ask, from ice breakers, to why they might want to study there, to current studies, what was on the Personal Statement and then finally, any technical or academic questions. An initial section of the session was introduced with a powerpoint slide that read, in big bold letters, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression!" and the kind of advice that was offered in terms of making a good first impression was a great deal to do with achieving a 'balanced' projection.

> Eye contact…eye contact is very important and make it very very soon. Smile - oh, eye contact, but not too much. Because eye contact is very important when you're trying to make a good impression but too much eye contact can get just a little bit threatening. so it's a balance…Smile - but not too much. Too much smiling doesn't go down too well. There's a final one that I think is important - shake hands! Contact! It's quite important… You can trust someone who makes contact with you. But not too much touching… It would be disastrous, obviously.

While Grange students learned the art of self-presentation through interview practice, this excerpt exemplifies the difficulty of making verbally explicit the kinds of tacit rules that are usually carried by habitus.

Most significantly, this pedagogic transmission communicated to ECC students that they could never be certain about what they could do to succeed in an interview context.

> Very difficult to say because there is no such thing as a typical interview. So if we did a mock interview today the chances of it being entirely different to yours are very very high because there are hundreds of universities, several departments and different admissions tutors. They will all have their own idea of how to select the right person…There should be however, some basic guidelines…And although there are a lot of things why they select - they select on the basis of your Personal Statement, they select on the basis of your reference (now is the time to be nice!), predicted grades. but they will also go on feel - they really will go on feel.

Here, Tom cannot transmit any details of the recognition and realisation rules that ECC students will need to do well at an interview because 'they' '…will all have their own idea of how to select the right person'. Even his assertion that they will most likely 'go on feel' is ultimately entirely unhelpful to the students who cannot begin to know how to apply that to their own behaviour.

The ability of a school/college to successfully guide a student in recognition and realisation depends, then, on their own recognition of classifications within the field of Higher Education and institutions could be more or less informed about what different universities were 'looking for'. Students at ECC were quick to pick up on contradictory advice. Annalise had received conflicting advice from two teachers, which she rationalised by suggesting that perhaps the teachers…

> …didn't want us all to be moulded into this - they wanted to see what we would actually say about ourselves because that's probably the more honest way of doing it, and the universities will get a better look at what we are.

There were also different ideas about the best way to 'work' the system. John told me that "'It's well confusing! I spoke to this lady in the Student Services and she said 'Just click defer before you apply'. But then I spoke to Dave and he said 'Don't tell' em and then when they've accepted you, then tell 'em you wanna defer'. So I dunno". Tom's attempts to reassure the students had

also led to one or two contradictions including that the university interview was '…exactly the same as a job interview' and that they needn't dress up because '…you're not going to a job interview'.

Every student in my sample had received some informal support from their tutors, whether drafting, editing or checking over the Personal Statement, or talking about their interview technique - but some received more help than others. Gav recalled that a two hour session with two of his tutors '…probably got me through my interview'. The tutors told him to 'Really try and sell yourself, try and talk about this as much as you can' and Gav later told me he had exaggerated quite a bit in his interview, just as his tutors had advised him: 'Not something I completely didn't do, just trying to push it a little bit further instead, that they weren't gonna know, sort of fing!' Other students also received a lot of support for their Personal Statements. Rob claimed that Maggie 'finished off' his statement, which was written at the last minute, while Matt had received help to make his statement 'sound better', and Lizzy said the tutors had helped her write hers '…cause I've got, not very good vocabulary'. Gary claimed that 'Susan or Maggie decided to rewrite the whole thing anyway, so it wasn't actually my words. I write what I writ and then they suggested what extra to put in…and then they had to make it sound like I was better than what I am'.

However, while at the Grange and Leabury High, I found that almost every student praised the school's support, at ECC opinion was divided. Annalise (who was described by the tutors as 'moany') was unhappy, and claimed that they had started the process very late in the year. Sarah agreed that help had come too late and by the time they had gone to the UCAS fair '…we'd already missed half the open days by then', and compared ECC to another college where '…they had, like, a one-to-one session with their teacher when they writ it and, like, helped them write them and stuff and you didn't really get that'. Lizzy felt unprepared for her university interview and believed that:

> The college didn't like tell us how to act or what to say…They didn't say that we needed to have questions written to ask, and she was asking me, like, 'Do you want to ask any questions and I didn't have any, and it went…so badly wrong

Annalise reported that '…the only people that got help were people that were lagging behind, and weren't going to meet the deadlines', a claim also made by Sarah This perhaps brings out a wider point, that both at ECC and Leabury High framing tended to be stronger where students' competence in terms of self-marketing was perceived to be weaker. At Leabury High, for example, when asked if she had received much help Vicky replied:

> Vicky   No, I don't think so really. Because I just wrote my Personal Statement, they said, 'Yeah that's good', they didn't help me write it or anything.

At the Grange, however, all the students received a great deal of support, because such close attention was an important part of the 'offer' of the school to its paying customers. Paradoxically, and probably very significantly, the 'academically able' students who, at ECC and Leabury High would have been mainly left to their own devices, were given extra support at the Grange, because of their status as 'the Oxbridge applicants'.

I suggested in the previous chapter that the destination habitus would strongly influence what kind of self-marketing practice would be necessary to gain access to the course. For Grange students, Personal Statements were less important than A' Level grades, which could often be further broken down into unit marks to help elite universities differentiate applicants. But for this group of ECC students there did not appear to be any such awareness that one part of the application process might well be more significant than another. Apart from one or two, these students were not applying to long-established universities, and were not therefore facing the kind of competition that would put high pressure on their Personal Statements, or even their interviews. While the UCAS handbook produced by Student Services had a section on the Personal Statement which read: " …what matters most is the Personal Statement", for the ECC students the statement might not *necessarily* make the difference between an offer and a rejection - at least from the perspective of the staff who believed that there would always be a university somewhere that would accept a student, even with a poor statement.

8.32 Leabury High transmission

The combination of being an 11-18 school (unlike ECC) and a state-run institution (unlike the Grange) is likely to have shaped the formation of Leabury High's pedagogy of self-marketing, especially through the influence of familiar New Labour policies around notions of 'citizenship', 'work-related learning' and 'enterprise education'. Furthermore the school's niche position in the local education market meant that it prided itself on the pastoral structures and close attention that both subject and pastoral staff could offer to their students, in comparison to much larger competitor colleges. Staff I interviewed at Leabury High described support for the UCAS process as one of the most successful aspects of the sixth-form and the 2006/7 prospectus highlighted a quote from Ofsted's 2005 report stating that: "Guidance on further and higher education and employment is very good, and supported by frequent speakers and visits to Universities and workplaces by students".

One aspect of this niche marketing approach was seen as expertise in 'adding value' to students, with one tutor remarking to me that '…we have a niche, we have very good value added'. An aspect of this particular feature of the sixth-form was therefore helping students get to university, especially those who might have struggled elsewhere. The Head of sixth-form, reflecting on this with some irony, told me that she was 'amazed', and found it 'outrageous' that year after year universities were accepting '…students who have barely scraped an A' Level doing that subject. I got somebody in to do Computer Studies at Bangor University that failed the A Level. But because he'd just about attended the two years they had him'. The Deputy Head of sixth also described the way that Leabury High helped students to access university through helping them prepare their applications. This was in terms of providing information to a clientele who were seen as often lacking key elements of both relevant knowledge and self-marketing skills.

> We try and provide that information when we have sessions on how to write a Personal Statement, we try and kick-start that. But a lot of them aren't able to sell themselves in that way, and I think that that's where…that's something that we can really enable the students to say what they need to say about themselves in a way that we hope would attract the admissions tutors.

But the preparation also involved encouragement to students to build up a portfolio of extra-curricular activities, which this tutor suspected sometimes made the difference for students who didn't quite 'make the grade'.

> I have been particularly surprised over the last couple of years about students who didn't quite meet the grades of their offers, who were offered places on results by their universities particularly last year, and I wonder whether or not that was because they were offering so much more…Just those students who were one or two grades off, it was very interesting how they got those places.

This 'strategy' was a core element of Leabury High's well developed programme of support and contrasted heavily to ECC, where students did very little outside of their studies, an issue that will be discussed in Chapter Nine.

As with the Grange, Leabury High had a well-established 'UCAS timetable' that ran over both the lower and upper sixth, and published this in their prospectus, along with Ofsted quotations, to emphasise their niche strategy of providing effective support for UCAS. This timetable was described to me by the Head and Deputy Head of the sixth-form, and is reproduced below.

Figure 8.1 Leabury High UCAS timetable

YEAR 12	YEAR 13
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER — Introduction to Higher Education and Careers Advice Programme.	**SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER** — HE procedures assembly & seminar with Admissions Tutor. Tutorial sessions on UCAS forms, personal statements and choosing institutions. Personal HE guidance interviews. Student references completed. Oxbridge, medical & law applications.
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER — Introduction to 'Centigrade' H.E. computer analysis system. Completion of 'Centigrade' questionnaire.	**OCTOBER/NOVEMBER/DECEMBER** — University applications completed. December deadline for completion of UCAS forms).
JANUARY — 'Centigrade' feedback. Post-18 careers advice, careers interviews begin (Connexions).	**JANUARY/FEBRUARY** — Preparation seminar for final course/institution selections.
MARCH — Initial 'University Choices' assembly.	**AUGUST** — Results day and clearing.
JUNE/JULY — Introduction to UCAS procedures. University Open Day visit & HE Conference. Initial Oxbridge identification and guidance. UCAS Online registration. HE Parents information evening (including student finances)	

A few elements of this timetable were particularly interesting. I learned that one admissions tutor from the University of Essex came to speak at the Higher Education evenings of both Leabury High and the Grange. While I only attended his presentation at the Grange, this raised interesting questions about a growing role for admissions tutors and Higher Education institutions in explicitly teaching or coaching students in the recognition rules relevant to the application processes that are particular to certain types of university, as well as the potential for these transmissions to be a lucrative business 'on the side' for Higher Education institutions or their staff. Another distinctive feature of the school's support was the use of 'Centigrade' software, which used students' answers to numerous questions about their personality and interests to rank all the courses at different universities in England and Wales in terms of their suitability for that individual. Much has been written about the significance of the advice given to students in terms of choice in Higher Education (Reay et al., 2001, 2005), but here the potentially fallible role of human information, advice and guidance was supplemented by technology.

Personal Statements were given a lot of attention at Leabury High, where few students went to interviews. The sixth-form offered discrete seminars on writing the Personal Statement, and students were given examples of good and bad statements and told (similarly to ECC) that they were a crucial part of the application:

| Daina: | Last week we went to the HE seminar at Huntingdon and they also gave us some, told us it really matters what kind of Personal Statement you write. It all goes back to Personal Statements |
| Vicky: | Yeah...that's the first thing they see, and it's the only written thing they get apart from ones where they ask for essays |

Students worked on their statements by themselves and then had an appointment with the Deputy Head where '…we sit down for half an hour, and we make the amendments here and we get the forms sent' (Mr Halliday). While Daina spent a while with Mr Halliday, adjusting her introduction, expanding on certain sections and being advised that some of "…the language he said was too plain, 'Use something fancy!'", Josh didn't get quite the same level of feedback. He told me: 'It was really difficult for Mr Halliday, who I was doing it with, to help out individually, because there was just too many people…He just gives it a quick read through to make sure there aren't any mistakes'.

Despite this well developed program of meeting each student (which offered significantly more support than that of ECC), Leabury High still did not have the same time and resources that the Grange devoted to this particular pedagogy, and to refining students' efforts. Grange students' Personal Statements were seen by tutors multiple times, to the point where students sometimes had to decide whose advice they should take, and while Oxbridge applicants at the Grange were almost half of the year group and received a great deal of attention and advice, Oxbridge applicants at Leabury High were a small group who were the only ones to do mock-interviews. Mr Halliday explained that the rest of the sixth-form received only basic advice on interview technique:

> We've picked up in the last few years the Oxbridge candidates and we've done some mock-interviews with them…But we will provide them with basic information on what to expect from an interview. I think very simply for students it is to present themselves appropriately. Even stuff like what do you wear, it's really, really simple stuff, sort of smart-casual rather than ripped jeans and all the rest of it, really simple things.

Although I was unable to witness any such interview training firsthand, I did observe a tutor session on CV writing, delivered by Mrs Bell, which gave me some insight into the pedagogy of self-marketing, specific to this tutor. Although strongly classified as a discrete topic and intended to be delivered by tutors from identical worksheets, the session was more weakly framed than similar sessions at other sites. This was both because of the context of the tutor group (rather than a 'lesson'), and also because of Mrs Bell's teaching style, which was informal, digressive and conversational. Students themselves walked in and out as questions and comments about CV writing were interwoven with other tutor business. The students' attention peaked during a discussion on whether they should ever lie on a CV, but in general they appeared to find the

session boring and repetitive - having already done sessions on CVs prior to sixth-form. Mrs Bell acknowledged this a few times, remarking 'I know that this is preaching to the converted but you do need to just make sure you have all of these things'. Once they got into the session, Mrs Bell often abandoned the session outline to talk from her own experience about writing CVs. The students were told that they needed to do everything they could to 'stand out' in such conditions.

> At your age as you're competing with people who are as knowledgeable as you are, you've got to make sure that yours says everything and you can see here, you know the job experience, he's sort of talking himself up isn't he?…You may have similar qualifications to everybody else. You may have similar work experience to everybody else, you might have the same hobbies, but if you can put a positive spin on it and talk about yourself in a sort of confident way. These days, most jobs have far too many, loads of people, to even -- now they don't even seem to send an acknowledgement that they've received your application. So you've got to make an impact…it's very definitely an employers market, they can pick and choose. So you've got to make sure you project the best side of you.

Here students were learning about the implications of an increasingly competitive labour market for their self-marketing practice. If they were, in effect, the same as everyone else, they would have to find some signal, perhaps, talking about themselves 'in a confident way', that would distinguish them from other applicants.

8.33 The Grange transmission

The Grange had a highly developed and very well-resourced pedagogy of self-marketing that, in Bernsteinian terms, was strongly classified and framed. The high degree of support offered for the UCAS process was a strength that had made it particularly popular with parents, despite its expense and the presence nearby of a highly academically successful state sixth-form college. Mr Williams detailed some of the services that made him '…confident that we prepare them, we give far more assistance and preparation'.

> Mr Williams: You look at the fact that we have close to 60 pupils applying to either Oxford, Cambridge or to medical school, and every one of those has been seen by our Oxford or Cambridge specialist, both people recently out of either Oxford or Cambridge…Every reference gets seen, written by a tutor, seen by me, seen by the Head, and we adjust and comment accordingly. So I think that they get fantastic preparation
> Interviewer: That's a lot of work for you!
> Mr Williams: Yeah, but that's what we provide, and that's why we put a price tag on the education at this school. All those that are going to do medical school, they had close to a ten week lunchtime course on preparing for BMAT, the biomedical test. And myself and another colleague marked as many BMAT essays as they wanted to produce.

Beyond this he also described the various means by which Grange students were provided with extensive opportunities to practice and hone their interview technique. This included an interview training day for the lower sixth students '…where they meet business people who interview them, and then give them feedback on their interview technique', an internal and an external mock interview for Oxbridge candidates, and a mock interview with '…a doctor and three of his colleagues' for the students applying to medical school.

In their research, Reay et al. (2001, paragraph 5.2) found that Oxbridge candidates have a higher chance of "…augmenting profits of academic and cultural capital regardless of a student's institutional base", but that 'academic social capital' in the form of long standing relationships with Oxbridge colleges was a resource that only a few schools had (*ibid*, paragraph 5.6). Although the Oxbridge group and medics at the Grange received more support than other applicants, the high level of investment in all students at the school meant that Emily, for example, was very pleased with the support she received and didn't feel 'ignored' because she wasn't going to Oxbridge. In fact, Mr Williams suggested that the school could make a difference not just for Oxbridge students, but even for 'chancers'.

> I know that there's quite a few people who come out of this school who are chancers, have got a chance, and they get in…We give them the edge that gives them the, that just tips the balance in their favour.

Strategy and risk

Because of the high status and therefore strong competition at many of the students' desired destinations, the Grange invested a great deal of their resources into strategising to ensure their students' success, an orientation which was far less marked at other institutions. Tactics included having all (rather than just Oxbridge) students start and finish their statements earlier than at the other sites. Despite a few universities sticking to their application dates 'religiously', at most others 'If you get them in September or October the admissions tutor will get to them early and give them more attention. It might sound horrendously unfair, but it's because of that it's worth knowing about it' (University of Essex admissions tutor). Another tactic was to ensure that the Personal Statement and the school reference complemented one another by encouraging students to take responsibility for discussing their reference with their tutor. So Mr Allan said to a group of students, 'You write your own reference anyway, talk to your tutor about what they will put on, so you aren't multiplying information', and Mr Williams echoed the same sentiment:

> Mr Williams: Who writes your reference?
> Student A: Tutor?
> Mr Williams: Yes, your tutor…Do you like your tutor?
> (*There is murmuring*)

Yeah, you'd better get to like them I suppose. Um, let them get to know you…promote yourself, uh, to your tutor, because they can write you the best reference possible. I will also read everyone's reference and update it or amend it if necessary and the Headmaster does the same because obviously they all go out under his name. And you can read your reference of course, if you ask your tutor nicely. You'll be amazed at how good it is.

At times the attempts to mange the risks associated with, say Oxbridge applications, gave the impression that university application was a science. Mr Williams told me that anyone could look at college prospectuses or websites and know exactly how many students applied for what course, at what colleges, and how many got in.

So you can work out your stats in terms of, if 50 are applying for two places, well you've got to be pretty good to beat that competition, or if only 20 are applying for four places, because somewhere is a less attractive college then you can hedge your bets.

The school also had a policy of suggesting that no more than one student per year should apply to any particular Oxbridge college, because increasing the competition for three or four places meant '…you just reduce your own chances'. Mr Parker added that 'We're probably talking about 70+ that will apply to Oxford and Cambridge, there are enough colleges and subject combinations to mean that they don't overlap'. This meant ongoing diplomatic conversations with parents and pupils, '…so there's a lot of work that goes into all that advice that we give' (Mr Williams).

The school had also developed a database that was, in the words of Dr Macintyre:

…perhaps unique, we think, in the country. It's a list of all the offers we've received, our upper sixth-form, in the last three years from all universities in the UK based on the GCSE and AS grades that we're requesting that place. We've got a list of offers or refusals, and it's searchable by subject, by university, by year.

He then demonstrated this by searching for which universities were making offers or turning students down, for Economics. The logic of such a tool was that students should not waste any of their choices, but instead use these statistics to maximise their chances. Students were encouraged to work this out themselves as well by emailing '…secretaries or admissions tutors in the departments you wish to apply to. Use information' (Mr Allen).

Personal Statements: information and signals
While the school invested heavily in the writing and editing of the Personal Statements as part of the 'offer', privately teachers expressed doubts about their significance – at least in the case of Oxbridge applicants.

> The pressure's high, you know, we tell them that the Personal Statement is valued very highly. In point of fact, though, for 25% of our students who are going to go to Oxford and Cambridge, the interview will be valued much more highly than their Personal Statement (Mr Williams)

This contradiction was played out when I heard Mr Allan tell a group of year 12 students that:

> Most universities don't interview, for many of you selection is going to depend entirely on what it is you have sent in and how it compares with the other applicants…for most of you it will be the Personal Statement.

While he expressed a very different opinion to me.

> Personal Statements are a nightmare…they come back five or six times trying to get it right, and of course you can't get it right. They don't read the statements anyway, they think the teachers write it for them.

Even the extra information that the Grange had access to, did not always make it clear how the school should help maximise students' chances. Mr Williams reported to me that a medical admissions tutor (whose daughter was in the sixth-form) '…looks at the first line, the last line, and that's it. He doesn't have enough time, or rather, he can't justify the time to look through the rest of it'. But *another* parent (also a medical admissions tutor) gave the school an example statement that she had originally written for her son, with key phrases underlined, as well as the scoring sheet that was used to grade students' statements and interviews. From this, staff at the Grange knew the '…types of words' that in this institution attracted a quantitative score: 'So all our medical references have those types of words in'. These two apparently contradictory 'tips' meant that while, to parents and students, staff were 'on message', emphasising the imperative of producing a good Personal Statement with all the 'right words', to one another and to me they appeared, in some respects justifiably more skeptical, sometimes even cynical.

Despite this ambiguity about the importance of the Personal Statement, students at the Grange still received far higher levels of feedback than those at other sites, both in terms of quantity and, arguably, quality. As well as their peers and family, students showed various members of staff their statement, for comments. Mr Williams claimed that staff were 'bombarded' with Personal Statements, "…and we have to actually say to them, 'Stop showing me it, this is a *Personal Statement*, stop showing it to us…you can't show it to five members of staff'". Six out of eight students in Dr Macintyre's tutor group were applying to Oxbridge or medical school, and he remarked that 'Those are the ones that I was very focused on at the end of the year. And I saw them probably three times, four times each, their statements'. One of those students, Alistair, described how the level of feedback he sought helped his statement progress.

It was incredibly bland in the beginning, um, and then I went to Dr Macintyre and he told me to spice it up…I went to my history teachers, I went to my parents, I went to my friends and ex-Grangers and I just tried to make it more interesting and more attention grabbing.

The advice given to students on their statements was less that of improving vocabulary (ECC), or making the language sound 'fancy' (Leabury High), and more the careful and strategic signalling, or indeed countersignalling, characteristic of 'high types' trying to differentiate themselves from the 'medium' as discussed in Chapter Seven. Mr. Parker's suggestions included guidance such as 'Take out the grade eight, that will go on anyway, and highlight the directing - that's better', helping students to recognise the existence of a hierarchy of signals. And he consistently corrected those whose language sounded affected or inflated.

'I have found a great interest in' -- Try to use ordinary language that you would actually use. It has to sound real. If you wouldn't say it like that - don't say it. Don't let it sound like you've thought about it too much.

The students had, in the main, absorbed this recognition rule that distinguished between 'playing it straight' as Mr Parker advised, and trying too hard to stand out. David, for example, told me about one statement he had read:

I read one guy's, who was completely individual, that said something like 'I believe medicine is the battle against a perpetually advancing and progressing enemy determined to destroy all humanity'. And it's that thing where one person may say 'It's quite edgy' and another might say 'What the hell are you going on about?' and you've got to play those odds.

As David's comment suggests, it is, in the end, the *individual* who must 'play those odds', especially when, having shown a statement to multiple people, their advice inevitably varied. Rather than bringing clarity then, seeking advice can heighten the anxiety that leads students to seek it at all. James told me that he had shown his statement to '…a few teachers, but everyone had completely different advice… everyone has conflicting opinions about it anyway, so you can't take their advice - you have to make it your own'.

During fieldwork I became aware of a tension in the pedagogic transmission of self-marketing (that may well have also been present in the dominant pedagogic code) between what was described as being 'spoon fed' and 'thinking outside the box'. When Dr Macintyre was asked to identify those in his tutor group who he believed to be the best and worst at marketing themselves, he described the poor self-marketers as '…too prepared to follow the routine, too happily force-fed'. The same contrast was described by Mrs Castle, but where Dr Macintyre believed that the Grange was '…a risk-averse culture in many ways' where '…we do coat them in

cotton wool quite a lot'. Mrs Castle believed that '…they're encouraged to think out of the box… It's a more relaxed atmosphere, and there are different expectations'. It appeared then, that although the imaginary subject of the Grange was held up to be the autonomous, liberal 'think outside the box' intellectual, there was still a strong strain of 'risk aversion' as described by Dr Macintyre. This appeared to be associated with students accepting external standards without question, or 'ticking boxes' in order to make a grade, and, interestingly, Mrs Castle saw this as strongly gendered.

> The girls tend to think quite down the line, so they find it quite challenging. And those who are particularly shy can find that difficult, although it is also really important for getting their confidence up. The girls who have been spoon fed in their education find that hard.

It may be that these two subject positions are related not just to gender, but also to the knower and knowledge codes described earlier, where the knower code requires an investment of the personality (as described by the English teacher, Dr Macintyre) that may be riskier, and a knowledge code less so.

Interview practice day

Finally, the most explicit (and strongly classified and framed) example of the transmission of this pedagogy of self-marketing was the Grange's 'Interview Practice Day' where all year 12 students were expected to attend, on a Sunday, in full uniform. They were grouped in threes and fours, according to which fictitious job they wanted to apply for, and gathered in classrooms with their parent-interviewer, to watch each other being interviewed for 20 minutes each before discussing technique, CVs and cover letters together for a further 40 minutes. Although, focused on *employment* rather than UCAS, it was nonetheless indicative of the superior resources allocated to this pedagogy at the Grange compared with the other sites, and of the significant involvement of Grange parents and highly valorised stocks of economic, cultural and social capital. In the group I was observing, Mr Thomas was '…pretending to be the chief executive of this energy management company…but I am a chief executive, and I have been for twenty years'.[110] The students had all chosen to 'apply' for the role of 'Business assistant' to the chief executive, a highly professional role for a school leaver. Both Mr Thomas' professional experience and the imaginary post were therefore strongly revealing of the perceived 'typical' destination of a Grange student.

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110 Later he told the students that he had worked in the chamber of commerce running business associations for ten years, and his last job was creating and running an association of insurers for Lloyds.

The whole experience was about practicing the *form* of an interview with fictitious content and required the students not only to be good at interviewing, but to also be competent at improvising answers to questions about 'why they wanted this job' and how it fitted into their ideal career plans. This tone of improvisation was set from the very beginning when Mr Thomas opened by explaining that 'We are doing a number of interviews this week and hope to be in the position to offer the job early next week. So don't call us, we'll call you' and asking the students if they had any other interviews 'lined up'. The students varied in their capacity to improvise in this way, with James often finding himself stuck for answers, while Laura was always quick with a strong (if completely fabricated) reply.[111]

Many of his questions provided explicit recognition rules for the students about the ways in which professional applicants might behave at interview, including specific advice about how to respond if an advertisement says 'salary commensurate with experience' - 'Get them interested in you first', then you're in a 'strong bargaining position'.[112] In comparison to the basic advice on interviews given at ECC and Leabury High (eye contact, dress, etc), Mr Thomas set a number of traps for these students to teach them how to avoid saying something at interview that they might regret. When Tom remarked that he wanted to become a doctor and this job would be a stepping stone, Mr Thomas replied, "So you see this as a training opportunity for you?" and Tom attempted to assure him that this was not what he meant. In the final review Mr Thomas reflected that "In this game, if you do dig yourself in and I give you a really nasty -- to make it really hurt, and you get yourself out, I'm gonna think 'Wow, this person is really good". One might presume that an interviewer would assure the candidates that they are *not* trying to trick or trap them, so Mr Thomas clearly expected a certain level of self-confidence from his interviewees. His discourse of interviewing drew heavily on metaphors of games where both parties are trying to outwit the other. So he suggested ways that a student could 'disguise' their true questions, and made comments such as 'You don't have to show your hand'. This philosophy of interviewing was summed up at the very start of the afternoon when he said to the three students: 'This is a game. This isn't a real interview, but actually all interviews are a game. So although this is a game, so is the interview. This is as real as that is'.

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111 When asked at the end of the interview if she had any questions, Laura asked about opportunities for career progression and what his last assistant would say he was like to work for, two savvy questions for which she was praised.

112 He contrasted this with jobs "..that say 'the salary's £54,000' and there's not a lot of leeway" . His picking of such a figure out of the air for these 17 year olds is, again, telling about the kinds of careers that Grange students are expected to attain.

8.5 Conclusion

To conclude, the data I have presented in this chapter demonstrate striking differences between the three institutions, in terms of the transmission of their particular pedagogies of self-marketing. Grange students have a hugely superior stock of resources (both in terms of time and expertise) available to them than do those at Leabury High and ECC (although the former's commitment in terms of time and individual attention is demonstrably superior to the latter). It is particularly interesting to compare the 'real world' character of the mock interviews conducted at the Grange - with their expert-interviewers and opportunities for interaction and improvisation - with the more standardised, weakly interactive, and in some ways formulaic character of what the other two institutions were able to offer. Grange students appeared to largely accept the premise of this pedagogy, and despite some variation in their ability to appropriately improvise, were far more enthusiastic in their response than students at the other sites.

Nine

Self-marketing: realisations (discourses) of the destination habitus

9.1 Introduction

Having suggested that self-marketing involves the recognition of a destination habitus, I will now present my findings on students' attempts to *realise* a legitimate self-marketing text in response. The 'text', in this context is the Personal Statement, which is an instance of what Bernstein (2000) includes under the rubric of 'legitimate text' because it calls upon applicants to conform their projection to fit as closely as possible to the 'imaginary subject' (Ivinson & Duveen, 2006), indirectly 'specified' by their target institutions through the projection of a discourse appropriate to the destination habitus. Furthermore, it is very strongly in both parents' and schools' interests to help students make these statements as 'legitimate' as possible, and so the statements provide a useful window into expectations held of the ideal university student in different courses and institutions across the country. Of course achieving success in this endeavour relies on the students', parents' and schools' ability to correctly 'read' the relevant recognition rules and then realise the text in its 'legitimate' form.

I will begin with a methodological discussion of my analysis of the students' Personal Statements before introducing the four primary discourses that they tended to draw upon in their realisation of a discourse expressive of the destination habitus. The final part of the chapter considers how these discourses relate to each institutions's pedagogic code and imaginary subject.

9.2 Discourse Analysis and the Personal Statements

Analysis of the participants' Personal Statements was a key aspect of the research. I analysed the statements in much the same way as I analysed interviews; looking for themes, correlations and contradictions in order to understand what students had written, within the wider context of the pedagogic codes of the site and pedagogies of self-marketing. However, as textual outcomes of these pedagogies I also treated these documents somewhat differently from interviews and observations, drawing particularly on the work of Fairclough (1992), in order to analyse more closely the various types of discourse that were present in the statements.

Fairclough (1992) offers a well-known methodology for reading texts, described simply as 'discourse analysis'. While there are underlying associations with Foucauldian discourse analysis, and indeed Fairclough draws on this extensively when discussing policy discourse, Fairclough also deploys the term 'discourse' in a much narrower sense, to refer to spoken or written language use and even to specific instances of these. Discourse is described as existing within a three-dimensional framework of 'text', 'discursive practice' and 'social practice', so that one is always looking for the social, cultural and economic contextual influences that shape particular textual discourses (or indeed constellations of discourse).[113]

Fairclough (*ibid*, p. 64) identifies three ways in which discourse, at all three levels he distinguishes, works to constitute those dimensions of social structure which then directly or indirectly shape or constrain it: firstly by contributing to the constitution of 'social identities' (what has already been discussed in terms of the Bernsteinian 'imaginary subject'); secondly by helping to construct social relationships between people; and thirdly by contributing to the construction of systems of knowledge and belief. These, then, correspond to three functions of language, identified by Fairclough. An 'identity function' (how social identities are set up in discourse), a 'relational function' (how social relationships are enacted and negotiated) and an 'ideactional function' (how texts signify the world, and its processes, entities and relations).

This framework is not only sympathetic to the theoretical perspectives already outlined in Chapter Four, but provides a tool with which to recognise and exemplify the work being done by language in marketing oneself. Although I did not apply the methodology of discourse analysis in any way *systematically* in my research, the analysis of Personal Statements presented here (identifying and describing what students actually did when they wrote their Personal Statements,

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113 In contrast to heavily post-structuralist readings however, Fairclough emphasises the dialectical nature of discourse, where neither its social determination, nor its constitutive properties are privileged at the expense of the other, all the more important he writes, "...given the emphasis in contemporary debates on the constitutive properties of discourse" (1992, p. 65).

and why) was certainly implicitly informed by this type of perspective. I was particularly interested, for example, in the identity function of such language, in constituting different kinds of 'ideal self' and the relation of these texts to wider discourses of such imaginary subjects, in both the sending and receiving institutions.

These textual projections of the ideal self in the Personal Statements fall within what Fairclough would identify as 'discourse', a subcategory used to describe a text, alongside 'genre', 'activity type', and 'style'. It (somewhat confusingly) bears the same name as Fairclough's whole approach because discourse is traditionally taken to mean 'content', i.e. the 'ideational' meanings or subject-matter of the text - and this is the aspect that has most in common with Foucault's description of discourse - at least in his earlier work. In analysing the Personal Statements then, I was searching for the prevailing ideas associated with the self as projected in these sorts of texts. These I categorised into four areas - 'subject identity', 'ideal student', 'career trajectory' and 'good citizen', and they are discussed in detail below.

Fairclough (*ibid*) also presents and discusses the three other elements that make up the order of textual discourse as a whole: genre, activity type, and style. 'Genre' tends to overarch the other elements, which can, in specific instances, be more or less compatible with it, and is "…a relatively stable set of conventions that is associated with, and partly enacts, a socially ratified type of activity" (*ibid* p. 126). In this case, the genre might be 'CVs and application forms' with the sub-genre being 'UCAS Personal Statement', not just because it is a particularly recogniseable 'type' of text, but also because there are particular conventions in terms of the production, distribution and consumption of such texts. The students in this sample (and the staff who coached them), ultimately all recognised, though with varying degrees of awareness and sophistication, what the genre required. Genre then tends to govern the 'activity type', i.e. the general structure that action follows and the set of subject positions associated with that action. For example the process of producing the text involves individuals assuming a variety of subject positions, including 'student', 'teacher' and 'admissions officer', in the process of coaching, drafting, viewing examples, redrafting and submitting the statement as part of the UCAS application process. Finally, the 'style' of the text describes its tenor, mode and rhetorical mode. The tenor of a Personal Statement tends to be official and formal yet also to some degree, personal, following, as it normally would, the pattern of a short and selective autobiography. In terms of mode, it is written to be read privately rather than publicly and its rhetorical mode is personal, persuasive, descriptive, and factual.

These terms will be employed below to describe the ways that the language of different statements reveals conceptions of the ideal self, and how these conceptions relate to the 'imaginary subject' projected by the case study institutions.

9.3 Four discourses

There were numerous 'discourses' deployed by the students in their Personal Statements, but I have, in what follows, focused upon four dominant and recurring elements used by nearly all the students. These are the 'subject identity', the 'career trajectory', the 'ideal student 'and the 'good citizen'. These discourses draw from both the pedagogic and the personal worlds of the student, and are deployed at both specific and generic levels.

Figure 9.1 Discourses used in Personal Statements

	Specific	**General**
Pedagogic	The subject identity	The ideal student
Personal	The career trajectory	The good 'citizen'

Pedagogic: Discourses related to the students pedagogic career

Personal: Discourses related to the students personal world and development

Specific: Discourses specifically related to the subject/disciplinary area

General: Discourses that are wider than the subject/disciplinary area

This categorisation reflects Bernstein's basic characterisation of all pedagogic discourse as involving an instructional discourse (knowledge and skills) embedded in a regulative discourse (conduct, character and manner), so that 'pedagogic specific' is the former, and 'pedagogic generic' is the latter. Although I have separated them out as four distinct discourses, the students often developed and employed them together in various ways, displaying both their subject

knowledge and their hard-working nature for example. In this respect, therefore, categorising them as separate discourses is simply an analytic, although hopefully illuminating, device.

In what follows I will discuss each 'cell' in Figure 9.1 separately.

9.31 Pedagogic Specific: performing the 'subject identity'

This discourse within the Personal Statements was deployed where students demonstrated something of the professional academic identity they were being socialised into, through their experience of the subject area that they applied to study. In effect, it was their attempt to *realise* the disciplinary habitus of the destination habitus discussed in Chapter Seven. This discourse was, perhaps obviously, the most widely encountered. It is the first time in a student's career where they have chosen to study one discipline or field, and therefore they are under pressure to demonstrate both their familiarity with it and their levels of accomplishment thus far. Students performed the subject-identity by displaying subject knowledge, language and ideas, relaying discipline-specific experiences such as relevant work experience, courses attended, awards won, and drawing on 'expert' voices from the field.

Subject knowledge and ideas

The Personal Statements were full of vague references to how students' 'knowledge', 'understanding' and 'ideas', had developed thus far. But students also demonstrated what they had learned by rehearsing *specific* pieces of knowledge in what they saw (or had been guided to see) as an appropriate disciplinary tone. So Gav, referring to Lucien Freud, wrote, 'I find that his thick brushstrokes give a much more textual look to the subject and his use of tone is something I strive to achieve in my own work'. Many students also demonstrated that they could think and personally engage with key disciplinary *concepts*. Sarah (ECC), for example suggested in her statement, that despite the comforts that our affluent modern society affords us, '…underneath is hidden an ugliness only brought to us by the immediacy of the visual media. I like to explore the ugly ideas that may lie beneath the surface of a beautiful, textured piece of art'. A few students, especially those who expected that their Personal Statement might become a basis from which interview questions would be formulated, then introduced an element of critical reflection or controversy into their display of subject knowledge. For example, Alistair (Grange) opened his Personal Statement with the following:

> 'History will be kind to me for I intend to write it.' These famous, or infamous, words from Churchill have become one of the most powerful motivators in my study of history. The 'history of the victors' is demonstrated clearly by the uncritical acclaim enjoyed by Churchill. His proposal to sterilize roughly 100,000 'mental degenerates' in 1910 was an

issue not discussed in my GCSE course. As I have progressed throughout my Lower Sixth year altered pasts such as these have been stripped away and in university I would hope for this to continue.

Here Alistair is not just opening up a historical debate, but also displaying his powers of independent judgement (in this case on his GCSE syllabus). He seeks here to successfully differentiate himself from students at lower levels of the 'ladder of knowledge' by indicating his growing realisation that knowledge is provisional and contested, a revelation identified by Bernstein (2000) as being the secret held by the producers of knowledge, in universities, and one of the 'ultimate mysteries' of those knowledge forms he called 'singulars'.[114]

The subject and experience

As well as displaying their knowledge of the subject's discourse, students wrote about relevant extra-curricular experiences, which commonly portrayed them as enthusiastic apprentices to the discipline e.g. attending '...lectures on glaciology, GIS and its uses in crime, climate change and salt marsh conservation' (Mark, Grange). I was intrigued by how many students had attended courses *outside* school, mostly oriented toward professional disciplines such as Fashion, Engineering, Law and Medicine. Sarah (ECC), for example had attended a four-day portraiture course, a three day' introduction to makeup for teenagers' at the London College of Fashion ('… to prove I wanted to go there and stuff'), and a five day introduction to careers in the fashion industry. A number of interviewees, particularly at the Grange, had also undertaken various kinds of work experience in support of their applications, giving them the opportunity to describe knowledge or skills they had learned, as well as how it had helped shape their commitment to a particular course or career. For those at the Grange who were applying to do medicine, the prominence given to work experience in their Personal Statements was striking. David, James, Rebecca and Eleanor all referred extensively to a number of placements in various hospital departments, describing what they had seen, done and learned in order to demonstrate their suitability for the particular kind of technically expert, but broad, training required of medics. David wrote for example:

> Whilst spending a week with a Cardiology team in London I sat in an outpatient's clinic, attended ward rounds and observed various investigations and procedures, including a pacemaker implantation and several balloon angioplasties. The difference that a procedure as minimally invasive as an angioplasty can immediately make to the health of a patient was staggering.

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114 This academic apprenticeship has long been located in the 'sixth-form', traditionally home to "…a minority judged capable of 'intellectual discipleship', and the upper reaches of the private sector" (Edwards, 2002, p. 532).

Students also described work that they had already produced within the discipline, which, as well as showing aptitude was also a vehicle for displaying specific knowledge or language. James (Grange) for example, wrote that through a placement at a hospital 'I was able to gain an insight into degenerative heart disease which inspired me to write an A grade marked study on stent materials following a fascinating coronary angioplasty procedure'. Where they had won awards for such work, the students also highlighted these in their statements, including being a runner-up in the semi-finals of the Bank of England Interest Rate Challenge (Isabelle, Grange) and Leabury High's 'Little Scientist' award (Paul).

Expert voices and 'gravitas'

Finally, a number of students sought to add 'gravitas' to their statements by demonstrating their up-to-date knowledge of established figures in their chosen field. They did so by citing relevant quotations, by name-dropping, or describing more recondite aspects of their reading, which had the effect of suggesting that they were prepared for a relationship to knowledge that relied less on textbooks and more on primary materials, and demonstrated their enthusiasm for the subject, beyond the content of their lessons. Three students included a quotation about their subject, while four students referenced a prominent figure in their chosen field. Almost every Grange student mentioned books they had read - a rare strategy at the other sites. In the most sophisticated use of this strategy students name-dropped the book while relaying its ideas, or relating it to some other aspect of their course/learning/experience. John (Grange) had gone for this strategy with gusto:

> I was introduced to Game Theory by Rob Eastaway's lecture 'From Penalties to Peace Treaties' and have since explored it in more depth, reading 'The Wisdom of Crowds' by James Surowieki and Robert Axelrod's 'The Evolution of Cooperation'. Elsewhere in Economics, I was excited by the 'interacting agents' model presented in Paul Ormerod's 'Butterfly Economics' and the abstract economic conclusions reached in 'Freakonomics' by Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner.

While no students at Leabury High described their wider reading – let alone in the detail cited above, two ECC students did do so. Sarah, who received a great deal of help and advice from her family, approached her application to this competitive course with more resources than most of her peers and wrote that reading 'The Female Eunuch' was '…helping to give me a more in-depth knowledge of feminism'. Abby, meanwhile, chose to mention a rather less impressive text.

> I have always been passionate about English and film. Since childhood I have always enjoyed reading. I enjoy reading a wide range of books. Recently I just finished reading Dave Peltzer's autobiographical trilogy, which I found incredibly absorbing and powerful as it was based on real life events.

Abby's choice of bestseller was not necessarily suggestive of a love of English literature, and because she was applying to a psychology course she had arguably failed to realise an appropriate *disciplinary* habitus. However, while this would have been an inappropriate 'signal' to send to some institutions, it may not have harmed her application to a variety of ex-polytechnics.

9.32 Pedagogic General: performing the 'ideal student'

Here students sought to demonstrate the skills, character and aptitude that are reflective of the perceived ideal student of their target institutions.

Intellectual curiosity

Initially then, the ideal student is one who is interested in their subject. Perhaps because of the inflation of certain kinds of language, the word 'interest' is often seen as insufficient as a sign of a student's intellectual relationship to their subject. 'Fascination', however, is beyond 'interest' - it is about a gaze drawn to and held by something, about being attracted to and 'mesmerised' by the discipline. As such it is somewhere between an emotional reaction and an intellectual attribute. Students were 'fascinated' by '..the process of making a film' (Matt, ECC), '...the intricacy and detail of the human body' (James, Grange), and '...the changing landscapes of the world' (Adam, Grange). Interestingly, some students used the language of a journey to describe such curiosity: '…my progression through the colourful fields of art and design' (Rob, ECC). However, Grange students tended to employ this device in more sophisticated ways, by narrating learning as a seamless journey of discovery - almost a treasure hunt. This rhetorical mode was created through the use of words such as 'intrigued', 'interested', 'inspired' and 'provoked' 'explore', 'led', 'drew'. This strategy was used eight times, and three times in one statement by one particular girl. For Penelope it was a journey though books and their ideas:

> The recent rise of Gordon Brown led me to read 'The Blair Years' by Alistair Campbell and 'Gordon Brown' by Tom Bower, which highlighted the differences between 'New' and 'Old' Labour. This provoked me to explore political ideologies as a whole, and how principals held by a single leader can form and alter the beliefs of a nation, for example, Germany under Nazism. Following this I decided to study Hitler's 'Mein Kampf', and conversely, Marx and Engels' 'The Communist Manifesto'. (Penelope, Grange)

Isabelle (Grange) also used this strategy a great deal throughout her statement, and to some effect. In the quotation below she is not just on the trail for knowledge, but manages to relate her reading to her impressive work experience and also draw a comparison that relates to her personal biography as Chinese. The effect is to interweave the story of her ethnic and cultural

identity with her pursuit and interest in PPE, all of which make her claim to authentic personal interest stronger.

> I decided to explore globalisation in more depth, reading Martin Wolf's 'Why Globalisation Works'. I gained an insight into the workings of the British political system and realised its sharp contrast to China's political regime during my recent work experience at the Houses of Parliament shadowing Labour and Conservative MPs.

Skills and aptitudes

Students also performed their textual realisation of the 'ideal student' by emphasising certain aspects of their individual character in relation to their work. This 'trope' was in part produced by the regulative discourses operating within the three different sites, as well as the applicants' anticipation of these particular discursive linkages being 'valued currency' in the courses and institutions they were applying to. Various devices assured the reader of the student's maturity in their personal attitude to work. 12 described themselves as 'hard-working', 11 as 'motivated' and 11 as 'committed', while two described themselves as 'fastidious' when it came to their work, and others referred to 'striving', their 'drive', or 'pushing' themselves. Three students relayed how they had learned to work to deadlines and six Grange students and two ECC students referred explicitly to their 'time management skills'. Finally, two students explicitly highlighted themselves as 'the ideal student' by referring to their capabilities as *learners*. Matt (ECC) wrote about his '… good work ethic when bringing a piece together' and Abby (ECC) ended her statement by listing her relevant qualities, a clear indication of what she believed to be the regulative discourse of the universities she was applying to: 'Overall I consider myself to be polite, creative, efficient, enthusiastic and sociable. I keep to deadlines, and manage my time capably, therefore I think I would make a successful candidate for university'.

However, by far the most popular aspect of the 'ideal student' discourse appeared to be 'teamwork', with 31 references from 20 students, across all three sites.[115] Many students attempted to balance this against their ability to work alone as well, and were keen to emphasise that they had learned to work with different *kinds* of people. This strong focus on teamwork underlined to me that it had become almost universally accepted as legitimate, and essential to include in a statement, likely the result of its being foregrounded within the self-presentation pedagogy in all three institutions, as well as being ubiquitous in the wider 'currency' of self-presentation within employment contexts.[116] This was particularly evidenced during a mock

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115 Grange students often demonstrated this through competitive sports.

116 Cremin (2005, p. 327) writes that "When a young person is already trained in teamwork skills and has learnt to reflect upon himself as a commodity, becoming a team player feels natural so that a potentially alienating process is not fraught with anxiety and does not, in point of fact feel alien".

interview between James (Grange) and a parent-interviewer, where James' uncertainty about how to reply to certain questions was mitigated by his repetition that he either knew, or wanted to learn better, how to work in a team.[117] This data suggested to me that there were more or less sophisticated ways to utilise these generic discourses, and that those students who lacked experience or only had partial recognition and realisation rules might do little more than mention them in the hope that they might elicit a tick in a box.

9.33 Personal Specific: performing the career trajectory

Here, students positioned their application to study a particular subject in relation to their personal biography. Rather than displaying their subject-identity through knowledge or experience, they described their relationship to the subject on a personal level - first by telling a story about the subject through *time*, and second by using *emotive* language to describe their relationship to it.

The subject and biography

Students strengthened their applications by showing the reader that there was a journey or a career they were following, along which path a particular university course was a natural next step. The crucial features of this strategy were their efforts to demonstrate the coherence of the narrative and its longevity through time. 13 students began their statements by positioning their relationship to the subject in their childhood, defending themselves from potential accusations of lacking commitment, unsuitability, or 'flights of fancy' when it came to choosing a course. Closely associated with this was the phrase 'I have always', which was used 21 times by students. For four students this claim was supported by an anecdote about family life and the subject. So Aarif (Leabury High) wrote that he could '…recall experiences where I would simply watch my father maintain our family cars and admire the functioning part of the engine system'. For a further 13 students the answer to the question 'How/why/when did you first become interested in the subject?' was a wider personal anecdote, which hinged on a single experience or moment in which an interest was sparked. Eleanor (Grange) opened her statement with this story:

> My first experience with the medical profession was at the age of eleven. I ended up in hospital after swallowing a fish bone. Within half an hour, I had been assessed by a consultant, and after an hour, I'd had the operation to remove the bone and relieve the intense pain. The skill and professionalism of everyone I spoke to made a deep impression on me.

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117 When asked why he struggled to answer a question about why he wanted this particular job, James confessed that '...all I could think of was it would provide me with communication skills and allow me to work as a team'.

These narrated reconstructions of 'personal experience' serve to connect the individual with a discipline and/or a profession, by framing their interest, and anchoring it in a transformative moment. It is a persuasive technique that distinguishes the author from others who simply 'interested' in X or Y. There may well be some students for whom such moments truly were transformative.[118] However it is likely that, for many students, the very act of remembering and narrating such moments probably became an element in the constitution of the subject-identity, being the first time that the student has had to publicly identify and perform the disciplinary self. While there are many persuasive reasons for a student to have chosen a particular subject, there are often alternative possibilities, and therefore alternative disciplinary selves that are suppressed in the process of choosing just one. There may well potentially be multiple transformative moments or anecdotes about different disciplines that might be told, but these would draw into question the integrity of the narrative and are therefore occluded.

Having positioned their relationship to the subject in the *past*, 11 students then appeared to be making sense of the *present* within this narrative, a strategy which was generally only deployed by Leabury High and Grange students, defending their choice of A 'Level subjects. They did so by seeking to show how these disciplines related with each other either through interweaving themes or interlocking dependencies. So Penelope (Grange), displaying considerable ingenuity, wrote that:

> Political themes within my other subjects, whether the ideology behind Thatcher's monetary policies, the Anglo-Irish tensions felt within Joyce's 'Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man' or the end of the Reconstruction period following the Compromise of 1877, have further shaped my political understanding.

Where students had chosen subjects that did not in any obvious way prepare them for a certain course, they sought to sustain the coherence of their narrative by turning this diversity into a 'selling point'. Vicky (Leabury High) defended her '…seemingly eclectic AS subjects' as having '…given me a wide range of valuable skills; analytical, evaluative, critical as well as teamwork through group coursework projects and essay writing'. Two students had changed courses and therefore had more discursive work to do to sustain the narrative's apparent integrity. In the following example Penelope (Grange) managed to avoid appearing flighty, and instead projected herself as committed enough to her 'true' intellectual interest to risk failure by having changed course.

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118 Mark (Grange), for example, identified a conservation project in the Philippines as the 'moment' his interest in Marine Biology was ignited, and told me that he '…was trying to portray this kind of excitement, the kind of feeling I got when I was out there' when writing the introduction to his statement.

> Having completed the AS level Early Modern History course, I became frustrated by a syllabus which I felt was lacking in political content. This prompted me to change courses to Modern History for my A2 year. Whilst a demanding transition I feel it was extremely worthwhile in that my historical and political knowledge, in particular that of American presidencies post Civil War, has already been significantly broadened through this alteration.

We do not of course know whether this was her only reason for switching course, but the device of making sense of this change allows her statement to display her as someone who is truly interested in politics.

Finally, 20 students sought to project their relationship with their subject into the *future* by describing their professional ambition. This was particularly important for those applying to courses like law, engineering and fashion, where it was crucial to portray their desire to actually work in their area of study. Jake (Grange) was very specific in writing that he was '…keen to participate in intermediate technology developments in Africa to help better lives with engineering', while Vicky (Leabury High) explained that 'Studying psychology at A-level has now strengthened my desire to study psychology further, be the first from my family to go to university, and become a psychologist'. Even those who were less sure of what professional path they would follow appeared to feel the need to complete the narrative by assuring the reader that their interest would be sustained beyond university. So Sarah (ECC) admitted 'Where this will take me in terms of a career I am not sure, but I am excited about following my passion and seeing where my learning leads me'.

The subject and the inner self
The second way in which students related their personal lives to their subject was through the use of language that presented them as having a strong emotional commitment to their academic career. The intended effect of this use of discourse was to persuade the reader that their commitment to, and experience of their discipline was as deep, or deeper than that of other applicants.

Every student described their 'enjoyment' of their subject multiple times and many referred to their relationship with the subject as one of 'love' or 'passion' with Emily (Grange) for example, declaring that 'Total immersion in another culture has further cemented my passion for languages'. It seemed as though some students were even trying to pay homage to the subject, with Adam (Grange) effusing 'Through my studies in geography I have been given an insight into this truly remarkable subject', and Alistair (Grange) declaring that 'I am still yet to find a (history) topic which has not grabbed my attention and imagination'. Here, students appear to have embraced the advice that to demonstrate their 'love' of a subject is the most important thing in an application, and in a world in which emotional literacy is ostensibly highly prized it is perhaps

unsurprising that so many conjoin qualities like 'passion' with the intellectual pursuit of knowledge. Interestingly though perhaps not surprisingly, the form of these emotional expressions varied with the disciplinary habitus. Some ECC students, for example, seemed to use almost theatrical language, and Robs' descriptions exemplified this:

> Introducing textiles electrified my work, and I grew fond of working with more texture than paint could provide…The firm interest and fascination I have always displayed for the creative arts has grown intensively zealous on the Fine art course I have been studying.

Adam's (Grange) choice of language was suggestive of a similarly personal, even romantic relationship of the self to knowledge - even of a natural science subject - when he wrote: 'Geology is more to me than a study about rocks', followed by '…it is a way to predict changes to our physical environment by studying the changes that have taken place in the past'. This, initially discordant coupling of the discourse of the individual and their emotions, with the academic language of the discipline is perhaps evidence of students' use of the kinds of sophisticated marketing techniques that are often used to sell products to them. That is, their ability to vividly convey a personal and meaningful connection to a subject evokes the relationship between individual and brand that is created in the most effective types of advertising. Kamil (ECC) had very little help with his statement, and yet seemed to have a knack for this kind of discourse, writing, 'I bring my life into my work. My work is an exploration of how I feel, journeys I have been through, stories, memories and the things I enjoy and embrace in my life'.

Another expression of this relational discourse is the tendency for some students to describe the 'fit' between themselves and their chosen subject through describing it as 'right for me' (Kieran, ECC; Sarah, ECC) – thereby highlighting a kind of elective affinity. This, to be sure, is partly a reflection of advice from schools and colleges to 'make sure this is the right subject for you' - based on a reasonable assumption that students are differentially suited to different disciplines in terms of their abilities, aptitude, motivation and interest, and also in an attempt to avoid high rates of drop-out. But it may also be further evidence of what some social theorists suggest is a particularly 'late modern' relationship of the self to knowledge (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1994). Here, individual uniqueness is emphasised within the 'reflexive biography of the self' that involves going through life seeking out that which is 'right' for oneself, that which fits one's particular ways, tastes, and desires. The phrase is often used to judge the worth of all sorts of decisions, from romantic relationships to consumer decisions,[119] raising interesting questions about the presence here of discourses more usually associated with late/post modernity and consumer culture.

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119 A quick google search for the phrase 'right for me' brings up results including 'Is an MBA right for me?'; 'Which Mobile Ads are right for me?'; 'What's the right weight for me?', and even 'Which Starbucks drink is right for me?'.

Finally, the students frequently described how the subject extended into their 'spare time'. This was another opportunity to demonstrate how fully the subject identity had been adopted, i.e time that was usually classified as non-pedagogic had been colonised by a pedagogic interest.[120] It was the Art students that were most remarkable in these respects, with Matt writing about his drawing, Kamil describing the '…extreme lengths' he would go to to get a good photograph, and Annalise recounting her dress-making hobby. Steve's informal style lent itself well to his description of his passion for early morning photography.

> I spend a lot of time creating things. Not just imagery, but also music...I often camp out in the woods to take photographs of landscapes and nature. I sometimes get up at 4 o'clock in the morning, then travel about 2 miles to an area I particularly like, just to take photographs of the sun rising, and just to be around at that time of day.

These descriptions sought to assure the reader that the interest was not merely instrumental, but holistic and integrated, particularly important in eschewing any sense of compulsion that might be associated with schooling rather than university. The effect of this, alongside the use of emotive vocabulary, was to create a sense that the student and the subject were 'meant for each other', that they shared a common destiny.

9.34 Personal General: performing the good citizen

I have categorised this fourth discourse as 'personal' and 'general' in Figure 9.1 insofar as it does not relate directly to students' application to study a particular subject, nor with their disciplinary identity, rather their general disposition as members of the societies and communities in which they live. Here we see what counts as legitimate in terms of claims to have developed the socially desirable traits of a citizen, particularly: volunteering, well-roundedness, health and responsibility.

There were numerous references to charitable work, volunteering, making a difference or generally 'helping' people in one way or another. Ten students explicitly mentioned voluntary or charitable work, including working at a charity shop, charity modelling, voluntary service in a hospital and ongoing work with palliative care, sponsored walks, village charity events and adults with learning disabilities. 11 students referred to 'helping' other people, and this included working as a peer mentor, at a Red Cross club for the disabled, assisting at Sunday School, 'community work' whilst on geography trips to India, improving educational facilities in Romania, impending

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120 A couple of students attempted to draw slightly more tenuous links between their chosen subject and the things they do in their spare time. So Josh (Leabury High) explained that by voluntarily working the sound system at his local church he was not only '...showing commitment' but also '...some experience of working with electronics', while Paul (Leabury High) posited that 'Basketball, in particular, reflects the growing importance of teamwork and specialised workforce at the same time to obtain the best performance. These skills are integral part of engineering'.

teaching work in India, conservation efforts in the Philippines, and running residential weekends for children. Some, like Paul (Leabury High), simply stated that they '…devote free time to voluntary activity', while Vicky (Leabury High), described how she had gained 'people skills' from her work 'helping adults with learning disabilities and dealing with the customers' which '…will be advantageous when furthering my study of psychology'. Josh (Leabury High) went so far as to lay out frankly that his work for the Duke of Edinburgh award '…shows that I am willing to volunteer for extra activities and enjoy a challenge'. Despite being recognised as a cliché, a number of students emphasised their desire to 'make a difference'. They were all applying for either engineering or medicine, suggesting that the desirable disciplinary habitus of these courses was someone with strong humanitarian concern.[121]

Two of the students (one from ECC and one from Leabury High) had been actively and quite prominently involved in ongoing work in their communities: Annalise (ECC) by setting up a '…community youth group called The Broken Circle' which 'was awarded a large grant from the Prince's Trust to establish links with the local community' and Aarif (Leabury High) in his work as a youth leader at his local Mosque, through which he obtained '…a grant from the government for the youth group' and started 'a football team to improve general physical fitness and promote a positive relationship between the youngsters'. These examples seem to suggest that there may be different ways at the different sites that the students demonstrate their humanity and concern. At the Grange there were various intra-school activities such as becoming a Prefect or a Scout, as well as numerous international opportunities to have fun and 'do something charitable' at the same time. Leabury High focused its more limited resources on a few core 'enrichment' opportunities like Duke of Edinburgh and Millennium Volunteers, operating within national frameworks, while it was Annalise's initiative rather than the college that had facilitated her particular experience.

At the Grange and Leabury High, but less so at ECC, the students mentioned positions of responsibility that they had held in various activities they undertook, and the 'leadership skills' this had taught them. At the Grange these roles included being a prefect (six students), captain of the rugby team, Director of a Young Enterprise company, Guide leader, member of the Venture Scouts executive committee, backstage manager in plays and the protagonist in plays. Leabury High students referred to these positions less often but there were mentions of working for a Community Sports leadership award and for a local boys youth club. By contrast, only two ECC students mentioned such positions. Sarah had been a peer mentor at school and was chair of the

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121 This raises interesting questions about a potential increase in instrumentalism where voluntary work is concerned. Of the five reasons given for volunteering on the website for 'Millennium Volunteers', New Labour's initiative for 16-24 year olds, only one refers to 'making a difference' while the other four extol the advantages to the individual concerned. Indeed there is a highly visible link on the front page entitled 'MV on your CV', that follows with 'Whatever you do, it will look great on your CV. Your experience will give you that extra something to talk about at an interview' – http://www.millenniumvolunteers.gov.uk

team running their slavery exhibition, and Annalise referred to being a form representative at school and the captain of her local pool team.

And finally, of course, many students referred to their 'extra-curricular' activities. There were 12 mentions of musical interest (instruments, bands and grades) and 16 mentions of sport alongside the many activities already mentioned. Some students plainly spelled out the implications of this activity to the admissions tutor: 'My ability to balance the demands of academic study with numerous extra-curricular activities makes me confident that I have the personal discipline and motivation needed to embrace the challenge of university life' (Isabelle, Grange) - and some extra-curricular activities were clearly more impressive than others, as I will discuss further in the following sections.

9.4 Different sites, different discourses

It will already be partially evident that while all these discourses were common across all sites, and therefore to some extent across all fields in terms of university courses, some patterns were beginning to emerge in terms of which were used more or less at each institution. Each site, and indeed each individual, responded strategically to the perceived dynamics of the field and to the destination habitus that they needed to recognise and realise. This was evidenced, in part, through the advice that the students received, but also in the language and content of the statements themselves. Again, students at all three sites used each of these discourses, but that they tended to focus their strategy on one or two, rather than on all. Figure. 9.2 shows which discourses were most strongly foregrounded at each site.

Figure. 9.2 Foregrounded discourses

The subject identity	The ideal student
The career trajectory	The ideal 'citizen'

The subject identity	The ideal student
The career trajectory	The ideal 'citizen'

The subject identity	The ideal student
The career trajectory	The ideal 'citizen'

The Grange   **Leabury High**   **ECC**

The following commentary will draw on data from the transmission of each site's pedagogy of self-marketing to demonstrate how their strategies differed, according to the different habituses of their students' typical destinations.

9.41 The Grange: The subject identity

Students at the Grange sought strenuously to project the image of 'the ideal student' more than anything else. This involved them in work and activities that went well beyond the 'crafting' of an appropriate Personal Statement. For example, it typically took the form of extra reading and extra courses/experience, with work experience playing a particularly heavy role for medics. This was the result of both the strong classification of the school, which inculcated particular academic disciplinary identities among the students, and also the equally strongly classified destinations toward which they were positioned. It was also a strategic response to the very high level of competition for places at these very academic destinations. When I asked Penelope if she had felt pressure to appear a certain way on her statement, she replied: 'No -- well, obviously you have to appear intellectual, and, um, and have a really high interest in the subject -- and that's kind of my primary concern'

Every student was advised to project 'the subject identity' through the 'thirds rule' which stated that two thirds of the statement should deal with the academic subject first and then their 'wider academic interest', while the final third '…should be more personal, you know, what else you do at school, what else you've been up to in the world' (Dr Macintyre). However Oxbridge candidates were then advised to follow the '80/20 rule', where 80 per cent of the statement concerned the discipline, and the remaining 20 per cent discussed wider aptitudes and experiences. For Alistair, this had meant '…basically turning the stuff that wasn't about the subject into a list'.

As a result Grange students referenced ideas that were relevant to their subject 15 times, compared to eight instances among ECC students and only three among the Leabury High cohort, and they were far more likely to draw explicitly on disciplinary concepts than other students. Every Grange student - bar two - mentioned books that they had read, compared with only two in the rest of the sample (both at ECC). Between them the Grange students referenced 43 books and seven journals. Jake referred only to one and Isabelle mentioned 11, but most alluded to three or four books or journals read. Consistent with this, it was only Grange students who displayed their intellectual curiosity by describing their intellectual journey through different

books and experiences. Students in the lower sixth were told by the Head girl that if they were applying for an arts subject they should '…start reading now. I know it sounds really boring, but, like, I had Mr Rushmore firing History books at me as soon as I came back to school and I hadn't actually read all the ones I originally had'.

Consistent with this, a Cambridge admissions tutor, speaking to the Grange applicants, stressed the priority of demonstrating commitment to and excellence in the chosen discipline by clarifying what was expected of a truly 'interested' student: "To us, '…really interested' doesn't mean 'I read half of a book', it means 'I've read six books'. What have you got to do? Do well in your exams and read some books". If this was not clear enough, he then went on to explicitly dissuade them from investing too highly in projecting the 'good citizen' or 'ideal student' through their extra-curricular activities.

> Your extra curricular activities might tell us about focus and organisation and application, but they won't tell us anything else. If you're really really good at chess it isn't going to make you any better at biology. So what we want to hear about on your Personal Statement is your relationship with your subject.

This advice was then reinforced by the second admission tutor from Essex university:

> (Oxford and Cambridge) …will take account of your interests and hobbies but unless it's directly related to the subject they may not care that much. Other universities are not the same; other universities are looking for what they call a balanced individual or a rounded individual.

Likewise, the Grange heavily steered students toward the kinds of extra courses or wider experiences that would bolster the projection of the ideal student. Posters were pinned up on boards in the sixth-form centre advertising courses related to different disciplines. One read: 'Improve your chances of becoming a doctor. A UCL day of advice. Costs £76 per person', while plasma screens in the common room rotated messages, one of which read: 'Veterinary course. If you are interested in going on a University of Cambridge Vet course, see Mr Allan'. During one UCAS afternoon Mr Williams asked the students:

Mr Williams:	So how many people have signed up for a course? A Head-start course? Who's got some work experience that is relevant to their career or university plans? Put your hands up. What have you been on?
Girl 1:	Medlink
Mr Williams:	Any good?
Girl 1:	Yeah
Mr Williams:	Some people didn't think it was great, but I'm glad you found it good. The medical schools will look at that and think 'Good - yep - showing some initiative', and it also gives you an idea if it's really for you. Did anyone do the law day in London?

The week of Glaxo work experience anyone?

More hands went up and he continued to ask about various courses as the students explained what they had done.

But although students at the Grange focused their strategies of self-marketing on the discourse of the subject identity, they also made use of their various, and often impressive, extra-curricular activities as well. A full-time sports coach at the school told me that, in his opinion, the school's high investment in the extra-curricular gave '…kids who aren't going to excel academically a chance to lead and take responsibility'. The discourse of 'good citizen' then was perhaps deployed, in some cases, as a contingency strategy for applicants whose subject identity was weaker. But even for those who were applying to high-status universities other than Oxbridge, there was more scope to draw on this strategy. Penelope, who appeared to have done a great deal of extra-curricular activities, remarked that:

> I really wanted to write them down because, uh, I thought 'What's the point of doing all this stuff?' I mean obviously I didn't write everything down, I just wrote the main stuff. And I thought 'This is as much a part of me as my work'. And obviously I'm not like going to Oxford. My main choices were like Bristol, Durham and Edinburgh, and in all of the, like, open days and in all of the literature that I've read they've kind of emphasised having somebody who's not just academically minded, so I thought you know…

9.42 ECC: The subject identity and the ideal student

ECC students were also concerned to project a subject identity as their primary strategic discourse. This may well be a distinctive feature of the fine art course (rather than representative of the whole college), and as such the form this projection took was less about books and courses, and more about demonstrating the language and disposition of an artist. For example, of the 20 times the word 'idea(s)' was used, 17 instances were within ECC statements, likely to be a reflection of the importance of generating and working on 'ideas' for the creative arts, relative to other disciplines. ECC students were used to having to relate their creative skill to 'interesting concepts' in order to use their art to communicate. Kamil, for example, described himself as 'full of ideas' and Sarah wrote that 'I have applied to universities offering an open, creative environment to which I can bring my ideas'. Similarly, when projecting a subject identity, the ECC students talked about their artistic hobbies (such as dress-making or photography), whereas Grange students would talk about books they had read, and Leabury High students might discuss

relevant school-based experiences. In contrast to the other sites, no ECC student mentioned winning an award related to their subject.

Secondly then, there was a tendency for ECC students to choose to portray certain aspects of the ideal student, more than at other sites. I noticed a higher use of generic terms around learning, and learning styles and progression, that tended to make explicit what other students attempted to demonstrate in more subtle ways. For example, four ECC students referred to 'development' 16 times in their Personal Statement, compared to six from Leabury High and eight from the Grange. Some students bolstered their application by referring to their ability to learn and their key skills, in a way which appeared to reflect the dominance of generic modes at these sites. It tended to be ECC students that referred to their ability to 'handle pressure' and 'meet deadlines', which is suggestive of a business-oriented ethos that had been absorbed into the discourse of the 'ideal student'. When asked what kind of person the universities were looking for, two students referred to their qualities as hard-working learners: 'Dunno - someone that, dunno - did work!' (Matt); 'Dunno really, just someone who works really hard I guess' (Gary). At ECC, the students are referred to as 'learners' by a discourse within FE that differentiates them from sixth-form applicants, and is then visible in their own projections of themselves.

ECC students also tended to position themselves in the present on their career trajectory by writing that they were 'currently studying on a BTEC National Diploma course in Art and Design', despite that information being replicated on the rest of their UCAS form. At least one student was advised to introduce their statement by describing their course in this way, which may be indicative of the less strategic advice on offer at ECC, compared particularly with the Grange. This was also revealed in the lack of references within students' statements to the kinds of positions of responsibility and voluntary activities that were mentioned by students at both Leabury High and the Grange, but nonetheless may ultimately have been a strategic response to the destination habituses of ECC students' target institutions. Grange students were advised not to refer to ambiguous hobbies by an admissions tutor from Essex: 'What does socialising mean? What does swimming mean? Swimming could mean you are the next hope for an Olympic medal for Britain. It could also mean you enjoy going with your mates on a Friday'. In contrast, where ECC students did refer to their past-times, it was often in just such a way and may not have harmed their applications as much as it would a student applying to a more competitive course e.g. this quotation from Abby's statement.

> In my spare time, outside college, I enjoy going to the cinema, socialising, reading, quiz nights at local pubs, and walking. I passed my driving test in June 2005 and since then I have expanded my boundaries and have been able to visit numerous places in England accompanied by my friends and family.

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9.43 Leabury High: The subject identity and the good citizen

Similarly to the Grange, Leabury High students were also told to divide their statement, but rather than thirds, they were advised to assign 60 per cent of their statement to the subject and 40 per cent for wider activities and skills. Students were competent at many of the strategies discussed earlier in this chapter, drawing on personal anecdotes to describe their love for and interest in the subject, and creating a narrative about their relationship to it. The strong classification of disciplines within the National Curriculum no doubt aided this process. For example, when asked what kind of advice he had been given about writing the Personal Statement, Kieran replied that they were told to '…focus on the subject. If you're applying for, to be a biologist or something, don't go babbling on about business', while Aarif suggested that to 'get in' to Engineering, 'You need to know a lot about Maths, and just be logical, just think outside the box'.

Alongside this though, was a highly visible strategy to project the 'good citizen'. In contrast to the advice given to Grange applicants, students told me that early on in their sixth-form career they were encouraged to take on extra-curricular activities to show that they were 'well rounded', with Mr Halliday remarking that, 'We push it and push it and push it…from the start of Year 12'. Amy remarked that, "At the beginning of the year they said 'If you do Young Enterprise and Duke of Edinburgh it will boost your CV'. And I've done them two activities, and that's about it". Although Mrs Tomlinson, the Head of sixth-form, stressed that students were encouraged that "…that these things are worthwhile in themselves", Amy's instrumental orientation is understandable in light of Mrs Tomlinson's acknowledgement that:

> …they are also useful when it comes to the point when you have to say what it is that makes you more the candidate than the person next to you in line, and sitting there watching Match of the Day is not going to cut it with an admissions tutor.

Mr Halliday, the Deputy Head of sixth-form was even more strong in his recognition of their value when it came to self-marketing.

> Very much the students need to see that the university marketplace is becoming more competitive, and universities are seeking more and more students who are more than simply good at their subject. And, depending on how much you're with us next year, you'll hear me banging on in assemblies about how this is great for the UCAS form.

The advice that Amy received was a key part of Leabury High's strategy of equipping its students with nationally recognised 'brands' such as Millennium Volunteers, Duke of Edinburgh and Young Enterprise that evoke images of the 'good citizen' as persevering, altruistic and

enterprising. When I asked Mr Halliday if he thought some extra-curricular activities were more 'valuable' than others to a UCAS application, he replied:

> There are probably some things that are more recogniseable. Duke of Edinburgh is a massive one because there are so many components to it they have so much to talk about, not only planning the expedition but all the skills and the community work, I think that's very valuable. Young Enterprise, again we've been quite successful

Young Enterprise was always heavily oversubscribed at Leabury High, and after an unsuccessful attempt to run two projects they had capped participant numbers at 25. Distinctive to these initiatives was not just the strength of the brand nationally but the very fact that these activities were validated within the brand, to become somehow more legitimate. When I asked Kieran if he had been aware that it was important to have 'enrichment' activities on his UCAS form, he replied:

> Um, I was sort of aware but I wasn't aware that you had to have as much as you do have. I wasn't aware that you had to have sort of certified, actual, recognised qualifications in terms of enrichment. But, yeah, they told us that a lot of universities now are not just looking for, ya know, grades 'n stuff 'cause they want to know what else you can do as well…

In another interview Kieran remarked that although he played football regularly with his friends, he would have joined a team if he was going to write his statement again, for the reason that activities have to be 'certified', and 'actual'. National organisations like Millennium Volunteers, then, play the role of regulating the quality of signals comprising the brand by deciding how much of which activities are acceptable. Kieran explained that he had donated his shares from Young Enterprise to charity and…

> Kieran: '…was the techniciany type guy, doing the lighting and the sound for the stage in the plays and stuff. I do that 'cause it's put on for the public and the school. They said I could do that as well.
> Interviewer: So who's 'they'?
> Kieran: The Millennium volunteers has a sort of rep that comes into the school. I asked her about it and she said 'Yes'

So here, students' experience of extra-curricular activities, including volunteering, is potentially being transformed through the professionalisation, branding and regulation of those activities by external authorities.

For Leabury High students then, the discourse of the 'good citizen' was key to their self-marketing practices, especially where they were unable to substantiate discourses of the 'subject identity' through their grades. Whilst advising her tutor group on writing a CV, Mrs Bell remarked that, '…if your results aren't quite what you think they should be, you've got to have something else that you can sell…if it is health or you can sell the fact that you're active or keep yourself fit,

stuff like that'. This strategy was summed up by Vicky, who told me that she was '…relying on the fact' that her universities were more likely to want someone who does extra-curricular stuff '…than someone who really just sits around doing nothing. Because it means I can be doing their sports teams and their bands and stuff, which they're going to want'.

9.5 Conclusion

Drawing on my analysis of the students' Personal Statements I have identified four primary discourses that, although present across all sites, were deployed in different ways depending on the destination habitus of the course applied for. The Grange focused on displaying the subject identity in order to realise a successful projection that would reflect the high-status universities they were applying to. This involved deploying signals that would successfully differentiate them from other applicants. At ECC students similarly sought to 'sound like' an art student, through their use of disciplinary terms and communicating their passion for the subject as well as emphasising their personal creativity, a strategy that was supplemented by their projection of the ideal student in 'skills' terms e.g. as someone who had 'learned to learn'. Finally Leabury High students invested a lot of time into producing accounts of their extra-curricular activities in an attempt to show that they were good citizens, as well as 'passionate' about their subject.

Ten
Self-marketing profiles: orientations to the process

10.1 Introduction

Having considered students' attempted realisations of the destination habitus (the *products* of their self-marketing), I will now present my analysis of the underlying *process* - in other words, how students in different institutions approached having to 'sell themselves' through the Personal Statement or interviews.

As I began coding the data, a number of contrasts became quickly evident. Some students had considered their Personal Statements months before the deadline while others produced them at the last minute. Some were simply doing what they were told, while others seemed to be far more self-reflective. As I recorded and refined these contrasting findings I discovered that some orienting principles could be abstracted from the students' accounts of their self-marketing practices. While these principles are presented as sets of opposing dichotomies, it is not my intention simply to reduce highly complex behaviour into dualisms nor to present an exhaustive list. Rather I am interested in the classifying principles themselves, and in this case I chose four of the most salient: time, engagement, focus and classification. I arrived at these principles after making initial lists of the contrasts that were evident in my coding thus far, and then considering their applicability to the whole sample. By reviewing the interview data for four or five students from each site, I was able to recognise fairly easily which principles had explanatory power beyond the one or two students that had generated the initial code and which did not. This preliminary analysis was supported later by systematic analysis of all the respondents in each of the three sites using these new codes.

This analytical approach could be seen as a hybrid between grounded theory and theory partially shaped by externally derived categories. For example, the principles I identified were primarily derived from the data itself. However, the creating and naming of those categories was shaped by my acquaintance with two main bodies of 'external' theory. The first of these were certain Bernsteinian theoretical concepts I was already applying to the overall analysis - structured in terms of opposing analytical principles - such as retrospective/prospective and internal/external.[122] Secondly my selection of analytical categories was also shaped by a chance encounter with Hayes and Wheelwright's (1984) four stages of manufacturing competitiveness. In this model the internal/external principle refers to *where* companies are focusing their strategy, whereas the supportive/neutral principle relates to the level of *integration* shown (see Figure 10.1). Here, it is claimed, companies become more competitive as they move from their manufacturing being internally or externally neutral i.e. simply meeting their own or others manufacturing standards, to being internally or externally supportive, where manufacturing is integrated into a whole company strategy or plays a key role in achieving an edge over competitors in an effort to be world class.[123] This struck me as resonating with some of the ways that the students approached their own competitiveness.

Figure 10.1: Hayes and Wheelright's four stages of manufacturing competitiveness

	Internal	External
Neutral	Stage I	Stage II
Supportive	Stage III	Stage IV

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122 However, the way these terms are used in my analysis differs significantly from their use by Bernstein himself. For example, his identification of retrospective and prospective identities embraces many more aspects of individuals' orientations than does my much more restricted application of this dyad here.

123 Stage I (internally neutral) is where companies rely on the strength of the product for sales. Stage II (externally neutral) is where companies aim to meet the standards imposed by external competitors i.e they use the same suppliers and adhere to industry practice/standards. At Stage III (internally supportive), manufacturing is internally supportive of other parts of the company. At Stage IV (externally supportive) companies are looking to use manufacturing to achieve an edge over their competitors and be as good as anybody in the world - i.e world class.

Stages in the Evolution of Manufacturing's Strategic Role (Hayes & Wheelright, 1984, Table 14.1 p. 396).

10.2 Four principles

Beneath each principle is a description of what counted as acceptable evidence of a particular orientation and then a few examples from the data to help the reader recognise it in the students' practices and attitudes. They are: Passive/Active; Internal/External; Retrospective/Prospective; and Segregated/Integrated.

10.21 Engagement: Passive/Active

This distinction identifies how the student related to the process of self-marketing in terms of their engagement and was the result of encountering varying levels of interest, commitment, action and reaction amongst students. Undoubtedly this orientation was closely related to (or indeed the result of) a whole nexus of personal and institutional factors, including, for example, how competitive or how reflexive a student was. Regardless of some opacity in terms of the origins of this construct, a contrast was evident in the data between those who actively embraced or resisted self-marketing, and those who appeared to be engaging with the process far more passively.

Active

An 'active' student was enthusiastic in *either* embracing *or* resisting the process of self-marketing (although the necessity of producing a Personal Statement made the latter highly unlikely). Sarah (ECC), for example, had been going to make-up trade shows with her mum for a long time in order to make her application to Fashion College more competitive, and John (Grange) explains here how he actively and reflexively adapted his body language to create a positive impression:

> Um, I sat, I kind of aimed to sit forward on my chair so I was kind of engaged, so I could get my hands involved, um, because communication is you know, I'm sure important. I, tried not to kind of sit back and fiddle.

When asked if there was anything that he downplayed on his Personal Statement, Gav's (ECC) reply suggested that he actively embraced the need to market himself: 'No, I tried to sell myself as best as I could and underplaying isn't really going to give them the whole story, so I tried not to do that'. In contrast, Jonny (Grange) made his resistance lighthearted by pretending that he regularly made Sunday roast dinners on a practice CV.

Interviewer:	On your CV?
Jonny	Yes, I said it was one of my past times?
Interviewer:	Have you ever made a roast dinner?
Jonny:	No…no, but I thought it sounded quite sort of, homey and humble.

Passive

These students passively followed the crowd, meeting minimal requirements to get by or displaying an attitude of reluctant compliance. For example, Charlie (Grange) explained to me that although he was highly motivated to work for money in his part-time job, this wasn't the case when it came to school, and even his UCAS application.

Charlie:	I think often, when I do something, I put my mind to it if I think it's worthwhile. Like school work I don't feel is worthwhile, but in the long run it clearly is, but you don't realise it at the time. But I still don't think I'd change very much. Even if I could go back in time, I'd possibly do a little more work, but I shouldn't have thought I'd do a lot more.
Interviewer:	Did you feel pressured to appear a certain way on your Personal Statement?
Charlie:	No, not really, I just wrote, I didn't do anything special. I wrote about me, and that's about it really, I didn't do anything.
Interviewer	Did you have much help with it?
Charlie:	No

I received a similar response from a number of other students, particularly when I asked them if they took advantage of opportunities to 'boost' their CV.

Jake:	I try to, but mostly don't follow through with plans - such as engineering work placements. (Grange)
Josh:	Not really…just 'cause it's effort really. (Leabury High)
Interviewer:	Did you have much time to write it? (*the Personal Statement*)
Lizzy:	No, I left it kind of late, and rushed it. (ECC)

10.22 Focus: Internal/External

Here the distinction concerned where the student appeared to be taking their cues from, i.e. the sources of the standard against which they judged their own self-marketing behaviour. It relates to Hayes and Wheelwright's (*ibid*) four stages of manufacturing competitiveness in that students may be benchmarking their approach against, or taking their cues from, either internal or external sources.

Internal

Students with this orientation judged their self-marketing behaviour against internal standards that were framed by strongly held personal beliefs or values. They were not seeking to 'measure up' to anything other than their own expectations. For example, when I asked Emily (Grange) how she became good at marketing herself, she took it as a question about how she came to know her own mind and talked about her parents being 'good people'. She defined self-marketing as '…the way you present yourself to other people in a way, and to yourself. The way you view yourself and what you hold like, as good values and like how you like spending time'. The following quotations were all taken as evidence of an internal orientation.

> Gary: No I didn't really feel I had any pressure trying to appear as any - as any person I wasn't. No, I don't think I was, I was just trying to be, trying to get it done. Yeah. Just trying to be honest. (ECC).
>
> Rob: I'll take any opportunity that's given to me, definitely, anything. Absolutely anything. But not…I don't know, not really for the sake of my CV, just to say I've learned. (ECC).
>
> Charlie: Oh, I found that easy because I knew about myself. Because a personal statement is just talking about what you've done, and what you plan to do, and stuff…I just talked about myself, that was it. (Grange)
>
> Matt: I don't try and be someone really…they have to accept me as I am basically. I don't really try and be different for them, I don't see why I should be. (ECC).

External

In contrast, an externally oriented student was taking their cues from either peers, parents or teachers and trying to live up to expectations set by some external other. There may have been a difference between *actual* benchmarks/competitors in the form of peers, and *imagined* competitors i.e. those the student imagined they were competing with to get in to university - but my data did not tease out this distinction. For example, here Vicky (Leabury High) repeated my use of the word 'appear', even suggesting that universities want students to make them 'look' good - evidence of a concern to satisfy external desires.

> Interviewer: Do you think that there's pressure to appear a certain way on a personal statement?
> Vicky: Well yeah… if you're doing a subject where you have to write then it's got to appear that you can write. But you've also got to appear university material. You can't be somebody who never does anything, or just doesn't care about anything, because they want you to go there and do well, and make them look good.

When it came to an interview at one of the universities, Gav (ECC) told me that he was trying to give them what they wanted: 'Some fings I had exaggerated, like trying to tell them I was really

into this or really excited about this, just trying to, trying to bullshit my way through a little bit uh, I s'pose'. And Jake (Grange) expressed the need to stand out from external competitors: 'I felt that by emphasising that I have previous knowledge with technology it would automatically give me a better chance over other candidates for the course who have only taken physics and maths in school'. Abby (ECC) had received '…a lot of help from my friends' and 'used theirs (Personal Statement) as a model', and Dylan (Grange) told me that "Yeah, I put it off, put it off and it was like 'What did everyone else put for their beginning?' I'll nick that".

10.23 Time: Retrospective/Prospective

This distinction positioned the students' approach to self-marketing within the concept of their own career, or pedagogic trajectory. It distinguished between those for whom a future career was strategically considered in the present, and those who could only look to the past when strategic behaviour was required in the present. Although it was often manifest in students doing extra activities for their Personal Statements, a lazy student who knew they 'should' have done more would still be categorised as having a prospective orientation. Crucially, having a prospective orientation was not necessarily purely instrumental. Most 'prospective' students approached a new activity for any number of reasons, including, but not only, its utility for UCAS.[124]

Retrospective

These students related to their projected identity retrospectively when the time came to produce their Personal Statement, or attend an interview. They had not thought about it before and often found themselves either 'spinning' their past to improve its instrumentality, or telling it 'straight'.

Adam:	I have a love of the outdoors and of travel, and I'll be able to incorporate that, and that has definitely worked to my advantage, although I never thought when I wanted to join the scouts or the exploration society, 'Well that will help with Geography, or Geology' I thought 'India…great…I don't think I'll ever be able to do that again.' (Grange).
Dylan:	It didn't seem that important at the time. Like, so I wrote that I'd done Young Enterprise, but at the time, doing Young Enterprise, I didn't actually see how this would affect university choices, so I had to sort of ad-lib how it would make me a better candidate. (Grange).
Daina	I started - I wrote it in like a day, but it was really short. So I had to think. I was like, me and another teacher were sitting there trying to think what

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124 This concern with a time orientation may appear to be related to the kinds of functionalist analyses that Kettley (2007a, p. 336) describes in his review of widening participation research. Here, barriers to university participation were attributed to different value orientations of particular social classes, so that "…working-class culture, unlike middle-class culture, was collectivist and present-oriented, resulting in a failure to master tasks". Kettley criticises this for pathologising working class culture and dichotmising material and cultural experience. I do not have the data to suggest any such class basis to these orientations, nor that such values would be the cause of difficulty in accessing university.

you could put in there to add stuff, and then I remembered that I attended a, at Cambridge, this kind of law conference, and I was like 'You could put this in there and that in there' and started adding things until we got the final one. (Leabury High).

Prospective

Meanwhile a prospective orientation was assigned where students had considered what an ideal projected identity would look like in the future, and adapted their behaviour strategically in the present in order to produce it. Even so, students were in the main truthful in their telling of 'the story'. Annalise (ECC) had helped to write a magazine as part of a project to engage local youth and told me that she knew 'This is all good practice for the future, and it also shows that you are a well-rounded person. I think we all knew that'. And Kate (Leabury High), had consciously chosen her extra-curricular activities with her 'CV' in mind.

Interviewer:	I take advantage of opportunities to boost my CV
Kate:	Well I suppose, the extra-curricular thing. Like the Millennium Volunteers, I didn't have to take on, but I thought, 'Well it'd look good on my CV and I'm doing it anyway, so I might as well'.
Interviewer:	Are there any other things where you've thought, 'That would look good' or 'That would be helpful'?
Kate:	Probably Duke of Edinburgh really. I was quite interested in it, but then I knew that it was going to be hard work, the expeditions weren't going to be much fun, but I thought that it would look really good for future employment.

10.24 Classification: Segregated/Integrated

Classification refers here to how different elements of a student's life were kept apart or brought together to be used instrumentally for the purposes of self-marketing. It is concerned with what students recognised to be available in different parts of their lives as a *resource* for self-marketing, and was part of a student's ability to talk in the language of 'transferable skills' that translate across different contexts. Because of the current focus on the transferability of such skills, an integrated orientation is likely to be more valuable in these kinds of 'markets'. While all students have to draw on their personal experience to write the Personal Statement, it was clear from the interviews that the personal and pedagogic realms within a student's life could be more strongly

or weakly classified, with implications for their ability to find resources with which to make an ideal projection.[125]

Segregated

Students with a segregated orientation displayed strong classification between their personal life and their pedagogic life (i.e. their schooling career), and were not quick to recognise either how they related or how they might both be used to create an ideal projection of the self. For example, when asked if he took advantage of opportunities to 'boost his CV', Kamil, an Art student from ECC replied: 'Uh, don't fink I've had any of those, so I think I'll put 'Don't know'. This was despite telling me in a previous interview that he made DVDs, went skating, started free running, played basketball, and taught breakdancing. Similarly, Lizzy told me she disliked the part of her Personal Statement that said she travelled to different areas of the country "…to help throw illegal parties" because although her tutor had encouraged her to include this aspect of her personal life, she felt it was 'irrelevant' to her application to study art and didn't 'sound right'. Jake (Grange) did not see, until it was pointed out to him, the relevance of his international upbringing to his UCAS application.

> I remember Dr. Macintyre telling me to emphasise more that I was in Africa for half of my education as it was the main thing that set me apart from English candidates - it would be the thing that makes me stand out, even just a little bit.

Integrated

In contrast the personal and pedagogic lives of 'integrated' students were weakly classified, and were considered as one whole. This took many forms, including hobbies being related to the subject discipline, or networks of relationships existing across these boundaries. An integrated orientation was also assigned where students *wanted* to include certain things in their statement, but had the rules to recognise where this would have been inappropriate or illegitimate. Crucially, the student saw their whole life as being available for instrumental use in creating an ideal projection, even if they did not draw on everything. David (Grange) for example, reflected that although he had captained two 'very very small' rugby and tennis teams at school, his '… leadership skills are better harnessed just socially, around the place, and sort of, in a school team, even if I'm not the captain. But, he reflected, 'I couldn't have said that. It would have sounded wishy-washy and vague and there would be no evidence to back it up'.

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125 It came to my attention after developing these concepts that Bernstein (1975), in his paper on Invisible and Visible Pedagogies, identified a strong classification between 'work' and 'play' as indicative of working class experience, compared to weak classification between the two for middle-class actors. For the latter group "Work carries what is often called 'intrinsic' satisfactions, and therefore is not confined to one context. However, from another point of view, work offers the opportunity of symbolic narcissism which combines inner pleasure and outer prestige. Work for certain subgroups of the middle class is a personalised act in a privatised social structure" (*ibid*, p. 24). This raises the interesting question of whether a 'segregated' orientation to self-marketing is more likely to be found among working-class students, and how far this might disadvantage them in these moments of progression.

John's (Grange) approach was so integrated that it even included pure fabrication.

> John: I included this entirely spurious point that I was school sudoku champion, which I completely made up, and I realised at the last moment 'What if they ask me about this? How could there have been a school sudoku championship you idiot?!'
>
> Interviewer: Why did it go in?
>
> John: I was arguing -- At that point I was trying to demonstrate how logical I was. I'm actually good at sudoku -- and I thought 'I need some way to prove I'm good at sudoku' I'm just an idiot, so, I put in a bit too much about croquet as well.

Here the strength of the boundary between the pedagogic and the personal interacted with the recognition rule concerning what was appropriate to draw on to successfully realise a legitimate text in the Personal Statement. John would happily have drawn on his enjoyment of sudoku because he saw it as a transferable skill, but he realised that he could not suggest he had won a fictional championship in an application to Oxford University. What is significant here though is that he considered his sudoku hobby as a resource in the first place.

10.3 Creating profiles

From here, it is possible to conceptualise various combinations of these orientations as forming what I shall term 'self-marketing profiles'. These are categorised in Figure 10.2, first on the engagement/focus axis, and secondly on the time/classification axis. I have given each profile a descriptor to try to convey most appropriately the dominant characteristic of each.

Figure 10.2 Descriptors

	Passive	Active			Retrospective	Prospective
Internal	Reluctant	Resistant or Authentic	**Segregated**		Unaware	Planner
External	Matching or Compliant	Competitive	**Integrated**		Resourceful	Careerist

Table 10.1 Descriptors and corresponding attitudes

Profile	Descriptor	Attitude
1. Passive Internal (PI)	Reluctant	'I'll do what I have to'
2. Passive External (PE)	Matching	'I'll do what everybody else is doing'
	Compliant	'I'll do what I'm told'
3. Active Internal (AI)	Resistant	'I am fine as I am'
	Authentic	'Who I am is what they want'
4. Active External (AE)	Competitive	'I'll do what it takes to be better than X'
5. Retrospective Segregated (RS)	Unaware	'I haven't got that much to say'
6. Retrospective Integrated (RI)	Resourceful	'I can find relevant stuff when it's time to'
7. Prospective Segregated (PS)	Planner	'I can include the things I did to help me'
8. Prospective Integrated (PI)	Careerist	'I will include everything that will help me achieve my plan

10.31 Profiles emerging from and then assigned to data

After an iterative process of using the data to refine these analytical distinctions and then applying them back to the data, I began assigning each student a self-marketing profile. In order to designate a student as 'active' rather than 'passive' I needed at least one clear piece of evidence that conformed to my description of 'active' (ideally two or three), and none that suggested the student was 'passive'. Sometimes I found evidence that was not directly related to self-marketing, but was nevertheless suggestive of a particular orientation. For example, Sarah's (ECC) language revealed a strong classification between her local friendship group, ("We're more of a pub kinda crowd than a 'Come to the theatre with me', sort of thing"), and her pedagogic career, where her Mum took her to galleries so that she could get in to Fashion college. For this reason I described her as 'segregated' rather than 'integrated'.

I am confident that these distinctions are authentic to the salient contrasts I found among different students, but there were, of course, certain students whose interviews had not revealed any pertinent data relating to one or other of these orientations, or who appeared to have

conflicting orientations. This is likely to be because my original interview schedules were not designed with these orientations in mind, and it seems plausible that a data collection tool designed specifically to capture such orientations would be more successful. It is also likely that some individuals were hard to classify because the data was not strong in either direction particularly. For example Dylan from the Grange displayed evidence of both an internal *and* external orientation. In light of all three of his interviews I chose to classify Dylan as internal. His case demonstrates the limtiations of such typologies, and the importance of creating a purpose-built data collection tool.

Here I would underline that creating dualisms was purely an analytical choice, and that it would have been more realistic, and data-sensitive to have plotted the students on a continuum, albeit an analytical challenge. I am not overly concerned that there were a few students I found hard to classify. The usefulness of the exercise was more in drawing out patterns and contrasts than in saying with certainty that student x was 'active' rather than 'passive'. To that end, quantifying orientations and profiles is only useful insofar as it helps to identify key findings. It also necessarily obscures the strength or weakness of the orientation as well as other, individual findings. Furthermore, there is a clear danger that small decisions to classify students one way and not the other (occasionally on the basis of weaker evidence) may have had the effect of skewing the findings - especially with such a small sample. However, this approach did allow me identify *potential* orientations, as well as actual ones. When his theory was described as one of 'ideal types', Bernstein (2000) argued that while ideal types cannot generate other than themselves, his work was about sets of principles that generate a number of different forms in their combinations. I hope that in a similar way these principles suggest combinations, not all of which may yet be recogniseable. For examples of the data supporting each profile, see Appendix 7.

10.32 The distribution of orientations within and between institutions

In Table 10.2 I have presented the orientations and profiles of each student. Three students were excluded because they were not applying to university and therefore had not written a Personal Statement. Despite including interview questions about CVs and interviews, I found that these did not yield the kind of data that would allow me to assign them a profile.

Table 10.2 Orientations of each classifiable student showing their distribution within and between sites

ECC	Engagement		Focus		Time		Classification		Profile
	Passive	Active	Internal	External	Retro-spective	Prosp-ective	Segre-gated	Inte-grated	
Sarah		X		X		X	X		Competitive Planner
Gary	X		X		X		X		Reluctant Unaware
Annalise		X		X		X		X	Competitive Careerist
Lizzy	X			X		X	X		Matching Planner
Megan									
Rob	X			X	X			X	Matching Resourceful
Kamil		X	X		X			X	Authentic Resourceful
Gav	X			X	X		X		Compliant Unaware
Abby	X			X	X			X	Compliant Resourceful
Matt	X			X	X		X		Compliant Unaware
Poppy									
Steve		X	X		X			X	Resistant Resourceful
Total (10)	6	4	3	7	7	3	5	5	
Leabury High									
Kieran	X			X		X		X	Compliant Careerist
Jake									
Josh	X			X		X		X	Compliant Careerist
Vicky		X		X		X		X	Competitive Careerist
Aarif	X			X		X		X	Matching Careerist
Leon		X		X		X		X	Competitive Careerist
Paul	X			X		X	X		Compliant Planner
Daina		X		X	X			X	Competitive Resourceful
Kate		X		X		X		X	Competitive Careerist
Lianne	X			X		X	X		Compliant Planner
Amy	X			X		X	X		Compliant Planner
Total (10)	6	4	0	10	1	9	3	7	
Grange									
Jake	X			X	X		X		Compliant Unaware
Penelope		X	X			X		X	Resistant Careerist
Alistair		X		X		X		X	Competitive Careerist
Adam		X		X	X			X	Competitive Resourceful
Charlie	X		X		X			X	Reluctant Resourceful
Emily		X	X			X		X	Authentic Careerist
Dylan		X	X		X			X	Resistant Resourceful
Isabelle		X	X			X		X	Authentic Careerist
David		X		X		X		X	Competitive Careerist
Rebecca		X		X		X		X	Competitive Careerist
Eleanor		X		X		X		X	Competitive Careerist
Mark		X		X		X		X	Competitive Careerist
James		X		X		X	X		Competitive Planner
John		X		X		X		X	Competitive Careerist
Total (14)	2	12	5	9	4	10	2	12	

10.4 Analysis

It is important to appreciate that these self-marketing profiles were both collectively held (because of the advice given by the schools) and individually held (because of students varying personalities/choices/desires). But though each is, in detail, unique to an individual, their character is strongly shaped by the interaction between the dominant and self-marketing pedagogies of each institution - and this is strongly supported by the marked differences between the institutions as illustrated in the table below.

Table 10.3 Summary of orientations

	Engagement		Focus		Time		Classification	
	Passive	Active	Internal	External	Retrospective	Prospective	Segregated	Integrated
ECC	6	4	3	7	7	3	5	5
Leabury High	6	4	0	10	1	9	3	7
Grange	2	12	5	9	10	10	2	12
Total	**14**	**21**	**8**	**26**	**12**	**22**	**10**	**24**

10.41 Orientations and their relationship to site-specific pedagogies

The most significant finding is that in total there were far more active than passive, external than internal, prospective than retrospective, and integrated than segregated students across the three sites. I would suggest that this AEPI profile represents the 'ideal' self-marketer, in the sense that such a person would be actively engaged in creating an identity projection by appropriately tailoring their activity, or drawing on all their experience, in ways that are sensitive to the demands of the 'market'.[126] It is clear that these orientations could be found in greatest number at the Grange and then Leabury High, and I will now consider how such profiles relate to the self-marketing and dominant pedagogies of each of the sites.

Active

Eighty six per cent of Grange students in my sample displayed an active orientation to self-marketing, compared with 40 per cent at both Leabury High and ECC

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126 It is perhaps unsurprising that 77 per cent of all students were classified as 'external' (compared with 69 per cent 'integrated', 63 per cent 'prospective', and 60 per cent 'active').

This suggests that the Grange's highly developed pedagogy of self-marketing - itself a strategic response to the competitive fields in which students were making their UCAS applications - was, to a large extent, recognised and realised in students then acting strategically themselves. Certainly the kind of habitus that was projected as desirable at the Grange was one that was socially engaged and competitive. So Mr Allan could challenge his students:

> Where are you going to research? What resources are you going to use? Don't hesitate to contact, email that department and ask the questions…take a positive approach…go on open days, departmental visits…

And he made explicit that the sort of student that universities want, is an active student.

> Are you going to be a stimulating person to teach? Are you going to be involved, go to seminars, speak up in tutorials and so on? Are you prepared to get involved in the various activities of the department or faculty that you apply to, and the activities of the university of course in a much broader sense?

In contrast there were more passive than active orientations amongst students at ECC and Leabury High.

External

One hundred per cent of Leabury High students were externally oriented to self-marketing compared with 70 per cent of ECC students and 64 per cent of Grange students.

The very high levels of external orientation in the sample from Leabury High represent both active and passive orientations, suggesting that these students were both competitive *and* compliant in their self-marketing practice. This finding is particularly interesting because one might have expected Grange students to display greater external orientations, but they were marginally lower than ECC. After all, the pedagogy of self-marketing was far more developed at the Grange than at ECC, I witnessed students being encouraged many times to be externally oriented, and for many Grange students this external orientation began very early, especially where parents invested their resources into students' stock of cultural capital.[127] This might be explained by the fact that Grange students tended to more *actively* resist external orientations - perhaps in reaction to the intentional and persistent encouragement that they adapt themselves to what universities want. Although there were still more externally than internally oriented students, at both ECC and Grange some students resisted approaching self-marketing as an exercise of external adaptation and instead took their cues from internally situated discourses of the self. But

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127 e.g. Alistair and John both had mothers that kept a portfolio of their sons' achievements and awards, and all students went through an interview process to get into the Grange schools.

in contrast to the Grange, 'internal' ECC students were less likely to feel the *need* to be anything other than they were, and therefore were more likely to be *passive* and internal.

Prospective

Leabury High had the highest proportion of prospective students (90 per cent) compared to Grange (71 per cent) and ECC (27 per cent).

Again, it is particularly interesting, given all the resources poured into the pedagogy of self-marketing at the Grange, that it was Leabury High students who appeared most likely to be prospectively oriented. However, this is broadly in line with the institutional strategies presented in Chapter Nine, in which Leabury High focused their attention on projecting the image of the 'good citizen' where the Grange focused far more on the 'subject identity'. Consequently, Leabury High students who were unable to compete on grades were encouraged from the start of Year 12 to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities, and as a result many students were highly aware of the 'This will look good' angle presented to them, and of the importance of appearing well-rounded. Mrs Bell the form tutor actively encouraged her students to think prospectively about what might look good in the future. Speaking of keeping records of their activities for a CV, she said:

> It's important that you get used to doing it, that you get used to amending it and if you think of anything just sort of jot it down somewhere and add it, you know, other activities that you've taken on and you think 'Oh this'll be good…this'll look good on my CV', like Neil being form rep. He's never been to a meeting, but he immediately, when it was reference time, became form rep, and he mentioned it in his Personal Statement.

Likewise, the pedagogy of self-marketing at the Grange positioned the students as strategic actors who would consider their future in the present. So Mr Allan warned his students that universities would be looking at how their previous grades '…relate forward to your predicted grades and backward to your GCSEs…is there a consistency running through it? Are you clearly working well at all times and therefore likely to continue to work well?' Most students had internalised this way of relating to time. David, for instance, talking of voluntary work, said that it…

> …makes more sense for the lower sixth to do it, have it on their UCAS application, although I suppose you can say you are *going* to do it but it makes more sense to say you've done it and talk about it at the interview.

Although the Grange still had more prospective than retrospective students, there were four students who approached self-marketing retrospectively, compared to only one at Leabury High. While more data would be necessary to substantiate this contrast, I suspect that for students at

the Grange this was a calculated risk. Dylan, Charlie, Adam and Jake all had a relaxed attitude to self-marketing and I wondered whether they felt they could still write a good statement without having to put in a lot of extra effort. This possibility was presented to me as the result of a conversation with John, in which he suggested that many of his peers took this approach.

John: For my interview, I kind of brand myself as - being lazy is quite cool, I probably brand myself as a lazy achiever
Interview: So thats quite a niche is it?
John: Yeah and at the Grange it's quite a desirable thing -- among my friends, it's like, you can do it without trying

This brings us back to the significance of the destination habitus projected by the course students are applying to, and the subsequent necessity (or not) of different orientations to self-marketing. While some students may need to adopt a prospective orientation (e.g. medics who require work experience), others may not. And ironically, sometimes those with the most resources can afford to adopt a retrospective, last-minute orientation without it harming their chances.

Finally then, only 30 per cent of ECC students had a prospective orientation, corresponding to my finding that only four of the 12 students were engaged in anything they would describe as 'extra-curricular' activities. Lizzy laughed when asked if she did any such activities and told me 'I work and go out. That's it!' Interestingly a couple of students did not know what I meant by 'extra-curricular' and one student interpreted it as remedial basic skills classes. The college did not appear to encourage or provide the range of opportunities that were found at Leabury High and the Grange (e.g. Duke of Edinburgh, Millennium Volunteers, Young Enterprise, or work experience). This was likely to be in part the result of how large and therefore fragmented the 16-19 student community at ECC was, as well as the structure of the course, which had the students working at college from nine to five for three days a week. Finally, many of the students had jobs which took up time that could be spent on other activities: 'With their economic backgrounds, many of them have to work' (Maggie).

Integrated

Finally then, Grange students were less likely to perceive their personal and pedagogic lives as strongly classified when it came to self-marketing, than Leabury High and ECC students. I would suggest that this is primarily the result of a greater stock of recognition and realisation rules amongst Grange students, allowing them to 'see' what universities wanted, and identify (and/or modify) those aspects of their lives that best fitted these requirements. In the interview practice

day, Mr Thomas identified this skill as the heart of their ability to successfully 'sell themselves' at interview.

> It's all about how you use what happens, and how you use your experience…You've all made good use of your school, you've done Young Enterprise, you've got potentially all the answers. But what are you going to make out of that? That's the key.

Leabury High and ECC students simply appeared to have fewer of these recognition and realisation rules, *or alternatively* needed them less in the process of applying to different kinds of courses from Grange students. Part of the reason that Leabury High students appear to be more likely to have an integrated orientation to self-marketing is the school's strategy of encouraging the students to find relevant transferable skills and experience from their personal lives that can be utilised in order to give them a competitive edge. In contrast, those ECC students with an integrated orientation were simply more likely to have weaker boundaries between their study of art and their enjoyment of art as a past-time.

10.42 Summary of the descriptors within and between institutions

At this point it may be useful to present a summary of the descriptors, to draw out the distinction between different kinds of orientation.

Table 10.4 Distribution of descriptors within and between institutions

	ECC	Leabury High	Grange	Total
Reluctant	1		1	2
Resistant	1		2	3
Authentic	1		2	3
Matching	2	1		4
Compliant	3	5	1	9
Competitive	2	4	8	14
Unaware	3		1	4
Planner	2	3	1	6
Resourceful	4	1	3	8
Careerist	1	6	9	16
Total	**20**	**20**	**28**	**69**

One of the more striking observations here is the variety found at both the Grange and ECC, where almost all ten profiles are present. In contrast, Leabury High students displayed only six profiles, and these were clustered mostly around the external and prospective orientations. This may be the result of the school's very visible strategy to make their students more marketable (therefore positioning them externally), and the student's willingness to heed this advice. At ECC the range of profiles may well be the result of a *lack* of any particular pedagogy of self-marketing, which meant that the 'wide range of abilities' and social backgrounds in the group (Maggie) manifested itself here as a wide range of orientations. At the Grange, students were more likely to be 'resistant' or 'authentic' (the active-internal orientations) than 'matching' or 'compliant' (the passive-external), suggesting that while students are still likely to be externally oriented, it is the *'active'* orientation that is salient to the dominant pedagogic code of the school, if not the pedagogy of self-marketing.

We can also now distinguish between the *kinds* of external orientation found at each site. So we see that students at every site are more likely to be externally than internally oriented in their self-marketing. But both Leabury High and ECC students are more likely to display the *'compliant'* orientation ('I'll do what I'm told') than the *'competitive'* orientation ('I'll do what it takes to be better than X'), while the latter dominates the profiles at the Grange, with eight 'competitive' students compared to just one 'compliant' student.

Finally, the two most prevalent profiles are 'competitive' and 'careerist', a reflection of the dominance of the 'active-external' and 'prospective-integrated' orientations at Leabury High and the Grange. At ECC however, we notice that students appear more likely to be 'unaware' or 'resourceful' than 'planner' or 'careerist', highlighting again the retrospective rather than prospective orientation of the pedagogy of self-marketing at that site.

10.43 Summary of profiles within and between sites

This final table summarises the distribution of self-marketing profiles within and between sites, allowing us to see how the descriptors come together to form full profiles.

Table 10.5 Summary of self-marketing profiles

	ECC	Leabury High	Grange	Total
Reluctant Unaware	1			1
Reluctant Resourceful			1	1
Reluctant Planner				
Reluctant Careerist				
Resistant Unaware				
Resistant Resourceful	1		1	2
Resistant Planner				
Resistant Careerist			1	1
Authentic Unaware				
Authentic Resourceful	1			1
Authentic Planner				
Authentic Careerist			2	2
Matching Unaware				
Matching Resourceful	1			2
Matching Planner	1			1
Matching Careerist		1		1
Compliant Unaware	2		1	3
Compliant Resourceful	1			1
Compliant Planner		3		3
Compliant Careerist		2		2
Competitive Unaware				
Competitive Resourceful		1	1	2
Competitive Planner	1		1	2
Competitive Careerist	1	3	6	10
Total	**10**	**10**	**14**	**35**

This table is perhaps less revealing because the profiles are so widely distributed, making it hard to make any claim from such a small sample. Nonetheless it raises some questions that would be interesting for further study. What it does show is how the descriptors fit together to form profiles. We might logically expect individual's profiles to fit together in pairs that appear to be consistent with one another. So we might expect to see 'reluctant' fit with 'unaware' at one end of the table, and 'competitive' fit with 'careerist' at the other. This is generally the case. For example, the most prevalent profiles were:

1. Competitive-Careerist (29 per cent of all students - 10 students in all)
2. Compliant-Unaware and Compliant-Planner (9 per cent each - three students each)
3. Competitive-Planner, Competitive-Resourceful, Compliant-Careerist, Authentic-Careerist and Resistant-Resourceful (6 per cent each - 2 students each)

Perhaps the key point to draw from this is that the profile of the 'ideal' self-marketer (the Competitive-Careerist) is most visible at the Grange (40 per cent), then at Leabury High (30 per cent) and barely at ECC (10 per cent) - a finding that is consistent with the pedagogies of self-marketing at each site.

However it is also interesting to note the emergence of some more unexpected profiles. While very unlikely profiles are entirely absent in this sample i.e. reluctant planner/careerist, there are two 'Authentic-Careerists' and one 'Resistant-Careerist' - all females and all at the Grange. These young women were all ambitious, motivated and hard-working, but resisted any attempts to shape their self-marketing in ways that were inconsistent with their self-image. So Emily took a very active and prospective approach to her Personal Statement, but interpreted self-marketing as 'The way you view yourself and what you hold like, as good values and like how you like spending time', rather than adapting oneself to external requirements. Similarly Isabelle described herself as competitive and had done a number of activities (including Young Enterprise and work experience at the Houses of Parliament) but told me that these things '…weren't to put on my Personal Statement'. She remarked that being authentic was 'really important' to her, and was very angry at students who plagiarised others' Personal Statements.

10.5 Positive vs. negative emotional responses to self-marketing

Finally, alongside these profiles were the emotional responses that students presented in the process of telling me about their self-marketing experiences. I asked a series of questions about how 'comfortable' or 'confident' students felt about self-marketing and adapting their behaviour, and whether they liked/disliked the process of interviews. Those students who experienced negative emotions in the process of self-marketing were very quick to share them when asked, and it was clear that although many students reported feeling nervous before an interview say, some students were particularly threatened or uncomfortable with the idea of having to sell themselves. It was not too difficult therefore to make a crude distinction between those who had a generally positive or negative attitude toward self-marketing, taking into consideration all the data I had about each student. For examples of responses that I coded as positive or negative, see Appendix 8.

Table 10.6 Emotional orientations to self-marketing within and between institutions

Site	Student	Positive orientation	Negative orientation	Profile
ECC	Sarah		x	Competitive Planner
	Gary	x		Reluctant Unaware
	Annalise	x		Competitive Careerist
	Lizzy		x	Matching Planner
	Megan	x		
	Rob	x		Matching Resourceful
	Kamil	x		Authentic Resourceful
	Gav	x		Compliant Unaware
	Abby		x	Compliant Resourceful
	Matt		x	Compliant Unaware
	Poppy			
	Steve		x	Resistant Resourceful
	Total (11)	6	5	
Leabury High	Kieran	x		Compliant Careerist
	Jake	x		
	Josh	x		Compliant Careerist
	Vicky		x	Competitive Careerist
	Aarif	x		Matching Careerist
	Leon	x		Competitive Careerist
	Paul		x	Compliant Planner
	Daina	x		Competitive Resourceful
	Kate	x		Competitive Careerist
	Lianne		x	Compliant Planner
	Amy		x	Compliant Planner
	Total (11)	7	4	
The Grange	Jake		x	Compliant Unaware
	Penelope	x		Resistant Careerist
	Alistair	x		Competitive Careerist
	Adam	x		Competitive Resourceful
	Charlie	x		Reluctant Resourceful
	Emily	x		Authentic Careerist
	Dylan		x	Resistant Resourceful
	Isabelle		x	Authentic Careerist
	David	x		Competitive Careerist
	Rebecca		x	Competitive Careerist
	Eleanor	x		Competitive Careerist
	Mark	x		Competitive Careerist
	James		x	Competitive Planner
	John	x		Competitive Careerist
	Total (14)	9 (22)	5 (14)	

Table 10.6 reveals that there were more students who felt comfortable and confident about having to market themselves than students who expressed negativity about the process, and this was true across all three sites. Interestingly, there does not seem to be any particular institutional difference here, with the table showing a fairly even distribution of positive and negative responses across each case. And significantly, how someone *feels* about having to sell themselves is not necessarily related to their self-marketing profile. For example, while Gary from ECC had a reluctant-unaware profile, he did not ultimately feel negative about self-marketing. Meanwhile Vicky (Leabury High) and Rebecca (Grange) both expressed negative emotions about the process, despite having competitive-careerist profiles.

10.6 Conclusion

To conclude, students' ability to recognise and realise a destination habitus (as discussed in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine) is underpinned by their self-marketing profile, which summarises their orientation across the four principles of engagement (passive/active), focus (internal/external), time (retrospective/prospective), and classification (segregated/integrated). The distribution of these profiles across the three case study institutions has been shown to relate to the pedagogy of self-marketing at each site - itself strongly associated to the dominant pedagogic code.

Eleven
Discussion

11.1 Introduction

The main aim of this study was to understand more about the phenomenon of self-marketing (the quintain) by examining it through three case-studies and in relation to a specific purpose (accessing university through a UCAS application and in some cases, interviews). The use of a multi-case study design enabled me to compare how three different types of 16-19 institution prepared their students for the process and practices of self-marketing in application to university, and also how those students responded. My concern was therefore to illuminate both the transmission of pedagogies of self-marketing, and the utilisation of relevant recognition and realisation rules within my sample of students. In this chapter I summarise my key research findings before considering what they mean in light of previous research. Because this study was the first to investigate self-marketing amongst British 16-19 year olds applying to university, this is not necessarily an easy task. I will therefore particularly discuss some theoretical implications of using a Bernsteinian framework, the way that different 16-19 institutions (with diverse manifestations of generic modes) shape students' self-marketing profiles; and the implications that this has for issues of social class and access to university.

11.2 A summary of findings

As previously mentioned, a Bernsteinian framework was not decided upon until after data collection, and as a result I faced some challenges in identifying data to answer each of the research questions in equal detail. Table 11.1 summarises how (and where) my data answered each of the questions.

Table 11.1 Summary of research questions and findings

Research question	Answered	Summary
1. How is the pedagogic discourse of self-marketing transmitted in each case?		
1.1 Where can one find self-marketing in the curriculum? Is it present in the instructional or regulative discourse, or both?	Chapter Eight	At each site the pedagogy of self-marketing tended to be located within the specific UCAS timetable, rather than the formal curriculum. This is arguably still within the instructional discourse, which, as Bernstein says, is ultimately embedded in the regulative.
1.2 How is it classified and framed, and why?	Chapter Eight	In all three sites, the pedagogy of self-marketing tended to follow the dominant pedagogic code of the school (i.e. strongly classified and framed at the Grange). This was indicative of the level of resource invested into the pedagogy, as well as the influence of the dominant pedagogic code - itself a strategic response to market pressures.
2. How is it recognised?		
2.1 What is the distribution of recognition rules within and across these schools in terms of self-marketing?	Chapter Seven	Recognition was oriented to a 'destination habitus', which varied depending on the status and discipline of the course applied to. Students also varied in their ability to recognise what was required, although 'distribution' of these rules was not measured in any detail.
2.2 How, and how effectively, do students acquire the recognition rules that distinguish a self-marketing context?		My data could not adequately answer this question. They certainly pointed to the strong influence of family and previous experience, but ultimately I excluded this data from the final report.
2.3 Are the recognition rules developed further by the school/college? How?	Chapters Seven and Eight	The school/college primarily developed recognition rules relating to the disciplinary habitus, but also helped students to recognise institutional hierarchies.
3. How is it realised?		
3.1 What is the distribution of realisation rules within and across these schools in terms of self-marketing?	Chapter Nine	Unfortunately, because I did not have any means of judging the success of students' self-marketing realisations, this question cannot be satisfactorily answered. However, as with 2.1 my data suggested that, unsurprisingly, students varied in their ability to produce a legitimate text.
3.2 How do students acquire the rules that enable them to realise a legitimate self-marketing text?		As with question 2.2, my data pointed to the skills and aptitudes that enabled students to realise a legitimate self-marketing text, but I felt that the data were too embryonic to draw upon.

| Research question	Answered	Summary
3.3 Are there common or different realisation strategies across the sites/subjects/contexts and destinations?	Chapter Nine	The sites were all strategic in their positioning toward both their niche market and appropriate higher education destinations. Accordingly, their *level* of strategising varied as this was necessary to their survival. While there were discourses that were used across all three sites, students at different sites *focused* on different, discourses in their Personal Statements as these reflected the requirements of different destination habituses.
4. How do these findings relate to other code modalities in the school?		
4.4 i.e. to what I shall term the dominant pedagogic discourse of each institution, and to the narrative that each institution projects about itself and its character.	Chapters Six, Seven, Eight and Nine	The discourses students' drew upon in their Personal Statements, as well as their orientations toward self-marketing, were clearly related to both the dominant pedagogic code of the school and their pedagogies of self-marketing.

Table 11.1 shows that there was not always an entirely appropriate 'fit' between the Bernsteinian research framework I developed post data-collection, and the findings as they had already begun to be shaped. For example, I had not gathered data that would satisfactorily answer questions about the distribution of recognition and realisation rules within and across sites - effectively because I did not measure the *success* of students' self-marketing practice, a point I will return to later. And while I did have data that would enable me to reflect on *how* and *where* students acquired these rules, I felt that they were insufficient to do justice to such a significant question. Finally, I devoted an entire chapter to analysing students' self-marketing orientations and profiles - an answer to a question I had not initially thought to ask. However, these profiles are easily incorporated into the framework, being both productive of students' self-marketing realisations and responses to the pedagogies of self-marketing at the different sites.

Figure 11.1 attempts to show graphically, how the different elements of my findings fit together. We see, for example, that:

1. The pedagogy of self-marketing at each site was a product of its dominant pedagogic code, itself an ongoing strategic response to the conditions of the local education market.
2. The 'imaginary subject' projected by the dominant pedagogic code of the school/college was a reflection of the 'destination habitus' of the typical university/course students applied to.
3. Self-marketing in the UCAS process involved: firstly the recognition of a destination habitus (itself a combination of institutional status and disciplinary habitus); and secondly the

realisation of that destination habitus through drawing on particular discourses in the Personal Statement.

4. Students' self-marketing profiles were influenced by the sites' pedagogy of self-marketing, and shaped the students' self-marketing practices/realisations.

5. Universities' criteria for what counts as a legitimate self-marketing text are filtered and modified in response to observing how (e.g. on the basis of interviews) these self-marketing realisations are related to students' actual qualities.[128]

Figure 11.1 Diagram of findings
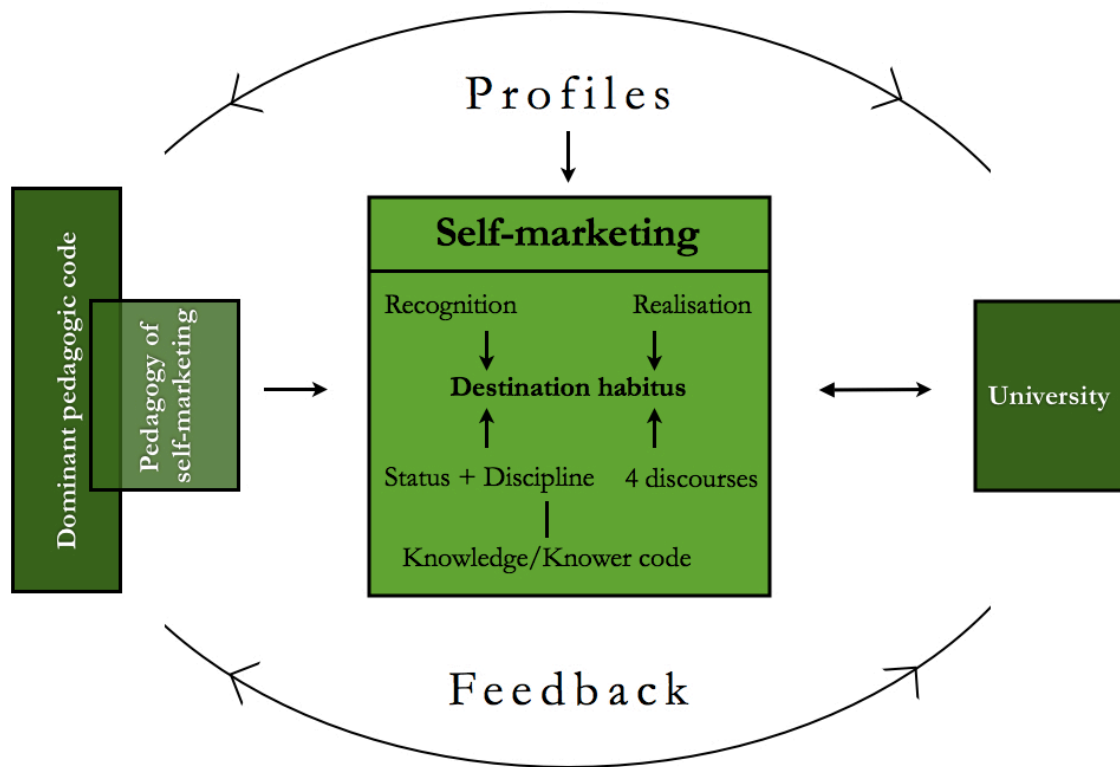
11.3 Self-marketing: definitions and functions

In the introduction to this thesis, I posited that self-marketing could be defined as "*The process of creating professional projections of an ideal self, which constitute a technology of 'career' progression for the individual and are associated with some form of exchange*". I have expanded this definition to suggest

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128 As discussed in Chapter Seven

that the creation of professional projections of an ideal self can be understood within the Bernsteinian concepts of recognition and realisation rules. That is, self-marketing involves the ability to recognise the details of what *kind* of ideal self will count as a legitimate projection, and then the ability to realise such a projection in some way (e.g. within the context of Personal Statements/CVs/interviews).This could be somewhat over-simplistically expressed as the ability to 'give them what they want'.[129]

I will begin this section by reflecting on the *usefulness* of defining self-marketing in this way, in particular the implications of aligning the practice of self-marketing with Bernstein's de-centred market position (DCM). I will suggest that, regardless of definition, it will be students who possess both the appropriate recognition *and* realisation rules who will realise a successful self-projection, and that this in turn directs us to the significance of the particular 16-19 institution that students attend.

11.31 Self-marketing as an externally oriented mechanism of projection

Self-marketing is by definition the self - or aspects of it - projected outward toward an external other. I have therefore sought to understand it within Bernstein's analysis of the various pedagogic discourses vying for position and influence within the educational arena - and in particular with reference to the DCM position which, at its core, "…constructs an *outwardly responsive identity* rather than one driven by inner dedication" (Bernstein 2000, p. 69 my italics). I would suggest that self-marketing can therefore be understood as an example of the 'mechanisms of projection', as opposed to introjection, through which, Bernstein argued, the identity of teaching staff and students are formed in schools and colleges that display the DCM identity. Importantly, he also pointed out that many schools and colleges currently operate with mixes of different pedagogic codes and modes - and that the DCM position now tended, very widely, to create a *managerialist organisational culture* even in institutions where the *curriculum* promoted elite retrospective identities. The 'pure' DCM identity is, in Bernstein's words, "…a reflection of external contingencies" and its maintenance "…depends upon the facility of projecting discursive organisation/practices themselves driven by external contingencies" (*ibid*, p. 70). This last point was of course elaborated and modified in Chapter Nine where I outlined four

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129 I have not, therefore, defined self-marketing in terms of the discrete and observable skills that one might traditionally associate with it i.e. body language (eye contact, smiling, posture) or 'evidencing' (the ability to find evidence of how one is suitable for a post/course). While I had initially included data concerning students' perceptions of the somewhat 'generic' skills associated with self-marketing, this was not investigated systematically enough to include in the final report. For research into the skills associated with self-marketing in interview contexts see Ugbah and Evuleocha (1992), who report that from 28 'communication factors', the six most influential in employment interviewers are resourcefulness, written credentials, support for arguments, social attributes, comportment, and style.

different discursive projections that the students in my sample drew upon (subject identity, career trajectory, ideal student, and good citizen).

Bernstein went on to examine the expansion of 'generic' modes as a manifestation of the influence of the DCM position, arguing that a concern with 'trainability' - the need to carry a flexible transferable potential - was indicative of the key focus of the DCM position on "…the short-term rather than the long term, on the extrinsic rather than the intrinsic, upon the exploration of vocational applications rather than upon exploration of knowledge". I suggested in Chapter Three that, since the ERA in 1988, successive governments have (sometimes ambivalently) promoted the DCM identity through their concern with intensifying quasi-market competition between schools - albeit alongside a concern to protect the curriculum from such market forces (a combination described by Bernstein as the 'pedagogic schizoid' position). As a result, generic modes within certain areas of the curriculum have - even for more academically successful students - become highly visible (e.g. in enterprise education and work-related learning), as have the discourses of self-reflection and self-marketing that accompany them. Earlier, I discussed Pupil Progress Files, Individual Learning Plans and National Records of Achievement as examples of this, and also suggested that the Personal Statement written as part of a UCAS application is now a particularly visible tool of self-marketing.

Bernstein argued that the key concept underpinning these externally oriented pedagogies and forms of institutional culture is 'emptiness', where individuals or organisations simply reflect the external contingencies of the field, are emptied of both their social locations and identities based on inwardness, and where teachers and especially managers rely on the 'materialities of consumption' to recognise themselves and others (*ibid*, p. 59). Of course, as he suggested, we may be yet to see the figures, interactions and tensions of the DCM identity in a fully realised form, and certainly my three case study sites, with their maintenance (albeit of different degrees of intensity) of an academic pedagogy of singulars (A' Levels at Leabury High and the Grange, and fine art for my sample at ECC) would be better located within the 'pedagogic schizoid' type of position previously discussed. Nevertheless, from this perspective self-marketing as a discourse and set of practices proceeds, fundamentally, from the DCM position, the influence of the economic base, and the function and logic of markets (including quasi-markets).

Bernstein's overall model of official pedagogic identities relies on a distinction between centred and de-centred identities (constructed from either 'national' or 'local' resources) and then within the de-centred position between 'market' and 'therapeutic' identities. This latter distinction relates to the social 'base' of such identities being, respectively, rooted in commercial/industrial or 'symbolic' sectors of the labour market - a classification that evolved over Bernstein's career and

was initially used to distinguish between the 'old' and 'new' factions of the middle class (Bernstein, 1975a). However, later in his career Bernstein (2001) recognised the extension of market rationality by the state to the agencies of symbolic control (e.g. education, social services), which was discussed in Chapter Three, as well as the blurring of conventional distinctions such as private and public (Power & Whitty, 2002). Therefore self-marketing, whilst strongly related to Bernstein's DCM position and recognised as a fundamentally *economic* practice, is subject to similarly complex positioning at different phases and in different sites of education.

For example, the presence of what I have termed the 'Authentic Careerist' profile (discussed in Chapter Ten), is suggestive of a more complex orientation toward self-marketing than is initially suggested by the distinction between 'internal' or 'external' orientations.[130] On the basis of my findings it is possible for students to employ various discourses about the importance of 'being oneself', acting with integrity, and not changing one's behaviour for the sake of others, whilst also acting in strategic and competitive ways to enhance their chances of accessing competitive courses; although arguably of course, it is the fact that they have acquired the sort of habitus that is 'at home' in those competitive environments that means they don't *have* to adapt themselves dramatically in order to create an appropriate self-marketing performance. Ball describes the kinds of texts exemplified by the Personal Statement as 'fabrications' that "…involve the use and re-use of the right signifiers…exclude other things which do not 'fit' into what is intended to be represented or conveyed….may be reactive or defensive or satisfying…or innovative and proactive or differentiating" (2003a, pp. 224-225). Certainly the students in my sample could experience self-marketing in such diverse ways i.e. as 'authentic' and 'satisfying' or as 'competitive' and 'differentiating' - or even as both at the same time in the case of the 'Authentic-Careerists'.[131]

These different profiles and experiences of self-marketing relate, of course, to the varying levels of reflexivity displayed by students when it came to their self-marketing. John (Grange) for example, told me that:

> For me it's about giving the person who I'm trying to sell myself to what they want, whether that's a set of academic or extra curricular activities or achievements, or whether it's a type of personality, or whether its an ability to perform a set of jobs.

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130 A further implication of the pressure to market oneself on the Personal Statement is an 'external orientation' to volunteering. That is, students' experience of extra-curricular activities, including volunteering, is potentially being transformed through the professionalisation, branding and regulation of those activities by external authorities and their instrumental use in moment of progression.

131 Lair et al. (2005, p. 320) suggest that self-marketing is less the overt commodification-as-domination of Marx, but rather invites people to "…consent to their own self-packaging all the while celebrating their sense of personal efficacy.' - a point which may help to make sense of the 'Authentic Careerists' in my sample.

In complete contrast however, Gary (ECC), with much less of a sense of engaging in fabrication, described self-marketing as '…just trying to get a description of everybody. That you're just trying to kind of just get a general idea of who people are'.

As I suggested in Chapter Ten, students could take their cues for self-marketing from either internal or external sources, and certainly students' own constructs of self-marketing were therefore highly revealing of their self-marketing profiles (Chapter Nine). John was categorised as a 'Competitive-Careerist' and the quotation above suggests that he was more than happy to adapt himself to external requirements as far as possible. Gary, meanwhile, was 'Reluctant-Unaware' and his definition suggests that some factual description of who a person 'is' (presumably in their *own* terms) would be sufficient to market themselves. The implications of such a distinction between John's ironic reflexivity about his own (multiple and possible) selves and Gary's relative naivety are not fully evident. What is clear, however, is that there will always be those who are more or less able to realise a legitimate self-marketing text in any given context. And it is here that the concept of recognition and realisation rules is most useful.

11.32 Self-marketing as recognition and realisation of a destination habitus

Having argued that self-marketing involves the recognition and realisation of a destination habitus, Chapter Seven then suggested that shifts in the market positioning of various Higher Education courses and institutions would affect students' ability to recognise and realise the salient features of the 'new' destination habitus to which they were orienting their applications. This, of course, relates to Bernstein's observation that shifts in the classification and framing of pedagogic contexts necessarily advantage those who can recognise the specificity of the new contexts that are created, and the forms of communication legitimate to those contexts. The success of self-marketing can be very difficult to measure, and as a result the recognition and realisation rules that enable someone to effectively project the 'right' identity/habitus, may not always be visible – even in relation to a particular institutional context. It is the field to which marketing endeavours are oriented (in this case particular levels and sectors of Higher Education) that creates the rules about what counts as legitimate communication, but such rules are not stable, and indeed may be contested, even to the point of interviewers disagreeing on whether an applicant is suitable or not. In many ways the terms of self-marketing are not explicit; expectations may be unclear, the risks of over-playing or under-playing, of mis-recognising the context and sending the wrong signals are all high. Students in my sample differed in very interesting ways (both within and between the different case study institutions) in terms of their recognition of this uncertainty, as well as the resources, and rules (recognition and realisation)

that they could deploy in response to it. Sarah (ECC), for example, while displaying a strong sense of the complexities and ambiguities of the process she was engaged in, told me:

> I wanted to sound posh but I didn't wanna sound like I was up their arses so it was like, dunno, it was all completely like, I don't wanna sound like I'm not clever or not literate or whatever, but I don't wanna sound like I'm too clever. I wanna say what I've done and say that I am good, whatever, but I don't wanna sound like I'm trying to be bigheaded and like too good…and then you don't know what they want even, so it's really hard.

The opaqueness of the self-marketing rules in her particular context resulted in some anxiety for Sarah.

Of course, anxiety aside, this opaqueness may not necessarily have disadvantaged Sarah because, as I outlined in Chapter Seven, not all applicants actually need to be highly sensitive to the dynamics of the field. I have argued, for example, that if a university is lower down in the institutional hierarchy, it may be less important for an applicant to create the 'right' self-marketing projection because the institution "…has to have bums on seats" as Mrs Tomlinson (Leabury High) ironically put it. In contrast, it is those applying for competitive courses within competitive universities who may most need to sensitise themselves to the appropriate self-marketing signals to send. The significance of self-marketing in terms of outcomes therefore varies, depending on the course and institution applied to. But irrespective of whether different fields of Higher Education are relatively stable or rapidly shifting, and whether a course is or is not competitive, what *is* clear is that it is those who have acquired the appropriate recognition and realisation rules who are *best placed* to produce a legitimate self-marketing text.

In Chapter Three I outlined Cremin's (2005) identification of a 'hierarchy of personality' within students' National Records of Achievement, from a basic organisational discipline to total orientation of the self to 'company' norms. In light of my research on Personal Statements, such a hierarchy would be related to a student's possession of the appropriate recognition and realisation rules in any given context, as well as the need (or not) to market oneself in relation to destination habitus - so that the actual realisations of such stages in the hierarchy will be reflections of the status and discipline of the course applied to. For example, ECC students' projection of the 'ideal student' discussed in chapter eight has some resonance with the idea of conveying the internalisation of organisational discipline (e.g. Abby concluding her statement with "I keep to deadlines, and manage my time capably, therefore I think I would make a successful candidate for university"). But Grange students 'performance' of 'the ideal student' was more often the sophisticated strategy of conveying their intellectual curiosity and embarking on a journey of uncovering knowledge - suggestive of their orientation to the institutional norms projected by Oxbridge above and beyond 'mundane' considerations such as being able to keep a deadline. For Cremin, then, the four stages that form his 'hierarchy of personality' "…parallel

processes of credential inflation in employment" in that ever more of the personal self must be drawn upon in order to distinguish oneself in a crowded market.[132] I have expanded on this point to show that it is the dynamics of both local education and Higher Education 'markets' that determine the self-marketing signals that will be most appropriate to send. And, crucially, I have related students' possession of different recognition and realisation rules to the dominant pedagogic codes (and pedagogies of self-marketing) of their schools/colleges.

11.4 The role of 16-19 institutions

By studying self-marketing within three different institutions, I have been able to demonstrate the influence of the dominant pedagogic code and pedagogy of self-marketing on students' self-marketing profiles and projections: in other words, that the school or college attended makes a decisive difference to the self-marketing approach.

11.41 Generic modes and pedagogies of self-marketing at different 16-19 institutions

By drawing together a number of theoretical tools developed by Bernstein, I have been able to show that the manifestation of generic modes (from which self-marketing emerges) varied across different types of 16-19 institution, as did self-marketing as an example of the 'mechanisms of projection' associated with the DCM position. As I showed in Chapter Six, this is largely the result of the different dominant pedagogic codes of each institution, which are themselves shaped by the dynamics of the local education market.

At the Grange, the presence and character of generic modes appeared to reflect their ubiquity in *employment* contexts, including, nowadays, those that might traditionally be the destinations of public school students (e.g. medicine, law etc). Grange students were largely derisive of pedagogies that attempted to have them overtly reflect on their abilities and set goals - the result, I would suggest, of those levels of skills having already been tacitly and successfully learned already in the acquisition of an educated middle-class habitus. In contrast, however, they enthusiastically embraced the Grange's more extended pedagogy of self-marketing, including its focus on dedication to academic disciplines and skillful performance in interviews, as they

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132 These stages are 1. Organizational discipline 2. Demonstration of) transferable skills 3. Extra-curricular/lifestyle equivalence/compatibility and 4. Orientation to and identification with the company (CV personality).

understood that in these respects it supported their attempts to access high-status and competitive courses at elite universities.[133] Interestingly, this pedagogy was highly visible, and a great deal of the sixth-form's resources were invested in drawing on the information present in the social networks of professional parents and wider contacts that might help the school help its students refine their self-marketing signals.[134] For Bernstein the generic mode now colonising wider sections of education was no longer that form of vocational education appropriate only for those 'destined' for intermediate and lower levels of employment, but rather emphasised the widely applicable skills and "…problem-solving that exploits relevant knowledge without regard for conventional academic boundaries" and that was appropriate for "future managerial and professional leaders" (Edwards 2002, p. 532). Edwards remarks that although generic modes are not "…obviously aligned with the persistently 'academic' character of elite schooling", this contradiction has been resolved by Walford's (1986) highlighting of the importance of extra-curricular activities, and a weak classification between 'work' and 'play' that in these schools aims to build 'character' in preparation for flexible work roles.[135] Ivinson (2009) argues that as generic modes become more popular, there is a danger that it is only those groups with high educational and socio-economics status (such as the Grange students) for whom the the link between education and production will ultimately be effective.

At ECC, however, generic modes were foregrounded within a well-developed pedagogy of core skills that aimed to address various kinds of real or imputed deficit in its students. The use of coursework, portfolios and the personal and professional skills folder, all oriented the students toward acquiring the kinds of 'flexible potential' that would enable them to become 'employable' - or at least better students. This latter point was underlined by the students' label as 'learners' and by their particular use of the discourse of the 'ideal student' within their Personal Statements. As previously mentioned, Bernstein (*op cit*) identified generic modes as originating within FE, and Gleeson et al. (2005) remark that, despite its peculiarly English connotation, "FE has much in common with attempts by governments world-wide to reform post-compulsory education and training within a global discourse of economic improvement, re-skilling and social inclusion" - a discourse which, at least in the first two of these points, could reasonably described as 'generic'. Crucially though, the pedagogy of self-marketing at ECC was far less sophisticated than that at the Grange, and despite Maggie's recognition that the college was sometimes playing

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133 That is not to say that Grange students did not also respond to the pedagogy of self-marketing with similar levels of reflexivity, even irony. During a session about the Personal Statement one boy turned to another and said in a deadpan voice, "I'm going to say I starred in 'Merchant', since I briefly had a part". They affected accents as they read each others statements out loud and laughed hard at phrases like 'From an early age'.

134 For the sake of space I have not presented all of my findings on the role of parental networks and social capital in self-marketing, but found that the Grange parents were a significant part of the resources for the school's self-marketing pedagogy. A few parents were Oxbridge admissions tutors, for example, and parents were the interviewers at the Interview Practice Day.

135 See Chapter Ten, footnote 125

the supportive roles that should be provided by the family (i.e. checking over the Personal Statement a number of times), she simply did not have the resources to do this all herself. Certainly ECC students were not prepared anywhere near as much as Grange students when it came to learning the art of 'selling themselves'.

Finally, Leabury High was positioned between the dominant academic identity of the Grange and the more generic discourse of ECC. With its broad intake of students, the sixth-form did not provide the targeted extra support to either its 'best' applicants (as did the Grange), or its worst (ECC). Rather, as with those in Walford's (1986) study, *all* students were encouraged to develop a portfolio of extra-curricular activities that demonstrated the kind of qualities that, it was presumed, would be expected of 'a good university student'. What this meant, in this case, was that the school directed students toward the kind of accredited and acceptable activities that could hopefully provide them with competitive capital in their applications (e.g. the Duke of Edinburgh's award). While this would certainly distinguish them from ECC students who did not have any such capital to display, it would be unlikely to help them compete with Grange students whose recognition of the destination habitus of elite universities meant they focused far more on projecting, in highly personalised ways, their 'love of the subject' rather than their extra-curricular activities.

Finally, one implication of these different manifestations was that students applying for different kinds of courses were also then differentially coached and supported *within* an institution. In summary, students who struggled were given the most attention at ECC, those who pursued staff for feedback at Leabury High received it, and it was Oxbridge applicants at the Grange who received the highest levels of support.

11.42 Institutional habitus and the distribution of recognition and realisation rules

The transmission (or pedagogy) of self-marketing in these institutions was present in the instructional discourse, but ultimately in each case subordinate to the regulative discourse. This is because such a pedagogy involved the projection of an ideal self that, as Chapter Six showed, was closely related to the 'imaginary subject' projected by the particular dominant pedagogic code of the institution. Furthermore, as far as different sites projected different imaginary subjects, this affected the students' ability not just to realise these subjects, but also to realise the trajectory that they *implied*. As figure 11.1 suggests, this could be perceived as a sort of 'mirroring' of the imaginary subjects projected by both the school and the destination institution. Various studies

have explicated the complex relationship between class background, school/college and university choice in similar terms. Reay (2001) describes attempts by mature working class students to 'match' the habitus of home and university in order to retain a sense of the authentic self. Similarly, Reay et al. (2001) consider the congruence or dissonance between familial and institutional habitus to suggest that 'inorganic' relations between home and school (comprising imbrications of gender, ethnicity and class) create significant tensions in the transition to Higher Education. And Kettley (2007b) explains educational attainment at sixth-form as the result of 'congruence' in the 'social relationship' between sixth-form students and their institution, which, he argues, primarily reflects their social background.

Within this study, such 'matching' was achieved in both explicit and tacit ways. Students were directed toward different universities and courses through both specific guidance and the more general expectations projected by the dominant pedagogic code.[136] Although their study focused on Higher Education *choice*, Reay et al's (*op cit*) identification of 'coupling' between schools/colleges and universities was confirmed by my own research. Parental networks at the Grange offered an access route into the local elite university which was not available to students at Leabury High and ECC, despite their physical proximity to the university. Likewise students at ECC disproportionately applied to a small number of 'local' universities for their art degrees.[137] My research also confirmed the findings of Reay et al. (*ibid*) in terms of the 'match' between curriculum offer at the 16-19 institution and the typical university applied to. They argue that "Curriculum offer is an integral part of institutional habitus and underpins the educational status of institutions" by highlighting the differences between state and private sectors, and between 'academic' and 'new' subjects (in Bernstein's terms, 'singulars' and, especially, modern 'regions'). Because self-marketing involves recognition and realisation of a *disciplinary* habitus, the ability to successfully market oneself as a 'historian' say, will therefore be limited by one's access to the appropriate curriculum (in terms of recognition of a 'knowledge' or 'knower' code). But furthermore, the status of different universities will subtly affect the destination habitus *within* a discipline, so that to apply to an Oxford college for history may require a significantly different set of recognition and realisation rules than to apply to an ex-polytechnic for the same subject.

Finally, these different sites clearly had very different resources available to invest in their explicit pedagogy of self-marketing, and these resources took a number of different forms. The Grange, for example, could employ: the social capital of parental networks and direct contact with elite

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136 Interestingly, where students at the Grange chose their universities from a recognised menu of top tier universities, students at Leabury High were presented with a selection of 'appropriate' destinations on the basis of a computer programme to which they had submitted answers to questions about their likes/dislikes/provisional grades and career plans.

137 Five out of the 12 students had applied to study at Norwich, and a third had applied to Anglia Ruskin University. A quarter of the students had applied to Nottingham Trent and/or Hertfordshire.

universities; reliance on the economic capital of most parents to invest in all manner of extra-curricular opportunities; and the cultural capital that could help them decode, for example, the sometimes subtle distinction between signalling and countersignalling discussed in Chapter Seven. In many ways the Grange was in the advantageous position of having both a powerful instructional *and* regulative discourse when it came to self-marketing. That is, underpinning their various formal pedagogies was a culture through which students learned the tacit rules that enabled them to recognise and realise the correct forms of communication within high status and academic pedagogic contexts. In such situations, Bourdieu (1989, p. 43) argues, the habitus "….finds itself 'as a fish in water', it does not feel the weight of the water and takes the world about itself for granted". Bourdieu (*ibid* p. 18) proposes that we measure cultural capital partly by the length of time required for its acquisition, recognising that positive value is acquired in pre-school years while negative value is the product of "…wasted time, and doubly so because more time must be spent correcting its effects". For these latter students, formal schooling cannot ultimately compensate for the lack of necessary dispositions through which they might access the tacit codes of the educational process (Moore, 2004). This is particularly interesting in light of the growth of industries and pedagogies, that aim precisely to coach individuals in the soft skills that are recognised to be important for 'employability', including self-marketing.

So then, the distribution of recognition and realisation rules across and within different 16-19 institutions will be more or less significant depending on the level of competition of the course students are applying for. And, significantly, the 16-19 institution attended by a student was not neutral in its positioning toward different universities, but reflected the kinds of pedagogic code (in terms of curriculum, instructional discourse and regulative discourse) that were appropriate at *particular* Higher Education institutions.

11.5 Self-marketing, class and access to Higher Education

As the field of Higher Education has shifted from an elite to a mass system, gender inequalities in access have reduced, while class inequalities have persisted (Blackburn & Jarman 1993; Egerton & Halsey, 1993). Egerton and Cheung (2007) compared two cohorts of applicants over the last forty years to show that while working class children had made gains in lower forms of Higher Education, class inequalities were particularly persistent in the more selective universities. This has invigorated a concern amongst researchers to widen *where* students from different backgrounds are participating, rather than their participation *per se,* and to illuminate the ways that social background (ethnicity, gender, but especially social class) still works to guide students to

'appropriate' universities. Some of these barriers are 'structural' i.e. where working class students face financial pressures that prohibit them from focusing on their studies and achieving the grades to go to elite universities (Reay et al. 2001b). Others are 'psychological' and 'emotional' (Reay et al. *ibid*), and here research tends to focus on the role of habitus in finding 'where I fit' as already discussed (Bourdieu 1990; Reay, 2001; Reay et al, 2001a, 2001b, 2005; Brooks, 2003, 2007).

As an essentially classed (as well as ethnic and gendered) reality, habitus therefore would appear to have a significant role in setting the limits that an individual perceives to apply to their choice of university and course. In this study I have focused not on the *choice* that students face, but on the *application* process, and in particular how students market themselves through Personal Statements and occasionally interviews. I have therefore shown that once a (socially conditioned) choice has been made, there remains the challenge of recognising and realising the form of communication appropriate to the destination habitus that is projected by a particular institution and course. However, social background is likely to be just as influential to the self-marketing process, as it is to processes of choosing. After all, much of Bernstein's analysis ultimately identifies the location of different pedagogic codes and therefore pedagogic identities within the social division of labour. In other words, children from different social class backgrounds enter pedagogic contexts differentially equipped with the ability to recognise distinctive pedagogic contexts and to realise the appropriate form of communication for those contexts.

Drawing on this theory, various researchers have shown the influence of class background (through different patterns of socialisation) on children's ability to recognise and realise various forms of appropriate pedagogic communication (Morais, Fotinhas & Neves, 1992; Morais & Antunes, 1994). Bernstein argued that while working class children tend to have the recognition and realisation rules for strongly classified and framed contexts, middle-class children have the rules for these *as well as* the weakly classified and framed contexts exemplified in certain kinds of 'progressive' education. So then, while the old and new middle class - with their location in the economic or symbolic base - may respectively favour visible or invisible pedagogies, Bernstein suggests that this is in the end irrelevant for their children's chances of educational success. Middle-class children are simply endowed with the recognition and realisation rules to succeed in a wider variety of pedagogic contexts. By suggesting, therefore, that self-marketing to universities involves recognition and realisation of a destination habitus, we may well infer that students from different class backgrounds are similarly differentially equipped with the rules to realise a successful self-marketing projection. Certainly Kettley (2007b, p. 209) argues that "…the possession of the capacities, skills and resources to assess the requirements of specific

educational contexts and respond positively to them reflect, among other things, students' social background, their gender and their ethnicity".

Unfortunately, this study was not able to systematically map the possession of such rules across or within classes (a point which will be discussed further in Chapter Twelve). However, much previous research which has shown the influence of class on choice, is strengthened and illuminated by this study on self-marketing in application. For example, Ball and Vincent (1998) identify a grapevine through which knowledge about different educational institutions is distributed, and suggest that parents can either be suspicious, doubtful or accepting of the 'hot' knowledge (as opposed to cold/formal knowledge) that they receive through it. Those who doubt are a "…mixed-class group of privileged/skilled choosers and semi-skilled choosers. For these parents, the grapevine and their awareness of its fallibility and fickleness often add to the anxiety and stress they experience in choosing a school" (Ball & Vincent, *ibid*, p. 392). In my study the distribution of knowledge about how to effectively market oneself in various contexts was somewhere between 'hot' and 'cold', and students could relate to it in a similar way. Certainly rumour and hearsay was rife at the Grange, as a result of which students experienced stress and anxiety about the opaqueness of the rules that would lead them to effectively market themselves.

Research about students' access to information about institution and course hierarchies has similarly demonstrated the influence of class. Reay et al. (2005, p. 152) found that students "…at the two ends of the social spectrum" in their sample preferred the 'hot knowledge' provided by personal recommendations than the 'cold knowledge' from official sources which was preferred by middle-class students in their sample. With their access to social networks that were high in cultural capital, the private school students in their sample were less reliant - at least in some respects - on the information available through the school, while the various constraints facing working class and mature students led *them* to prioritise the opinions of 'someone like me'. This would clearly affect students' ability to recognise and realise the appropriate destination habitus and was confirmed by my own research, where students at the Grange seemed to have a well-developed (even instinctive) sense of the relative status of institutions that were 'suitable' for them, while at ECC, there were a number of students who relied on the course tutor's opinion of where they should apply, and who chose to apply to universities simply because they were close to home. This is not to say that any of these students ultimately had more or less information than each other. Reay et al (2001, paragraph 6.2 and 6.4) point out that the private school students in their sample expressed a "…higher degree of uniformity and a narrower range of choices among pupils than is normally the case in the state sector", and that their knowledge of the relative status of *new* universities was "blurred and ill-informed". Rather, then, the

information that students have access to is *different*, affecting their likelihood of being able to draw on certain recognition and realisation rules.

Finally, then, access to these rules may also vary *within* different classes. Brooks (2003), for example, challenges Walkderdine's (2001) distinction between middle-class choosers concerned with reproducing their parents' lifestyles, and working class choosers concerned with actively *not* reproducing parental lifestyles. Rather, she shows that within her lower middle-class sample there were four different criteria applied to the construction of institutional hierarchies in the field of Higher Education (league-table position, reputation, vocational preparation, or the rejection the usefulness of such criteria at all). In this study, parents' perception of a particular institution/ course were generally synonymous with students', but despite all coming from a very similar social background, "…there were considerable differences in the extent to which families were involved in the decision-making process and in their knowledge about Higher Education, generally, and the relative status of institutions and subjects, more specifically" (Brooks, 2005, p. 286). Brooks concludes that parental influence on children's sensitivity to institutional hierarchies may be the result of a variety of experiential differences (including exposure to graduates in the workplace) rather than simply on the basis of their achieved class position or their own Higher Education experience. This suggests that rather than aiming to make generalisations about class-based access to recognition and realisation rules when it comes to performing a destination habitus, further research should expect greater variety *within* such groups.

11.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have summarised my findings as they were presented in Chapters Six to Ten, and reflected on their significance to wider research. I have suggested that despite the dualisms within which pedagogic identities and self-marketing profiles were presented, self-marketing as a practice is experienced in more complex ways. Crucially, it is those with the appropriate recognition and realisation rules who will be most *likely* to create a successful projection, regardless of the relative stability of the field of Higher Education. Finally, different 16-19 institutions (with their diverse manifestations of generic modes) will therefore shape students' self-marketing profiles in ways congruent with their own 'imaginary subject', which raises important questions about the role of such institutions in challenging patterns of social class and access to different types of university.

Twelve
Conclusion

12.1 Introduction

In this brief final chapter I will reflect on my three rationales for embarking upon research into 16-19 year olds' self-marketing practices and how these have formed my contribution to the study of generic modes (including skills for employability), 16-19 institutions, access to Higher Education and self-marketing itself. I then consider the implications of my findings, identify three major limitations of the research, and suggest some possible areas for future study in this area.

12.2 Summary of contribution

There is not at present a clearly delimited research agenda within which this thesis is located and to which it contributes. But in the introduction to this thesis I suggested that there were three main reasons for undertaking this research, and it is in these three areas that I would suggest the major contribution of this thesis lies.

1. To contribute to the *theorisation of self-marketing*, by looking at it within a range of pedagogic contexts
2. To *investigate the role of different types of 16-19 institutions,* set within a wider context of quasi-market competition, in influencing self-marketing
3. And through doing these, to arrive at some tentative conclusions about *the significance of self-marketing* as a set of 'soft skills'.

Firstly then, this thesis has contributed to the theorisation of self-marketing. While there are a handful of studies concerning self-marketing from within the field of marketing studies, such literature is still rare and mainly theoretical (Shepherd, 2005; Bendisch, Larsen & Trueman, 2007; Hughes 2007), and of the one or two *sociological* reflections on self-marketing, none but Cremin (2005) concern education. In this thesis, then, I have outlined a conception of self-marketing within the context of UCAS applications as the recognition and realisation of what I have termed a 'destination habitus'. As Brooks (2003, p. 286) writes: "Relatively little has been written about the way in which hierarchies of degree subjects are constructed or the ways in which such hierarchies intersect with perceptions of institutional status". The construct of the concept of destination habitus as an intersection of these two factors, is then, a novel contribution to both the study of Higher Education, and of self-marketing in relation to these hierarchies. Furthermore I have built upon the work of others (e.g. Brooks, 2003, 2006; Reay, David, & Ball, 2001, 2005) to demonstrate the significance of recognition of these hierarchies of both institutions and specific disciplines in terms of students' chances of success in *accessing* courses, as well as initially choosing them. My theoretical contribution therefore also includes the identification of four 'discourses of the ideal self' that students differentially drew upon in order to realise a projection of the destination habitus, as well as the different orientations that can be put together to form what I have termed 'self-marketing profiles'. I have argued that self-marketing can be understood as part of the expansion of generic modes that have become increasingly significant in the last 20 years, that is, as a pedagogic form that orients students - including those in high-status 16-19 institutions - outwards toward marketised contexts. I have argued that, as a technology of progression, these modes call upon students to draw on various resources, both pedagogic and personal, to create a projection through which they are positioned as taking responsibility for their own chances of educational success. For the university, the UCAS form becomes, in effect, a means of sorting and differentiating between those who recognise the destination habitus of their institution/course and those who do not. All this has involved the application of aspects of Bernstein's theory of educational transmissions to a distinct and novel class of phenomena within education.

Secondly this study is among the first to investigate the role of different types of 16-19 institutions in influencing students' self-marketing projections in the process of applying to university. It has illuminated the different manifestations of the generic mode from which self-marketing emerges, as well as highlighting different forms of relationship between the generic modes and the 'dominant' pedagogy of different institutions, and has also shown that these institutions have very different *resources* (in terms of economic, social and cultural capital) to apply to their pedagogies of self-marketing. Building on the work of Reay et al. (*ibid*) it has shown that institutional habitus strongly shapes students' self-marketing practices through the influence of a

dominant pedagogic code that tends to mirror the status of those universities to which students typically apply.

Thirdly, my findings indicate that self-marketing is particularly consequential where *competition* to gain access to institutions and courses is high. In the context of UCAS applications this will involve the realisation of a distinctive *disciplinary* habitus the details of which may vary from course to course (or even within courses as, for example, an effect of new pedagogies in fields such as medicine). In defining self-marketing as a mechanism of projection, I have suggested that the 'ideal' self-marketer would display an AEPI profile i.e. Active-External-Prospective-Integrated, or 'Competitive-Careerist'. Those students who apply to competitive institutions but are based in lower status 16-19 institutions are therefore probably less likely to acquire the recognition and realisation rules that would enable them to develop such a profile.

12.3 Limitations of the research

This study was limited in a number of key ways including, most notably; the decision not to attempt to measure the *success* of self-marketing practice; the lack of any investigation into the effect of students' social background and/or personality on self-marketing practice; and finally, the focus on Higher Education over employment.

Firstly then, it is difficult to fully grasp the implications of students' varied self-marketing practices and profiles and the distribution of recognition and realisation rules within and across schools, given the lack of any criteria against which to judge the success of such practices/rules. What *has* been achieved in this research is the development of a theoretical language through which to analyse *what* students do, *how* they do it, and how this relates to the pedagogic code of their school/college. But I cannot then claim, on the basis of my data, that those students with an AEPI profile (Active, External, Prospective, Integrated) are 'better' self-marketers per se. Further research is needed to explore how these profiles relate to admission tutors' or interviewers' perceptions of applicants' quality - something which, for reasons of confidentiality may prove difficult to obtain. I have suggested that we can describe self-marketing as recognition and realisation of a destination habitus, and can therefore make reasonable inferences about what counts as a legitimate text in terms of the status of the institution, and the disciplinary habitus of the course applied to. However, as discussed in Chapter Seven, the shifting dynamics of the field of Higher Education will affect the potency of different self-marketing signals (e.g. the significance of an 'A' grade), and these dynamics will not always be easily visible to researchers. Similarly, the judgements made by admissions tutors are likely to be based on a variety of factors

within and beyond the criteria established by various departments and universities. A complex interplay of the personality and background of both the applicant and the admissions tutor (as well as self-marketing profile and/or discourses) may well intersect to affect a student's ability to access a university course - particularly at interviews.[138]

This brings us to the second limitation - the lack of any rigorous investigation into the effect of students' social background and/or personality on self-marketing practice. Kettley (2007a) suggests that the exclusion of quantitative data from research into widening participation has undermined attempts in much sociology of education to demonstrate the complexities of the relationships between class background, university participation and social reproduction. Bernsteinian research as a type may generally be exempt from such criticism, drawing as it does on a theoretical framework that has generated numerous quasi-experimental studies concerned with illuminating the relationship between principles of classification and framing in the family and in various pedagogic contexts, and the implications for those with the least resources for navigating this system (e.g. Morais, Fontinhas & Neves, 1992; Morais & Antunes, 1994).[139] Arnot and Reay (2006) certainly conclude that researchers need to consider the relationship between the 'social identity' described by Bernstein (2000, p. 79) which varies with "…age, gender, social class, occupational field, economic or symbolic control" and those generated within the classificatory relations of schooling.[140]

I did in fact gather data on the 'social identity' of the students in my study, including post-code, parental occupation, personality, and lifestyle and consumption habits (see Appendix 2).[141] However I chose to focus my analysis on the relationship between the classificatory relations of schooling and the orientations and profiles of students in terms of their ability to realise legitimate self-marketing messages. A similar approach was taken by Reay, et al. (2001, para 1.6) who interviewed 120 students from six different institutions to demonstrate that while Higher

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138 This is the case with employment interviews. There is strong consensus across these numerous studies that while the interview remains by far the most popular recruitment tool, it is also a largely unreliable predictor of an individual's future *performance* at work (Mayfield, 1964; Schmitt, 1976; Arvey & Campion, 1982; Harris, 1989; Marchese & Muchinsky, 1993). Marchese and Muchinsky's (*ibid*) meta-analysis of studies concerning interview validity found the correlation between interview score and performance within employment to be .274 (variance .023) - only marginally better than chance (Eagle, 2009).

139 Bernstein did, however, face a series of criticism for his treatment of class (Power & Whitty, 2002) including that he perceived class as a "…category of experience and consciousness … rather than an economic and structural category' (Apple, 1979, p. 131) and that he merely paid lip-service to notions of power (Bisseret, 1979). Any future Bernsteinian study focusing on the influence of class factors would therefore need to take such criticisms into account.

140 In his later work, Bernstein began to expand this concern with the division of labour to a broader acknowledgement of the role of 'social identities' alongside 'pedagogic identities'. These social identities "…vary with age, gender, social class, occupational field, economic or symbolic control", and can shift "…depending upon the possibility of maintaining the discursive or in some cases on the economic base of the identity (Bernstein, 2000, p. 79)

141 Unfortunately I have been unable to include background data on parental occupation and post code, as well as qualifications achieved, current subjects being studies and universities applied to in my appendices. This is the result of a technical problem accessing my data in the weeks before submitting the thesis

Education applicants were "…located within a matrix of influences which are best represented by overlapping circles of individual, family, friends and institution", there are "…specific effects from attending a particular educational institution" when it came to choosing a university. As far as it is possible to make judgements about students' social identities from their presence in certain 16-19 institutions, the findings may still be suggestive (if not conclusive) of a significant relationship between social identity and self-marketing profiles and practices.

Finally, my focus on university applicants limits my contribution to research on student 'employability' and the role of generic/soft/transferable skills such as self-marketing. I did collect data from students who planned to find employment post-19, but my sample was so small for this group that it seemed best to focus on Higher Education applicants.[142] Notwithstanding this decision, it appeared that all three institutions poured a higher proportion of their available resources into helping students into universities rather than the workplace, perhaps the result of ongoing pressure from successive New Labour governments to continually increase the number of students gaining a degree.[143]

12.4 Implications and recommendations

Students' presence in particular 16-19 institutions is, as has been shown, a key part of the forming of their pedagogic identity and educational trajectories - of a sense of what sort of educational career is possible for 'someone like me' (Reay et al. *ibid;* Kettley, 2007b). What this thesis has shown, is that pedagogies of self-marketing (as a technology of progression) tend to confirm the trajectories typical of different institutions, through preparing students to realise the destination habituses of 'typical' universities. This is clearly a limitation on moving towards a meritocratic ideal of fair access to all on the basis of effort and ability rather than social or institutional background. Of course, by the time a student is coming to choose and apply to universities, much of the influential work of habitus has already achieved the apparent limiting of what is seen as possible. Perhaps the most significant implication of this study is therefore for those students who (as already stated) apply to competitive institutions but are based in lower status 16-19 institutions, particularly if they are from families who are not well-resourced with the various kinds of capitals already described. For such students the 16-19 institution they

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142 There were only two students in the group at ECC who were not applying to university. All of the Grange students were going to university, and at Leabury High only Kate was leaving to find work.

143 Megan (ECC) was planning on working full-time for the Disney store, where she currently worked on Saturdays and told me that '…there's a lot of pressure on us for uni', and hadn't received any particular support for transitioning into employment: 'I think, 'cause I know what I wanna do, I haven't asked for any help -- wasn't given any anyway though'.

attend may well make a significant difference to their ability to present themselves effectively through various self-marketing strategies.

It is as a result of such implications that the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions, based in the Cabinet Office, recently published their final report, including a number of recommendations intended to address the 'lack' of the soft skills associated with self-marketing amongst some students. These recommendations included: that the government prioritise soft-skill training (including team work, leadership and presentation skills) delivered by third sector organisations; that schools be held accountable for providing an expanded range of extra-curricular activities; that the Charity Commission assess independent schools for their role in "…sharing their expertise in extra-curricular activity and soft skill acquisition with state schools"; and that all schools ensure that pupils from Year Six upwards have a record of achievement that brings together all their extra-curricular and soft skill activity (Cabinet Office, 2009, pp. 71-73).

While these are admirable recommendations they are unlikely to address the root cause of such inequality in access. As long as attending certain university courses continues to pay economic, social and/or cultural dividends to potential students, it will be those with the most resources that are likely to 'win' in the competition for places, including when it comes to marketing themselves. Still, a fairer distribution of high-quality extra-curricular opportunities across different type of schools, closer contact between elite universities and 'untypical' sending institutions, and appropriately diverse curriculum offers *within* schools may help to address some of these inequalities. Certainly the ability of staff working with 16-19 year olds to support students' acquisition of a wider variety of recognition and realisation rules will enhance the possibility of students reaching 'untypical' Higher Education institutions.

12.5 Suggestions for future research

The limitations of this study invite a number of responses in the form of further research. Perhaps most obviously, a future project might draw on the concepts of recognition, realisation, destination habitus and imaginary subject to investigate the relationship between students' social location (in terms of class, ethnicity, gender, age, sexuality, disability etc.), the 16-19 institution they attend and its self-marketing pedagogy, students' self-marketing profiles, practices and experiences, and the success of those practices in facilitating a successful progression to Higher Education. Such research is necessary if we are to draw further implications of the *significance* of these different orientations to self-marketing for different social groups. A secondary issue might be the relationship between such social variables, and the *psychological* constructs that are likely to

exert powerful influence over students' self-marketing practices and profiles. Popular self-marketing texts tend to focus on the individual's self-esteem and self-confidence in presenting themselves, and these should not be overlooked within attempts to understand self-marketing.

12.6 Conclusion

In his study of attainment amongst 16-19 year olds, Kettley (2007b) found that a small minority of students in his sample obtained A/AS results that, while congruent with their adaptation to what I would term the 'institutional habitus' of the sixth-form, were *incongruent* with their background characteristics. He concludes that: "These novel patterns of adaptation and attainment served, in a small way, to transform society" (*ibid*, p. 209). Such findings provide hope that more students can come to reject the forces which appear to pre-determine their educational trajectory. The final word on this matter goes to Bernstein, for a reminder of the value of such research - even where its contribution and implications are relatively modest.

> Education is central to the knowledge base of society, groups and individuals. Yet education also, like health is a public institution, central to the production and reproduction of distributive injustices. Biases in the form, content, access and opportunities of education have consequences not only for the economy; these biases can reach down to drain the very springs of affirmation, motivation and imagination. In this way such biases can become, and often are, an economic and cultural threat to democracy.
>
> (2000, p. xix)

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Appendix 1: Research questions

Research questions: 2005

1. Is it the case that in the process of presentation of self in preparation for university entry, students' behaviour and values might give evidence for the existence of post-modern instrumentalism?
2. Is there evidence amongst sixth-form students of a post-modern, instrumental identity, in terms of individualism (relationships), passivity (citizenship) and alienation (labour)?

Research questions: Nov 2006

Pupils

1. How do 16-19 year olds engage in the process of self-marketing and what influences these different forms of engagement?
2. How do 16-19 year olds understand and relate to their own 'selves'/identity in the process of self-marketing?

Sub-questions

- What resources or frames of reference do they draw upon in the process of self-marketing?
- What attitudes and orientations exist toward self-marketing among sixth-form students?
- What do students do to project desired identities?
- How authentic or 'real' are such projections?
- How do different social groups engage in the process of self-marketing and why?
- How do successful students learn how to present themselves?
- How do pupils relate to the instrumental and expressive order of the school in relation to self-marketing?

School

1. How do these schools train 16-19 year olds to market themselves?

Sub-questions

- How do these schools relate to different 'types' of pupils in terms of provision of training for self-marketing?
- What is the schools overt curriculum concerning self-presentation
- What is the schools hidden curriculum concerning individual and corporate marketing?
- What discourses are identifiable in each school's projection of the ideal student?
- What position and identity do these schools represent in the local market?

Research questions: early January 2009

THEMES
Theme 1: What attitudes and orientations toward SM exist among 6th formers?
Theme 2: What do they do and where did they learn it?
Theme 3: How do these orientations relate to social groups and career trajectories?

THEMES

Theme 4: What role does the school play in training different (types of) students to market themselves?

Theme 5: How does the position/context of the school affect their discourse of self-marketing?

1. What attitudes and orientations toward SM exist among 6th formers?
• How do they relate the 'self' to the projection? (metaphors and discourses of identity)
• How authentic are the projections? (tensions and negotiations of blagging, identity and authenticity)

2. What do they do and where did they learn it?
• How do they project desired identities? (
• What kinds of things do successful self-marketers do, and failed self-marketers not do?
• What resources do they draw on to do it, (i.e. school, home, peer, experiences, texts etc?

3. How do these orientations relate to social groups and career trajectories?
• Are types related to background, educational history, school or personality?
• What are the educational and career trajectories and hope of different types of self-marketers?

4. What role does the school play in training different (types of) students to market themselves?
• How do schools relate to different types of pupils in terms of provision for self-marketing?
• What discourses are identifiable in the school's projection of the ideal student?

5. How does the position/context of the school affect their discourse of self-marketing?
• What is the schools hidden and overt curriculum concerning self-presentation and marketing?
• What position and identity do these schools have in the local market?
• What is the instrumental and expressive order of the school?

Research questions: late January 2009

1. In what ways have discourses of self-marketing (as a function of generic modes) been recontextualised, transmitted, recognised and realised in these three schools, and why?

Sub questions

1) Where did the self-marketing discourse in the school originate?
• What evidence is there of its philosophical/cultural/social/political origin?

2) How has it been recontextualised?
• Has it been recontextualised by the ORF or the PRF, or both?
• What reasons are given for the particular forms of recontextualisation?

3) How is it transmitted?
• Where do you find self-marketing in the curriculum (overt/instructional and hidden/regulative)?
• How is it classified and framed?
• And why?

4) How is it recognised?

- What is the distribution of recognition rules within and across these schools in terms of self-marketing?
- How do students acquire the recognition rules that distinguish a self-marketing context?
- Does the school develop the recognition rule further? How?

5) How is it realised?
- How do students acquire the rule to realise a legitimate self-marketing text?
- Are there common/different realisation strategies across the sites/subjects/contexts and destinations? What is the distribution of realisation rules within and across these schools in terms self-marketing?

6) How do these findings relate to other code modalities in the school?
- i.e. the story of the school, its positioning and development?

7) What are the implications of this?

Appendix 2: Interview schedule for phase 1

A' levels

1. What AS levels are you taking this year
• Do you know what you will continue/drop next year and why?

2. Why did you choose those particular subjects?
• Which of these do you enjoy the most and why?

3. On a scale of 1-10 how much would you say you have enjoyed your study? (Ten being the most and zero the least)

4. On a scale of 1-10 how hard would you say you have worked at your A' levels?

5. What do you think has been motivating you to do the work? (*If necessary offer the following prompts*)
• Satisfaction of achieving good grades,
• Pressure from parents,
• Wanting to get into university,
• Peer pressure,
• Teachers' expectations,
• Love of the subject

University

6. Are you planning on going to University?
• Where?
• What course?
• Why do you want to go to University?

7. How confident are you that you'll get in to the universities you want to?

8. Will you take a gap year?
• Why/why not?

School

9. Where were you at school before the sixth-form?

10. Why did you choose to stay here/move here?

11. How does the school compare to other ones you could have chosen?
• How is this school different to you last one?

12. What's it like being in the sixth-form different to being in the earlier years?

13. Are there distinct social groups in the sixth-form, or do you all hang out together?
• If there are groups, can you describe them?

Extra-curricular activities

14. What extra-curricular activities do you do in the school?

- How much time do these take out of your week?

15. Which enrichment activity did you choose?
- Why?

16. Do you have any hobbies outside school?

Identity-grid

17. Pick five words that you think best describe you as a person.

Parents

18. Do you live with your parents?

19. Do they have jobs?
- If so, what do they do?

19. Where do you live?

20. How much do you think your parents' advice/opinion affect the decisions you've made about your education?
- What role did they play in you choosing where to come to sixth-form, what subjects to take, which universities to apply to?

Lifestyle

21. How many hours of TV do you watch a week?
- What time of day? Any favourite programs? What do you mainly watch?

22. Do you read any magazines?
- Which ones? How often do you buy them?

23. What do you do with your spare time?
- What does a typical weekend look like for you?

24. How much (if any) alcohol would you say you drink in a week?

25. Do you smoke?

26. Have you ever taken drugs?

27. On a scale of 1-10 how much would you say you were interested in politics?

28. Have you done much travelling in your life so far?
- If so, where?

29. On a scale of 1 to 10 how much do you look forward to the future?
(10 being I really do, 0 being I dread it, 5 I'm kind of indifferent)

30. If you could imagine your life in fifteen years time, what would it look like?
- What kind of career will you have had?
- Do you imagine yourself living a particular lifestyle?
- Where live? Married? Travel? Rich? Etc

31. Would you describe yourself as having a particular style of dress? i.e. grunge, hip-hop, goth, skater?
• Are there any clothes shops you go to more often than others?
• Do you and your friends dress similarly, or is everyone very different?

Job

32. Do you have a part-time job?
• If yes ..What is it? How many hours a week? Why that job?
• If no…have you had one in the last two years? Or why not?

33. What kind of people do you work with?
• Is there a certain kind of person that works there? Or is everyone very different?

34. Does the company expect you to look and act a certain way?

35. Do you feel able to be yourself at work?
• Can you express yourself, or do you feel constrained? What is it that makes you feel like you can't be yourself?

Money

36. How much personal income do you have per month?
• Where does that come from?

37. What do you spend money on mostly?
• Going out (cinema, clubbing, concerts, pubs and bars, eating out)
• Food and Drink
• Phone Bills
• Clothes
• DVDs and CDs
• Gifts (birthday etc)
• Technology (computers, MP3 players, mobile phones etc)

Final questions

38. What is your post-code ?

39. What grades did you get for your GCSEs?

Appendix 3: Interview schedule for phase 2

	Statement	Definitely Yes	Yes	Unsure	No	Definitely No
1	I come to school because I have to					
2	I will do whatever I have to do to get where I want to go					
3	Lots of people in the school know who I am					
4	I feel uncomfortable talking about myself and my achievements in front of other people					
5	I feel hopeful about being successful in future employment					
6	It is important to me that I am very committed to the kind of employment I end up in					
7	I have been in trouble at school during my time in education					
8	I would like to be like one/or more of my teachers/tutors					
9	I occasionally exaggerate to make a point or to make myself look better.					
10	I like competing with people					
11	I want to give something back to the school					
12	I tend to do what is asked of me but no more					
13	I am happy to bullshit a little bit if it makes life easier					
14	I like being in education.					
15	I can easily understand the most appropriate way to behave in any social situation.					
16	I volunteer to answer questions in school regularly.					
17	I dislike progress reports and writing goals for myself.					
18	I am very confident when meeting people for the first time					
19	I am in school to get the grades I need to leave and move on					
20	I am good at adapting my behaviour to different situations					
21	I am prepared to work long hours/commute to earn a bit more money.					
22	I am willing to adapt myself in order to become successful.					
23	I am very confident making choices about my education, like what or where to study					
24	I need to have a comfortable lifestyle to be happy					
25	I dislike going for interviews					
26	I find it easy to make small talk with people who are older than me					
27	I'd be happy in a job with less money if it meant I had time for people/other activities					
28	I find it easy to gather information for portfolios (evidence of activities/skills etc)					
29	I want to live far away from my family					
30	I take advantage of opportunities to boost my CV					
31	I have some ideas of how I would change the society we live in					
32	I think I am a well-rounded person					

Appendix 4: Interview schedule for phase 3

Basic Information

Ok, firstly I just need to go over a couple of things that I didn't find out last time.

1. Would you be able to tell me your post-code?

2. And can you tell me what qualifications you got before coming here? (i.e. what grades in which subjects?)

Attitude Survey

3. *Ok. I'm going to give you a list of 33 statements, and read them out. After each one I'd like you to choose the best response for you. But I'd also like you to just think out loud as we go through each one if that's ok.*

Authenticity

4. What do you think it means, to 'be yourself?'

5. How important is it to be yourself?
• Are there situations and times when it is OK to change the way you look/talk/act?
• When is it not ok?

6. How easy do you find it to be yourself?
• Tell me about 'being yourself' at school?
• When/where do you find it hard or easy to be yourself?
• Are you yourself with teachers? In classes? At breaks?
• Has it changed over time?)

7. Can you think of any times in your life when you have changed the way you have spoken or acted for a particular reason?

8. Are there ways that you change around particular groups of people?
• What ways
• What groups?
• Why?

9. Are there different 'yous?' in different situations with different people or groups?
• If so how would you describe them?
• Are they very different?
• Are they ever in conflict?

Personal Statement

I've printed out a copy of your Personal Statement. Can you just have a look over it again and I wanted to ask you some questions about it.

10. Why did you choose to start it this way?
• How did you get that idea?
• Did anyone give you advice or help you with wording?
• Did you look over anyone else's?

11. Do you remember how long it took you?
• How many drafts did you do?

12. On a scale of 1-10 how much effort did you put into it?

13. On a scale of 1-10 how hard was it to write?
• Why was it hard/easy?

14. Do you remember any advice you were given?
• What advice did you follow?
• What advice did you ignore?
• Why?

15. How does it feel to look over it again a while after you wrote it?

16. How did you feel while you were writing it?

17. Are there any parts that you are particularly proud of?
• Why?

18. Are parts that you dislike?
• Why?

19. When you read it again which bits do you think are most 'you?'
• That is, which bits do you feel really do represent how you truly are, what you really feel, and what you really think – Why?

20. And which bits do you think are least 'you?'
• That is, which bits do you think or feel don't really represent the kind of person you truly are, what you truly think or feel? – Why?

21. Are there any parts of it that you feel are slightly overplayed or exaggerated?
• Which parts and why?

22. Are there any parts that you feel are slightly downplayed?
• Which parts and why?

23. On a scale of 1-10 how much do you feel this Personal Statement is an authentic picture of who you are?

24. If you had to write it again, would you change anything?

Self-Marketing

My project is all about how people learn how to sell themselves and how they feel about doing it.

25. How would you describe what it is to 'sell yourself'?

26. Do you think you've had to do that in your life much so far?
• When and why?

27. How did you find it?
• What was easy?
• What was difficult
• Why?

28. Have you seen those websites where you can buy Personal Statements?
• Would you consider using one?
• Why/Why not?

29. Is there pressure to appear a certain way on the Personal Statement?
• How do you think you should appear on the statement?

30.Looking back at your own life, how did you learn how to present yourself to other people?

31. Of the people you know, who is the best at selling themselves?
• Why do you think that is?

32. As you look back, do you think that your tutors and teachers were helpful in helping you sell yourself?
• Were they pointing you in a particular direction? i.e. encouraging you to write certain things or downplay other things?

Appendix 5: Letter to schools requesting access

Faculty of Education
184 Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 2PQ

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

E·S·R·C
ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

College Address

Friday 6th October 2005

Dear Mr…

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as a PhD student from the Faculty of Education at Cambridge University, undertaking ESRC funded research in the sociology of education. My research is focused primarily on how 16-19 year olds learn how to present themselves as they transition into work, and/or college or university. As you are no doubt aware, competition for jobs and university places means that the experience and social skills associated with self-presentation are increasingly important in preparing students for their next life-stage. This project is the first of its kind, seeking to describe and analyse pupils' experiences of the process of self-presentation, as well as understand how different schools help their students in this area.

As a local resident I am aware of the unique status of … college in the local community, and am very interested in how the staff and students perceive self-presentation. I would be grateful if you would consider meeting with me to discuss the possibility of conducting case-study research in the college over the course of the coming calendar year of 2007. I have attached my CV for your consideration, as well as a document outlining what my research would entail.

I will follow up this letter with a telephone call in the next few days in the hope of talking to you personally, answering any questions you might have and arranging a time to meet in person. Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely

Lucie Moore
Phd student
Faculty of Education

Research Outline

Research Methodology

This project involves case studies of three different schools or colleges for 16-19 year olds. It is divided into three phases, during which the researcher visits each school for two weeks at a time, making a total of 6 weeks research time at each site. This is for two reasons:

- To spread the timing of research activities in order to minimise disruption to staff and students.
- To enable the researcher to gain some understanding of the issues, as contextualised in the life of the school over the course of a whole year.

This project will make use of a 'grounded approach', whereby the researcher begins the research with an open mind in terms of their plans and theories, in order to be able to respond to areas of significance that present themselves in the process. This is primarily due to the novelty of the research topic, making it difficult to know in advance what exactly will be of interest to study. As a result, the study will focus progressively throughout the course of the year, so that interviews questions in phase 3, for example, will only be decided upon after phase 2.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
• Observation • 1st round of interviews	• Observation • 2nd round of Interviews	• Observation • 3rd round of Interviews

Because of the nature of this approach, regular communication between the researcher and tutor and/or principal will be very important. I will make requests to interview staff or students in good time, and always provide a copy of the interview schedule beforehand.

Observation
By observation I am referring to being allowed to be present as a silent observer in various parts of college life such as tutor time, lessons and open days for example.

Interviews
I would like to be able to interview the same students on three separate occasions over the course of the year. These interviews would take no longer than an hour. I may also ask to hold a focus group discussion with a few students once or twice. I trust that this will not be too much of a disruption. Beyond this I will ask to interview a few members of staff who may be tutors or a careers advisor.

Sample
I would like to work with a group of about 15-20 16-19 year olds who are a fairly even mixture of boys and girls over the course of the year. It may make sense for this to be a pre-existing tutor group so that organisation of interviews and possible focus groups is made easier on the staff, students and researcher.

Provisional Research Design

Phase	School	Date

Phase			Date
Phase 1	School 1		8-19th Jan 07
	School 2		29th Jan – 9th Feb 07
		School 3	19th Feb – 2nd Mar 07
Phase 2	School 1		9th-20th Apr 07
	School 2		23rd Apr – 4th Mar 07
		School 3	7th – 18th May 07
Phase 3	School 1		3rd – 7th Sep 07
	School 2		10th–14th Sep 07
		School 3	17th–21st Sep 07
	School 1		1st-5th Oct 07
	School 2		15th-19th Oct 07
		School 3	29th Oct-2nd Nov 07

Ethical considerations

As a researcher I hold a Masters degree from Cambridge University in Educational Research, and have previous experience of interviewing in secondary schools. I am CRB checked, and have provided a reference at the bottom of this document. I adhere to the British Sociological Association's Statement of Ethical Practice, which can be summarised as maintaining professional integrity and a responsibility toward research participants. Specifically this means that:

- Participants must give their informed consent to be part of the research (including consent to recording interviews and the transcripts to be published as part of the research)
- Participants have the right to refuse participation at any stage of the research
- Participants will remain anonymous in the publication of the research

I am very happy to discuss in more detail how I could work with staff to ensure everybody is informed about my project and happy to partner with me in the research.

I understand that … is a busy institution and would do my utmost to minimise the costs to staff and students of participating in this research. While it would involve a willingness on the part of the College to partner with me in allowing me to be part of College life for these six weeks, I trust that the experience will be beneficial for everyone involved. As well as supporting a piece of new and exciting research, staff and students will have the opportunity to reflect and discuss something which forms the backdrop of many young people's lives during times of transition. Kvale (1996) writes that interviews should be 'a rare and enriching experience for the interviewee who may obtain new insights into his/her life situation.' My previous research with sixth-form students bore this out when one interviewee remarked

> *'It's been quite interesting to speak to someone I don't know and tell you what I think. And yeah you've asked me questions which I don't really consider … it's been mutually beneficial'.*

Appendix 6: An example of a 'student memo'

Rob (ECC) Key Findings

Rob is a bundle of contradictions. He hates labels, and being labelled. But he works at a designer store because the people are 'nice'. For the same reason he wanted to write a very *personal* Personal Statement and for it to be 'less structured', but at the end of the day he copied chunks from his friend's.

1. Rob has quite a strongly styled personal identity (Fashion student, Musician, Artist) that makes him stand out in Cambridge but means he will fit in at Brighton
2. He sees himself as different to the others on the course (i.e. wanted to be on the Foundation course but didn't have the qualifications). He is from a middle class Christian family
3. He is positive and optimistic. He spoke a lot about taking opportunities, working hard (trained as a chef first), and had a highly positive orientation to learning new things.
4. He believes all the 'evidencing' they have to do is for the college, not for the students.
5. He knows what he wants to do, and so doesn't have a very instrumental attitude to things - i.e. he does stuff because he likes it, not for his CV
6. He seems to dislike inauthenticity and 'being labelled'
7. However, he is happy to market himself because, as he says, 'I'm not selling you a dodgy watch, this is the real deal'
8. Nevertheless, he did 'rip off' off a friend's Personal Statement and is pragmatic about that because he was nervous and this helped him solve that problem.

Family background

Family all quite artistic but his mum works in Marks and his dad (?). His parents are strict Christians and he was brought up to have 'good character'. He says he works hard for people, is caring etc. He's having a hard time with his Dad, had arguments. They want him to be one way, he is itching for his freedom and he is ready to move out and get away.

Personality/Identity

He is a tall, languid guy with hair swept over his eyes and heavily styled. He is softly spoken with a Fens accent and speaks like a teen, with lots of 'like' He is talkative and interested. He is into his music, Rolling Stones etc. Describes himself as 'a determined person' with 'quite high standards and stuff'.

Also describes himself as different

> I guess like the clothes that I wear sometimes like people like take notice sort of thing. But Um, I don't know. Cambridge is so like, they haven't got a clue, they really haven't. Like if I was in London or something like I'd just blend, like I wouldn't… Yeah Like it wouldn't be outrageous at all sort of thing. If anything they'd be like 'he looks so normal, like he should try harder.' But here, Cambridge like this like, people here like dunno. A lot of people are just going to live here for the rest of their life and stuff and like never move away and this is their way of life and stuff. And like um they've been wearing like reebok classics since they were like eleven and stuff and like they always will.. and they don't know any different. Like go out and stuff and wear like pointy shoes and like some of my friends like go out with some people and like they're like.. they just can't believe it! They're like 'what are they!' sort of thing. And like they just can't honestly believe it and I dunno. I just find it really funny to like understand.

Educational Orientation

Rob quit school after his A'levels and trained to be a chef because he thought it looked cool (Jamie O's inspiration). Worked very hard, got his NVQ 2 but stopped after 2 and a half years because it didn't seem like a very attractive life. Not many of his friends went to uni, and even those that went to 6th form dropped out. Most of them are working now. He sees that as a justification. He wanted to get on the foundation (felt that was right for him?) but didn't have the A levels so couldn't. He didn't enjoy school so much then, but having tried working life and realised he didn't want to be a chef he realised education was where it was at, that external challenge and structure that in his words, steers you in the right direction'.

He is now 20 and only just going to uni, so regrets not getting on foundation and doing it in one year. but is proud of the fact that he made the right decisions, even though he's not happy that he's going to uni so late he still tells it like a success story compared to so many of his mates.

> I've done alright. But I know a lot of people that just messed up sort of thing real bad. It's like a lot of my friends messed up at A levels so bad. Just got stoned all the time and they just messed it up real bad and now just like they've just got shit jobs now, like they see like people who did apprenticeships like back in the day and now they're like qualified, like earning tons, like as plumbers and stuff. And like now they're thinking 'shit I should have done that' But I'm pleased I've got my cooking behind me and now I'm going on to do fashion. So yeah I'm pleased with my achievements, like I don't mind shouting about it.

He enjoys art and is confident in his own ability to do it. He has his own art space where he works at home. 'Um but I just want to learn stuff so bad sort of thing like um like anything that anyone can teach me I'm like appreciate it so much' --- has a highly positive orientation to learning...particularly skills by the sounds of it. Rob has a strongly positive orientation to art, and probably sees his life as being quite artistic in the whole. He spends his spare time in this cottage where he has a art space and he is enthusiastic about the ideas and about communicating them, both to me in the interview and to his teachers and peers.

> I'm kind of understanding like who I am now like sort of thing like what I'm into and that like going to Brighton to do fashion is like exactly what I want to do that's where I want to be and what I want to be sort of thing. Like um, yeah so I guess I'm more confident now because like I understand after this course and doing two years I understand more like about who I am and what I want to do…

He has an interesting view on evidence/setting goals. He gets that it is the culture of FE and suggests it is more for 'them' than it is for the student…'It's just like another document for them to like um put in their little filing cabinet and make sure it's all in law and order and that… it's more for them to see like to understand where you are sort of thing. Yeah, cuz I know exactly like where I'm going and what I'm doing but like maybe they don't so yeah it's more for them'.

Self-marketing

He sounds perfect for a band, alright for an artist but not good at communicating, so many 'uhs' and 'likes' it's almost unbelievable when you see it written down. He describes himself as a performer, is front man for his band. They have a web page (myspace), and a friend of his is going to take pics of them…so some experience in marketing the band at least. 'I wouldn't, I dunno I wouldn't adapt myself to be successful at something I weren't interested in sort of thing'. - he has a clear sense of what he likes and wants and is good at, and like anyone his motivation would go down where he wasn't interested in it.

> I dislike going for interviews Naw, I quite like them. Like um I think it gives you a chance to like, I dunno it just gives you a chance to like dunno, just say stuff and like put your case across sort of thing.

He went to an interview at epsom and was confident when he realised that he was better than many of the other candidates. then his confidence picked up and he now sees himself as someone who is good at what he does and can interview well as well. --- 'So when it come round to my turn I dunno I was just I was well confident like I just wanted to I dunno, be more or less like to show my work off a bit sort of thing really.

> I hate doing things just for the sake of it. Like we have to like get stuff for our portfolio for like hanging work and how like how they do it and like… like funding and stuff like that and like I couldn't care less like I don't like….I dunno like it's not important is it so why do I need to do it, just to pass the course and that but…So yeah, I'll take any opportunity that's given to me, definitely, anything. Absolutely anything. But not I don't know not really for the sake of my CV, just to say I've learned. Yeah, like right now I don't really think about my CV but I guess I better had do like in time sort of thing, yeah. You know, just not for my CV though

Rob's Personal Statement is very 'fancy' in the sense that he uses words and phrases to impress but which are probably a bit overboard like "The firm interest and fascination I have always displayed for the creative arts has grown intensively zealous on the Fine art course I have been studying'. 'Introducing textiles electrified my work, and I grew fond of working with more texture than paint could provide'----- grew fond is an interesting way of saying it. That he has an affection for a certain media. (again this idea of a romantic attachment to the subject?). - to use electrified and fond in the same sentence is very interesting… He uses rhetoric. 'When considering options for furthering my education it did not take too much deliberation'... as an opening sentence it draws you in, makes his choice seem inevitable because of his passion and commitment and still leaves you hanging. 'During my days and nights training as a chef I worked under intense pressure, and thrived in a creative bustling environment' ---- by saying days and nights and using intense, pressure, thrive, bustling he has created a scene for us in his head.

He copied parts from his friend who was at St Martins (the parts about education and the start - all the general stuff - and the stuff about going to art galleries which conflicts with him saying 'If like I went past a gallery and I went in it definitely, like definitely. Um I dunno I just do things more like more for pleasure, rather than like cuz I have to'. He justifies himself saying that he had felt physically sick at having to do the PS until he got Olly's and then it was fine. And he said he wasn't doing anything any worse than when they all looked at PS together as a tutor group and were picking out good things and bad things ---- so even thought it's copied it's fine because it had a job to do and it achieved its purpose for him, so that's the main (pragmatic criteria) what works. which does fly in the face of some of the other things he said about his character..being raised well etc etc, not liking to do things for the sake of them. 'I really like writing and that...I write songs for the band and that , I dunno...I just...I love writing but...I kept going off and making it too, like a story, it add to be like a bit more structured and that. but I fink it's still like represents me a bit, like there's a bit of structure there, but it's still a bit like colourful sort of fing.' ---- he would have made it overly personal perhaps. so he wouldn't have necessarily got the balance right between personality and a tightly argued evidencing and persuasion. I probably would have gone off on one a lot more, I just kept it quite simple, so I probably did downplay it a bit

He wanted to somehow communicate some strong feelings he has about resisting the kind of labelling that comes from Topshop/sports brands to younger people. 'I hate it, just blend in, people buy it for the sake of it, like I can't stand it sort of fing.' I hate the fact of being labelled or summink. I dunno, I tried to make this less structured, more dunno'. About self-marketing 'Yeah, alright, alright. I'm quite competent at it sort of fing. like, dunno…I just I fink it's cause, like, I'm confident that I've got a lot to offer, yeah, I'm quite happy to like sell myself or whatever, cause I'm not like, it's not a joke - but I'm not like selling you a dodgy watch or something, like dunno..it's kinda like the real deal a bit...yeah...quite happy'.

Appendix 7: Supporting data of student self-marketing profiles

1. Steve: Resistant-Resourceful (ECC)
2. Daina: Competitive Resourceful (Leabury High)
3. Will: Competitive Careerist (Grange)

1. Steve: Resistant-Resourceful (ECC)

Steve was a student in the Art group. He looked distinctive with his baggy, holey jumpers and straggly long hair, and it became obvious on speaking with him that he wasn't too concerned with making a good impression on strangers like me, but that he had plenty to say when asked his opinion on life.

Active

Steve actively resisted having to act appropriately in environments he didn't like. He described knowing how he should behave in various social situations, but not always wanting to do it:

> Yeah, I can understand it. I don't always act on it". When asked to elaborate he explained that "If it's something I particularly hate I'll make it obvious...so like when we had talks and shit, I'd just make it really obvious that I didn't care…be really loud, talk, not bother. Like the church thing, I know that wasn't appropriate but I couldn't give a crap".

Internal

When asked if he would change his email address to a more professional one later in life, Steve said no and explained

> That's one thing I always like do, regardless, I always stay the same. I don't like, yeah I hate when people do that. 'Cause my mate's really pDavidte to my parents, I shout at him for it it - I don't have a go, but I'm like, 'Why are you pDavidte? You're not like that to me, why are you like that to them?' It just really winds me up.

This internal orientation even compromised his success in a part-time job as a waiter at a golf course.

> I did when I had to work as a waiter for it, but I said I didn't like that. So they just moved me into the kitchen and I could be, I was just me in the kitchen. But I hated being a waiter...don't like the way you have to act...it's horrible. Like I just wanted to...it's just dick heads, 'cause it's a golf course. It's full of knobs, really, like, dunno, a lot of wankers. Especially in Brampton, there's a lot of old pretentious wankers.

Retrospective

Steve "didn't prepare anything for the interview. Just sat down and talked normally" and And when asked if he takes advantage of opportunities to boost my CV, he replied, "What like little fings, jobs and that? I've never been in that situation, I have no idea. Maybe I will when I'm older when I give a shit about more things (laughs) I don't care about anything, I'm just really lazy".

Integrated

Steve's life appeared to be weakly classified in that his whole life was about Art in its broadest sense. He explained to me that he is most inspired about college work when he is at home

> I usually get more motivated when I'm not in college, which is really weird. I just go trek off somewhere, I get an idea and I get really excited and I do it. But when I'm here I

never really...don't know. It's just the environment I think. At home I actually get more inspired. Just going out and doing things inspires me more, cause a lot of   my stuff is about society and that, so if I'm out I'm inspired more

Similarly when I asked him if he did any extra-curricular activities he asked me to explain the word.

Interviewer: So anything not related to your course in college?
Steve: Naa, not really.
Interviewer: Do you have any hobbies outside college?
Steve: I play music...that's about it I fink.
Interviewer: Is that mostly what you do with your spare time?
Steve: Yeah, music and art mostly. 50/50...yeah

It was not clear at first whether Steve's life was segregated, because he preferred to work at home and didn't see his music and art a relevant extra-curricular activity, or integrated because his identity as an artist was so engrained across both spheres. In the end I decided on integrated because he drew on his personal artistic life in his Personal Statement, and at its core the classification principle is about what the person recognises as being available. Steve knew that his strongly internal orientation made self-marketing a challenge, even though art was such a large part of his life, both at college and at home. When describing one of his interviews he said, "I felt like a knob. I do these stupid big hand gestures and I just did that. I suppose I wish I could sell myself 'cause I just am myself and feel stupid. I thought these people don't know me and I'm just being stupid".

2. Daina: Competitive Resourceful (Leabury High)

Active

Daina embraced marketing herself as a sociable activity. She is multi-lingual, having spent time living in Russia, Latvia, North America and now the UK. She explained that because of "moving a lot I kinda got used to meeting new people, so I got confident over time and I'm used to that. I liked actually talking to people and telling them what was good. I don't know, maybe I'm just good at selling stuff to people...and I can sell myself as well".

External

She described looking through other people's Personal Statements and seeing one that was very good that included "how much research she'd done to get it, and how she was friends with a deaf person, and about her job at burger king and it all sounded really good".   She then described measuring her own statement against her teachers' advice:
"When they started talking about it I was like 'You have to put this - yes, do I have that? Yes. You have to put this - hmm, what can I put for that?"

Retrospective

However she tended to look back rather than forward when it came to finding things to use for her statement. When I asked why she did Duke of Edinburgh she didn't mention it's instrumental use, but explained it's appeal as "like going to do an expedition and everything and just..trying to get round, and learning to do all those things and just, and just..finding something you can do". Similarly, she told me that she didn't think about the instrumental value of some of her activities at the time, " 'cause when I went to the conference,Ii didn't really think about my Personal Statement, or when I was travelling. When I started, doing 5 A 'Levels I just thought it would be good for me, but it just added up to my Personal Statement anyways".

Integrated

Daina's approach to her statement was to "put law through everything, every single part of it", but she was also very clear about how her whole life was marketable aside from study. "And then one of the paragraphs that I had was 'Not only do I want to do law but I can also do all these other things' Like, I was on a basketball team and tennis teams before, and I like to go out with my friends, so I'm not just into stuff like that. 'Cause some people write 'I'm just organised, I just sit and study' and I thought, 'No one would actually believe you...because yeah I don't just do that, I like going out with my friends and stuff like that".

3. Will: Competitive Careerist (Grange)

Active

Will embraced the process of making a good impression. When I recounted to him that I had seen him coaching another sixth-former on body language at Oxbridge interviews, he told me his approach. "Um, I sat, I kind of aimed to sit forward on my chair so I was kind of engaged, so I could get my hands involved, um, because communication is you know, I'm sure important. I, tried not to kind of sit back and fiddle".

External

He was not only quick to orient himself to new social situations, but enjoyed the process of realising a variety of legitimate social texts. When asked how well adapted to new situations he replied:

> I'd like to think I'm not too bad at it. For example I was at my friend's house yesterday and before I knew it, I was having dinner with his parents and their friends, and that was completely alien. You know we were just there watching rugby and then suddenly I was at the table talking about philosophy. And I loved that - it was really fun to adapt and you know, try give them what they wanted and meet their criteria I suppose.

Prospective

Will was similar to Josh in that he knew what would be useful to have done for his statement, but didn't necessarily do it. He recounted doing some work experience "over the summer, so I whacked that into the Personal Statement. It was helpful". And when I asked if he had been aware of what would go into his statement early on in the year he replied:

> Not to the extent of someone doing, say medicine, who knew they needed X amount of hours or work experience, but I knew the value of work experience so I went and spent time with an economist down in London. But I think it would be quite a hard trade off if it was say, doing voluntary work, I'm trying to think of something really horrible! But if I knew I needed that I would do it probably. If the opportunity's not going to cost me anything in time or money then definitely yes.

We then talked about one of his friend's whose mum keeps a file of all his achievements and he replied animatedly, "So does my mum! There's a Will file at home with all my reports and awards in there!"

Integrated

Will described in some detail the process of self-marketing, and central to this was finding resources from his own life that he could use to demonstrate his suitability. This extended to using an imaginary school sudoku championship to prove his logic, as I have already related. He told me that writing the Personal Statement "was about thinking 'What would they want to read from my Personal Statement?' And then drawing on my experiences, giving them as close…"

Appendix 8: Positive and negative orientations to self-marketing

Positive emotional response to self-marketing

Interview: I feel uncomfortable talking about myself and my achievements in front of other people

Gav: Uh, no, not really. Um, I don't know…I'm quite outgoing, there's nothing really to be embarrassed about or anything. No, it's a bit silly really. I don't know, I'm just quite comfortable talking, so…yeah, that would be no.

Interview: I feel uncomfortable talking about myself and my achievements in front of other people

Penelope: No definitely not. I'm not saying I've got loads of achievements or anything, but I always find it a bit wierd when people, like if someone said something that implied that you were really good at say, singing, and I asked you I'd rather someone said 'Yeah i'm really good' than someone saying 'Mmmm' 'cause I just think if someone has a talent then they should be quite open about it. Not like boasting, but confident

Interview: I feel uncomfortable talking about myself and my achievements in front of other people

Eleanor: Not at all. I quite like talking about myself, so yeah -- no.

Interview: I feel uncomfortable talking about myself and my achievements in front of other people

Adam: Uh definitely not, because everyones different and I don't get easily embarrassed. So even if I haven't done amazingly at GCSEs, even if I don't have an amazing job, I'll still be able to talk about it with enthusiasm because I know what I wantto do hopefully.

Interview: I feel uncomfortable talking about myself and my achievements in front of other people

Leon: I'll say no now, because I've got more confidence to do that now. It's mainly been in the last year and a half - that kind of thing. Before I was quite shy. It doesn't seem like it but I was pretty shy, I didn't like to talk about myself

Interview: If I talk about 'selling yourself', what comes to mind?

Megan: Just being in a job interview really. Yeah I think if I was trying to get a job you want to sell yourself to the company to make them think they want you. Like for uni interviews and stuff like that, I personally like to sell myself.

Negative emotional response to self-marketing

Interview: So do you feel confident you're going to be able to write a good personal statement for this?

Sarah: No, I'm really struggling with it. It's like my mum's trying to help me again. She's like you've just got to say why you want to do it. But like I dunno I just wanted to do it for that long I don't actually know anymore. It's just like quite hard, and I think cuz I'm quite nervous about it it's making it even harder.

Interviewer: Do you find it hard or easy to do?)
Lizzy: Quite hard to do, quite hard to fake being what I am.
Interviewer: Do you feel that's what it is, having to fake it?
Lizzy: Yeah, make yourself come across really great, but it's not actually all true. So I find it hard, lying!

Steve: At the times I have to sell myself I feel weird about it, I don't feel very comfortable.

Interviewer: How do you feel about having to market myself?
Dylan: I don't think I am good at selling myself because i think I panic…say the wrong things…Um, I'm quite easily distracted, I just dart off - got a very short attention span.
Interviewer: So not good?
Dylan: No, not really. I just don't focus that quickly and if I'm put in a situation where there is pressure on me, um, I don't collapse but I do panic and I might do something wrong

Inerviewer: How easy to talk about yourself?
Rebecca   I think I kind of put myself down, and don't have a very confident view of myself, so….I don't find it hugely easy. I don't like to boast about things, so…

Interviewer: I feel uncomfortable talking about myself and my achievements in front of other people

James   I'm not sure about yes definitely. Well actually I think it probably is yes definitely because I always feel uncomfortable. But if someone is willing to talk to me about it then I'll say it but I'll still feel uncomfortable about saying it. So I'd say yes definitely

Interviewer: I dislike going for interviews.
Vicky   Yes. meeting someone new for the first time and having to make yourself look really good is kinda like, yeah…I don't like talking about myself in a really positive way sometimes..

Interviewer: Do you think that you're any good at self-marketing
Lianne   If I have to. I don't try to. You feel like such an idiot saying how good you are at something, it's better just to prove it really, isn't it? But then I don't suppose you can until you've told someone, can you?