



Do accelerated, work-based programmes enhance student learning? An action research study

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Abstract

Flexible learning has been an important part of Government policy for over 20 years. Often connected to economic performance, the driver is improved productivity. This study critically evaluates the development and delivery of two flexible learning programmes - BA (Hons) Advertising (WBL) and BA (Hons) Public Relations (WBL). These were developed as part of a HEFCE Catalyst-funded project 'Towards Higher Apprenticeships' led by the Sector Skills Council for the creative industries and a consortium of five universities. The study aims to improve practice and inform the literature on the design and delivery of flexible programmes. Research questions critically evaluated the participants' experiences, nature of learning and outcomes. The research addresses gaps in the literature in relation to student, staff and employer perspectives and outcomes in the coproduction of accelerated, work-based learning programmes.

Using an interpretive philosophy, the study employed an action research approach, that is, the study is primarily intended to inform practice within a specific social situation, the findings of which may be transferable. Documentary analyses, interviews and field notes were analysed inductively. The research participants included the research author who also headed the project for the lead institution, students, academic staff, employers and the Sector Skills Council (SSC).

The findings of the research suggest that the active, multi-modal learning opportunities offered by accelerated, work-based learning programmes can facilitate the attainment of planned and emergent outcomes cultivating the creation of capital, building communities of practice and contributing to the productivity that is a key driver in government higher education and skills policy. However, the research suggests that the foundation for such programmes requires: an innovative institution, where teams have existing strong industry links and an employability focus, particularly in industries with a clear skills shortage; a reachable target audience with raised awareness of the benefits of such programmes; and an active Sector Skills Council to raise awareness, particularly amongst small to medium-sized businesses, and to act as an umbrella organisation. Employers engaged in such programmes should be prepared to devote sufficient resources.

This research, through adopting an action learning approach, has been able to develop a conceptual framework which, whilst focused around accelerated work-based learning, has the potential to be equally applicable to other forms of work based learning such as apprenticeships.

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Outline Structure

Chapter 1.0 Context of the Study

This chapter provides the reader with background information on the development and delivery of accelerated, work-based learning programmes within the context of higher education policy. The study analyses ways that students, course team and employers can work together and some of the implications for learning in these situations. The focus for the research is discussed and justified, the overall research aim and individual research questions are explained with reference to gaps in research and the potential for the study to add value.

Chapter 2.0 Literature Review

This chapter develops themes in literature relating to the design of accelerated, work-based programmes including modes of learning, flexible pedagogies, facilitating learning, communities of practice, constructive learning, reflective practice and capital creation. It goes on to cover the nature of learning within accelerated, work-based programmes including definitions of work-based learning, the continuum of industry interaction, learning from experience, typologies of work-based learning, partnerships for learning and co-production. Concepts relating to student experience are explored through Bourdieu and other models of social capital related to communities of practice, career trajectories from the pre-periphery into the periphery of practice. Finally, implications for the research methodology are discussed.

Chapter 3.0 Methodology

This chapter discusses the philosophical approach and justifies the action research strategy and methods to be adopted in the empirical research for the study. In addition, the piloting of the research methodology and research methods is outlined and the approach to data analysis is explained. Limitations and ethical aspects of the study are discussed.

Chapter 4.0 Findings: Description, Analysis and Synthesis

This chapter reports on the findings of the action research study. In the first instance, the policy framework is discussed including transferable skills and vocational skills and the apprenticeship agenda. It goes on to consider each of the research questions analysing and synthesising the literature and empirical research data drawn from interviews with participants from the stakeholders in the programmes together with a discussion of reflexive aspects within research where the principal investigator is also a participant.

Chapter 5.0 Conclusions

This chapter revisits the overall aim of the study and the findings are related to the individual research questions covering themes including: the foundations for flexible, WBL programmes; multi-modal learning; and outcomes including capital creation, leading to productivity. The conclusions from this research are related to the contribution to knowledge and implications for practice at programme and university level but also for employers and policy level. The limitations of this work are discussed and the potential for future research is outlined.

1.0 Context of the Study

1.1 Background – the Development of Accelerated Work-based Programmes within Higher Education

This research study sets out to contribute to knowledge in the development and implementation of combined accelerated and work-based learning programmes for undergraduate students and informs policy in this area of flexible approaches to higher education. It addresses gaps in the educational research literature in three areas: firstly, there are very few studies of flexible courses or apprenticeships that triangulate the student, staff and employer perspectives; secondly, studies on apprenticeships often focus on the employer or provider, whereas studies on accelerated courses have focused on students and staff; and, thirdly, even fewer studies have been conducted into flexible courses that also incorporate work-based learning.

This thesis presents the processes and outcomes of an action research project centred on flexible (accelerated, WBL) pilot programmes (“how, where, when, and at what pace learning occurs” Outram, 2011, p.7) covering two creative industries degrees, BA (Hons) Advertising (WBL) and BA (Hons) Public Relations (WBL). Zeni (1998, p.12) defines action research as drawing “on the qualitative methods and multiple perspectives of educational ethnography”. Indeed, in the early stages of the research the study was considered as an ethnographic or auto-ethnographic study but the intention to inform teaching practice influenced the methodology.

One of the key drivers for the development of the project was ‘fusion’ which the Sector Skills Council (SSC) has defined as follows (Creative Skillset, 2013, p.8):

“The individual: One should support individuals to develop a range of skills – possibly focused on a core specialism – that allows them to explore and exploit their potential fully. This might lead one to develop a series of specific interventions – courses or modules such as: Coding for Artists; The

Entrepreneurial Programmer; Cinematography for the FX Technician;
Wordpress for the Textiles Designer.

The 'firm': One should support SMEs to take advantage of new workflows and markets arising from the disruptive impact of digital technology. This might lead one to host jams, hacks and creative conferences bringing together SMEs from different sectors/industries: preparing fertile ground for serendipity, connections and idea generation.

The industry: One should look to foster and inject new skills into established but – perhaps – decreasingly relevant industries so that they can be agile enough to develop new business models to protect traditional market positions and break into new ones. This might lead one to work in tandem with professional bodies and industry associations to inspire fresh thinking at management level whilst aiding recruitment and partnership opportunities to import or bolt on capabilities to existing businesses.”

This 'mission' intended to drive the development of a skilled workforce by co-producing learning and knowledge-creation to the benefit of all partners. It recognises the interdependence of all partners and the social aspects as well as the planned curriculum.

The HEFCE-funded project was a very tangible way for the Sector Skills Council to engage with industry and higher education to foster the adoption of fused approaches. These concepts also link to the emergence of digital clusters which was presented in a research project called The Brighton Fuse (2013), a survey of 500 organisations and 77 entrepreneurs, that found regional clusters of companies combining creative art and technology were integrating to mutual benefit in a similar way to Silicon Valley.

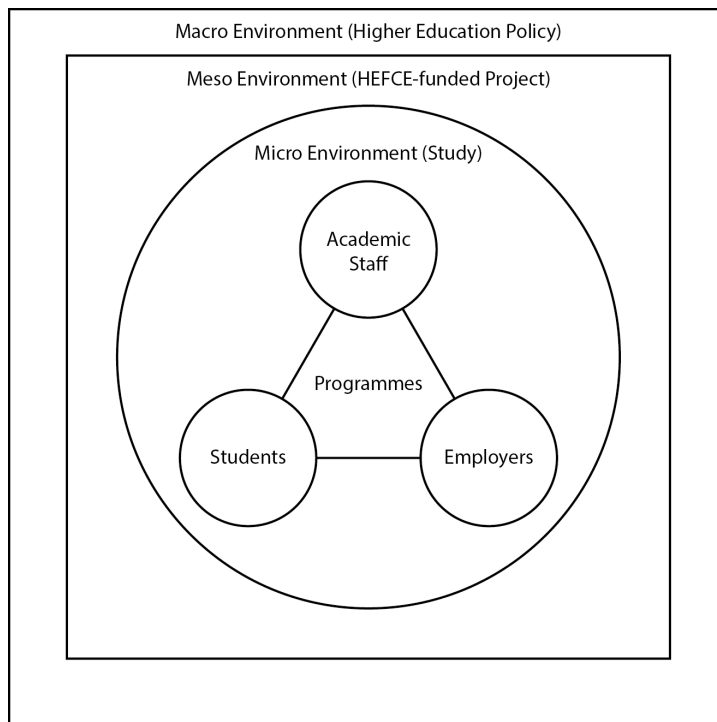
“The research identifies a new category of high growth firms within this cluster, that are 'fusing' and 'superfusing' to create an extraordinary competitive edge.” (Sapsed and Nightingale, 2013, p.1).

The macro environment for the study is influenced by government policy on skills and learning that has emerged over the last 20 years or so, this in turn has directed funding and other resources towards a number of initiatives intended to implement this policy. One of these projects forms the meso environment for this study. Led by the SSC, a HEFCE-funded project was intended to promote the development of flexible courses in conjunction with industry with the aim of developing higher or degree apprenticeships and to trial new accelerated modes of delivery where higher education works closely with industry, thereby drawing together two of the most significant strands of policy in this area, flexible learning and work-based learning.

The programmes that form the micro-environment within which the study is situated are two pilot accelerated, work-based learning degree programmes, BA (Hons) Advertising (WBL) and BA (Hons) Public Relations (WBL) (WBL represents work-based learning to differentiate these programmes from the standard delivery which run alongside and share many aspects of the programmes), offered by a university on the south coast of England. The aim of the *project* was to trial new accelerated modes of delivery collaboratively with industry. The aim of the *study* was to understand the opportunities and demands associated with programme development, delivery and experiences of participants in accelerated, work-based learning. The participants in the study were students, employers and academic staff engaged in developing, delivering and participating in the programmes.

The relationship between the macro environment (Higher Education Policy), the meso environment (HEFCE Catalyst-funded Project instigated by the Sector Skills Council in partnership with a consortium of universities led by the institution within which this study was carried out) and the micro-environment of the programmes (the action), the study (the research) and the three participant groups of students, academic staff (including the primary investigator) and employers are shown diagrammatically in Figure 1 below. Throughout the thesis the two degree courses - BA (Hons) Advertising (WBL) and BA (Hons) Public Relations (WBL) - are referred to as 'the programmes', the wider collaborative project within which the programmes were developed will be referred to as 'the project' and the research study for which this thesis is written is called 'the study'.

Figure 1: Context of the Study



Since 1997, government policy has consistently strengthened the link between education and productivity to focus on human capital.

“This thrust towards a human capital version of higher education was based on the assumption that good though higher education was, its students were inadequately prepared for the workplace and were unable to put into practice what they had learned at university.” (Light, in Boud and Solomon, 2001, p.205).

This was reinforced in the 2003 Higher Education White Paper and incorporated into the 2006-11 HEFCE Strategic Plan, challenging higher education institutions to provide more flexible delivery, reaching out to widen participation and encourage partnerships with industry in collaborative knowledge creation.

Since 1992 a number of programmes were sponsored by government to test and develop flexible learning in higher education, these included: Accelerated and Intensive Routes into HE, 1992-1995; Extended Academic Year, 1995-1998; and, Flexible Learning Pilots 2005-2010). The Flexible Learning Pathfinder (FLP)

programmes were developed in eight institutions. The intention of policy was to provide flexible methods for “certain types of student” and to “locate flexible learning development within wider institutional strategic developments” (Outram, 2011) but the pathfinder projects also identified barriers including: funding and fees, institutional working practices and processes structured around traditional provision. Though work-based and accelerated pedagogies are becoming more common, Kettle (2013, p.32) suggests, “the pedagogies deployed for work-based learning have been well-articulated but the effectiveness of approaches requires more evaluation”. Recently, the government White Paper *Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice* challenged higher education institutions (HEIs), finding that “Courses are inflexible, based on the traditional three-year undergraduate model, with insufficient innovation and provision of two-year degrees and degree apprenticeships (p.8).” The findings of this study will inform this debate and contribute to the community of practice.

1.2 Research Focus – The Project

Taking an interpretive stance, this action research study was centred on two pilot accelerated programmes incorporating up to 48-weeks of work-based learning. The HEFCE Catalyst Fund supported the development project which extended across a number of university partners, facilitated by the SSC for the creative industries.

“The fund commits up to £30 million in annual funding. This money aims to drive innovation in the HE sector, enhance excellence and efficiency in HE, and support innovative solutions... Funded projects will normally be collaborative, bringing together support from other partners including business, universities and colleges, and other public agencies.” (HEFCE, 2018).

The SSC for the creative industries instigated the project:

“in response to government discussions... about the need for universities to move away from traditional degrees, find other ways that people can engage

with higher education and to see if there was a market for apprenticeships that involve degree study". (SSC Meeting 1.1).

Because the SSC couldn't apply directly to HEFCE for funding, the official lead for the project was the University where the study took place, along with a consortium of four other universities offering a range of programmes at level 6 and 7 in disciplines in the creative industries. The over-arching qualifications were known as a Higher Level Apprenticeships at this stage.

In terms of governance, the project had a steering group led by a senior member of staff from the lead institution and the deputy director of the SSC along with senior people at the other universities in the consortium. They were joined by representatives from Guild HE and the National Centre for Universities and Business. "The people who did all the writing, teaching and negotiation with employers" (SSC 1.1) sat as a working group. Both groups met a total of four times during the project, June and November 2014; and March and June 2015.

Whilst the project itself would be evaluated against HEFCE and institutional criteria, it provided a further opportunity for additional research around, in particular, the experiences of students, academics and agency staff in the roll-out of this 'new way' of teaching and learning.

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

Collis and Moonen's (2004) *Dimensions of Flexibility* model covers time, content, entry requirements, instructional approach/resources, delivery and logistics in a continuum from fixed to flexible and can be used to position programmes. The rationale for the study is to apply the lessons learned from the earlier FLP programmes and understand more about the tensions between university and industry in developing flexible (in this case accelerated and blended) work-based learning pedagogies as part of a HEFCE Catalyst-funded project working with the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the creative industries. The *Exploring Higher Apprenticeships in Higher Education* programme was intended to develop and promote Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) programmes, "The vision of this project

is for employers and HEIs to work together to position apprenticeships with degree awards embedded as a sought after alternative to traditional degree models” (Creative Skillset, 2013, p2). Within the joint bid document developed by the SSC and the University partners, five specific recommendations were taken forward from the FLPs: the need for a publicity campaign targeting applicants, their families, employers and professional bodies; allow HEIs to charge for credits rather than years; the need for organisational change; concerns about acceptance of accelerated degrees in the European Higher Education area; and, work with external bodies to facilitate sustainable strategic change. (Creative Skillset, 2013, p21). The ambition to develop HLAs was tempered by the changing environment and government policy, resulting in only one HEI attempting to validate a Degree Apprenticeship in which case the development of an employer-led standard took an additional 18-months and became one of the first apprenticeships developed under the new standards.

The action research approach was intended to provide opportunities to refine practice, based on emerging findings during the course of the two-year pilot. An adapted action research spiral provided the framework for the study, comprising the six terms of the delivery of the three levels of the programmes. The participants in the study included the principal investigator, students, alumni and industry partners, constituting a community of enquiry. An interpretive approach is justified through the ontological and epistemological positions that suggest a qualitative ethnographic methodology, developing narratives through documentary analysis semi-structured interviews, observations and field notes.

The theoretical framework of the study covered government policy on apprenticeships and vocational skills, accelerated learning, work-based learning, flexible pedagogies, social capital, communities of practice, the development and implementation of work-based learning and the flexible pedagogies highlighted some of the challenges and advantages of such approaches. The literature relating to early career practice in advertising and public relations was helpful in developing the approaches for interviewing the student participants, in particular the use of the life history method to help identify changes in habitus over time through the

acquisition of (for example) appropriate cultural capital relative to the field of practice.

The research aim is to investigate how student learning might be enhanced through combined accelerated, work-based learning. This addresses a gap in the literature in that there are very few studies of flexible courses or apprenticeships that triangulate the student, staff and employer perspectives.

“Much research is currently being undertaken into the effectiveness of apprenticeships, but much of this research seems to focus on either employers or providers rather than on the triangulation of all three parties – the employers, the providers and the learners.” (University Vocational Awards Council, 2007).

Studies on work-based, accelerated courses have rarely focused on the employer (McCaig et al 2007 focusing on quality perspectives being the exception).

“Unfortunately, the lack of the employer perspective is notable in the literature on accelerated degrees, and where primary research has been undertaken this has tended to focus on students and HE staff rather than gather feedback from employers and their attitudes to and acceptance or otherwise of accelerated degrees.” (Pollard, et al., 2017, p.61).

Finally, the attainment of students is considered as a quantitative measure in a largely qualitative study as an overall comparator with students studying the traditional route of the same courses.

“There is a scarcity of literature that captures the benefits of accelerated study, and particularly of robust studies of the effectiveness of accelerated degrees that make comparisons between the outcomes of students on accelerated programmes compared with those on traditional programmes.” (Pollard, et al., 2017, p.65)

1.3.1 Research Questions

RQ 1: What is the experience of all partners within accelerated, work-based degree programmes?

RQ 2: What is the nature of learning within accelerated work-based degree programmes?

RQ 3: In what ways can we design accelerated, work-based degree programmes to deliver benefits to employers, students and universities?

1.4 Potential of this Research

The domain of accelerated and work-based learning is lacking critical investigation, particularly in the areas highlighted as gaps. The study is intended to add value in a number of ways, in particular insights into employer and staff perspectives in working in partnership with a university in developing and co-producing accelerated, work-based learning programme; also, the student perspectives in experiencing a course of this kind combining higher education and industry practice. The literature review draws together educational research into accelerated and work-based learning the associated flexible pedagogies and social capital studies in related fields. The empirical research provides insights into the design and development of flexible curricula, the nature of learning within such a context and the student experience of balancing academic study and industry practice as they negotiate their way through the programmes. This will be of benefit to academic staff engaged in developing and delivering such programmes within the school, the university of study, the partner universities in the project and may provide insights transferable to those engaged in similar projects.

1.5 University Context

The context for the study is a post-92 university (former polytechnic or central institution, initially without research degree awarding powers) on the South coast of England with a widening participation focus. Currently, the University reports that 97.7% of students studying their first degree come from state schools, 15.4% of students are from low participation neighbourhoods, 21% are non-white in origin

and 30% are over 21 at entry to the University (University Access Agreement, 2018-19). The University mission is:

““We are dedicated to the pursuit of excellent university education that enables learners from all backgrounds to become enterprising citizens and responsible leaders, while also promoting economic and social prosperity for the communities we serve”.

(University Access Agreement, 2018-19).

Known for offering a range of creative industries courses, when the sector skills council was looking for a lead partner the university offered the potential for strong and pro-active leadership founded on a well-established partnership with a range of courses accredited across the creative industries.

Looking back to the start of the project it is clear to see how the opportunity to work with industry under the guidance of the sector skills council was a logical extension of the collaborative approach adopted by the faculty committed to real world learning together with industry partners.

During the course of the project the university went through a series of reorganisations. Firstly, the faculty structure that drew together all of the provision for the creative industries was broken up into smaller schools as part of a major restructuring and realignment and then within 12 months the structure was further adjusted to create a larger school offering courses across business and communications. During the course of these changes the strategic direction of the academic department within which the project was situated shifted to reflect changing priorities. Where the faculty had driven forward the project as part of a wider initiative to deepen engagement with the creative industries, employers and the sector skills council, the new school's centre of gravity shifted more towards business. Where the faculty was interested in rolling out accelerated courses more widely, the new school was more focused on stabilising the business course portfolio. So for the school the pilot project became a more marginal piece of work. This had implications for the project team and also for the scope of the project.

Originally it might have helped test and develop accelerated provision more widely across the faculty but as is discussed elsewhere the promotion and communication required in order to raise awareness of such programmes is essential in gaining traction. Without such an investment of resources any university would struggle to establish such programmes. However, the recent emergence of degree apprenticeships offers the opportunity to apply some of the lessons learned during the study in the design and delivery of programmes .

1.6 Policy Context

The literature relating to the context of the study encompasses policy-related literature including White Papers and reports/reviews published by Department of Education and Skills reports, United Kingdom Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE), Higher Education Academy (HEA) and Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO) covering flexible learning in general, accelerated learning, skills development, work-based learning and widening participation. This literature helps define the wider environmental context of the study and helps explain institutional and skills council strategies.

1.6.1 Productivity

Over the last 20 years there have been many reports sponsored by government investigating the relationship between skills, training and work experience (Sims and Woodrow, 1996; Wlodowski, 2003; McCaig, et al., 2007; Lee and Horsfall, 2007; HEFCE, 2011; Outram, 2011; Tallantyre, 2013; Huxley et. al, 2017). In this the link between higher education and preparing students to contribute to the economy was made, the need to for higher education to “align to the economic needs of the contemporary nation state... a human capital vision of higher education... based on the assumption that... students were inadequately prepared for the workplace...” (Boud and Solomon, 2001, p.205).

1.6.2 Flexibility

Another theme that has consistently been developed through government policy is the need for universities to provide more flexible courses and modes of delivery. The Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, Jo Johnson reinforced the need for accelerated courses in his speech at Reform in July 2017 and at the Universities United Kingdom (UUK) Annual Conference in September 2017 highlighting that the cost for students taking accelerated courses should be lower through lower fees and loans, that it accelerated them into the world of work and that they are more likely to repay a greater proportion of their loans back reducing cost to government too. It will be interesting to see how this agenda is further promoted through the new Office for Students. He also announced that universities would be able to potentially charge a higher fee under powers in the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 for an accelerated course as an incentive to increase what he found to be a limited number of courses across a narrow range of fields.

“The focus should continue to be on undergraduate provision that differs from the ‘standard offer’ of an honours degree completed in three years through full-time study.” (HEFCE, 2011).

However, having directed universities to focus on providing a wider variety of degree formats to a wider participation audience has had limited impact.

“We want to see more programmes that are taken flexibly and part-time and that a learner can access with ease alongside their other commitments. We also wish to see more programmes, such as foundation and fast-track degrees, that can be completed full-time in two years. The underlying theme is providing for diversity. Over the next spending review period, we will want some shift away from full-time three-year places and towards a wider variety of provision. I would like you to assess current trends in demand; to lead a debate on how diverse provision can be encouraged; and to give me initial advice by Summer 2010.” (HEFCE, 2011).

1.6.3 Skills

Dearing (1997) who first identified key skills “we believe that four skills are key to the future success of graduates whatever they intend to do in later life. These four are: communication skills; numeracy; the use of information technology; learning how to learn”. In particular the skill of learning how to learn is important in the context of work-based and other experiential learning opportunities and to continue to “manage their own learning, and recognise that the process continues throughout life” (Dearing, 1997, 9.18), this “met-competence” is also identified by Raelin (2000) as being a defining feature of WBL. Dearing goes on to suggest that progress files (Dearing, 1997, recommendation 20) would be one tool that could facilitate this. Dearing also identified the importance of “some exposure of the student to the wider world as part of a programme of study” (Dearing, 1997, 9.26) that he explained would be of particular relevance to graduates “employed in small and medium sized enterprises” (Dearing, 1997, p.28).

In defining his suggestion for key skills, Dearing also considered frameworks suggested by the Council for Industry and Higher Education:

- Continuous learning
- Behavioural and interpersonal skills
- Problem identification and solving
- Information appreciation and management
- Communication
- General awareness

and the Centre for Research into Quality:

- Intellect
- Knowledge
- Willingness to learn
- Self-management and motivation
- Inter-personal skills

- team working
- communication

(Dearing, 1997, s9.15)

These elements hint towards the different types of situations within which learning or skills development may occur, many of which require an inquiring and active approach on behalf of the learner.

The need for a broad range of characteristics, qualities and dispositions perhaps explains the fact that many students may struggle to make the transition from academic study to the field of work. This may be exacerbated because the student has possibly been participating in a broadly acquisitive model of learning where they are focused on achieving their individual grade (notwithstanding that group work forms a part of many assessments). Bennett, Dunne and Carre observed that “...graduates experience a culture shock because they are seldom prepared for the change from working competitively as an individual to working as a member of a cooperating team.” (2000, p.18). Another aspect they identified that is perhaps a little intangible is “a feel for the market, what’s going on in the world” (2000, p.100).

Critics of such an emphasis on skills ask “does closer alignment with student employability and skills needs have to be at the expense of the academic experience? More specifically, is student employability simply about having up-to-date technical skills?” (Phippen, 2010).

Dearing had identified that “for many employers and graduates, work experience makes a real difference, complementing traditional academic skills with a basic understanding of work... the graduate recruitment problem most often mentioned by employers. (1997, 9.29). He goes on to report that “many institutions devote a great deal of effort to identifying such opportunities... this particularly so when the work is treated as a structured part of a programme, and its progress is moderated by both the employer and the institution”. (1997, 9.31).

The role that sector skills councils (SSCs) might play in the development of vocational skills is clearly laid out by Leitch (2006) who saw best practice in “Australia and the Netherlands”, defined the following priorities “taking the lead role in developing occupational standards, approving vocational qualifications; taking the lead role in collating and communicating sectoral labour market data; raising employer engagement, demand and investment; and considering collective employer action to address specific sector skills needs.” (Leitch, 2006).

He also identified that providers must be “more responsive to employers” and learners” needs... providing training in ways that suit them” (Leitch, 2006), necessitating the reform of qualifications, funding and delivery in response to demand. All of which can be traced through to the accelerated and work-based courses that are the focus for this research.

Preceding Leitch, the role that SSCs might play was taken up by the Department for Education and Skills “A key means of raising our game on skills is through the Sector Skills Council network... The Councils will be a major new voice for employers and employees in each major sector of the economy.” The strategic driver for this was “raising productivity in each sector, the skills needed for international competitiveness, and how employers might work together... to invest in the necessary skills”. (DES, 2003, p.14). A different angle is considered by Spilsbury, Giles and Campbell (2010) “It seems clear that there is a significant positive relationship between product market strategy and the skill levels of the workforce in the UK, with the higher the product market strategy the higher the average skill level required from the workforce. Product market strategies drive skill use, and it therefore follows that to increase skills used in the workplace, there is a need to drive companies up the product market value chain.” (Spilsbury, Giles and Campbell, 2010, p.8). They go on to challenge “providers need to be responsive to on-going developments in the labour market so that provision and learners skill acquisition is well aligned to labour market needs and varying consumers” (employers and learners) demands”. (Spilsbury, Giles and Campbell, 2010, p.8). This demonstrates the environment within which the project was created, setting out Government policy in relation to the role of SSCs in moving the skills agenda forward with

employers and for providers to be responsive to this. This provides a key driver for the project of productivity but the study will consider the wider benefits for all partners in terms of learning and outcomes.

Recent reports prepared by the SSC suggest that high achieving agencies, often gathered in clusters, are looking for T-skills in their graduates.

“The vertical stroke of the “T” represents the deep, specific skills an individual has in their specialism; the horizontal denotes the broad understanding of the whole process involved in their sector, as well as some of the core competencies, or soft skills, needed for success.” (Creative Skillset, n.d., p.15).

That is, a high degree of digital and/or creative skills supported by well-developed and transferable soft skills. Interestingly, Waller and Hingorani (2009, p.18) found persuasion to be a “business attribute” rather than a skill, more native than teachable (p.18) suggesting that students’ self-awareness may be as important as taught skills. They also suggest that the key soft skill is oral presentation, which is supported by Lowry and Xie (2008) who used WordStat to analyse the content of entry level Advertising and Marketing recruitment adverts, “no matter how many new technologies enter the workplace, some traditional, basic skills remain critical” (p.23). So awareness of the combination of attributes and soft skills that employers value could be important for students developing their social capital in building and presenting their professional profile.

The advertising education literature identifies soft skills as being crucial for success: critical thinking (anticipating issues, uncovering insights, evaluating/articulating solutions, offering rationales); interpersonal communication (understanding others, communicating in the right manner, influencing others, building relationships, teamworking); presentation skills (public speaking, tactics, overview, storytelling, emotion); persuasion (through critical thinking and presentation). In terms of hard skills, which are those needed in contemporary advertising practice? Beachboard and Weidman (2013) researched small integrated marketing communications

agencies and found that: writing is “the most needed and least available” in the industry; awareness of cost; research skills; HTML coding; Adobe Creative Suite skills; and overall for educators to consult with industry as students’ future employers (p.33). Of course, it is not only creative software that is constantly updating but also the way students access this software (increasingly online and on-demand) and the possibilities for search and collaboration (Google Hangouts for example). This provides a framework for curriculum development for a specialist-advertising course and also the mode of delivery. Providing students with opportunities to develop relevant industry skills may contribute to the development of social capital, potentially enabling the student to find their place in the field more readily.

To summarise, regardless of party, governments have consistently attempted to create a policy framework to influence the provision of training and work experience opportunities in order to help develop the skills required to drive the economy forward. In particular, the role universities have in this and the need to offer more flexible approaches and to work with employers more closely. Dearing identified key skills and sector skills councils have taken the composition of appropriate vocational skills forward. This focus on skills for employability has been seen by some as being detrimental to the wider academic role for universities. An emerging and key strategy of this and the last government is the role apprenticeships might play in both offering alternative routes to degree-level qualifications and challenging employers to take the skills agenda forward.

1.6.4 Apprenticeships

Though the study is concerned with accelerated, work-based learning, the wider project was initially positioned as moving towards apprenticeships. During the project-planning phase the Government changed the structure for the development of apprenticeships from provider-driven frameworks to employer-led standards. If this had not been the case it is likely that the partner institutions in the project may have been more likely to develop apprenticeship programmes rather than flexible learning programmes. Nevertheless the apprenticeship agenda has an increasingly

important bearing on the study as Government policy on apprenticeships has developed and matured.

The Richard Review of 2012 identified a number of recommendations for apprenticeships. The cover of the report features some illustrations of 'traditional' apprenticeship trades such as painter/decorator, mechanic and baker but also a computer mouse – presumably representing computing/digital roles. When analysing the implementation of this report into government policy it is clear that some aspects have been taken forward more completely than others, particularly the fundamental shift in responsibility for developing standards to the employer (the previous frameworks were provider-led). An important factor is the communication of apprenticeships to raise awareness for employers, potential apprentices and their influencers. One of the recommendations suggests, "Government, through its own communication channels and careers advice services, should ensure that information about apprenticeships and their benefits is effectively and widely disseminated" and that "More effort should be made to ensure that schools and teachers, parents and all those who inform and guide young people have a better understanding of what a high quality apprenticeship can offer" (Richard, 2012, p.19).

However, by the time Matthew Hancock produced the *The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan* in October 2013 these important dissemination and publicity aspects are only briefly discussed and even then, stating that "Much highly effective activity aimed at promoting Apprenticeships to employers and potential apprentices is already undertaken by organisations such as NAS, education and training providers and employer bodies. We support this but, in the context of the Apprenticeship reforms, more needs to be done, further "employers have an equally important role to play" (Hancock, 2013, p.21). The role of apprenticeships is discussed along with details of how the new standards were to be implemented and how funding reform was to be carried out. When Richard is referred to directly, the following aspects are included:

Table 1: Role of Apprenticeships (adapted from Hancock, 2013, p.6).

Factor	Analysis	Implications for the study
...redefining Apprenticeships to be targeted only at those who are new to a job or role that requires sustained and substantial training;	This perhaps suggests the minimum criteria for what constitutes a distinctive job or role. Practically this second aspect has been left to industry to decide through the development of apprenticeship standards.	This suggests that the industry has spent time in identifying roles and may potentially indicate a skill shortage in that area.
...focusing on the outcome of an Apprenticeship - what the apprentice can do when they complete their training - and freeing up the process by which they get there;	This aspect is reflected in the development of the synoptic final endpoint assessment within which the apprentice demonstrates their achievement of course outcomes. The choice the word training suggests a very one-way process that overlooks the social aspects of the workplace as a learning situation.	This suggests that it may be appropriate to underline the student-managed aspects of learning from experience that is perhaps avoided by using the word training.
...trusted, independent assessment;	This seems to relate to the synoptic endpoint assessment rather than on-going assessment throughout the apprenticeship at a cost of up to 20% of the course fee. It also maintains the industry role in assessing quality.	This relates to the contractual aspects that make tangible all partners responsibilities.
...having recognised industry standards as the basis of every Apprenticeship and linking to professional registration in sectors where this exists;	Tying in trade associations and professional bodies reinforces the industry focus though the benchmark for professional registration may vary widely.	This reinforces the need for a trade association or professional body to perhaps act as an umbrella organisation for sectors made up of many small to medium-sized enterprises.
...ensuring government funding creates the right incentives for Apprenticeship training, with the purchasing power for investing in Apprenticeship training lying with the employer and;	The main incentive being the mandatory levy applied to large employers providing a pot that needs to be spent within 24 months.	Though financial incentives are clear, the additional value added through capital creation is a message that would need to be communicated to employers, particularly as the financial incentive has not so far led to an increase in apprenticeship places.
...greater diversity and innovation in training - with employers and the government safeguarding quality.	This underlines the expectation that a range of providers and approaches may be involved and again reinforces the role for employers in making the final assessment of the apprentice.	For universities to compete as providers they need to be able to communicate the added value they can bring.

By 2015, the Apprenticeship Reforms – progress so far report provides some more visually presented statistics including promotion: “The Get In. Go Far campaign, very much the centrepiece of an integrated campaign, has had a major focus on young people but also small businesses. To date visits to the apprenticeship website are up by over 95% on the previous year.” The case studies presented in the report include UK Power, automotive, energy and utility industries. Higher and degree apprenticeships are highlighted “standards are agreed and will soon be ready for delivery for occupations including Professional Accountant, Civil Engineering Site Manager, Software Developer and Solicitor” (BIS, 2015a, p.10). The *Government Campaign Highlights* (GCS, 2016) publication includes some details on how the campaign was developed and evaluated.

“BIS developed a campaign to target the 9 million young people aged 14-24 to demonstrate the range and diversity of apprenticeships. In addition it would target parents, carers and other influencers, telling them that apprenticeships can lead to rewarding and well paid jobs. Its specific aim was to drive active consideration from those aged 16-24 year olds. This would be measured through calls to the helpline and registrations on the apprenticeships vacancy site.”

The integrated campaign included television, out-of-home and social media and “BIS was the first government department anywhere in the world to partner with Instagram which promoted apprenticeships on their feed”. A key objective of the campaign was to re-position apprenticeships to three target segments: “young people, parents and teachers still see apprenticeships as low skilled, low wage, manual occupations and reject them as viable career choices”. The *Government Communications Service Campaign Evaluation* presents an increase in telephone enquiries of 140% (GCS, 2016) and impressive advertising recall. However, the actual increase of apprentices aged 19-24 only increased by 2% in the period. The task in hand is illustrated in the BIS Apprenticeships Evaluation 2015 – Employer Summary Report that revealed “A quarter (24%) of employers were aware of these standards, although only 12 per cent had at least some knowledge of what they involved” (BIS, 2016a, p.5). The Apprenticeship Standards (at this stage Traiblazers)

are still very new and in the partner publication evaluating the learner experience, only “only 19 apprentices who had undertaken a Trailblazer apprenticeship were interviewed in the survey” (BIS, 2016b, p.5).

In the *English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision* report the future for apprenticeships is set out. For employers, the apprenticeship levy was introduced, coming into effect in April 2017:

“The rate for the levy will be set at 0.5% of an employer’s pay bill. Each employer will receive an allowance of £15,000 to offset against their levy payment. This means that the levy will only be paid on any pay bill in excess of £3 million and that fewer than 2% of UK employers will pay it. By 2019–20, the levy is expected to raise £3 billion in the UK. Spending on apprenticeships in England will be £2.5 billion, and Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will receive their fair share of the levy.” (BIS, 2015b, p.19).

Further, for the public sector and public procurement:

“The Enterprise Bill will seek to introduce statutory targets of 2.3% for public sector bodies with a workforce of 250 or more in England to employ their fair share of apprentices.”

“The rules for public procurement have been amended: bidders for all relevant government contracts over £10m, and more than 12 months in duration, will also need to compete on the basis of their contribution to apprenticeships and skills.” (BIS, 2015b, p.13).

The same report introduced the Digital Apprenticeship Service that, from October 2016, allowed employers to post their vacancies. A search on this service on 10 October revealed that in central London (within a 15-mile radius) there were 58 digital apprenticeships at all levels, though all of these were at level three. Similarly a search for ‘marketing’ revealed 110 posts, nearly all at level three.

The following 'digital industries' roles were included in the latest list of standards (as of October 2016):

- Network Engineer (level 4)
- Software Developer (level 4)
- Digital and Technology Solutions Professional (level 6)
- Digital Marketer (level 3)
- Cyber Intrusion Analyst (level 4)
- Data Analyst (level 4)
- Unified Communications Trouble Shooter (level 4)
- Infrastructure Technician (Level 3)
- Software Tester (level 4)
- Cyber Security Technologist (level 4)
- IT Technical Salesperson (level 3)

Of these, there is only one degree apprenticeship (level 6) and in addition one relevant framework (the previous process for the development of apprenticeships) for Public Relations at level 4 ('live list', June 2016).

To summarise, higher level or degree apprenticeships are emerging as Trailblazers, extending out from those industries that have an apprenticeship tradition and beginning to provide options in the digital industries. By May 2017 degree apprenticeship standards in Digital Technologies led by The Tech Partnership and Digital Marketing, led by The Civil Service were on the cusp of final approval. Much is made of the simplicity of the two-page *pro forma* but the process of getting to the finished and employer-led standard is still long and very few new standards are emerging outside of the larger industrial, health and professional services. The promotion to key target audiences is encouraging enquiries and raising awareness to potential apprentices but the awareness and interest amongst employers is low, which is particularly relevant given the pivotal role of employers in the process. The apprenticeship levy and Digital Apprenticeship Service are intended to provide an online route for finding apprentices and to ensure that organisations of a certain size are incentivized to take on apprentices. The funding arrangements for levy-payers is

becoming established, the arrangements for non-levy payers should be finalized by November 2017.

Undoubtedly, for some specific courses and more generally institutions the increase in apprenticeships provides a two-pronged threat in that these students are rejecting the traditional UCAS route and that providers of apprenticeships are not restricted to universities. The transaction becomes business-to-business at a time when universities have been rapidly adapting to the marketisation of higher education and the importance of customer relationships. The key performance indicators of national student survey (NSS), destinations of leavers of higher education (DLHE) and proportion of good honours degrees have become embedded in university management and organisation of courses. Are these still relevant when bidding against other providers for a proportion of the national levy pot? Are universities best placed to provide when so much of the wider university experience is seen to be irrelevant by the employer and the apprentice?

1.6.5 Accelerated Learning

Pollard et al. (2017, p.6) found that there was no universal definition for accelerated learning but that the most common form found in the UK offered 180 credits per year over two years (the traditional approach would be 120 credits each year for three years) taught over three 15-week terms, sometimes running alongside traditional routes and combining more blended approaches combining distance learning, e-learning together and face-to-face delivery. They go on to suggest that a 'standard' definition of accelerated degree might encourage institutions to "increase supply" and encourage the take up by students "increase demand".

"Two-year honours degrees (or "accelerated degrees") cover the same curriculum and content, and deliver the same number of credits (360), as a three-year degree. Accelerated degrees are delivered over three semesters a year instead of two, with the traditional summer holiday period being used to teach the third semester" (HEFCE, 2011, p.11).

Accelerated programmes have consistently featured in government policy being discussed in “HEFCE Grant Letters (2009, 2010), the OFFA and HEFCE national strategy for access and student success (2014) and the Conservative Party Manifesto (2015)” (Pollard, et. al., 2017, p5). Government policy has clearly identified that more flexible provision of higher education is desirable “Courses are inflexible, based on the traditional three-year undergraduate model, with insufficient innovation and provision of two-year degrees and degree apprenticeships” (BIS, 2016, p.8), often linking to apprenticeships and emphasising choice “We will increase choice and flexibility in the sector by putting a duty on the OfS to have regard to promoting choice in the interests of students, employers and taxpayers.” (BIS, 2016, p.8). This lack of flexibility is further connected to a perceived need to encourage lifelong learning.

“In the 2016 Budget, we announced that we will review the gaps in support for lifetime learning, including flexible and part time study. We are also continuing to explore how we can encourage greater take up of two-year degrees, for those who want a higher education qualification but prefer to spend less time out of the labour market.” (BIS, 2016, p.19).

The emphasis on accelerated learning was reinforced when the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, Jo Johnston spoke to Universities UK about the new regulatory framework offered by the Higher Education and Research Act in September 2017 – “the start of a new era”. In a speech that presented his views on two critical perspectives of higher education, utilising the argument of a group he called the pessimists to highlight the Apprenticeship Levy (“which will raise £2.8bn to fund 3 million apprentices over a five year period”) as part of a broader offer for more flexible routes through “higher levels of education”, he also spoke about HE reforms, the Teaching Excellence Framework, grade inflation, student contracts as well as accelerated degrees. He positioned accelerated courses as offering faster but equivalent education appealing to mature students and suggested that three-quarters of HE providers identified a “demand for such degrees from students or employers” but found that only a very small number of providers and a narrow range of subject areas were offered – this he suggests has to change

and will be looking at setting appropriate and higher fee cap as an incentive. It is interesting to note that rather than universities he refers to HE providers.

“By definition, accelerated learning programs are structured for students to take less time than conventional (often referred to as “traditional”) programs to attain university credits, certificates or degrees. The core element in accelerated learning programs is the accelerated course. Ground based (as opposed to on-line) accelerated courses are presented in less time than the conventional number of instructional contact hours - for example 20 hours of class time versus 45 hours of class time; and for a shorter duration - for example 5 weeks rather than 16 weeks. Accelerated courses, often referred to as intensive courses (Scott and Conrad, 1992), are usually structured in condensed formats including weekend and evening classes and workplace programs.” (Wlodowski, 2003, p.2).

Here, Wlodowski is referring to an accelerated course that would equate to a unit or module on a degree programme. The level of intensity referred to is of a finer granularity than the degree programmes in the study where there is no intention to reduce the number of hours per unit, rather the time spent in university and the workplace equates to that of a traditional course but that the acceleration relates to the accommodation of more than one level in an academic year divided over three 15-week semesters rather than two.

One of the difficulties for providers of flexible learning is that the target audience is more fragmented than that for traditional three-year degrees, the applicants for which predominantly apply through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) system.

“Accelerated honours degrees occupy a very small niche market, and appeal largely to older students. There is some potential for growth within this market, and this might be aided by a centrally co-ordinated information campaign (at present, many students do not know the accelerated route

exists).” (Report to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2010).

Courses catering for such audiences require a promotional mix of communications targeting this dispersed audience. “...it would also require a cultural shift in the way in which young students, in particular, think about their route through higher education.” (HEFCE, 2011). The government has recognised this in relation to apprenticeships and has put in place high profile communications to prospective apprentices, positioning apprenticeships as a smart alternative to a traditional degree, and to industry in order to prepare them for the levy.

This was something that was echoed in the earlier flexible learning pilots, recognising the needs of distinct stakeholder groups, “a publicity campaign to enable potential students, their families, employers, professional bodies and teaching staff to understand, properly, what accelerated programmes are all about” (Outram, 2011, p38). Nevertheless such degrees are seen as “a very small niche market “appealing “largely to older students” that would require “a centrally co-ordinated information campaign (at present, many students do not know the accelerated route exists)” (HEFCE, 2011), in order to reach this niche and fragmented audience the campaign would need to be sophisticated and targeted, possibly relying on social media. Certainly individual institutions may struggle to address the audience. Huxley found that there was often no tailored promotion of such courses and that they were included alongside “their general promotion of undergraduate courses, which some staff found frustrating” but to do otherwise would be “difficult and expensive” given the nature of the market. Where targeted promotions did take place the proposition was focused on “accessing the workplace faster rather than the potential cost savings” (Huxley, et. al. 2017, p.6).

One of the main drivers for flexible courses has been governments of various parties for a number of years but it is perhaps surprising that even though the suggestion that market research would be required in order to establish demand for such courses was suggested by the Labour administration in 2010, “we will want some shift away from full-time three year places and towards a wider variety of provision.

I would like you to assess current trends in demand; to lead a debate on how diverse provision can be encouraged; and to give me initial advice by Summer 2010” (HEFCE, 2011), as Huxley et. al. observe, that there hasn’t been much in the way of “market research with potential students to explore potential for take-up in this current context of higher fees and uncapped recruitment”. They suggest a number of segments may be addressed in this way “the younger “traditional” HE student market... adult learner market... and also with employers.” This would provide an opportunity to “let stakeholders know what is meant by acceleration... explain how they work in practice... highlight potential benefits but also outline the commitment required”. Importantly it would also offer the opportunity to “determine a common terminology in the sector, make accelerated degrees more visible and allow for potential students to be able to use duration as a search criterion” (Huxley, et. al, 2017, p.72).

Outram found that potential students could be profiled as follows:

Table 2: Accelerated Student Characteristics (adapted from Outram, 2011, p20)

Factor	Analysis
...are often in the 21 plus age group and from social groupings B and C	This does present a challenge in communicating to this target audience. Universities are geared towards the traditional 18 year-old applying through UCAS. Perhaps this demographic is more likely to be the first in their family to take a degree.
...are potentially already in the workplace	This already provides for a link between student, employer and institution and for mutual benefits.
...feel they have missed out on the opportunity of study and benefits of a degree	This may have implications for motivation of individuals in taking up apprenticeships and the image of degree apprenticeships as something related to but different from a traditional degree. This may also suggest that the wider university experience may not appeal to this audience.
...are... short of time	Does this imply longer-term factors relating to the need to make up for lost time in some way with perhaps a greater vocational focus?
...but have clear passion/drive to succeed	Presumably the rejection of a traditional degree route is related to this?
...may already have professional qualifications or other learning suitable for APL/APEL	Implying benefits to partnerships between employer, provider and professional body.
...are happy to engage with blended and work-based or related approaches in combination within accelerated programmes.	This may suggest that a need to take an accelerated approach is desirable and that a traditional student experience is less important.

McCaig, et al. (2007) found that students on accelerate degrees were looking for a “quicker route into employment” and “financial benefits” and that “skills shortages encourage employer interest in them”. (2007, p.30).

“Some institutions may consider offering accelerated degrees because this allows them to attract new students. It is notable that all seven pathfinders piloting accelerated degrees are newer universities; older universities seem wary.” (HEFCE, 2011, p.25).

Pollard et. al. (2017) developed a literature review of accelerated learning within which they identified two strands of accelerated learning “accelerated learning as a form of flexible learning... and accelerated degrees as a way to bring about efficiencies and reorganise the academic year” (2017, p.5). They also found that when considering the accelerated learning literature there were a number of difficulties:

Table 3: Accelerated Learning (adapted from Pollard et. al., 2017, p.5)

Factor	Analysis
...”no consistent terminology;	This does provide a major challenge for universities that are used to recruiting students through a central and national service (UCAS) to a relatively fixed three-year, two-term model.
...conflation of acceleration with intensification (a difference in learning approach/methodology);	In most cases the intensity of learning refers to the adoption of a third term rather than a more intense week recognising that extra-curricular activities may not be as likely during 45-week university year as opposed to the traditional 30-week model.
...acceleration can also apply to other levels of education; and	Much of the literature applies to students with special educational needs at high school level in the USA.
...some courses appear accelerated because they allow for alternative entry points/exemptions from part of the course.”	Entry points in January as well as September are still relatively uncommon and often not accelerated. Exemptions do not qualify as acceleration for the purposes of this thesis.

They went on to list the “special initiative funded” accelerated learning projects from 1992 onwards:

- Accelerated and Intensive Routes to HE (AIRs) from 1992 to 1995
- Extended Academic Year pilots (EAYs) from 1995 to 1998
- Flexible Learning Pathfinder (FLPs) pilots from 2005 to 2010

(2017, p.5)

The programmes recruited through the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the number of flexible courses available, the number of courses offering more traditional routes and the number of degree apprenticeships is perhaps an indication of the relative market size in each category. This is important in respect of the foundation condition for accelerated, work-based courses of a reachable target market.

With over two decades of initiatives it is perhaps surprising that the number of accelerated programmes is still a tiny proportion of the courses available overall. On the UCAS website out of 269 courses for Advertising, there were only five courses offering some form of flexibility of study from three providers, but no accelerated options (UCAS, 2018). Until the availability and awareness of more flexible routes reaches a critical mass and while the recruitment of students is overwhelmingly through UCAS it is perhaps not so surprising. A search of the UCAS website reveals some special information for students looking for flexible routes that focuses on distance learning, work-based learning and blended learning but doesn't mention accelerated courses (UCAS, 2018). By digging a little deeper, some details of accelerated courses are provided under "Types of undergraduate course", interestingly the benefits of these types of courses are not covered and there is no way of easily finding a list of accelerated courses available whereas the emerging market for degree apprenticeships is incorporated (though only eight level 4 apprentices were available under 'marketing'). This may suggest that flexibility is more difficult to closely define, categorise and label compared to apprenticeships that have a clear and improving brand image:

"This is a two-year, fast-track degree course offered by some universities/colleges in some subject areas. It is more intensive and

demanding than a typical degree, because you have to cover the same course content in a shorter period – however, it may suit those students who are prepared for the workload.” (UCAS, 2018).

Accelerated learning has formed part of Government policy in encouraging more flexible approaches to higher education to provide greater choice. However, the market for these courses is fragmented, certainly in comparison to the traditional three-year degrees aimed squarely at school/college leavers applying through UCAS. Though market research has been suggested in order to understand more, nothing substantial has taken place. Given the nature of flexible courses, it would be difficult to adopt a standardized approach to marketing. This means that a carefully targeted communications strategy would be required in order to raise awareness of these courses. Some research has been carried out in terms of the students likely to participate in such courses with a higher proportion that might be classified as widening participation, have more focus on attaining a degree in a short space of time, may have more drive to succeed and have an open mind to distance learning and work experience. When developing accelerated courses, the need to communicate to the target audience is an important precursor. Even then targeting those potential students on these niche courses may be difficult and expensive. Many of the pilot programmes developed have since proved to be unsustainable and much of this development might contribute to the more tangible higher apprenticeships that also benefit from government-backed communications programmes for potential students and employers.

The study covers the development and delivery of two accelerated, work-based learning programmes. The particular application of accelerated learning adopted in the programmes added an additional teaching period each year. Each trimester was the same length as a ‘standard’ semester (15 weeks long) but with a period of work-based learning in the workplace for the final eight weeks in level four and five and 10 weeks at level six. The whole of level four was shared with the traditional degree, one trimester at level five was shared with the same cohort before the classroom teaching moving to a one-to-one, flipped classroom approach at level six (at this point the student had moved ahead of the traditional cohort (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Programme Development and Delivery Timeline.

Development					Accelerated Delivery					
Planning		Validation			Level 4		Level 5		Level 6	
Bid	Design	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Sem 1	Sem 2	Sem 3	Sem 1	Sem 2	Sem 3
Sept 2013 - Mar 2014	Mar 2014 - Sept 2014	Sept 2014 - Sept 2015			Sept 2015-Aug 2016			Sept 2016-Aug 2017		

Traditional Delivery							
Level 4		Vac	Level 5		Vac	Level 6	
Sem 1	Sem 2		Sem 1	Sem 2		Sem 1	Sem 2
Sept 2015-May 2016			Sept 2016-May 2017			Sept 2017-May 2018	

1.7 Summary

The context for the study covered the broader HE environment, driven by government policy in the three related areas of productivity, skills, apprenticeships and flexible learning (particularly accelerated learning). The University mission, structure and strategies were described to provide a background to the particular institutional context. Finally the funding and development of the accelerated, work-based programmes were discussed.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

A wide range of educational research literature informs the study including work-based learning theory developed by Brennan and Little (1996); Harvey, Geall and Moon (1998); and, Boud and Solomon (2001). Overall these policy and theoretical frameworks provide the context for the study in helping to understand the experiences of the three partners in socially-constructed, multi-mode learning of this kind.

2.2 Modes of Learning

The study is concerned with the relationship between industry and higher education in enabling learning to take place in a dynamic environment. Such a context might enable distinctive forms of learning, combining transmissive learning associated with didactic teaching approaches with constructed learning through experiences and the collaborative potential of the programmes facilitating co-construction of knowledge. Many of the studies into co-construction (Vygotsky, 1962) have taken place in secondary education. These studies have covered making meaning (Anning, 1998), collaboration (Dagenais et al. 2008) and knowledge-building, while within higher education the research has focused on disciplinary knowledge (Nerland, 2012), individual cognition (Marton and Saljo, 1976), preparation for knowledge-driven professional work (Stankovic, 2009; Zimbardi and Myatt, 2012) and complex knowledge-based problems (Damsa, 2013). However, research that considers social learning within the workplace as part of a degree programme is more limited.

The social theories of learning that are a central concern of the study have emerged through the work of Vygotsky (first published in the 1930s but more widely known through the re-print of 1962), recognising the interdependence of the individual and society, learning as an active and dynamic process and refined by Valsiner and others to recognise a “three-part analytic unit - consisting of *constructing* person, *structured* environment, and *purposive* social others” (Valsiner, 1996, p.65). This

implies a collaborative relationship between actors in a social situation, with the potential for more symmetrical power relations between the parties than might be the case in other contexts:

“...we can observe the normal hierarchical organization of power relations between the participants, where asymmetric distribution of roles is the norm and the symmetric one an exception.” (Valsiner, 1996, p.77).

This informs the study both in terms of power relationships and the potential for agency of learners in the construction of learning; the development, interpretation and representation of reflective narratives by the research participants; and, student-led or managed aspects of the curriculum.

Broadly, there are three main forms of learning, didactic (teacher-centred and transmissive), Socratic (encouraging dialogic debate) or more facilitative approaches (towards student-managed learning). The emergence of experiential and problem-based learning and other active approaches have been increasingly recognised as providing different types of insights unavailable in other modes of learning, often identified through reflective practice. Reflective learning was first identified by Kolb (1984) who found that individuals could reflect on their experiences selectively through a cyclical process of concrete experience, observation and reflection, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. Many others have gone on to refine this model but whichever model is chosen, reflective practice is an important way of crystallising the learning gained through experience.

Flexible learning in the workplace may take this experiential approach further, placing the student in a situation that may be more open, complex and dynamic in terms of the potential for experiences of learners, one that is difficult to control or replicate. Rather than providing a scenario or a simulation, the student may be required to respond to relatively open-ended social situations and identify reflexively aspects of the practice that can be reflected upon and for learning to be recognised. Unlike didactic approaches, constructive learning is not “a stimulus-

response phenomenon, it requires self-regulation and the building of conceptual structures through reflection and abstraction” (von Glaserfeld in Steffe and Gale, 1995, p.10), in this the student begins to manage their own learning, “in an interpretive, recursive, nonlinear building process by active learners with their surround” (Fosnot and Perry, 2005, p.34), placing “more emphasis still on the learners role in creating knowledge and new thinking” (Lucas, 2010), “being able to convert and apply abstract and general principles (acquired through instruction) in meaningful and responsible acting in life (acquired through construction)” (Scheer, et al., 2012, p.10). The combination of theory learned in the classroom with practice in the workplace brought together in a reflective phase where the student identifies concepts and theories. Engeström proposes another approach that combines acquisitive (essentially an individual activity) and participative learning (a community of practice). He calls this expansive learning and suggests the following dimensions:

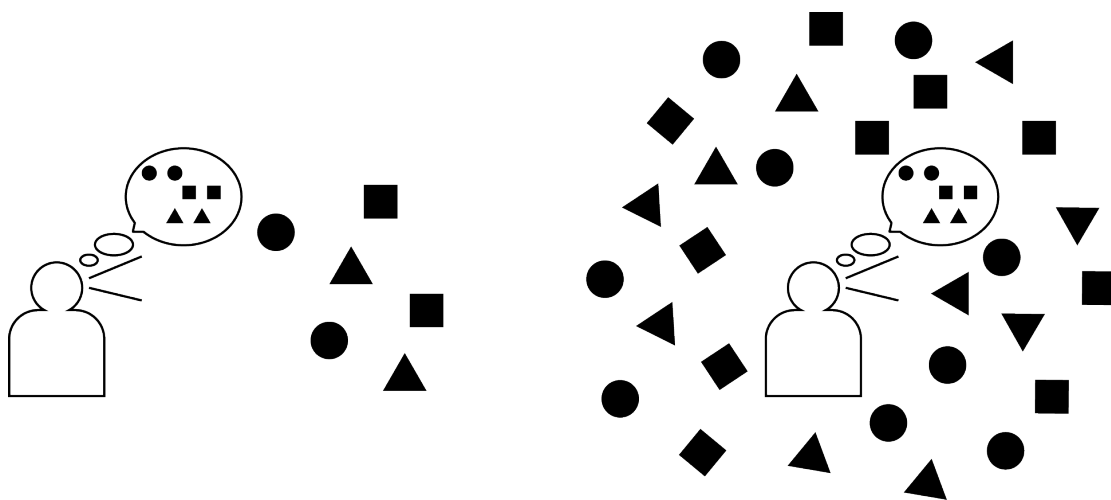
Table 4: Expansive Learning (adapted from Engeström in Malloch, 2011).

Factor	Analysis
Is learning primarily a process that transmits and preserves culture or a process that transforms and creates culture?	Perhaps this also relates to the acquisition of cultural capital within an individual student that draws together both the transmission and the transformation of culture within the context of a workplace.
Is learning primarily a process of vertical improvement along some uniform scales of competence or horizontal movement, exchange and hybridization between different cultural contexts and standards of competence?	This may present a broad difficulty in it is difficult to escape uniform scales of competence and improvement within a quality-managed context. Even the emerging apprenticeship standards are very much focused on establishing competencies related to specific role and for the outcomes to be independently verified.
Is learning primarily a process of acquiring and creating empirical knowledge and concepts or a process that leads to the formation of theoretical knowledge and concepts?	This is perhaps where the role for the student in co-production is most clearly identified but which remains an intangible outcome.

This multi-dimensional approach “puts the primacy on communities as learners, on transformation and creation of culture, on horizontal movement and hybridization, and on the formation of theoretical concepts” (2010, p.74). As such it suggests a symmetrical, democratic model for learning.

Scheer (see Figure 3 below) provides a visual illustration of the social situation for the construction of knowledge. The figure on the left represents “empirical realism: observing a given reality independent from oneself”, suggesting that an individual might learn through observing an external phenomenon and on the right “constructionism: the observer as part of his environment and the reality he chooses” (Scheer, 2011) where the learner is embedded within the social situation.

Figure 3: The Learner and his Environment (Scheer, 2011).



In drawing these together, a comprehensive framework might be suggested:

- Curriculum to promote experiential learning and for learning outcomes and assessment to reflect the importance of social-constructivist and reflective practice
- Individualised learning contract negotiated with student and employer as part of a community of learning, acknowledging the importance of the learning organisation (reflecting the impact of the organisation on the student and vice versa).
- Memorandum of understanding, reflecting the needs of student, employer and institution including agreed resources and responsibilities

- Definition of actual and online sites of experience or engagement spaces
- Student induction into social constructivist learning approaches

2.3 Work-based and Experiential Learning

Work-based and experiential learning has been considered by many authors who may use slightly different definitions and terminology. Harvey, Geall and Moon provide a generally accepted definition of work experience “as a period of work that is designed to encourage reflection on the experience and to identify the learning that comes from the working” (1998, pp.1). This clearly identifies that the potential for learning through reflection on the experience of practice is key. This definition was developed by Boud and Soloman (2004, p.4):

“WBL is the term being used to describe a class of university programmes that bring together universities and work organisations to create new learning opportunities in workplaces.”

This definition is more concerned with the partners engaged in designing and delivering such programmes. The potential for learning and knowledge-creation was taken further during the extensive work taking place at Middlesex University that grew into the National Centre for Work Based Learning Partnerships (Garnett et al. (2009, p.4):

“A learning process which focuses university level critical thinking upon work, (paid or unpaid) in order to facilitate the recognition, acquisition and application of individual and collective knowledge, skills and abilities, to achieve specific outcomes of significance to the learner, their work and the university”.

This definition emphasises the potential for WBL to deliver benefits to all partners in the undertaking in relation to knowledge generation, change and development for the individual and the organisation such that WBL, it was argued, constituted a field of study and not just a mode of learning (Portwood, 2000; Gibbs and Garnett, 2007).

Garnett (2016, p.307) looked back at this as a “paradigm shift”, signalling “a more “trans-disciplinary approach to WBL”, he goes on to define the knowledge creation as being “unsystematic, socially constructed and... action focused”.

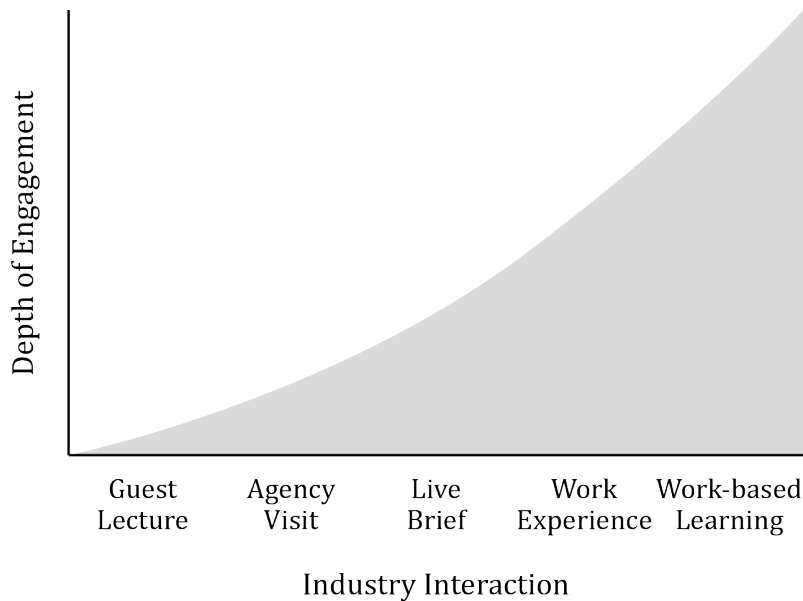
These real-world experiences can provide the opportunity for students to “start to realize individual skills, model professional behaviours, build résumés, clarify career goals and prepare for future employment” (Yoo and Morris, 2015, pp.5). All of which provide a strong foundation for self-promotion and contribute to focusing on and employability. This potential was recognised in 2000 by the then Secretary of State for Education and Employment who called “for all higher education students to have a minimum period of work experience” (Little, 2006, pp.2). In terms of the organisation of work-based learning, Little emphasises the importance of access. If work-based learning is so important, then there needs to be equal access to it... some students are not well placed to take advantage of work-based learning opportunities.” (2006, pp.13). She goes on to suggest “care needs to be taken, when choosing an approach to work-based learning, not to disadvantage some groups of students inadvertently.” The importance of social justice in providing equality of access to work experience is relevant to the related fields of advertising and public relations where the acquisition of appropriate social capital is instrumental in providing opportunities for entry into the industry and subsequent progression. While the programmes provided appropriate contexts to facilitate the acquisition of social capital, participation was still reliant on the student passing an interview with the staff team and negotiating a recruitment process including interview and other assessments.

Hesmondhalgh (2010, p.231) defines creative labour in the terms of ‘good work in the cultural industries’ the features of which he concludes concern the concepts of ‘autonomy and self-realisation’. These concepts and the ‘high level of emotional investment in creative labour’ tend to encourage a ‘self-commodification process’ (Ursell, 2000, p.807 in Hesmondhalgh, 2010, p.232). Whereby agents takes actions that they see increase their employability in creative roles with assumed high levels of ‘self-realisation’ (closely associated with creativity) leading ‘only to self-exploitation’ (p.233) and hardly ‘good work’. In terms of autonomy, creative

industry firms might seem to offer ‘openness, cooperation and self-management’ (ibid in Hesmondhalgh, 2010, p.233) but this is illusory in making the distinction between work and leisure time blurred, encouraging self-imposed long working hours.

Other forms of experiential learning often used in higher education that incorporate elements of, or attempt to simulate, aspects of the workplace include the use of “live briefs”, whereby students are taught and assessed in a real world context; industry visits and guest lectures (Haley and Blakeman, 2008, pp.25); more formal team teaching, where an academic and an industry professional jointly deliver the module; and through participation in competitions (See Figure 4 below). All of these are commonly used in specialist courses that tend to be developed by universities with a vocational focus. Examples include the annual Young Creative Network and the Design and Art Direction (D&AD) New Blood event, where students from creative industries courses present work to be considered for an award aligned to the same principles at their professional awards, often linked to assessments, in response to live briefs. D&AD is a charity with the aim of supporting the development of early career practitioners in advertising through a series of programmes including their annual three-day competition, offering students the opportunity to win a coveted pencil award, very much in line with their professional counterparts. This type of activity was first developed in the early years of advertising education in America where the key industry bodies have a philanthropic remit to nurture new talent. Brennan and Little (1996) discuss the combination of instructional and constructed learning ranging from “short visits to industry, through placements, to employment-based learning programmes.” (p.6).

Figure 4: Student Industry Interaction Continuum, Berry (2018)



Quite often student experience of work is not directly related to the field of study and is often a by-product of the practical need to earn money. Greenbank and Hepworth found that working class “students applied for term-time jobs on the basis of wage levels and convenience, rather than the extent to which they were relevant to their future career aspirations” (2008, pp.24). This is important as not only does the student have limited opportunities to develop specific vocational skills but also the potential for developing cultural and social capital relevant to the field of practice is diminished.

The simple phrase ‘linking learning to the work role’ can be viewed in many ways. For example, a project at the University of Leeds discussed by Brennan and Little (1996) suggested the following features of work-based learning:

- performance or task-related, particularly where circumstances are changing;
- problem-based, usually associated with tackling problems of production, design or management;
- autonomously managed, with learners expected to take a large measure of responsibility to ensure they learn from their work activities;

- team-based, in that tackling problems often requires effective co-operation between people with different roles and expertise;
- concerned with performance enhancement;
- innovation centred, which creates opportunities for learning and providing experience of managing change

(Brennan and Little, 1996, p.3)

As such, the Leeds project team clearly identified work-based learning as being derived from the experience of undertaking work activities. The implications of autonomy in student-led aspects along with the instructional and experiential learning within such programmes might contribute to multi-modal learning promoting student agency with “an interaction of academic study and practical applications such that each serves to illuminate and stimulate the other” (Crick Report, quoted in Nixon, 1990). This is important in relation to the study in that the blend of constructed and didactic aspects of the curriculum is critical to its cohesion and success. It is also very important that all partners are aware of this complexity and their respective responsibilities to each other. In this respect the demands on the student, staff and workplace are multi-faceted. This context is described by Brennan and Little:

“At the heart of learning through work... is the process of doing a job of work, undertaking a particular task or function. The learning derived from that experience, provided it can be evidenced and assessed is the basis for many work based learning developments within higher education. Such experiential learning, which may be combined with instruction led learning (either delivered via in-company courses, or through university courses), both for purposes of reinforcement and extension, provides the main vehicle for work based learning programmes of study leading to higher education academic awards.” (Brennan and Little, 1996, p.4).

Here the importance of experiential learning is highlighted as being the primary vehicle for learning to be supported by facilitative and didactic approaches. As such

this provides a very different context for learning than the student may be used to and their understanding of this aspect will be crucial in its success. Traditionally reflective assessments are used to draw out experiences but here the experiential component is central.

More broadly, Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993) identified the following qualities of learning from experience in table 5 below:

Table 5: Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993) in Brennan and Little (1996, p.42).

Factor	Analysis
Experience is the foundation of, and the stimulus for, learning	So many of the experiences that constitute learning are unplanned or emergent. How can this be accommodated in a curriculum design? How can this be measured through assessment?
Learners actively construct their experience	What opportunities can we create for students to make this tangible?
Learning is a holistic process	Can this be reflected in responsibilities of parties, learning activities and assessment?
Learning is socially and culturally constructed	Can we help students understand how they learn?
Learning is influenced by the socio-emotional context in which it occurs"	Can we help students reflect upon these aspects?

This process is highlighted by Scheer, Noweski and Meinel (n.d.): "being able to convert and apply abstract and general principles (acquired through instruction) in meaningful and responsible acting in life (acquired through construction)." (p.10). This might suggest that the demands on the student are more complex in that they would need to be able to recognise and understand theoretical concepts, go on to apply them in a very pro-active way in a practical environment where they may not have the direct support of a facilitative tutor before reflecting upon these experiences, making sense, inferring meaning and proposing their own theoretical perspectives.

Brennan and Little (1993) propose the following typologies for work-based learning:

- A. Curriculum framework controlled by HEI, content designed with employers - learner primarily a full-time student;

- B. Curriculum framework controlled by HEI and professional body, and content designed with employers - learner primarily a full-time student;
- C. Curriculum framework controlled by HEI, content designed with employer - learner primarily full-time employee;
- D. Curriculum framework controlled by HEI, focus and content designed primarily by learner - learner primarily full-time employee.

(p.52).

Within this framework the programme that is the focus for the study fits most closely into type B. However, the distinction between employee and student roles can be less straightforward and at various times the student's primary role is as an employee. This would be a similar situation within an apprenticeship where the student is primarily an employee and the context for their participation as a student (apprentice) would be detailed in a contract.

The relationship between the workplace and university as the site of learning challenges the role of the academy and as organisations become increasingly engaged in learning "it might become more difficult to claim a special role for universities." (Brennan and Little, 1996, p.20). But this also provides the potential for the development of deeper relationships and partnerships that may the potential to draw industry and educational practice closer to mutual benefit.

Boud and Solomon (2001) suggest that this framework offers the possibility of challenging traditional instructional approaches offering "programmes which depart substantially from the disciplinary framework of university study and which develop new pedagogies for learning" (p.4), going on to identify the following characteristics (see table 6 below):

Table 6: Work-based Learning (Boud and Solomon, 2001, p.5).

Factor	Analysis
A partnership to foster learning	This concept recognises the co-production aspects for the three parties, student, employer and institution.
Learners are employees and have different needs that change over time	These temporal aspects also apply to the other partners.
Programme derived from needs of workplace – work is the curriculum and industry uses and generates knowledge for different purposes and ends	Might this suggest the needs of the workplace over those of the student and institution? Is this realistic or desirable? What is the relationship between needs and learning?
Prior learning is recognised	And this learning through experience needs to be recognised in an on-going basis.
Learning projects undertaken in the workplace with framework and capstone “standard” units	What is the proportion? Can a unit be blended across employer and institution?
Education institution assesses learning outcomes of negotiated programmes	Suggests a deep understanding of the workplace needs and assessment of the social construction of learning by the student.

Such approaches may have benefits for all parties. For example, in recognising that this is a partnership with learning as a central concern provides a basis for contracts and memoranda of understanding that place a priority on learning. The definition of an employee is particularly important as that is where the potential for tension may arise. Is there a neat divide between the role of student and employee? Does the learning take place in either context? Perhaps the third point is harder to justify in that the programme would need to address all of the partners needs in order to be effective and that the needs of the workplace form one part of this. Admittedly, if the needs of the workplace are ignored it would be difficult to sustain the programme. The fourth point is a little vague. This may be formally through APEL. The concept of a capstone unit may relate to an over-arching module that sums up the rest of the course and has a specific industry context. Such modules are commonplace in American advertising education and the final synoptic assessment that completes a modern degree apprenticeship fulfils the same role. The blend between standard and workplace units is at the very heart of such programmes and the academic institution will always reserve the right to make the final assessments though there may be an important role for the employer during the process of assessment.

By working in partnership all parties may gain experience of different fields of practice with the potential for collaboration and other activities building on the foundation of the original relationship, not only extending the “knowledge and skills

of the individual, but to make a difference to the organisation". (Boud and Solomon, 2001, p.6). This process is more likely to be embedded within organisations with "the greatest resources to devote to learning and organisations that have staff appointed to promote and oversee training and development." (p.9). This is an important point and may limit the extent to which small or medium-sized businesses can engage effectively with work-based learning programmes. The resources required may be such that it is prohibitive. This also applies to apprenticeships whereby the large levy-paying organisations (with a turnover of £3m or more) have a vested interest in making the most of their 5% contribution (plus 10% on top from the government).

Perhaps because of the complex relationship between the workplace and university as sites of learning and the interplay between instructional and experiential (or constructed) learning it would be practically impossible (or desirable) to offer a standardised approach. This flexibility enables "the customisation of each partnership and learning programme... to cater for "different learners on "different pathways"." (Boud and Solomon, 2001, p.20). This offers particular challenges as the resources required to customise and manage individual programmes may be prohibitive. Universities are still very much geared towards the standardised approach to (particularly) undergraduate courses, recruiting through UCAS.

"...the structural arrangements, as well as the sequence of learning episodes, begin with the learners and their workplaces, and end with the university."
(Boud and Solomon, 2001, p.21)

Another key concept in this type of learning is that many of the practices, experiences and learnings that constitute the programme are co-produced (Boud and Solomon, 2001, p.21) and that the traditional roles for the student, workplace and university are challenged, resulting in "a radical shift in our assumptions about "legitimate" knowledge and learning" (p.19). This is often a particular challenge to the academic services departments responsible for quality. To summarise, work-based learning provides a complex but stimulating environment for learning. The relationship between formal didactic approaches and social constructivist

experiences is such that the potential for learning is great but that the needs of all partners need to be recognised. By placing the context for much of the learning the hegemony of the university as a place of learning is challenged and perhaps the last bastion of ownership is in the final assessment of work. This is one aspect that universities may be reluctant to relinquish. The resources required to develop effective programmes are such that organisations of a certain size and universities with relevant strategic interests may be best-placed to offer provision of this sort. As such, economies of scale may impose a larger granularity in that individualised learning may only be sustainable when applied uniformly to small cohorts.

Similarly, the learner may be required to “deal with the complexities of being both a worker and a learner...” (Boud and Solomon, 2001, p.31). This is perhaps taken further to require them to balance instructional delivery in the classroom with more complex constructivist approaches in the workplace, forms of learning that may be unfamiliar. To what extent are students expected to consider how they learn?

2.4 Flexible Pedagogies

The multi-mode learning offered in flexible programmes might include constructive learning, work-based learning, accelerated learning and requiring associated flexible pedagogies encompassing but not limited to instructional, acquisitive, participative (Sfard, 1998), facilitative, constructivist (von Glaserfeld in Steffe and Gale, 1995) and expansive (Engeström in Malloch, 2011) learning, particularly in the context of co-production and communities of practice. As Nahapiet and Goshall (1998) identified, these concepts are all concerned with the creation of intellectual capital in the combination of ‘different forms of knowledge’. ‘Practical, experience-based knowledge and theoretical knowledge derived from reflection and abstraction’. (Nahapiet and Goshall, 1998, p.246). In terms of the programmes, the knowledge derived from traditional didactic teaching of theory in classroom-led learning is first practically applied in the workplace and then theoretical knowledge created again through abstraction and reflection. All of this suggests a very active approach to learning and for the student to both understand this complexity in taking

responsibility for their learning and knowledge creation and for the staff team in taking this complexity into account in the pedagogical aspects.

Work-based learning can provide challenges to conventional pedagogies and invites different approaches. Chief amongst these are constructivist approaches. While balancing instruction and construction, at the same time the needs of all partners are complex with unconventional learning activities taking place in the workplace and the university sharing many of the aspects of teaching and learning while often being required to prove equivalence with traditional delivery. Some theorists (Collis and Moonen, 2001; Scheer, et al., 2012; Kettle, 2013 and Gordon, 2014) have proposed frameworks in response to this environment including the development of individualised learning plans/contracts, learning and work-related objectives. All of these aspects are dealt with more fully later in the chapter.

Hammersley et al. (2013) sets out what they see as the key differences between syllabus-structured and work-based learning:

Table 7: Comparison of work-based learning and structured learning (Hammersley et al., 2013).

Syllabus-structured	Work-based
Determined in advance	Emergent
Tutor designed	Learner-centred
Knowledge authority clear	Knowledge authority contested
A defined package of learning	A varying learning journey

This is perhaps an important factor in the development of flexible programmes. Impacting on the role of the teaching team in supporting the flexible learner in terms of preparation time, development for learner-centred learning approaches, and the negotiation of individualised programmes of study and employer engagement (Hammersley et al. 2013). As these programmes are accelerated, there is also the additional concern of time management and balancing study with the demands of the workplace.

2.4.1 Facilitative

The over-arching aim is to recognise the needs of all partners, resulting in mutual benefits. Penn et al. (2005) in Basit (2015) identifies the needs of “a tripartite workplace learning relationship” to be influenced by their specific contexts as being “distinctive features of WBL”:

- Individual learners’ needs (influenced by their life plan)
- Employers’ needs (influenced by their business plan)
- Providers’ needs (influenced by their corporate plan)

Basit goes on to suggest that a basic need for students is to be able to manage their work (suggesting the alignment of the curriculum and work), for universities to ensure quality is maintained and for collaborative working to enable the improvement of programmes.

In order to capture the learning constructed from work-based activities, reflective practice is identified as being essential, particularly as part of the process to analyse how learning has taken place, an example would be a team briefing or team working situation within which the student has been an active participant but not directly associated with a specific unit, module or assessment. Staff too may require development and support to operate in this unfamiliar territory. While teaching on such programmes lecturers may find themselves being expected to take on a role as “facilitator in learning rather than an expert in a discipline” (Boud and Solomon, 2001, p.30), “increasingly more facilitative than didactic” (Lucas, 2010), requiring them to draw upon unfamiliar pedagogies “while at the same time being “lumbered” with the complex task of managing work experience opportunities, for which there may be little relief from teaching and little prospect of promotion.” (Harvey, Geall and Moon, 1998). This has implications for the make up of University staff teams working on such programmes. A willingness to prioritise this link tutor role over, for example, research might not fit with personal development or academic workload planning and institutional priorities.

In a report written for the HEA, Kettle points out that the balance of “learning outcomes with individual activities matched to work-related objectives, and personalised learning matched to employer needs” was important for success but “that flexible learning is conceptualised differently from the point of view of different stakeholders” (Kettle, 2013) so that a mechanism might need to be put in place to ensure effective co-production of learning and other cooperative and co-dependent facets of a community of practice to facilitate positive outcomes for all parties and programme sustainability.

2.4.2 Constructive and Reflective

Kettle goes on to identify that constructivist approaches are founded on “problem-based learning; learning from practice and experiences and reflecting on those experiences... with the growing use of new technologies”. This might provide an opportunity for ongoing engagement with course-related materials through the utilization of a wide range of engagement functions of virtual learning environments that enrich the blended learning mix. In many cases academic staff may be unclear of either the nature of those experiences or the likely outcomes and that “the work-based learning becomes the field of study, where work itself is the focus of learning and inquiry” (Kettle, 2013).

Lucas et al. link flexible pedagogies directly to one of Dearing’s key skills, “A truly flexible pedagogy for employer engagement will teach people how to learn rather than how to understand a particular discipline, if the ultimate aim is to ensure that what is learned theoretically in one context is applied effectively in another and that learners are facilitated to develop their own methods of doing this” (OECD 2012; Lucas et al. 2012). This is not to say that how students learn through experiential and problem-based learning in the workplace and in combination with more didactic or traditional classroom situations is straightforward or necessarily well understood, “Portwood (2007) argues for an epistemology for work-based learning defining the distinctive nature of the learning that is derived in this way.” (Kettle, 2013).

“There is little evidence however, that evidence-informed pedagogical debates have been at the forefront of enquiry about activity, although there is a growing community of practice among teachers. The pedagogies deployed for work-based learning have been well-articulated but the effectiveness of approaches requires more evaluation.” (Kettle, 2013).

A range of structures have been proposed for developing flexible pedagogies for workplace learning:

Table 8: Flexible pedagogies for workplace learning.

Author(s)	Factor
Collis and Moonen (2001)	entry requirements
	time
	content
	instructional approach
	resources, delivery and logistics
Kettle (2013)	reflects employer requirements;
	supports the development of workplaces as learning organisations; and
	ensures appropriate quality controls and standards are maintained.
Scheer, et al. (2012)	involvement of students;
	experience space;
	balance of instruction and construction.
Gordon (2014)	personalised learning
	support for synchronous and asynchronous activities
	flexible learning
	gamification
	online learning
	blended learning

The formal entry requirements of such programmes may require interviews at a time when universities are making unconditional offers. Participation offers a high level of student autonomy and personalisation but this will need to be understood by the student. The development of content requires more complex thought in how theory, practice and reflection might be facilitated utilising a range of instructional approaches from didactic to facilitative, theoretical to practical, instructional to constructive but also employing more flexible pedagogies including the flipped classroom (Bergman and Sams, 2012) where material is introduced through online resources prior to the student-led face-to-face session where concepts and ideas are discussed in the classroom. With much learning being carried out in the workplace,

online resources and communication will need to be available to supplant face-to-face contact. These have implications for the resources required in delivering such programmes. As partners, the employer requirements need to be acknowledged along with outcomes supporting knowledge-sharing within the organisation but potentially with the University to create relational capital. Contractual aspects need to be taken into account the expectations and responsibilities of each party.

2.4.3 Standards

So far the literature review has mainly concerned academic staff and industry practitioners (including mentors). Wrapping around the taught curriculum is the quality and standards process that covers the development of programmes and the assessment of work. Where the traditional workplace may be unused to being a site of learning in such a direct way, equally, the institutional systems, processes and departments that usually follow a very traditional approach may also be confronted with a range of circumstances that fall outside of their expectations in terms of what constitutes “knowledge”, a range of challenging “pedagogical practices” and even the “identity of the university” (Boud and Solomon, 2001, p.26). Potentially this may inhibit the development of such programmes or attract “a degree of scrutiny of it by the university and by academics who are concerned about the quality and standards of university awards” and their “equivalence” (p.22). There are perhaps two key moments where this becomes critical:

“Contestation between parties occurs on two main occasions: at the time when the acceptance of a programme is being pursued and at the time when the assessment of the learning outcomes from that programme is being determined.” (Boud and Solomon, 2001, p.46)

The course approval process can be formal, detailed and developmental in nature. Often taking many months with the involvement of academic services and quality departments requiring academic teams to prepare detailed documents covering the learning outcomes, curriculum design, course structure and taking into account marketing research and other resources requirements. When work-based learning

is introduced this process becomes more complex and often falling outside of accepted processes and procedures. This requires a more flexible approach and a degree of interpretation. This may tend to introduce an extra degree of scrutiny and critique with the intention of ensuring adherence to standards and robustness. The higher the degree of flexibility the more difficult it is to take them through this process. It may also be that a range of additional documents are required taking into account the involvement of employers which may include a contract or memorandum of understanding, an employer handbook and perhaps guidance on mentoring and so on.

2.5 Capital Creation

In order to understand more about the outcomes of the experiences and outcomes of students and other participants in the study a method was required to help identify change and development. It was helpful to provide a baseline to gauge change that might be subtle and the method would need to get beneath the surface.

2.5.1 Social Capital

Social capital was first proposed relating to communities (Jacobs, 1965) while (Granovetter, 1973) identified that 'weak ties' within social networks may have very positive qualities compared to societies with strong ties being, before being considered in relation to human capital (made up of knowledge, skills and capabilities Coleman, 1988), and economics (Baker, 1990). Bourdieu (1986) emphasised how these social connections and networks related to resources, power relations in society, 'cultural capital' and 'financial capital'. His ideas are explored further in the next section. Putnam (1995) used the term to explain how American society was in decline because of a decrease in participation in clubs and societies, particularly in relation to 'trust'. He also introduced the idea of 'bonding capital' (relating to strong family ties for example) and 'bridging capital' (between different social groups) that seem to build on Granovetter's concepts. Woolcock (2001) added 'linking capital' describing the links between different strata of society, relating to power.

These ideas have been taken forward to consider how social capital and intellectual capital are related. Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), (building on work by Schumpeter, 1934 and Moran and Ghoshal, 1996) proposed that knowledge is created through combination and exchange (of knowledge and experience) and that a number of factors needed to be in place: opportunity; the potential to create value; motivation; and what they called 'combination capability' in order to capitalise given the first three dimensions. They went on to propose three dimensions of social capital; relational (trust, identification and obligation), cognitive (shared ambition, vision and values) and structural (strength and quantity of ties between actors) (as described by Carey et al, 2011, p.278) which have the potential to create intellectual capital and provide organisational advantage. Carey et al. (2011, p.286) applied this model, particularly the relational dimension, to the buyer-supplier dyad and found that social capital was the 'relational glue of buyer-supplier exchange through facilitating cooperation and collaboration' and that by understanding the interplay of these dimensions, organisations could seek to manage and leverage these relationships. They go on to suggest that this creation of capital among organisations explains 'the relative success, and indeed occurrence, of industrial clusters' (p.18). Examples in the creative industries include areas of London, Brighton which has 'drawn on the supply of creative entrepreneurs, a skilled workforce, networking systems for sharing knowledge and... appropriate clients' (Brighton Fuse, 2013, p.2), Bournemouth and increasingly Southampton. This aspect of social capital theory is relevant to the relationship between the employer and the provider in terms of day-to-day collaboration and also the development of more formal instruments such as memoranda of understanding that seek to clarify and solidify partnerships in more tangible ways.

2.5.2 Habitus

Pierre Bourdieu developed interconnected concepts concerned with power relationships between individuals, organisations and wider society. Moving between different social settings is an important aspect of the research, Bourdieu categorised these as fields, each within a defined set of rules or doxa. For the study the key fields are time in higher education and the transition into industry. The extent to which an

individual “fits in” to a particular social setting is defined by Bourdieu’s concept of habitus. This complex theory cannot be directly accessed but is indicated by an individual’s acquisition of capital (economic – financial resources; social – networks, connections, bridging and bonding; and cultural – understanding how to behave in different social contexts) and their dispositions to think and behave in particular ways. The habitus is influenced by upbringing, (primary socialisation) related to class and relatively fixed, and added to by secondary habitus through education and is the “strategy generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations” (Bourdieu, 1977, p.72). When entering a new field, the individuals’ habitus has a bearing on how they find their place, their relationship with other agents and subsequent progression.

Habitus relates to the functioning of individuals and their engagement with social structures through their ‘dispositions’ to take certain actions. This is determined by the interplay between different forms of capital. Bourdieu saw social capital from a resource perspective “the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.” (Bourdieu, in Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 119) and “is integral to the pursuit of the successful creative career” (McLeod, et al., 2011, p.116). This builds on Vygotsky’s social learning theory and also relates to Lave and Wenger’s (1991) concepts of situated learning and communities of practice where novices acquire social capital by sharing knowledge and collaborating to eventually legitimise their participation in the field of practice.

McLeod, et.al (2009) carried out research that applies Bourdieu’s concepts to the advertising industry. They observed that the social capital accumulated by students from the wealthy middle class meant that an advertising “career was theirs for the taking” (2009, pp.1025). By contrast, they found that the middle class or working class participants had to endure “considerable periods of financial hardship between placements and unemployment”. However, once “in the game” career progression was far less reliant on class and upbringing, creative teams from different backgrounds having a distinct advantage in generating a ‘creative tension’.

Within this study there were 32 participants reflecting a broad age range but it is unclear how participants' class distinctions were made. Was a 'scale' used? Did they self-categorize? Given the broad age range of participants, there is a sense that the centre of gravity of the study was quite distantly in the past when it came to earlier life experiences and college (Bucks/Watford) – perhaps the snowballing technique exacerbated this through closed networks (strong ties)? Is there a suggestion that working class creatives bring craft skills (p1030)? Overall there is a lack of critique of class definitions and a suggestion that working class creatives' strength is in being close to populist taste, while middle and upper class creatives had "good taste" (p1031). Working class – visual. Wealthy middle class – bookish (P1031).

They suggest that in some senses, entering into the industry and subsequent progression are likened to an informal apprenticeship "novices learned on the job by observing their peers interacting with agency and media personnel, clients and other creative specialists." (McLeod, et al., 2011, p.123), but with "an absence of structures that facilitate smooth career development and progression (McLeod, et al., 2009; Nixon, 2003)" with "the gradual construction of an identity and learning to talk within a practice (rather than about it) that allows the novice to become part of a community." (McLeod, et al., 2011, p.115). Featherstone quotes Bourdieu in proposing that this group may "adopt a learning mode towards life... [who] always wishes to become more than he/she is" (2007, p.44). This might suggest that these dispositions are either present within the habitus of the individual as they enter the field, possibly acting as an informal barrier to entry for those lacking this quality, or that participating in the culture of the agency modifies the habitus of the individual as they progress (or presumably decide that the industry isn't for them and leave).

2.5.3 Communities of Practice

Wenger (1998) conceptualised a community of practice as being a simple social system and a complex social system being made up of interrelated communities of practice (see table 9 below). Through collaborative working and sharing expertise individuals have the potential to acquire social capital. Organisations also have the benefit of sharing knowledge and building expertise. So the individual and

community benefit through situated learning, that is through social interaction and that novices may participate in the periphery of practice through situated learning.

Table 9: The new model of learning proposed in Situated Learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

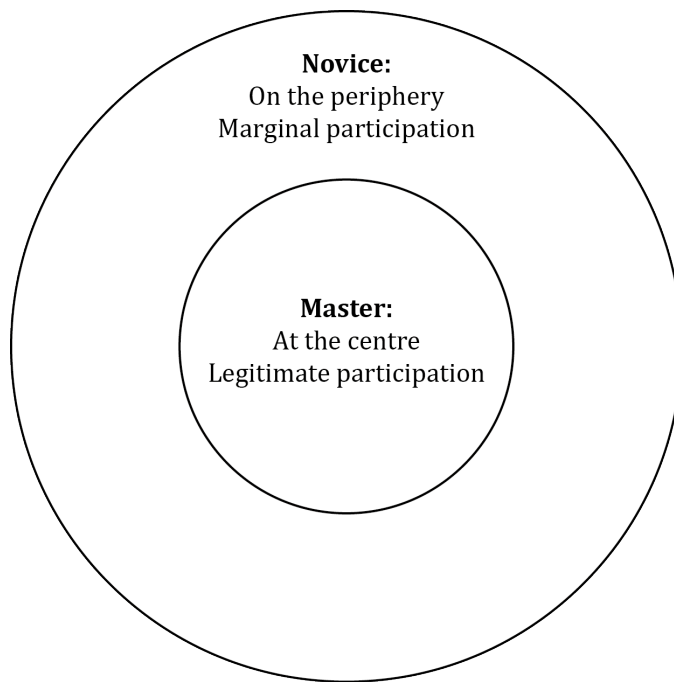
Old model (cognitive)	New model (constructivism, situationism)
Teaching	Learning
Classroom	In Situ
By teaching	By observation (therefore social)
Individualised pupil learns from teacher	Learning from other learners (therefore social)
Planned in a curriculum	Informal, driven by the task (though elements of the apprenticeship are formal)
Learning is a mechanistic, cerebral process of transmission and absorption of ideas	Learning is as much about understanding how to behave as what to do, and is an identity change

An aim of the accelerated course is to provide students with the opportunity to acquire social capital through a community of practice such that they build knowledge and credibility through situated learning enabling routes for progression within an agency and by providing an environment where the student is aware of this process of learning (in any mode) that they may go on to develop a more pro-active, self-directed approach to learning that facilitates their entry into and progression within the industry. These concepts of communities of practice and active learning chime with contemporary agencies' desire to cultivate the learning organisation. A framework for this process is set out as follows:

Table 10: Communities of Practice (McLeod, et al., 2011, p.116)

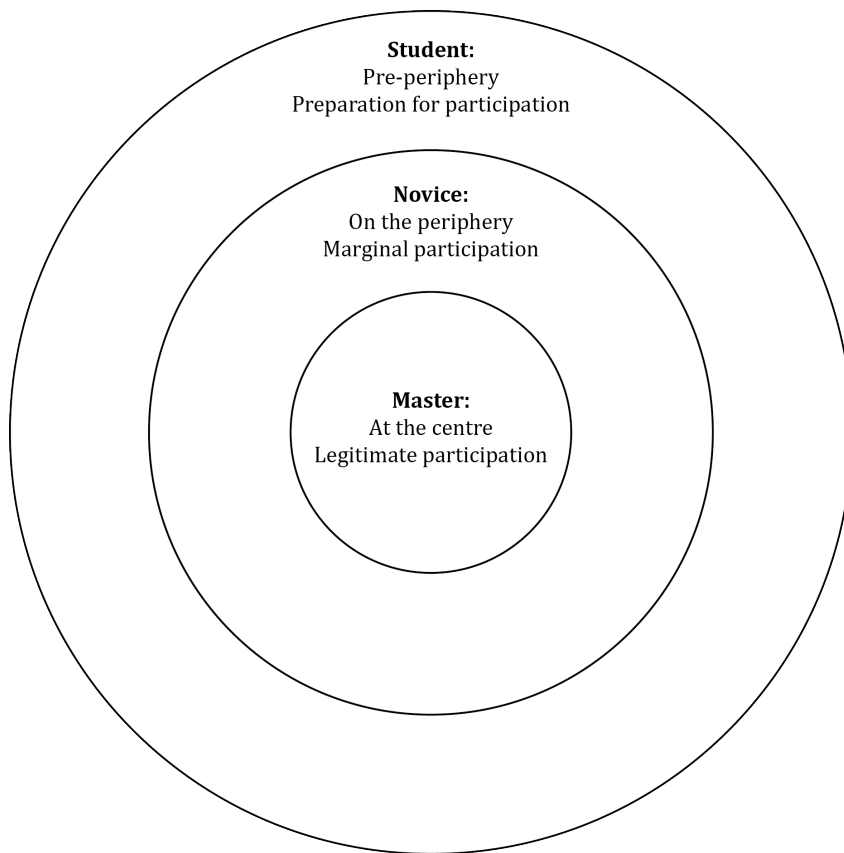
Factor	Analysis
...a fairly well bounded local entity with clear membership criteria;	Perhaps the identification of membership criteria is the most problematic here. Particularly the less tangible social capital aspects. Are (can?) these criteria incorporated in the outcomes and assessments?
...a single centre of supreme skill and authority, typically embodied in the master; and	Suggests on-going development after entry into practice Can "the master" work in partnership with the institution prior to entry?
...characterized by a centripetal movement, from the periphery towards the centre, from novice to master, and from marginal to fully legitimate participation.	This might suggest that a novice will enter the periphery and acquire mastery over time. What are the entry criteria (or barriers)?

Figure 5a: Career Trajectories adapted from McLeod, et al., 2011.



Given a professional career trajectory within which a novice acquires mastery over time and within which legitimacy of practice emerges, what are the criteria (or barriers) for entry into the periphery of the industry? Is the role of the institution recognised (or needed?) in preparing students for entry (or overcoming barriers)? Can a university work in partnership with industry to accelerate the process and to provide mutual benefits for all partners? Perhaps the distinction between novice and master is too simplistic as it implies the achievement of a certain status that is reflected in some tangible form (job title, remuneration, status) at a given time. These aspects are illustrated first in Figure 5a where McLeod, et al.'s ideas are visualised and adapted below in Figure 5b where the model is adapted to include the student in the pre-periphery phase. Whereas a university degree programme does offer incremental, measured development through learning, evidenced through assessment and certification. Might the model be taken further to incorporate the preparation offered by a specialist university course and at the same time, industry participate in the pre-periphery phase, perhaps blurring the boundary between pre-periphery and periphery?

Figure 5b: Career Trajectories adapted from McLeod, et al., 2011.



“The Chicago school identified three important components of “professional” trajectories:

- the situational context (the social environment);
- relational dimensions (represented by an individual’s interactions with others in the workplace); and
- chronology (the moving perspective of time).”

(McLeod, et al., 2011, p.117)

The main focus is on creative team roles in the creative team which overlooks the possibility of young practitioners’ moving across from (more plentiful and less competitive) account management roles. In the contemporary context, what defines a creative? The study is ambitious in covering career trajectories (spanning over 15 years of experience) and range of backgrounds within 48 participants split over

time. Is the distinction between service led and creative led agencies sound?

Somewhat contentious views on whether creativity can be taught (p120), limited to the teaching of “craft skills”. Assumption on pre-existing talent for art or words. The authors recognize that digital agencies are not represented.

There are three traditional roles in advertising: account management, media planning and creative team. This division of roles is not so clearly defined in many smaller and more digital agencies that organize themselves along agile principles, but still applies to many larger and established agencies with specialist departments. The creative team comprises an art director and copywriter who are often employed as a team having met each other at college (for example). The interplay between the creative team, the audience for their work and their respective social and cultural perspectives, it is suggested, informs “an intense dialogue, both internally (with an “implied reader”) and externally (with their partner), drawing on life experiences, social background (tastes, attitudes, norms, cultural capital) and habitus (Bourdieu, 1984; Kover, 1995; McLeod, et al., 2009).” (McLeod, et al., 2011, p.1117). This ability to relate directly to the target audience and to share elements of social capital might seem to be highly valuable to advertising agencies as they meet the needs of their clients and implies that it might be the benefit of agencies to draw widely and diversely on society to reflect the widest range of cultures, ““working-class” creatives may serve in a sense as intermediaries, spanning the cultural divide between social classes, and converting their origins, cultural and experiential reference points into cultural capital within the advertising industry” (McLeod, et al., 2009, p.1032). They go on to suggest that the “bridging and bonding forms” of social capital might also “bridge the gap between the privileged habitus of agency life and the cultural landscape of those occupying a different social position.” (p.1034).

Unpaid internships have been a fact of life for many of those entering the creative industries. McLeod, et al. describe this as “a precarious, penurious apprenticeship, likely to constitute a barrier to entry for “working-class” creatives in particular” (2009, p.1031), they go on to claim that this placement process would often take 18 months for even the “top college teams to reach their first permanent position,

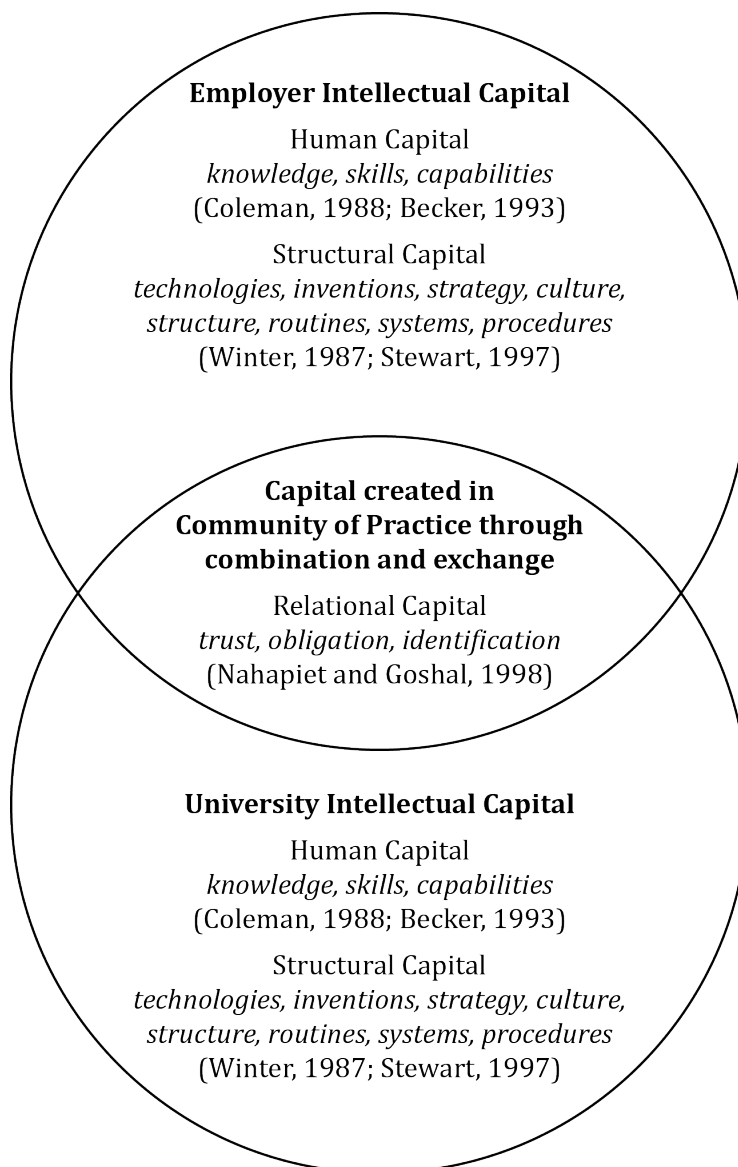
which placed them at the periphery of this community of practice” (2011, p.122). Emphasising the close-knit nature of the community, once established in the field, progression often relied on “word of mouth” (2011, p.124). It was thought that specialist courses might offer advice and networking advantages “the guidance of tutors who knew the industry, its working practices and key contacts” (McLeod, et al., 2009, p.1027). This provides an important driver in the development of the accelerated course in order to provide an alternative to the unpaid placement route into the industry. The study is intended to investigate this aspect of the course through the experiences of the participants.

Within work-based learning Garnett (2009) links intellectual capital to the development of knowledge within the wider group through structural capital (Stewart, 1997, p.108). That is technologies, inventions, strategy, culture, structures, routines, systems and procedures. Garnett (2009, p.229) goes on to link the structural capital of communities of practice in the transmission of tacit knowledge to an apprentice (resulting in the creation of human capital) and the sharing of explicit knowledge between departments to contribute to the learning organisation (creating social capital). He sees a key role for WBL to offer employers the opportunity to focus university intellectual and structural capital on their work (therefore building the intellectual capital of both organisations) rather than just “knowledge transfer from the university to the student” (p.235). This broadening of the concepts around capital has the potential to offer incentives to the university to develop WBL programmes not just to offer flexible courses to individual students but to broaden the benefits to the institution by enhancing and deepening partnerships and knowledge transfer opportunities with employers to improve the attractiveness and increase the value added by employing WBL in a strategic way. In this Basit, 2015, p.1007) suggests that “long-term relationships with large corporates needed an account director”. In the context of the programmes, the role of the link tutor may have some parallels with this.

The interplay between these forms of capital is presented in figure 6 below within which the knowledge creation of a community of practice comprises human capital, intellectual capital and social capital advantages for individuals and more widely if

the organisational structures are such that knowledge development and transfer is facilitated. Garnett suggests this is enhanced if the knowledge created is performative (that is, relating to social action), focused on organisational objectives (this suggests a high degree of cognitive capital is in place); enables tacit knowledge transfer; exploits the structural capital of partner; and, links (usually considered part of structural capital) “WBL, knowledge creation (intellectual capital), organisational decision making and bounded rationality” (Garnett, 2009, p.238). This last point implies the creation of cognitive aspects of social capital.

Figure 6: Capital Creation through Work-based Learning.



2.6 Summary

Within this literature review, the three research questions have been considered and sub-themes identified:

2.6.1 Modes of Learning

Given the emphasis on the social construction of learning, the cooperation of partners, movement between distinctive fields of practice and emergent outcomes, the student experience will need to be understood through models and concepts that recognise socio-cultural changes within an individual over time. Bourdieu's concepts are drawn upon because they offer insights into the complex relationships within the community of learning, the extent to which students "fit in" and progress from the pre-periphery to the periphery of practice as a novice. The programme is designed to provide a structured framework designed to facilitate opportunities for the acquisition of social capital such that career progression is facilitated and integration into the community of practice. A difficulty with this is that so much of these aspects are personal, below the surface and it would be difficult to account for these as learning outcomes to be assessed; yet they potentially hold huge value for the participants.

The potential for a deepening of partnership working to facilitate knowledge creation focused on organisational objectives to deliver mutual benefits opens the discussion of capital from a student focus to the wider organisations. These additional benefits may enhance the perceived value of WBL programmes which might otherwise seem complex, difficult to fit into standardised university processes and difficult to manage. Similarly, the wider organisational benefits of knowledge creation and deeper academic engagement with practice may encourage the employer to engage in WBL programmes which otherwise might be seen to be philanthropic.

2.6.2 Work-based and Experiential Learning

Some of the advantages of WBL were discussed in relation to the acquisition of skills, reflective practice and employability. The engagement with industry could be seen as a continuum ranging from visits, guest lectures, live briefs, simulations, work experience and work-based programmes. This distinctive form of learning might require students to react to volatile situations, tackle real-world problems, take responsibility for learning, co-operate and innovate. A more traditional instructional or transmissive model can provide key concepts and theories for students to apply in practice. This blend of primary, experiential and secondary, didactic approaches provides for a rich but complex learning environment with students called upon to take more responsibility for their learning and to participate more fully in a community of practice bridging industry and university. Some of the complexities of this approach include, the accommodation of emergent outcomes, supporting students in constructing and reflecting upon practice, supporting students in understanding how they learn, encouraging students to draw upon open-ended social situations for reflection.

The programme is co-produced, all parties have needs and priorities that change over time and in some cases actors taking on unfamiliar roles, employer as mentor, lecturer as facilitator, student as employee. This may make demands on the available resources. This also has implications about what constitutes knowledge, where and how learning takes place. As learning and knowledge are co-produced, the opportunity is available for all parties to construct or reflect upon experiences to identify developmental perspectives.

2.6.3 Flexible Pedagogies

Accelerated and work-based programmes are distinctive because of the co-production of learning and the coordination of activities between the employer and the institution. This suggests a degree of flexibility is required in terms of curriculum design compared to more traditional models. A range of models suggested for developing flexible pedagogies have been considered incorporating a range of

approaches which have been suggested with a focus on the role of the partners engaged in the co-production of a work-based learning programme. These consistently discuss the balance of didactic and experiential aspects and for the combination of these to facilitate a more broad-based learning that is more active and might have the potential to be more expansive. In delivering these types of programmes, the teaching team may be required to take on unfamiliar responsibilities that may be more facilitative in nature and includes the coordination and management of partnership activities. This is intrinsic to the delivery of benefits to all parties that is one of the key underpinning concepts in delivering sustainable programmes. This may require more complex and multi-faceted communications with students and employers within a community of practice. In recognising that much of the valuable learning is gained through social interaction and learning from practice the focus is on how students learn and recognising the importance of constructive learning and reflective practice. This may require the student to articulate responses to a range of participative practices in relation to general principles taught in the classroom.

Recognising the complexity of this type of programme, a framework might be proposed covering an induction into social constructivist learning comprising an individualised learning contract and a memorandum of understanding. This may help enable the student to recognise learning in social situations and in non-classroom situations. An individualised learning contract negotiated with the student may help formalise this multi-modal learning. A memorandum of understanding reflecting the needs of student, employer and institution as a community of learning, including a definition of the sites of experience may facilitate communication and encourage reflective practice.

In drawing together industry and institution, perhaps one of the most problematic areas is in the development and approval of programmes and outcomes. A high degree of flexibility might provide a more complex context for course approvals as many of the processes fall outside of accepted educational practice, particularly with regard to learning outcomes that tend to be fixed and measurable.

2.6.4 Capital Creation

Theories of capital have included relationship between knowledge, skills and capabilities (Coleman, 1988) in creating human capital and transferable capital of communities and networks in relation to bridging and bonding (Putnam, 1995) and linking (Woolcock, 2001). Bourdieu (1986) developed concepts relating to power relations between individuals, organisations and society with related concepts of habitus, field and doxa. These concepts have been operationalized by authors analysing the career trajectories in the advertising industry and this theory informs the study in relation to the movement from the periphery to the centre of practice. A resource-based view was taken by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) who focused on the combination and exchange of experiences to build relational, cognitive and structural dimensions of social capital, in turn creating intellectual capital. It is this latter approach that informs the study in relation to the value added to the partners.

2.6.5 Implications for Research Philosophy

The aim of study is to understand the opportunities and demands associated with the delivery and experiences of accelerated, work-based learning considering three research questions covering the design of accelerated, work-based programmes, the nature of the learning taking place and the student experience of participating in such programmes. The design of such programmes is driven by academic staff and it is the experiences of those staff that are the central concern of the first research question as they apply concepts related to experiential learning and work-based learning through the application of flexible pedagogies in designing and delivering accelerated, work-based learning programmes. The nature of the learning taking place in such programmes is primarily focused on the student perspective informed by literature relating to constructivist learning concepts but also the learning taking place of all the partners the student experiences of such programmes are explored through socio-cultural concepts and in particular Bourdieu's related concepts of habitus, field and doxa as they are concerned with deep socio-cultural transformations as students move from the pre-periphery of practice into the periphery of practice, bridging from higher education into industry. Resource-based

concepts of social capital relating to relational, cognitive and structural dimensions help define the interplay between the partners and their experiences in co-construction.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study is centred on the development and implementation of accelerated, work-based learning programmes in line with consistent government policies, strategies and initiatives emphasising skills development and experiential learning. It has been suggested that such courses offer potential benefits: higher attainment (Outram, 2011), financial benefits (McCaig et al., 2007; Huxley et al., 2017; Pollard et al., 2017), widening participation (HES, 2010; Outram, 2011), fast-track into the workplace (McCaig et al., 2007; CBI, 2013). Equally, the shortcomings of such approaches have been identified as: the lack of publicity (Outram, 2011; Pollard, et al., 2017), small scale (Outram, 2011), uncertain demand (Pollard, et al., 2017), delivery cost (Foster, Hart and Lewis, 2011; Outram, 2011), staff stress (Huxley, et al., 2017), primarily vocational focus (Phippen, 2010), lack of rigour (Wolfe, 1998; McCaig, et al., 2007; Pollard ,et al., 2017) and commodification of learning (Wlodowski, 2003).

The study investigates the experiences of students, employers and university staff in developing and co-producing the curriculum within a community of practice and is situated on one location in the south of England. The aim of study is to understand the opportunities and demands associated with the delivery and experiences of accelerated, work-based learning. The research questions are as follows:

- What is the experience of all partners within accelerated, work-based degree programmes?
- What is the nature of learning within accelerated work-based degree programmes?
- In what ways can we design accelerated, work-based degree programmes to deliver benefits to employers, students and universities?

These questions are intended to address gaps in the literature on the employer perspective and a comparison between accelerated and traditional modes of learning.

An important aspect of the research is to understand and reflect upon the experiences of all participants in the community of practice in order to improve the action. This sort of research is usually referred to as action research. In order to facilitate this a framework is required to understand more about what the participants are bringing to the site of experience and the extent to which these might change over time as a result of the social interactions within the university and workplace. Bourdieu provides such a framework that has gained an established place in educational research. His concepts of capital (social capital, cultural capital, financial capital), habitus and field offer an indirect way of accessing change, development and transformation indicated by dispositions to take courses of action or otherwise.

There have been a limited number of studies in the creative industries that might be said to have operationalized Bourdieu's framework, employing methods including life history interviews as a way of investigating participants "early socialization... cognitive and affective dispositions shaped by a person's social location that provides them with a sense of what is normal, comfortable and natural" (Cooper, 2008: 1229) and indirectly their habitus. Specifically, McLeod, et al. used "a topic guide, which included questions about the creatives' childhood, family, early interests and education, as well as their "discovery" of advertising as a vocation and their working life" (2009, p.1018). The data was analysed by first using open coding "to make constant comparisons between different incidents, perceptions, relationships and issues" which were then "grouped into themes or categories, such as experiences of college or placement". The theoretical framework for the research included "situated learning, communities of practice, organizational socialization and advertising practices" and the analysis "tacked back and forth between theory and observations, refining both in the process" (2011, p.120). This work helped inform the research design for the study in terms of method (the use of life history aspects in the student participant interviews and the analysis of data).

Action research studies centering on work-based learning have tended to focus on the relationship between student, staff and employer (often the mentor). Some key themes include bridging theory and practice, managing internships (from all parties'

perspectives), multi-modal learning and mentoring. Much of the meaning making (or “making sense”) is in the interplay between theory and practice, something that Engeström (in Choy, Kemmis and Green, 2016, p.337) describes as an “intersection of established practices, rules and processes, individuals and groups, objects and artefacts forces learners to constantly evaluate and re-evaluate their responses and actions”

3.2 Action Research

Action research is “a form of disciplined enquiry leading to the generation of knowledge” (Koshy, 2004, p.1) and can be seen as a form of participatory or practitioner research. McTaggart (2007, p.316) broadens the scope of participant groups and dissemination “action research is the way groups of people can organise the conditions under which they can learn from their own experience, and make this experience accessible to others”. Within educational research, an action research approach provides a structure within which practice is observed, reflected upon, leading to planning to prepare for the next cycle of action. Kurt Lewin (1946) is usually considered to have first linked theories on social action with a cyclical structure but Altrichter and Gsetzner (1993, p.332) propose that Moreno was not only first to adopt a collaborative approach (the nature of action research is often associated with collaborative approaches) but argue that his model of action research (‘actionism’) is more influential than that of Lewin. Some 30 years later Stenhouse (1983) proposed a radical approach to curriculum design benefitting from a collaborative approach to the education process and formalising the reflective component in curriculum design.

“He believed that curriculum development depended neither on specifying new courses of study nor on specifying learning objectives, but on working with teachers as researchers in joint exploration of the processes of teacher–student interaction and learning.” (Somekh and Zeichner, 2009, p.7).

This approach is very much at odds with the educational context where the adherence to standards and the need to achieve outcomes might be seen as external

drivers. Kemmis and McTaggart (2000, p.595) describe action research as participatory research, underlining this aspect. They go on to propose a cyclical structure comprising “planning a change; acting and observing the process and consequences of the change; reflecting on the processes and consequences and then replanning; acting and observing; reflecting; and so on”. O’Leary (2004, p.141) portrays the action research cycle as refining understanding as the cycles are repeated. Kemmis (2009, p.463) identified three concepts that are at once bound together but in a fluid, ever-changing state, “practitioners” practices, their understandings of their practices, and the conditions in which they practise”. Importantly, he sees this as transformative and impacting on what practitioners “do”, “think”, “say” and “relate”. He goes on to point out that the choice to adopt an action research approach in itself informs and influences practice, neatly summed up as “practice-changing practice” or “meta-practice”. Fundamentally, the research project and the pilot programme that is central to the research are both concerned with transforming practice. The stages in action research map on to the processes use to manage the programme. This is most true for the research questions that consider flexible curriculum design and the experiences of student participants as they engage with the programme and prepare for entry into industry practice. The research informs the programme design and development.

There are broadly two schools of action research, firstly where the principal investigator maintains a distance and secondly studies within which the researcher is “an insider”. In either approach the research is what McNiff and Whitehead (2006, p27) terms “value-laden” which is a critical difference to positivist ontological stances that aim to be “value-free” with a clear separation of the participants and researcher. Within action research, particularly where the researcher is also a participant in a social creation of knowledge the “process of inquiry as important as outcomes” (Koshy, 2010, p34). In this, action research is distinct from positivist research that aims for instrumental knowledge creation. The aim of the study is to describe and explain the characteristics of a particular programme through collecting and analysing data with the purpose of planning action in a specific situation (Dresch et al., 2015). However it is important that where appropriate

others may wish to apply the principles of the study to their own context. This is explored more fully in the section on trustworthiness and authenticity.

Action research provides a vehicle for the study to inform the programmes in an incremental way (there are a number of cycles that might be applied including, development and delivery of the programme, transition from level to level and reflective practice and planning of each trimester). McTaggart (1994, p.317) defines action research as:

“...in short, we can say that action research is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality, justice, coherence and satisfactoriness of (a) their own social practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the institutions, programmes and ultimately the society in which these practices are carried out.”

This is relevant as it resonates with underlying social justice theme of the study in two ways. By facilitating the development of reflective narratives by the participants and more broadly by explaining the practices and social interactions in the programmes. This may encourage the adoption of practices that are more enabling and offer agency to a wider range of students who may otherwise be disadvantaged by social capital factors including financial and networking aspects.

Early criticism of action research include Hodgkinson (1957) in McTaggart (1994, p.323):

“...action research was only problem-solving (“easy hobby games for little engineers”); was statistically unsophisticated; did not lead to defensible generalisation; did not help to create a system of theory; and was practiced (and not very well) by amateurs.”

More contemporary critiques of action research have centred on the extent to which action research can claim to be empowering, emancipatory and liberating and the extent to which the voice of the participant is accounted for in reflection, subjectivity

and experiences (McTaggart, 1994, p.327). Perry and Gummesson (2004) suggest that interpretive research should have wider ambitions and application “to indicate how knowledge gained in one context might subsequently be transferred to another” (Daymon and Holloway, 2011, p.204). The emerging nature of action research may mean that “informed consent may be problematic” and that the cyclical nature of the project may be time-consuming. However, the programmes studied had well-defined temporal aspects in the development and delivery phases which need help the participants understand the likely duration of their engagement with the research study.

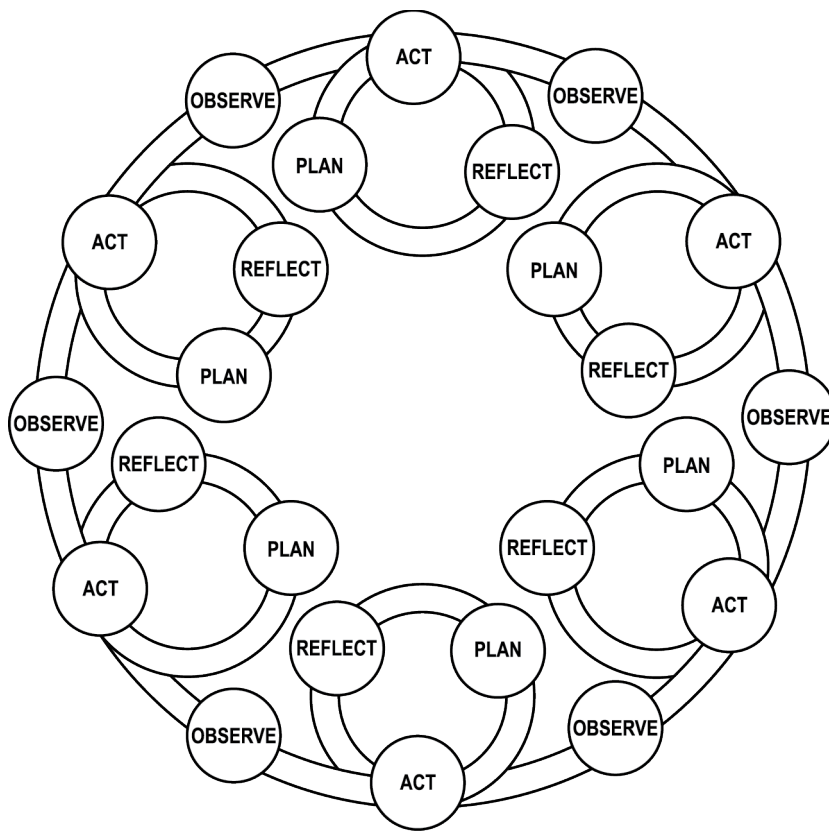
Notwithstanding the difficulties, the argument for employing action research is supported by the desire to investigate the experiences of participants in a social setting and to offer them the opportunity to understand more about the underlying processes associated with learning and as such is a valuable and enabling form of social enquiry. However, claims for the emancipatory nature of the research should be moderated. The voice of the participants is indirectly captured through the research but the issues of representation are borne in mind reflecting that there are important ethical concerns relating to inequality of power within the participant groups in both the construction of practice and their participation in the research. This has implications for the study both in terms of ensuring that through the editing, coding and interpretation of data that the voice of the participants is represented fairly. Also, that in the application of ethical procedures that the participants fully understand their voluntary participation in the study and that this is quite separate from their participation as students on the programme and as employees in the workplace.

This action research methodology is not an attempt to provide generalisable answers, or cause and effect (Feldman, 2007, p.30). The cyclical approach (“plan-act-evaluate-reflect”, Koshy, 2010, p22) encourages reflection, planning and implementation of incremental changes in collaborative, social contexts. Involving students, staff, employers and less directly wider university departments and the sector skills council, encourages collaborative knowledge creation and provides the opportunity for learning and continual improvement of practice. This also provides

challenges in the interplay between participants and their own practices: student as employee, student or participant; principal investigator as lecturer, researcher or practitioner; employer as mentor, employer, participant or partner.

O'Leary's cycles of research model (2004) is adapted for the research project (see Figure 7 below) providing a somewhat idealised presentation of the cyclical nature of the study, taking and applying it to any university programme, divided into levels, each level divided into teaching periods, each teaching period having the potential for observation, reflection, planning and action, either within a specific unit or module, across the level or throughout the course, all involving students, staff, university support departments, industry panels and external examiners. Within the accelerated programme of study the role for industry is more formal in that the employer provides the work-based learning context as well as employing the student.

Figure 7: 6-Stage Action Research Spiral – adapted from O’Leary (2004).



Underlining the importance of applying the cycle in a flexible way more as a guide or outline approach, McTaggart (2007, p.315) “Action research is not a “method” or a “procedure” but a series of commitments to observe and problematise through practice the principles for conducting social enquiry”. Nevertheless the underlying structure provides a broad framework or path that corresponds with the formal academic year offering established opportunities for reflection, planning and so on that have a familiar rhythm for staff and students with progression through levels. An interesting proposition for all participants to reflect upon is the extent to which the formal outcomes of the university programme have been influenced by the action research approach and whether those outcomes are still an appropriate scale of measurement. In other words the inevitable lag in curriculum design is formal with long lead times for modifications. By adopting a more collaborative and flexible approach, might an action research approach move beyond the learning outcomes of the programmes (and how those outcomes are assessed) envisaged during course development?

The research addresses a practical problem: how can we meet employer, student and university needs in implementing accelerated, work-based learning? The knowledge generated through action and critical reflection informs continual change (also in formal teaching cycles - periods and levels). Employer, student and staff are participants alongside researcher, presenting particular challenges and opportunities in the research. Often an important aspect of action research is that it is collaborative. This mixing of discourses (Somekh and Zeichner, 2009, p.6) from both academy and industry is the challenge and the opportunity, "It is a characteristic of "Western" culture that physical work and mental work are seen as the provinces of two different kinds of people" (Somekh and Zeichner, 2009, p.5), given such a context McTaggart, (2007, p.317) advises "the distinction between academics and workers must not be taken to imply a distinction between theoreticians and practitioners as if theory resided in one place and its implementation in another" and that the group decides the context of the research and benefits from the "development of theoretically informed practice for all parties involved". He goes on to make the distinction between practices (in this case education and marketing services) with the institutions "that protect them" of university and the workplace. This identifies the interrelated but distinctive institutional and cultural contexts for different participant groups and the extent to which they can work together to "improve the theory and practice of education" in the workplace. This synthesis of practice and theory offers the opportunity for deeper engagement between industry and University and for emergent outcomes in the creation of social capital for all partners outside of the formal student-focused learning outcomes recorded in the course development documentation.

3.3 Research Design

Central to the research are the narratives of those engaged in the development and delivery (these narratives also contribute to the on-going programme development). An action research methodology is employed running concurrently with the development and implementation of the programme. Within this the central role of the research lead is recognised with due regard for the subjective nature of the study. In analysing the data, a number of methods might be used. The four main

approaches are phenomenology, narrative, discourse and grounded theory (Crotty, 1998). Of these approaches, careful consideration was given to the particular requirements of the study, to implement an action research methodology in order to incrementally plan, implement, reflect and evaluate practice. Overall this study is “social research that employs... observation and interviewing and analyses its data by allowing major themes to emerge in quite a straight-forward way” (Crotty, 1998, p.110).

The experiences of participants in the study are explored by analysing the narratives (and meta-narratives) that are constructed through interview. Student participants were encouraged to keep journals to provide a source for subsequent reflection and interpretation by the participant. Importantly, these narratives provide a means to understand participant experiences in relation to all aspects of the programme including curriculum design and the transformation in the habitus of the student participants.

The over-arching concern of the research is to enable agency amongst participant groups within a co-produced educational context spanning educational practice and workplace practice. The intention is to provide an environment that is enabling and for the theme of social justice to be a guiding principle. This is important in the context of a university with a widening participation focus and an industry with a reputation for unpaid internships and often-problematic routes into practice, particularly for students without access to social capital advantages. The practical problem in the action research project is how employer, student and university needs might be met in designing a curriculum in response to government policy, implementing accelerated, work-based learning through a flexible pilot programme and the outcomes for all partners but particularly the students as they transition from university study into early career practice. Knowledge generated through action and critical reflection informs continual change (also in formal teaching cycles - periods and levels).

3.4 Philosophy

A range of paradigms might be applied in educational research, that is, beliefs about the nature of knowledge, research methodology and criteria of validity (MacNaughton, Rolfe and Siraj-Blatchford, 2001). Studies might be designed to test or prove theories scientifically or concepts that might then be generalised and accepted as “truth” in the real world. This approach is usually described as positivist and an important aspect of this type of research is that the investigator maintains distance from the participants in order to retain objectivity (or alleged objectivity, Crotty, 1989) and not to influence their actions, behaviours and responses. Through Husserl, Crotty (1989, p.27) argues that this distillation “distances us from the world of our everyday experiences” though he goes on to emphasise that although scientific enquiry has helped achieve many things it is on the assumption that this approach is truly objective and more valid than other approaches. This type of research formed one strand of educational research within a context of competing philosophical approaches which took place in the 80s and 90s, sometimes known as “the paradigm wars” (Gage, 1989) where the initially prevalent positivist approaches might be seen to be increasingly challenged by more interpretive research, in order to help develop principles and theories of learning (for example) and in turn influence policy.

Broadly, positivist research employs quantitative methods and may be concerned with cause and effect “...value-free, detached observation, seek to identify universal features of humanhood, society and history that offer explanation and hence control and predictability” (Crotty, 1998, p.67). The other dominant paradigm in social science research is interpretive, understanding contexts and developing knowledge through the experiences of participants. Crotty (1998, p.67) defines this approach as looking “for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world”. Within this approach the aim is to gain empathy and understanding by developing deep and rich data and for the distinction between investigator and participant to be blurred. The supposed detachment that is an important aspect of positivist approaches is neither desirable and nor, it might be thought, achievable. An interpretive approach can cover a broad range of methodologies but often the

methods used will be qualitative and acknowledging the narratives which are often developed through the research process as being subjective and value-laden. This might be described as more democratic, the hierarchy of investigator and participants being broken down. The desire to learn from and explain the social and experiential aspects is the aim of the study and these findings may be applicable more broadly but the study does not set out to, as Feldman (2007, p.30) describes in his principles for action research, “demonstrate causality” by applying “quasi-experimental or experimental” research methods. However, the aim of the study is to provide sufficient information for it be useful and transferable to those in similar situations.

One might argue that higher education is taking a more positivist turn with greater emphasis and reliance on a quantitative approach to measuring performance in relation to student satisfaction through the National Student Survey, employability through the Destination of Leavers in Higher Education survey, excellence of teaching through the Teaching Excellence Framework and an increasingly consumerist orientation amongst students and a market orientation within universities. This HEFCE-funded project was born out of the policy framework connecting skills development and positive student outcomes directly to productivity as a measure of success in a very instrumental way. It is within this environment that the study is intended to discover more about the experiences and wider-ranging outcomes for all participants through their own narratives.

3.5 Interpretivism

Interpretivism acknowledges the existence of socially constructed “multiple realities and truth” (Daymon and Holloway, 2011, p.102). It is distinct from positivism in that an open, inductive approach is taken to mainly qualitative data taking into account the social context of the study (Daymon and Holloway, 2011, p.107). It is small in scale and does not seek to be generisable (though aiming to be transferable and is written with this in mind). The action research starts with the research lead and his practice, extending out to the wider social world of two work-based, accelerated degree programmes. It is through the narratives of those participants

that meaning is constructed. In contrast to positivist approaches, no attempt is made to claim objectivity in the research and the “interests, biases and preferences” (Daymon and Holloway, 2011, p.102) of the research lead are acknowledged throughout.

An interpretive research paradigm is most appropriate to the study given that social interactions between students, staff and employers (sometimes acting in different roles), is the focus of the knowledge generation through the development of qualitative narratives. The project took place within a policy framework within which higher education is operating and particularly the drive towards providing more flexible approaches to delivery degree programmes. It goes on to evaluate curriculum design that responds to this strategy and finally the experiences of the participants in a flexible pilot programme.

The context of the study is the workplace as a socially-constructed environment. Participant narratives are used to understand actors’ experiences and to uncover meaning. The study has a part to play in influencing the research and as an action research project, the intention is to plan and implement change in response to emerging knowledge rather than maintaining a distance and neutrality that might be expected in positivist approaches.

Though there is a broad principle of democratising the research process, in any form of participatory research, including action research, the decisions made by the researcher will have a bearing on the data. Given the nature of the study it is accepted that an objective approach is not possible and that the subjective decisions that Wadsworth (1998, p5) identifies below are accepted and acknowledged:

- the effects of raising some questions and not others;
- the effects of involving some people in the process... and not others;
- the effects of observing some phenomena and not others;
- the effects of making this sense of it and not alternative senses;
- the effects of deciding to take this action... rather than any other action.

Throughout the cycles of the study, all of these factors have a bearing. From the choice of field selected for the accelerated provision, the choice of agencies to approach to provide placement opportunities, selection of staff participants, choice of methodology, timing of interviews and development of the interview guide. This extends to the data analysis in that it is the researcher who organises the data, attributes codes, identifies themes going on to synthesise the findings with the literature chosen by the researcher. As such the voice and influence of the principal investigator are accepted. Although the intention was for the participants to be closely involved as partners in the programme and the research, inevitably the decisions made by the principal investigator are intrinsic to all of the research.

Knowledge is created through “social construction and not external or independent” (Koshy, 2010, p23), social interactions as a collaborative process – often distinctions between participants and the researcher are not clear. Learning “is rooted in experience” (Mcniff and Whitehead, 2006, p18), students and other participants are encouraged to share thoughts and ideas about their experiences. The students “...actively construct their experience” (Boud, Cohen and Walker, 1993), at the same time, informing the collaborative practice of curriculum design (and just as importantly workplace practices). In some cases the cyclical observation, reflection, planning and action cycle are applied and followed in others the distinction is less formal, this doesn’t mean that learning isn’t taking place. The distinction between practice and practitioner is not made, social relations between the participants are at the heart of knowledge creation and learning. In many ways an interpretive, qualitative study, quantitative data has a place in the study if only to elicit qualitative responses from participants. An example of this would be the qualitative comments made by external examiners in relation to the performance in assessments of the students. Though by no means an exclusively qualitative study, the majority of data collected were narratives or participants articulating their reflections on experience. The situational and social contexts are central to the research and it is the understanding of this that generates meaning. The specific setting is intrinsic to the research and wider or more generalisable application more widely is not the aim, however, given a policy framework that continues to require higher education institutions to offer more flexible programmes and the growing importance of

degree apprenticeships it may help inform those wishing to develop similar accelerated and work-based models.

Such an approach blurs the distinction between dominant theory (developed within the academy) and practical concerns (of ordinary people) and often labelled “practical problem-solving rather than proper research” McNiff and Whitehead, 2006, p20). They go on to suggest: “The most powerful and appropriate form of theory for dealing with contemporary social issues is one which is located in, and generated out of, practice, and which values tacit knowledge as much as cognitive knowledge”. This underlines the appropriateness of an action research approach in this research in that the site of learning is co-located in the classroom and the workplace and the social interactions are in many ways the curriculum.

3.6 Research Methods

3.6.1 Primary research

The research methods employed in the study are tailored to the action research approach and the research questions, firstly the design of accelerated, work-based programmes to deliver benefits to employers, students and universities is analysed through field notes and documentary analyses. The second research question is concerned with the nature of learning within accelerated work-based degree programmes. The main research method used will be semi-structured interviews (and in some cases wider conversations) and field notes. The third research question analyses the student/practitioner experience within accelerated, work-based degree programmes. The main research method will be semi-structured interviews.

In preparation for the main research, a pilot study was undertaken to trial the interview approach, the appropriateness of the questions and identify any key issues that needed to be addressed in the main study. In addition, the student participants were asked to complete an online blog in order to gain some preliminary insights that provided some contextual background for the subsequent main interviews. The main findings of the pilot included an updated interview guide

setting out the research aim and research questions related to the interview, data collection plan outlining the goal of the research and the questions tailored to the participant group and research question. For example, the topic areas that emerged from the pilot covered the background to their life history through to their participation in the programme, broken down into upbringing, education, acquisition of skills (soft skills, digital skills and creative skills), employability (work experience/internships and portfolio), practice (agency culture, hours, background of colleagues, client contact, favourite task/role, least favourite task/role, successful projects, unsuccessful projects). These topic areas served as a guide but the interviews followed a conversational style.

Table 11 below indicates the planned schedule of phases, dates, potential data sources and methods used in the study. This is indicative only and in reality, appropriately for an inductive approach there is a degree of flexibility in practice.

Table 11: Schedule for Data Collection.

Phase	Dates	Data sources	Methods
Pilot	Sept 16	Student	Semi-structured interview
Development	Sept 14- Sept 15	Funding Application Quarterly reviews Course Approval documentation Unit Modifications Field notes	Documentary analysis
Teaching Period 1	Sept 15- Jan 16	Students Link Tutor Unit Leaders (x3) Placement Mentor Placement Manager Summative student feedback External Examiner Report Field notes	Semi-structured interviews Documentary analysis
Teaching Period 2	Feb 16- May 16	Students Link Tutor Unit Leaders (x3) Placement Mentor Placement Manager Summative student feedback External Examiner Report Field notes	Semi-structured interviews Documentary analysis
Teaching Period 3	May 16- Sept 16	Students Link Tutor Unit Leaders (x3) Placement Mentor Placement Manager Summative student feedback External Examiner Report Field notes	Semi-structured interviews Documentary analysis
Teaching Period 4	Sept 16- Jan 17	Students Link Tutor Unit Leaders (x3) Placement Mentor Placement Manager Summative student feedback External Examiner Report Field notes	Semi-structured interviews Documentary analysis
Teaching Period 5	Feb 17- May 17	Students Link Tutor Unit Leaders (x3)	Semi-structured interviews Documentary

		Placement Mentor Placement Manager Summative student feedback External Examiner Report Field notes	analysis
Teaching Period 6	May 17- Sept 17	Students Link Tutor Unit Leaders (x3) Placement Mentor Placement Manager Summative student feedback External Examiner Report Field notes	Semi-structured interviews Documentary analysis

3.6.2 Selecting the participants

In line with the action research approach, the population encompassed three distinct groups. Firstly, students enrolled on the accelerated BA (Hons) Advertising (WBL) and BA (Hons) Public Relations (WBL) courses, in this case all of the students on the two courses agreed to participate. The second participant population from which the participants were drawn were the employers providing work-based learning opportunities for the students of the two degree programmes. In some cases the person responsible for supervising the placement students was invited to participate. The third participant population was drawn from the teaching team on the two courses. All staff teaching shared modules on the two programmes were invited to participate in the study. Opportunities were taken to interview participants from the three groups throughout the study.

The sampling approach for the study was determined by the nature of the participant groups. The purpose of the study was to understand more about the experiences of students, staff and employers in order to take action and therefore a purposive sampling approach was adopted. The participant groups shared “certain characteristics and experiences... inclusion criteria” (Daymon and Holloway, 2011, p.212). All of the students taking part in the programmes were invited to take part (and accepted), members of staff engaged in teaching units on the programmes were invited to take part in the study and all employers in the two settings of the workplaces and university. In many respects the participant groups were homogeneous, that is “with respect to a certain variable” (Daymon and Holloway, 2011, p.214) and it might be argued that the intention was to implement a total population approach (this certainly the case in the document analysis which comprised all of the development documentation over the period of around 12 months including plans, minutes and field notes). Students shared their role of student on the programmes but in other respects and to a greater or lesser extent differed in terms of age, gender and background. This final aspect was important in understanding pre-existing social capital. Staff taught a range of units, again, with a range of prior experiences and employers shared their willingness to offer places but in many other respects were heterogeneous in terms of the size and specialism

of their organisation. This might suggest that a larger sample might be desirable but the small sample size did enable “deep, rich data” (Daymon and Holloway, 2011, p.217) to be collected over a period of two years. It is accepted that within the study that participation in the research would be likely to influence behaviour, social interactions and outcomes.

3.6.3 Data Collection – Interviews

This study utilised semi-structured interviews, which included a set of ‘standard’ questions but also sub questions to probe ideas further. The questions included several open-ended questions to encourage different interpretations by the interviewee. A key advantage of semi-structured interviews for this study was that it enabled key areas that would enable the research aim and questions to be addressed, but also allowed for other perceptions and experiences to be raised and discussed (which may not be the case with more structured interviews).

Koshy (2007) identifies a number of advantages of using interviews, which were particularly helpful in terms of this study. Interviews can provide rich and powerful insights as well as ‘unexpected but useful perspectives’ (p.7). In addition, they can provide a more relaxed environment for the participant and the opportunity for the interviewer to explore any issues raised in more detail. However, Koshy (p.88) also notes that interviews can be more time-consuming than questionnaires, especially when taking into account the transcription. In terms of the study, this additional time helped in the data analysis in finding meaning. He suggests that participants may find tape recorders intimidating, contributing to nerves. In the pilot interviews the recording also felt unnatural to the researcher. However, using informal scene-setting questions helped both parties relax, facilitating a more conversational dialogue

Brinkman and Kvale (2015, p.64-65) indicate that the knowledge created through interviews has seven features, which describe the value they have in constructive approaches. Firstly, ‘knowledge as produced’ refers to the social construction of knowledge in the interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer as ‘co-

constructors of knowledge'. Secondly, in 'knowledge as relational' the intersubjectivity of the knowledge created is acknowledged, literally 'inter-views', perhaps suggesting the interplay between the habitus of both parties. The importance of narratives is developed in 'knowledge as conversational' where descriptions of experiences are foregrounded. Interviews contribute to the rich, thick description desired within the research to encourage transferability through 'knowledge as contextual'. The importance of ironic validity is considered in 'knowledge as linguistic, and in doing so recognises the importance of the different nature of oral and written language, for example in transcription. The story-making potential for interviews is described as 'knowledge as narrative' to make sense of social reality. Finally, 'knowledge as pragmatic' refers to the usefulness of knowledge to the research through the interview interaction, transcription, coding and analysis to 'contribute substantial new knowledge to a field' (p.22). Brinkman and Kvale (2015) go on to suggest that a qualitative interview 'goes beyond a mechanical following of rules and rests on the interviewer's skills and situated personal judgment in the posing of questions' (p.71) which suggests that much depends on the subjective experience of the interviewer, perhaps gained through a form of 'apprenticeship in a community of practitioners (see Lave and Wenger, 1991)" in the field of research, situated within the field of practice.

Interviews can take several forms, such as structured, narrative, creative or unstructured (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). For the purposes of this study, and in order to address the research aim and questions, semi-structured interviews will be used. This approach includes a set of 'standard' questions but also sub questions to probe ideas further, including open-ended questions to encourage different interpretations by the interviewee. Unlike structured interviews, this approach allows for variations in responses and greater flexibility in the way questions are asked and at what point in the interview they are asked. A key advantage of semi-structured interviews for this study is that it enables other perceptions and experiences to be raised and discussed (which may not be the case with more structured interviews).

The research participants included students (enrolled on the pilot programme), staff (academic support, lecturers and link tutors delivering the programme) and employers (line managers, mentors and department heads in the partner agencies). Table 12 below provides anonymised details of all participants. Other participants included staff at partner institutions in the wider project and staff from the sector skills council, in this case as part of the project review process and rather than formal interviews, consent was obtained to record and transcribe the review meeting. The questions used in the semi-structured interviews were open and in-line with the themes identified in the literature review. As the study progressed the interview guide was adapted as part of the cyclical action research approach. Recordings were made of the interviews that were subsequently transcribed and coded. The coding process helped identify themes. Though many of the data sources are providing descriptive or narrative interpretations, there is a need for some quantitative data to inform the study and to inform the participants in the study. This would include levels of student attainment and retention. Another important data source were the field notes made throughout the action research, “very important interpretative moments came during conversations in the field” (Schiellerup, 2008, p165).

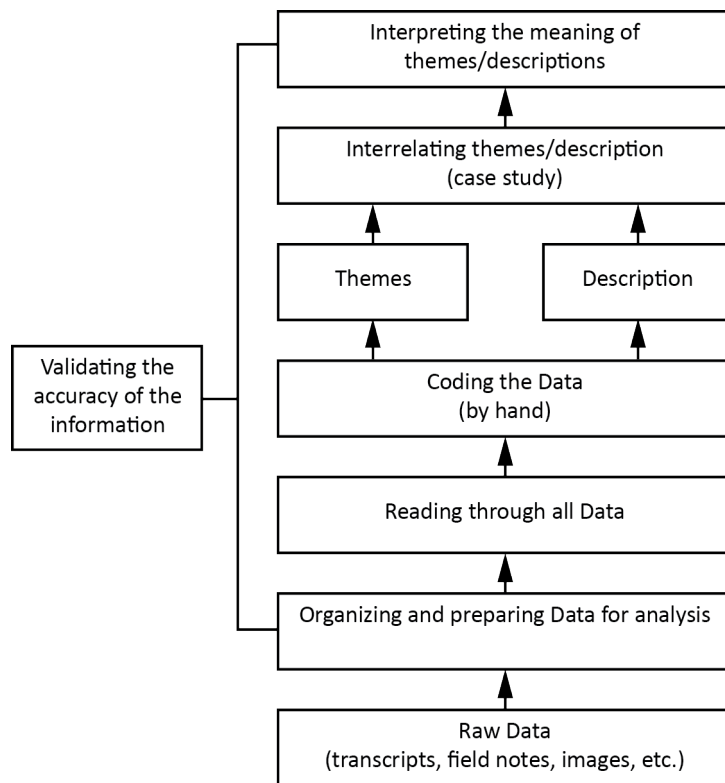
Table 12: List of Participants.

Name	Role	Description
Simon	Employer 1	Managing Director of a direct marketing agency.
Andi	Employer 2	Manager in a public relations agency.
Max	Employer 3	Supervisor within the communications function of a national organisation.
Lily	Staff 1	Lecturer in public relations.
Pete	Staff 2	Senior Lecturer in journalism.
Rod	Staff 3	Lecturer in public relations.
Tom	Staff 4	Subject group leader and link tutor.
Sarah	Staff 5	Course leader and link tutor.
Crispin	Staff 6	Course leader.
Verity	Student 1	Student on the BA (Hons) Advertising (WBL) course.
Millie	Student 2	Student on the BA (Hons) Public Relations (WBL) course.
Mike	Student 3	Student on the BA (Hons) Public Relations (WBL) course.

3.6.4 Primary Data Analysis

As the projects draws together data from range of sources including field notes, interviews, documentary analyses and images, Creswell's (2009) data analysis model was an appropriate framework to apply (see figure 8 below). This systematic approach takes raw data sets, organises them for analysis and interpretation; taking time to re-read all the data to get an overview of the study and get a sense of emerging themes; coding the data, in this case hand-coding was used though a range of computer software programmes could also have been employed, the codes being added in the margin of the transcribed interviews and other data sources; from these preliminary "chunks" a description as well as themes are generated which in turn suggest categories (all of these related back to and synthesised with the literature review); a narrative considering categories, themes and descriptions is developed presenting the findings of the analysis; finally interpretations of the data are discussed taking into account the research questions, related educational theory, literature, limitations and potential further research. (Koshy, 2010, p113).

Figure 8: Data analysis in qualitative research (Creswell, 2009, p185).



The approach to coding is for the themes to emerge abductively (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2007, p565) through the literature review, by analysing the qualitative data sets from interviews and other sources and also taking into account the cyclical approach to the study that allows a more iterative process of data collection, analysis and interpretation. The decision to hand-code the data rather than using computer assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) using software such as NVivo takes into account a number of factors. Chiefly, the application of an action research methodology allows a cyclical approach to be taken whereby observation, reflection, planning and action phases are repeated with the aim of focusing and intensifying knowledge-creation. This iterative process meant that secondary and primary data collection was repeated, each informed by the other so that data analysis was carried out throughout the study. A simple 'index card' template had been used to organise the literature review into themes and it seemed logical to apply a similar approach to the coding of the transcripts and field notes. Also, the time taken to acquire the expertise in using a software package had to be taken into account. Finally, the manual process may have been more time-

consuming but the time taken to interpret was an important filter in understanding the data, a faster and more efficient process may have resulted in more coding without necessarily contributing to understanding (Welsh, 2002).

The process used in analysing the data was as follows.

- Close and detailed reading of the data
- Second reading with systematic coding
- Reflect on list of codes
- Review and refine codes and coding practice
- Identify key codes and their relationship

Adapted from Silverman (1016, p.334)

An initial close reading of the transcripts and documents identified the themes emerging from the texts. It seemed to make sense to start with the documentation relating to the development process first. These included minutes from meetings, documents associated with the bidding process and field notes. These were coded along with extracts from the text in a separate document which allowed the short narratives to be more easily considered individually. In creating the codes the researcher was also influenced by the literature, theory and the choices made and construction of the codes was subjective. This was an iterative process and the draft codes were refined and simplified as more documents were processed. An example would be where specific software skills were coded individually but later replaced with a single “digital skills” code that helped draw the theme together. An important factor within this was that the codes had to be heterogeneous but in practice there could be multiple interpretations of any single text. Choices in deciding which codes to identify relied not only on familiarity with the interview as well as the transcribed text but also pre-existing knowledge of the participants and the programme. As the coding progressed, notes were also made in interpreting the data and amendments made in light of the new readings. Patterns began to emerge as coding progressed and prior coding practices were reviewed (Silverman, 2016, p.334), entailing the revision of codes and/or the creation of new codes. Subsequently a summary document was created listing the codes created prior to a deeper engagement with

the codes where the properties and dimensions of the codes were explored in a more conceptual way. Inevitably perhaps, the coding was a very subjective process based on the interpretations of the principal investigator. A more hierarchical approach was employed to identify key codes and the relationships within them. An example of this is the use of codes relating to social aspects of the placement that were gathered together under 'workplace culture' that could perhaps be linked to the habitus prevalent within the agency.

An example of the standard coding template is provided in table 13 below for the first interview with student participant Verity and for the first document analysis in table 14 below.

Table 13: Interview Coding Template

<i>Document title: Verity Interview 1.1</i>	
<i>Creation date: 16 Oct 2016</i>	
<i>Author: Richard Berry</i>	
Chunk	Code
I like maths and science so I did that as well but at the same time I liked theatre studies because I sort of like the balance I like creativity but I like logic so I think this course is like a good combination	Interests Creative skills
I met somebody in advertising and they sort of like inspired me she sent me her portfolio	Inspiration
Then I worked at the Warsash Maritime Academy in their marketing department – I knew I was interested	Work experience
I didn't think I liked learning	Reflection
At school I did work experience in accounting I like lists and things and organisation there are certain sides when I like to do more creative stuff	Work experience Creative skills
My family is very competitive and stuff I did karate for years I like planning stuff and seeing it through I was never good at sport	Interests
I feel like I have always been quite confident and then things like just working at M&S you become so independent like on Sunday they have no managers in I was one of the most, been there the longest I suppose so when it came to dealing with complaints you become more confident	Work experience Confidence Part-time working
the weakness is definitely digital - I know it needs improvement	Digital skills
Yeah, I'm happy to produce Excel documents, I do feel I've learned some things here something to improve on we had to put like analytics onto graphs not my area something to build on	Digital skills

I think I'm lucky in the fact that I don't get easily embarrassed so I'm like definitely prepared to ask lots of questions	Confidence
maths was a solid back up choice but it doesn't interest me enough it's not exciting enough	Reflection
then I worked at Warsash I think that was the first marketing thing I need event planning really create posters that was the first time I'd really looked at the whole branding and how they had to have certain logos and stuff and guidelines	Inspiration
I've worked in a few different places I have found you do learn a lot of skills there like teamworking and stuff, prioritising...	Work experience Soft skills
It's very welcoming what they describe themselves as is endearingly arrogant when I was reading their style guide it has got that vibe to it a nice place to work very quiet music in the background full of intelligent people sort of like vibrant in a way, you can tell it's got fresh and new and stuff	Workplace culture
when I first started they were telling me about what they offer and I was just sort of shadowing mainly marketing a software they are trying to bring out quite a few different tasks to it	Workplace roles
producing like email and start-up guides, I'm obviously working with someone, I do feel like they have given me a lot of responsibility produce the PDF we are going to send to 5000 potential clients predominantly what I've written	Portfolio
that's a lot of pressure quite amazing as I'm technically a first year student	Reflection
I had to deal with the designers, then they came in a meeting with the two web developers speak through what I had found whether it would be possible to do this what they were thinking, show me their Trells – the tasks that need to be implemented, the bugs and when they" done it can you just do this	Soft skills Interdisciplinary skills Influence
I prefer like writing up produce the PDF, the research thing I like timeframes and stuff how long do you want me to come up with straplines and stuff so I'm transforming	Portfolio
so I wrote all the storyboard and what I wanted it to say and the relevant screenshots so that was what your vision was - it's always difficult when you give it to someone	Workplace outputs Creative skills
I was nervous to say can we like - that coming in faster or whatever	Influence
They just one of the designers, they specialise in animation and stuff But then I felt like once I was more comfortable explaining it, like it turned out so well, it was fantastic, he did a good job	Teamwork Influence
Yeah good, cos once it turned out so well that your glad you made your little comments and things and they can you don't know what they are capable of maybe you could do the same for that page	Teamwork Influence
we had to explain how to use it but then mine was very detailed whether that was common knowledge or if that's logical - explain like every bit are you being obvious that you need to click on that	Interdisciplinary skills

I've sat in a few meetings as well when people have said like how do you do that again, or what feature's that? I would make sure I include certain parts	Interdisciplinary skills
When you said email marketing I just genuinely - I was surprised just how powerful it can be As exciting or creative I was so surprised that it actually is you think TV advertising is where you can do it all cos you can personalise it you can make it even more appropriate for that customer	Change in attitudes

Table 14: Document Analysis Coding Template

<i>Document title: Catalyst Fund Business Plan</i>	
<i>Creation date: n.d.</i>	
<i>Author: Project Consortium</i>	
Chunk	Code
However, he also argues that in order to get the most out of apprenticeships, they should be redefined and that the solution lies both in shifting more power over to employers in the development of apprenticeships and also in the awarding of an official qualification that signals that something meaningful has been accomplished.	Apprenticeships Accomplishment Employers
Specifically, this bid proposes to develop and promote six new Higher Apprenticeship (HLA) programmes with degree awards embedded during a fifteen-month pilot phase.	Apprenticeships Pilot Timetable
These programmes would all incorporate the principles of a 'fused' curriculum in order to ensure that they are fit for purpose and produce graduates with the essential blend of creative, technical and entrepreneurial skills to take advantage of the fast changing digitised business conditions they enter	Fusion
They would also be driven by employer demand and designed and delivered by employers in collaboration with HEIs and the advisory partners.	Employers Collaboration
Apprentices would be recruited by the employer and paid the National Minimum Wage for apprentices ¹ and attend HEIs for short blocks of teaching in order to obtain their qualification.	Apprenticeships Payment Work-based Learning
If the pilot is successful, it is anticipated that Southampton Solent and Creative Skillset would apply for additional funding from the HEFCE Catalyst Fund in order to carry out a second phase of the project. This would enable a wider scale testing of the models with additional HEIs and employers, in additional subject areas, with a view to embedding the models in to HEI culture and ultimately disseminating them in to other sectors. However, either way, an additional period of evaluation has been factored in three years after	Funding Dissemination Evaluation

completion of the pilot in order to track progress and to disseminate the project findings.	
Please note that there would be an open recruitment process for all of the above HA/degree programmes, so that all individuals with the requisite experience would be able to apply, rather than spaces being limited to existing employees of a company.	Recruitment
The role of Creative Skillset would be to act as the broker between HEIs and employers, bringing employers on board, liaising with regional networks and facilitating co-investment.	Collaboration Sector Skills Council
The unique nature of this bid is the role Creative Skillset as the representative of the employers would play in encouraging them to fully engage with the HE sector. Without Creative Skillset's support, employers and higher education institutions may not have the time or the inclination to drive forward innovative degree models such as these.	Catalyst Sector Skills Council Collaboration
<p>Developing an in-depth understanding of HAs in liaison with Creative Skillset, and acting as a point of contact for all HA queries within the institution;</p> <p>Working with course development teams and employers to ensure that the development of curriculum content and the operation of the HA are progressing to schedule;</p> <p>Liaising with the communications team at Creative Skillset to ensure that HA opportunities are promoted effectively in the local and regional area, and dealing with queries from potential apprentices and their advisers;</p> <p>Liaising with Creative Skillset, the advisory partners and the HA Champions in the other HEIs to ensure that advice and good practice are disseminated to course development teams;</p> <p>Championing HAs within the institution, disseminating good practice and encouraging developments in other subject areas;</p> <p>Contributing to Creative Skillset research and evaluation of the project.</p>	Apprenticeships Timetable Promotion Queries
Information pertaining to the project would also be made available on the Creative Skillset information portal that was developed as part of a previous HEFCE funded project: Creating Relationships: Growing Business – industry and higher education in partnership to support global leadership	Dissemination Website

in the creative industries.	
<p>University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC), the HE representative organisation championing higher level vocational and work-based learning. Their role would be to advise and support the HEI partners on the development and delivery of the HAs;</p> <p>The National Centre for Universities and Business (NCUB), which develops, promotes and supports collaboration between universities and business across the UK. Their predecessor body, the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE), was responsible for the landmark report, The Fuse: Igniting High Growth for Creative, Digital and Information Technology Industries in the UK. Their role would be to be to advise and support the HEI and employer partners in the development of the fusion aspect of this project;</p> <p>GuildHE, one of the two formal representative bodies for Higher Education in the UK. Their role would be to advise and support the HEI partners on the development of the new models of delivery and on any organisational changes that are required in order to deliver these new programmes.</p>	Advisory Partners
<p>Creative Skillset, as the Issuing Authority for Apprentices for the creative industries, has extensive experience in developing apprenticeship frameworks. For example, in 2012, Creative Skillset developed the first three HLAs for the Creative Industries, as follows:</p> <p>All three were active in early 2013 and delivered through FE and the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). Beyond this, Creative Skillset worked with the BBC and HE partners in 2013 to create the first Higher Level Apprenticeship in Broadcast Technology. This was developed as a three-year programme and is being adapted in to a two-year programme as part of this pilot, drawing on the lessons learnt.</p> <p>Creative Skillset is therefore well placed to write the new frameworks for the six HAs being developed as part of this project, and to this end, the involvement of a part-time development manager has been factored in to the development stage of the project.</p>	Apprenticeships Issuing Authority
Principle 1: It is focused on HEFCE priorities, 'derived from those of Government, rather than the positioning of individual institutions.' As outlined below, the project is strongly linked to a range of government priorities.	Government
HEFCE funding would primarily be used for the brokerage	Sector Skills

<p>role Creative Skillset would play in this project, which includes liaising with and advising employers and HEIs in the development of these programmes, the project management costs of ensuring that targets are met, the costs of a centralised marketing campaign to ensure that potential students and their parents, as well as additional employers and HEIs, understand the essence of the programmes and the evaluation and dissemination costs to ensure that models of best practice are widely distributed, thereby informing future practice and having a potentially transformative effect on the development of HAs</p>	<p>Council</p> <p>Project Management</p> <p>Promotion</p> <p>Evaluation</p> <p>Dissemination</p>
<p>Employers, meanwhile, are looking for educated individuals with high level skills who are work-ready. These developments would address all of these issues and offer tangible benefits for students, employers and HEIs alike, as outlined in the benefits section below. The dissemination of the models in to other HEIs and other sectors would ensure that the benefits apply to a wider range of HEIs than those in receipt of HEFCE funding for this project.</p>	<p>Employers</p> <p>Benefits</p> <p>Dissemination</p>
<p>The project activities address key ambitions included in the Government's Plan for Growth, to support 'more apprenticeships than any previous government²' and recommendations in Sir Tim Wilson's Review of Business-University collaboration that: 'Pathways, including higher-level apprenticeships and professional qualifications, should become a priority development³', as well as key recommendations in the Richard Review of Apprenticeships, as set out above.</p>	<p>Government</p> <p>Apprenticeships</p>
<p>In terms of the degree models themselves, some recent research undertaken by Kaplan in to market demand for two-year accelerated degree programmes highlights that the 'incumbent coalition government supports the alternative of providing two-year accelerated degrees alongside three-year degrees⁴' and that the 'Business Secretary, Vince Cable, has publicly supported the growth of two-year accelerated degrees.⁵</p>	<p>Accelerated Degrees</p> <p>Government</p>
<p>Embedding the fusion of technological, creative and entrepreneurial skills within the HA/degree models would ensure all HA graduates think more entrepreneurially, thereby providing UK companies with more people who can see business potential in creative ideas. It would also identify and develop potential future leaders and managers.</p>	<p>Fusion</p> <p>Entrepreneurs</p> <p>Leaders</p>

This proposal would broaden the range of entry routes to the creative industries, reduce the gap in esteem between HA and HE provision and increase access to cutting edge, industry standard training.	Access
By embedding leading employers into both degree development and delivery, this proposal would deepen industry links to education.	Collaboration Employers
Southampton Solent University's mission commits it to 'responsive and flexible educational provision that meets market needs' and 'excellent career prospects for students.' Indeed, a major thrust of their current strategy is to enhance student employability to ensure that graduates are able to realise a good return on their investment.	Employability
Furthermore, the employers that have signed up to work with this project, by the very nature of committing their time and resources to this project, are demonstrating their commitment to enhancing the work readiness of graduates and to the matching of graduate skills to the needs of creative industry employers.	Employers Employability
Similarly, the need for graduates to have carried out work placements in order to secure a job has also been evidenced by employers. For example, a recent research study carried out by Highfliers Research, found that over half of graduate recruiters 'stated that it was either 'not very likely' or 'not at all likely' that a graduate who'd had no previous work experience – either with their organisation or at another employer – would be successful during their selection process and be made a job offer	Work-based Learning
'The era where we can afford multidisciplinary groups is becoming unaffordable. We need universities to develop graduates with interdisciplinary skills, or who can lead interdisciplinary teams	Interdisciplinary Skills
'We need to tackle the idea that the A-levels and three year-degree model is the only route to a good career. [...] The skills needs of tomorrow's economy will be different to the needs of today's	Flexible Delivery
The novelty of the proposal is apparent in the radical movement in an essentially conservative curriculum process, a movement that places the development of a 'fusion' of skills at the heart of its curriculum, that challenges traditional models of degree delivery and places work based learning at the forefront of its development, and in so doing, repositions apprenticeships as a sought after alternative to traditional	Fusion Work-based Learning Apprenticeships

degree models	
<p>Employers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to tailor course content to their needs; • Opportunity to address industry skills gaps issues; • Opportunity to nurture young creative talent and to benefit from the enthusiasm apprentices bring to the company; • Opportunity to employ more work-ready graduates with the essential mix of skills that they require; • Improved business performance resulting from more highly qualified staff. <p>HEIs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to stay at the top of their game with the development of cutting edge programmes; • Opportunity to challenge traditional models of course delivery; • Opportunity to build closer links with creative media employers; • Opportunity to offer a new and competitive way of engaging students; • Opportunity to strengthen the vocational nature of their programmes / enhance student employability. <p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly employable at the end of the programme; • Opportunity to undertake a course that combines the academic rigour of a degree programme with the industry relevance of an apprenticeship; • Opportunity to gain the latest industry knowledge and skills; • Opportunity to gain significant work experience and contacts; • Opportunity to earn a wage throughout the programme; • For undergraduates, only two years of university fees, instead of three and opportunity to move in to the employment market more quickly than on a traditional three year course. 	<p>Benefits</p> <p>Partners</p>
<p>Creative Skillset employers' survey: This was sent out to employers within the UK TV, film, computer games and interactive media industries and a total of 105 responses were received. Of these, 86% support the idea of these new work-based higher apprenticeship degree-programmes, 73%</p>	<p>Research Survey</p>

<p>feel that these new degree programmes and their associated graduates with more industry relevant skills would potentially have a positive impact on the productivity of their company, 47% would be prepared to recruit a higher level apprentice as part of their team for two years and 84% of those would be willing to pay the apprentice the minimum wage for apprentices. Additionally, 71% of respondents stated that they would be happy to be contacted further for discussions around these programmes. Please see Appendix 3 for the complete results of this survey.</p>	
<p>'In a changing HE environment, it is imperative that HEIs explore new and innovative methods of course delivery that focus on the development of employability skills first and foremost, in collaboration with industry partners. These new HLAs with degree awards embedded would do just that and GuildHE is delighted to be involved with this project and the wider dissemination of its outcomes.</p>	<p>Innovation Skills Collaboration</p>
<p>'In a changing HE environment, it is imperative that HEIs explore new and innovative methods of course delivery that focus on the development of employability skills first and foremost, in collaboration with industry partners. These new HLAs with degree awards embedded would do just that and GuildHE is delighted to be involved with this project and the wider dissemination of its outcomes.</p>	<p>Collaboration Dissemination</p>
<p>Creative Skillset new undergraduate degree programmes student and parent survey: This was sent out to students/recent graduates and their advisors via Creative Skillset's Facebook and Twitter accounts and a total of 75 responses were received. Of these, 81% would be very likely to apply for / advise prospective students to apply for a degree like this, assuming it was in a relevant subject area. When asked to rate the major attractions of the programme as 'Important', 'Neutral' or 'Not Important', 96% of respondents rated 'Lots of work experience' as important, 85% rated 'Paid while you study' as important, 76% rated 'Reduced debt' as important and 59% rated 'Complete degree in 2 years' as important</p>	<p>Student Demand Work-based learning</p>
<p>'Fifty-four per cent of young people in the UK would opt to undertake an apprenticeship if one were available to them⁶ and that this rises to '56 per cent among university students, and to 66 per cent of young people who were already employed but received no training⁷'. This research was based on interviews with 1,000 14-24 year olds.</p>	<p>Research Apprenticeships</p>

Furthermore, the university has found that students on these programmes tend to be more focused and outperform equivalent three-year degree students and that any barriers associated with two-year degree programmes are largely based on inaccurate perceptions of quality.	Two-year Degrees Quality
'Although I expect to graduate from my graphic design degree with honours, I am already worried about not being able to get work in industry without doing unpaid internships and placements to get on the job experience that is required from most employers.	Work Experience Internships

3.6.5 Secondary research – exploring and analysing the broader issues and documents

'Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents' (Bowen, 2009, p.27). Documents for analysis can be considered to come from two sources. Those that are created by the researcher and those that already exist or 'researcher-generated and already existing data' (Rapley, 2007, p.9).

Koshy (2007, p.90) identifies that the key advantages of document analysis are that it can provide insights into a situation relatively easily and highlight objectives and policies that may not otherwise be easily communicated. It also enables support of other forms of evidence – in this case, through the interviews with participants.

For the purposes of the research study, documents that already existed were selected on the basis that they were created primarily during the development process but also the delivery phases of the programmes. In total 24 document sources were selected (directed by both my research questions, in particular RQ3 and the 'theoretical trajectory', Rapley, 2007, p.10). This 'archive' formed primary material that were 'documents-in-use' (p.88) during the development stage and included bid documents, agendas and minutes of meetings. It could be said that these documents provide tangible insights into the historical practices of the project team and offered the opportunity to triangulate with other methods used to 'seek convergence and corroboration through the use of different data sources and methods' (Bowen, 2009, p.28).

There does remain a risk of making interpretations that cannot easily be verified but this subjective analysis is consistent with the research approach. The dual role of the research lead as both participant and investigator is, in this case, a benefit in that having direct experience of the writing and editing of documents or involvement in meetings where agendas and minutes are the documents to be analysed does privilege the researcher in experiencing the documents in use as well as an archive of research data. This also addresses issues around authenticity, credibility, meaning (truth) and representativeness of documents as discussed by Daymon and Holloway (2011, p.281). The researcher's familiarity with the material helps to determine the authenticity and credibility of the documents, having close knowledge of who authored the documents, in what context and purpose. As 'socially situated products, produced and intended to be read, seen or heard within a particular social context' (Daymon and Holloway, 2011, p.282) each document in the archive has a clearly identified author and social context, in some cases representing the discussion in a meeting and in others demonstrating decision-making and the context of the production of the document is important in the interpretations made in the research. Finally, the representatives of the document archive may be open to question. In this case, every document produced in conjunction with the project was included in the archive. This was aided by having a clearly structured governance of the project that determined the frequency and purpose of meetings and other document production such as quarterly reports.

The data informing the study also includes the documentation from the inception of the project, the validation of the programmes to the formal completion of the project over a two-year period (see table 14 above). Accounts of participants including students, staff and employers engaged in the implementation of the programmes provide rich, descriptive data. Given the action research approach and driven by a desire to be responsive and reflective the data analysis method needed to be carefully considered in order to recognise the interplay between the participants and documents. Rather than being "containers of data" the focus is on how the documents are used as "a resource for human actors for purposeful ends" (Silverman, 2016, p.172). This data provides insights for both the context for the programme leading to the environment being such that intra-departmental

cooperation and alignment leading to the availability of funding for such programmes. These documents also provide the background and a narrative for the development phase of the programme. Though the document creation process is still of interest, it is the responses to these documents by human actors that is the central concern. During the project, subsequent validation process and programme delivery, a wide-range of documents were important in directing action of participants. These range from government policy papers, minutes of project meetings, course approval papers and external examiners reports. The interest is on the role that these documents have in shaping the behaviour of humans (Silverman, 2016, p.181).

3.6.6 Secondary Data Collection

Given the scale of the project, there was a very formal set of “official proceedings” (Silverman, 2015, p.293) in order to ensure quality and transparency. These included a business plan, regular governance and update meetings, quarterly reports and progress reports. The SSC project team took responsibility for keeping minutes, distributing documents and hosting quarterly meetings. These documents form an important source of data in analysing the development phase of the project. Another set of documents then relate to the validation of the programme within the university. These include stage one, two and three of the formal validation process, programme specifications, unit descriptors, course handbook and, in addition to ‘standard’ courses, memorandum of understanding, employer handbook and mentoring guide.

“...many argue that the existence of a mentor can be a critical factor in making work based learning a success by having the learner’s interests at heart and the expertise to offer sound advice, by helping learners reflect on their experience and providing them with encouragement and motivation”.

(Duckenfield and Stimer, 1992, p.26-27 in Brennan and Little, 1996, p.91).

Training in mentoring was offered for employers to ensure that the learner was adequately supported in the workplace. This helped underline the importance of mentoring but the awarding of “academic credit for completion of mentor training” as suggested by Brennan and Little (1996, p.90) may have provided “mentors with a

status reward” which may helped underline the importance of this role in the workplace.

These documents were produced in collaboration with other university departments including quality, student finance and student records. These documents collectively help contextualise the development process and provide “a useful background and context for the project” (Koshy, 2009, p.89) through to the delivery of the pilot course. In delivering flexible courses it is recognised that university systems and processes may be one area that friction can be introduced with the associated need for shared understanding to enable non-standard provision to be developed. These documents provided insights into that process and the interplay between university teams with different responsibilities (also their engagement with external organisations such as Student Finance England). Table ? above, lists these documents and the type of data that they contain. All of these Word and PDF files are “organisational documents” (Silverman, 2015, p.285), stored in their original form along with coded extracts for analysis.

3.6.7 Secondary Data Analysis

Overall the number of documents is large, the data analysis time-consuming and selecting the key documents was a significant challenge. Other documents included participant journals and field notes, inform narratives of participants’ experiences (the research author being also a participant). These field notes in particular contributed to the reflective and analytical aspects critical to an action research approach. Not all of the analysis was carried out during each cycle and documentation was returned to and analysed in more depth as the overall programme was drawing to a close.

The questions suggested by Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) were used to provide a structured approach to the analysis (see table 15 below).

Table 15: Textual analysis (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, in Silverman, 2015, p.286).

Questions to ask about documents	
Contexts	How are texts written?
	How are they read?
	Who writes them?
	Who reads them?
	For what purposes?
	On what occasions?
	With what outcomes?
Texts	What is recorded?
	What is omitted?
	What is taken for granted?
	What does the writer seem to take for granted about the reader?
	What do readers need to know in order to make sense of them?

The context of many of the documents analysed in the study was that they were written by the SSC project team in the form of meetings agendas, papers for consideration at meetings and minutes as well as the initial preparation for the research-funding bid. During the development process they were very much working documents but they also provided a rich source of information for the study. The intended audience was the project team in most cases and they were used to ensure shared understanding and to keep a record of proceedings for governance and sharing knowledge. The documents centred on the quarterly meetings and each university prepared a report to keep track of the project goals. Together the documentation provides a written summary of the project provided to HEFCE in the reporting process. The texts recorded all aspects in the development including curriculum design, progress against key performance indicators, records of employer contributions, progress on validation and the development of marketing communications. At certain points some of the taken for granted aspects of the project were tested including the extent to which higher apprenticeships were likely to emerge. This was a particular area for clarification as each programme had a distinctive design and the potential for an over-arching 'brand' and campaign that had been assumed by the SSC in the first instance was clearly not going to be

possible. In order to make sense of the documentation the reader must understand that they are working documents, shared and used by the project team. The purpose is to construct a winning bid (in the first instance) then draw together the project team in planning for action and then to review progress of the project. In many respects the texts are prove that the project is able to achieve the objectives of the programme and that the project team has put in place appropriate governance.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Throughout the study ethical conduct was undertaken at all times. The research proposal was submitted to the institutional ethics committee for approval. Participant information sheets and consent forms were produced in order to facilitate informed consent. An important ethical concern in participatory research is the impact “beliefs, values, experiences, interests, political commitments, wider aims in life, and social identities” (Borg et al, 2013) have in shaping the research. The study is grounded in human interactions based upon trust (Daymon and Hollway, 2011, p.55), to a great extent is concerned with change and as a result the outcomes were unpredictable. Overall some broad guiding principles were adopted. Harm to participants was to be avoided, all participants were to be anonymised (pseudonyms are use throughout), that research interaction be clearly flagged in an appropriate location, ethical implications were to be considered in an on-going way given the length of the study (up to three years depending on participant) formally at each research interaction and that each participant group required particularly ethical consideration.

Students participating in the programmes were small in number and the research relied upon full participation in the research study. This had the potential for students to feel pressured into taking part during the recruitment process, they may have felt that participation was compulsory and may even be linked to their performance or progression on the programmes. The approach taken was to deal with these aspects in the participant information sheet and consent form and to clearly delineate the teaching and research interactions. The use of a recording device underlined the research interactions.

Employers participating in the programme were initially contacted at a high level within their organisation (in most cases director level). There was the potential for confusion between participation on the programmes (effectively offering a series of 7-10 week placements) and the research. Again, these were dealt with by ensuring a clear delineation between meetings as part of the programme development and delivery and research interactions.

Representatives of the sector skills council who took part in the research were particularly vulnerable as the organisation is most easily identifiable.

Documentation and minutes from meetings formed data in the research as well as recordings and transcripts of meetings. Care was taken to obtain consent from individuals where possible but it was not always possible to contact all authors of documents created through the development process and prior to the research study commencing.

Staff within the course team formed the final participant group. In most cases the research lead also had the role of line manager or seniority in the organisation and had the potential for staff feeling an obligation to participate. Care was taken to ensure that research interactions were clearly delineated and protected by the adoption of participant information sheets and consent forms. On completion of the study, staff are to be offered a workshop to disseminate the findings and discuss the implications (Daymon and Holloway, 2011, p.72) of the study amongst participants and more widely in the subject group.

When a formal meeting was taking place to discuss aspects of the programme a second meeting was scheduled where the context of the research was made clear. This was clearly signalled by the recording of the conversations. This was equally important for students, staff and employers where other roles held by the researcher in the project would respectively be lecturer, head of subject group and partner. In each case the consent form providing an appropriate ethical framework for informed consent. Interactions that form part of the running of the programme were carefully identified with the application of a research protocol.

Another aspect with ethical implications was that the range of data was very broad from documents, interviews, meetings and observations taken over a long period of time. Though participants were aware at each stage that research was being carried out the interpretations, meta-narrative development and all aspects of the research that were brought together into this action research study were analysed and edited by the principal investigator. The intention is to produce an account that has “more weight than individual accounts” (Feldman, 2007, p.28) and that an awareness of reflexive aspects is a guiding principal to ensure that the account developed in the study may have no claims to be an absolute truth or to be better than any of the accounts of others, it is at the same time a balanced and authoritative account drawing together a range of sources, analysed systematically, carefully and critically with the aim of improving “practice and the educational situations in which our students and we are immersed” (Feldman, 2007, p.24). While having no claim to truth, the ethical imperative is to as far as possible fairly represent the views of the participants during the transcription, coding and analysis of data.

A participant information sheet explaining the background to the research, the research questions research method (semi-structured interview), an explanation of why they have been asked to participate, location (usually within a private office in the placement agency), duration (60-90 minutes) and confidentiality along with contact details of the principal investigator, supervisor and independent academic and consent form tailored to each of the participant groups. A consent form setting out that the participant had been provided with an information sheet, that participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw at any point up to anonymisation, that the data will only be used in preparation of the research report. Finally, an interview guide setting out the research aim and research questions related to the interview, data collection plan outlining the goal of the research and the questions tailored to the participant group and research question. For example, the topic areas for the initial student interviews were based on themes that emerged from the pilot interviews and were intended to cover the background to their life history through to their participation in the programme, broken down into upbringing, education, acquisition of skills (soft skills, digital skills and creative skills), employability (work experience/internships and portfolio), practice (agency

culture, hours, background of colleagues, client contact, favourite task/role, least favourite task/role, successful projects, unsuccessful projects). These topic areas served as a guide but the interviews followed a conversational style.

3.8 Trustworthiness and Authenticity

The context for the study is the workplace, both in terms of the university social situation of the research lead and in terms of the workplaces offered by the employers, summarised as a community of practice. The social and cultural aspects of the workplace situation therefore are intrinsic to knowledge creation and suggest an action research approach. A challenge for the research lead is that of being an insider. Advantages of being an insider researcher are that you have “easy access to people and information that can further enhance that knowledge” and have “in-depth knowledge of many of the complex issues” (Costley, Elliott and Gibbs, 2010, p.3). This closeness offers some ethical challenges in the change in role from colleague or tutor to researcher and the level of trust invested by the participants that may be influenced by relationships outside of the study. Costley, Elliott and Gibbs suggest that “care in gaining feedback from participants, initial evaluation of the data, triangulation... and an awareness of the issues represented in the project” (2010, p.6) are steps that an insider researcher can take in avoiding bias. In the study feedback opportunities were provided through the pilot studies and the interviews with student, employer and staff participants along with project documentation offered the opportunity for triangulation.

Many action research studies can be said to have the aim of improving practice, some studies may also have wider ambitions relating to society or the human condition in some way. There are two main aspects relating to quality that relate to an action research study and can apply both to the quality of the research and the quality of the report. The reporting of the research deals with narratives generated through engagement with participants and then in the development of the narrative of the programmes, constructed and edited by the principal investigator outlining the developmental and temporal aspects.

The concept of trustworthiness was first proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), who suggested a framework to use in relation to qualitative research. These have been very influential and many authors have gone on to refine and apply these principles. This approach is particularly relevant to the study in relation to transferability and they suggest that in order to maximise opportunities for others to understand the extent to which the study might be applicable to their own circumstances that a rich, descriptive narrative be developed (Daymon and Holloway, 2011, p.85). This perhaps emphasises the importance of taking steps to ensure that narratives developed in the study would be recognised by the participants, notwithstanding the dominant voice of the research lead in the study. In this the related concept of authenticity is important in ensuring “the true reporting of participants’ ideas” (Daymon and Holloway, 2011, p.84). Lincoln and Guba suggest that within the context of a naturalistic, open study (as compared to a closed, ‘conventional enquiry’) the extent to which ‘truth’ can be guaranteed is limited and that this in itself may limit the potential to persuade skeptics and for them to in turn take action or operationalise theory based on the study.

Table 16: Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p301-327).

Criteria	Techniques
Credibility	Prolonged engagement Persistent observation Triangulation Peer debriefing Negative case analysis Referential adequacy Member checks
Transferability	Thick description
Dependability	Overlap methods Dependability audit
Confirmability	Confirmability audit
Reflexivity: in relation to all four criteria	Reflexive journal

Table 16 above sets out the criteria and techniques proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). In applying this framework to the study, credibility is enhanced through the on-going engagement with participants throughout the study (in many cases over a two year period) with data being gathered periodically from three distinct participant groups to facilitate triangulation. The peer debriefing approach was used informally during the study in reporting back early and tentative analyses and findings. The intention is to formalise this through a workshop. The transferability criterion encouraged the overall narrative and meta-narrative approach and the development of a conceptual framework covering the foundation, modes of learning, outcomes and potential for productivity for accelerated, work-based learning that may be applicable to apprenticeships. The dependability of the study is enhanced through the availability of an audit trail for the raw data (recordings and field notes for example), data analysis (chunks of data and coding templates) and theme development. This has the potential for an audit to be carried out. Appendix A identifies all of the data sources used in the study, the date it was created and some justification in relation to the research questions. For the interviews a transcript was created and stored before a standard coding template was applied to chunks of text. The same coding template was used for the document analyses. The confirmability of the study is shown through the synthesis of theory and analysis of data to develop

the conceptual framework in addressing the research aim and research questions. A self-critical, reflexive approach was taken throughout the study and this is summarised in section 5.4.

3.9 Limitations

Action research aims to inform practice and is not required to be large in scale. However, the number of participants in the study is small so any claims for generisability may be more limited than larger studies. This is acknowledged in the methodological approach through the development of the rich, descriptive narrative (Daymon and Holloway, 2011, p.85) to enable transferability and the development of a conceptual framework designed to assist those engaged in accelerated, work-based learning or other flexible learning programmes or apprenticeships.

Originally the plan was to apply the action research cycle to each of the trimesters, in practice, research interactions and data analyses took place in a less regular and organised manner, often driven by emergent opportunities. In most cases 2-3 research interactions took place over the study per participant.

3.10 Summary

In this chapter the research design has been described within an interpretive research philosophy considering mainly qualitative data sources and organisational documents. An action research methodology was employed in order to inform practice in a developmental way for the accelerated and work-based learning programmes at the heart of the study. The data sources comprised documents relating to the development of the programmes, field notes from meetings and other opportunities for observing participants in the programme and transcripts of interviews and conversations amongst students, employers and staff engaged in co-producing the programme. A pilot study was used to test research instruments and in particular develop emergent themes and interview guides. The populations from which the participants were drawn included employers offering on-going work-based learning opportunities, staff engaged in developing and delivering the programmes and students on the courses. Ethical implications were addressed,

trustworthiness and authenticity of the study were discussed and methodological limitations were considered.

4.0 Findings: Description, Analysis and Synthesis

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the action research methodology and presented the research design with reference to the three research questions. This chapter is organised by considering each research question in relation to the literature, the data analysis and results. The data collected included transcripts of interviews, field notes and document analyses. The themes that have emerged through the analysis of this data will be discussed in relation to the context of the study and the professional situation of the research lead. The outcomes of the study have the potential to influence the practice of the research lead, those engaged in the project and may be transferable to those engaged in similar programmes by attending to the trustworthiness of the study through rich description and the development of a conceptual framework that might be applied. The implementation of the methodology will be discussed, in particular any lessons learned through the project along with an account of potential future areas for research.

4.2 RQ1: What is the experience of all partners within accelerated, work-based degree programmes?

This section addresses the first research question and focuses on the experiences of all partners while taking part in the programmes as they move from the pre-periphery of practice within a hybrid university/workplace social context. The categories have been defined in relation to the inter-connected concepts of habitus, practice and field, developed by Bourdieu to help explain the practices of actors within different social situations (fields) governed by a tacit understanding of rules in accordance with their possession of social capital valued in the field. The codes identified through data analysis relating to the RQ1 are set out in table 17 below.

Table 17: Categories and codes relating to RQ1.

Habitus	Practice	Field
Adding value Approvals Complexity Confidence Coping Culture Hours Pressure Roles	Creative skills Control skills Digital skills Interdisciplinary skills Portfolio Reflection Research Soft skills Time management Writing skills UX skills	Management Workplace v university

4.2.1 Habitus

Habitus (Bourdieu, 1977, p.94), refers to “our predisposed ways of being, acting and operating in the social environment” (Sweetman, 2009, p.491). It is derived from our circumstances and allows us to participate in social situations that we may find ourselves in, it is not fixed and Bourdieu argues that the primary habitus relates to upbringing and is relatively more fixed than the secondary habitus of education and other life experiences. This is particularly relevant in the context of a student participating in the workplace, but by virtue of participating in the programme, the habitus of the employer and academic staff teams in the distinct fields of the workplace and higher education are also to be considered. For the student this entry into the periphery of a new field (and the requirement to switch between fields) may present challenges and opportunities for the individual to adapt and change, their habitus reconfigured through these experiences, but it may also offer challenges in understanding rules that govern practice in each field, a concept that Bourdieu refers to as doxa. The assumption being that the student may find their feet if they have accrued appropriate social capital prior to joining the programme through their upbringing (primary habitus), or is prepared for practice by participation in the programme through multi-modal learning (secondary habitus). Though habitus itself is elusive, the extent to which a student thrives when entering the new field, or the depth of engagement between employer and university course team might be an indication of their habitus and social capital. Similarly a student

lacking confidence, or a less engaged employer/staff partnership may indicate a lack of fit with the habitus of the new situation.

Students often referred to their growing sense of confidence which perhaps might suggest the acquisition of social capital and the secondary habitus “I think I’m lucky in the fact that I don’t get easily embarrassed so I’m like definitely prepared to ask lots of questions” (Verity 1.1) and a readiness to be more assertive in the workplace (with reference to an agency visit that the team had organised) or find their place in the field “Why didn’t you tell me I wanted to go?” (Verity 1.1). This confidence was also challenged in some cases by entry into the new field and workplace habitus “so different to classroom and anything like that I’ve experienced so I felt like I didn’t have any confidence” (Mike 3). Certainly there was an awareness amongst the students with varying levels of confidence at different stages in the programme that confidence was an important factor and symbolic of adapting to the new field.

“Very amenable and approachable and enthusiastic... once he gets exposed to a few more people in the business and builds a bit of confidence... (Max 3).

“You have to cut them more slack... positive attitude and enthusiasm and hopefully a little bit of confidence, but hopefully we can help to cultivate that... expressing a desire to learn but not scared to offer an opinion... we try to create quite an open atmosphere where that is encouraged...” (Max 3).

This does indicate that the supervisor acknowledges the importance of confidence, perhaps helping for the student to find their voice in the organisation and may also indicate that their habitus is adjusting to the pastoral and mentoring role of the new situation. Whether this confidence was deeply embedded “I feel like I have always been quite confident” (Verity 1.1), or for show “I think I’m really confident I think that is one of my traits and I can put on quite a front if I’m not” (Mike 3). Perhaps this has been a factor in influencing colleagues or even managing upwards. This was perhaps the first time that students were in a position to influence colleagues “I was nervous to say can we like... That... coming in faster or whatever” (Verity 1.1), often in an interdisciplinary context “I had to deal with the designers, then they came in a

meeting with the two web developers, speak through what I had found... whether it would be possible to do this... what they were thinking” (Verity 1.1). Seeing a project come together could help build confidence and trust in judgment “I felt like once I was more comfortable explaining it, like it turned out so well, it was fantastic, he did a good job” (Verity 1) and that working as a team with everyone making their own contribution “once it turned out so well that your glad you made your little comments and things” (Verity 1). Perhaps because of a certain maturity and gaining early confidence, this student felt able to be quite assertive and manage upwards “I’ve kind of subtly hinted that I would like to work with them a bit more ... I did some work with employee comms and it interested me more” (Mike 3), sometimes with a real focus on skill development “I’ve asked them to concentrate on my writing skills as a personal goal, not that I write badly” (Mike 3). Students were capable of operating strategically, gaining agency to make the most of opportunities and to seek out experiences that might be beneficial.

One of the consequences of the regular contact between employer and link tutor promoted a deeper working relationship with regular communication, particularly in preparation for the new trimester or during assessments. In some cases this meant as the programme progressed that a more flexible, student-managed, approach was required with the negotiation of the timing of placements and so on. For the student this deeper engagement with the agency afforded the opportunity to be more influential and confident in the workplace. In turn, this confidence was recognised by the employer and a greater level of complexity was provided “the confidence has gone through the roof really” (Mike 3.2).

Students were presented with a wide range of tasks that they were expected to carry out. Coping with exposure to the field of the workplace, which may not align with their habitus, combining the mundane with the more challenging towards a higher level of autonomy and agency (perhaps in this realising the value of the capital they have acquired to the field). “Admin is not as fun, doing board reports. (Millie 2), “Yeah, I’m happy to produce Excel documents” (Verity 1). Particularly for content creation there was often a high degree of responsibility, often under tight deadlines: “producing like email and start-up guides, I’m obviously working with someone, I do

feel like they have given me a lot of responsibility – produce the PDF we are going to send to 5,000 potential clients – predominantly what I’ve written” (Verity 1.1). “I wrote a blog this morning... I’m running social media, doing their accounts” (Verity 1). “I wrote all the storyboard” (Verity 1). This seems to come as a surprise. Perhaps the student was expecting to be working on simulations rather than directly on client work?

Sometimes this included large and multi-faceted projects: “I’m thinking back to what you had to do to launch the product. Absolutely everything was developed in six weeks. There was no identity. That was a lot of work...” (Simon 1). Clearly this would very much depend on the individual student but it might be a mistake for the course team to anticipate and pre-plan all activities too closely but rather allow for the student to find their feet and level in the organisation. McLeod, et al. (2011) observed that working class students who hadn’t studied a specialist degree in the field were at a disadvantage when finding placements: “Most lacked not only the economic capital to ease the hardship of placements, but also the guidance of tutors who knew the industry, it’s working practices and key contacts”. Attending a specialist course is seen to overcome some of these barriers, one of the objectives of the accelerated programme was to provide not only industry contacts but paid industry experience too. It is perhaps too early to say but the first graduate from the programme found a job at one of the leading media agencies before the end of the course, the extensive industry experience gave her confidence in interviews and assessment centres, especially when faced with scenarios and role plays. The most recent graduate of the programme was offered a permanent role in their placement organization.

When asked to describe their agency, the different cultures became apparent, perhaps emphasizing that the habitus of each workplace would be heterogeneous (as might be expected in comparing agency and in-house but also between agencies): “they describe themselves as endearingly arrogant... full of intelligent people sort of like vibrant in a way” (Verity 1). “When I got there it was overwhelming... it was quite corporate” (Mike 3). Something that academic staff recognised: “The atmosphere in the work placements are really, really different.”

(Lily 1). This does mean that if the choice of agency doesn't fit the student it may lead to problems for all parties. This was a factor during the programmes where a student was rejected by one agency but accepted by another. Perhaps this isn't highlighted in the literature where agencies are assumed to be relatively homogenous. It also suggests that the student may initially at least be looking at the actors in the field as an outsider prior to understanding the rules, realising the value and being prepared to invest their capital.

“... at least some of the value attached to these creatives' cultural capital lay in its ability to bridge the gap between the privileged habitus of agency life and the cultural landscape of those occupying a different social position.”
(McLeod, et al., 2011)

Though the programme had been designed with industry and the employer was closely involved in the setting of appropriate assessments there was still a sense that coping with pressure was an inherent part of the course. “Sometimes if I feel like I'm under pressure I don't like to work on school stuff at [Andi 2]. Mainly weekends.” (Millie 2). This sense that time management is vital in keeping things together was highlighted “I think it's really important that I keep focused, maybe dedicate one night a week to uni work” (Mike 3) and that this may be a factor to bear in mind as the course progresses “Its fine now – when it picks up the pace a bit it might be harder.” (Mike 3). Putting it simply, from the student perspective there had to be a very clear distinction between workplace activities and university activities and it was up to the student to manage this “it's been very separate it has to be doesn't it? (Verity 1.2). This was the case even with a high-level of collaboration between employer and staff and was in some ways self-imposed by the student.

“I think he is coping remarkably well... particularly find it very impressive he always appears to be on top of both his work and his university studies... he seems to manage it really well...” (Max 3).

The profile and preferences of applicants was borne in mind in relation to the planning of placements but nothing could be guaranteed “[Mike 3]'s gone off to work

at [Max 3] he's finding it's a very corporate environment so that is something quite challenging for him to get used to, and I think that's where his confidence has dropped when he's gone in there... that's why he's contacting us seeking reassurance." (Lily 1). Staff had to be sensitive to changes in behaviour, often relating to confidence and the development of coping strategies in response to the intensity and shorter periods of holiday. Staff in a level leadership role would expect to take on pastoral care aspects but all staff working on the accelerated programmes had to be more aware of this.

The course is structured so that a period of traditional university experience (usually eight weeks) is followed by a period in the workplace (usually seven weeks). The step-up in activity and complexity between the two is considerable.

"Cos I did find, cos I think as well, when you're not used to working full-time and then you go from doing like a couple of hours a day and the you end up like, you know, being there for eight hours. Then in the evening I was just knackered." (Meeting 1.2)

This cumulative effect could build up over time as the end of the teaching period and the second assessment approached.

"it takes a couple of weeks to settle in and then you're tired because your sort of... you can do work in the first two weeks but it is harder so then you know you have a shorter amount of time to get the work in so that's why I panicked in the end this year" (Meeting 1.2).

In some cases the work assigned to the students was in itself challenging and open-ended, particularly as the workplace team recognised growing confidence and value to be added.

"I'm thinking back to what you two had to do to launch the product absolutely everything was developed in six weeks. There was no identity. That was a lot of work." (Meeting 1.2).

In many ways all of these experiences offered the student the opportunity to discover if the agency or in-house setting was a place that they felt comfortable in and if it was, to what extent was the student adapting to and assimilating the habitus of the industry and employer.

How do the students perceive their workplaces and workplace culture? “it’s very welcoming... what they describe themselves as is endearingly arrogant, when I was reading their style guide it has got that vibe to it a nice place to work, very quiet music in the background, full of intelligent people sort of like vibrant in a way. You can tell it’s fresh, new and stuff...” (Verity 1.1) on a more prosaic level, often students are unaware of the budgetary aspects of projects, something that cannot be overlooked in a “live” environment with the need to make a big impact on a low budget “You don’t take into account that there are budgets – you have to think small but great.” (Millie 2). The student placed in-house had quite a different culture to adapt to “When I got there it was overwhelming... it was quite corporate, so different to the classroom and anything like that I’ve experienced” (Mike 3). Though that student was chosen to work in-house as he had already expressed a preference for that style of working, he was now keen to see what agency working would be like, even if only for a short time “Because it’s so specific at [Max 3] where you’re in-house, that’s the service you work with, it will be interesting to see what an agency has to offer cos I know they have lots of different clients” (Mike 3).

“In his next placement we’re keen to get him out... he sat in a far corner, not away from everyone else but a hot-desking system, but perhaps we didn’t make that clear and encourage him to move around to sit with different people and build those relationships...” (Max 3).

In comparison with agency life there appeared to be a formality, in observing the habitus of the agency: “I find they are all really friendly but they are “work colleague, work colleague” so I don’t think they’re very social outside that’s just their colleagues to the left and right” (Mike 3), and that this specialist organisation almost had its own language “there is so much to learn as a whole, so in-depth what you need to know so many acronyms” (Mike 3). Sometimes the student was happily

surprised to find that certain preconceptions proved to be inaccurate “When you said email marketing, I just genuinely - I was surprised just how powerful it can be as exciting or creative I was so surprised that it actually is. You think TV advertising is where you can do it all cos you can personalise it you can make it even more appropriate for that customer” (Verity 1.1). So the perceptions a student has prior to the placement may be different to the experiences they have when they arrive.

Having worked with students to match their preferred working style, this could only be a guide and no guarantee “...whereas at [employer 2] it is more informal and [Millie 2] has been able to settle in really quickly, she’s working with people who are quite vibrant. The atmosphere in the work placements are really, really different.” (Lily 1) in comparison with in-house “He’s like wearing suits every day and being part of the corporate affairs team, yeah it’s quite different for him.” (Lily 1). Regardless of the workplace culture, the social interaction was also important.

“There’s quite a strong recruitment of graduates, particularly in the engineering disciplines. Broadly speaking the majority are university-educated... you don’t need to have a degree to work there... things are changing in that sense...” (Max 3).

“I think [Millie 2] gets on well with a few of the people that work there but she is also really tired at the end of her days there finding that it is really quite draining to do effectively a full-time job and study. I don’t think she is spending a lot of time socially.” (Lily 1.1)

After taking a little time to adjust, Millie 2 described the working day “I come in at 9.00, I usually stay to 5.20-ish”. The expectations of the commitment of time from workplace to university were significant “I was used to it, kind of. Then coming to uni seven weeks before, now I’ve got so much freedom and then going straight to the 9-5... I think I’m adapting to it fine” (Mike 3.1). In addition to adapting to different work patterns, what roles were expected of the students? “When I first started they were telling me about what they offer and I was just sort of shadowing... mainly marketing a software they are trying to bring out, quite a few different tasks to it”

(Verity 1.1). In some cases this “spare pair of hands” was available to work on new projects that may not otherwise have been progressed “I definitely don’t have the same role as anyone else, I always end up doing something different, cos I’m not with the designers, I’m not with the developers... Market this brand new product...” (Verity 1.2). But in other cases the detailed and technical work wasn’t a natural fit “...I get it back six times – they’re really business-oriented and I’m not.” (Millie 2.1) perhaps a clear indication of a lack of fit.

Both the demands of work and the variety of projects all contributed to the deepening and broadening skillsets, creative, digital, interdisciplinary as well as soft skills and the fundamentals of writing skills. All creating capital valued in the field.

“I think to date that most of the work has been directly to us... I don’t think he’s had that exposure we’ve tried to protect him from that yet have it reviewed by someone who perhaps doesn’t understand the context and perhaps have it pulled to shreds... again its back to the confidence piece... I’m quite keen to manage that... (Max 3).

In this the supervisory team in the workplace might be seen to be very aware of their pastoral and mentoring responsibilities (that they have adapted their habitus in recognising that they are operating on the boundary of two fields?), recognising that other staff may not understand the programme (being unaware of the higher education field). It might be that this need for protection reduced in time as the student progressed and felt more at home in the workplace (adapted to the workplace field) but this would depend on the individual habitus of the student and the habitus of the employer team and academic staff team in recognising that they are operating at the boundary of two fields and when support may be needed by the student in adapting.

4.2.2 Practice

Bourdieu (1977) defines practice as being the relationship between the structured environment and the structured dispositions (habitus) of individuals within a social space which he defines as a field defined by distinctive rules which govern the

practices of individuals. The possession of capital (economic, cultural, social and symbolic. Bourdieu, 1986) valued within the field is intrinsic to the successful entry into and position within that field by an individual.

Practically, given such a rich environment, there is an opportunity to fill a portfolio with live work, often covering a range of roles and the opportunity to develop skills and apply theory learned in the classroom. This may be used to evidence their familiarity with practices in the field and understanding the rules.

“producing like email and start-up guides, I’m obviously working with someone, I do feel like they have given me a lot of responsibility – produce the PDF we are going to send to 5,000 potential clients - predominantly what I’ve written” (Verity 1.1)

Such projects offer the opportunity to take on new tasks and identify preferences “I like writing-up, produce the PDF, the research thing... I like timeframes and stuff, how long do you want me to come up with straplines and stuff? So I’m transforming...” (Verity 1.1) but it may not always be easy to identify outputs that are solely the students “I do have a lot of school things but even working with [Andi 2] I don’t feel I have anything that I have solely 100% contributed on.” (Millie 2). This is perhaps understandable and reflects the teamwork required in the workplace that is simulated through learning activities and assessment in the classroom.

An important contribution to capital valued within agencies are skills, the following section considers the acquisition of a range of skills. The CBI (2017, p.25) definition of core skills included self-management and communication skills which help students acquire technical skills. The development of these core or soft skills were key outcomes of the curriculum design to be applied to a range of live projects and situations. Often the client brief will require management and planning skills to develop insights into the client, their products, existing communications, target audience, competitors and so on, allowing the agency to develop their own creative brief. “I was doing research for them – personalised email marketing... seeing what

their emails are like already and seeing how we can use our services” (Verity 1.2). It may be that the use of live briefs may accelerate the acquisition of capital that is valued in the agency.

Comprising the key skill of communication identified by Leitch (2006) and supplanted with inter-personal skills and team working, soft skills form a vital foundation for employability. There was evidence that students were reflexively aware of the importance of developing these skills “I’ve worked in a few different places I have found you do learn a lot of skills there like teamworking and stuff, prioritising...” (Verity 1.1). The workplace context provided many opportunities to practice and see positive results “...but then I felt like once I was more comfortable explaining it, like it turned out so well, it was fantastic, he did a good job” (Verity 1.1). This was acknowledged by the employer “You’ve got to have really strong people skills.” (Meeting 1.2), particularly in relation to influencing colleagues to prioritise projects and to work in a sophisticated agile environment “Everybody wants studio time in [employer 1] and everybody’s busy, the way you just got everybody to do what was needed.” (Meeting 1.2). In some cases, as described by Simon 1 below, the scope of the project was large, complex and required persuasion and influence of interdisciplinary teams:

“It was fascinating to watch, cos we're doing [large supermarket] and all these big companies and you got this done I just wouldn’t have said it was possible. Especially with [studio manager] because she’s a deliberate brick wall... you got past that easily... Communicating with the developers, the developers we have working with us can be quite difficult to get them to do what you want... You can say you’ll do it and speak to the studio manager and the default answer will be no. There’s a lot of people skills in the middle.” (Meeting 1.2).

Perhaps the employer had been expecting the student to be operating in the higher education field and was surprised when they adapted to the workplace field, increasingly understanding the rules and realising the increasing value of their capital?

Often an area that is hard to simulate in the classroom, the control and evaluation of projects was something that Simon 1 highlighted “Do you cover campaign performance as well? You’ve got to study that to be any good at the first bit really.” (Meeting 1.2). By identifying gaps in the curriculum, the employer was able to help develop the curriculum and thereby adding to the intellectual capital of the course team.

Though not all tasks were exciting they provided a clear example of the sort of task that junior staff will have to work on and still maintain enthusiasm and attention to detail, “Admin is not as fun, doing board reports. I wasn’t expecting. I didn’t understand that was something in PR you would have to do. I was a little bit disappointed. But you know you have to start somewhere.” (Millie 2). In this the student was beginning to learn more about the rules that applied in the field that might not have been given sufficient weight in the classroom, perhaps because it was tempting to provide more glamorous and exiting examples of practice?

“I don’t mind getting in there early to get work done before because I’m doing it accelerated it’s just one of those things you’ve got to get past doing more work than everyone else just the drive makes you tired” (Mike 3).

At the heart of content, writing skills were a vital capability and students were very conscious of this “PR – it’s a lot of writing, that’s not my strong suit” (Millie 2), again perhaps inferring that the rules of the field and practices were not a good fit with that student, in other cases the employer observed “...like writing skills and stuff they’ve just been so good” (Mike 3) and the student also saw this as a priority “I’ve asked them to concentrate on my writing skills as a personal goal, not that I write badly” (Mike 3). Perhaps indicating that the student understood the value in honing this skill and that possessing high level skills in this area would increase his capital and contribute to his secondary habitus. The importance of writing skills is emphasised by the employer below. This might be seen as a personal view but it is likely that as someone with a high level of capital in the organisation, he is making clear one of the unspoken rules of the field.

“I’d say perhaps those digital skills are, whilst they’re very good, they perhaps have a negative impact on those traditional skills, say writing skills, that perhaps are not as solid as they once were in my day...” (Max 3).

Lily 1 observed that by comparison and without the benefit of workplace tasks, support and feedback the traditional students’ work was weaker “They’re writing skills don’t seem as strong. Those on placement are much, much stronger because they can focus, it is definitely real and will go out to someone so they have a vested interest in making it better.” (Lily 1). When it came to assessments, the quality of writing was found to be of a higher quality, the students perhaps benefiting from the polish that continual practice and feedback in the workplace can provide. This was observed by the external examiner: “A very business-like and professional approach was evident in the work.” (External Examiner).

During the programme, Verity 1 hadn’t identified her preferred role and veered between account management and copywriting. The range of projects in the workplace allowed her to experience both roles and more in a dynamic environment. “Yeah, I’m happy to produce Excel documents, I do feel I’ve learned some things here something to improve on we had to put like analytics onto graphs not my area, something to build on” (Verity 1.1). Here she is perhaps recognising that the standard skillset of Microsoft Office held fairly low capital value but that by developing more specialist skills in reporting on analytics she understood from the rules that her increased skills level would result in valuable capital and perhaps access to more important projects? By interviewing students as they progress it is possible to see how the student articulates their own transformation, here Verity 1 identifies “the weakness is definitely digital – I know it needs improvement”, but by the second placement a few months later:

“I wrote a blog this morning – you’ve got no geographical limits, there’s no like practicality limits – you can do brand experiences, not just about the product. I’ve made them social media accounts. I’m running social media, doing their accounts, blogs. You need social media, if you’re going to sell a

game, so it's quite good to engage that kind of customer - it's kind of nice – social media marketing” (Verity 1.2).

It can be seen by the language that confidence in digital skills has increased and that a discreet specialism, perhaps one that is seen to hold high value in the agency, is becoming more appealing. Perhaps again indicating an understanding of the rules.

Other students had different experiences Millie 2 had expressed a preference for working digitally prior to joining the course, perhaps identifying this was an important part of her habitus but was finding that those skills were not always needed “Before I went to university Adobe Audition, Photoshop but not confident yet, In-Design, Muse, Final Cut Pro and iMovie. I don't get to apply these skills our clients are a little bit more – not as willing I suppose.” (Millie 2). In this case the fit between student and agency could have been better and she may have had a different experience in another agency. It may even have helped her realise that her future may lie in another field “When I'm done I'm not totally keen on the PR writing aspect but I have so many other skills – it's definitely made me want to do more courses on creative programmes... I've just done a viral video, I've been using Final Cut Pro I've been using In-Design and all that kind of stuff which I love.” (Millie 2).

Working in an in-house environment, Mike 3 had developed content within the first placement period “...writing blog posts internally and externally tailoring to the audience” (Mike 3). Lily 1 recognised this as an instance of combining work outputs with university:

“He's done a blog post and he's done an internal placement and that's brilliant it's something he's done in work as part of his daily routine and would have to produce anyway but he's also doing a reflective log and he's not been given time to do that in the office, in his own time.” (Lily 1).

The acquisition of skills and valuable capital may also encourage the student to have confidence in influencing others, perhaps suggesting that they are enjoying an upward trajectory in their practice.

“...the side of like the user testing and stuff and then you find a bug and then like OH NO we’re gonna have to re-do that thing. That’s what happens and you don’t really do that bit in the classroom.” (Meeting 1.2).

The first placement at level 5 required Verity 1 to develop storyboards prior to learning about these skills in the classroom “so I wrote all the storyboard and what I wanted it to say and the relevant screenshots so that was what your vision was – it’s always difficult when you give it to someone” (Verity 1.1) this comment might indicate an enhanced understanding of interdisciplinary practice. On returning for the next teaching period she joined her University class and one of the units had a storyboarding task. Undoubtedly the experience of developing a commercial product contributed to her attention to detail and planning for the group component “I had to do like a guide and user testing plan. And the storyboards were for the promotional video for the software” (Meeting 1.2). Her performance on the unit was of a very high level having had the opportunity to develop these skills in much tighter time constraints in the workplace. This had the added benefit of underlining the importance and real world application of these skills to the students taking the unit on the traditional unit.

By the second placement at level 5, Verity 1 was becoming more accustomed to being given challenging and open-ended projects, reflecting her increasing value and developing secondary habitus driving her status as a flexible resource with an increasing level of freedom and responsibility. “They were like, we want you to help us market it, and so I said you need social media. It wasn’t really up and running, so they needed... and when I came in – here’s an extra brain.” (Verity 1.2). Being integral to the entire project also meant that every stage needed to be addressed. From research to help develop insights in writing the creative brief, storyboarding concepts, briefing the creative/developers and user testing. In this case explaining in detail how a new app functioned.

“we had to explain how to use it but then mine was very detailed whether that was common knowledge or if that’s logical – explain like every bit are you being obvious that you need to click on that... how do you do that again,

or what feature's that? I would make sure I included certain parts" (Verity 1.1).

This was something acknowledged by Simon 1:

"The way I looked at it. Any product that goes out to market has got to start at the development, the user testing it's got to go through all of that to be able to do advertising and know that all this stuff has to go on in the background... I'm thinking back to what you had to do to launch the product. Absolutely everything was developed in six weeks. There was no identity. That was a lot of work... we did say want to give you something substantial to get your teeth into rather than just plod along" (Meeting 1.2).

One can only imagine the impact that the above comment has on the student and the confidence this must endow "that's a lot of pressure quite amazing as I'm technically a first year student" (Verity 1). The interviews provided students and employers with an opportunity to reflect on the nature of the placements.

"I think things have been going really well. [Mike 3]'s very keen and seems to be interested in the subject. He's provided some good work and we have to remind ourselves he's still at university and in his first year and it's as much of a learning curve for him as it has been for us." (Max 3)

Verity 1 observed that the types of task expected had developed from one placement to the next "My jobs have changed quite a lot from last time" (Verity 1.2).

"I had to deal with the designers, then they came in a meeting with the two web developers speak through what I had found whether it would be possible to do this what they were thinking, show me their Trellos [a project collaboration tool] – the tasks that need to be implemented, the bugs and when they've done it – can you just do this?" (Verity 1.1).

Mike 3 had advice for students on the traditional route, comparing the expectations of a student on a traditional programme, operating in the rules of the field that

define very different standards to the rules of the workplace field, hinting at time management and performance:

“I think you’d have to be really organised if you want to have a student life you’ll stand out more, you’ve got to be career focused... I think I’m putting 18 year olds in a box... Some of the students in my class do leave things to the last minute a bit, so I can influence them to not, cos they forget that like I’m at work placement but still manage to get everything done and get good grades so far” (Mike 3).

It is unclear if this advice, from an outsider looking in would have any impact on students who in their view are already practicing as the rules dictate in the higher education field.

4.2.3 Field

Bourdieu defines the field in terms of the social space where actors interact with each other based on social rules specific to that situation. These may or may not be formally laid down and may be tacitly understood by the actors as they carry out their practice (according to their position defined by their possession of capital valued in the field and their habitus). The study concerns the fields of higher education, advertising and public relations. Though Bourdieu would claim all fields to be autonomous there is some crossover in the convergence of advertising and public relations practice.

Being able to switch between the university field and the workplace field was an important part of a successful student experience on the programmes and dealing “with the complexities of being both a worker and a learner...” (Boud and Solomon, 2001). One student observed “...when you’re not used to working full-time and then you go from doing like a couple of hours a day and the you end up like, you know, being there for eight hours. Then in the evening I was just knackered.” (Meeting 1.2). However, the ability to switch between the two fields and in-between teamwork and individual activities may have helped prepare students for industry practice:

“...graduates experience a culture shock because they are seldom prepared for the

change from working competitively as an individual to working as a member of a cooperating team.” (Bennett, Dunne and Carre, 2010). Though in this the authors are disregarding group working which attempts to simulate the field of work must form part of most programmes.

Sometimes students didn't recognise that the university work and their daily practice in the workplace were often directly linked, perhaps emphasising that they separated out the two fields even if the course team and employer tried to blend them: “It's been very separate it has to be doesn't it? I haven't mentioned it. The work's quite separate.” (Verity 1.2). Other times students were reluctant to ask for time to work on university projects during the working day. The rules of the field were clear and working on university projects was not something they saw anyone else doing so was tacitly acknowledged to be outside the rules: “Sometimes if I feel like I'm under pressure I don't like to work on school stuff at [employer 2]. Mainly weekends.” (Millie 2), “A couple of times I had to say... can I have the afternoon to do some work on my like essays and stuff... I think like I did have to ask... a couple of times can I do some work on my essay, especially like your starting your job for the first time, so obviously a new company and stuff, you're not used to working long days and stuff” (Meeting 1.2), even though employers would be quite happy for that to happen, it was still outside the rules that everyone was abiding: “[Mike 3]'s really busy, he's been kept really busy in the office and I've told him he needs to leave time for uni work.” (Lily 1). This was something also observed by academic staff “from what I'm being told that they are spending their weekends looking at the lecture materials.” (Lily 1), “It depends on the assignment, if it relates directly to his job that's fine but if not they won't allocate extra time.” (Lily 1), “I think they probably have a couple of hours during the week to get on with it, that's the impression I get and that the work placements are quite supportive in reading things through.” (Lily 1). Overall this paints a picture of a busy working day and university work being carried out in the evenings and weekends, a clear distinction being made between fields and the practices that are legitimate and likely to increase capital. This also illustrates the culture within an agency where staying late and asking if anyone needs any help before leaving might be the norm and working on university projects might not be seen as making a full contribution,

demonstrating the boundaries between fields and the application of two different sets of rules that the students find confusing. They may ask, which rules am I playing to today?

One student gave a sense of how the teams they were working with were managed:

“You have your team meeting on a Monday and then that’s pretty much it... We’ve got a team of four in the public affairs team, we have a little group email and every Friday you have to email everything you’ve done and everything you are going to do in the coming week so for me it is easy... They do have their meetings and their briefs to help each other. Their communications are really good, so as I go on more and get more responsibility, I’ll be more involved in that” (Mike 3).

“So he did some work in internal comms and PR as well on corporate affairs... we’ve lined up for his next placement to spend... they’ve got a couple of meaty projects that they want him to run with so I think that will expose him more to HR and programme management... he’ll get that interdisciplinary context... that was a learning from us... you’re not going to learn a great deal if you spend a few days here, a few days there... what we want to do spend a good chunk of time with one of the communications teams, next time it will be internal and then it might be the marketing team, then the media team... We’ve had regular correspondence with [Lily 1]... We have a weekly team meeting which he attends and then he has reported to us so we try to involve him in those team meetings as well...” (Max 3).

Throughout the development phase, the tension between workplace and university had been thought to be one of the more complex aspects of the course. Here are extracts that explain how the students approached working on their assessments (assessments that had been designed in collaboration with industry, formed part of the documentation provided in the Employer Handbook and dealt with in the Memorandum of Understanding):

“Sometimes if I feel like I’m under pressure I don’t like to work on school stuff at [Andi 2]. Mainly weekends.” (Millie 2), “[Mike 3]’s really busy, he’s been kept really busy in the office and I’ve told him he needs to leave time for uni work.” (Lily 1), “from what I’m being told that they are spending their weekends looking at the lecture materials.” (Lily 1), “It depends on the assignment, if it relates directly to his job that’s fine but if not they won’t allocate extra time.” (Lily 1), “I think they probably have a couple of hours during the week to get on with it, that’s the impression I get and that the work placements are quite supportive in reading things through.” (Lily 1), “A couple of times I had to say... can I have the afternoon to do some work on my like essays and stuff... I think like I did have to ask... a couple of times can I do some work on my essay, especially like your starting your job for the first time, so obviously a new company and stuff, you’re not used to working long days and stuff” (Meeting 1.2).

Though one student did recognise that the workplace provided a rich source of material that could be applied to assignments, particularly live briefs. In this case a project for a large supermarket chain was also shared with the students on the traditional route:

“I only work on it outside, yes but saying that I did... they are always happy for me to ask questions. What they think [large supermarket chain] are really good at. They speak to [large supermarket chain] and they see all the emails that come through. What do you think that they could improve on?” (Verity 1.2).

It is interesting to note that Verity didn’t recognise the advantage in being involved in a live project, working as part of a team with access to insights through their research. Perhaps the rules ran so deep that it simply didn’t occur to her that the material she had access to in the workplace would be useful in her assessment.

Which field did the students most identify with?

“The people I work with are quite a bit older than me and the people I’m at school with are quite a bit younger than me. I’m kind of stuck in the middle.” (Millie 2), “when I got there it was quite corporate, so different to the classroom and anything like that I’ve experienced so I felt like I didn’t have any confidence” (Mike 3).

This didn’t go unnoticed by Max 3:

“I think he comes across as really confident but it’s not really there, we are quite keen to build up that confidence... ask that stupid question, get out there and try to build your confidence... In a one-to-one environment he’s confident, there is a level to go to build up that confidence in the working environment...” (Max 3).

“It has been one of the real positives. We took the time to understand the requirements before he came... we’ve helped even to provide briefs that have been used beyond [Mike 3] he’s been working in an environment that translates well across to his studies, so he’s got a context... I’m going to be able to apply what I’m learning to the assessment process and that has been a real plus point...” (Max 3).

On returning to the classroom, how did they adapt to changing fields in the opposite direction?

“I’m worried about missing a few things in the classroom that might be important, especially as we have group work that’s due in when I’m not in the classroom what I’m worried about is that they, they won’t want to be in a group with me because I won’t be in the classroom” (Meeting 1.2).

“She seemed to just slot straight back in she had done well to keep in contact and had some social so I think that is quite important otherwise when they come back in the others might be in their cliques and groups.” (Lily 1).

“Group working has worked really, really well. It settles them in to the cohort otherwise they might feel quite separate.” (Lily 1).

Again, this appears to be working in the opposite direction. The rules of the field were quite different and in order to fit back in they would have to abide by those rules and become more like the traditional students to regain their licence to practice. As students progressed through the programme some of them showed signs of fixing their habitus to the workplace field and maintained a desire to continue to create capital valued by that field. These students went on to be offered permanent contracts at the end of the programme.

Teaching staff were also challenged by operating on the cusp of two fields, where material prepared for classroom teaching had to be reconfigured to the new situation. The application of unfamiliar pedagogies may be changing the rules of a game that they thought they understood and challenging the capital accrued through experience of more traditional pedagogies.

“so that rather than inheriting materials and transposing what you’ve got, you’ve actually got to think very carefully about that material and often re-build it and re-invent it to be effective.” (Rod 3.1)

They may also feel a loss of control as the student returns to the workplace half-way through the trimester, having to rely on email, phone for communication and not really knowing if the student has been able to find time while at work or is having to make time in the evenings and weekends.

“...it makes it harder for you to keep tabs until a student does something you’re on tenter hooks.” (Pete 2.1)

However, some staff, perhaps with more previous experience of blended learning saw the flipped classroom and informal relationship as an advantage.

“So when we go into this one-to-one environment I don’t lecture to her I will put the lecture slides up with notes which she reads before the class and she comes into the

classroom with questions to make sure she's completely clear on what she needs for the assignment which seemed to suit her really well last Summer." (Verity 1.1)

For employers the experience of having a long term placement student meant that they had to be more aware of managing the environment for the student and perhaps to protect them in some way. At least in the early stages as they began to understand the rules of the field and maybe struggled to find their place.

"You have to cut them more slack... positive attitude and enthusiasm and hopefully a little bit of confidence, but hopefully we can help to cultivate that... expressing a desire to learn but not scared to offer an opinion... we try to create quite an open atmosphere where that is encouraged..." (Max 3.1)

It may also be that the employer is conscious of signalling to the student when they have made a positive contribution, helping them accrue capital.

"So I think to translate to this practical example... we're making a conscious effort to try and expose him to a lot of the different disciplines within communications, get him involved in real tangible examples.... To be able to go out and say I helped in this instant response scenario or I helped develop this social media campaign... to be able to give practical examples..." (Max 3.1)

4.2.4 Summary

The fusion of the two fields of higher education and advertising/public relations provided the opportunity to facilitate the creation of capital for all participants which might be studied through Bourdieu's related concepts of habitus, capital field and practice. Students had to cope with the, sometimes conflicting, demands of the workplace and their studies which when successfully managed, led to increased confidence and influence (creation of valuable capital in the field). Some students began to understand that their habitus was not suited to that particular workplace or even field. The employers appreciated the value added by the students, encouraging them to offer more responsibility and autonomy as they created capital that was valued in the field including the acquisition of skills that were useful or in

short supply. In some cases skills learned in the classroom (theory) were applied in the workplace and in others skills learned in the workplace (practice) were brought back to the classroom. Students clearly separated out the two fields and were perhaps bound by tacit recognition of the rules the field. Even though they were given permission it was difficult for them to reconcile this as being within the rules of the field that they could see being structured through the habitus of the rest of the team. They would have stood out of the wrong reason at a time when they were finding their place. Academic staff found operating with unfamiliar pedagogies to be challenging, particularly for those with limited experience of blended learning. This may have in some ways redefined their field, challenging them to learn the new rules, accrue capital and modify their habitus in order to find their place. Employer staff found a new role in helping create the conditions for students to find their feet in the field, learn the rules and allow them to accrue capital and the opportunity to gain confidence in a protected environment. Potentially this may contribute to the modification of their habitus.

4.3 RQ2: What is the nature of learning within accelerated work-based degree programmes?

This section will address the second research question which focuses on the nature of learning taking place for students, staff and employers as they co-produce the programmes, particularly in the work-based learning phases of each term (usually the last seven weeks of a 15-week term).

Table 18: Categories and codes relating to RQ2.

Modes of Learning	Pedagogy	Roles	Outcomes	Scaffolding
Accelerated Active Autonomous Blended Constructed Co-produced Customised Distance Experiential Flipped classroom Learning journey Placements Practical Theoretical Transmissive (teacher/student and master/novice) Work-based	Classroom-led Communication Flipped classroom Learning outcomes Live briefs Workplace-driven	Applicant Apprentice Assistant executive Employee Employer Link tutor Intern Master Mentor Sector skills council Trainee	Accomplishment Agency Aspirations Attainment Attributes Capital creation Confidence Degree Dissemination Documentation Employability Experiences Innovation Mobility Objectives Outcomes Portfolio Resilience Skills (classroom-taught and workplace-developed) Social Time management Training Value creation Widening participation	Assessment Attainment Distance learning Feedback Support

4.3.1 Modes of Learning

The programmes defining characteristic was multi-mode learning. These broadly comprised syllabus-led (planned) learning which incorporated blended,

transmissive (teacher to student), theory-led, classroom teaching (supported with distance learning) and workplace-driven (emergent) learning which was socially constructed, experiential (but also transmissive from master to novice) and practical. Bridging the two was reflective practice linking the two contexts together. Given such a broad range of learning, the degree of autonomy, student-managed and personalised aspects was high.

Staff found the need for a more blended approach challenging, particularly those who also had a link tutor role. Instructional designers had provided workshops for all staff teaching on the accelerated programmes and offered a service to help build the online learning materials using a storyboarding approach. Even so, staff did find that the different modes of learning required a re-think in terms of their preparation and particularly supporting students once on placement so that they got equal value out of learning activities that students on the traditional route would gain from lectures and seminars. This underlines the differences between syllabus-structured learning with “a defined package of learning” and work-based learning offering “a varying learning journey” as identified by Hammersley et al. (2013).

“I’m more conscious that they are doing it from a distance, so rather than just putting the lecture slides up I need to put an explanation covering what the key areas are, what we are doing in the seminar and what they would be expected to do”. (Lily 1.1).

This has led Lily and the rest of the course team to adopt the flipped classroom approach more widely in their teaching.

4.3.2 Pedagogy

One of the anticipated concerns of programmes of this nature is that staff would find the longer teaching year to be challenging. “A shift towards increased flexible delivery may be seen as threatening by some staff, raising concerns regarding their future role or anxieties about the quality of flexible learning programmes.” (Hammersley, Tallantyre and Le Cornue, 2013, p7). Staff work scheduling was used to ensure fairness. “As a trade union we continue to have concerns about the

employment consequences of “fast-track” degrees, including the employment of casual staff to teach on “third semesters”. University and College Union (UCU, 2010, p4). Facilitating work-based learning placements proved to be time-consuming, with staff feeling that it lacked legitimacy, “there is an implicit hierarchy of learning that ranks “learning” in the lecture hall above all other methods.” and not valued by the institution “being lumbered with the complex task of managing work experience opportunities, for which there may be little relief from teaching and little prospect of promotion.” (Harvey, Geall and Moon, 1998, p70). Staff teaching on the programmes did find that the keeping in touch, planning and more formal course-related activities were onerous and not the sort of activity that was recognised or rewarded.

“Developing content for the two-year students requires a creative approach. Forums, private blogs, videos and quizzes are used to keep in touch while the student is on placement. The experience the two year students bring to the classroom enhances discussions, benefiting the three year students, and making my teaching more interactive and practice-based.” (Lily 1.1).

This participant sees the advantages in having to find new ways of engaging at a distance and also reflects the added value that the traditional students may experience through their vicarious experience of industry and more varied approaches to learning.

There were a number of pedagogical challenges and opportunities for the staff team teaching on the accelerated course.

The teaching situations described above was recognised by staff to be quite different “I think the other tutors have done the same. Just chatting it through in quite an informal way.” (Lily 1). With larger groups it might be easier to avoid preparation or engagement, as might be the case with a traditional course “With the three year if you get them to read in advance it’s very rare that it happens.” (Lily 1). But the development of materials to fully accommodate the mode of delivery and flexibility expected of all parties was challenging.

“It isn’t as easy as you might imagine to transfer existing material into this new environment. The material that you might have inherited doesn’t always lend itself to an accelerated programme, it doesn’t allow enough thinking time or to a different environment...The material is designed for groups, or group work and it affects the way you teach... but often it becomes extremely difficult to react to change, it just simply didn’t occur to me that that would be the impact... so that rather than inheriting materials and transposing what you’ve got, you’ve actually got to think very carefully about that material and often re-build it and re-invent it to be effective.” (Rod 3).

Though in nearly all units the accelerated students were taught alongside the traditional route students, taking identical first assessments (usually group work) and taking place just before the cohort split so that the accelerated students went into the workplace and had a different second (and often individual) assessment requiring the workplace context, every unit was effectively doubled in nearly every way apart from the first eight weeks of shared delivery. This extended to exam boards and every part of the quality and academic processes. Two sets of unit guides, assessments and as each accelerated unit (indicated with WBL in brackets after the unit code and title) with separate online learning sites.

What was the experience of staff and students when it came to summative assessment?

“Well initially I thought it would be a bit of a hindrance to set briefs for both sets of students when you will see some students for eight weeks and others for 12-13. But actually all the accelerated students have been mature and/or quite motivated it hasn’t been a problem to keep them up to speed and the other bonus is that I can employ the same live client brief for all of the students.” (Pete 2).

Speaking specifically about a unit called Creative Digital Technology within which an individual in-tray exercise takes place in week eight:

“Given that it was an unknown and it was literally put together, they came in and we couldn’t have planned it any better. They already knew where all their images were coming from, they already had all their text. It’s quite a basic website and they were happy for us to have that. Then the icing on the cake is literally a week after the submission was completed the employer launched the site with the same resources that the students were given. It was interesting to see where they had filled the gaps that they didn’t give the students.” (Pete 2).

Having access to live briefs and ‘real world’ material had its downsides:

“I stayed in contact with Andi and she has provided me with some live client content but it didn’t really fill the requirement for the students because the content had already been created so the students would almost certainly come across the actual execution... It would always be nice to try and have the projects sooner. But because it is reliant on the client and we don’t always know until quite late in the days means explaining what we are trying to measure and test... Having a lot of briefs floating around makes it harder for you to keep tabs until a student does something - you’re on tenterhooks...” (Pete 2)

Sometimes the employer was very aware that the project may or may not be appropriate for the assessment and attaining learning outcomes.

“You’ve done all of the ideas of how to, you know, sell it and just fantastic timing, it worked brilliantly for us but I do worry that it wasn’t quite what you needed for your learning” (Meeting 1.2)

For some students the workplace context was a site of higher attainment and the products of that context were of a high order but the aspects of the course that had a more traditional academic focus might offer different challenges:

“The quality of the work at level 4 was definitely of a higher a standard and the same at level 5... I think I’ve got a little bit of a concern at level 6 because

all her work done in collaboration with the agency is really creative and it works for the assignment briefs... But on the other hand the academic work hasn't been of as high a quality and that is concerning me, certainly for her dissertation and ethics, that deeper understanding of theory... I wonder how she will get on with that because Andi won't be able to get so involved with that, help her write for the target audience because that target audience is going to be the university so that will be a challenge." (Lily 1).

In this circumstance a guiding principles of the course - to help students understand and adapt to the industry field - had been turned on its head and it was evident that the students was well-adapted to the world of work but less academically inclined. This does seem to be recognised by the student:

"When you're in school you learn stuff but when you get into the workplace there are so many other things. There are certain things that you can't learn at school." (Millie 2).

4.3.3 Roles

Research on the pathfinder programmes suggested that accelerated programmes appealed to "instrumental and strategic learners" (Outram, 2011) who were focused on their career and felt short of time. It was more effective to link the student to the employer prior to term starting so that a recruitment process could be completed. This challenging selection process may have acted as a barrier to entry, particularly at a widening participation University more used to recruitment rather than selection.

Balancing work and university study was challenging and there were examples of students outside of the programmes in this study where students transferred out of flexible programmes. Though the intention was for students to work on their assessments as part of their daily work routine they all found they could only find time after the working day, with clear separation of the role of employee and student. The programmes ran for 45 weeks (three 15-week trimesters each with 8-10 weeks on placement), allowing some time for holidays and perhaps a near year-

long programme was more in-keeping with work-based study where a long summer break might be seen as disruptive.

Students identified with their work colleagues while they were on placement, building social relationships while also working as part of group assignments in their weeks at university. Overall they had a very different university experience and the students were not generally aware of the impact their work-based experiences had on their performance in assessments. By level 6 students were spending 10-week blocks with their employer and increasingly identified as a member of the team rather than a student “it doesn’t feel like a placement any more” (Mike 3.2).

“[The agency] gives me responsibilities and makes me feel a part of the team, I don’t feel like an intern or a student. They give me assignments in areas that I know I need to improve on and learn more about, like my writing skills.”
(Verity 1.1)

“I have learned a lot about how the PR industry works and whenever a new teaching opportunity comes up they make sure they show and discuss it with me.” (Millie 2.1).

A cluster of codes was drawn together during the data analysis relating to the different roles that participants were required to adopt during the programmes and the different participant groups. These included:

- Applicant
- Apprentice
- Assistant executive
- Employee
- Employer
- Link tutor
- Intern
- Master

- Mentor
- Sector skills council
- Trainee

The students on the pilot course applied through UCAS in the usual way with the additional stage of an interview. Often over the phone, the interview was an opportunity to provide more information about the course as well as discovering more about the student. One of the aims of the programme had been to enhance employability, particularly through the work-based learning aspects. Though each student came from a different background with different experiences, some similarities emerged. Flexible courses are thought to appeal to more mature students (McCaig et al, 2007; Outram, 2009) and the students on the pilot programme were more mature than the cohort of students on the traditional route running alongside. This may have been due to self-selection prior to application and the application process itself (though there were very few applications and only those students who saw the course as a way of obtaining a degree having previously had very poor attendance and/or very low attainment on prior degree-level programmes were declined). When the courses started the opportunity for the traditional students to transfer to the accelerated route was also open for the first year. Some students made enquiries but none made the switch. Though in some cases very practical considerations were a factor in choosing the course:

“I am a little bit older than most people when they go to school and if I had or tried to get a degree in Canada I would have to do four more yours. Over summer you learn so much, it just seemed so appealing to me. I’ll be graduating at 24 rather than 28. This programme makes much more sense.”
(Millie 2.2)

After being placed with their employer the students spent the initial period in the university studying alongside students on the traditional course. After eight weeks they joined their employer and began to balance two roles, student and employee. Due to their unique status, often they had more freedom than many of the employees (though they identified themselves as employees rather than interns, a

stage in the transition into practice that they were circumventing by joining the programme “I can hopefully skip that intern step” (Millie, 2.2)). This may have been because they had a more fluid status in the workplace with periods spent in different teams and in some cases tasks were created for the placement student “I definitely don’t have the same role as anyone else, I always end up doing something different” (Verity, 1.2). In some larger organisations with graduate schemes this may have been standard operating procedure but these were no such schemes at any of the employers that offered placements to us. The rotation of placements in different teams did provide an opportunity to experience different roles, challenging preconceptions and in some cases a very clear identification of a preferred career path. In one case the student was given the title of “Assistant Executive” (Millie, 2.1), reflecting that the student was an assistant account executive, more closely defining the scope of the role. In other cases no formal title was provided, perhaps reflecting this unique and more open-ended status. In some cases students were able to continue working part-time throughout the course (one day each week on top of the placement periods each semester) but in others, the realities of affording tuition fees meant that in addition to being an employee with their placement organisation they also combined the role of employee in a third party organisation (a ‘Saturday job’) unrelated to their discipline in the same way that many students on more traditional courses do.

The employers were often very conscious that the student needed to be nurtured with an emphasis on offering appropriate tasks and roles that would enable learning and increasingly enabling the student to add value to their organisation, sometimes with a hard-headed business focus “...the return on investment with you was well worth doing and we want to grow our business” (Simon 1.1) rather than a one-way, transmissive model of ‘master and apprentice’. This was something that was enhanced over time “we kind of plan Mike into things now” (Emily 3.2). Employers were often critical of the internship system, reflecting their commitment to providing organised, paid internships by participating in the programme.

4.3.4 Scaffolding

Scaffolding learning relates to Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development. In this he considers the difference in learning outcomes that might be accomplished unaided or with assistance. Scaffolding forms the category covering the following codes: assessment, attainment, distance learning, feedback and support.

Formative and summative feedback were built in to the curriculum as you might expect but structured feedback was something that employer 3 (Max) offered and perhaps reflects a developmental approach for all staff at their organisation "I think going forward will be I'm getting on the job feedback... They'll make me print off all my work and everything that I've done, all the bits that I've had feedback on and talk about what I'd achieved" (Mike 3.2). "We were quite keen to sit down with him as regularly as possible..." (Max 3.1). This would take place during the seven-week placement in each teaching period where the student is working 9-5 with the employer. During that same period the communication between academic staff and the student was less straightforward.

Through the development phase there had been a lot of emphasis on the distance learning aspects using all the facilities available in the online learning environment.

"I'm more conscious that they are doing it from a distance so rather than just putting the lecture slides up I need to put an explanation covering what the key areas are, what we are doing in the seminar and what would they be expected to do." (Lily 1)

Staff teaching on the accelerated courses had been given workshops by learning technologists to help adopt a blended approach "I did help with some blended learning details when the approval went through." (Lily 1). In practice, most content was delivered in the classroom phase and it was email and phone contact that was most common during this phase:

“So all the phone calls have been about giving them formative feedback rather than giving them something else to do” (tutor Lily 1).

“...towards the end of the unit Milie 2 sent me some work and I gave her some more advice. I’ve had more emails from him, he’s emailed me half-a-dozen times.” (tutor Pete 2).

As tutor Lily 1 observed “From my perspective, if I had a big cohort of accelerated students I would find that really challenging because the time taken up in replying to [Mike 3]’s emails.” This might have implications for scalability and the time allocated remote communication. How might this be recognised in staff workload planning?

Being able to reliably communicate remotely was something that student Mike recognised and valued “It’s been really, really good I still have contact with uni quite a lot, like Lily and everyone call or I’m able to talk to anyone at uni really easily... I have to read all the slides at home and then I’m on the phone to Lily ask any questions” (Mike 3). Again, how scalable might this individual approach be? Having to offer a range of communications opportunities and the one-to-one teaching in the Summer term facilitated a closer working relationship “They’ve got that informal chatting relationship with the tutor... very much deeper. They can’t hide... I’d need to be a bit clearer. It’s mainly been a conversation.” (Lily 1). Support and feedback was also offered in the relationship of master to novice by the employer:

“It’s certainly things we’ve said to him... to take his time, have a re-read of things, spelling, grammar, sentence structure... three of four points... make your point, evidence it. Make your point evidence it... (Max 3.1).

Though the support was offered it wasn’t always taken up:

“When Millie went out on placement we arranged for a weekly phone call to make sure she is all right. But this very rarely happened, she would either be too busy or she wouldn’t phone, we didn’t have very much contact at all... Whereas with Mike it is quite different he has been in touch with me a lot, emailing me 2-3-4 times a week and talking to me regularly, so he seems to

need a bit more support but also he feels like he's more engaged with the course." (Lily 1).

This flexible approach was something that characterised the role of the link tutor, a member of staff at University taking the lead in joint planning and engaging the employer, placing demands on the teaching staff.

"They met with Lily and me just before I went there and they were given all the unit packs and were told everything that I've got to do, asked to think about ideas to fit in with what I'm doing... Manage their expectations they eased me in quite well" (Mike 3).

Though much planning and preparation had taken place behind the scenes, Mike would still have appreciated an early visit "Probably someone coming to physically visit in the first week so she can get an insight into what's it like so when I'm on the phone to her she can appreciate... that would have been nice" (Mike 3).

The setting up of the placement was very detailed with all the timings and assignments planned across the full two-year programme "...they are really on-board with the assignment briefs and making sure that, they even offered to help out with one of the units with tutor Rod here, pieces of work for his assignment." (Lily 1). There should be no surprises and by making the assessments clear to the employer, the time to work on assignments should be built in to the working week (though has had been observed earlier in practice the student often preferred to work on assessments in the evenings or at weekends). "They are completely aware so they give Mike the time to do it." (Pete 2).

"We've built quite a positive relationship... whether there is even more that can be done to explain what Mike's studying and how he's getting on with it... we've always had the brief at the start of his course assessment, but perhaps something at a midway point that kind of, he's done this... this was really good... bit if there is any opportunity to develop XYZ while he is with you... Try and give him some personal development advice outside our role... 10

years into a career... it might have been me that told him to stay away from agencies as well..." (Max 3.1).

At the end of teaching period two and after a short break teaching period three begins. At this point the traditional students have all left for the summer so the approach can be adapted to that situation:

"So when we go into this one-to-one environment I don't lecture to her I will put the lecture slides up with notes which she reads before the class and she comes into the classroom with questions to make sure she's completely clear on what she needs for the assignment which seemed to suit her really well last Summer... I think that level of one-to-one support will get her through those academic units... I don't know if that was all down to the placement or whether she had one-to-one teaching over the summer period. So she had quite a lot of formative feedback opportunities, talk through her work in a lot of detail... One thing I'm quite happy about is that the areas that Millie might find really challenging next year is that she will be taught one-to-one and the other thing is the flipped classroom." (Lily 1).

"Academics and support services staff need a broad appreciation of what methods are available and which will scaffold or harness the most appropriate learning for each outcome or engagement." (Kettle, 2013).

4.3.5 Outcomes

The multi-modal learning resulted in syllabus-bound (planned) outcomes and syllabus-free (emergent) outcomes. Planned outcomes included the development of classroom-taught skills, the development of a portfolio of live work and a high level of attainment in comparison to the traditional course, culminating in a high level of attainment in degree classification. Emergent outcomes included confidence, resilience (particularly related to the more stressful and condensed form of accelerated learning), workplace-developed skills and time management (again, a necessity due to balancing the demands of the workplace with course work). The combination of planned and emergent outcomes had wider implications for the

student and other partners in developing a community of practice including knowledge creation, value creation, student agency (through autonomy and student-managed aspects and more symmetrical power relations, Valsiner, 1996) and culminating in capital creation.

The knowledge, skills and capabilities developed through the programme (and applicable to student, staff and employer) resulted in human capital creation. An example would be the facilitative role (link tutoring) and the use of flipped classroom (flexible pedagogy) by University staff. Social capital was created through the student's to engagement with the field (moving from the periphery to the centre and from academic study to practice). This combination and exchange between the three partners was facilitated by the programme itself providing the opportunity, the incorporation of live projects enabling value to be added, the motivation of partners who allocated sufficient resources to the programme and staff prepared to act in facilitative and account management roles.

Structural capital creation was situated with a small number of actors (link tutor, workplace mentor and student) through regular communications, formal contracts and allocation of resources. The relational dimension was created through a high degree of trust, the obligation of all parties to fulfil their role and identification of themselves with the programme alongside their other responsibilities. The cognitive dimension was driven by a shared ambition to deliver a successful programme and learning outcomes. The commitment of all parties was a symbol of their shared commitment, values and vision for a new type of learning.

The social capital created led to the creation of intellectual capital drawing together the relational (respect, friendship and trust), structural (connections) and human capital (knowledge, skills and capabilities).

The anticipated beneficial outcomes for students on accelerated programmes were identified in the literature:

1. cost saving for students as they only need to cover two years of fees and living costs and can earn an extra year of income from entering the labour

market a year earlier (highlighted by most institutions that offer accelerated degrees);

2. better learning outcomes (satisfaction, grades, skill development, employment rates and career development); and,
3. the potential to stand out from the crowd, and signal certain skills and attributes such as commitment, time management and working under pressure.

Pollard, et al. (2017, p.7)

The student participants identified similar advantages. “It’s amazing that I can get a degree and I’ve had to spend less money and I’ve still got experience” (Verity 1.3), “had it been three years I wouldn’t have been able to afford the programme” (Millie 2.2). The learning outcomes have included a consistently higher performance on all units compared to traditional route students and so far all participants have left the programme with a first-class degree. In relation to the third point, firstly standing out through the experience (and resulting human capital creation) gained and secondly not having to gain that experience through unpaid internships “...so I’m not afraid to apply for those jobs because it’s not like I’m ruled out straightaway” (Verity 1.3), (reflecting on the requirement for experience in entry-level jobs). “I can hopefully skip that intern step when I’m done school” (Millie 2.2). In this respect the programmes achieved their aim.

These aspects mainly relate to factors leading to employability and the potential appeal to a widening participation target audience.

“The literature that does exist suggests that accelerated degrees are seen to offer a range of benefits: they allow individuals to move more quickly to the labour market; they can act as a way to widen participation and to increase qualifications in the labour force; they provide students with more choice and thus convenience; and can reduce the costs of study. These benefits have been used to promote accelerated degrees to the sector and as a justification for policy interest.” (Pollard, et al., 2017, p657).

The needs of more mature students but also employers in filling skills gaps may also be met through accelerated programmes by providing faster routes into industry to the benefit of both parties.

“Another potential motivator or perceived benefit to accelerated degrees indicated by the literature is their efficiency, in that they can be completed in a faster time than a ‘traditional’ first degree programme. This is reported to be a motivator for students (generally mature students) who may be looking to re-enter the labour market quickly; and also for employers, who may be looking to address skills issues and find faster pathways into professions (CBI, 2013; UKCES, 2009).” (Pollard, et al., 2017, p.67).

Table 19 (below) sets out the anticipated benefits identified in the Catalyst Fund Business Plan (document 1):

Table 19: Anticipated Benefits by Participant Group (document 1).

Anticipated Benefits: Employers	Participant Comments
Opportunity to tailor course content to their needs	<i>“I’m more part of the team, you can just mould everything” (Mike 3.2).</i>
Opportunity to address industry skills gaps issues	<i>“The most important skills brought by the students were soft skills, even just a willingness to ask questions” (Tom).</i>
Opportunity to nurture young creative talent and to benefit from the enthusiasm apprentices bring to the company	<i>“...recruitment is difficult and students often prefer to go directly to London or go after earning their stripes at a local agency, the programmes were not apprenticeships but accelerated degree programmes” (Tom).</i>
Opportunity to employ more work-ready graduates with the essential mix of skills that they require	<i>“...one student was offered a job after the first placement” (Tom).</i>
Improved business performance resulting from more highly qualified staff	<i>“There was one example where a student helped drive forward a new product that subsequently generated over 400% of the wages paid offering a high return on investment and having a fresh perspective with a willingness to ask questions was an advantage in some circumstances” (Tom).</i>

Anticipated Benefits: HEIs	Participant Comments
Opportunity to stay at the top of their game with the development of cutting edge programmes	<i>"The internal processes have a conservative influence on the development of such courses and cutting edge courses may not have high applicant numbers as other criteria such as league tables may be more influential" (Tom).</i>
Opportunity to challenge traditional models of course delivery	<i>"Possibly at the price of sustainability due to fragmented, niche audiences that are difficult to target through promotions" (Tom).</i>
Opportunity to build closer links with creative media employers	<i>"Regular agency contact had a range of benefits and in some cases a much deeper partnership resulted" (Tom).</i>
Opportunity to offer a new and competitive way of engaging students	<i>"The opportunity to offer radical and disruptive approaches is tempered by the lack of sustainability, the challenge would be to communicate this as a competitive advantage" (Tom).</i>
Opportunity to strengthen the vocational nature of their programmes/enhance student employability	<i>"The deeper agency relationships and potential to share live briefs and other aspects more widely across traditional courses" (Tom).</i>

Anticipated Benefits: Students	Participant Comments
Highly employable at the end of the programme – though not an apprenticeship the investment by both student and employer increases the probability of extending their engagement;	<i>"Hope so [laughs], yes I think so, I find a lot of people who have left or are looking for jobs... before you come to uni ever you just want to do a degree and then when you've left you know they all want you to have experience, so people find that they can't work out which one is more beneficial but because I've done both I feel like... when it says you need a year's work experience... so I'm not afraid to apply for those jobs because it's not like I'm ruled out straight away, I can explain to them how I have actually achieved that, so that definitely makes me more employable." (Verity 1.3).</i>
Opportunity to undertake a course that combines the academic rigour of a degree programme with the industry relevance of an apprenticeship	<i>"Yes, absolutely, I wanted to do an apprenticeship before... that was my mindset. I wanted to do something in work... then when they said you could do a degree basically whilst doing your apprenticeship but come out with a degree I thought that was even better. So yes, that's exactly what it combined." (Verity 1.3).</i>
Opportunity to gain the latest industry knowledge and skills	<i>"Yes I think I'm at a fairly young agency and it is the fact that they are doing VR and stuff that's very current then want your learning</i>

	<i>in school I think they work together really well..." (Verity 1.3).</i>
Opportunity to gain significant work experience and contacts	<i>Already with my dissertation I know people who will be in the industry who will be helpful for that..." (Verity 1.3).</i>
Opportunity to earn a wage throughout the programme	<i>"That is super beneficial, a lot of people are doing jobs... like working in coffee shops or whatever so that is good that you can get experience in the field you want to go to without having to just have a standard job that's not actually going to be beneficial to you, like when you're applying for things..." (Verity 1.3).</i>
For undergraduates, only two years of university fees, instead of three and opportunity to move in to the employment market more quickly than on a traditional three year course	<i>"It's amazing that I can get a degree and I've had to spend less money on it than other people and I've still got experience. It's crazy it's almost as if I should be paying more for getting it in two years. Saving money is brilliant. I'm already applying for things the third years are." (Verity 1.3).</i>

In terms of employer benefits, the programme development anticipated employer needs (with variable success) but more importantly the level of student agency increased in negotiating briefs used for assessments, indirectly enhancing the importance of the workplace. Employers could brief course teams on gaps in skills (often soft skills) in the curriculum. They enjoyed having a spare pair of hands to take on tasks that may otherwise not be done. Live briefs, particularly those negotiated at higher levels in the course brought the workplace activities and classroom learning more inline. As students created valuable capital they were able to take on higher level practice, finding their voice.

For the students, two out of three graduates have gone straight into employment, one with the employer on the programme and the other with a large advertising agency. The work-based experiences contributed to a high level of academic attainment but the assessments could have been better assimilated into the working day rather than necessitating evening and weekend study. Students gained 48-weeks paid work experience on the programmes and were attracted to the programmes because of the accelerated aspect. Students of the programme achieved the equivalent of a 1st or 2:1 for many of their assessments, echoing the observation of "high-flying achievers" (Outram, 2011, p25) in the evaluation of the FLPs.

“Quite frequently the literature shows that the accelerated format produces better learning and achievement than the traditional format...” (Pollard, et al., 2017, p.70).

“More recently the work of Davies et al (2009), which compared the outcomes of students on fast-track degrees to those on equivalent traditional programmes at the University of Staffordshire (one of the Flexible Learning Pathfinder pilot HEIs), found students on the fast-track programmes outperformed those on traditional programmes by an average of two-thirds of a degree classification.” (Pollard, et al., 2017, p.68).

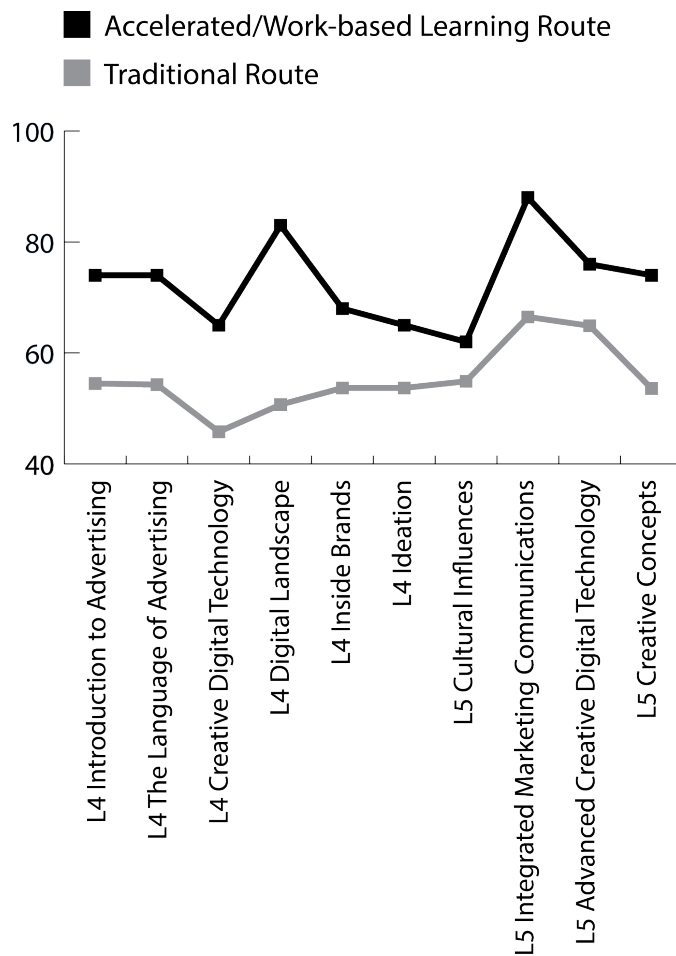
The external examiner commented on this:

“The students were very strong due, in part, to their links with employers with the university providing a supportive and nurturing environment for these practitioners.” (Laura 1)

“Excellent skills are being developed in this area on this very vocational course, which is clearly run by experienced practitioners who are pragmatic and supportive of their students.” (Laura 1)

“There is a great deal of real application, using live case studies and experiences to reflect on which is blended very well into an academic environment.” (Laura 1)

Figure 9: Accelerated/Work-based Learning and Traditional Route Grades.



4.3.6 Summary

The multi-mode learning offered by accelerated, work-based programmes encompasses planned (syllabus-structured) and emergent (workplace-driven) learning. The combination has the potential for customised, co-produced, student-managed learning if the curriculum is designed to facilitate this with individualised learning contracts for example. This also presents complexity in terms of the application of unfamiliar pedagogies, the range of roles required of students (student, employee, novice), staff (teacher, facilitator, account manager) and employer (master, manager, mentor).

Syllabus-structured:

- Blended
- Transmissive (teacher/student)

- Reflective
- Flipped classroom
- Theoretical

Workplace-driven:

- Experiential
- Transmissive (master/novice)
- Observative
- Socially constructed
- Practical

The learning outcomes of the programmes included planned (syllabus-bound) and emergent (syllabus-free), synthesising theory and practice, symmetrical power relations and enabling a community of practice:

Syllabus-bound:

- Attainment
- Degree
- Portfolio
- Skills (classroom taught)

Syllabus-free:

- Confidence
- Experiences
- Resilience
- Skills (workplace-developed)
- Time management

4.4 RQ3: In what ways can we design accelerated, work-based degree programmes to deliver benefits to employers, students and universities?

This section addresses the third research question that considers the development and delivery of the programmes. The importance of partnerships is reflected in the emphasis on benefits. It is assumed the programmes would only be sustainable if all parties needs were identified and met. In the first instance, employers agreed to take

part in the programmes based on very little information. This reliance on goodwill underlines the perishability of these relationships without tangible benefits.

Table 20: Categories and codes relating to RQ3.

Partnerships	Approval	Promotion	Models	Foundation
Co-creation Collaboration Community Confusion Consultation Contracts Contacts Development Employment Engagement Expectations In-kind Liaison On-boarding Partnerships Relationships Support	Accreditation Bid Budget Catalyst Compliance Criteria Delays Delivery Evaluation Fees Funding Modifications Payment Pilot Queries Recruitment Schedule Standards Validation	Advertising Awareness Case studies Image Market Marketing Numbers Persuasion Public relations Promotion Return on investment Social media Strapline UCAS Website	Apprenticeships Business model Accelerated Fast-track Customisation Frameworks Standards Fusion Individualised Live briefs Non-standard Placement Technology enhanced learning Traditional degree Work-based learning	Test markets Trailblazer Viability

4.4.1 Partnerships

Partnerships were intrinsic to the success of the programmes. The relationship between the three parties engaged in the programme, the student, the employer and the staff delivering though programme. This sense of community and “relationship between learners and teachers” (Lucas, 2010) is at the heart of most successful courses (acknowledged by the addition of a question relating to course community in the National Student Survey). Within these programmes that community is extended, requiring the “Co-operation between providers and employers” (IfM/IBM, Wilson, 2012) to organise and manage the curriculum.

The relationship between the student, the employer and the staff delivering the programme was critical. Could each party have had a clearer understanding of the context and expectations? The institutional structures dictated that a conventional

approach was taken to developing the course extending into additional documentation. As Kettle (2013) observed, “the three way relationship still remains but the driver is generally the provider”. This provided a model that reflected the context shifting to the workplace and challenging the development team to adapt and take this fully into account “as it’s gone on I’m more a part of the team and can just mould everything, everyone is just adapting” (Mike 3.2). This was something that staff at times struggled with, feeling ill equipped to deal with the distance learning aspects and feeling the need to adapt materials more suited to a traditional course. At times this was successful in adopting the flipped classroom. Even then the emphasis was still on an acquisition model where the staff team was responsible for providing a framework for learning and communicating this to the employer for them to play their part. However, a more radical approach might have been to recognise the new opportunities of learning in a very different context rather than prioritising the development of a blended approach led by university staff, a more student-led approach facilitating the construction of learning by the student in the workplace. In turn, the employer sometimes felt that they had to adapt the work environment to provide a legitimate context for learning. The student made a clear distinction between workplace and university and perhaps diminishing the extent to which they were open to learning through a whole range of ad hoc experiences in the workplace. When they were at work, they were at work. In the evenings and weekends they were students.

After a series of meetings in March and April 2014 the process of attracting employers into the project began. Six potential employer partner organisations were sent a short email outlining the project with an emphasis on incorporating “fusion” into the curriculum and to “develop new work-based learning degree programmes” but very little else:

“If you are in favour of these developments, we would be grateful if you could confirm your support for this project by replying to this email using the following text: I support [the SSC’s] project to introduce ‘Fusion’ into the HE curriculum and to develop new work based learning degree programmes,

and I welcome more employer involvement in the design and delivery of these degrees.” (document 5).

Alongside work-based learning the key aspect of the courses at this stage was the development of the right skills for the creative industries as identified by the SSC.

Nevertheless this was an important moment in establishing the working partnerships albeit based on a large amount of goodwill as the specific information provided was very limited. As the project progressed the realisation of these partnerships became more complex and of variable success, in some cases the contact at the employer moved on. During this period the preliminary project schedule was agreed. The aim for the courses was a January 2015 start, in order to meet this target the institutional validation process required that the course should be taken to stage one Academic Programme Committee (APC) in June 2014 and that the completion of the process would be due by September 2014. This would allow for promotion of the course November-December 2014 for a January 2015 start (document 2). These dates were challenging as the usual validation process took around 12-months and left minimal time for recruitment. One reason for the delay in commencing validation was that delay between submitting the bid and gaining approval for the project. In essence the project was running out of time even before starting.

At this stage, in the Outline Project Plan, the project was being linked to government policy “the project is strongly linked to a range of government priorities” (document 3) and the key role for the sector skills council was prominent “HEFCE funding would primarily be used for the brokerage role [SSC] would play in this project, which includes liaising with and advising employers and HEIs in the development of these programmes, the project management costs of ensuring that targets are met, the costs of a centralised marketing campaign to ensure that potential students and their parents, as well as additional employers and HEIs, understand the essence of the programmes and the evaluation and dissemination costs to ensure that models of best practice are widely distributed”. Potential interest in the programmes was seen to hinge on the emerging importance of work-based learning, assuming that

“many students (and their parents) will prefer to invest their money in courses they believe will lead to better employment opportunities and return on investment” (document 3). Finally, the plan claimed that employers “are looking for educated individuals with high level skills who are work-ready” (document 3). In the May 2014 Agreement, a key priority was still seen to be “to position apprenticeships with degree awards embedded as a viable alternative to standard degree programmes” (document 4). However at the Governance Meeting in November 2014 the project team acknowledged that what had been a central tenet of the programme, the term “higher level apprenticeship” could only be used by official trailblazer projects and that use of such a term might suggest involvement with the trailblazer programme (document 12). This was clarified further in June 2015 with the decision at the Governance Meeting that the “decision was taken not to promote the apprenticeship style concept on a national level as there would be confusion/conflicting messaging with the courses coming from different sectors, with different qualifications and different models” (document 16). The opportunity to promote these courses centrally therefore became impossible and the emergence of government-sponsored apprenticeship communications was of no advantage to the majority of projects that did not have trailblazer status and therefore could not be branded as high level or degree apprenticeships.

4.4.2 Approval

Within the university, the recruitment of a course leader for the new courses was completed and he would join the team in August 2014. At this point the ambitious goal of a January 2015 cohort was abandoned, partly due to the internal validation process that had the stage one completed in September 2014 (in the end the stage one documentation was presented to the November APRC and approved in December) but the stage two of the process was only pencilled in for February 2015 with the first cohort planned for September 2015 (document 7). The stage two process was much more detailed and it was here that the units were written. An important aspect of the project was that appropriate teams from within the School and wider University worked together as the project had so many unusual features “the school has established an administrative and academic quality support team

which has begun to meet on a regular basis who are engaged in further developing the course approval documents”, this team worked closely with “the quality office in developing a course structure [met] university course approval standards by addressing key criteria such as availability of options, progression and so on” and in particular while still working with the finance team to develop non-standard financial models “the course team has amended the structure to allow the maximum number of shared units with the traditional three year degree to improve sustainability and resilience” (document 10). The first course structure was designed using the following guiding principles drawn from the SSC’s work on ‘fusion’:

- Creativity first
- Build T-shaped graduates
- Facilitate digital content development
- Seek out interdisciplinary opportunity
- Create a space for innovation
- Professionals in action - teaching/practice, practice/teaching
- Maximise collaboration - contribute to local fusion
- Driven by employability
- Promote, share and disseminate

(document 9)

The structure closely aligned the traditional three-year degree with the accelerated course “the rationale for this structure is that the students engaging in the fast-track course have the opportunity to draw on their work experience to the benefit of the whole cohort” (document 9).

“These courses provide accelerated routes into Advertising and Public Relations by offering students the opportunity of paid work within an agency during the programme in two 8-week blocks at levels 4 and 5 and two 10-week blocks at level 6 (some employers may offer on-going 1-2 day experience throughout the whole programme). Students on the programme

will benefit from earning while learning, a fast-track into the industry, enhanced portfolio/real-life experience and opportunities to develop digital, creative and soft skills through continuous professional development in the workplace.” (document 13).

The structure of the programmes became one of the critical aspects of the curriculum design. The emphasis is still on skills but in order for programmes to be sustainable the model needed to fit with the traditional three-year courses as far as possible. This would be also deliver pedagogical benefits of work-based learning across the wider cohort.

By November 2014, of the other institutions in the consortium, only one was in a position to work on a new apprenticeship standard. In that case the course was specialised with a very low number of employers and an even smaller number of clients one of which was on the steering group of the course. Even with trailblazer status this course was still only able to recruit students in September 2016. One had put the project on hold due to internal reorganisation and quite slow progress was being made by the others (document 11).

As the course had passed stage one of the validation process the focus then turned to the second stage with a date set for June 2015. During the process to date it had been assumed that the modifications to the three year course would enable that course to benefit from the development work. Unfortunately the quality team believed them to be “too significant to be approved through course modification, yes some of the modifications are minor but cumulatively the changes are quite significant, and especially the changes to level 6 core units” (document 17). This was partly due to a change in policy within the University regarding revalidation of courses and also the interpretation of the Competitions and Markets Authority guidance published in March 2014 that was causing University regulations to be re-written. Further complications from a “standard” validation included the range of additional documents to be completed and approved before validation could be completed. This would later have repercussions for student satisfaction as the students returning in September 2015 to join their level six course, and who had

been consulted throughout the process, were expecting to benefit from the modifications to align their curriculum with the accelerated course. This was a double blow as an accelerated course would have been an attractive option for many of them and they felt that in some ways they were getting second best. In particular they were concerned that the skills development units that had been an important part of the new curriculum were not available to them.

The validation panel included a number of requirements prior to full approval. A key area was the clarification of how assessments would work and that they fully reflected the work-based learning aspects “there should be guidance linked to specific units on what would be expected from the employer and how they can support and guide the student in meeting the requirements of that unit” and further, “ensure that all placement assessment is work based learning not a live brief that could be completed at university”. There were also additional requirements that would not be required for a traditional course, namely a memorandum of understanding “which can be customised to each employer involved in the delivery of the provision” covering roles and responsibilities for the employer and the university, setting out the expected contractual arrangements covering the duration of the course, the need for a named workplace mentor, the expectation that students would be given time to work on in-placement assessments and that the complexities of intellectual property rights “Intellectual Property developed by a student as part of a university course in the UK is owned by the student. In the case of employment, a contract of employment, unless otherwise stated, contracts the employee to develop IP on behalf of the employer. In this case, an employee, when acting as an employee, does not own the IP that they produce.” (document 21) an employer handbook “specific to a course and contain[ing] information which will enable the employer to effectively support the student in achieving the relevant learning outcomes” (document 17). Finally, a mentoring guide was recommended by the panel to clarify the relationship between the student, the workplace mentor and the university link tutor. The guide explained the need for a mentoring approach, the frequency of meetings “we recommend that you meet fortnightly. Aiming for at least six meetings will enable a useful relationship to be established and a range of positive outcomes.” And also offering the workplace mentor the opportunity of

taking a professional development unit to “enable participants to reflect on and learn from their experiences and aims to support those who are taking on a mentoring role in addition to their current duties.” (document 19).

The project was long and slow-moving. Funding approval absorbed a large part of the time available and the move to employer-led standards was a barrier to the development of degree apprenticeships. It also inhibited any shared marketing of a common standard across creative industries as the programmes varied in scope, scale and design. Only two of the six institutions validated and recruited. Not only did the course design have to meet academic quality criteria but also balance the use of university resources in meeting the project requirements (and for sustainability).

“The radical nature of work-based learning encourages a degree of scrutiny of it by the university and by academics who are concerned about the quality and standards of university awards...” (Boud and Solomon, 2001, p.22).

The documentation required to provide a strong foundation for the programme was challenging for the teaching team and academic quality in developing memoranda of understanding, employer handbook, mentoring guidelines as well as the course handbook. Fundamentally “providers, employers and learners may have diverging opinions and understanding of what flexible learning is and should be” (Willem 2011 in Kettle, 2013). The financial aspects were also more complex with *pro rata* funding being made available by Student Finance England (this applies to work-based learning but not to placements so the terminology was critical) and the rules for international students limiting the number of hours that could be worked. Assessments and earning outcomes were closely linked to employer needs. An assessment map was an important tool in agreeing what was expected of the employer. An important aspect of the validation process was that the work-based context was reflected in the curriculum design and in particular that the assessments reflected the work-based context “The assessment methodology for work-based learning should relate to the workplace and enable the student to reflect and demonstrate their learning in a work-based context.” (Hammersley, et al., 2013, p20).

It has been stated that two-year accelerated courses could cost 71-74% of a traditional course (Foster, Hart and Lewis, 2011). In an environment where increasingly university courses are measured by their contribution and staff/student ratios, how sustainable are accelerated programmes for universities? The programmes were designed to provide a blended approach with large periods of time spent in the workplace. This changed the staff engagement with these students but generally university processes and systems found it hard to cope. In the first instance the “standard” financial model used in planning the programmes was difficult to adapt. Financial sustainability proved elusive even with the maximisation of shared provision with the traditional programmes and the management of individualised programmes of study in partnership with industry would undoubtedly have proved very difficult had large numbers of students taken part in the programmes.

4.4.3 Promotion

In December 2014 a Marketing and Operations meeting took place during which the promotion of the courses was discussed. During the meeting an outline of a communications strategy was developed covering public relations “attempt to achieve editorial coverage in mainstream press... attain dynamic and diverse case studies...”, website development hosted by the SSC “to include web links to all institutions involved in this project, preferably including the entry level criteria for each course”, social media “...re-tweeting relevant posts from the [the SSC] corporate account, creating posts on all of the SSC’s social channels...”, budget “...£2,000 per course will be allocated to each institution to utilise their contacts [and] in-house services...”, and tagline “developed in partnership with the SSC”. The meeting also considered if the courses could all share a unique selling point that might be communicated using a strapline? Ideas included “earn while you study... avoid large debts... gain good work experience and contacts... complete your UG degree in two years... make yourself more employable.” (document 22).

The courses went live on UCAS in February 2015 (document 14). During this period the decision was formally taken “not to promote the apprenticeship style concept on

a national level as there would be confusion/conflicting messaging with the courses coming from different sectors, with different qualifications and different models.” (document 16). This lack of a cohesive identity for flexible programmes with “no consistent terminology” (Pollard, et al., 2017, p.5).

In September 2015 the pilot courses commenced. In recruiting the students there had been minimal promotion other than the University online course information (the lead time on the printed prospectus was such that the course would only appear in printed form for 2016 entry) and the UCAS website. It had been anticipated that accelerated and other flexible provision would appeal to more mature students and it transpired that all students on the programme would be considered mature. However, in terms of raising awareness there was very little available in terms of communications. Mainly due the lack of an overarching label for the programmes because they could not be described as apprenticeships and the nature of flexibility, work-based aspects and level were very varied. Though the funding provided ensured that the pilot could run the level of awareness, interest, applications and conversations was very low.

4.4.4 Structuring the Curriculum

In early 2014 the university was invited to take part in a bid by the sector skills council for a HEFCE Catalyst-funded project for universities to work with employers to “position apprenticeships with degree awards embedded as a sought after alternative to traditional degree models, thereby contributing to an increase in graduate employment, a more highly skilled workforce and thriving creative industries” (document 3). The university was selected for this project as it had a strong track record in working with the SSC and was acknowledged to provide “responsive and flexible educational provision that meets market needs” (document 1). The ambition was in response to the Richard Review “in order to get the most out of apprenticeships, they should be redefined and that the solution lies both in shifting more power over to employers in the development of apprenticeships and also in the awarding of an official qualification that signals that something meaningful has been accomplished” (document 1). Clearly the intention was to

develop apprenticeships but also to transform the relationship between employers and universities. Another important objective of the project was it should “incorporate the principles of a “fused” curriculum in order to ensure that they are fit for purpose and produce graduates with the essential blend of creative, technical and entrepreneurial skills” (document 1). This was an important driver in influencing the curriculum design and the term was also used to describe the relationship between employers and universities. As the project developed this may have also introduced an ambiguity and the original concept of “fusion” (a “radical movement in an essentially conservative curriculum process, a movement that places the development of a “fusion” of skills at the heart of its curriculum, that challenges traditional models of degree delivery and places work-based learning at the forefront of its development” (document 1) became less important than the close working relationship between employer and institution.

For its part the Sector Skills Council was seen as “the broker between HEIs and employers, bringing employers on board, liaising with regional networks and facilitating co-investment” and that without their support “employers and higher education institutions may not have the time or the inclination to drive forward innovative degree models such as these” (document 1). Indeed, this insight into the balance of power shifting to the employer in developing apprenticeship standards instead of the established provider-led frameworks, became an Achilles heel of the project as the project was institution-led when the Apprenticeships Standards that emerged part-way through the project were employer-led (the original intention being that the SSC would be “well-placed to write the new frameworks for the six HAs being developed as part of this project” (document 1). Given a successful outcome of this pilot project it was hoped that the project would be a rich source of information for other projects in other industries and that the dissemination of the project would be an important factor in its success. Government policy was also an important driver for the project “key ambitions included in the Government’s *Plan for Growth*, to support “more apprenticeships than any previous government” and recommendations in Sir Tim Wilson’s Review of Business-University collaboration that: “Pathways, including higher-level apprenticeships and professional

qualifications, should become a priority development⁸”, as well as key recommendations in the Richard Review of Apprenticeships” (document 1).

The flexible nature of the provision that was anticipated in the project was seen to respond to the then incumbent coalition government “supports the alternative of providing two-year accelerated degrees” (document 1) and that the then Business Secretary, Vince Cable “has publicly supported the growth of two-year accelerated degrees”. (document 1). So the key drivers for the project covered the development of degree apprenticeships that would be led by the industry skills council in conjunction with a consortium of higher education institutions, very much in response to government policy and that this pilot project would inform the process for developing apprenticeship frameworks across a range of industries. At this point the “product” was seen to be driven by concepts of “fusion” that had particular resonance for the sector skills council and that they would be in a position to promote these new flexible courses through “centralised marketing campaign to ensure that potential students and their parents, as well as additional employers and HEIs, understand the essence of the programmes” (document 1).

Within a climate encouraging a greater range of flexibility, what aspects could be considered in designing the curriculum? Collis and Moonen (2001) proposed five categories that might help develop more flexible approaches to teaching and learning, fundamentally shifting to a more participatory model with “the student placed at the centre of the creation and utilisation of knowledge” but also acknowledging that “other stakeholders may have a different conceptualisation of flexible learning (Willems, 2011). In delivering the project, the different stakeholders included the students, employers, and academic staff delivering units, external examiners, academic services, quality, finance and student support services. Each of which could potentially have had their own needs and interpretations of what might constitute flexible delivery and learning. Further, Portwood (2007) argues that work-based learning “becomes the field of study”. In delivering the programme, it can certainly be said that an individualised approach has been taken.

“The compelling evidence from these projects is that a pedagogic approach which places a central focus on learning outcomes with individual activities matched to work-related objectives, and personalised learning matched to employer needs, is likely to be most successful (HEA, 2009).

In developing a course this is perhaps quite difficult to achieve as work-related objectives would need to be anticipated even with the involvement of the employer so that this aspect might be achievable in broad terms. However, it is very clear that learning is co-produced and perishable in that it might be very difficult to predict the particular social construction of the workplace combining the student with other employees let alone the work being undertaken at any given point.

“Reflection on the learning derived from work practices (or from other life-wide contexts) lends itself to a constructivist pedagogic approach. Again the emphasis is on the process of learning itself with the student placed at the centre of the creation and utilisation of knowledge. Constructivist approaches continue to be developed, particularly with the growing use of new technologies and access to knowledge from and through many different media. The tool used is often problem-based learning; learning from practice and experiences and reflecting on those experiences.” (Kettle, 2013).

Perhaps this is where the nature of assessments is important, where possible employing reflective writing in order to capture these emergent and unpredictable experiences and outcomes. This also becomes more complicated to design into the curriculum so far ahead of delivery.

The Pathfinder projects identified that there were issues around “the expertise of staff; administrative systems; academic year and workflow; quality assurance and resource development” (McCaig, et al., 2007). The validation process certainly took far longer than might usually be expected with a range of additional requirements taking place from the final validation event in June 2015 through to September 2015, just prior to the programme start. These covered the drafting and agreement of documentation including the memorandum of understanding, the employer

handbook and mentoring guidelines. In some instances the various university departments made differing interpretations of what was required and sometimes it may have been the case that the wider context was a little lost in the consideration of fine details. In other situations the engagement with third parties, also unfamiliar with these type of programmes resulted in contradictory advice. One employer took part in the validation event but he subsequently left the agency and in the end that agency didn't take part in the pilot. It would have been beneficial to have got all of the employers involved in this process but final numbers were still uncertain at this stage and involving up to six agencies in quite detailed development without certain further involvement in the pilot may have been difficult.

Each student was interviewed and the choice of an appropriate placement was carefully considered. Concurrently the employer usually followed their own selection procedure. This was a little clumsy and exposed the students to a degree of scrutiny prior to being matched to their placement, in one case a student was declined and another placement was found. Employers were provided with detailed information about all of the six placement periods of the course in a pre-placement briefing where all of the learning outcomes and assessments were discussed along with all of the expectations of each party. This meeting took place without the student but it would be more appropriate to ensure that they were involved in this important meeting. Employers were closely involved in setting the live briefs for nearly all units to ensure that there was a high degree of shared understanding about the requirements. Even then the employers often worried if they were providing an appropriate context and range of activities for the required learning to take place, the student sometimes didn't link the work-based activities to the academic work in the ways that might be expected and the staff felt that materials designed for more traditional models of delivery were difficult to adapt.

In applying lessons learned in the pilot project, perhaps an understanding of the potential for the workplace as a site of experience might be more important than having to specify each unit and assessment in fine detail based on assumptions about how things might turn out in the workplace in terms of social interactions, work tasks and skills development. Involving the student in the meetings relating to

the placements would be another lesson learned as part of a consistent reinforcement that all of the experiences in the workplace are relevant and that divisions between work and study should be avoided. Taking this very different approach to unit and assessment design may also help with the difficulties in adapting materials designed for classroom teaching.

Flexibility is perhaps the key concept in the study and the project. Something that implies tailoring, adaptation and is on-going. None of these are necessarily associated with a standard approach to curriculum design and the lengthy development and recruitment phases for any degree programme. Recognising that the learning is co-produced “all parties should benefit from this flexibility” (Boud and Solomon, 2001). This is of course easier said than done and ultimately it remains to be seen if any university can offer significant flexibility. In particular, in order for a flexible course to be offered it would need to satisfy the requirements of the course approval process “challenging institutional structures and developing flexible pedagogies” (Boud and Solomon, 2001). It also offers challenges to staff more used to working within a structured ‘syllabus-led’ curriculum. This is made more complex in the programmes due to the two modes of learning taking place in any teaching period. Eight weeks in a syllabus driven university environment and seven weeks in a learner-driven, situated learning in a workplace environment.

Perhaps in this it is important that there is a shared understanding of a constructivist approach to learning, agreed and understood by all stakeholder groups in order for them to understand how to engage with the programme. There was a higher degree of understanding of blended approaches but without the concept of constructivist learning this may have been less effective. Further, as Lucas et al (2012) identified “a truly flexible pedagogy for employer engagement will teach people how to learn rather than to understand a particular discipline”, with learners taking a large responsibility for their learning from work-based activities (University of Leeds, 1996). In this case moving from a “more traditional acquisition model” to a “participatory model” (Collis and Moonen, 2001).

“This is becoming more common in constructivist approaches to pedagogy for work-based and work-related learning where learners can join in communities of practice around projects and individual learning contracts.” (Collis and Moonen, 2001).

This refers back to Dearing (1997) where four key skills are identified. Dearing paid particular attention to “learning how to learn... as a key skill because of the importance we place on creating a learning society... at a time when much specific knowledge will quickly become obsolete” (9.18). He goes on to recommend that “institutions of higher education, over the medium term, develop a Progress File. The File should consist of two elements: a transcript recording student achievement which should follow a common format devised by institutions collectively through their representative bodies; a means by which students can monitor, build and reflect upon their personal development. (recommendation 20)”. If the curriculum had incorporated a Progress File it may have helped develop more active learning, awareness of the workplace as a site of experience and for the student to more proactively and reflexively identify how they have learned, their preferred learning style and rather than reflecting on experiences, reflecting on their learning. In this way making a greater distinction between the traditional course and the work-based, accelerated programme.

“Reflection on the learning derived from work practices (or from other life-wide contexts) lends itself to a constructivist pedagogic approach.” (Boud and Solomon, 2001).

Without clear signposting the students on the programme tried to balance the demands of the workplace and university assessments where a more radical approach would suggest that the student is prepared to “autonomously manage” and “take a large measure of responsibility to ensure they learn from their workplace activities” (University of Leeds, 1996) or even “actively construct their experience” (Boud, Cohen and Walker, 1993, p42) where “work is the curriculum” (Boud and Solomon, 2001, p5) and learning begins “with the learners and their workplaces, and end with the university” (p21).

“The people I work with are quite a bit older than me and the people I’m at school with are quite a bit younger than me. I’m kind of stuck in the middle.”
(Millie 2)

“It’s just one of those things you can learn about but I do think it’s different in practice” (Meeting 1.2)

This may also have a bearing on the development of degree apprenticeships. Given the context of employer-led standards with an emphasis on identifying roles and associated skills, how might this be appropriate for the creative industries? It might be said that creative agencies require disruptive thinkers rather than junior staff learning an established and well-defined trade or role. In some respects the agency might be in the position to learn from the apprentice as well as teach.

When Outram (2011) reviewed the accelerated pathfinder programmes he observed that “students are often in the 21 plus age group from social groupings B and C”. The three students on the programme all fitted this demographic group and in one case the student acknowledged that the accelerated course provided a faster route to a degree qualification, possibly being more important than the discipline area. She also felt that one benefit of the course was that she would be 24 when she finished and would have been 28 had she continued her studies in her home country. Again, this echoes Outram who found that these more mature students might feel “short of time”.

Critics of accelerated courses find such programmes stress convenience over substance (Wolfe, 1998) and may tend to a commodification of learning. Certainly this may be true of some programmes but to say that of the courses considered here would be to profoundly misunderstand the objectives in designing the programmes and the associated costs in terms of resources and institutional challenge.

“It isn’t as easy as you might imagine to transfer existing material into this new environment. The material that you might have inherited doesn’t always lend itself to an accelerated programme, it doesn’t allow enough thinking time or to a different environment...The material is designed for groups, or

group work and it affects the way you teach... but often it becomes extremely difficult to react to change, it just simply didn't occur to me that that would be the impact... so that rather than inheriting materials and transposing what you've got, you've actually got to think very carefully about that material and often re-build it and re-invent it to be effective." (Rod 3).

In this he highlights the implications of blended delivery and the situated learning in the workplace. In particular the mix of individual and group work within a mixed cohort of traditional and accelerated students. Generally the first assessment was group work in the university in about week 7-8 and the second assessment was in the workplace and an individual piece of work closely related to the workplace.

In reflecting on the course, some students recognised that an accelerated route may not be appropriate for everyone, recognising that what was brought to the course was an important foundation "I think if I had tried to do it when I was 18 I would have struggled but now I'm older and have a lot more life experience it's so much better... I imagine a lot of my class struggling with having to balance everything" (Mike 3). One aspect in particular was the third term starting in May that formed the clearest differentiation with the traditional route and particularly a sense of isolation at the point where the other students leave for their Summer break and you are in a classroom for 5-8 weeks prior to the work-based learning component of the teaching period "I would recommend it to older people you don't get summers off you have to be here all summer and all of the students are gone so you're kind of on your own." (Millie 2).

There was perhaps an indication that students on the course recognised the importance of work experience and they had already, in some cases a real wealth, of work experience prior to coming to University (literature). One student even maintained his additional part-time working to top up his income but was aware that it may not be sustainable. It was clear that the previous and on-going work experience was recognised as contributing to skills development. Sometimes relating to digital skills "I was doing a lot of filming and editing and doing a lot of the social media stuff. Sending stuff out to the studio." (Millie 2), sometimes in

developing soft skills through customer-facing roles “I was one of the most... been there the longest I suppose so when it came to dealing with complaints you become more confident” (Verity 1.1), this recognition that transferable skills might be important for the future was developed further “I’ve worked in a few different places I have found you do learn a lot of skills there like team working and stuff, prioritising...” (Verity 1.1), but still recognising that priorities need to be made “I might have to drop Boots quite simply because uni is more important than the Saturday job” (Mike 3).

Though the number of students was small, all of them had been actively seeking out experiences for skills development. One student made it clear that relevant work experience would help her stand out “when it comes to CV writing it’s obviously much more impressive to say you worked at [Simon 1]” (Meeting 1.2). From the employer perspective “It’s great for employers when you’re interviewing someone, it’s one thing to be able to talk about doing it but if you’ve actually done it, it is completely different” (Meeting 1.2). One employer found that students who had gone to agencies in London for work experience sometimes had paid a price and this had been one reason that they supported the programme “their goal is to work in London they will get often unpaid internships in big agencies and it sounds amazing and they’ll do it for 6-12 months, they will complain get kicked off and pull a new one in, come back here with a better CV but a troubled kind of history with it” (Meeting 1.2).

“So I think to translate to this practical example... we’re making a conscious effort to try and expose him to a lot of the different disciplines within communications, get him involved in real tangible examples.... To be able to go out and say I helped in this instant response scenario or I helped develop this social media campaign... to be able to give practical examples...” (Max 3.1).

When reflecting on the difference between working at university (theory) and in industry (practice) both students, staff and employers agreed “it’s just one of those things you can learn about but I do think it’s different in practice” (Meeting 1.2) and

sometimes the greater complexity of real world situations is recognised by academics to be very difficult to simulate in the classroom “I think that’s very true, the professional development and the creative writing and the targeting messages to different audiences, all of that experience is fantastic.” (Lily 1). One of the outcomes of the pilot programmes is that staff became more aware that real world contexts are far muddier and uncontrolled than the comprehensive briefs provided by competitions.

“Probably fairly low but still quite complex because of the incredibly complex nature of what we do... you’ve exposed him to some of the political stuff... different stakeholder dynamics... (Max 3.1).

4.4.5 Foundation

The study identified six dimensions that provide a foundation for the development of accelerated, WBL programmes:

- Industry: Engagement with an industry with a skills gap
- Employer: Prepared to devote sufficient resources
- Institution: Flexible institutional systems
- Staff team: Flexible/facilitative Link tutor/account manager
- Market: Awareness raising to a reachable target audience
- Professional Body: Active sector skills council

One of the drivers in bidding for the funding and developing the programmes was to test the viability of such flexible courses “to determine, what was the appetite like for this sort of thing... and to test out three markets/stakeholders and what their investment would be...” (document 23). This included the market of potential students, the willingness of employers to engage with such programmes and the ability of universities to develop sustainable programmes. “What are the problems they are likely to hit?” (document 23).

One key performance indicator for sector skills council was that courses were developed that could be “put on the books” (document 23). It was thought that

industries that struggled to recruit (an example being nuclear power) might be more prepared to invest resources in supporting similar programmes but that within the creative industries it was less clear, particularly as there was a culture of unpaid internships and a sense that often university graduates were often poorly prepared for the discipline. The earlier Pathfinder programmes “have had some success in introducing, sustaining and developing flexible provision, particularly accelerated degrees and work-based learning” but that the provision has remained small in scale and that the development of flexible delivery across the curriculum had not materialised (Outram, 2011, p.38). Outram also suggested that the then new funding arrangements might encourage the development of more flexible programmes, supported by professional bodies and employers. In the final analysis, the programmes developed during this study were run for a maximum of two cohorts before being withdrawn, though unlike the infrastructure barriers identified by Outram were not a significant factor the fundamental market for such courses meant that attracting students was difficult and that even with the willingness to develop communications for students and employers the channels to reach potential students remained difficult to identify.

It may be that in the future the market is made ready for a wider variety of provision in which case the investment on the promotion of apprenticeships will have played a significant part. The employers that engaged in the programmes had done so with very little information in the first instance, very much relying on good will on both sides. In most cases, the employers found that the benefits to the organisation largely hadn't been considered and they have expressed an interest in taking on apprentices in any related degree apprenticeship that may emerge in the future, part of the development process for which, some of the lessons learned in developing accelerated, work-based programmes. These include the incorporation of a third trimester in order to allow the study of two units rather than three each trimester in order to lessen the burden to the student but also delivering the programme across three rather than four years. The Government has also provided an incentive to universities in developing accelerated courses to allow them to charge at a higher rate. It is difficult to say if the ability to charge a higher fee would have helped the programmes to be retained but as identified by Foster, Hart and Lewis (2011, p.3)

“the cost of the two-year, accelerated degree could be between 71-74% of the equivalent three-year degree”, so in order to break even a course would need to be able to charge around £10,000 per year but they also noted that significant infrastructure changes (“availability and expertise of staff, administrative systems, the academic year, workflow, quality assurance and resource development” McCaig, Bowers-Brown and Drew, 2007, p.11) would be required to attain these cost savings. Many of those changes to culture, perceptions and processes took place at the university during the development and implementation of the pilot programmes but that without sufficient student numbers, the courses remained unsustainable and that such programmes may be more likely to succeed in providing vocational courses for areas with significant skills shortage.

4.4.6 Summary

Partnerships are at the heart of the programmes, forming a foundation for viability that extends from employers willing to invest sufficient resources in an industry, perhaps drawn together through an active Sector Skills Council and a university with a strategic approach to flexible learning, particularly in three areas: being prepared to invest in market research and promote courses to a fragmented and hard to reach audience; direct internal departments including quality, finance and marketing to support flexible and non-standard approaches; recognising and rewarding the important account management and facilitative roles required of academic staff. Within course promotion, the university should communicate the autonomously-managed, co-produced learning, planned and emergent outcomes including capital and value creation to students but also to employers; during development ensure that the active learning, student autonomy, agency and other student-managed aspects are enabled; prior to delivery that staff are supported in taking on unfamiliar pedagogies, link tutor and account management aspects.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 Contribution to knowledge

5.1.1 Aim of Study

The aim of the study was to understand the opportunities and demands associated with the delivery and experiences of accelerated, work-based learning.

The following factors (see table 21 below) appear to be important in understanding the opportunities and demands relating to all partners in developing accelerated, work-based programmes and may also apply to other flexible approaches and alternatives to traditional degrees including degree apprenticeships.

Table 21: Opportunities and Demands of accelerated, work-based learning

Opportunities	Demands
Active learning Address skills shortage Capital creation Customisation Depth of industry engagement Modes of learning Student agency Value creation	Institutional flexibility Programme promotion Programme sustainability Student resilience Teaching staff flexibility (communication and learning modes)

Beyond the initial aim of developing a student-centred programme facilitating the creation of social capital to enable progression into industry, all partners benefitted from the creation of intellectual capital. The combination of transmissive (university-led but also in a traditional master to novice relationship) and social constructivist (workplace-driven) learning placed a greater emphasis on how learning takes place, with an assumption that theoretical knowledge is taught in university and that is then applied in the workplace. One of the intentions of both the HEFCE-funded project and the programme was to address a social justice aim by facilitating the development of social capital (bridging and bonding) such that

transition into industry was enabled and thereby sidestepping the unpaid internships that are prevalent in the creative industries.

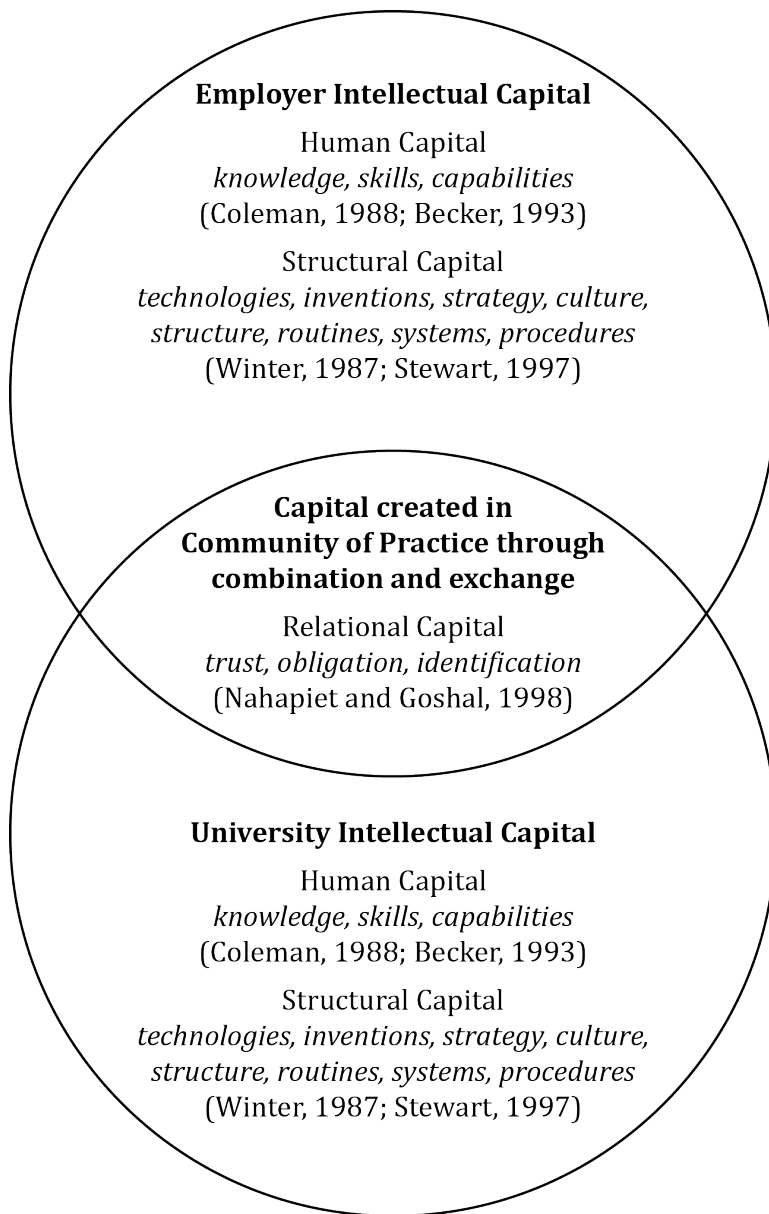
In the development of the programmes, social justice had been seen as an aim, particularly in relation to supporting students from diverse backgrounds in gaining work experience. It was thought that access to agency practice was restricted to students who enjoyed social capital advantages in terms of access to networks and financial capital benefits to allow participation in the unpaid internships that characterise entry into the periphery of practice. Due to the small scale of the study the range of student participants reflecting a diverse range of backgrounds was not possible. It was also apparent that the slightly mature, driven and 'ready for the world of work' candidates that are attracted to accelerated courses may already have social capital advantages. What wasn't anticipated was the social capital concerns of the employers. This was found in the corporate social responsibility strategy of the large employer that influenced the recruitment of more diverse candidates, this may have attracted them to participate in the programmes. On the part of smaller agencies, the social justice aspects of the programmes were evidenced in a number of ways. One agency was well aware of the established route of going up to London and finding unpaid internships and from their experience they felt that this was often problematic (alluding to the concept of self-commodification) and perhaps this influenced their participation in the programmes. This participation may have also led them to reconsider their assumptions about students from a vocational university and the potential for specialist courses in preparing students for practice.

The experience of working in an agency or department of an organisation also provided an opportunity to confirm or challenge their assumptions about the industry. That the student/employee may increasingly add value to the organisation as they found their place, understood the rules and accrued capital, rewarding the investment in time, was one of the key emergent outcomes. That this also encompassed the creation of intellectual capital for the employer and institution underlined the advantages to all parties and not just the student in social constructive learning. The creation of capital also contributed to productivity which

links back to the government policy driver in the area of education and skills. More widely the employer and the institution enjoyed capital creation benefits through shared human capital, networks (relational capital) and structural capital (the resources, technologies, culture and so on of the partner organisation) (see table 20 above. As the programmes progressed a higher level of customisation of units and student-led activities (flipped classroom for example) reflected changing student needs and deepening engagement with the workplace. Student attainment was higher overall, reflecting the more driven student who is attracted to such courses and the potential for enhanced learning opportunities, balanced by the pressure and stress of managing time for the student/employee and the higher level of tutorial and teaching support required by university staff across a longer academic year (see figure 10 below).

The study contributes to research looking to operationalise Bourdieu's concepts in three ways. A critique of Bourdieu might be that the field is seen as being preserved and replicated due to the asymmetrical power relations at play and that on entering the field, agents must learn the rules (apprentices learning from the master) in order to find their place and fit in. Secondly, that habitus is a deterministic concept with agents being unable to escape their pre-determined place in society. This might be to overlook the dynamic nature of the interplay between habitus and field and the potential for disruptive engagement of agents (in this case students on work placement). By considering the field as being reproduced rather than replicated the distinction might be made between a dynamic and adapting structure rather than being fixed, unchanging and preserving the status quo. Perhaps discussing habitus in relation to both primary influences (life history) and secondary situational factors such as higher education and work experiences helps to understand the potential for renewal of habitus (through the creation of human capital) and the social mobility of agents. Finally, in considering the interplay between fields, while the situation of students on the programmes is described above, the emerging community of practice across all three participant groups provided a dynamic catalyst for change in the respective fields of university and workplace that is expressed in the discussion of social capital from the perspective of intellectual capital being shared and created through relational and structural factors of the partnership.

Figure 10: Capital Creation through Communities of Practice (Berry, 2018).



Demands were to be found in the development, promotion and delivery of the programmes. Very much as outlined in the literature, institutions that are geared towards developing traditional degree courses need to find a way of enabling more flexible models while still delivering 360 credits in two years (Outram, 2011, p.12) to equivalent value to a traditional course (McCaig, et al., 2007, p.4). This required a strong strategic focus of a number of departments “to overcome perceptions, culture and processes” (Foster, Hart and Lewis, 2011, p.4) and for rules to be adapted and revised (Pollard, et al., 2017, p.6).

When designing a curriculum for accelerated, work-based learning programmes it is important to understand that the learning may take place in an unstructured syllabus-free context, by contrast traditional curriculum design is predicated on fixed and predictable learning outcomes bound by the syllabus. A challenge for a course team will be to design a curriculum that allows for this in the pedagogical approaches, individualised learning contracts and the assessment of outcomes. Reflective practice is one key way to summatively assess outcomes synthesising theory and practice.

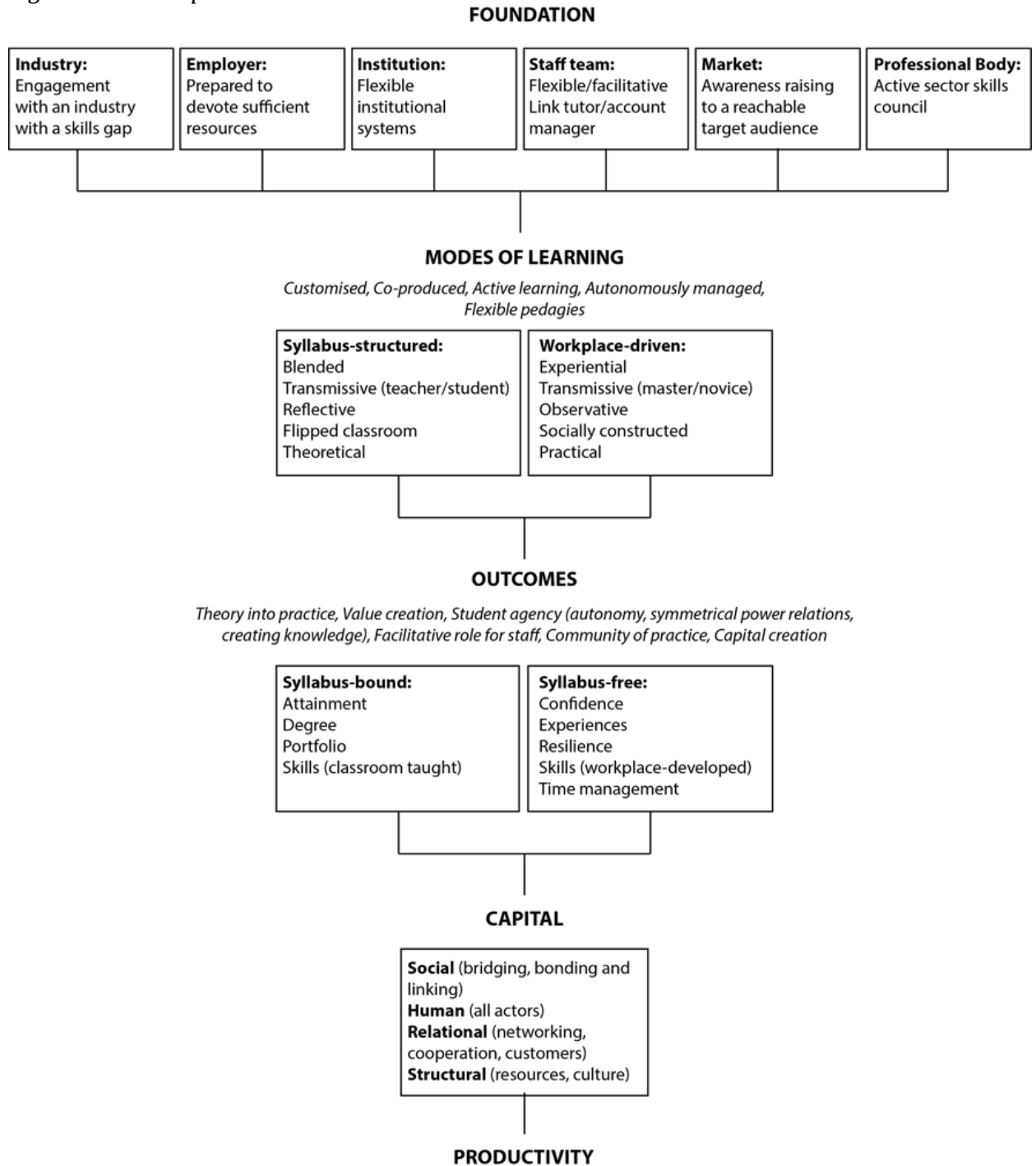
When promoting such programmes, the reality that the target audience is slightly more mature and diverse, confirming the findings in previous research, (McCaig et al, 2007; Outram, 2009; Huxley et al, 2017) means that targeting a coherent group is difficult and certainly that the usual UCAS route is inappropriate even though such a profile is broadly in keeping with a widening participation university. This aspect is key in the sustainability of such programmes. Working with industries where employers are motivated by a skills shortage may be an advantage and in some instances the student may regard the employer as the primary route into the programme.

When delivering programmes the staff overhead of link tutoring, more flexible communication and the development of a richer blended approach to teaching and learning, not to mention the third trimester, offered challenges to staff with no experience of such programmes, placing demands upon university staff. Similarly the learning, teaching and mentoring taking place in the work place placed demands

on employers. But principally, the demands placed upon the student by balancing the responsibilities of being an employee and a student required a high degree of resilience, though very much in line with the literature, students found that “though they had to work hard, the course was manageable” (Huxley, et al. 2017, p.9).

The threshold for transitioning from higher education to industry has been effectively moved by the programme, the need for students to have appropriate financial and social capital to gain work experience has been removed, but the inherent social capital of the student at the start of the programme would need to be such that they felt confident to take on a challenging balance of study and work and to be confident in applying for a non-standard course “a high level of selectivity is applied to the students who enrol on this type of programme” (Foster, Hart and Lewis, 2011, p.33). The conceptual framework of the study is intended to help in the transferability of the study to other situations. It sets out some pre-requisites as a foundation to enhance viability of programmes. It also focuses on the ways that student learning is enhanced through accelerated, work-based programmes through multi-modal learning giving rise to distinctive outcomes and the creation of capital. The conceptual framework is illustrated in figure 11 below.

Figure 11: Conceptual Framework



The research set out to address gaps in the literature in three areas. (1) There are very few studies of flexible course or apprenticeships that triangulate the student, staff and employer perspectives. (2) Studies on apprenticeships often focus on the employer or provider, whereas studies on accelerated courses have focused on students and staff. (3) Even fewer studies have been made into flexible courses that also incorporate work-based learning.

The study has contributed to knowledge in a number of ways, in particular insights into employer and staff perspectives in working in partnership with a university in developing and co-producing accelerated, work-based learning programmes, also the student perspectives in experiencing a course of this kind combining higher education and industry practice.

5.1.2 RQ1: What is the experience of all partners within accelerated, work-based degree programmes?

Habitus was operationalised in the study to understand more about how all actors were able to “realize themselves” in relation to distinct fields through “occupational, institutional, cultural... norms, values, rules and interests” (Bourdieu 1990). By placing “...someone in a different position within the field, or in a different field altogether... they will behave differently – and will be more comfortable or ill at ease – depending on their ‘feel for the game’ (Bourdieu 1990) with which they are now confronted” (Sweetman, 2009). This captures an important aspect of capital creation, particularly in the student but for all actors. The programme placed any individual student in a workplace, exposing that student to the social aspects outlined by Bourdieu. This could also be taken further in describing the relationship of the student with the field of higher education within which, as the programme progressed. It might be said that the student has increased agency in the bespoke and negotiated aspects of the programme that might be unfamiliar to a student on a traditional course. By providing a more dynamic and complex mix of experiences, and outcomes, planned and emergent, the programme attempts to create a stimulating environment to facilitate the transitional phase from higher education to industry. In many cases the student feeling increasingly like an employee rather than a student. Potentially, students may also find that they don’t find their place in their organisation and this aspect would be influenced by the habitus of the student and the extent to which their exposure to the social capital of the organisation contributes to their assimilation or otherwise. For the employer, the recruitment process for the placements was almost equivalent to that for a full-time role requiring the student to “negotiate their entry into the [industrial] world” How do they feel and operate? Do they know “what to do... how to behave” (Bourdieu 1990)?

Or, as Sweetman (2009) suggests, is such flexibility and adaptation already a requirement of their habitus? This did mean that at the outset the student was being treated as an employee and looking back it can be seen that one of the aims of the course had originally been to provide more equitable access to the industry but in reality the barrier to entry was still set quite high in order for the student to be taken on, in other words the student may have to have been aligned well to the field of practice prior to any interventions on the programmes, being judged as being able to “cope with the demands of accelerated study” (Huxley, et al., p.8). This has implications for the admissions process, particularly with the increasing trend for unconditional offers and a lack of academic involvement in selection. Interviews will be essential to screen candidates “a high level of selectivity is applied to students who enrol on these type of programmes” (Foster, Hart and Lewis, 2007, p.33). The accelerated, work-based learning experience for the student hopefully leading to early career practice required a high degree of efficient working on the part of the student. This was partly because the student spent less time on course work while in the workplace than anticipated but also just the demands of a regular 9-5 day including travel time. Digging a little deeper it emerged that students worried about what they were contributing to the workplace with feelings of guilt about time spent on course work during the working day. Talking to university and employer staff this didn’t feature during regular communications – perhaps because the focus on student communications was more on unit-related or work-related aspects – but did emerge from the research interviews. Employer staff were aware of the need to adapt their practice and to accommodate students into the workplace. They sometimes helped provide a safe environment for the student to learn the rules, accrue capital and find their feet, understanding that being too exposed to other staff and social situations at too early a stage might be detrimental. Academic staff found that operating of the cusp of two fields, where they ‘lost’ the student half way through each semester, challenged them to adopt unfamiliar pedagogies and they too had to find their feet and accrue capital in the new situation. They too might benefit from support and training to help them adjust prior to the commencement of such programmes.

The following shows the elements of work-based, accelerated learning that help facilitate the accrual of capital and the types of capital created that apply to actors and organisations in the programmes.

Vehicles for capital creation:

- Industry engagement
- Active learning
- Attainment
- Student agency
- Communities of practice

Types of capital:

- Social (bridging and bonding)
- Human (all actors in the programme)
- Relational (networking)
- Structural (resources, culture)

By being aware of the potential for capital creation, all actors may be able to capitalise on opportunities outside the programme, the practices of actors and new rule helping reconstitute the respective fields.

One aspect that was often commented on by employers was the importance of the soft skills that they observed in the students in the workplace. These included teamwork but also higher-level influence and creative aspects. These gave employers the confidence to give students more responsibility, contributing ideas, taking decisions and pitching to clients for example. In turn the students recognised this and were at times shocked that they would be so trusted and have such influence over “real” projects. Again, many of these aspects were not formally measured or assessed during the programme but may contribute to the cultural capital, confidence and resilience of the students. After the programme one student commented that they had found the recruitment process for their first agency job much easier than the students from more traditional courses she was competing

against having had direct experience of many of the tasks that they had to undertake as part of the assessment centre. Towards the end of the programme one student commented on their sense of pride in “my little course” (Verity 1.3), which she felt was a hidden gem, and gave her many employability advantages. Some of these less tangible aspects are difficult to capture in either unit assessments, earning outcomes but also the National Student Survey.

Students engaging with the programme were able to deeply engage with occupational practice, gaining confidence, resilience, skills and influence while socially engaging with the field. This was enhanced by the central importance of reflective inquiry synthesising theory and practice. Academic staff and employer staff faced challenges in their fields and were challenged to adapt their practices to accrue capital in the new situation and to facilitate the accrual of capital by the students. All actors were able to engage with the respective cultural, rules and norms of both University and workplace and were in a better position to understand where they saw their future. As they progressed through the programme some students increasingly identified as practitioner having found their place in the field.

5.1.3 RQ2: What is the nature of learning within accelerated work-based degree programmes?

Employing different modes of learning was always going to be important in the programmes. They were, after all, designed to pilot more flexible degree courses with a strong work-based learning focus. During the development phase, this aspect was prominent in the curriculum design but as it was innovative and outside of the experience of the course team and the other university teams responsible for managing the course development process this was a very steep learning curve. It also meant that many of the decisions were based on assumptions and to insure as far as possible parity between students on the traditional route and the accelerated route. Certainly it was a central concern that delivery and assessment during periods spent in work-based learning were carefully considered. The assessment was predominantly practice-based, the communications were assumed to be of a more blended nature and it was assumed that cultural capital would be influenced

by the student participating in the workplace and that this may have advantages in easing the transition into the field of practice. What perhaps wasn't understood prior to the programme delivery was the full impact of the workplace as a social context and the extent to which that it became the curriculum.

Modes of learning:

- Blended
- Experiential
- Transmissive (teacher/student)
- Transmissive (master/novice)
- Social constructivist
- Theory/practice
- Customised
- Co-produced
- Flipped classroom

As the programme developed approach taken by students in assessments in all of their units whether in the workplace or in university were increasingly influenced by experiences gained in the work place. This could take the form of the use of a specific research tool or a much clearer focus on the client in writing a plan. Much of this learning wasn't directly assessed but it supported a high level of engagement with the programme. Though the plan had always been for students to work on their units during the 9-5 working day, often students felt guilty in taking time in this way so spent evenings and weekends doing course work. Looking back and in planning for action it seems clear that by trying to anticipate the ways that practice and study could be combined the curriculum was still too restrictive and the gap between actual daily practice (the day job) and work associated with passing a unit was sufficient to make them far less compatible than had been assumed in the development phase, to the extent that often students didn't connect the unit assessments with the workplace even though they were projects for live client briefs. This pressure on time and increased stress at times during the course were

evident in student comments made during the study but the same type of comments were not made during regular programme communications.

It was also anticipated that students would take the academic aspects of accepted models and theory back into the workplace and add value. This wasn't something that employers identified but rather the student was seen to be an increasingly useful resource given more responsibility and that might help with more speculative projects. This seemed to surprise some of the employers and they also learned more about what the university could offer. In one case a number of visits where the agency could see the potential for the university providing additional resources were set up for very high profile clients. These resources included students from a range of interdisciplinary courses to physical facilities. In some ways the boundary between agency and university became less distinct and the potential for enterprise and research projects enhanced. Two such projects emerged during the course of the programme as a tangible example of sharing structural (networking) and relational (trust, identification) aspects of social capital and might also be said to indicate cognitive aspects of social capital (perhaps generated through the experience of positive relationships) which would otherwise have been unlikely to emerge, particularly in a university looking to build research and knowledge exchange projects.

5.1.4 RQ3: In what ways can we design accelerated, work-based degree programmes to deliver benefits to employers, students and universities?

In order for programmes of this nature to be sustainable, all parties involved must perceive benefits. For students to apply they must anticipate benefits, for employers to become involved they must enjoy benefits and for universities the courses must offer enhancements to the portfolio. More specifically the range of benchmarks that they are judged by including the National Student Survey (NSS) that measures many dimensions of the student experience, the Destination of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE) that ranks courses in terms of professional and managerial employability and the rate of good honours would all need to be enhanced by such programmes. Key issue: A critical aspect in designing such courses is to ensure that

the benefits to all are understood and communicated through a promotional campaign that would likely be through social media as that may offer the potential to reach the fragmented target market using powerful tools based on demographics, interests and behaviours through flexible ad formats. This would also contribute to the viability of programmes.

The involvement of industry partners in the development process required existing networks, goodwill, trust and a long-term perspective. Because of the lengthy development phase, some industry partner contacts moved on and by the time the programme was in the final stage of approval there was a need to re-connect in some ways. This was crucial as this was just the time when placements were being put in place as the courses were recruited to and then delivered. The fundamental relationship with industry partners is critical in programme design, it may even be that the employer channels are used to promote the programmes to reach an audience not tied to UCAS. In order to attract partners the programme should have clear benefits and not just rely on the willingness of the employer to invest in society for the greater good. Any assumptions they may have about the transmissive nature of learning the workplace from master to apprentice should be balanced with an understanding of the socially constructed learning for all parties. As they learn the rules and accrue capital students may increasingly practice as employees and add value rather than just receive training. Some of the partners who had appeared committed during the development didn't go on to offer student places and some who had been recruited later in the process and were more tenuous proved to be more sustainable. Key issue: Take steps to ensure that employer partners are willing to allocate sufficient resources at the outset. This may need to be quite formal and contractual.

In part, the development process was extended because of the complexities of working as a consortium of university partners and also because university course approval processes can be lengthy and when unconventional courses are being developed many of the standard procedures need to be adapted. There were also additional documents relating to partnership working, a memorandum of understanding, employer handbook and mentoring guidelines. Finally, there were

complexities in funding arrangements and definitions of placements as opposed to work-based learning that had implications for student finance. Nevertheless, partnerships formed through the development and delivery phases proved to be strong and emergent outcomes included enhanced relationships between agency staff and university staff which continue to offer new opportunities for collaboration and research. Key issue: In order to move programmes forward and gain industry engagement, appropriate promotion communicating the full range of social capital (structural and relational) benefits to all partners might be beneficial.

An institution that has enabled the various departments to adopt more flexible practices in validating such courses should be in a good place to deliver other similar programmes and they would sensibly look towards industries with a skills shortage who may be more amenable to the investment in time and other resources required in this co-produced approach to programme design and delivery. Key issue: In order for an institution to develop and sustain such programmes their needs to be a strong and shared vision and strategic planning to enable “procedures, processes and perceptions” (Foster, Hart and Lewis, 2011, p.3) within the institution to validate such programmes. Capital creation potential may be increased identifying employers with the potential to share those cognitive aspects of social capital.

The course team set out to recognise the work-based context in the curriculum design but it became clear that this did not fully take into account a number of factors centred on the socio-cultural context of the work place and more facilitative and constructivist approaches to learning that were unfamiliar. This co-production of learning was perhaps the greatest challenge and opportunity. Key issue: Those designing programmes should take into account the multi-modal learning of such programmes and the relative importance of emergent learning and outcomes to the creation of capital. This may mean that staff teams need training in the application of blended learning and that assessment briefs should facilitate the reflective practice that synthesises the classroom-led theory and workplace-driven practice.

The benefits to the university have been the development of standard documentation that can be carried over into other courses, particularly at a time

when there appears to be no let-up in the demand from government for universities to provide more flexible and particularly accelerated programmes.

The benefits to employers are that they have been able to understand more about what universities can offer and they have enjoyed contribution of students throughout the programme, often with a higher degree of responsibility than anticipated. The engagement with partners at the earliest stage is important in ensuring that the curriculum design is informed by the contemporary industry context and that sufficient weight is given to the uncontrollable and unknowable aspects rather than try to anticipate every aspect. Key action: The potential for negotiation of individualised learning contracts for students is important, offering student agency. This would have implications for the role of the employer and particularly in the validation of such programmes to allow the degree of personalisation in the curriculum, acknowledging the student managed, socially-constructed learning.

The benefits to students appear to have been clear. Overall they have achieved higher grades and overall degree classification while acquiring experiences that have contributed to industry-relevant cultural capital. They have also saved money as they only had two years of course fees; student loans and their 48 weeks of work experience were paid. Some of the outcomes were heavily influenced by the curriculum, others by the social context of the workplace. Both sets of outcomes predicate the development of social capital:

Planned (syllabus-bound):

- Attainment
- Degree
- Portfolio
- Skills (classroom developed)
- Theory into practice

Emergent (syllabus-free):

- Confidence
- Experiences
- Resilience
- Skills (workplace-developed)
- Time management
- Value creation
- Productivity (effectiveness)

It would be important in programme design to understand the complexities here and that should form part of the communications to the target audience as well as programme design and delivery. Key issue: Being aware of the potential for emergent outcomes should influence the development process and enable them to be articulated to all parties as valuable if intangible benefits.

5.2 Implications for Practice

Implications for practice are considered in relation to course teams delivering programmes, the wider university, students, employers and SSCs.

Table 22: Implications for Partners.

Implications for Programme	Implications for Universities	Implications for students	Implications for employers	Implications for SSCs
<p>The link tutor role may be onerous and not recognised.</p> <p>The employer may require account management.</p> <p>Staff may require development in flexible learning approaches.</p> <p>Flexible courses may extend the academic year.</p>	<p>The industry sector should have an identifiable skills gap.</p> <p>Commission market research to confirm target market size.</p> <p>Strategic commitment to flexible learning supported by quality, finance and marketing.</p> <p>Interview to be combined with the selection process of the employer.</p> <p>Ensure good employer fit in vision and ambition; existing network connections, trust and use contracts.</p> <p>Combine planned (classroom) and emergent (workplace) learning synthesised through reflective practice.</p> <p>Planned and emergent outcomes contribute to capital creation, potential for deeper partnerships.</p>	<p>Be prepared to complete an interview and other selection activities that may involve the employer.</p> <p>Feel ready to commit to the field of practice.</p> <p>Desire to prioritise vocational study.</p> <p>Be prepared to balance 9-5 working with course work.</p> <p>Feel ready for the world of work.</p> <p>Feel able to work under pressure.</p> <p>Seek autonomy and self-directed learning.</p> <p>Be prepared for active learning (multiple modes of learning, reflective practice, often student-led).</p> <p>Identify as an employee more than a student.</p>	<p>Be prepared to allocate sufficient resources (financial and human, including mentoring).</p> <p>Shared vision and values with University will promote capital creation.</p> <p>Be prepared to sign a detailed contract.</p> <p>Link the placement to recruitment.</p> <p>Be prepared to engage with academic staff.</p> <p>Be prepared to dedicate 20% of the placement student's working week to course work.</p> <p>Think of the University as an extension of relational and structural capital with potential for intellectual capital creation.</p>	<p>Be prepared to disseminate communications to employers (particularly SMEs).</p> <p>Be prepared to engage with government departments in the development of policy.</p> <p>Be prepared to identify accreditation opportunities.</p>

Table 22 above summarises the implications for the partners in accelerated, work-based learning programmes.

5.2.1 Programme Level

The programmes were distinctive in a number of ways and in particular the requirement to provide an individualised learning experience. This is perhaps one of the chief challenges for sustainability in that each student has to be matched to an agency for a potentially two-year contract with appropriate clauses to ensure that all parties are protected. This partnership requires a high level of servicing in terms of regular meetings before and during the placements. If a placement falls through, as it did in the pilot programmes, the identification of a suitable replacement becomes critical depending on the notice. Though a number of employers agreed to take part in the programmes, taking these through to an actual placement was more complex and due to the fact that agency practice can be variable in terms of client and work the offer of placement is perishable. For the course team this added a degree of stress as each term started knowing that eight weeks later the work-based learning placement was due. Lessons to learn from this are that the potential for human, relational and structural capital advantages for the course team should not be overlooked, building towards more formalised partnerships. Key action: recognise, acknowledge and reward the importance of account management and link tutor roles as well as facilitative aspects that staff may need to undertake in account managing employers.

One of the biggest challenges is awareness of learning taking place and capturing that through curriculum design. This may require unfamiliar pedagogical approaches (Lucas, 2010) with more emphasis on reflective practice and assessments that synthesise more open-ended experiential learning. But this would also mean that it would be impossible to ensure that each student had the same opportunities for experiential learning. Teaching staff taking part in such programmes need to recognise that a richer blend of learning and teaching methods may be required including the flipped classroom and more flexible communications.

Key action: universities to ensure that appropriate development opportunities are provided for staff to understand more about employing flexible learning pedagogies.

The account management (Basit, 2015), work experience management (Harvey, Geall and Moon 1998) and link tutoring roles are critical to the success of the programmes, so staff with a responsibility to lead flexible programmes will need to understand that this facilitative (Boud and Solomon 2001, Lucas 2010) role that may not be recognised or rewarded.

At a time when universities' performance is measured in a number of ways outlined below, course teams need a plan to meet these targets. They also have to meet staff/student ration targets (SSRs), possibly a ratio of 25/1, and make a contribution to meet the costs of central or professional services, which can amount to 50%-70% of the income from student fees. This pressure on staffing may mean that courses requiring a high level of resources or servicing may be less likely to be sustainable using the current models. It would also be important to ensure that the emergent outcomes and development of forms of capital that may not relate to the conventional course KPIs are recognised and valued.

The accelerated nature of the programmes (see Figure: 13 below) meant that a third term was required (1.5 levels in one calendar year). During the previous flexible learning pilot programmes a concern was raised about the implications for university staff contracts (BIS, 2010, p.26), time pressures in turning marks around (Huxley, et al., 2017, p.9) and workloads (Pollard, et al., 2017, p.72). In practice standard staff workload planning models were used and no increase in teaching hours was required – effectively spreading the expected teaching allocation over 45 rather than 30 weeks, but the requirement to cover teaching for the third trimester did extend the working year significantly making leave and research time more difficult to plan. During the pilot, and as the literature suggests, goodwill (Foster, Hart and Lewis, 2011, p.p.31) was relied upon and this may not be scalable or manageable in the longer term. However, there are similar pressures in delivering postgraduate courses. Also, many universities are experiencing a higher demand for postgraduate courses (up by over 26,000 from 2015-16 to 2016-17 coinciding with

the changes in student finance to offer loans HESAa, 2018) that also follow a third term or 45-week teaching year. However, this increase in the 'standard' year did mean that opportunities for research and other extra-curricular activities was squeezed into a small window which could be a factor depending on the teaching or research trajectory of staff in the course team. This pressure is very real and academic workload planning will need to be carefully implemented to ensure that staff on such programmes are not seen to be disadvantaged by having less time for research and a Summer break. Key action: the curriculum should be designed to accommodate block teaching and distance learning in the Summer term, particularly at level 6 when the student is potentially feeling more like an employee and will be in a better position to add value to their organisation by spending extended work placement periods.

5.2.2 University Level

Institutional processes are most closely aligned to standard or traditional delivery. In order to more effectively facilitate the development of flexible courses institutions themselves could be more flexible and open to new paradigms. Many of the aspects of a flexible course challenge institutional practices including expectations of equitable student experiences, assessments and learning outcomes. This has been acknowledged in the programmes piloting flexible routes that have run over the past 20 years (Sims and Woodrow, 1996; Wlodowski, 2003; McCaig, et al., 2007; Lee and Horsfall, 2007; HEFCE, 2011; Outram, 2011; Tallantyre, 2013; Huxley et. al, 2017). However, government policy is still directing universities to offer these programmes so more effective ways of developing and delivering these flexible provision seems to be a sensible step, particularly if an institution is wishing to differentiate in this way. Key action: align university strategy with flexible provision and ensure shared understanding prior to embarking on flexible programmes. In particular quality, finance, marketing as well as academic staff.

Applications for the accelerated programmes were low and drawn largely from two constituencies, young but mature applicants and students who had perhaps struggled in an original degree programme looking for a qualification delivered in

two years. The findings supported the literature in that the recruitment and communication of flexible courses was challenging with a very hard to reach and fragmented target audience but that students who found the programmes tended to be more mature, motivated and focused on a career, feeling short of time (Outram, 2011). Many institutions that took part in pilot programmes over the years did not go on to extend those programmes, perhaps because of a lack of demand. This was the case in the programmes researched in the study that only ran over two intakes before being closed and suggests that the steps proposed by Pollard et al. to increase supply (the recent announcements to open the way to higher charges for two year degrees are an example of this) and encourage demand will be essential to stimulate the market for accelerated courses. Key action: institutions prepared to invest in WBL programmes as part of a partnership strategy may see additional benefits through the engagement with practice and within the study there was a deepening of the relationship including the sharing of structural capital and intellectual capital to bring university resources to bear on practice-based objectives. Key action: use market research to identify if there is a reachable target audience of sufficient size prior to developing programmes.

The viability of programmes depends on a number of factors:

- Awareness raising to a reachable target audience
- Flexible institutional systems
- Engagement with an industry with a skills gap
- Active sector skills council

For universities, the wider impact of the programmes is that though they are quite onerous to develop and demand additional coordination and facilitation, they provide a deeper engagement with employers that may develop into degree apprenticeship places and knowledge-exchange projects as the relationship between university and staff and agency staff are developed to mutual benefit. Universities are operating in an emerging marketplace with sometimes incompatible pressures to meet key performance indicators, often externally imposed. These include the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Destination of Leavers in Higher Education

(DLHE) but also the Research Excellence Framework (REF), Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and Knowledge Exchange Excellence Framework (KEF). Flexible provision may offer opportunities to excel in some of these areas. Key action: invest in and employ student-centred, flexible approaches to enhance the student experience and outcomes for all partners.

The emergence of WBL to be considered not only a mode of learning, but a field of study (Portwood, 2000; Gibbs and Garnett, 2007) emphasises the complexity in combining syllabus-structured (tutor-led) and workplace learning (student-centred) (Hammersley et al., 2013) which was evidenced in the development and delivery of the programmes where the curriculum was designed with employers but didn't create individualised learning contracts. Key action: implement the application of formal contracts with all partners.

In terms of employer communications, universities should be prepared to communicate the benefits of such programmes and in particular to ensure that all relevant institutional departments are coordinating action. Key action: universities must be prepared to communicate the wider range of benefits and potential for capital creation to the employer. Key action: universities to ensure that business support or development teams engage with levy-paying organisations in planning their apprenticeship strategy and to offer distinctive provision in this area and other flexible approaches.

5.2.3 For Employers

Employers are beginning to understand more about the emerging apprenticeship policy that has been driven by the government for the last few years and particularly those larger employers who have a mandatory levy to pay. Within this, employers are responsible for the development of apprenticeship standards under the jurisdiction of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. This provides an environment where organisations have to take on responsibility for identifying specific roles within their fields of practice; defining them closely in terms of competencies, and knowledge; and developing approved standards. The government has recently placed employers at the centre of their reforms of technical education in the same way with employers, professional bodies and providers sitting as panels “responsible for developing the outline content for technical qualifications and the broader T level curriculum” (DfE, 2017, p.12). Most of the employers who have engaged in the programmes have expressed an interest in taking on degree apprentices, having in some cases had unsatisfactory experiences with the processes and providers of lower level apprentices in the past, perhaps because they found the coordination and synergies between college working and work-based learning to be less apparent and collaborative.

Perhaps a contribution to knowledge of the study in this respect is that employers taking on long-term placements and apprentices could be more attuned to what learning is, where it is taking place, that it is sometimes less formal and tangible. Relationships with universities may also be beneficial in that they may give the agency access to knowledge exchange projects and funding but also that they become more involved in the recruitment and education of students in their discipline area. They may also be more aware of the benefits of situated learning, cultivating communities of practice and the potential for sharing knowledge, collaboration and becoming a learning organisation. The study anticipated transformations in the social capital of the student/employee but also in the teams within which they work and more widely both in the employer organisation and institution through the development of intellectual capital through “knowledge creation” and not just “knowledge transfer from the university to the individual

student” (Garnett, 2009, p.235). Key actions: ensure that the employer is prepared to devote sufficient resources.

5.2.4 Policy level

It could be argued that the skills debate has focused on vocational skills, driven by government policy, to the detriment of one of the fundamental key skills as identified by Dearing of learning how to learn. Acknowledging that the construction of learning is taking place in the workplace is critical.

The on-going demand for universities to offer more flexible and particularly accelerated courses shows no sign of slowing, the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, Jo Johnson reinforced the need for accelerated courses in his speech at Reform in July 2017 and at the UUK Annual Conference in September 2017 highlighting that the cost for students taking accelerated courses should be reduced through lower overall tuition fees and loans, that it accelerated them into the world of work and that they are more likely to repay a greater proportion of their loans back reducing cost to government too. It will be interesting to see if this agenda is further promoted through the new Office for Students in the same way that they are declaring support for apprenticeships.

“Tuition fees are paid by the employer using the apprenticeship levy, and apprentices are paid a salary. Learning fits around that work commitment and requires flexible learning modes such as day or block release, distance or blended learning.” (Office for Students, n.d.)

He also announced that universities would be able to potentially charge a higher yearly tuition fee under powers in the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 for an accelerated course as an incentive to increase what he found to be a limited number of courses across a narrow range of fields. Perhaps this is because the expected market for higher education has been much slower to emerge than the government expected and with an overall lack of innovation.

Contributing to this may be that the recruitment of students to universities is still predominantly through UCAS and that the number of more flexible courses is still extremely low. How many students when applying to university will be looking for these sorts of flexibility? Do flexible courses appeal to more mature students as the literature suggests? If so, how can the government work with universities to create an environment where awareness is raised within this audience in the same way that it has been doing by investing in communications about apprenticeships to both potential apprentices and employers. Is there room for more flexible university degrees alongside degree apprenticeships given that they may both appeal to a similar target audience? Market research has been identified as being required to provide more concrete evidence of this incipient market. Until that takes place it is unlikely that universities will develop courses. If a reachable target audience can be identified, in a similar way to higher and degree apprenticeships, a national campaign would help raise awareness of flexible degrees. The Government has encouraged universities to develop flexible provision but without committing resources to a central campaign, carrying out market research or creating a flexible learning brand. The promotion of flexible routes are likely to be left to individual universities, all offering different degrees of flexibility. The UCAS website does allow searches for flexible/part-time routes to be selected but perhaps isn't the best way to reach more mature students, also the huge decline in students applying for part-time courses (declining by a third between 2013 and 2017 HESAb, 2018), which seems to be having a disproportionate impact on mature students.

Jo Johnson in his speech to HEFCE in October 2017 challenged universities to increase the impact of knowledge exchange, to improve research and development and contribute to the economy (rather as the skills debate has been directly linked to GDP and the performance of the UK economy). The Higher Education Innovation Fund offers an incentive to universities to develop knowledge exchange. Combined, all of these factors provide an environment that indirectly supports the deepening of engagement with industry. In this light, the argument for developing flexible courses, incorporating work-based learning provides a vehicle for deepening engagement with employers at a small and medium-sized business level. Perhaps the articulation of this would help Government persuade more universities and

more employers to work collaboratively and in this way contribute to policy relating to skills which has been consistently linked productivity for over 20 years (DES, 2003; Spilsbury, Giles and Campbell, 2010; Richard, 2012; Pollard et al, 2017) giving rise to a host of funded flexible learning pilot programmes (Sims and Woodrow, 1996; Wlodowski, 2003; McCaig, et al., 2007; Lee and Horsfall, 2007; HEFCE, 2011; Outram, 2011; Tallantyre, 2013; Huxley et. al, 2017)?

5.2.5 Summary

The foundation for such programmes recognises the contribution of all parties. Firstly, the industry sector should have an identifiable skills gap. This may be enhanced if the skills council is actively raising employer engagement (particularly in industries dominated by SMEs).

Appropriate market research should be undertaken to confirm that there is a target market of sufficient size, reachable through a promotional campaign communicating the demands and benefits of such programmes. The campaign will be a significant investment but is essential in raising awareness and will likely be driven by social media. It is unlikely that courses would recruit through UCAS due to the niche target audience.

The University should have a strategic commitment to flexible learning with a supportive infrastructure, processes and systems (such as quality, finance and marketing). Of which one of the most important is to support staff in taking on flexible and unfamiliar pedagogies (such as the flipped classroom) and recognise them for time-consuming link tutor and facilitative aspects of their role.

In terms of recruitment, flexible courses are most appealing to committed and career-focused, mature students. These students have a high degree of motivation, are competitive and able to cope with the pressures of balancing work and study. The selection process should include an interview and if possible be combined with the recruitment process of the employer in a joint interview (though the boundaries between academic quality procedures and the employers' recruitment processes may make this difficult).

When choosing employer partners, the University should ensure a good match in cognitive aspects, such as vision and ambition; have existing network connections and levels of trust and use contractual arrangements to ensure the allocation of appropriate resources (both financial and human). Communications to potential employer partners should explain the potential for the development of social capital between both organisations and the potential for adding value through the creation of human capital (primarily in the student but also in workplace mentor and other staff through social construction of learning).

The modes of learning enabled through accelerated, work-based learning comprise: planned (syllabus-structured) learning which focuses on theory, is transmissive (from tutor to student), face-to-face; and, emergent (workplace-driven) learning which is socially constructed, experiential, observative, practical and may also include transmissive learning from master to novice. Drawing these two modes together is reflective practice which facilitates the development of students' own theory and can also be a vehicle for assessing learning. Individualised learning contracts may be helpful in recognising the potential for student-managed learning. Overall the learning is co-produced and active.

The outcomes of the multi-modal learning described above include planned (syllabus-bound) outcomes: passing assessments, attaining degree; developing a portfolio of 'live' work; acquisition of classroom (or workshop) taught skills; and, emergent (syllabus-free) outcomes: confidence; resilience and time management; added value; and, workplace developed skills. Contributing to the creation of human capital; communities of practice; symmetrical power relations; and, student agency.

The knowledge skills and capabilities developed by the student contribute to their human capital and their situated learning in the workplace facilitates the structural (networking), relational (trust, obligation and identification) and cognitive (interpretations, systems of meaning) aspects of practice to enable the creation of social capital as a bridge to practice.

Employer and University intellectual capital can be created in the community of practice through the exchange and combination of human capital (primarily in the student/employee but also other staff), relational capital (trust, obligation and identification) and structural capital (technologies, inventions, strategy, culture, structures, routines, systems and procedures), leading to productivity.

5.3 Limitations

Limitations relating to the study covered in this section include the areas of accelerated and work-based learning within the wider context of flexible educational research, the use of an action research approach, the choice of research instruments and the nature of the participant groups.

Interpretive researchers are criticised as being “prepared to accept the meanings that the actors attribute to social phenomena at face value” (Crotty, 1998, p.75) and that “the sociological observer must exercise sufficient discipline on himself to ensure that it is indeed the actors' meanings that are recorded in his notebook and not merely his own” (Mitchell 1977, pp. 115-16 in Crotty, 1998). The application of a qualitative, interpretive paradigm in this study is justified by the need for the research lead to remain close to the other participants and the social situations and interactions that are at the centre of the programmes. The on-going dialogue during the study is intended to triangulate the narratives of different participant groups in the social phenomenon and to ensure that meanings match those of the participants reliably. Though more generalisable findings are not intended, the findings of the study may be transferable to similar situations (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2008).

There is a lack of research into the development and delivery of flexible, work-based learning programmes, especially those that aim to cover the experiences of students, academic staff and employers. Also, studies that examine the experiences of early career practitioners in advertising are few in number (McLeod et al. 2009, 2011). This means that the overall corpus of material is scarce but that the study has the potential to contribute to this discourse.

Due to the nature of the study, an action research methodology was appropriate. Although this approach does mean that the results cannot be generalised, the results do provide a detailed account of the experiences of the participants in the programmes and has the potential through analysis to be applicable to other programmes within the school and possibly the wider university. Some of the findings may also be of interest to the wider sector as they relate to a contemporary implementation of policy in an under-researched area of educational practice. Hodginson (1957) and McNiff and Whitehead (2006) warn that action research might be likened 'practical problem-solving', going further to question the professionalism of those engaged in this research methodology. McTaggart (1994) questions the emancipatory claims of action research and the extent to which the voice of the participant is reflected in the analysis. As Wadsworth (1998) observed, the many subjective decisions made by the research lead in developing the research questions, choice of participants and interpretations. Nevertheless the opportunity to investigate the experiences of participants in a social setting and apply that new knowledge to co-produced learning could not be as readily provided using other forms of research, certainly with the immediacy offered by the chosen methodology. It is very much a practical research study and as Koshy (2010) observed, "the process of enquiry is as important as the outcomes". An example would be the dialogue with students on the programmes through interviews that facilitate reflective practice.

One of the limitations of an action research methodology is that it may be difficult to separate out the action (programme development and delivery) from the research. This was something that was a constant factor in the study and has been addressed in this thesis by careful separation of the programmes that are the focus for the research and the study. Conversely, the research lens and action research spiral process provided for a reflective and incremental approach throughout the programme, as might be expected. However, the commitments as identified by Winter (1989) in McNiff and Whitehead (2009, p.24) of improvement, learning, collaborative enquiry, risk, reflexive critique, dialectical critique and new beginnings provide a framework to support standards of practice.

The use of interviews as the main research instrument does mean that potentially the data may be affected by potentially subjective opinions of a small number of participants and the degree of the recall of events. This is balanced in two ways. Participants from the three groups were interviewed, students, employers and university staff and their views were triangulated during analysis in order to draw upon a wider range of perspectives and narratives. Secondly, a wide range of documentation was analysed, comprising working documents, minutes, field notes and other observations that helped understanding, particularly of the development phase of the programmes and what they were intended to achieve. Overall the number of data sources amounted to around 50.

One of the key participant groups were colleagues working on the programmes but also the students and employers developed close working relationships during the programme. They may find it difficult to relate to their colleague as a researcher and perhaps leading them to be unsure if particular conversations are taking place as part of the organisation and management of the programme development and delivery or the research study. This was minimised by ensuring that research protocols were adopted. These included the formal booking of time allocated to the research outside of other meetings, the use of participant information sheets and consent forms and voice recording.

An aim in adopting an action research approach was to provide opportunities for on-going development of the programmes by applying the action research spiral and adopting an iterative approach. This was perhaps naive in that it didn't fully take into account the formal modifications process adopted in any university to allow for on-going enhancements of this kind. Practically, these minor modifications can have a lead-time of 12 months and in an accelerated programme where 1.5 levels are covered in the calendar year there are few practical opportunities to make modifications of this magnitude. However, the comments made by external examiners, students and staff could be taken into account in making smaller changes to the programmes.

The placements covered email marketing (one student), public relations (two students) and in-house communications (one student). The original aim had been to offer six places in both Advertising and Public Relations which would have extended the participant population and reflected a wider range of agencies in a single discipline.¹¹

5.4 Self-reflection

This research study has in many ways been very personal. For this section I will be writing in the first person as it seems to be more appropriate. Prior to embarking on this research I had a reasonably limited academic career having worked in industry from 1989 to 2010 in roles including graphic design, media production and creative direction, almost exclusively within marketing and communications teams. This strong affinity with the creative industries has perhaps meant that I am more attuned to industry engagement, contributed to me finding my way into teaching in higher education through two vocational institutions and helped provide the foundation for leading the team for my university bidding for the funding to support the pilot programmes. Looking back it does seem that the initial interest in studying for a doctorate came after the instigation of the project. Was it the catalyst to study or was it coincidence? I am not so sure now but certainly when I was looking to build on my MA Graphic Design, PPD Marketing and PGCTLHE with a doctorate level qualification I was more attracted to a professional route, one that could be directly linked to my practice in HE and the pilot project provided a way of linking this study back to industry, the modes of learning offered by accelerated, work-based learning, outcomes and particularly capital creation.

One aspect of the research that has been challenging is the separation of practice and research. In many ways they are two sides of the same coin but the potential for confusion for myself and the other participants was a distinct possibility. In order to tackle this aspect I always ensured that research meetings were timetabled separately from other meetings and that an appropriate environment and protocol was adopted. This implies something quite orderly and it was on the whole but there are of course situations that were less clear. For example, in analysing the

development documentation. This took place long after the meetings and so on took place and so the participants in meetings where I have analysed agenda, minutes and my own notes may not have anticipated the data being considered in this way (as the research study emerged and where appropriate a strict research protocol was put in place – an example of this would be the final project meeting where I sought permission to record the proceedings). I can still see in my writing that my reflections and analysis have become an amalgam of rememberings from past events along with more formal field notes and transcripts. This is all quite subjective and I think for an action research study of this type it is perhaps necessary. The ultimate aim of the research is to inform my practice and if these experiences are useful for others then that is a small contribution to the research into developing and delivering flexible courses.

As large organisations tend to do, the team that has delivered the pilot have been subject to a number of reorganisations. The project was instigated in a faculty with a wide creative industries remit and will be completed in a school with a business focus (by way of a school with a communications focus and four different leaders). Inevitably perhaps this has provide quite an unstable environment, one where this project has had a reducing profile. The emergence of degree apprenticeships has provided a vehicle for carrying forward many of the lessons learned and experience of developing and delivering a flexible programme. Nevertheless from a personal point of view the pilot project's diminished status provided quite a difficult environment as it drew to a close.

Though the need to be objective does not fit with my research philosophy it is still important to discuss the impact that being an insider has on the research. As the study took place over three years, two of which were the delivery phase, I had been talking to some of the participants for quite an extended period. An initial imperative was to recruit six agencies to take part in the pilot project with very limited details of what the project would entail. These were drawn from those who I had a certain amount of prior experience and was based on a certain amount of goodwill. So in some cases the relationship with the participants extended up to five years. This may have meant that some employers felt an obligation to take part and

that once they had signed up this would be difficult to withdraw. In practice, two agencies did not offer placements (but didn't formally withdraw either). As the study progressed, regular discussions and more formal interviews were required and in some cases these were added on to regular update meetings. The significance of this is that the number of employer participants was very low which in turn limited the number of places available for the pilot study.

In terms of the impact on my practice, the study has provided very rich and on-going data from students, staff and employers. I feel that this has deepened my engagement with all parties and that this in itself provides a framework within which flexibility can be nuanced and adapted in order to improve communication and ultimately contribute to all parties achieving their objectives. In some cases these are clearly shared – student progression and achievement perhaps being indicators of transformative learning within this complex amalgam of dichotomies of workplace/university, face-to-face/distance, practice/research, facilitative/didactic, worker/student and so on. Central to this is the understanding by the employer that they are building an organisation more focused on learning.

I was already a firm believer in learning through experience. The outcomes for students on the pilot course have underlined how important this mode of learning is. In the past much of this has been captured through reflective assessments, something that many students find very difficult to grasp. My general approach would be to use Jenny Moon's excellent "The Park" as an initial introduction but moving students on from description has been very difficult. As a result of the study, particularly the literature on constructivist approaches but also talking to students about their learning has helped me recognise that verbal reflections are perhaps a more natural way to develop deeper reflective capacity and that rather than asking the students to work through an exercise. When faced with similar circumstances in the future, potentially as a degree apprenticeship provider, the central importance of social interactions within a community of practice would need to be addressed. The approach that has emerged from the study would include individualised learning contracts reflecting the emergent learning, student-managed and student agency aspects with an introduction to social constructivist learning approaches to

be an important induction into the programme in order to help facilitate more active learning and to ensure that the student understands their central and autonomous role that is quite different from a traditional degree programme. This may contribute to the sense of a community of practice and facilitate transition into industry by enabling the student to build relations and to find their voice within the field of practice. For researchers in a similar situation in the future I would recommend that they use a full repertoire of research methods within an action research approach and that interviews could be supplanted with techniques putting more control into the hands of the participants. These might include the use of participant-generated video and even the use of 3-D video in capturing visual data from social situations such as team meetings. This material may be used to elicit responses in subsequent research interactions.

Due to the small scale of the study, the social justice theme of the project was more limited than anticipated. Originally the project team had anticipated at least six students on each programme, each working in a different agency. Recruitment proved to be more difficult and only three students were recruited from quite a narrow social background and not reflecting diversity or widening participation. This limited the potential for exploring life history in the development of the primary habitus. Many of the findings suggested that students' added value to their organisations by taking on the role of employee and managing their student role by working long hours in the evenings and weekends. Perhaps this relates to a form of 'self-commodification' and 'self-exploitation in the development of the secondary habitus. Future research could be carried out to understand more about the more negative aspects of fitting in to the work place and making their way into creative industries practice.

5.5 Future Research

One of the original aims of the programmes was to offer more equitable access for students from a wide range of backgrounds into the creative industries, acknowledging the difficulties that students from lower economic groups might suffer directly from the cost of self-funding internships and indirectly through the

lack of opportunity to acquire cultural capital. This very much ties in with government policy to encourage social mobility and widen access to higher education. This aspect of the programmes and the study was not developed as the scale of the pilot programmes was very small and the main focus became accelerated and work-based learning and this could be an avenue for future research given access to a sufficiently large sample.

Degree apprenticeships are emerging as a competitor to traditional university degrees. Universities and other providers are working closely with trade associations and employers who are developing standards anticipated to grow in scale to offer millions of apprenticeships. Providers and employers working together to deliver these apprenticeship programmes could benefit from research to understand more about the complexities of learning in these situations and to avoid the potentially high level of bureaucracy and paperwork. The new apprenticeship standards are very knowledge, competency, outcome-specific and assessment framework oriented. These aspects were seen to be too fixed during the course of the study and didn't allow for valuable emergent outcomes through social constructivist learning and less tangible social capital advantages to the students. Potentially, future research might contribute in identifying the importance of emergent outcomes and socially constructed learning to the attainment and future career success of participants in similar programmes. The central role for employers in designing apprenticeship standards and assessment plans does ensure that the WBL context of learning is recognised and a university open to developing work-based, student-centred rather than syllabus-structured, tutor-designed curriculum would offer the opportunity to research knowledge creation and sharing and the development of intellectual capital to the benefit of employer, institution and recognising the contribution of the student/employee and not just measuring learning outcomes.

5.6 Summary

This thesis is an action research study focusing on the development and delivery of two flexible degree programmes as part of a HEFCE Catalyst-funded project *Towards*

Higher Apprenticeships led by the Sector Skills Council for the creative industries and a consortium of five universities. One of the mandatory principles of the project was that programmes had to deliver 120 credits (one-third of the course) in a work-based learning context. The aim of the research is to understand more about how two aspects of flexible learning (accelerated and work-based learning) might facilitate learning. The research addresses gaps in the literature in relation to student, staff and employer perspectives and outcomes in working to co-produce accelerated, work-based learning programmes.

Using an interpretive philosophy, the study employed an action research approach. Documentary analyses, interviews and field notes formed the data that were analysed inductively. The research participants included the research lead, who also headed the project for the lead institution, students, academic staff and employers. The voice of the Sector Skills Council (SSC) is also present in the development documentation and through field notes and transcripts of meetings. The findings of the study which were intended to inform practice but which might have implications more widely, include insights into the lengthy development of such programmes including implications for how and where learning takes place and the importance of unanticipated experiences and outcomes, particularly the balance of syllabus-led learning and work-based learning. The study also finds that the deepening of the relationship between university staff and employer representatives may have the potential to extend the community of practice and lead to more collaborations.

The emergence of WBL to be considered not only a mode of learning, but a field of study (Portwood, 2000; Gibbs and Garnett, 2007) emphasises the complexity in combining syllabus-structured (tutor led) and workplace learning (student-centred) (Hammersley et al., 2013) which was evidenced in the development and delivery of the programmes where the curriculum was designed with employers but didn't create individualised learning contracts. This may explain why students separated out course work (to be carried out in evenings and weekends) from work (the 9-5) even though the programmes had been designed to incorporate assessments within the workplace and suggests that for WBL programmes to be more effective the

university may have to recognise trans-disciplinary learning, “contesting the primacy of the university in curriculum design” (Garnett, 2009, p.227).

The study anticipated transformations in the social capital of the student/employee but also in the teams within which they work and more widely both in the employer organisation and institution through the development of intellectual capital through “knowledge creation” and not just “knowledge transfer from the university to the individual student” (Garnett, 2009, p.235). The findings supported the literature in that the recruitment and communication of flexible courses was challenging with a very hard to reach and fragmented target audience but that students who found the programmes tended to be more mature, motivated and focused on a career, feeling short of time (Outram, 2011).

Institutions that took part in piloting flexible learning courses over the years did not go on to extend those programmes, perhaps because of a lack of demand. This was the case in the programmes researched in the study that only ran over two intakes before being closed and suggests that the steps proposed by Pollard et al., 2017 to increase supply (the recent announcements to open the way to higher charges for two year degrees are an example of this) and encourage demand will be essential to stimulate the market for accelerated courses. However, flexible programmes share many characteristics with degree apprenticeships that have the benefit of many of the foundation factors being in place: the active involvement of sector skills councils and employers in leading standards development; commitment to allocate 20% of the working week to the programme; compulsory funding through the apprenticeship levy for large employers; the involvement of flexible, streamlined private providers; and, benefiting from a high-profile national marketing campaign. Though overall apprenticeship numbers declined by 18,100 places in 2017 compared to 2016 and the levy has been criticised for its complexity, the number of higher-level apprenticeships has doubled over the last two years but still only equates to 7% of 491,300 starts overall (Powell, 2018, p3).

Institutions prepared to invest in WBL programmes as part of a partnership strategy may see additional benefits through the engagement with practice and within the

study there was a deepening of the relationship including the sharing of structural capital and intellectual capital to bring university resources to bear on practice-based objectives. Again, in-line with the literature, the level of attainment was very high compared to the attainment of students on the traditional route and had employability benefits leading to a very high degree of professional and managerial destinations after leaving the programmes.

To conclude, the active, multi-modal learning opportunities offered by accelerated, work-based learning programmes can facilitate the attainment of planned and emergent outcomes that cultivate the creation of capital, not just for the student but for the employer and university staff teams, building communities of practice and contributing to the productivity that is a key driver in government higher education and skills policy.

This is more likely to be viable in an innovative institution with a shared strategic commitment to developing flexible programmes and where teams have existing strong industry links and an employability focus, particularly in industries with a clear skills shortage, a reachable target audience with raised awareness of the benefits of such programmes and an active sector skills council.

One of the initial aims of the project was to foster 'fusion' skills in the individual. Though the interdisciplinary aspects suggested by the SSC were not realised fully, the multimodal development of skills in the classroom and in the workplace contributed to capital creation within communities of practice drawing more closely together the different sectors of higher education and marketing communications

6.0 References

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7.0 Appendices

7.1 Table of data sources

No.	Documentary Analyses	Date of document/data collection	Why data was collected?
01	Catalyst Fund Business Plan	March 2014	These data sources were used to inform the aspects of the study relating to the development phase of the programmes and in particular the working of the partner institutions together with the sector skills council: <i>RQ3 In what ways can we design accelerated, work-based degree programmes to deliver benefits to employers, students and universities?</i>
02	HEFCE Catalyst Fund Meeting	31 March 2014	
03	HEFCE Catalyst Fund Outline Project Plan	29 April 2014	
04	HEFCE Catalyst Agreement	8 May 2014	
05	Creative Skillset – New Higher Education Project	23 June 2014	
06	Creative Skillset Advertising and Communication	23 June 2014	
07	Quarterly Report	7 July 2014	
08	Future of Higher Apprenticeships Conference Field Notes	29 Sept 2014	
09	Quarterly Report Appendix	Oct 2014	
10	Quarterly Report	8 Oct 2014	
11	HEFCE Catalyst Fund Governance Meeting	5 Nov 2014	
12	HEFCE Catalyst Fund – Governance Group Field Notes	5 Nov 2014	
13	Quarterly Report	17 Dec 2014	
14	Quarterly Report	30 March 2015	
15	Quarterly Report Appendix Diary of Hours Spent	March 2015	
16	HEFCE Catalyst Fund Governance Meeting Field Notes	23 June 2015	
17	Overview of the process for developing the materials for the pilot accelerated programmes Field Notes	Sept 2015	
18	Quarterly Report	7 Sept 2015	
19	Mentoring Guidelines	11 Sept 2015	
20	Employers Handbook	27 Oct 2015	
21	Memorandum of Understanding	27 Oct 2015	
22	Marketing and Operations Meeting Field Notes	19 Dec 2014	
23	Creative Skillset and HEFCE Meeting (90 mins)	13 Sept 2016	
No.	Interview	Date	Why data was collected?
01	IES Institute for Employment Studies Interview with Tom, Sarah and Crispin. (90 mins)	July 2016	These data sources informed: <i>RQ1: What is the student/practitioner</i>
02	Sector Skills Council 1.1 Meeting.	13 Sep 2016	

	(90 mins)		<i>experience within accelerated, work-based degree programmes?</i> <i>RQ2: What is the nature of learning within accelerated work-based degree programmes?</i>
Employer Participants:			
03	Simon 1.1 Interview (24 mins)	4 Oct 2016	
04	Simon 1.2 Meeting (24 mins)	4 Oct 2016	
05	Andi 2.1 Interview		
06	Max 3.1 Interview (23 mins)	3 Mar 2017	
07	Emily 3.2 Interview (54 mins)	3 May 2018	
Staff Participants:			
08	Lily 1.1 Interview (24 mins)	8 Dec 2016	
09	Pete 2.1 Interview (25 mins)	27 Jan 2017	
10	Rod 3.1 Interview (18 mins)	27 Jan 2017	
11	Tom 4.1 Observations	Various	
Student Participants:			
12	Verity 1.1 Interview (26 mins)	16 Oct 2016	
13	Verity 1.2 Interview (20 mins)	13 Jan 2017	
14	Verity 1.3 Interview (20 mins)	16 Mar 2017	
15	Millie 2.1 Interview (20 mins)	3 Aug 2016	
16	Millie 2.2 Interview (20 mins)	22 Mar 2017	
17	Mike 3.1 Interview (26 mins)	3 Feb 2017	
18	Mike 3.2 Interview (54 mins)	3 May 2018	
External Examiner Participants:			
19	Laura (external examiner report)	June 2017	

7.2 Participant Information Sheet

Student Interview Participant Information Sheet

Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if anything isn't clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part

My name is Richard Berry and I am researching contemporary advertising practice in order to update advertising education teaching.

You should only participate if you want to, choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way.

Before you decide to take part, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following, ask me if anything is not clear or if you would like more information.

Background

This research is intended to help in redesigning the advertising education curriculum to help career progression for students from a wide range of backgrounds. Progression into a career in advertising often depends on some key factors. Access to networks, the resources to work in unpaid internships and educational background. These are sometimes characterised as social capital that can help career progression.

Research questions

Can a university work with agencies to develop a programme of teaching and learning to contribute towards a more inclusive advertising industry?

What part might life history (upbringing and education for example) have in employability in the advertising industry?

Research method

The research will take the form of a depth interview that will focus on your life history including background, education and career.

Who I have asked to participate

I have invited students on the pilot BA (Hons) Advertising (WBL) degree programme.

Location of research

The interview will take place by arrangement in a private setting.

Duration of the research

It should take one 60-90 minutes.

What does the research entail?

The interview will be recorded and transcribed. Visual data may also be recorded in the form of still images.

The risks are involved are minimal and you are free to withdraw up to the anonymisation of data.

Confidentiality

Your responses to the questions will remain confidential and your name will not be published.

All answers will only be used for this study.

Direct quotes may be used in the final report. If they are they will be anonymous.

You will be given a copy of the information sheet and signed consent form for your records. If you require further information at any time or wish to make a complaint, please find below the contact details of myself, my academic supervisor and an independent academic.

Contact Details

Researcher:

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7.3 Consent Form

Student Interview Consent Form

Research aim

This research is intended to help in redesigning the advertising education curriculum to help career progression for students from a wide range of backgrounds. Progression into a career in advertising often depends on some key factors. Access to networks, the resources to work in unpaid internships and educational background. These are sometimes characterised as social capital that can help career progression.

Research questions

Can a university work with agencies to develop a programme of teaching and learning to contribute towards a more inclusive advertising industry?

What part might life history (upbringing and education for example) have in employability in the advertising industry?

Researcher Name: Richard Berry

1. I confirm I have read and understood the information sheet and wish to take part in the above study
2. I understand my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw up to the point of anonymisation of data
3. I understand that any data will only be used for this study and that I will not be identified in the research report
4. I agree to the anonymous use of quotations in the report

Name of Participant:

Date:

Signature:

Name of Researcher:

Date:

Signature:

Contact Details

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