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**Transitions: variation in tutors' experience of practice  
and teaching relations in art and design.**

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**Declaration**

This thesis results entirely from my own work and has not been offered previously for any other degree or diploma.

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### **Abstract**

In art and design education creative practice, being an artist or designer, is seen as central to what and how students learn. The use of practitioners to teach is viewed as an indicator of a quality experience on one hand and a source of anxiety on the other. Doubts have been expressed about whether practitioners actually enable students to learn about practice. However, very little is known about how transitions between practice and teaching are made. This study sets out to explore the experience of this relationship from practitioner tutor's perspectives.

A phenomenographic enquiry approach is used to construe variation in experiencing practice/ teaching relations. This is extended by case studies representing the phenomenographic categories, where activity theory is used as a heuristic device to examine the different relations experienced by practitioner tutors. These relations can be experienced as symmetrical, asymmetrical or holistic, and practice knowledge is experienced in different ways in teaching: transferring, using, exchanging or eliding knowledge between practice and teaching. Thus there are different ways that practitioner tutors report making knowledge available to students, leading to different kinds of learning experience.

The contextual factors, including individual histories of development and the experience of the two worlds of practice and teaching may also hinder development of tutors by institutions. Although art and design as a broad discipline is the focus of this study there may be differences within it, but also resonance for other practice based discipline subjects.

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## Glossary of Abbreviations

ADEPTT	The Art and Design Enabling Part Time Teachers Project.  Funded by the FDTL4, the project set out to support part time tutors through providing information and training facilitators in colleges who could support part time tutors to develop as teachers.
CLTAD	Centre for Learning and Teaching in Art and Design
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport.
FDTL	Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning
FE	Further Education
F/HE	Further and Higher Education
HE	Higher Education
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate – predated QAA, responsible for overseeing standards in education
ISL	Improving Student Learning. An annual conference organised by Oxford Brookes University and a JISCMAIL list.
ITTF/CCSF	Information transmission, tutor focused/conceptual change, student focused approaches to teaching.
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency. In the UK this is the body responsible for audit and maintaining standards in higher education
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise. A mechanism through which funding is allocated to Higher Education Institutions to maintain and undertake research.
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects

# Chapter 1

## Introduction to the study

In art and design education there is an emphasis on practical, procedural 'knowledge', which is situated within the social worlds of the creative industries. This is not to say that art and design is devoid of complex conceptual ideas, or a historical body of written, visual and artefactual knowledge, but it is dependent on a continually shifting and changing notion of what might be appropriate in terms of the production of artefacts or performances. Many would see the role of art and design as challenging and questioning the accepted norms of its own practice (Danvers 2003). In the early sociologist Georg Simmel's terms one could say that creative practice never *is*, but is always in a continuous state of becoming, in a constant search for the new (Levin 1971).

Given that creative practice is central to learning, practitioners in art and design are frequently employed as part time tutors in Further and Higher Education (F/HE); estimated as 25% of the total (ADEPTT 2003) though this figure may well be higher. However, practitioners who teach are viewed as both excellent (e.g. QAA 1999) and a cause for concern (Burgess 1995, Bryson & Blackwell 2001). The Art and Design Enabling Part Time Teachers (ADEPTT) project produced materials to develop part time teachers in art and design (ADEPTT 2005).

The aim of the ADEPTT Project was to enhance the teaching of part time lecturers in Art and Design in order to effect change in learning and teaching in HE, leading to enhanced student learning, meeting diverse learning needs of students, enhanced student retention and improved professional knowledge transfer. (Aims from: <http://www.adeptt.ac.uk/project.cfm>)

Thus implying that being a practitioner alone is insufficient to become a good teacher. The use of artists in school education has also been recognised as problematic and not necessarily leading to learning about art practice (Burgess 1995). This suggests that the relationship between being a practitioner and teaching others about your practice is not a straightforward one.

The reasons for employing so many part time staff are complex. There may be financial advantages to institutions, with lower wage bills associated with hourly paid staff. They are seen as a more flexible pool of labour from a management perspective (Bryson 2003) and in art and design this may be one of the reasons for their high numbers. The breadth and the specialist nature of much art, design and related activity, which is crudely constituted as separate areas of expertise; for example, fashion, textiles, fine art, communication, performance, three-dimensional design, hide a wealth of different practices which are constantly evolving in relation to new technologies. The creative industries are one of the largest growth sectors of the economy and seen as a critical factor in the future prosperity of the UK (DCMS 2006). A larger teaching work force would be more likely to encompass different skills and expertise, providing students with a wider range of opportunities to learn different aspects of their subject specialism.

Large numbers of part time staff in the HE sector are mainly seen as a quality assurance issue, with an associated need for staff development for part time teachers (Bryson & Blackwell 2001, Bryson 2003). The ADEPTT project (2003) supported by the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) was designed to develop practitioners as teachers in art and design and the involvement of over 70 institutions in the project indicates that this is a widespread concern. However, the precise cause and nature of this need to develop practitioners as teachers is not explained. It is the assumption that people can be practitioners *and* teachers that

underlies the production of materials, but this project does not examine the nature of the 'and', the relational aspects of practice and teaching.

Employing practicing artist and designers to teach is generally associated with common sense reasons, seldom analysed, assuming that those employed in current practice are most aware of issues and trends in the work place and therefore in a position to benefit students and bring them up to date with such practices. Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) published a review of higher education in art and design (DFE 1992), citing the use of part time staff making 'important contributions to teaching' (vii) and including 'effective part-time teaching from professional practitioners' (p32) as one of the 'good features' of art and design higher education.

In quality review and audit the use of practitioners in the teaching environment is seen as a good indicator of a quality learning environment for students. The use of part time tutors is usually cited as enabling students to have access to first hand knowledge of employment in a specialist area. For example, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) subject review at Wimbledon College of Art in 1999 states:

The frequent close contact with professional artists as part time tutors and the commitment to the individual artistic practice of contracted staff, ensure that advice of high quality and currency is embedded in the courses. (QAA 1999: 8)

However, the employment of practitioners is recognised by both teachers and students as not always successful. This is expressed in an article in the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Journal (Knut 2000). In the article an academic states 'Just because you're a good designer does not mean you're a good teacher.' (p80). Another academic also 'worryes that the division between practice and teaching could

be widening' (p 81) but attributes this to the changing pressures of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE).

The current research climate means you've got to publish research in a way that satisfies the system, and moves away from the old style architect as practitioner and teacher. (p81)

Such statements indicate that the actual relationship between practice and teaching is not really understood and point to assumptions that there is an ideal, and possibly disappearing, 'practitioner and teacher'. Why is it that being a 'good designer' does not necessarily correlate with being a good teacher? What exactly would constitute the ideal practitioner *and* teacher and how would we recognise this? How would it feel *to be* the ideal practitioner and teacher? The statement stresses the dual nature of the role, practice *and* teaching, but we know very little about how this relationship works; it seems to be critical, poorly understood, and yet essential to many creative arts learning and teaching environments.

The use of practitioners in teaching creative arts is possibly analogous to the use of research active staff teaching in more traditional academic subject areas. In art and design there is an emphasis on the 'currency' of practice as expressed in the QAA review cited earlier and the same desire exists in schools (e.g. Downing 2005), and in an area of performativity and production the epistemology is such that 'new knowledge' is often created through practice and not always through more academic research activities (Prentice 2000).

The debate about the relationship between research and teaching in higher education has been an important one in the last decade. This relationship is seen as both problematic and essential for student learning. There is a perceived split between

research and undergraduate learning, not simply resolved by having research active staff that also teach. (See Jenkins et al. 2007 for an overview of the issues surrounding the teaching-research nexus). If art and design practice is considered to play a similar role to research in more academic subjects then it is possible that there will be similar issues about the 'nexus' between practice and teaching. There may be multiple ways to experience the relationship and these may also have an impact on learning.

### **The Aim of the Study**

This study sets out to investigate the relationship between the worlds of practice and teaching as the practitioner tutor experiences it and the potential impact this has on the learning and teaching environment in an art and design context. I will challenge the assumption that the practitioner is, as a matter of course, positioned to provide the best educational experience for students in art and design and will examine the ways in which it is possible for practitioner tutors to draw on their experiential knowledge in their teaching. This is premised on the notion that people experience the same phenomenon in different ways and that there is likely to be variation in the experience of practice and teaching relationships. I will therefore adopt a phenomenographic enquiry approach. In order to extend this study further and examine possible contextual factors and relations that affect the way an individual might experience these relations. I will use activity theory (Engeström 1990, Billett 2003) as a framework to analyse individual case studies that exemplify the phenomenographic categories of variation. Through using the idea of activity systems as models of social interaction that organise and make sense of collective activity it will enable me to look at the worlds of practice and teaching and the relationship between them from the point of view of the individual operating within and between these two worlds.

I will use the term practitioner tutor to define those who undertake a creative arts professional practice and also teach that practice to others. This is not a term in common use in the creative arts, but one that serves to identify those who teach as well as 'do'. I refer throughout the thesis to practice/ teaching relations to stress the relationship between the activity undertaken outside the educational system and the teaching activity within an institution, and to avoid confusion, where the term 'practice' is used this will normally refer to an art and design practice and not to teaching, though I do acknowledge this as a form of practice.

The terminology of the creative arts disciplines themselves is also problematic, covering a wide range of different, often overlapping practices and nuances of practice. I therefore use the term art and design as a broadly understood discipline categorisation, a short hand term which stands for a broad and changing set of disciplinary activities and course provision associated with the creative industries in the UK.

I will begin by looking at literature relevant to the discipline, to teaching, the part time tutor and the practitioner tutor in universities. As they work within collectively organised environments I will consider how these might be studied and how individuals relate to their work contexts (Chapter 2). Developing a methodology for research (Chapter 3) follows the construction of my research questions and a phenomenographic analysis (Chapter 4) will be augmented by case studies from individual accounts of practice and teaching (Chapter 5). A discussion of issues arising from the data (Chapter 6) points to the fundamental nature of the relationship between practice and teaching to the experience of teaching and learning in art and design. This has some implications for other disciplines and for developing part time tutors in higher education. A conclusion (Chapter 7) summarises the main issues of the thesis and the contribution to knowledge this study makes.

## **Chapter 2**

# **A review of the literature pertinent to a study of practitioner tutors in art and design**

### **Introduction**

This study is concerned with examining the experience of practitioner tutors in art and design as they make transitions between their practice and their teaching. It seeks to explore the relationship between these two aspects of their working lives and to consider how differences between ways of experiencing the relationship may impact on student learning and account for perceived differences in the value of practitioner tutors.

Practitioners have been viewed as providing excellent teaching for students in F/HE (QAA 1999) and yet, there appears to be a widespread need in the sector to develop them as teachers (ADEPPT 2005). The normally part time nature of their employment is also cited as causing a problem for quality assurance (Bryson & Blackwell 2001). The study sets out to determine why there are such widely differing views and what contextual factors might contribute to different views.

I will begin by examining the nature of practice and how it might be understood and researched and how researchers have viewed the relationship between practice and teaching to date. I also argue that we need to consider the purpose the practitioner tutor is seen to fulfil, as gaps between expectation and fulfilment could account for different perceptions of performance. Underlying the purpose of employing the practitioner tutor is an assumed function behind the relationship, an assumed 'and'

between practice and teaching and I discuss what this relationship might be and look at examples of other relations in education and how they have been examined.

Research that considers teacher training and art teaching in particular (Adams 2007) suggest that individuals change their identity when they become teachers. The construction of identity in relation to work practices seems to be a key aspect for individuals and I consider various factors contributing to the constitution of identity. As variation in experiencing various aspects of education is prevalent in higher education research I include an overview of phenomenographic studies that suggest there are different ways to experience teaching and being a teacher. The absence of the context which influences individuals is seen as a drawback to phenomenographic research methods and I argue that an enquiry into practitioner tutors' experience needs to include relations to their working contexts. In the conclusion I state my research questions and propose an approach based on phenomenography with a complementary use of activity theory as a heuristic to examine case studies representing categories of variation in practice/ teaching relations.

## **Understanding Practice**

The aim of the study is to understand how practitioners who teach can be seen as providing an excellent contribution to art education (QAA 1999) and yet also be seen as problematic, requiring development as teachers (ADEPTT 2005) and sometimes not enabling students to learn about art and design practice (Eisner 1974, Burgess 1995). In order to examine why this dichotomy exists I will firstly consider the idea of practice and how two sites where potentially different, but related practices occur are brought into relationships through the individual practitioner tutor.

Practice in art and design and teaching that practice to others take place in different locations. Unlike more academic subjects, where research or practice in the subject

(chemistry for example) might also take place in the university, art and design generally belong to the social world beyond education. These different locations also suggest that there are different practices (Bourdieu 1992) associated with operating in or belonging to the world of art and design or the world of education in or through art and design. It is therefore necessary to consider how these two practices might be understood and conceptualised.

Practice is constituted through ways of working and being and is situated in particular social settings such as the family, school and work. It is a temporal playing out of actions that are appropriate and learned in certain settings, everyday rituals and ways of interacting with others (Bourdieu 1992). Practices are always socially situated (Chaiklin & Lave 1993) in that they are specific to particular times and contexts and are subject to change brought about through individuals, social and political influences, both micro and macro aspects of social life. Practitioners who teach have two working contexts with different associated practices (Atkinson 2002) and therefore have to make some kind of transition between the two sets of practices.

In examining the social practices of education, practice has been depicted in a number of different ways: as ecologies, where resources, people and spaces interact (e.g. Knight et al. 2007), though the idea of an ecology of teaching tends to play down the agentic nature of human activity with its underlying power structures and political influences. Academic literacies (Lea & Street 1998, Lillis 2001) point to ways of understanding which are common within particular groups of people and which can lead to exclusion from the group, but does not take into account the purposeful activities directing interacting groups. More complexity is accounted for in Trowler's teaching and learning regimes (2005), which indicate how educational work environments are made up from different levels of practice, particularly the local work group, which contribute to a particular approach within an organisation, but does not

account for practices which might interact and overlap, like practice and teaching others to practice. This kind of relationship is described in graphic design education by Logan (2006), where an educational environment and the local industry of graphics develop a common use of metaphor and language. I would argue that this is only to be expected if, as is indicated by the proportion of part time tutors in art and design, you are taught by someone who is a practicing designer. Learning the language or discourse of the practice is part of the process of becoming a practitioner. The depiction as overlapping circles of practice does indicate that there is a relationship between the industrial practice of graphic design and graphic design in education, but does the relationship extend beyond the development of a shared discourse and how does the tutor experience the relationship and enable students to learn the discourse?

In considering the wider social spectrum of practice and practices, Communities of Practice (CoP) (Wenger 1998) as a theory identifies attributes and constituents of practice; that people have to be inducted into a community of practice through engagement in legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) at the edges of the community (Lave & Wenger 1991), and that they are supported by 'old timers' who know the procedures of the practice. It recognises that practices can happen in disparate locations and are held together by commonalities, engagement, reifications of the practice, or embodiments of practice, and above all it recognises that individuals hold multi-membership in different communities of practice. However, the edges of communities are ill defined, Wenger suggests that there are boundaries, which are lines of distinction between inclusion and exclusion in the CoP, and peripheries which are more fuzzy and allow 'windows and meeting places' (p120). This is not a particularly helpful notion however, when considering the practitioner who teaches. Is the art or design practice in an overlapping periphery between art practice and teaching practice or are they two distinct practices with boundaries? Are

these boundaries 'shared' (p118) or does the practitioner tutor 'broker' (p108/9), that is, transfer aspects from one CoP to another across the two boundaries?

The idea of developing expertise within a community of practice has been seen by others as a useful model to adopt when considering learning and teaching (e.g. Wilson & Pirrie 1999, Drew & Williams 2002), though Lea (2005) warns against the adoption of a simplistic approach to the idea of student induction into a CoP through legitimate peripheral participation as institutional discourses or literacy practices can work to exclude some students. I would also argue that the tacit nature of much practice (Polanyi 1958, 1967, Eraut 2000), both within education and in creative industries, could occlude ways of understanding or engaging in practice. The experience of practitioners who teach is made more complex through working within and between different organisational contexts where the two practices have elements in common. The nature of the relationship between these two related practices needs to be examined empirically, not assumed theoretically. Communities of practice theory does address multimembership and brokering across boundaries, but what tends to be missing in this theory is the purpose or reason behind the practice and behind specific kinds of boundary encounters the practitioner tutor is engaged in. The potential complexity and variety of possible relations that might exist for individuals working within and between different communities of practice tends to be generalised and needs to be more specifically examined to understand how the relationship is experienced.

Given that practitioner tutors work in two different cultural contexts, which are related through the tutor being the common linking factor in teaching their practice to others, a research approach or analytical framework is required that will illuminate both areas of their work and also the relations they experience between them and which will

allow differences to be explained. Activity theory provides a possibly more structured lens than communities of practice to explore social practices.

## **Activity theory**

Activity theory as an explanation of social engagement in practice has been quite widely used to examine education (e.g. Engeström 1994b, Trowler & Knight 2000, Finlay 2004), but these examples have taken a different approach to depicting the system itself. Engeström examines a group of teachers changing the purpose or object of their activity, using activity theory as an underpinning structure to his interpretation of discourse; Trowler and Knight take the course as the activity system and Finlay uses two different institutional settings as two activity systems. There appears to be no clear way to determine the boundaries of the activity system, though this might be dependent on the actual research questions and data generated, rather than an inherent flaw within the theory itself.

In my earlier study for the Education, Training and Work (ETW) doctoral assignment (Shreeve 2005) I looked at the idea of activity systems in education and practice and questioned the way that working between two systems tended to be depicted as an oppositional relationship, where working across or between two systems was characterised as needing boundary crossing objects (Engeström et al. 1995, Ludvigsen et al. 2003) or resulted in expansive learning, changing the activity system (Engeström 2001). I argued that there were potentially more ways for the relationship between two or more systems to be experienced and proposed that practitioner tutors who taught their subjects in higher education could actually elide the two systems together through drawing on their practice. Elision in this sense is used not to denote an absence or omission, but an easing or flowing together as in a poetic articulation, or the use of *l'* when the definite article in French is followed by a vowel. However, the study only included three practitioners and the outcomes were not in keeping with

research from other disciplines that characterised the relationship between practice and teaching as working in two camps or serving two masters (Elcock 1998, Fairbrother & Mathers 2004). This ETW study forms the basis for developing the research into a thesis, which further investigates the ways in which practitioner tutors relate teaching and practice and the potential impact this has on learning.

Activity theory appears to provide an appropriate means to examine the organisation and human participation and interaction in education in a structured way denoted as it is by the purpose or object of activity, student learning (e.g. Billett 2002, Berglund 2004). Activity theory has its origins in soviet Russian psychology of the 1920s. Vygotsky challenged the idea of the self as a Cartesian individual, developing in isolation from the society of which they were a part (Vygotsky 1978, 1981, van der Veer & Valsiner 1994). Through the idea of mediating artefacts or tools, such as language, which accompanied an individual's actions and helped to make sense of actions, he linked individual and society together in a relationship. Mediating artefacts enabled individuals to understand and engage with the social practices of their society and also shaped how they engaged. His theories were developed by Leont'ev (1978) and Luria (see Engeström 2001 for an account of this development) to include the idea of collective activity which extended individual activity through recognising that much human endeavour is developed historically and can only be understood through a realisation that roles are undertaken differently in order to achieve the common object or purpose of activity and that there are ways of working that are agreed (usually tacitly) by the collective or community involved. Thus activity theory provides a framework that includes the subject, the object of the activity and the outcome. The object/outcome is said to provide the motivation for undertaking the activity (Engeström 2005, Kaptelinin 2005). It also includes the community, the resulting division of labour within the system to achieve the object and the tools or mediating artefacts used in achieving the object. These tools are historically and

culturally specific to the activity and help to shape and achieve participation in the activity. Vygotsky's original emphasis on language also included symbolic conceptual tools. Leont'ev extended this to include physical tools originating in cultural practices, emphasising the material social world and explaining the interrelationship between activity, a fundamental characteristic of human life and the socially constructed and constituted means of carrying out activity.

The activity system is usually represented as a triangle in which the object is circled to denote that it is a problematic concept, often fuzzy, distributed (Engeström 2005), complex and 'conflicted' (Blackler & Regan 2005). The double-headed arrows indicate that there can be tensions within the activity system and these, it is argued, drive changes to the system itself (Engeström 2001).

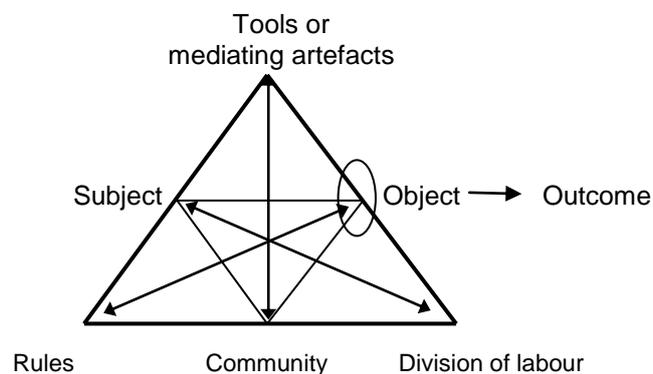


Figure 1. An activity system (after Engeström 2001).

Activity is not defined by actions with objectives, but is a historical social practice that has evolved collectively over time. Thus the components of activity theory provide a clear structure to examine social human activity. There are however, various methodological approaches to research using activity theory, suggesting that an activity system is an explanatory framework for human actions, rather than a theory with predictive capabilities (Nardi 1996). Some research remains embedded in a psychological approach investigating actions in close detail (e.g. Bedny & Karwowski

2004). Others employ a mixture of analytical tools, for example, discourse analysis and activity theory (Engeström 1994). Activity theory is seen by many of its practitioners as an evolving and developing theory, not simply a formula to apply and this has resulted in challenges to both theory and practice. For example, criticism of activity theory arising from the work of Cole (and others) highlighted the lack of explanation or accounting for cultural difference in the theory (Cole 1998) and subsequent research developed approaches to examine more complex accounts of difference and multiple engagements in different activities. As practitioners who also teach come into the latter category, using an activity theory approach to examine their experience may require different ways to envisage the relations between the two or more activity systems in which they engage. It may not be sufficient to argue that they require the construction of boundary crossing objects (Engeström et al. 1995, Ludvigsen et al. 2003) in order to work across systems or there may be more complex ways that the relationship between practice and teaching, as working in two or more systems is experienced. As a way to examine the working contexts and particular aspects of practices it does offer a clear structure from which to draw comparisons.

To summarise, in this study practice is seen as situated in the everyday activities in which we engage, it can be defined as the commonly held ways of working and being within particular groups and organisations. I characterise the two practices this study is focusing on, creative professional practice and teaching, as two worlds, but these are also synonymous with cultures, communities of practice and activity systems, which I see as different theoretical ways to explain practice. The most useful way to consider practice for the purposes of the study would appear to be activity theory as it provides a structured way to examine and compare the two worlds of practice and teaching and the relationship between them.

## Practice and teaching relations

Creative arts practice and teaching might be considered to be two forms of practice, which have some kind of relationship for the practitioner tutor. There are however, very few studies of this particular relationship in art and design, but there are in other practice-based disciplines, where more experienced practitioners teach novices to become practitioners. Notable amongst these are the medical professions, nursing and health care, where there have been various depictions of the relationship. The most straightforward approach is to see it as amalgamating two roles and forming a new identity (Beckett & Gough 2004). The argument here is that when practitioners become teachers they are simultaneously novice teachers and expert practitioners, moving towards a new identity or 're-forming' their identities, an approach that has also been described when artists become school teachers (Adams 2007). The transition from one role to another requires the construction of a new or different identity.

For the practitioners who work in two environments, teaching in an 'authentic' (Billett 2001a) environment on the ward, Beckett and Gough argue that there are many relational aspects to becoming a clinical teacher and 'gluing these together at the bedside' enables the construction of a 'hybrid identity' (p208). Although obtaining responses to six broad questions about being a teacher and teaching, including how it feels to be a teacher, the authors do not see the conceptualization of the 'clinical-plus-pedagogical professional identity' (p206) of their respondents as problematic, rather they assume it will be a dualist or hybrid identity. There appears to be no room for alternative experiences or a range of different experiences to be possible in this particular depiction of practice/ teaching relations and the process of identity fusion is not fully explored.

More complex pictures of working between practice and teaching are explained in a study of lecturer practitioners in six different professions, including architecture, using a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Four theoretical constructs emerged, living a dual role; academic culture; professional practice culture; combining cultures (Fairbrother & Mathers 2004: 541) although the relationships between the constructs are not explained. The emphasis here is on a strong sense of two cultures, practice and teaching, that require successful 'bridging' and a strong sense of alienation between the two cultures, with an emphasis on being a practitioner.

It is clear from the interview data that lecturer practitioners in all of the different professions perceived a clear dichotomy between their professional practice role and their university role. (p544)

This is a very different perspective to that of constructing a 'hybrid identity' argued by Beckett and Gough. Fairbrother and Mathers' study tends to polarise through categorisation, rather than look at the specific nature of the relationship as individuals experience it. Neither study examines the impact on student learning that might result from experiences of practice/ teaching relations. Underlying the use of practitioners to teach is an assumption that because they are professional practitioners themselves, they will enable others to understand and become practitioners. The two studies described above indicate that the transition to teaching is not universally experienced in the same way and therefore it is not a simple matter to become a practitioner tutor.

### **The role of the practitioner tutor**

Transitions between practice and teaching appear from Fairbrother and Mathers' study to be less than straightforward, yet if practitioners are seen as the best people to teach others about practice we need to unpack the assumption about how they actually enable others to understand their practice and to explore why they might not

enable others to understand. This is linked primarily to the role we expect them to perform, the reason for employing them, the 'and' between practice and teaching.

In nursing education the lecturer practitioner (LP) is a relatively new introduction, developed since the late 1980s, the role has evolved locally, and has variable definitions and manifestations (Elcock 1998). Reasons for the widespread deployment of the LP include seeing them as a way to improve staff development, ensure the implementation of a practice-led curriculum, to retain credibility for teachers of nursing through maintaining practice, to improve the relationship between hospital trusts and education, but primarily, the argument for the deployment of a practitioner is to bridge the perceived gap between practice and theory (Elcock 1998, Upton 1999, Fairbrother & Mathers 2004, Williamson 2004); a concept that is constantly under debate (eg Fairbrother & Ford 1998, Murphy 2000, Rattray 2004, Gillespie & McFetridge 2006). The main difference between education of nurses and art and design practitioners is that novice nurses actually undertake part of their learning in a live situation, as opposed to art and design where it mainly takes place in the studio, a simulated live environment. Also in art and design, theory is often taught by a different set of tutors to those who teach the practice components of the curriculum. Art history, contextual studies and cultural studies are often seen as distinct disciplines in themselves. This is not to say that theory tutors cannot also be practicing artists and designers, but the theory practice gap in creative arts is not associated with the actual practice of the art or design discipline within a social context outside education, as it is in nursing, but rather as a schism within the educational institution (for example Findeli 1990). Theory is more often perceived as an enrichment of practice, not a fundamental part of practice and according to Riley (2007) a practicing artist might be the last person you would approach to teach theory. The practitioner tutor in art and design is not therefore a response to a perceived gap between practice and theory in a vocational subject area, but is

possibly more likely to be seen as a good role model for developing students to become practitioners themselves or a conduit for understanding current practice.

## **The importance of contemporary practice in art and design education**

The notion of 'currency', as cited in the QAA report (1999) in the introduction to this thesis, appears to be an important concept in art and design education and the underlying reason why large numbers of practitioners are used to teach in F/HE. Practitioner tutors are seen as providing knowledge of or access to current practices, but the process by which they do this is poorly understood. Within schools this link has been facilitated by schemes since the 1970s to place artists in residence and to expose pupils to art in galleries and museums in spite of doubts about what kinds of learning ensue (Burgess 1995). Drawing on the critique of such schemes by Eisner (1974), who identified the underlying premise on which the schemes were designed as built on assumption rather than evaluation or practical purpose, Burgess identifies tensions inherent in importing practitioners into schools, without integrating the work of both the teacher and the artist. Eisner's observation was that artists were employed because

...it was also believed that those who can best teach a subject are those who know the subject best. In this case, those who are believed to know the subject best are artists. (p19)

Burgess also reports on debate about the 'Ability of artists to communicate their knowledge and expertise to teachers and pupils' (p115) and the lack of understanding about the school environment leading to ineffectual results of the artist in residence. Overall Burgess claims that there should be direct involvement of the artist in schools but fails to list the reasons why that should be so and how that can

best be achieved given the problems she identifies. Successful schemes are cited, amongst them those organised by Rod Taylor (Taylor 1987, 1993), where he claims that the use of recent graduates to teach children about art was having a positive impact on art education in the late 1980s. However, these reports do not significantly identify *how* practitioners make successful teachers of art within educational institutions, or how they make transitions between practice and teaching and enable students to learn about practice.

The tensions indicated by Burgess are indicative of different cultural constructions of art and design. The 'pedagogised identities' (Atkinson 2002: 99), the way that practices such as assessment and the National Curriculum constrain what art is in schools and how teachers and pupils conceive of art, may be significantly at odds with the situated identities of practitioners as artists. People are coming together from different cultural practices. The need to relate contemporary practice to education as a reflection of current 'knowledge' within the discipline, makes it imperative to study the relationships between the working contexts of practitioner tutors and the ways that they teach or contribute their knowledge of current practice to the learning environment rather than assume that the relation between practicing and teaching others to practice is unproblematic. If employing practitioners to teach in higher education is done to help students to understand contemporary practice, this might be considered to be 'why' they are employed. In considering the 'and' between practice and teaching we also need to consider the 'how', what happens and how students are enabled to learn about practice through this relationship. The relationship between practice and teaching begins to feel like a complex issue in which the relationship, the 'and' is a pivotal rather than convenient link.

## **Relationship in studies of academic practice**

The actual nature of the 'and', the relationships between different aspects of education is often assumed and seldom examined in detail. The connections between things are taken for granted, such as practice *and* teaching, teaching *and* learning, but Edwards (2006) argues that the 'and,' the 'little superglutinous superconductor' (p122), is seldom problematised and proceeds to show that a discourse analysis can uncover multiple interpretations and different functions being performed by 'and' in an educational context. With Edwards, I too am interested in the 'and' of practice and teaching, believing it to be far more complex and nuanced than most research into relations currently demonstrates, but unlike Edwards, I am interested in a more experiential playing out of the 'and'.

How relationships are examined is critical to the information to be gained from the examination. Links are frequently implied between the way teachers teach and what or how students learn (Martin et al. 2002) and this has been statistically linked through the use of quantitative inventories; for example the way students approach their learning is related to the way tutors approach their teaching (Trigwell et al. 1999), but these studies are based on statistical relationships between items in inventories. People are 'self-reporting' by filling out questionnaires, which structure their responses in particular ways. The studies do not directly examine differences in the relationships between teaching and learning or how and why there might be differences in relationships.

In a study by Prosser et al (2007) based on phenomenographic research into teachers' experience of research, teaching and understanding of the subject matter they found that there were relationships between these three aspects of academic life. Using a phenomenographic analysis and two different studies, followed by a

categorisation of the transcripts into the highest category demonstrated in each, they used a statistical analysis to measure the relationship between the experience of research, teaching and understanding of subject matter. They found that there are underlying structures to the way research active staff experience all three, as parts, as parts in relation to wholes, or as wholes. This study is interesting as it suggests that there are underlying ways to experience or conceive of all of these aspects of academic life and separating them out may not be the best way to understand practices. However, the methodology is rather tortuous and departs considerably from a phenomenographic approach, appearing to use categories from one study to re-categorise others and then to categorise whole transcripts and the authors are tentative in their claims. This relationship might be more simply addressed through a study specifically designed to examine variation in academics' experience of the relationship between research, subject and teaching, rather than 'prove' statistically that there is a connection. A statistical approach does not help to understand an underlying relationship, or the experience of a relationship, statistics being a device to evaluate probability.

A particular relationship between research and teaching has been identified in art and design by Trowler and Wareham (2007). This relationship seems to be centred on the nature of art practice itself, the process and the practical, material artefact, which still remains central to enquiry in creative arts subjects (Prentice 2000). Research could be argued to be closely related to practice, or an extension of practice or even synonymous with practice as a performance or an exhibition can be 'counted' in the Research Assessment Exercise. Trowler and Wareham (2007) find:

A strong pattern which emerged from these interviews was the congruence between values and philosophies of research and teaching. Several respondents indicated that they and their students were on a continuum of

expertise, where the only substantive difference between them and their students was the degree of experience and recognition. This feature was most strong where the work was largely creative. (...) Where the disciplinary context was closer to a more mainstream traditional subject there was more distance between the academic and the student with a sense of teacher and taught. (p11)

As practice and research can be almost synonymous in creative arts this suggests that the relationship between practice and teaching for practitioner tutors may be very close, not a case of two camps as emphasised by Fairbrother and Mathers (2004). Given that there appear to be a number of ways to experience practice/ teaching relations it is essential to understand how such a relationship between practice and teaching might be constituted.

## **Variation**

In higher education there has been an emphasis on understanding difference, or variation in experience through the use of a phenomenographic research approach (Booth 1997, Marton & Booth 1997, Prosser & Trigwell 1999, Bowden & Walsh 2000) and this may be useful in considering how the relationship between practice and teaching is experienced from the perspective of the practitioner. The approach allows the researcher to constitute the ways in which experiences are qualitatively different and to construe how the different categories are related (Åkerlind 2005, Ashwin 2006), thus focusing on difference in experience. Most phenomenographic studies do not look directly at relationships however, but employ additional statistical methods to show relationships (e.g. Lindblom-Ylänne et al. 2006, Prosser et al. 2007).

Understanding the relationship experienced between practice and teaching appears to be essential to understanding the contribution practitioner tutors make to learning

in art and design. Relationships have been shown to exist between conceptions of research, teaching and the subject matter and yet little is known about the nature of these relations themselves or how individuals experience the relations and why they might experience them in particular ways.

### **The individual subject and potential influences on variation**

In this section I will consider the centrality of the individual practitioner tutor to the learning environment and potential reasons for individual differences in experience. Each individual tutor could be said to be a different 'and' that potentially links practice and teaching worlds for the students they teach. Each person brings to their working environments different ontogenies (Billett 2001b) or histories of development and will experience and understand aspects of practice worlds in different ways. They are both subject to the contexts or practices they encounter and also agents acting within them (see Ashwin 2008 for discussion of structure and agency in learning and teaching).

### **The influence of the discipline**

Art and design as a discipline is not generally included in the literature on disciplines arising from Biglan's work (Biglan 1973, Kolb 1984, Becher 1989, Neumann et al. 2002, Lueddeke 2003) and has not been studied in the same way. In sketching a quick overview of the discipline one could argue that it has historically evolved through the atelier system where 'sitting by Nellie' (Swann 2002) characterised the predominant pedagogy. The studio and workshop environment and the practical nature of the curricula and the 'informal and implicit nature of the pedagogy' (Logan 2006: 341) still persist (Prentice 2000, Danvers 2003, Adams 2007). There have been significant contributions by artists to art and design education via the Bauhaus (artists such as Klee, Kandinsky and Albers) and the Basic Design Movement in the UK in the late 1950s which resulted in the foundation course in art and design, which

changed art and design education from an emphasis on self-expression to one based on intellectual enquiry designed to 'embrace and affirm the modern world' (Yeomans 2005:197). Art and design in schools has variously been seen as a form of self-expression, critical enquiry, problem solving or a vocational calling and the underlying purpose changes over time and between individuals (Atkinson 2002), though school art and F/HE art may be very different practices driven by different ideological and historical stances (Adams 2007).

'Knowledge' in art and design is constituted by practice (Corner 2005) and most sub disciplines in the area would concentrate on students knowing about current practices, which constantly change and evolve in terms of their aesthetics and technologies. These would be informed by art and design histories and relevant technological or scientific knowledge and although underpinned by methods, skills and techniques, 'knowledge' is more properly situated in being able to produce 'work' that has a currency in the arena of practice and has an individual voice or handwriting, i.e. is a creative response by the individual practitioner within the context of the wider social practice.

The disciplinary ways of working, it is argued, can influence the kind of approaches to teaching that predominate within the discipline (Becher 1994, Neumann et al. 2002, Lueddeke 2003, Lindblom-Ylänne et al. 2006) and in design subjects there is a distinct predominance of a student centred, conceptual change approach (Trigwell 2002). Trigwell, using a modified version of the Approaches To Teaching Inventory (ATI), indicates that design tutors are more likely than science tutors to adopt student focused approaches to teaching, they are more likely to say that they learn from their students and that their students are more likely to explore their own creative ideas. There is however, variation in the way that design tutors approach teaching. This perhaps tells us more about the general approach to teaching and the kind of

activities which traditionally constitute disciplinary practice than it says about individuals, though individuals will be influenced by the way they have been taught (Knight et al. 2006).

The fact that there are dominant modes of teaching, but variation within them, is substantiated by Brown's research (Brown 2003), which challenges the coherence of classifying approaches to teaching as student focused or tutor focused. He found that nursing tutors, teaching in a practice based discipline like design, experienced student centred learning in different ways. They could undertake activities with their students that appeared to be student centred, but their intentions were to transmit information. Thus the disciplinary learning and teaching practices were, to outward appearances, student centred but subverted by tutors approaching them with different intentions. Therefore individual tutor intentions can override the normative practices within a disciplinary culture. The discipline provides a broad approach to understanding teaching practices, but individuals can and do operate in different ways within the broad approach.

## **Conceptions and approaches**

It is possible for variation to exist in conceptions of and approaches to teaching in art and design (Drew et al 2002, Drew & Williams 2002, Drew & Trigwell 2003, Drew 2003, Drew 2004) and these are similar to those found in other academic disciplines (Prosser & Trigwell 1999). As conceptions are linked to approaches (Prosser & Trigwell 1999) these could also be said to range from Information Transmission/Tutor Focused (ITTF), to student focused with the intention to change the students' conceptions, Conceptual Change/Student Focused (CCSF).

Drew and Williams (2003) identify a 'community of practice dimension' to teaching in art and design, where there is an emphasis on using examples, stories and

experience to help students to learn. This is not explored in any great detail though and the discussion is disappointingly short, hinting at the possibility that there is a difference in the way that fine art and design tutors express this dimension; fine artists are more likely, they state, to use terms such as students 'becoming' fine artists, seeing art as a way of life, whereas designers are more likely to talk about industry and commercial aspects of a community of practice. This suggests that there might be differences within the overall 'discipline' of art and design as well as between individual tutors.

Phenomenographic studies construe categories of variation within phenomena but these are not attributed to individuals and are not considered to be fixed traits, but to vary with context (Laurillard 1984, Lindblom-Ylänne et al. 2006). The methodology makes it impossible to relate the context, any personal histories of development of the individual, or environmental factors, to ways that teachers conceive of or approach teaching. There are differences in approaches to and conceptions of teaching within the discipline and possible variations linked to sub-disciplines in art and design that indicate but do not explain variation in teaching.

### **Understanding the subject**

There are other studies that suggest variation in teaching might be linked to the way the subject is understood (Prosser et al. 2005, Reid 1999, 2001). There are underlying ways to understand the professional subject, or the 'professional entity' in design: as extrinsic technical, design is about being able to apply skills appropriately – design is about doing; extrinsic meaning, where design is being able to meet the needs of society – design is about interpreting and finally, an intrinsic meaning orientation where design is being able to communicate – design is about living (Reid & Davies 2003: 88). Although they do not specifically indicate that part time tutors are involved in this study one could assume that there are likely to be strongly held views

about the 'professional entity' in part time practitioners who teach and this might be one factor that is related to the way they experience practice/ teaching relations. Reid and Davies claim that students and tutors both have a 'critical understanding of the nature of work in their artistic professions' (p87). Thus the way that the professional subject area, or the world of practice, is understood can influence tutors ways of approaching teaching, ranging from an emphasis on technical skills through to developing personal conceptions. The links to approaches to teaching suggests that ways of conceiving of teaching, learning and the subject itself are all factors that contribute to the way that teachers think and work. A small scale study to illuminate tutors' ideas about the purpose of art and design education (Shreeve 2006) also points to different ways that university education is understood, as developing skills, developing people, understanding how to practice, or understanding the structure of education itself. However, these research studies do not suggest ways in which particular ways of thinking and behaving are constructed or influenced, but they do point to ways in which individual teachers might understand the purpose or function of their role to educate students. More specific studies are needed to understand what might influence individual conceptions and approaches to teaching and the subject within the social context of F/HE

### **The influence of context**

The context in phenomenographic studies is said to influence both approaches and conceptions, which are not fixed traits of individuals (Laurillard 1984, Prosser & Trigwell 1999). The way the context is experienced influences approaches to teaching, but the context is not a part of the methodology of phenomenography, as data is generated across a range of individuals to examine the possible ways that variation can be experienced. Prosser & Trigwell (1997), using the Perceptions of Teaching Inventory to measure the way in which teachers perceive the particular context they are working in, find that there are relations between the approach to

teaching adopted and perceived factors in the teaching context. Those influencing a CCSF approach are identified as control of what and how they teach, the class size and whether the department values teaching. If any of these conditions are perceived in a negative way tutors are more likely to adopt an ITTF approach. Although identifying relations between approach and context, this also measures relations statistically and does not identify reasons why individuals might perceive the context differently in the first place and therefore adopt particular approaches. This is also a very narrow view of context in regard to the practitioner tutor who is working in more than one work place. Both of these contexts and the relationship experienced between both contexts could have some influence on approach to teaching. Other views of the context and its influence on teaching might include power relations (Barton & Tusting 2005), politics (Edwards 2006), ideologies (Trowler & Wareham 2007), sociologies (Trowler 2005) and not simply individual's interpretation or understanding of particular facets of the teaching context.

### **Engagement with the context**

The specific context of teaching, within the educational organisation and the course, is only part of the context of employment for most practitioner tutors as they are part time or fractions of a full time post. They therefore have a reduced opportunity to learn the professional aspects of teaching from colleagues and through participation in the activity system of teaching (Trowler & Knight 2000, Knight et al. 2006). This lack of engagement has been associated with a concern for quality assurance and consistency in educational practice (Bryson 2003) and accounts for some negative perceptions of practitioner tutors. *The Part Time Teachers Initiative* (Bryson & Blackwell 2001), looked specifically at the need to support and develop part time teachers, largely from the perspective of equality of opportunity. The report draws a distinction between these hourly paid tutors and those who are fractional appointments, and also highlights the complexity of defining the part timer; they may

hold other roles in education (e.g. technicians) hold full time jobs in a profession or have a 'portfolio' career. Part timers are not a unified type of worker. The main criticism about part time tutors is that they are marginalised and not part of the mainstream activity of education, an effect the report identifies can be a result of poor management on the part of the institution, or lack of willingness to engage by the part timer. In a study of part time staff in Scottish higher education (Nicol 2000), the cited activities constituting good practice could be argued to be indicative of engaging the part timer in the practice of higher education.

Of the five case study institutions in Bryson's report, one was a 'University College' with an emphasis on art, design and communication. This had the highest proportion of part time tutors and also the only evidence of part time staff being specifically mentioned in human resources and learning and teaching strategies. The authors of the report cite this case as an example of moving towards an integration strategy rather than a differentiation (separate identities and roles) strategy for part time staff. The importance and central position of part time staff in art and design is also indicated by the ADEPTT project (2003, 2004, 2005) with 70 contributing partners, clearly associating the wider art and design sector with an integration strategy for part time tutors and with concerns about part time tutors within the sector. This need to engage part timers with activities in education suggests that they may not fully understand the processes that full time academics take for granted and this again may lead to perceptions that the practitioner tutor does not fulfil their role in education. Therefore the degree of engagement individuals have in the education system may be an important factor in the way they both understand teaching and learning and how they enact it. Participation through engagement is a determining factor of being part of a community of practice (Wenger 1998) and therefore the degree to which practitioners engage in the activity system of education may influence the way that relations between practice and teaching are constituted.

## Identity

Engagement in a CoP is also an issue of identity according to Wenger (1998: 192). If the individual tutor is central to learning and they can influence the kinds of art made in schools for example, (Atkinson 2002) it may be important to consider how individual identities are constituted in relation to practice and to teaching. Beckett and Gough's (2004) analysis of practitioners who teach is based on the construction of a hybrid identity, involving change as practitioners move into teaching. Adams (2007) also notes a change in identity from artist to school teacher as initial teacher training is undertaken, suggesting that being a teacher changes how the self is constituted. Although a challenging and complex concept identity seems to offer an insight into how individuals see themselves and their relationships to working environments (Billett & Somerville 2004, Parker 2000). The interrelationships individuals experience require adjustments and reconstructions of a sense of self which requires constant work in order to sustain the sense of self, though this is not a static, Cartesian 'self'.

Self identity ...is not something that is just given, as a result of continuities of the individual's action-system, but something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual. (Giddens 1991: 52)

Such identity work takes place in environments where there is a potential separation of 'us' and 'them' (Parker 2000), where identities are partly ordered by the way in which people identify themselves with others like them, through the kinds of jobs that they do. Identity is about negotiation and participation (Wenger 1998) with the social structures we encounter and although we are subject to cultural influences (Foucault 1979), we are also individual agents with histories of participation formed by unique interactions over time, thus forming 'personal trajectories of participation' (Dreier

1999) or non-participation (Wenger 1998:188-209). Identity always requires forms of negotiation (Wenger 1998).

Such forms of negotiation are relational between the structures of the workplace and the individual (Billett 1998, 2001a, Billett & Somerville 2004) and learning is a natural outcome of working (Chaiklin & Lave 1993, Billett 2001b) something that occurs in our 'everyday lives' (Berger & Luckmann 1967). However, what and how you learn is also dependent on the affordances that the work situation provides; the social mediation provided by activities, guidance from others, the tools and artefacts available (Fuller & Unwin 2003, 2005). Individual trajectories of participation result in personal histories of development, or ontogenies, which will

result in unique dispositions, ways of knowing and knowledge, how they engage in work activities and interactions will not be wholly determined by what the workplace affords them. (Billett 2001b: 22-23)

Practitioner tutors therefore bring their ontogenies into the education environment where the usually part-time work reduces the affordances for engagement compared to those in full time employment. Even in the face of strong 'enculturation' individuals have choice about the positions they adopt in relation to the workplace, what they learn and how they identify with it. Billet and Somerville (2004) argue that the relational construction of the self and subjectivities are socially situated, drawing on social psychology, (Vygotsky 1978, Wertsch 1991, Wertsch et al. 1995, Cole et al. 1997) and also on the idea of discourse subjecting the individual to certain ways of being (Foucault 1979) and the idea of Bourdieu's habitus (Bourdieu 1992) providing a milieu of subtle but ubiquitous influences on the individual. However, they stress that the individual can also exercise intentionality; they have some choice in whether they appropriate, transform or ignore the social practices they encounter at work.

Identity therefore appears to be a complex picture of individual histories, engagement or non-engagement with forms of practice and the reconstitution of particular forms of practice when interacting with others. The individual has some choice in how they enact identity; they are not simply subject to one form of social construct or swimming in a vague sea of 'culture'. Such differences between individuals and the relationships they experience in and between their working environments may account for the different ways that practitioner tutors either excel as teachers or not. Being an academic presumably requires certain kinds of identity work (Taylor & Littleton 2006) and academic identities are subject to changing organisational, social and political imperatives as well as being strongly related to disciplines (Henkel 2000). If practitioner tutors only spend part of their working time in academia do they construct an academic identity and how might this identity relate to their identity as a practitioner?

Dalton (2001) and Atkinson (2002) examine the construction of identities that the social environment of schooling through art education has produced. These adopt a psychoanalytical perspective in conjunction with a more social constructivist position acknowledging the role of discourse and practice in the construction of identity. Atkinson examines the educational environment as a site for the structuring and construction of identities for both the pupil and the teacher. He calls these 'pedagogised identities', where normative practices develop and shape what, for example, becomes accepted as appropriate art within schools and uses the example of assessment to illustrate how certain viewpoints, terminology and forms of art creation by pupils become normalised. Teachers become subject to particular kinds of identity formation as teachers through the practices they employ within schools.

...certain practices, skills and techniques of practice are valued over others and lead to the production of particular kinds of pedagogised subjects. (p 97-98)

This view of identity suggests that the individual has little choice but to accept the norms of educational cultural practices, rather than exert some degree of agency or construct a narrative of identity, or bring a range of individual histories or ontogenies to the construction of identity (Billett & Somerville 2004). Partly due to the National Curriculum and the construction of staged achievement levels there are quite prescriptive practices within the schools sector, which are less evident in F/HE. The rules and guidelines for producing school art help to shape what is made as art and how teachers respond and behave. However, Atkinson does provide examples of teachers who do not become constrained by the regulatory discourse of the National Curriculum, but work around it to produce different pedagogised identities for other teachers and students (Atkinson 2002: 151-158). Therefore the individual teacher can be responsible for determining the particular kinds of art practice in the school. Atkinson accounts for this by suggesting that each tutor will determine their practice by what they believe art is or should be. There is therefore a complex picture emerging between structures and rules in the work context and individual agency that in turn structures what is done. Not all teachers appear to be able to exert such agency, but remain 'captured by the discourse' (Bowe et al. 1994). Possibly the ability to determine what kinds of art are made in schools is driven by retaining a strong personal view of the purpose of art education and a degree of confidence that your beliefs are right. The reasons why this variation in school occurs would be interesting to explore further as it suggests that individuals can change the rules and prevailing ethos of dominant practices.

The conditions where part time and practitioner tutors might actively construct practices in teaching may be linked to whether they have strong beliefs about art and design education and to their sense of identity and the degree of agency they experience. Their constitution of identity is possibly fragmented, but likely to be simultaneously related to different parts of their working lives, both practice and teaching. Identity for the individual is demonstrated in the biography or narratives that they construct to deal with different encounters; the consistency exists, not through stability, but in the creation of a story over time; a past, present and future narrative of the self. When, as researchers, we interview people we are presented with a particular view or narrative at a particular time. The interview is evidence of a form of identity narrative or identity work (Taylor & Littleton 2006), an enactment of self in relation to the context of the life-world as it is recounted in response to the interviewer's questioning. Practitioner tutors may have particular identity work to do in terms of the relationship they experience between practice and teaching.

### **Researching variation in experiencing teaching**

If individuals' sense of identity and the contexts in which they work are both important aspects of understanding teaching, what might be the best approaches to undertaking research into practitioner tutors' experience of practice/ teaching relations? It is possible that practitioner tutors, like all tutors, may understand and undertake teaching in different ways, thus accounting for differing views of their efficacy. This variation is indicated by numerous phenomenographic studies (Marton 1994, Prosser & Trigwell 1997, Reid 1999, Åkerlind 2004, Prosser et al. 2004, Bowden et al. 2005, Prosser et al. 2005). However, the reasons why there is variation is poorly understood and phenomenographic studies do not consider individuals, yet individuals and their relationship to their work environments seem to be critical in terms of identity (Atkinson 2002, Billett & Somerville 2004) and approach to teaching (Prosser & Trigwell 1997). Do part time or practitioner tutors actually undertake their

teaching in different ways and to what could this be attributed? A tentative suggestion has been made to link teachers who are student focused to a wider use of teaching methods (Coffey & Gibbs 2002). This research employs the ATI (Trigwell & Prosser 2004) and suggests that teachers who are student focused employ a wider range of teaching activities with students. The results must be viewed as tentative as the authors have doubts about the method they used to collect data about teaching methods. The use of inventories and questionnaires to measure teaching and learning is problematic as it relies on one particular meaning associated with items in an inventory, does not allow for multiple ways to respond and does not take into account the idea that meaning is socially situated (e.g. Chaiklin & Lave 1993, Cloran et al. 1996, Wenger 1998).

Such research methods constrain the way that respondents can express their views and are constructed from the viewpoint of those determining the sense of the questions. For example, in Norton et al's study (2005) which identifies the possible disjuncture between beliefs about teaching and what is done in practice, the authors identify the impact of individuals, work contexts and discipline as factors which can lead to disjunction. They say that they recognise the limitation of the instrument they adapted from Gow and Kember's (1993) inventory, but from the perspective of my own discipline I would take issue with some of the categorisation of the questions used. For example, questions 10 and 30 (beliefs on a knowledge transmission dimension):

- The main aim of higher education should be to prepare students for their future careers
- An important function of higher education is to produce graduates for certain professions within the community

From an art and design perspective these would be important (but not the sole aims) of higher education. Students are learning to become practitioners or capable of practicing in professional situations as creative artists and designers and individual approaches to the subject are positively encouraged. These professions actually require creativity, problem solving, adaptability, and entrepreneurial approaches, and teaching traditionally includes the items listed as beliefs on a learning facilitation dimension. The instrument is a blunt one and is indicative of the problems of trying to measure beliefs and approaches to teaching across disparate contexts and with fixed items.

The construction of the questions and the meaning attributed to them (and my disagreement with that) may also be dependent on particular understandings of education. Where art and design might see education as helping students to become certain 'kinds of persons' (Lave cited in Drew 2003: 27) or to be addressing the whole person through a process of becoming or changing, this is a fundamentally ontological approach (Dall'Alba 2007) and not simply one of providing skills for professional practice, an epistemological approach, which appears to be the underlying premise of attributing these statements to a knowledge transmission approach.

A more holistic way to research individuals' experiences or their 'being' (Åkerlind 2003, 2004) as they work between practice and education would possibly reveal more about the complexity of experience and relations between aspects of experience. Using inventories, even though based on qualitative research approaches, seems to isolate particular ways of experiencing, rather than look at people and their environments as interrelationships. In spite of underlying beliefs that the person and the world are related in phenomenography (Marton & Booth 1997) the

methodology does not reveal the richness of individual experience and cannot on its own provide a view of the influence of the context of the experience.

Phenomenography has tended to dominate the way in which learning and teaching in higher education has been viewed (Haggis 2003, 2004) and there are other ways to consider and examine experience and how it might be researched (Haggis 2006).

However, phenomenography does allow the researcher to constitute their understanding of variation and the interrelationship between categories of variation through interpreting the data. The limitations of this research method are that it provides a general theory of experience but does not include the context in which experiences take place, although it is integral to the experience, and therefore restricts how much we might learn from the resulting analysis. It is also limited to the researcher's construction of variation, rather than the lived experience of individuals (Ashworth & Lucas 1998), which are richer and more complex. Phenomenography can provide an analysis of variation, but cannot, on its own, provide information about individuals and their multiple contextual and relational experiences.

## **Conclusion and research questions**

For the purposes of this study phenomenography could provide a research approach to explore potential differences in relations between the practice and teaching worlds as experienced by practitioner tutors in art and design. The potentially different ways to experience this relationship and the implications for student learning resulting from it could account for the polarised views of art and design practitioner tutors (Burgess 1995, QAA 1999) and contribute to understanding the experience of practitioners who teach in other disciplines as well (Fairbrother & Mathers 2004). However, as the context is seen as critical to understanding variation, whether accounted for by discipline (Becher 1989), influencing approaches to teaching (Prosser & Trigwell 1997, Trigwell 2002, Lindblom-Ylänne et al. 2006), or providing 'affordances' in the

work place (Billett 1998, 2001), I will use an additional analysis to examine how individuals relate to practice and teaching worlds. Activity theory can provide a heuristic device to illuminate the experience of individuals acting within two differently constituted social contexts.

As knowledge of teaching and teachers in art and design F/HE is limited and few studies have looked specifically at relationships between practice and teaching or the part time tutor in this subject discipline it is timely to consider, from the tutor's perspective, how working between practice and teaching that practice is experienced. Most extant studies examine conceptions and approaches to teaching and do not look precisely at the experience of being a teacher *and* practitioner within the discipline. As Åkerlind (2004) suggests, the experience of being a teacher is perhaps more nuanced and complex than most research currently accounts for and is worthy of further investigation. It is particularly important given the different views of practitioner tutors' efficacy and the underlying assumption that they will enable students to learn about current practice, that the relationship between practice and teaching is examined.

Although there have been studies in nursing and medicine which begin to investigate the relationship between practicing and teaching, there have been few studies of the practitioner tutor in art and design and no comprehensive look at the way different aspects of working life and the relationships between them are experienced.

Research indicates that there are underlying relations between the way research, the subject or practice and teaching might be experienced and also that the individual will bring personal ontogenies to the work context. Although knowledge of current practice is seen to be critical to student learning in art and design there are no studies that examine why and how practitioners may or may not support student learning,

only that there is conflicting evidence of this. My research sets out to investigate this area. Specifically the research questions are:

1. What are the qualitatively different ways in which practitioner tutors in art and design experience the relationship between their practice and their teaching?
2. What factors might influence this experience?
3. What impact does the variation in experiencing practice/ teaching relations have on the learning environment?

The following chapter sets out the research methodology used to investigate these three questions. In recognising that phenomenography can construe the differences in ways to experience what might ostensibly be seen as an obvious, taken for granted relationship, I will adopt a phenomenographic approach to the analysis of practice/ teaching relations. However, this approach cannot empirically address the experiences of individuals operating within and between different working contexts and bringing to these contexts different ontogenies or histories of personal development. In order to address these factors I will consider the relationship of the individual to the wider contexts of practice and teaching using activity theory as a heuristic device to explore case studies representing phenomenographic categories of experience.

## **Chapter 3**

# **Methods and methodological approaches to the research project**

### **Introduction**

Practitioner tutors embody the relationship between practice and teaching, they are the 'and' (Edwards 2006) which is normally taken for granted in the link between the expert practitioner and the learner who expects to become a practitioner through an education in art and design. However, the use of practitioners to teach is built on an underlying assumption that those who know a subject best are those who make the best teachers (Eisner 1974), and that simply being a practitioner enables students to learn about current practice. The need to provide materials to develop part time tutors and the question of whether pupils in school learn from artists in residence (Burgess 1995) point to variable success in terms of students learning about practice from practitioners.

My research questions are framed to understand, from practitioner tutors' points of view, what it is to be a practitioner tutor, how the relationship between practice and teaching is experienced and what kinds of things might impact on individuals to structure different experiences of being a practitioner tutor. These questions are based on the premise that the individual is operating in two cultural worlds that are related but different and this relationship is critical for learning in art and design. Practitioner tutors are seen as a bridge between the two worlds, but very little is actually known about this bridge and how it works. Teaching and practice are conducted in different spaces, and the hypothesis is that it is possible to experience these worlds and the relationships between them in different ways; it is not

necessarily a simple transition from practice into teaching. It is possible that the individual tutor, who works usually alone with a group of students, will have a significant influence on what and how students learn about practice.

Existing studies of practitioner tutors' experience of practice/ teaching relations suggests that there are different ways that this relationship can be experienced, from melding or hybridising (Beckett & Gough 2004), to living a dual life (Fairbrother & Mathers 2004). Examining the nature of possible variation in experience would seem to be an essential starting point for research as different points of view indicate that this is variable but still unclear in terms of the nature of the different ways to experience these relations and no studies have specifically looked at the art and design discipline area.

In this chapter I will explain the choice of research approaches taken to address these questions and describe how I undertook the research.

## **Phenomenography**

Variation in experience has been studied in higher education through a phenomenographic approach, which has evolved from the seminal studies into student approaches to learning undertaken by Marton and Säljö (1976a, 1976b). These studies introduced the idea that there were different intentions underlying a basic learning activity and rather than assume that everyone experienced something in the same way studies began to explore how a phenomenon might be experienced differently (e.g. Marton et al. 1984, Trigwell & Prosser 1997, Trigwell et al. 1999, Bowden et al. 2005). Phenomenography has some affinities with phenomenology (Hasselgren & Beach 1997) in respect to a concern with human experiences of everyday life (Berger & Luckmann 1967) but according to Svensson (1997) it has relations to a number of theoretical and philosophical aspects but allegiances to

none. It is based on an empirical approach to understanding human experience, usually through interviews. Using a phenomenographic approach requires starting without preconceptions of categories or looking for specific kinds of experience within the data, but forming the categories as a result of the data (see Walsh 2000 for a discussion of constructing or emergent categories). This allows the researcher to examine the data and construe the variation found within a range of accounts of the experience. In assuming that there are different ways that practice/ teaching relations might be constituted, not simply those already found in other practice-based learning environments, phenomenography would appear to provide an appropriate methodology to understand just how the relationship between practice and teaching in art and design might be constituted.

Experience in phenomenographic terms depends on seeing reality as something that is constituted between the person and the world, and as such is a non-dualist, relational approach (Marton & Booth 1997, Marton 2000). The person who is experiencing something is central to the approach, it is the person and the world that constitutes reality and from this perspective research is not about the object existing independently, but about how people experience particular objects and the different ways that these can be experienced. Rather than examine the object from the researcher's point of view, 'A more reasonable idea is to see the object as a complex of the different ways in which it can be experienced' (Marton 2000: 105). The different ways are logically related, but together constitute the phenomenon. However, most researchers would acknowledge that the constitution of the outcome space, the structure of the phenomenon, is the researcher's interpretation and constitution (Åkerlind 2005, Ashwin 2005).

Within phenomenography the idea that a phenomenon consists of different aspects of experience is accounted for by the notion of being able to hold in our awareness

different aspects of a phenomenon simultaneously (Marton & Booth 1997). The different ways are not always present to consciousness and can be more or less to the foreground or to the background of our awareness.

Certain things come to the fore, they are thematised, while other things recede to the ground, they are tacit, they are unthematized.....There are different degrees of how figural, thematised, and explicit things or aspects are in our awareness. (Marton, 2000: 110)

Therefore, at a certain time there will be some aspects of a phenomenon that are more to the forefront of awareness than others and this may be to do with our previous experiences or the context of our current experiences. Marton and Booth (1997: 83) argue that situations are always experienced 'within a context, a time, and a place' and phenomena are divorced, abstracted, or transcend such constraints. However, the two are 'inextricably intertwined' (p83) and as such the researcher may focus on ways to experience the situation or the phenomenon, but cannot focus on both simultaneously. The researcher however, will realise relations between the phenomenon and the situation.

We cannot separate our understanding of the *situation* and our understanding of the *phenomena* that lend sense to the situation. Not only is the situation understood in terms of the phenomena involved, but we are aware of the phenomena from the point of view of the particular situation. Furthermore, not only is our experience of the situation molded (sic) by the phenomena as we experience them, but our experience of the phenomena is modified, transformed, and developed through the situations we experience them in. (Marton & Booth 1997: 83 emphasis in original).

The situation, or the context of the experience, is therefore always critical to the way that the phenomenon is experienced. Marton and Booth's definition of the situation also includes the individual's past experiences as being present and influencing the way that the phenomenon is experienced. Phenomenography is therefore dependent on understanding the way that something is experienced by individuals and recounted through the individual's awareness of the experience at a particular time and place (Marton et al. 1984). In terms of understanding how practitioner tutors might experience the relationship between their practice and their teaching, this particular phenomenon is dependent on the two physical contexts of practice and teaching and also on individual's previous experiences which all influence the way that the relationship between practice and teaching, the phenomenon in question, is experienced.

The method looks for the variation, the qualitatively different ways of experiencing a phenomenon that are possible (Marton & Booth 1997). Although individuals form the basis of the generation of the data, the whole set of transcripts are used to construct the categories which are qualitatively different and logically interrelated. This provides a geography of the potential ways in which something can be experienced and because there is an internal relationship between the categories it provides a range from the more limited ways to the more expansive ways in which that phenomenon can be experienced (Åkerlind 2005, Ashwin 2006). Thus an apparently unified entity can be seen as potentially fragmented as participation can no longer be assumed to be uni-dimensional. These ways of experiencing are not fixed traits of the individual but are said to be influenced by the context and how the individual perceives the context of the experience at the time (see Prosser & Trigwell 1999). However, linking the contextual factors into the differences in ways of experiencing is not part of the empirical methodology of phenomenography.

The issue of the context in phenomenographic research has been addressed in a particular way by Adawi et al. (2001), but this limits the notion of context to a narrow area of the researcher and researched experience, not addressing the wider socio-cultural or political aspects of experience. The influences of the context are often deduced from the wider literature such as the idea of presage, process, and product (Trigwell & Prosser 1997, Biggs 2003). In order to consider the wider social context empirically an additional theoretical approach is needed to extend the understanding illuminated by a phenomenographic methodology. Whilst phenomenography might provide an understanding of variation in practice/ teaching relations it does not explain how variation might be influenced by the social worlds of practice and teaching. The ontological and epistemological emphasis in phenomenography remains largely within the individual's perception, that is, the way in which they understand, or experience, at the time, the phenomenon in question, but the individual voice, the personal history of experience and their relation to the social context is lost in the collective analysis.

### **Activity Theory**

In order to examine the contextual factors that could possibly influence ways to experience relations between practice and teaching an additional stage of analysis is required, one that can account for variation in experience within and between the two working contexts of practice and teaching and provide an explanation of variation. Although activity theory uses the activity system as the unit of analysis it is possible to analyse relationships and actions within the activity system using the structure of the system as explanatory principles (Nardi 1996). Although much activity theoretical work places the emphasis on collective activity rather than on individual interpretation or perception of activity (Engeström 1990, Engeström et al. 1999, Engeström & Rückriem 2005), Vygotsky's original research based in psychology linked societal actions and activity to the individual through the use of mediating artefacts (Cole

1969, 1985, Cole et al. 1997). This was further developed by Leont'ev (1978) to include the rules, the community and the division of labour, which were held together and given purpose by the common object of the activity (Kaptelinin 2005), in an activity system (Engeström 1990). A product of the Soviet times in which these theories were produced they have since been developed and explored and have close relationships with the social constructivist theories of the West exemplified by Cole, and Lave and Wenger (Lave & Wenger 1991, Wenger 1998) where the individual and society are mutually related; the individual is a product of the society in which they operate and their interrelations can also change society.

I see the advantage of using activity theory as providing a theoretical framework with explanatory principles, which allows relationships between different aspects of collective social engagement to be studied. Education is some kind of collective endeavour in which we participate (Engeström 1994, Berglund 2004). It has evolved historically, it exists as a construct of the particular time and the particular society we live in (Popova & Daniels 2004), and the educational activity system appears to me to exert a strong influence on how we operate and what we do. Similarly the worlds of creative practice also have social structures with ways of working. Without acknowledging that these organisational and social infrastructures exist and exert constraints the study of variation in practice/ teaching relations would be limited by only considering variation through a phenomenographic methodology. Activity theory provides a way to examine the individual and their relationship to both social worlds, therefore providing a way to examine the context and its influence on relations.

### **Limitations in both phenomenography and activity theory**

In seeking a greater understanding of practitioner tutors' experience of practice/ teaching relations in art and design, and the effect that variation in the experience might have on teaching, a phenomenographic approach provides a way to define

differences in experiencing the relationship between practice and teaching. However, the methodology does not allow the context to be studied in relation to individual experience, nor does it look at factors that might be affecting different experiences of working within and between complex social organisations. On the other hand activity theory does not generally account for the individual as agent or perceiver/processor of information acting within the activity system, often ignoring the influence that the individual can bring to bear on what is ostensibly the common or collective endeavour of activity (Nardi 2005). Both Edwards (Edwards & Nicoll 2004, Edwards, A. 2006) and Billett (Billett 2002, Billett & Somerville 2004) identify this deficit in activity theory and seek to rectify this through a re-emphasis on the role of the individual in the workplace.

It seems to me to be an important aspect of reality that there is a relationship between the world 'out there' and the way that individuals experience it. This is perhaps best described as 'critical realism' (Bhaskar 1986, 1989, Robson 2002). Through using activity theory to extend the analysis of variation into the context a more detailed interpretation of the data from a phenomenographic analysis of variation is possible (Åberg-Bengtsson 1998, Gordon & Nicholas 2002, Berglund 2004). For these reasons I have used phenomenography to understand the different ways that the relationship between practice and teaching can be experienced in art and design, and activity theory as a heuristic device to examine how categories of experience might be shaped through relations to the context, that is, individual histories of development and the social interactions individuals experience in and between the worlds of practice and teaching. The use of phenomenography and activity theory has been argued by others to be an appropriate mix of theoretical and methodological lenses through which to view the data (e.g. Coupland & Crawford 2002, Berglund 2004).

## Compatibility of both approaches

I do not see the ontological position of these two methodologies as incompatible, they both take a non-dualist approach, that the individual and the world are related and not separate realities (Cole et al. 1997, Marton & Booth 1997, Engeström et al. 1999). They both work from a largely empirical position in researching human endeavour. The epistemological position is slightly different though. Traditionally activity theory uses observation of activity, which may be recorded through video, as the data collection method. It looks at individuals' collective interactions and interprets these from the perspective of theory, whereas in phenomenography the second order generation of data, the reporting of experiences, is used. This aspect of a phenomenographic approach has been argued by Säljö to be flawed, as most phenomenographers conflate the account of experience with the actual experience, failing to recognise that language is a discursive practice that is socially acquired (Säljö 1997). Säljö argues that the analysis of language is what is being examined in phenomenography and not the experience of a group of individuals. Whilst sympathising with this view and recognising that language is a product of social interaction, the instances Säljö cites in his argument illustrate a very particular and narrow experience, with terminology often defined by the theories and disciplines being investigated. I believe that Säljö, in this instance, fails to acknowledge the underlying sense conveyed by language, and in researching the relationship between practice and teaching I have not looked at an aspect of experience that is solely dependent on understanding and use of particular terminology. Those aspects of the experience that are uppermost, or at the forefront of awareness (Marton & Booth 1997), are surfaced in the interview process. This is in response to the interview questions and therefore I have to recognise that the accounts are co-constructed (Knight & Saunders 1999), not direct experiences, but reflections of experiences in response to my questions. This reporting of action would be an approach not

necessarily supported by other researchers who question the link between thought and action (Argyris & Schön 1974, Orrell 2006). Disjunctions between thought and action are not significant methodologically as the reporting of experience from the individual's point of view will indicate how they experience the work situation, and what is most important to them in the work environment, not necessarily what actually takes place in work.

### **Reliability, validity and generalisability of the research**

These three aspects of research design present a problematic triad for qualitative research, originating as they do from a positivist paradigm. Some researchers have used an alternative vocabulary, but with Robson (2002: 170) I prefer to look for alternative ways in which qualitative research meets the requirements of rigour. Ultimately it is a question of reader interpretation and the clarity with which I set out my research process and the reader must ultimately judge the degree of validity, reliability and the claims I make. However, I believe the methods I have used are rigorous and this is discussed below.

Reliability, as a concept can be problematic but useful in qualitative research (Mason 2002: 39). Traditionally it rests on the notion of methods and techniques 'measuring' or producing accurate and reproducible data, the tools of research being neutral, non-biased and standardised (Mason 2002: 187), rather than a concept of data being provisional, situated and the product of the process of research as most qualitative researchers would believe. Mason argues that qualitative research should also be

thorough, careful, honest and accurate (as distinct from true or correct – terms which many qualitative researchers would wish to reject). (p188)

This sense of honesty and accuracy is provided through a careful account of the research process. Accuracy in this study was attempted by tape recording the interviews, transcribing them in full, and constantly returning back to the tapes to check the transcription in order to attempt a faithful record of the interview. This process in itself can be challenged as spoken and written forms of language are different, speech seldom occurs in the structurally neat form presented in a written dialogue. Silverman argues for the use of conversation analytical conventions in transcription as a means of increasing the reliability of transcripts (Silverman, 2001: 231). This method however is time consuming and inappropriate in the amount of detail required for phenomenography, which relies on the sense or meaning of experience conveyed by speech (Trigwell 2000). Within the transcription process I have punctuated to emphasise the sense of the meaning as spoken and I have included the hesitations, emphases and stumbling as they occurred, as I believe this reflects the difficulties and thoughts behind the explication of experience but also points to issues that are important to the individual. Also through my own insider knowledge of the art and design context I am able to understand terminology and references made by the tutors to their specialist areas, a problem when using audio typists. The transcripts were also supported by brief notes made during and after the interviews in a research journal.

Consistency over time, another way of establishing reliability (Silverman 2001: 225) quoting Kirk and Miller (1986), is not appropriate in relation to the methodology used, as phenomenographic approaches do not claim to provide pictures of stability, but are situated in specific situations and on another occasion, with another researcher it is quite feasible that the research would reflect a different set of experiences and result in a different outcome space as a result (Ashwin 2005). The interview is central to the phenomenographic methodology as it rests on the premise that accounts of experience are filtered through an individual's consciousness and will reflect aspects

of the experience that are important for that individual at that time in those circumstances (Marton & Booth 1997). In many studies using this methodological approach reliability could be argued through a collective interpretation, verification and construction of the outcome space (see Åkerlind et al. 2005). This inter-judge reliability has been argued by Sandberg (1997) to be unreliable and epistemologically inconsistent. I believe the methodology itself, requiring a constant return to the text until a stable analytical structure is reached, is reliable in terms of qualitative research. The requirement to produce a diagrammatic explanatory structure, the outcome space, shapes the actions of the researcher to constantly question the interpretation.

Validity is a claim that your research is “‘measuring”, or explaining, what you claim to be measuring or explaining’ (Mason, 2001:188). The research design was based on understanding the practitioner tutor’s experience of practice, teaching and the relationship between them, and data was generated through interviews as the primary means to develop an insight into how this was experienced from the practitioner tutor’s point of view, with a particular focus in mind (Mason 2002: 62). The notion of the structure of awareness and intentionality in personal accounts is central to phenomenography (Marton & Booth 1997) and to the research questions. Those aspects of experience that are to the fore are recounted in the interview process. The semi-structured interview questions also ensured that the discussion focused on key aspects of the phenomenon being investigated but allowed for individual responses and unlooked for aspects of experience to emerge (Robson 2002: 278).

The interview process itself provided a means of checking that my understanding and interpretation of the tutor’s statements were in line with their thinking. I used the interview to check that my understanding was an appropriate one, through rephrasing

questions in different ways, to provide opportunities for more than one response to a question, or asking if my alternative description of their account was accurate in terms of the tutor's intended meaning. Kvale refers to this as 'validation in situ' (1996: 237). Communicative validity (Kvale 1996: 244-248) is also demonstrated through the argument and the claims set out in the thesis.

Using activity theory to view individual's experience of the context and not relying on one methodological viewpoint to understand the experiences of practitioner tutors added to the interpretation and flexibility (Robson 2002) of the research. This was perhaps a more appropriate form of validity than the notion of triangulation, which rests on the assumption that there is one truth and different methods of data generation will provide a way to pinpoint the truth (Mason, 2002:190). Denzin (1988) refers to the use of multiple methods as theory triangulation, but I prefer to see this as an alternative way of extending the explanation and interpretation of the data. Thus using phenomenography to illuminate the possible ways to experience practice/teaching relations is a reliable and valid approach to adopt, and extending the interpretation into the context through the heuristic of activity theory enables the context to be brought into focus, both being appropriate ways to explore my research questions.

The extent to which the research in this study is generalisable is limited due to the small scale and discipline focus. There are similarities between art and design and other practice based disciplines such as nursing, where the practitioner tutor is employed (Fairbrother & Ford 1998, Murphy 2000, Williamson 2004, Gillespie & McFetridge 2006). However, the claims I make are that there are most probably more complex ways of experiencing practice/teaching relations than have been reported in the literature to date (e.g. Elcock 1998, Fairbrother & Mathers 2004). The study also provides an illumination of the potential ways that practitioner tutors in art and design

experience their teaching in an education organisation and this should resonate within the subject sector as a whole, where there is a high dependency on part time and visiting tutors who work directly with students.

## **Undertaking the research**

In this study I used interviews to generate data, which were then analysed by using a phenomenographic approach and by using activity theory. Activity theory was perceived of as a heuristic to examine aspects of the structure and the engagement of the tutors in both practice and teaching, thus extending the phenomenographic analysis by taking case studies that were more congruent to one phenomenographic category of experience than to many. These were viewed from an activity theory perspective, a combination that enabled the context to be brought into focus as well as variation within the phenomenon (Berglund 2004). The limitations in using personal accounts to reconstruct the activity were that experience was always seen from an individual's point of view and the workings of the system were not available as primary data for the researcher. The advantages of using accounts was that they showed the activity system as the individual in the study perceived it and acted within it, and accounts can produce personal responses to experience that would not be visible through observation (Mason 2002: 63). In this study it was the experiences of the practitioner tutors that were the object of the study; I was interested in the way that people lived the experience and how they talked about that lived experience.

## **Using a Phenomenographic Approach**

Following a phenomenographic methodology required exploring a range of individuals and using the whole range of experiences as the base for subsequent analysis. It is not the individual that provides the key to the analysis, but the whole collection of transcripts or accounts of the experience which make up the 'pool of meaning' (Marton & Booth 1997: 133) which was then analysed.

Interviewees were invited to participate in the research by a request made through a Post Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Art and Design course. The participants were either about to undertake the course or were currently on the course when interviewed. They were drawn from two cohorts of students and include one person who did not subsequently enrol. I did not know the majority of those interviewed and two people from my own institution who were interviewed had no personal or professional relationship to me. One exception to this was a tutor whom I knew about who was very new to teaching in HE and I made a request through a third party inviting him to participate.

## **Ethics**

The need to approach research with a general position of beneficence, meaning that no harm is intended to the participants or will occur as a result of the research, underpins research ethics codes of practice. In much educational research there is an underlying premise that research provides information that might enable improvements to be made (Robson 2002: 7), and this also underpins this project. All tutors were given a description of the research, had an opportunity to ask about the research before the interview and signed a consent form before the interview commenced; they understood that they could withdraw at any point. The forms were based on those provided through the research office at my university. I was advised that ethical clearance would not be required, though revisions subsequently made to the Research Ethics Code of Practice would now require my proposal to be submitted to the ethics sub-committee. The BERA code of practice for research has also been used to guide this study (BERA 2004).

Confidentiality was attempted through anonymising the transcripts and referring to numbers rather than named colleges in the transcription. There are however,

difficulties with ensuring anonymity as some of the subject areas are highly specialised and it is theoretically possible to guess who might have taken part in the study. In these cases I approached the individuals subsequently to ensure that they were comfortable with the use of their quotations in the study and did not wish me to disguise their participation in any further way. It is unlikely that colleagues of these participants would access any of my research and one respondent indicated that although I was concerned about identification through specialisation, there were actually five practitioner tutors who were engaged in teaching the same subject in one institution making identification more unlikely.

### **Participant profile**

I interviewed sixteen people in total who were chosen to maximise the variation possible (Trigwell 2000) in terms of their experience of practice/ teaching relations. Participants described themselves as practitioners who also teach. They are self-selected in this respect, but within this I have sought to maximise the difference or variation possible, by ensuring a breadth of experience has been covered. They are drawn from different colleges, different levels of teaching, FE and HE, and their experience of both teaching and practice differs in the length and amount of time spent in both. The variation within the range of people interviewed is summarised in Table 1 (page 63) below:

This range of experiences is not a statistical sampling of the population of practitioner teachers in art and design, but is differentiated enough to ensure that variation will be present (e.g. Prosser et al. 2005). The number of specific subjects and variation between them in what is loosely termed art and design is in fact enormous and ranges from highly technical, computer based design through to media related subjects including film, theatre and performance and to those practices which are more individually dependent fine art based practices. Even within fine art there is an overlap with video, film and performance. The selection of practitioners to interview

Transcript No.	Age	Gender	PT or pro-rata	Approx. number of hours per week teaching	Approx. length of time teaching	approx. length of time in practice	Current place of teaching	Subject specialism
1	35	M	0.6	15	3 yrs	15	A	Footwear
2	31	M	PT	12	3 yrs	5	B	3D graphics
3	42	F	0.5	15	5 yrs	10	C	Artist/curator
4	48	F	PT	11	8 yrs	6	B	Fine art (print)
5	36	M	0.75	20	16 yrs	14	D	Fine art (photography)
6	32	F	PT	10	5 yrs	8	B&E	Graphic design
7	35	M	PT	2.5	10 weeks	17	A	Make-up
8	44	M	PT		12 yrs	20	F	Comics scholar
9	29	M	0.5	12	3 yrs	5	G	Fine art (sculpture)
10	30	M	PT	5	3 yrs	8	A	Photography
11	37	F	PT	3	8 yrs	5	H	Fine art print and digital print
12	35	F	PT	10	6 yrs	10	F&H	Fine art Performance
13	43	F	PT	12	7 yrs	20	J	Video and web design
14	54	M	PT	15	3 yrs	30	K	Broadcast media
15	27	F	PT	8	3 yrs	4	B	Fine art (print)
16	35	F	PT	15	6 yrs	10	K	Fashion textiles

Table 1. Summary of participant characteristics

was not a representation of all the different nuances of art and design practice, but included a wide spread of different subjects. This ranged from a writer who was a 'comics scholar', through broadcast to fine art, video, web design, fashion and textiles. The practices the individuals engaged in were similarly varied in that most of them worked freelance and this included work for major companies, small to medium

size enterprises, as collaborators on projects or for their own company. Many worked for more than one kind of employer and there was a distinct reluctance in several of them to be categorised by the kind of work they did.

This range of different subject and practice areas was considered to be an important aspect of variation as there is some debate about the influence of the disciplines on the way teaching and learning is undertaken (e.g. Becher 1989, Becher & Trowler 2001, Neumann et al. 2002). Thus the range of people interviewed was determined through self-selection as a practitioner tutor and to maximise the variation in the experience of being a practitioner tutor in art, design and related subjects.

## **Interviews**

The interview questions were designed to elicit how the practitioner tutor experienced practice and teaching, and the relations between them. They were semi-structured to allow space within the interview for practitioners to tell their own story in response to my questions and for me to follow up interesting replies, (Robson 2002), but also to ensure practice/ teaching relations were addressed (see Appendix 1).

Tutors were asked about their teaching, to describe a specific situation they had encountered recently, as situating replies within a particular context is important phenomenographically (Ashwin 2005, Lindblom-Ylänne et al. 2006). They were asked to describe what they did with their students and why they did it in that particular way, as intentions are important (Marton & Booth 1997). I also asked what would constitute success for them in their teaching, again to address intentionality and purpose in teaching their students. They were also asked about their practice, to describe a particular event or day in their practice, what they did and why they did it and to describe the way in which they thought their practice and their teaching related to each other. In addition to questions that were designed to generate data for a

phenomenographic analysis of the relations between practice and teaching I also included questions designed to identify people or the community in the activity system and aspects of teaching and practice they felt were difficult or might like to change. The latter I felt would indicate areas of tension for the practitioner tutor both within the activity systems (Engeström 2001) and between activity systems.

The identification of the interviewees was 'purposive sampling' (Silverman 2001: 250) selected because they were undergoing a specific experience, but the interview process was intended to be illustrative or evocative (Mason 2002:126) providing insight rather than empirical truth about an individual's experience within the context of teaching and its associated practice. The interview questions were semi structured to ensure that all interviewees were asked the same range of questions, but the prompts or 'probes' (Robson 2002: 276) used to draw out the reasons for doing particular things in particular ways and the importance of clarifying the meaning in the responses meant that there was space in the interview for different and sometimes unexpected avenues of discussion to take place.

The interviews, as the primary generation of the data for this study were seen as a vital part of the research design. The role of the researcher in the generation of data is integral here, I see my role as one of co-construction in the data (Knight & Saunders 1999). The questions require the practitioner tutor to focus on their experiences, perhaps in ways that they would not do normally. Some of the interviewees experienced the questions as difficult or challenging as I was probing for reasons why they expressed certain views, essential phenomenographically (Trigwell 2000), or they were articulating feelings and opinions that were not normally expressed in their working practices. Reasons why people do things are not necessarily easy to articulate, working practices are notoriously difficult to turn into

words, usually remaining tacit (Polanyi 1967, Eraut 2000). The interviews were therefore critical in generating personal responses about practice teaching relations.

The phenomenographic interview method requires probing to explore the 'why' aspects of experience (Trigwell 2000), and is not simply a descriptive account. There were also examples in the interviews where I probed to ensure that my understanding was aligned to the tutor's explanation and understanding of the experience as well. This was to verify the data as it was being generated, 'validation in situ' (Kvale 1996: 237) and was important to the future analysis and the integrity of the research.

Having recorded the interview in a place that was mutually acceptable to both researcher and practitioner in an attempt to reduce power relations and to ensure an ethical approach to the interview process (Mason 2002: 79-82) I transcribed the interviews myself. I saw this as an important way to begin to get to know the data and to insert some of the nuances of the conversations into the transcripts, as pauses and emphases indicate potentially significant parts of speech (Silverman 2001).

## **Phenomenographic analysis**

The sixteen interview transcripts as a whole formed the data for analysis. There is some debate about whether the whole transcripts should be used or whether significant phrases should be isolated and contribute to a 'pool of meanings' (Bowden & Walsh 2000). I believe that the transcripts should remain whole, as the interpretation of key phrases is important in the analytical stage. Meanings are not fixed and clear, they rely on the textual context for interpretation and for purposes of analysis one needs to return to the transcripts again and again checking the meaning and interpretation against the emerging structure of the phenomenon (Åkerlind 2005). I therefore maintained the transcripts and their key phrases so that could be dipped into repeatedly for verification and clarification (Marton & Booth 1997: 133). This

constant iterative process engaging all the transcripts looked for the key qualitative variations within the accounts that related to the way in which the tutors experienced the relationship between their practice and teaching their practice.

After an initial reading of all transcripts I constructed what appeared to me to be six different themes or differences in the way that this was experienced. These initial categories took their key titles from words or phrases used in the transcript. What is critical in phenomenography is that the categories should be construed from the data, although constructed by the researcher (see Walsh 2000a). The researcher does not set out with a tentative framework or a theoretically derived set of categories. This construction of categories is performed with what is described as a need to 'bracket out' one's experience when starting the analysis. The true extent to which this can be done is debatable (Ashworth & Lucas 2000) as this methodology, like other qualitative approaches, is subject to the interpretation of the researcher and this interpretation must be influenced by previous experiences. The way in which most phenomenographers avoid the potential bias in interpretation is to work as a team at the analytical stage, discussing the construction of categories, challenging, debating and going back to the data to check that the analysis can be supported by the evidence in the data (e.g. Walsh 2000b, Bowden & Green 2005).

As I worked independently on this research I did not have the benefit of team discussion and therefore I had to be very critical and rigorous in returning to the data each time I thought I had determined a category or structure (Åkerlind et al. 2005). This is similar to the idea of distance, removing oneself from the intimacy of the transcripts and testing the ideas by questioning the construction, returning to the data for another reading, looking for any instances that would counter the current construction, as in negative case studies (Robson 2002: 490), and trying to look at the data as if you were reading it for the first time. Each re-reading can produce a

new interpretation or a new understanding of some of the data. The idea of a reflexive research practice (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2000) was one that I tried to adopt, not being satisfied with my emerging categories until I felt that I had adopted a critical distance and challenged my constructions. This process was repeated until I had achieved a logical framework that I could no longer disturb by returning to the data to look for evidence that would negate it. A final discussion with a critical friend enabled clarification and naming of the last structural formulation in the iterative process, so although no team was involved another person helped in the verification of the final structure (Bowden & Green 2005).

This iterative approach was a long process of challenging myself and at the same time feeling as if the underlying skeleton of the overall experience was emerging as a supporting structure integrated with the meaning of the research (Marton & Booth 1997: 133). From the first tentative construction of six categories I returned to the data and these became reduced to four, three of the original ones being incorporated into one category labelled balancing. The other three categories remained fairly stable throughout the analysis, although the detail and their relationships to other categories continued to be crystallised out and firmed up. The process was similar to a constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss 1967, Silverman 2001: 238), or in phenomenographic terms moving between figure and ground repeatedly in the interpretation of the data (Marton & Booth 1997). I later split the categories into five, identifying that there were differences within the balancing category that I had not fully accounted for. I worked with post it notes attached to transcripts to identify where there were contradictions to the first set of categories and then compared what was different and what was similar in and between the categories. Through quick sketching of ideas (Tesch 1990, Miles & Huberman 1994) and tables of relationships between emerging categories I diagrammatically explored the emerging differences and relationships between the ways of experiencing teaching and practice. This also

pointed to difficulties in reconciling the structure and showed where I still had work to do in sorting out the underlying components. Writing up the description between the categories also helped to clarify the differences between them, again pointing up issues that were not distinctly different and therefore had to be clarified or redefined by referring back to specific examples in the data. There were several further iterations of the categories until I felt sure that there were distinct differences between them.

During the process of sorting and checking, of making provisional structures of variation, an idea emerged in my research journal where I said: 'these sound like strategies'. I looked back into the transcripts and identified a number of ways that tutors described teaching their practice, what they actually did with their students. When I analysed these it seemed that they were associated with particular ways of experiencing being a practitioner tutor. Unpicking these strategies also helped to clarify and confirm the construction of the outcome space and made a more robust picture of the experience. By undergoing this process I had reached an awareness and understanding of the data that I would not otherwise have achieved.

### **Using activity theory**

In deciding to use activity theory to extend a phenomenographic approach I was seeking to examine some of the contextual aspects associated with variation in tutors' experience of practice/ teaching relations; the context as understood in its widest sense in phenomenography (Marton & Booth 1997: 82). Practitioner tutors were making transitions between two 'worlds' or two activity systems, the purpose or object of the activity being different in each one. Generally speaking, in practice the object of the activity is to produce an artefact but in education the object is student learning. Through using activity theory categories or 'nodes' (Åberg-Bengtsson 1998) as a heuristic device, it allowed me to question the data in a particular way.

Theorized accounts provide a much more selective representation of the phenomena with which they deal. On the other hand, assuming that the theoretical ideas are well founded, they begin to give us much more knowledge about why events occur in the patterned ways they do.  
(Hammersley & Atkinson 1995: 208)

Using case studies (Yin 1989) that were most congruent to each of the categories of experience construed in the phenomenographic analysis I looked for evidence of the categories of activity derived from Engeström (1990). These include the subject, object, mediating artefact, rules, community and division of labour in each of the two contexts, practice and teaching. This way of viewing the data allowed the individual aspect of the context (Marton & Booth 1997) and the socio-political aspects of the contexts to be explored. I first of all checked with five interview transcripts to see that there were no data that could *not* be accounted for by the activity theory categories. To assist in the analysis I used an Excel spreadsheet where the columns were labelled with two sets of categories, one for practice and one for teaching, and colour coded to assist in identification and comparison.

These formed the categorical index (Mason 2002: 153) for organising the evidence and comparing the activity systems of practice and teaching in the case studies. Short hand versions of the examples were included in cells in the matrix. The detailed analysis enabled me to check the validity of using the categories or 'nodes' derived from activity theory and to ensure that there were no major gaps in the analysis. The spreadsheet enabled me to physically move the categories of evidence to adjacent columns to compare the similarities and differences between the subjects operating in two systems. The emphasis on the subject, their feelings and their position in practice and teaching activity systems confirmed that I needed to address the issue

of identity in my analysis and discussion as it appeared to be a vital aspect of individual participation.

I selected representative case studies that were most congruent with one particular phenomenographic category, rather than many, and identified where tensions were evidenced in practice, teaching or between the two systems. As these were always viewed from the practitioner's perspective this extended the phenomenographic analysis into the context as it was experienced by individuals in the case studies. This was not an objective view, or outsider view, that much developmental activity theory work might adopt (e.g. Engeström & Rückriem 2005), but within the framework of the research questions in this study it was a legitimate examination of how the individual experiences two worlds or two activity systems (also see Nardi 2005 for a focus on individuals) and highlighted tensions within and between the systems of practice and teaching for the tutor making transitions between two different 'worlds'.

## **Conclusion**

In order to understand the relationship between practice and teaching, the 'and' embodied by the practitioner tutor, the methods and approaches employed in this study are designed to elicit the experience of practice and teaching and the relations between them, as experience by practitioner tutors. The methods and approaches are therefore appropriate in terms of the research questions I am asking.

Phenomenography enables the variation in experience of practice/ teaching relations in art and design to be examined in depth. The structuring of an outcome space helps to demonstrate the relationship between different categories of variation in experience and understand how variation in experience is constituted, indicating the 'how' and the 'what' (Trigwell 2000) of the variation in experience. Through this approach it is also possible to see how the variation in experience of practice/ teaching relations impacts on student learning in different and specific ways.

The importance of context in phenomenography is acknowledged but is not part of a phenomenographic methodology (Marton & Booth 1997, Prosser & Trigwell 1997). Through employing the activity system as a heuristic to examine case studies which are more congruent to one category of experience than to many it is possible to explore aspects of the context that are related to particular ways of experiencing practice/ teaching relations. The context in this study refers to the broader phenomenographic context, that is, the individual's previous experiences and the social and temporal contexts in which they are working (Marton & Booth 1997: 82). This extended analysis enables a broader and richer picture of the object of study to be examined.

In the following two chapters I will set out the analysis of the data from a phenomenographic approach followed by a series of case studies representing the phenomenographic categories of experiencing practice/ teaching relations.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Analysing the experience of practitioner tutors in art and design 1: a phenomenographic analysis.**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter I explore the data in the interviews with practitioner tutors and use a phenomenographic approach to examine the qualitatively different ways to experience practice/ teaching relations. This is expressed through an inclusive set of categories, which constitutes my understanding of the structure of variation within the overall set of data. I also identify teaching strategies associated with different categories of variation that suggest ways in which knowledge of practice is used in teaching. In the following chapter I will take case studies which best exemplify the phenomenographic categories and use activity theory as a heuristic to examine the interrelationship between the person and the contexts in which they operate, with particular emphasis on the educational environment. This provides a way to examine both the variation in experiencing practice/ teaching relations and the kinds of contextual and individual factors that potentially influence ways of experiencing such relations.

#### **Categories of variation in practitioner tutors' experience of the relationship between practice and teaching in art and design.**

Using the whole set of interview transcripts as data I have constructed five categories that illustrate qualitatively different ways to experience the relationship between practice and teaching your practice within an educational institution. These categories are internally related in their structure through an inclusive 'hierarchy' that will be discussed below. The categories in their basic descriptive formats are:

## **Category 1**

***Dropping in.*** There is an asymmetrical relationship between practice and teaching with the focus on practice. Knowledge from practice is seen as being passed on to the student.

## **Category 2**

***Moving across.*** There is an asymmetrical relationship between practice and teaching with the focus on teaching. Knowledge from practice is used in teaching students.

## **Category 3**

***Two Camps.*** There is a symmetrical relationship between practice and teaching, but they are seen as two different and separate things and tension exists between them. Knowledge from practice is used in teaching students.

## **Category 4**

***Balancing.*** There is a symmetrical relationship between practice and teaching with a fluid exchange of knowledge between both.

## **Category 5**

***Integrating.*** There is a holistic relationship between practice and teaching. There is an elision between practice and teaching knowledge and they become one and the same thing.

These five different categories have structural and referential components (Marton & Booth 1997), which are related, but distinctly different. Using the 'spirit of the quotes' (Trigwell 2000: 78) to determine the different ways it is possible to experience the relationship between practice and teaching I have constructed the categories to

highlight the distinct differences between ways of experiencing practice/ teaching relations and these are illustrated below and supported by examples from the transcripts. The structural variation between the categories reflects the different ways that teaching and practice seem to stand in relation to each other, either symmetrically or asymmetrically or as a holistic experience. The referential dimension of the categories is the way that knowledge from practice is used in teaching. Together these form the outcome space illustrated in table 2.

Structural component of practice teaching relations	Referential component			
	Transferring knowledge from practice	Using knowledge from practice	Exchanging knowledge between practice and teaching	Eliding knowledge between practice and teaching
Asymmetrical	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>		
Symmetrical		<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	
Holistic				<b>5</b>

Table 2. Outcome space for variation in practitioner tutors' experience of practice/ teaching relations.

In transcription a 'T' is used to denote the tutor speaking and 'I' the interviewer.

Distinct *emphasis* in speech is shown through italicised lettering and pauses are recorded thus: ... in an attempt to convey the essence of the spoken word.

### **Category 1: *Dropping In***

There is an asymmetrical relationship between practice and teaching with the emphasis on practice. In this category being a practitioner is in the foreground of the

experience. It is practice that is the central focus and the intention is to pass on the knowledge of practice to the student. This passing on of knowledge is an emphasis on skills, on the technical process of the practice, being able to do and make rather than knowing how it is to experience or to be a practitioner.

I sort of felt more like a teacher, even though...it was not my intention to become a teacher I would rather er...I would rather they saw me as a professional working in the industry passing on some of his knowledge, rather than a teacher you know. It's a different, it's a different thing. I don't know whether its...er...beneficial to them or not, but that's how, how I felt. I wouldn't want to be, I wouldn't want to be known as a teacher, I'd rather be seen as a professional working in the industry, you know, come in part time on a...because you know that's what's interested me, you know, that's always what I wanted to be. (...) I do enjoy helping them out and er, passing on the knowledge. If I see they've actually learned something it's a good thing you know, to see that they've actually taken it in. (Tr7: 6)

The overall sense of teaching practice relations is well described by the emphasis on being a practitioner. Passing on knowledge and skills from practice is a function of *being* a practitioner. It appears to be taken for granted that because the tutor is a practitioner they will pass on those skills through demonstrating their practice and that is the core aspect of this category of variation.

I thought, I don't need to sort of sell myself, I'm just here to teach them and they've just got to take note of what I tell them really. I'm not...I didn't think I had to sort of...show them that I know what I'm talking about, I just thought they should take it as read that I know what I'm talking about, which is why I'm here! (Tr7: 15)

I'm purely like this guy who knows stuff about 3D and has experience in the industry and I come in and teach my experience, that's how I see it. (Tr2: 15)

So now um, now I'm in a position where I can hand that knowledge on to other people, because I can, I have a history of it now. (Tr13: 8)

I just enjoy working with lots of different young people, with students, teaching them how to do it, passing on the knowledge. (Tr1: 9)

This category of experience emphasises the world of practice and production and teaching is just an act of dropping in to pass on your technical skills, a sense that there are two different worlds, practice and teaching, linked only through the practitioner telling students how to do things. This is an unequal relationship where practice is most important and in the foreground of the experience. In the next category the worlds of teaching and practice also have an asymmetrical relationship, but here it is teaching that is fore grounded.

### **Category 2: *Moving across.***

In this category of experiencing the relationship between teaching and practice the focus is on teaching, with knowledge from practice being used in teaching. Teaching is at the forefront of the experience, but the practice is there too as part of the teaching experience; this is brought into the teaching environment through the use of the practitioner tutor's knowledge of the practice and how it feels to be a practitioner. The two worlds are acknowledged as different, but the emphasis is on being a teacher, being competent and knowledgeable about teaching and the world of academia.

T: I mean I er...my teaching workload's quite high, so I've actually had to turn work down. But, as I say it's ...being a teacher and working in HE is something that I want to develop anyway. It's important to me. It's, it's ...very satisfying actually to have the opportunity to change my career, but still...in something that I, in an area that I work in. So I'm taking my trade and bringing it into a new career and that's very unusual for people to have that opportunity I think.

I: So you see it as a different career?

T: Yes, yes.

I: Why is that?

T: Well, because I've now become a teacher... or a lecturer, whereas before I was a designer shoemaker. But I'm able to do both. (Tr1: 12)

This sense of having two sets of abilities is also present in the following excerpt. The practice is still present in the experience, but teaching is to the fore.

I: You, when said that you were moving, moving *out* of your practice?

T: No, I don't think that, in a sense, my practice, I maintain my practice in my teaching. Because you know, it's what I *am*, it's not what I *do*, it's what I *am*.

I: What you *are*.

T: It's what I *am*. So I can continue to do that. Because, just because I haven't written a novel for eight years doesn't mean that I'm not a novelist, just because I haven't made a, directed a film for five years, doesn't mean to say I'm not a film director. You know, just because, just because I am, because I haven't edited a film for 25 years doesn't mean to say I'm not a film editor. I actually teach advanced film editing. I haven't *cut* a piece of film in 25 years doesn't make a blind bit of difference. I know more than anyone, oh god, this is going to sound awful! But I really, (laughs) you know, I really, I was an editor for 25 years, I *really* know my business as an editor...and I haven't forgotten it! (Tr14: 14)

Unlike the first category where the emphasis is on practice and being a practitioner, here practice is present in teaching, 'bringing it (practice) into a new career', where teaching is the focus rather than practice being the focus as in category 1. Although the structural component of the variation is the same as category 1 there is an asymmetrical relationship, the referential component is different. Rather than an emphasis on reproducing skills, practice knowledge is used to explain processes to students:

Yeah, I sometimes show them, not necessarily the actual shoe, but maybe pictures and explain the process of how I've come to that product, and how I've negotiated with customers and that sort of thing. (Tr1: 12)

Experiential knowledge is used more fully to help students understand practice, not simply to pass on skills and this is also present in the next category, although the structural component is different.

### **Category 3: *Two Camps.***

There is a symmetrical relationship between practice and teaching; they are seen as two separate activities where knowledge from practice is used in teaching. This knowledge is also perceived as a somewhat reluctant one-way flow, from practice to teaching. There is a sense of conflict between the two worlds. Both of them are part of the tutor practitioners' experience, but they do not come together comfortably, they are separate and not reconciled, forever in tension, pulling at the practitioner tutor to be in one world whilst they are in the other.

I feel quite engaged in it...in the environment, and with my particular set of students, with the students I work with and with the course...um...but in the broader context, like for example I don't take the Times Educational Supplement, I don't read all that kind of stuff, partly because I don't want to, because if I do that, I'm going to be completely overwhelmed by teaching and it just means any vestige of my own, you know, my own outside art life, or inside art life, just goes. So you know, I struggle with a kind of internal conflict all the time between the two things. Umm.....so I don't, you know it's quite interesting, which camp do you put yourself in, are you in the camp of education/teacher or are you in the camp of more independent artist? I feel I'm in no man's land and I'd like to be in the artist one, but...I think probably my strength is in the teaching one, so therefore I kind of straddle the two probably quite badly, well I feel quite badly, so ... (Tr4: 9)

In this extract there is a strong sense of the conflict and tension. The tutor positions themselves in one world or the other, in practice or in teaching but never managing to balance both worlds. There is no sense of movement between practice and teaching, the two worlds are, un-reconciled, 'strange bed fellows'. There is no sense of the

practitioner just passing by, dropping in to pass on knowledge into teaching as there is in category 1. In this category the dual role of practitioner and tutor is present, both are part of the experience in equal measures and experience from practice is used in teaching rather than knowledge transmitted to students or 'passed on'.

Although this practice knowledge is being used there is tension between the two worlds in the sense that the teaching is feeding off the practice in a parasitic way, the knowledge that is used in teaching is sucked out and saps the time and energy that could be used in practice, leading to the tension inherent in the category. There is no flow between practice and teaching, just tension between them.

But maybe it's the development of ideas, but again that goes back to well, if I had the time...because you need the time and the space, you know. These things, you just can't guarantee, but you need to be feeding them, so that, they're not being fed at this point because the focus and energy is somewhere else. (Tr4: 4)

Um, yeah, they get in the way of each other in terms of; I've just got too many things to do. Um...*Like*, just like describing the thing about drawing that I did, I was quite motivated about it and on the second day I thought, do you know what, I really need to be in working with (my partner) on stuff, I really need to be *not* teaching today and I thought, oh, should I take a sicky and change the days around or, and I thought, no, I'm really committed to them and I'm going in and working with them and no one turned up and I thought I wanted to say to them, you know, I've come in here to really support you and I didn't want to be in here I wanted to be doing my own thing and those kinds of things I find really hard. (Tr16: 7)

It is the sense of being in one place, one world or the other, sometimes one, sometimes the other, but never both together and the tension that generates between practice and teaching that differentiates this category of two camps from the others. There is no balance between the activities of teaching and practicing and no exchanges other than the one way flow of knowledge from practice to teaching.

Although the relationship between practice and teaching is symmetrical, both worlds are acknowledged and present equally, the tension between them causes a sense of unease. The use of knowledge from practice is here accompanied by a sense of draining time and resources from practice, a palpable tension within practice teaching relations. This is in complete contrast to the next category where there is a similar structural relationship, symmetry, but a different referential component of variation, which results in an enjoyable experience of knowledge moving between practice and teaching in both directions.

#### **Category 4: *Balancing.***

This category of variation in the relationship between practice and teaching is a symmetrical one. The focus is on both practice *and* teaching with a fluid exchange of knowledge between both. Here the relationship between practice and teaching is one in which there are no walls or barriers between the different activities. Although they are different in many ways they are not in conflict; what happens in practice can influence teaching and vice versa; there is an exchange and movement between practice and teaching. These are seen as complementary activities that are balanced, with movement between the different worlds. The overall sense of this category of experience is of managing and moving between the different aspects of practice and teaching.

There is a strong emphasis on a two-way exchange between practice and teaching within this category. Unlike categories 1, 2 and 3 there is an exchange between the two worlds, a fluid interface.

Um, I think the more, the more practice I do, the better teaching is. Because I can get quite excited by the teaching, and I think because I'm, because I'm buzzing when I'm working, um, I think it just makes me, it probably makes me able to inspire them a bit more...em...and...you know, it makes me enjoy the lessons much more as well. (Tr13: 9)

There is still however, a sense that the two worlds are slightly different, they have similarities and differences and these are complementary.

Although I work *hard* for the teaching, and I do put a lot into planning, um, it, it, it's kind of normal almost, and then I have this kind of chaos of filmmaking. (Tr13: 11)

Um...well...um...I think, for me it's...kind of like...it's, it's a nice to and fro. (Tr13: 10)

To-ing and fro-ing characterises the balance between practice and teaching here. It suggests that there is a movement, a flow between both worlds, one can influence the other and they are not separated. Unlike category 1 where practice drops into teaching and passes knowledge on, and category 2 where knowledge from practice is used in teaching and academia is the primary focus, or category 3 where there is tension and separation with a reluctant use of knowledge from practice, here there is a two way flow and knowledge also moves from teaching into practice. This reciprocity is an enriching and enjoyable experience.

T: Umm...I...think I'm very interested in dialogue and communication, so...I am of course very interested in my, my own development and therefore sharing in the dialogue and taking from the studio whatever I see and find and... um...recognise in my own person. So that is a large part of that. But also the opposite way, maybe there is um...er, a sense of maybe wanting to give something back, or...sounds too altruistic, but it's er, a sense of providing this um, bounce back or encouragement or er, this er...er *position* where you can encourage someone to go onto a tangent which may not be recognised by anybody else. So that's part of that. (Tr9: 9)

There is an overwhelming sense that both practice and teaching are important and related in this category; although there are two (or more) worlds these are balanced and accommodated. The perception of practice and teaching relations is of two activities that are mutually beneficial. The movement between practice and teaching is seen as a two way process, never a sense that one is feeding off the other (as they are in category 3), but they feed each other. In the final category of variation this relationship between practice and teaching becomes even closer so that the worlds begin to align or slide together.

### **Category 5: *Integrating.***

The relationship between practice and teaching in this category is a holistic one, not two worlds of practice and teaching, but the life worlds of practice and teaching become one with an elision of knowledge between practice and teaching. Elision in this sense is not one of omission, but of an easing together, as in a poetic use of language. There is no sense of barriers between practice and teaching activities, they are not two different things to be experienced where you move between them or

maintain places in one or the other, they become conflated into closely aligned aspects of one life world. This is illustrated by the following extract.

...it's all about not putting boxes around things and wanting to ....umm...not wanting to define where something ends and something begins, because, you know, if I get too hung up on that...you know I've seen people in the past, I've worked with people who've been very precious about their practice, and where the boundaries are between work and practice. And...I've seen them tie themselves in knots, and... but, you know people who say that because of the pressure of academic work it's in their head and you know, I'm really determined to carry it on and I think that the very stresses that working and living and paying the rent and so on put your life under, you can't be too precious about what your practice is, you have to kind of take life as a continuum and just sort of see how it, you know... you know, even with teaching, I mean when you look at certain artists like Carey Young, Joseph Beuys and all this, they, they're using teaching and pedagogy as art practice (Tr5: 5).

In this category of variation in experience the relationships between practice and teaching are about commonalities. There is an elision between practice and the education environment; teaching and practice slide together.

Unlike all the other 4 categories the boundaries between practice and teaching begin to dissolve. They are not seen as two different worlds, either practice or teaching where one or the other is dominant (categories 1 and 2) or they are both separate (categories 3 and 4) with different relationships between them. In this category there is an emphasis on commonalities between practice and teaching; knowledge is shared between both and is constituted as the same knowledge. This is the most

comprehensive category of experiencing practice teaching relations and it involves integrating; the two things begin to slide together, the two worlds elide (Shreeve 2005) and knowledge moves towards a unified whole.

This is the final and most expansive category of the five distinct ways in which teaching/ practice relations can be experienced. They are related in that they are a nested set of categories; some elements of the categories can be present in the more expanded ways of experiencing but not vice versa. In this sense they conform to the phenomenographic 'hierarchy', but there is no value judgement inherent here, only a hierarchy of expansion.

### **Strategies associated with the referential component of the outcome space**

The referential component of the categories described above is the way in which experiential practice knowledge relates to teaching. There seem to be different strategies associated with the referential component for each category and this is illustrated in table 3 (on the following page) and described in more detail below. In the case of the moving across category there are two strategies that only appear to be associated with this and are not part of the nested hierarchy of the outcome space.

#### **Strategies associated with Category 1: *Dropping in.***

There is only one strategy associated with transferring knowledge from practice and this is passing on your knowledge.

#### **Strategy: Passing on your knowledge**

The experiential knowledge of practice is passed on or transferred to the students in this category of practice teaching relations. How this is achieved is frequently not elaborated, but the following extract describes in a little more detail what the strategy

to 'hand that knowledge on' looks like; it is showing and telling. Where there is reference to being interactive in the passage it means that the tutor is interacting on a

Category	Referential Component	Strategy	Additional Strategies for moving across category
1. Dropping in	Transferring Knowledge	Passing on your knowledge	
2. Moving across	Using knowledge from practice	Using examples from practice	Simulating practice
			Engaging in academia
3. Two camps	Exchanging knowledge	Bringing in your practice	
4. Balancing		Removing barriers	
	Toing and froing		
5. Integrating	Eliding knowledge	Paralleling	
		Dovetailing	
		Collaborating	

Table 3. Strategies and their relationship to the referential component of the experience of practice/ teaching relations

one to one basis with the students to see if they are actually doing what he has described.

I mean I felt like I was more lecturing, I felt as a professional coming in I felt like I'm doing what I do, here's how I do it. And if you don't pay attention, then it's up to you, but rather than being *more* interactive, when I'm giving the initial demo of how we do and what we do, at the beginning of the lesson, I wasn't

interacting so much with them I was just showing them and saying, 'Any questions?' And if they didn't come up with any questions or say anything, that's it, I would just carry on to the next stage. But then when they were...er, physically doing their sculpting and moulding, they're off busy, right, OK, off you go and do it sort of thing, then I would go round and interact with them individually so I could see how they were doing. (Tr7: 11/12)

There is an emphasis here on demonstrating, telling how to do the procedural parts of the practice. Later in the interview there is confirmation of this strategy '(I'm) quite happy to stand there like, you know, the generation game and here's how you do it, now you go and do it' (p12). It is important that students know how to do or make the products of the practice and the tutor's role is to pass that knowledge on.

### **Strategies solely associated with Category 2: *Moving across***

There are two strategies only associated with category 2 that are not associated with the inclusive hierarchy of subsequent categories (3-5). In this respect these ways of using practice knowledge in teaching suggest a branch of the referential component in as far as associated strategies relating practice to teaching are concerned (see table 3). Although these two additional strategies are definitely about using knowledge from practice, it is used in a distinctive way compared to other ways of using knowledge in teaching.

#### **Strategy: *Simulating practice***

This strategy, reproducing practice conditions, is used to construct conditions in education that are like those found in an industrial or practice situation, a 'real life,' rather than an educational environment. It is important that where students learn in education they are in physical conditions that reflect those found in the practice.

I think the students will benefit as well, because, because (rearranging the rooms) will, it will represent more of a...a typical industrial type situation rather than an educational. They'll be getting, they'll be getting, I mean obviously they'll be receiving the educational side of it but it will be more of a real, hands on approach. (Tr1: 3)

And in this example it is the feeling that is mirrored or reproduced, the atmosphere of working in the media.

...as tutors, as lecturers you have to, you really have to...create the, the environment where they will accept this learning, and part of that is to create a very dynamic atmosphere. It replicates very much what goes on in broadcasting; broadcasting is very fast, very dynamic, extremely energised. And so the course tends to replicate that so we do work very, very quickly. It's very energised they have *no* free time. (Tr14: 4)

It is not just the learning environment itself that can replicate practice, the structure and content of the course is also a way to achieve this. In this example an elective unit has been created, which simulates for students a very particular experience of practice.

...that is very much linked to what I do because I'm if you like, simulating the process, showing them how to measure a customer, you know, it's an exact reproduction of what I do in my practice really. (...) I've sort of, as I said, it's a simulation of what I do with my customers. (Tr1: 12)

The design and structure of the unit has been created in order to use experiential knowledge as a practitioner to replicate what it is like to be a practitioner for the students who undertake this unit.

The next strategy is also only associated with the moving across category and it is to undertake an academic approach to the practice.

### **Strategy: Engaging in academia.**

The practice is followed in order to engage in a more academic discourse about practice, rather than for practical or economic purposes.

I don't think um...I think that where I'm going...in terms of professional practice, I think I'm turning into something else...Um, I am applying to do an MA. At er, in political communication...er and so that's where I'm off to. So yes, I am keeping up with my professional practice but in a different way than I have hitherto. (Tr14: 10)

This strategy is about further engagement with the practice but within academia. This represents thinking about practice in different ways, in a space that is removed from the world of working; practice is still there but being developed conceptually into a new or different dimension. This requires using knowledge from practice, but in a different way to the other strategies described here.

You know I'm not just a teacher; I'm a learner as well. I'm learning every day and I want to move up that learning scale if you like. I've kind of got the bug if you like! You know, once I've done my PGCert I do want to look at what's the next stage. I mean I've, I'm considering possibly doing an MA in, maybe not necessarily in teaching, I might do it in, in footwear and develop that a bit

more so that I can then deliver er, you know, more quality er work or whatever, so I am looking at the future as well definitely. And that future, for me, is in teaching, not as a footwear, a footwear designer... maker. (Tr1: 13)

This emphasis on teaching is reflected in the idea of a different way of experiencing practice, not as a practitioner who drops in to teaching as in category 1, or as a practitioner who is also a teacher, as in categories 3, 4 and 5, but as an academic with a different view of practice, not just an experiential one, a more reflective and exploratory, academic one.

There is a distinct alliance with the world of academia here. Practice knowledge is used in teaching and to develop simulated experiences for students as well as cultivating a more reflective knowledge about the practitioner tutor's own practice. These two strategies for using practice knowledge stand outside the inclusive hierarchy of the outcome space.

### **Strategies associated with categories 2: *Moving across* and 3: *Two Camps***

In both these categories there is a common referential component, using knowledge from practice. These categories have two strategies associated with this component, 'using examples' and 'bringing in practice', two slightly different strategies that draw on the experiential knowledge of practice and its associated products.

#### **Strategy: Using examples from practice**

There are numerous instances in the transcripts of examples from practice being used. One tutor (transcript 2) asks his students to bring in examples of animation they have seen, which they discuss in the class, analysing how they have been constructed. These are things that other people have produced and they represent

finished things or the products of practice. This is also demonstrated in transcript14 where scripts and film and TV clips are brought into the class so that they can analyse how character is established through several different examples (pages 1-3). These are ways in which tutors enable students to learn the 'tricks of the trade'.

Another more enhanced but related strategy is to bring in examples of your *own* work as a practitioner. This enables the tutor to bring a more intimate understanding to the attention of their students and I have called this, *bringing in your practice*, to differentiate the use of insider knowledge and experience used to convey a more personal sense of what it is to *be* a practitioner. Tutors use their experiential knowledge to demonstrate to students how practitioners act and think.

### **Strategy: Bringing in your practice:**

I use my own prints to show, because I think it's always nice that people see, obviously, I can talk about how other people's work was most *probably* made but when you talk about your own work you can talk about it much more specifically as to you know, what you did and why you did things. (Tr11: 2)

The reason behind showing examples of things that you do in your practice is not just about showing a finished object, it is about helping students to understand the processes and thinking that goes into practice. Sometimes this is better explained by showing elements of work that are not normally seen in the finished product.

If I show them I'm a practitioner, and this is what *I* do, here's *my* proposal, here's *my* treatment, then I think they trust me more, they believe what I say. And actually, they are more inclined to have a go at it. (Tr13: 10)

Understanding aspects of practice in a broad sense is important here. It is the thinking behind the processes, the reasons why particular things have to be done and also what it feels like to work in the practice, that lie behind the use of artefacts in learning and teaching activities.

I do think it's important to teach them the wider context in which they're working. You know, to try and show them what it's like out there in the industry and what's expected of them out there when they leave. (Tr2: 5)

This understanding is brought about through the tutor's own experiences as well as using artefacts they have created through their practice. They are using the experiential knowledge they have, not simply passing on information as in the first strategy associated with category 1, dropping in.

Thus the practitioner in their teaching is using the experiential knowledge of practice in order to enable the experience to be understood by their students, or to be visualised or learned vicariously.

### **Strategies associated with Category 4: Balancing**

The referential component associated with this category is about exchanging knowledge between practice and teaching and there are two distinct strategies that achieve this.

#### **Strategy: Toing and froing**

Here tutors learn either while they are in the teaching environment, or specifically for teaching. There are exchanges between practice and teaching the practice that are mutually beneficial to both activities. Here a comics scholar explains how he learns in order to keep up with his students and also enables them to understand how to write:

I feel I have to stay up-to-date. Now that's part of it. Ummm...and I also like to feel that umm...I can answer questions that are fired at me. ...So there is that angle to it.....ermm, So in terms of other teaching like postgraduate, one-to-one tutorials and that kind of thing, I think I would have had to fought my way through certain... theories, theoretical issues, in order to engage with the students at that level. So it feeds back in all sorts of ways. The other way is writing. All my students have to do essays...and err...the fact that I can structure a piece of writing is quite an important thing because I can... give students tips on how to do that and...They get intimidated by the number of words, a thousand, oh my god it's two thousand words. Well, I say, think of it as three things, you know, you've said three things, so it's about this number of words. (Tr8: 10)

And a graphic designer appears to have an even more integrated experience of the mutual relationship between practice and teaching:

Well you can't directly switch off that part of your mind for that day. I don't think that's possible and so often you talk, mention ...you know, usually ...you can...if you're talking about a student project, then quite often you can kind of see a link in what you're doing and make a comparison, or you know, or fit your experience to that, and also, if you are on a project intensively you will be thinking about that in the back of your mind as well as teaching, because, you know, or you're doing your own conceptual stuff, you know, a pitch or something. Again, what you do on that day teaching may affect something in that pitch. (Tr6: 6/7)

Thus the tutor learns while they are teaching and the student learns from them as well. There is an exchange of experiences and knowledge, a flow or interrelation between the two worlds of practice and teaching. The example above also demonstrates that there are no barriers to thinking about practice, it can take place whilst teaching. This constitutes the next strategy; boundaries or barriers to practice or teaching are removed.

### **Strategy: Removing barriers**

This is not simply about boundaries between activities but is a more positive position in which spaces are not visualised as specific to either practice or teaching activities, but thoughts about both practice and teaching can occur whilst engaged in the other activity. This is more clearly demonstrated in the following extract, there is no separation between thinking about practice and teaching in different situations.

I think, I think what it is, is...for instance, at the moment I'm building a web site for, for a fashion company. And as I'm building the web site I'm thinking, I could, I could do a lesson like this, I could show them, you know, and I actually then took, I took the partially built web site, well, I put it up on line, and then in the classroom I was able to show them how that related to what they were doing, so it kind of fed into the lesson. (Tr13: 9)

This strategy removes the specificity of location and ensures that activities can be related to each other and can spark ideas in either practice or teaching that can be utilised in the other location.

### **Strategies associated with Category 5: *Integrating***

Category five is an experience of practice/ teaching relations in which the boundaries disappear and knowledge is constituted as an elision between practice and teaching.

There are three strategies associated with this. The first one is using parallel activities to undertake things that concern the tutor's practice in the teaching situation.

### **Strategy: Paralleling**

Teaching provides opportunities to parallel what you do as a practitioner and what you do with students. The purpose of this is to enable personal interests or questions relating to practice to become the subject of tutor *and* student practice in education, where conversations around these ideas can be carried on. The tutor is in effect carrying on their own practice whilst teaching and sharing that with students.

I've been running a project at (College H), which is on archiving research and is very much around...text, written text, in certain kinds of ways. That was running a project over a number of weeks where I spoke about my own work and also sent them off on research, investigations into terms, their own interests. So that was a way of me blending my ideas and interests and putting forward a project to engage parallel relations to my own practice.

(Tr12: 1)

This has also been described by another tutor in this study who was less conscious of this particular relationship between practice and teaching. Towards the end of the interview he describes a student project he has set that is an almost exact reproduction of the description he has given me of his own practice (Tr9). Another strategy employed to elide knowledge is to engage in practice and education activities simultaneously, the two worlds begin to dovetail together.

### **Strategy: Dovetailing**

This strategy entails undertaking activities that fulfil more than one function. These contribute to both practice and teaching activities at the same time and the activities

can happen in any setting relating to practice or teaching environments. Here dovetailing happens through attending exhibitions of student work.

Well, part of what it [her practice] entails is...going and seeing as many ...exhibitions of student work as possible. Which...I guess, also...is where the two roles of working in education and...working as an artist stroke curator kind of started to dovetail a bit for me, was one of the things, that especially because I taught on foundation, umm, and it's quite important to know what courses are out there, what kind of work is being made, you know, what things are like, um in other university situations. (Tr3: 4)

The visits to student shows are primarily to identify work of graduating students with a view to inviting them to exhibit their work in shows, the practice of curating, but through this strategy teaching and practice 'dovetail', there are two simultaneous purposes to the activity. Here it is curating and also identifying the nature of the courses in higher education to which the students on foundation courses in art and design will be applying and this is part of the role of the tutor on the foundation course.

Another strategy closely aligned to dovetailing is collaborating with students. In this strategy both tutor and student undertake shared activities, either in the educational environment or outside it.

### **Strategy: Collaborating**

This strategy is about joint activities that remove the distinction between tutor and student. It recognises that there is little to separate the neophyte practitioner and the tutor and the sense of power relations between them is diminished.

But I mean, I do bring in my practice into the studio in that I am *doing* it. Currently. And I am dealing with a lot of the issues the students are dealing with. You know, it can be either, you know, the artist as craftsman as in work or it can be with issues of you know, all applying to the same exhibition that might be coming up and I say to them, look, I'm putting work in, but it's open to you, and it's free for you, so why don't you put work in as well? And you know we'll have a discussion about it. I realise that there's a very thin gap between them as artist and me as an artist and that's why I try and encourage a kind of...peer...relationship rather than the almighty tutor verses the almighty peon, the student, you know...yeah. (Tr15: 9)

The ultimate collaboration between students and tutor is the integration of 'knowledge' on an equal level with students who are becoming practitioners too.

Umm...success for me in terms of teaching would be to be in an environment of independently creative practitioners with whom I could have a mature and serious engagement and have fun. Whether they get good marks, or whether they whatever, it's not important but, umm, the point where it becomes success is the point where you feel you're collaborating rather than teaching. (Tr5: 7)

## **Conclusion**

My phenomenographic analysis of the data indicates that there are different ways in which practice/teaching relations can be experienced. These are more complex than simply melding or gluing practice and teaching together or making a simple transition from practice to teaching. Also associated with the different categories of experience are strategies for transferring, using or eliding knowledge between practice and teaching and these indicate how practitioner tutors enable students to learn about

practice. The categories of experiencing practice/ teaching relations are hierarchically inclusive, it is possible for elements of lower categories to be present in higher categories, but not vice versa, and there are two strategies that are only associated with category 2, Moving Across.

These five phenomenographic categories and their associated strategies for relating experiential knowledge of practice to teaching represent the different ways it is possible to experience the relationship between practice and teaching your practice in art, design and related subjects. What a phenomenographic analysis does not set out to do is to understand the contextual factors associated with the way a phenomenon is experienced or what might contribute to an individual having more or less limited ways of experiencing something. In order to develop my understanding of the way variation in the experience of practice/ teaching relations occurs and to include some of the wider social and contextual factors potentially influencing the experience or being affected by the way practice/ teaching relations are recounted, I will in the following chapter use case studies representing the five phenomenographic categories described above and an activity theory framework to analyse them. Using activity theory to extend a phenomenographic approach has been argued by Gordon & Nicholas (2002) and Berglund (2004) to be an appropriate combination of analytical lenses with which to view the available data. The analysis is no longer phenomenographic as it uses individual accounts analysed from a different theoretical position in order to develop a broader picture of the social context of variation in experiencing practice/ teaching relations.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Analysing the experience of practitioner tutors in art and design 2: Using Activity Theory to extend the phenomenographic categories of description**

The phenomenographic categories construed in the previous chapter provide indications of ways in which it is possible to experience the relationship between practice and teaching, but do not illuminate why particular variations in relations might be experienced. Here I am attempting to extend the analytic potential of a phenomenographic approach by taking the categories of description, the geography of ways of experiencing practitioner tutor's relationships between their practice and their teaching, and examining these from an activity theory perspective. Activity systems are ways to understand the contextual environments in which practitioner tutors engage, moving between one work context and another. Individuals bring different experiences to these contexts and also experience the relationships within and between the contexts in different ways. By taking case studies that represent phenomenographic categories I will explore potential relationships between individuals and contexts that are associated with variation. This is not a part of the phenomenographic research approach, but is a different way to examine the data.

I will begin this chapter by using the interview transcripts to support the idea that practice and teaching are two related but different activity systems. I will then select a case study for each phenomenographic category and analyse these using an activity theory framework.

## Two activity systems: practice and teaching

The two parts of practitioner tutors' professional lives were considered to be similar but different by several interviewees suggesting that it is a valid exercise to construct these experiences as two activity systems. There was a sense of inhabiting or operating within two different arenas, even though a tutor's skills, interests and abilities were what linked these activities. One tutor summed up this awareness of the difference by referring to different worlds she was aware of within art practice.

T: Well they are different...I mean also, being a teacher brings you into an...*academic* framework around, around art making in the art world. It's another very distinct...*subsection*...of what art is possibly...very different...*values*...pertain to it as opposed to what you might come across in a commercial gallery, so that's quite interesting, in a kind of, another section of the world, um...I think it's probably quite...good...to have insights into the different...framings...it's difficult, you know.

I: Mmm, maybe you could kind of label or, summarise...you say its part of the same world but different bits of the world?

T: Well, I mean art is a, art is a lot of things and there are different art worlds within the art world, you think um, and think teaching and academia is, almost has its own sub, its own sub-aesthetic to it, which has been generated through imperatives through research funding and what it is to be a successful say, artist/teacher within the academic system, so...and there are different things in play when you look at the, the art scene in terms of...galleries which may be, like *small* galleries, they may be contemporary, lively small galleries, but if they're trying to sell work, then

you know that they're already, um referring to different, different systems, so er, I think it has consequences for aesthetic value, I think it has consequences for kind of...political questions, but I think fashions change, you know, it really moves. The fashion within the, the art school, for certain type of work shifts and there are ways in which it is responsive and...and reflect bigger social changes, but I think, I do think they are different cultures, you know. (Tr12: 7)

This description of cultural contexts within the overarching world associated with fine art practice explains clearly that there are differences and includes the reference to changing values or kinds of work that are deemed appropriate at the time. This is indicative of the changes that are characteristics of activity systems, they are not static, but evolve and their historical persistence is important, they are not constituted through ephemeral actions, but are long standing, constantly changing social structures (Engeström 1999).

There is also a sense of the practitioner tutor having to enter into a world that predates his or her participation in the activity of learning and teaching; you have to learn to work within the activity system that you enter into when you start to teach. For example a tutor who has been brought in to run a course in HE, which he has not worked in before, identifies that his previous teaching experience, across a broad range of FE and vocational workshops has been very different.

I have to take a much more serious approach to the management side of things and a much more...um...not controlling, controlling's the wrong word, but much more...just leadership role. Umm...and I'm coming into that...more now, that's becoming more natural to me now. Whereas I really had to fight that the first year as a new member of staff with very little

experience of working in an HE context, coming into an established course, full of politics, full of conflicts, under pressure in terms of resources, timing, course philosophies, um going into a merger with another institution, possibility of staffing cuts. All these things coming in and...conflicts with the technicians and ...umm...you know, you're kind of in this kind of mess of people, all fighting with each other all the time. (Tr5: 9)

This sense of entering into a new and slightly different world to that of ones own practice or of your previous experience is indicative of the activity systems being a localised, possibly course based experience within a broader institution that influences and controls some aspects of the activity. There are at least two worlds, or two activity systems that have some similarities and some differences for the practitioner tutor, their practice and their teaching.

By comparing all the tutors' accounts it is possible to draw some generalisations between the activity systems of practice and teaching the practice in higher education. These can be illustrated by classic activity theory diagrams (figure 2).

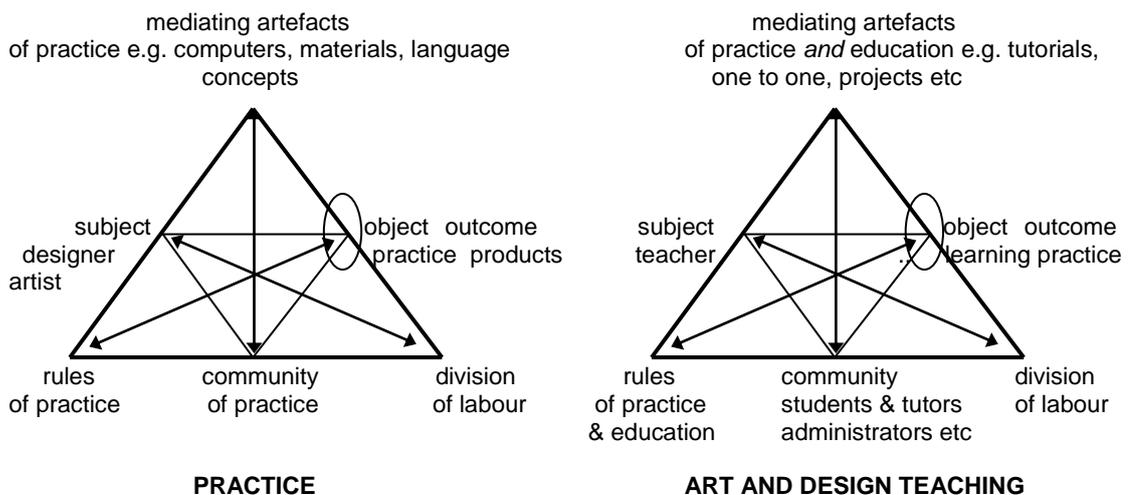


Figure 2. The two activity systems of practice and teaching

There are strong overlaps between the two activity systems in that learning to practice requires using the mediating artefacts or tools and also some of the rules of the practice. However, these are subsumed into the rules and mediating artefacts of education and sit alongside them. There is no clear link between the communities and the division of labour between the two activity systems. There are generally differences between the object of the activities, where practice is the object the outcome is a product, and in teaching it is students learning with the outcome as practice. The other common factor is the tutor themselves who is acting as subject in two different, but partially related systems.

Through a more detailed analysis of the categories of experience, using the concept of the activity system and illustrated by case studies from the transcripts, it is possible to see how the two systems are related and where tensions exist, for individuals. This is seen through the eyes of the practitioner tutor, as subject in both activity systems and is not an external or objective viewpoint. Activity theory becomes a heuristic device to view the two working contexts, practice and teaching, and how practitioner tutors experience relations within and between them.

### **Case studies of individual tutors in relation to phenomenographic categories of experience.**

The individual cases used here were selected through labelling each transcript with the highest phenomenographic category demonstrated in each transcript. These were then examined for the most thorough and consistent evidence throughout the transcript aligned to the selected category. Thus the case study presented here is most representative of the category of variation within the overall set of transcripts. This allows an analysis that extends the phenomenographic view of experience to include the individual, social relations and more structural elements of the relationship

between practice and teaching to be brought into focus, but it is no longer a phenomenographic research approach.

### **Case Study 1: *Dropping in* – Transcript 7**

There is only one tutor who convincingly evidences this category of experience throughout the whole interview, although elements of this category were present in other transcripts. This tutor was very new to teaching in an educational environment and was one of the two tutors in the study who had no experience of further or higher education through being a student himself or herself, but had learned on the job. This could be said to be an extreme case, but from this point of view alone the data is particularly revealing of the impact of entering into an activity system and having to learn to operate in accord with the prevailing ethos. He is assisted by 'old timers', who show him how things are done, and he learns to work to the prevailing pattern of rules, which is different in some respects to the way he works in his own practice.

For this tutor the focus is on practice, there is a strong and richly described world of practice that evidences this community in depth. He describes the different divisions of labour that are associated with the practice and the rules and mediating artefacts. The practitioner sees himself as a part of this world; it is where he belongs and where his primary focus is. The teaching activity system is much less important for this tutor and is therefore depicted in a smaller scale diagrammatically. For this category of experience practice and teaching are seen as two different systems and they have limited links and relationships and significant tensions between the two systems (figure 3, following page). The main parallels in the systems are shown through the red lines and the double-headed arrows indicate tensions. Where aspects of the activity system are not indicated convincingly in the case study I have used broken lines.

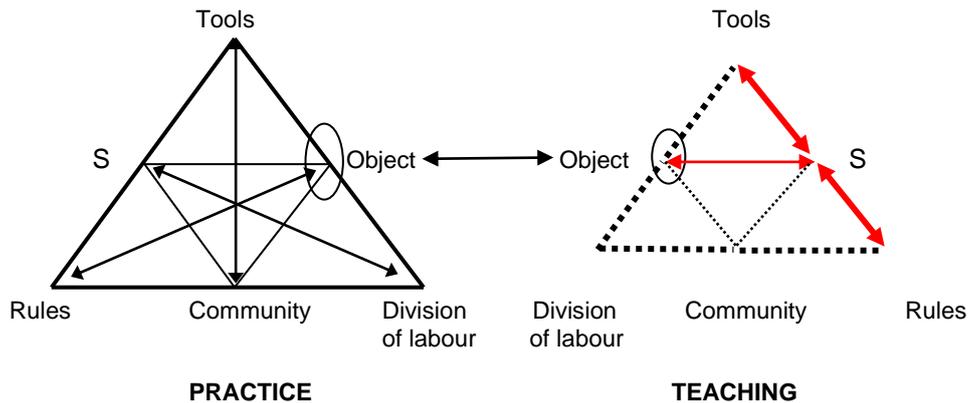
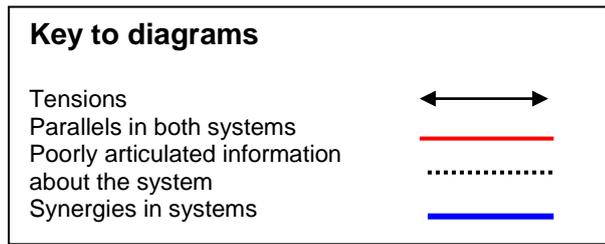


Figure 3. The activity systems of practice and teaching for the phenomenographic category of dropping in

The practice system is fully understood and can be populated completely through the account provided by this practitioner. However, within the activity system of teaching for this subject there is only a partial awareness of and integration into the activity system. As subject in the activity system of teaching, this practitioner tutor experiences tensions between the rules, the object of activity and the mediating artefacts of teaching. This results in a major tension between the two systems and the experience of 'dropping in' limits the way that relations between practice and teaching are or can be experienced. There is little evidence of experiencing the community or division of labour within the activity system of teaching and this leads to limited participation. He has a conflicting perception of the object/ outcome or purpose of the activity and there are numerous tensions between the tutor and the activity system.

## Two different systems

In the phenomenographic category of experience there is an asymmetrical relationship between practice and teaching where practice is dominant. The case study emphasises the two systems as very different things, with significant tensions between them in spite of the tutor teaching the students about his own practice. The tutor agrees when I suggest from his comments that he is describing practice and teaching worlds as separate entities.

Yes, definitely, yes. I mean I er, I er...umm...yes, I mean it's entirely a different thing...I mean, although er...effectively I'm doing the same thing...and umm...being paid for it...there is quite a big difference between doing a makeup job that I am asked to do for a TV or film, or theatre, or whatever and then I have to work to their criteria (...) Rather than when you're teaching you show the student, you know, its up to you what you, if you want to produce a nose or a chin or blow someone's brains out or you know, or show how, it's entirely up to me, so there's a lot more freedom, and it's more relaxed the teaching aspect. (Tr7: 10/11)

But er it is very different, as I say, even though I'm pretty much doing the same thing, umm they are very different things, the teaching side and the working umm – working's not teaching! Sorry! (Tr7: 11)

This separation of the two activity systems is accentuated by the tension between the object of activity in education and the object of activity in practice, as the tutor as a subject acting in both systems perceives it.

## **Tensions in the perceived object of activity between practice and teaching**

A major difference between the activity systems of practice and teaching is the object of the activity. Within his own work, and also when he is teaching other people in his own studio, the most important aim for this tutor is to achieve a well-crafted and effective product. This is the object of the activity. He is a professional prosthetic make up artist and his work is seen in theatre and film. When he begins to teach in a formal educational environment he encounters a different object of activity, for here it is important for students to *learn about* the product, the processes involved and the health and safety issues surrounding the processes. What is important, and what is revealed as a tension, is the fact that the students have understood what is involved, though their final product might not be as professionally finished as this tutor would like. The emphasis is not on the final artefact they are making, but on evidencing an understanding about it through several means including a logbook about the process of learning.

Because, as a makeup artist I can see if somebody's produced a good makeup at the end of it. So, you know, and if you've done a good prosthetic I would say you know how to do a prosthetic. (...) In the real world...you have to be able to produce the prosthetic on set, or on stage, or wherever it is. And er, that's an important aspect, for me, that's the important aspect as to whether you can, actually produce a good makeup. (Tr7: 4)

You know, because to me, kind of, if you manage to produce a brilliant makeup you know, you have obviously understood the lessons, but if you can't physically show it in a book, that's difficult, because, you're crossing a

line, because, are we learning prosthetics or are, is it English? That's why I have, I have a little problem. (Tr7: 5)

Thus there is a tension for this tutor in his experience of practice/ teaching relations between the object of the activity in education and the object of activity in practice.

### **Tensions between the rules as experienced in practice and in education**

The students have to produce a 'log book' with evidence of reflection, health and safety issues and the processes involved in learning. This represents a mediating artefact in teaching and also a reification of the rules of practice (Wenger, 1998). It is an artefact designed to assist the students to understand and to enable the tutor to see whether some forms of learning have taken place and is particular to the education activity system. This is unfamiliar territory for this practitioner tutor and is part of the need to demonstrate learning *about* rather than making a professional product. As such it represents the tension between the objects of practice and education. As the book forms part of the assessment process this tutor has to conform to the rules and accept that the object of the education system is different. He describes this conflict between what he is used to and what he believes the object/outcome of learning about prosthetics should be as 'a little problem'.

The overriding rule and difference between his practice and his teaching, or even teaching other people about his practice when he is in his own studio, is the need to assess the students' performance. In teaching others who come to his workshop it is a different situation, more closely aligned to the object/outcome of activity in his practice and more akin to legitimate peripheral participation as described by Lave and Wenger (Lave & Wenger 1991) in ethnographically traditional apprenticeship models.

And so they come to me because they want to improve their skills. Umm, its not about getting a...diploma, at the end of it...or a degree, you know, it's just about learning how to do this stuff, so that's what they want. They don't umm...it's not to...improve their chance of employment later on, its literally to...to...so they can do this stuff. So it's er loose and er I have a lot more freedom with it and I feel it's more relaxed. I think I get...well, because I was working at...my own course that is tailor made for myself, its easier, it fits in, there's no marking at the end of it! You know if somebody hasn't produced a decent piece I can't say, well, you know you've failed, I just, they just need to go and practice some more. You know. And if they want to come back and spend another day with me, or a few days with me, they can, so. They mark themselves in that regard. (Tr7: 8)

This need to have a diploma or a degree is one of the complexities of the object/outcome that drives the activity system of education. Most tutors don't refer directly to this as they are describing their part in a two or three-year process for the students, but it is also one of the reasons why students have to be assessed. Also in this example the rules about how much time is spent in learning how to do a process in education are implied. The students and the tutor are constrained by the rules about the length and shape of the unit the students are studying and do not have the freedom to 'spend another day' with the tutor or to practice some more if they have not succeeded initially within the allotted time. These rules conflict with the practitioner's way of teaching people in his practice activity system.

### **Mediating artefacts of practice and teaching**

Within the phenomenographic category of dropping into the education system there is an associated transmission of knowledge from practice to teaching, 'passing on the knowledge'. This is done through limited strategies of showing and telling and the

associated mediating artefacts used in teaching are similarly limited. The technical objects, the literal tools of the practice are evidenced in this case study, but he does not use examples of his own or other's work. Neither is there reference to more abstract mediating artefacts of practice, such as concepts or ideas, or to many mediating artefacts of teaching such as the different ways to engage students in understanding the practice.

This tutor does refer to the one way he is used to teaching, as a one-to-one tuition and he implied that he could support the students further if he could spend more time with them individually:

I think if any of them want to take it further, and some of them have obviously got talent, you know, that they would er...see me again, under more one-to-one tuition kind of thing, where I could really go into more detail about things, the way I would more normally do it. (Tr7: 6/7)

As a subject new to the activity system of teaching in higher education this tutor has a very limited knowledge or awareness of the many mediating artefacts he could possibly use, both from his own experience in practice and from those particular to the education system. Most importantly he does not use himself and his own experience as a mediating artefact for students learning about prosthetic make up. This is a separate world and he does not volunteer information or show them the work he is actually engaged in professionally, although he has to leave the class early to deliver a finished prosthetic for a production.

...there were one or two [students] who asked me 'What are you working on now?' And er, a few questions I did get, but I was talking to individual people in the course of the class, you know, but I didn't umm, lecture them on, this is

what I do, how I do it, this is my kind of project or...but I probably mentioned [a particular production] because that's the thing I keep having to leaving lessons to deliver pieces you know, 'I've got to leave at four because I've got to deliver some faces down the road'. Umm, but er, well, I haven't gone into any details. As far as they're concerned they don't know what I've done. (Tr7: 15)

The relationship between the activity systems of practice and education is limited to the basic rules and tools of practice being used to show students what to do and how to do it. The rules and tools of education are present but limited in the account and are also in tension with the subject experiencing the activity system. There is also compliance to the rules by the subject, it is important to fit in, even though these rules and tools are different to the activity system of practice. For this tutor there are limited relations between the community, the division of labour and the tools of the activity system of teaching in higher education. Overall there are tensions evident between the two activity systems; in particular the object of activity is under tension.

### **Case Study 2: *Moving Across* - Transcript 14**

The phenomenographic category described as 'moving across' has an asymmetrical relationship between practice and teaching with the emphasis on teaching. There are two tutors who comprehensively demonstrate this category of experiencing practice teaching relations in the interview and I have selected one to further illustrate the category. This tutor is a very experienced practitioner with over 30 years in the broadcast industry; he too has learned his practice 'on the job' and had no experience of being a student in higher education. He says he has fallen out of love with the practice, though he identifies himself with that practice, it is still there with him when he teaches, 'It's what I *am*' (p14). He surprises me when he tells me that he no longer practices, that he has not physically engaged in making products for

three years, but he has volunteered to be interviewed, describing himself as a practitioner tutor.

There is a sense in this transcript that the wider aspects of both activity systems are well known and the tutor relates to all sections of the teaching activity system, unlike the previous example. The relationship of practice to teaching is difficult to illustrate, as practice appears to be there with the tutor in their teaching, it is a part of who they are, carried into the education system (figure 4). This manifests itself in a number of ways, principally in the use of practice as a mediating artefact in teaching.

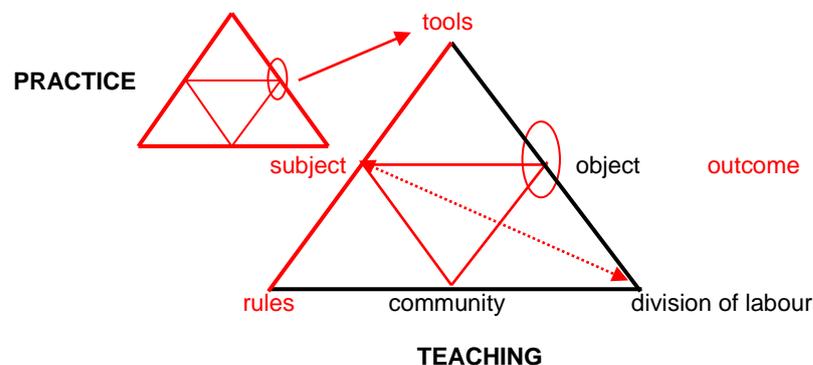


Figure 4. The activity systems of practice and teaching for the phenomenographic category of moving across

### Mediating artefacts

The mediating artefacts used in the teaching activity system are based on both practice and education and in this case study both are evident and richly described. Using examples from his practice in film and television he describes in great detail, how character is established using three different examples, demonstrating how he uses the products of his practice as mediating artefacts in teaching. This section of the transcript takes up two out of the nineteen pages of the interview transcript. He also uses his knowledge of the whole activity system of practice as a mediating artefact in education. He reproduces the experience of being an editor and producer

for students through role-play and the use of collaboration between students on different courses.

They are, they are the production team. They write the, er, they write the drama and they produce the drama. So they write, they write various drafts of the script, they work with the actors, they cast the actors, work with the actors, um, but life is complicated for them because we introduce a third element which is that they have to work with broadcast operations students who are going to direct and shoot the drama in the studio. So, it is their project, they have to manage the project, but it is not, you know, after week three of next term it is not hands on, so they have to go through the process of actually, well you know, managing this thing remotely and er, having to...take into account the, the input and the feelings of other people, and the shortcomings as well. So, it's er, it's er very complex and particularly for first year students.

(Tr14: 4)

This role play and team work that mirrors the community and the division of labour of the activity system of practice is used as a mediating artefact to help the students to understand what it is like to be a broadcast practitioner and how they will have to work in the industry.

This case study shows that the tutor is also using themselves and their experience as a mediating artefact for the students. Unlike the dropping in category where the tutor as subject maintains distance between the two activities, here the tutor themselves becomes a means of helping students to understand the world of practice, he is using his knowledge to help students to understand what it means to practice.

They've done the technical stuff and I sort of mess with their heads and start talking about the politics of editing, and group dynamics and group behaviour, how to, you know, power in the cutting room, relationships within the cutting room, hierarchy within production. How do you protect yourself, where is the money, all of those things! (Tr14: 15)

This tutor is also simultaneously very aware of a range of mediating artefacts of the activity system of education and these are liberally spread through his account. This includes discussion, exercises for students, peer group learning, workshops, reflection and feedback.

### **The objects of practice and teaching are different**

For this tutor there is an understanding that the object of teaching is for students to learn to become practitioners, not simply for students to create products as evidenced in the dropping in category. He has learned through his own experience that students are learning what it means to take part in a production team for television and his role as the subject in the education activity system is different to the role he has played in the past as part of a production team. He realises that when he first taught he treated the students in the same way that he had treated a professional production team.

But I now realise that the reason I was getting complaints and because I was so harsh was because I was still a television producer, I wasn't a teacher, and I was teaching, I was treating my students as if they were a particularly *dozy* and recalcitrant production team! It was really *unfair* you know and so I feel bad about it! (Tr14: 17)

Although the tutor in the first case study also experiences practice and teaching your practice as two different things, this tutor is able to pinpoint the reasons why his actions or his position in the activity system cause the awareness of difference. He has learned that the object of the activity is to help students learn and that requires a different way of working than being a subject in broadcast production. This awareness of teaching as a different activity from the actual practice has resulted in a desire to know more about how to teach. He is actively positioning himself in the world of academia and he also wants to have more responsibility in the division of labour in the education system; to be more involved.

T: I do a lot of assessment, I assess all of them and looking at basically what I do is I look after all of the production elements of these two honours degree courses and so I'm involved in the assessment of all of it. And er, so yes. I'm involved in the planning and er, I'm involved in the delivery and I'm involved in the construction of learning activities and I'm involved in assessment.

I: Do you have a certain role like tutor or year leader or anything like that?

T: No. No.

I: No?

T: And I'm pretty fed up about that!

I: Why? Would you like a role like that?

T: Very much. (Tr14: 8)

He is unusual in that he would like a more specific role and more involvement in teaching and would like to be a tutor or year leader, but has not had that opportunity. However, because he is interested and he volunteers information and ideas, which the team discusses, he feels a part of the community and says 'it's a very enjoyable thing' (Tr14: 9). This is an active engagement with the community and an understanding of the division of labour in the teaching system. The tutor is playing a part in all aspects of the system, but the limitation in the role he experiences causes tension between him as the subject and the division of labour in the system.

## **Tensions**

Tensions are described within the activity systems of teaching and practice, but there are none evident between the two activity systems, unlike the dropping in category described above. When tensions are perceived the tutor is likely to provide solutions. For example, here he expresses tensions related to the outcome of learning that he is engaged in with his students; the unit does not require them to reflect on their learning.

I've said that I would welcome some reflective work from them, and I would assess it and give them *feedback*, you know off my own *bat*. Because I just believe that we need to get them reflecting, thinking about what it is that they're doing... from day one, frankly. Um, so I think that is a shortcoming with the unit. I understand why it's written that way, but I said to the students, on a voluntary basis, if you want to, you can write a short reflective piece and I will respond to it, I will give you feedback, in an informal way. (Tr14: 5)

He is providing a solution to the tension he experiences between his own understanding of the object of the activity of the education system and the rules, the way the unit has been written.

This tutor also feels confident enough to adapt when problems arise from the division of labour, like being told to give up his large teaching room for an open day that he has not been informed of earlier. He immediately restructures his teaching plan and puts this ability to adapt down to being 'a hybrid' (p8), an interesting position that suggests that his practice and his teaching are now dual skills or are becoming equally important in his identity or sense of who he is. However, the projection of his identity is one in which he is leaving practice behind and moving across into education, bringing practice experience with him and this relationship between the activity systems of teaching and practice is an unequal one with an emphasis on teaching.

The relationships between the two activity systems when they are experienced as the phenomenographic category of moving across is that the two systems are fully understood and there is active engagement by the tutor in all aspects of the education system and it is this one that dominates the relationship between practice and teaching. Practice, as a whole activity system is used as a mediating artefact in teaching, as well as the tutor using himself as a mediating artefact and using the products of his practice.

### **Case Study 3: *Two Camps* - Transcript 16**

The phenomenographic category of experiencing practice/ teaching relations as being in two camps can be explored through representing the activity systems as two distinct systems with little interaction between them. Both practice and teaching are present and complete systems in the accounts but there is little common experience

between them and few exchanges. The tensions are centred on the subject and the perceived amount of time and energy they have to work in one or the other of the systems (Figure 5).

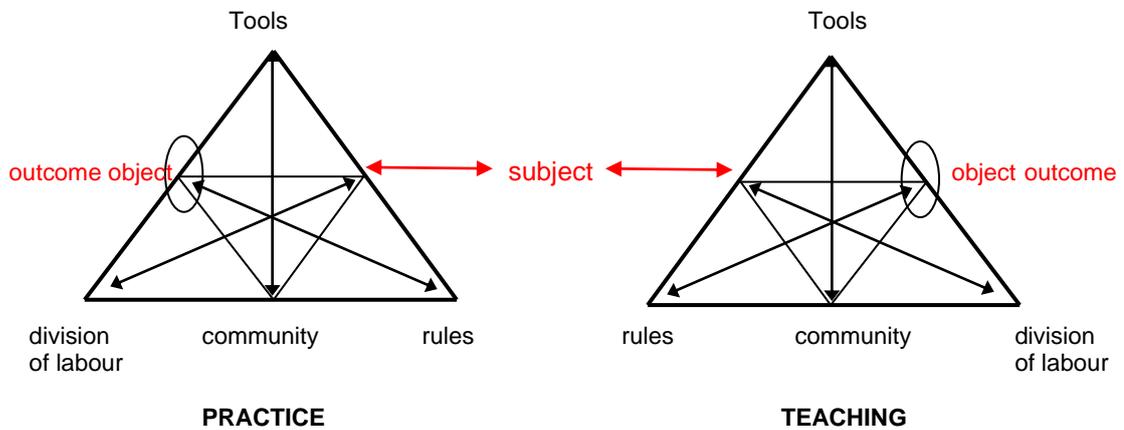


Figure 5. The activity systems of practice and teaching for the phenomenographic category of two camps

### Separate activity systems

I have used one of the two examples of tutors who demonstrate the highest phenomenographic category of practice teaching relations as two camps to illustrate the relationship from an activity theory perspective. She is a tutor of fashion textiles and has recently moved to a different college to teach. She works four days a week in teaching, but as a subject in two activity systems she keeps the world of education and teaching as separate as she can from her practice. She does not want to link the two or merge them together across the boundaries of the activity systems, but prefers to maintain barriers to interaction. In this extract she does not want the communities of her practice and education activity systems to merge through using her contacts to provide work placement for students, an example of practice being used as a mediating artefact in learning.

T: Yeah....Um...I don't know...I don't know how...I, sometimes I feel I want to keep them quite separate, I don't like, this is the first time I'm trying to get

students a placement with someone I actually know, and sometimes I don't like that too much, I like to keep them separate, I don't like that.

I: So do you bring anything from your practice into your teaching?

T: Um. Well, yes, my knowledge of organic fabrics and all that side of it. I *haven't* actually done a session on things like that. Um, do you know, I sometimes keep them quite separate. And I quite like it. (Tr16: 6)

This is quite a distinctive way of isolating her practice, being in a camp where she lives a relatively separate existence from the world of teaching her practice. Although she says her knowledge about print does 'feed into what I'm trying to teach them' (p 6), she has not actually used her knowledge of organic fabrics in her teaching. This could have been used as a tool in her teaching, but she has deliberately kept this knowledge to her world of practice. She experiences the use of her own knowledge and contacts from practice being in tension with the activity system of teaching, preferring to keep the two systems as separate as possible.

### **Differences between the object of activity in practice and teaching**

In experiencing practice teaching relations this tutor emphasises different objects of activity, not similar ones when describing her practice and her teaching. This emphasises the separation between the two activity systems. It is not like the misunderstanding demonstrated by the first tutor who sees the object of activity in both systems as creating professional products, or the realisation that teaching is different to practicing as described in the previous case study, but a choice is made to describe activities that emphasise the difference between her own practice and the teaching experience.

In the education activity system the object of the activity she is describing is to help students to understand what observational drawing of garments entails. She needs them to really observe, as a practitioner of fashion would observe and to understand the detail in the construction of garments.

Well, trying to get them drawing and the twist to the lesson that I do is to get them to observe and do front and back drawings for about an hour and then I take the garments away and ask them to do a working drawing of the garment without it being there and this makes them realise that they've been sitting there for half an hour and they haven't really *observed*, they've just been copying. (Tr16: 2)

The object of activity she describes in her current practice is to design prints for a fashion range that she and her husband are working on together. They are both designers, but she is more responsible for the prints and he for designing and drawing the garments. In the past she was successful with a printed textiles collection of fashion garments, which sold well, but she was not confident enough to borrow all the money needed to invest in that completely, so she took on some part time teaching. Now she feels that she is torn between her teaching commitments and her practice as a fashion print designer.

...now I'm really more of a print designer, more print for fashion, and I'm not doing what I should do because I've been teaching. (Tr16: 5)

There is a tension between the two activity systems of teaching and practice and her role as subject within them. She wanted to teach because it offered some security, regular money to be able to live, but now there are exciting possibilities for her new venture and she is pulled to be in that world.

All I know is that I feel now, because I am financially in this place where I feel quite secure.....but I so *desperately* want to do my own thing more. And it's really hard and I think how do I do it? (...) I just kind of, I think, I mean I really enjoy the teaching but I don't want to be defined by the teaching I do want to achieve other things. (Tr16: 7/8)

### **Limited engagement with the community**

This tutor is in a new teaching environment and learning what the specific rules are in relation to assessment. She also indicates that there has been little discussion with other people about the teaching example she recounts, suggesting that there is limited actual engagement with the activity system and the community in particular. The lack of a sense of common purpose, the object outcome of the activity system, is indicated through the tutor feeling as if she has been asked to cover a teaching situation for other tutors with little exploration of what was required.

I was asked really, to fill in time. Um, would that be too negative? To work while tutors were still on Christmas break, to work with some fast track students, really to do drawing with them, so that was it, I wasn't really told more than that. (Tr16: 1)

She didn't feel that this was a very successful teaching situation and this sense of isolation, partly induced through being new, but also lacking a sense of common purpose is also increased by the lack of confidence in the division of labour in this new situation. She does not have the support from technicians that her previous job provided and she feels that she is expected to provide skills that she doesn't have. These tensions between the subject, the object/outcome and the division of labour would, I suggest, be enough to cause a sense of unease with her role, to threaten her

identity as a teacher and to add to the separation and tension between her practice and teaching roles.

### **Complexities in the object/outcome of education**

The desire to be financially secure suggests possible motives for undertaking teaching that are not explicitly part of the collective activity system, but are very real aspects of the experience for the individual. The object/outcome of the activity provides the motive for undertaking the activity according to Engeström (2005). The most obvious aspects of the object/outcome are that students are learning and being developed as people and more specifically as neophyte practitioners. However, we all need to earn a living and this aspect of the object/outcome from this tutor's point of view presents a tension that is at the forefront of her experience. For this tutor, described in the extract above, there is a very definite tension between the object/outcome, her motivation for engaging in the activity system of education and her practice and this remains unresolved. She needs to earn money to live and this can be achieved through teaching, but she also desires to be a designer and she does not earn enough from this work. Another tutor described being paid for her practice as a process of 'legitimation', one that she normally acquired through being paid for teaching.

I think the reason I feel more legitimate saying I'm a teacher is because I actually go into an outside structure and work and get an income at the end of the month, I mean, it's almost as basic as that. ...Whereas saying I'm an artist when I'm doing something for myself and therefore I'm not doing it, and I'm not making enough money from it, I find that a problem. (...) Actually I was awarded quite a big lump of research money from (college) a few years ago. And for the first time, actually receiving that, because I had to put in a proposal and you were up against other people and it went to a committee

and they chose... *That* to me suddenly legitimised my art, my work as... an artist. (Tr4: 8)

These tensions caused by the ability to earn money from the teaching experience or the tension between the use value and the exchange value represented by the subject's participation in the two activity systems, are a source of tension and division between the two systems. This is indicative of the complexity of the object/ outcome of the educational activity system and of its multi-faceted nature (Kaptelinin 2005).

### Case Study 4: *Balancing* - Transcript 13

The phenomenographic category of balancing describes an experience of moving between practice and teaching in a to-ing and fro-ing manner. This can be illustrated through a diagrammatic representation of the two activity systems being pivoted on the tutor who is simultaneously a subject in both systems. The tutor makes active links between and across the systems acting as a bridging artefact between the two systems. There are strong parallels, more like synergies between the rules and tools of education and practice and also the object of education and practice (Figure 6).

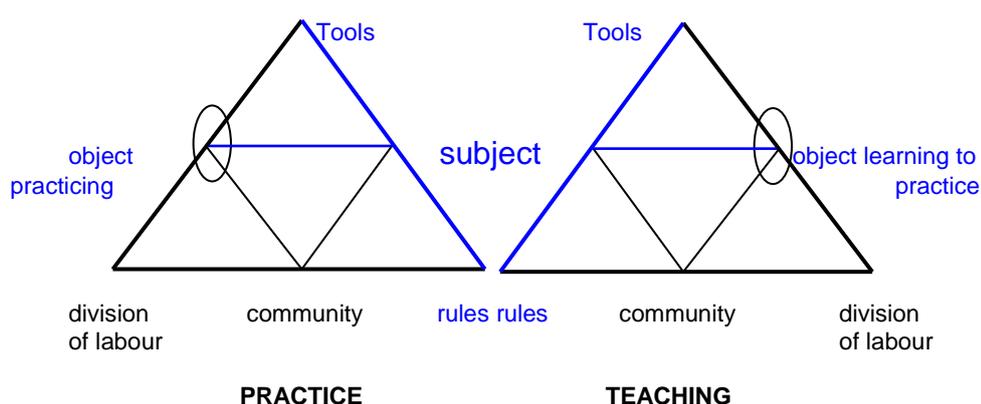


Figure 6. The activity systems of practice and teaching for the phenomenographic category of balancing

I have selected a tutor to illustrate this category of practice teaching relations who has a portfolio career in multimedia. She creates web sites, works on production teams and editing video and has her own art video practice as well as teaching aspects of these to students. Through the interview she describes all she does with obvious enjoyment and is fully conversant with all aspects of the activity systems of practice and teaching she has selected to describe in more detail. She recognises that they are different and complementary systems but they have distinct aspects in common.

### **The object of activity in practice and education**

For this practitioner tutor the object of activity in education and in her practice centres on being an independent practitioner, able to design and make the products of the practice. For her the object of activity in the educational system is the students becoming practitioners, capable of designing their own products and understanding the world of practice.

So, um, towards the end of the lesson um, then I just simply observed how they were actually making the navigation system. I encourage them, I don't encourage them, *ever*, to copy what I do. I encourage them to take on board what I show them, and then go off and design their own. So I hope, the creativity runs alongside, I don't care if it's day one, they're creating from day one, so they never, *ever*, just simply copy a demonstration that I do. (Tr13: 2)

She demonstrates how to construct a 'button' but the intention behind this is to enable students to design their own web sites, in their own way, not simply to be technically competent. She also describes the object of activity in her own work is to produce a film or a video or a web site for clients or colleagues.

I do a lot of video editing, I get asked to come along and cut things for people, I then I also do my own work as an *artist*, so I make... *videos*. I made a video um, in New York and then showed that in a gallery. It was in a *big* gallery window last year. (inaudible) set on the streets of New York. So I do my own video work and then I work with people on documentaries etcetera. And all sorts of other multimedia stuff. (Tr13: 6/7)

She appears to be very comfortable with the range of different kinds of practice she engages in and she also teaches aspects such as web design and video to students, aligning the outcomes of activity in both education and in practice, focusing on students being able to independently work on the products, to become designers.

### **Mediating artefacts in practice and education**

This tutor also becomes a mediating artefact, drawing on her experience to enable students to understand what it means to be a practitioner, similar to the tutor in the moving across category. This extract includes a range of mediating artefacts from her practice used in teaching.

So I'm able to show them something that *I'm* actually doing and in some cases, because I also teach video, you know, then I can also show them, you know, rough footage, I can show them stuff that I've cut which relates to something they're doing, then I think you get a lot more trust from the students and that they're also, I think they're more willing to go along with you when you suggest something, I don't mean copy what you say, I mean bear *with* you while you see a line of thought through ...In something like video production there's a lot of...in the course I teach, I'm trying to teach them, that although you can go out and be a maverick film maker, you can go out with your camera and do whatever you want, but if you join a production company

or if you work with three or four or, or six bands or whatever, em, there are ways of working, there are systems in place and they are there to help you actually get to the end product, so, there is a lot of pre-production, there's a lot of preparation. There is a crew, the crew is in place for a reason, you know, people are in charge of their area because they have to take responsibility for their area for their creativity, or non-creativity. It's *just* as important as the creative side. And, there's a lot of paper work and if they want to get an idea considered by say channel *four* then they have to write out a documentation. They have to write a proposal and a treatment. (Tr13: 9)

She is clearly linking her experience of making video to the learning situation for her students. In this description she is acting as a mediating artefact as she explains why you must have a 'treatment' and a 'proposal' (p9). These are aspects of learning to become a video producer and she is able through her own experience to show why it is important and what their function is, to ask the students to believe in her knowledge and to enable them to have an insight into what it means to be a video practitioner. She also shows work in progress to her students, another mediating artefact in the activity system of teaching. She is providing an insight into her world or activity system, acting as a bridge between them.

There is also a close alignment between the mediating artefacts of education and practice. This tutor describes her teaching situation with a wide mix of mediating artefacts that are both specific to her subject, such as computers, specific software and technical terms intermixed with the mediating artefacts of teaching, the notebooks and sketchbooks kept by students, the lesson plans she produces, the demonstrations, students' independent learning plans, whiteboards and other hardware she uses to teach her subject. These are liberally mixed together in a long passage, over two and a half pages, describing a teaching situation in one college

where she works. When asked specifically what kinds of things she uses in her teaching she says:

T: OK, I use, a white board in the room, um, we, ah, usually have a projector, but it's quite often not working, in which case I'll lock up a G4 to a larger screen that I've got, that I use for video.

I: I'm sorry...a G4?

T: A G4 computer, so I can attach that to a rather large screen that we've got. I also give out written er *handouts*, so they get comprehensive handouts, I don't encourage them to use those in the room, I encourage them to follow the demonstration and to use the handouts as backup so that when I'm not there they've got instructions about how to do it when they forget. Um, they also get a written project which I'm happy for them to follow, but I'm also quite happy for them to come up with their own ideas and we talk about this early on, I'd much rather they were doing something that they were interested in, rather than following something because they *have* to do it. Um, what else do we use? Um, I show them web sites, so we're continually looking at other people's web sites and I encourage the students to tell me web sites that they've visited and we show those to the class. The, we use each other's *work*, so they look at each other's work. Every six weeks we have a group session where we go round and students are able to describe what they intended to do and then what they actually have done and get some comments back from the other students. Yeah, that's about it. (Tr13: 3/4)

Both the tools of education are present and fluently described, but also the tools of practice, the computers, the programmes and the products. There are no tensions apparent between the two activity systems in this category of experiencing practice/teaching relations. There is instead an element of pleasure in engaging in the two activity systems that are recognised as different and complementary.

I: So what do you enjoy most about being a practitioner and also a teacher?

T: ...er...

I: Or *don't* you enjoy it?

T: Um...well...um...I think, for me it's...kind of like...it's, it's a nice to and fro. I *know* what I'm going to be doing with the students, so I think I kind of get...I thought I'd get bored of teaching, right? And in fact the more I learn about it and the more I know how to actually control the situation... it gets *better*. So I know that when I go into class that I can get a result out of them, right, and it's going to be quite controlled and I'm going to be there at a certain time and then I'm going to be away, right? And so I enjoy that for a bit. If I was doing that all the time I wouldn't like it. And then I enjoy the fact that then, maybe at the end of the week, I'm going to be off on Friday to shoot a band or something like that and that...I mean, and that, that's chaos every week, because I don't know what's going to happen...(...) So, I like that, but that would be like a nightmare...all the time as well, so it's really nice to have something that I can go to that's quite calm. Although I work *hard* for the teaching, and I do put a lot into planning, um, it, it, it's kind of normal almost, and then I have this kind of chaos of filmmaking.

(Tr13: 10/11)

This tutor feels at home in both activity systems and recognises their different characteristics. There is no sense of tension between the two systems but instead two parallel activity systems in which the tutor engages as a subject. There is no guarding or separation between the two systems as described in the category of two camps and no sense of the activity system of practice being subsumed into the teaching system. They are separate, and the tutor actively relates aspects of the rules and the mediating artefacts of practice to the education system using herself as a mediating artefact and bridge to link the two systems.

### Case Study 5: *Integrating* - Transcript 12

The final phenomenographic category describes an elision of practice and teaching where the knowledge of the tutor's practice becomes closely allied to that of their teaching. From an activity theory perspective this can be viewed as the tutor eliding the two activity systems together to create one system in which they operate.

Teaching becomes part of their practice and viewed from this position there are significant differences between the activity system of education depicted in previous categories (figure 7).

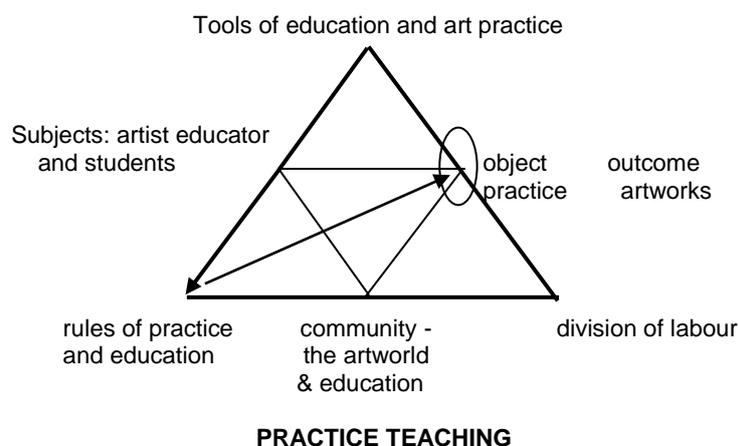


Figure 7. The activity system of practice teaching for the phenomenographic category of integrating

## **A new object and outcome of activity in education**

Here the students also become subjects in the activity system and the object of the activity becomes art practice, with the outcome as art works. The students and the tutors work together in close alignment on similar activities.

I have selected one tutor who demonstrates the integrated category in the interview. She articulates the complexity of practice in this category of experience and is very reluctant to define her practice. There are broad and encompassing aspects that defy being tied down; it appears that she has a complex view of the object/outcome of her activity system. Part of this is to produce the artwork.

Well...er...I work with films and video and sound and drawing... and I also *write* a lot. So where I work...I don't know what that means really. I have a space at home, I used to have a studio, until the landlord wanted it back...um...where do I, where do I *show* work? I've shown work at..er, places like Danielle Arnauld Gallery, quite a bit recently which was a drawing exhibition, but also performance work, and then I have...a story, in a collection of artists stories which is coming out just now, so that's another space where I work. I've also been involved with a...collaborative practice with... friends and colleagues...(Tr12: 5)

She is reluctant to put boundaries round her practice, which appears to be fluid; sometimes she works alone, but at other times collaborates or co-authors work with other people. It would seem though that her view of the object/outcome of art practice also includes learning constantly and this is a critical aspect of practice that contributes to sustaining the practice.

I mean I spent a long time just trying things out and just...but I mean you keep on learning don't you. The thing about art practice is that it continues...it has to be so, you...almost invariably it has to be self-motivating so you have to find these strategies to keep on learning *yourself*, finding things out that the practice, somehow the practice will generate and push that. (Tr12: 6)

There is a cycle of self-motivated learning generated through the practice that keeps her engaged in a creative process. There are no direct clients involved in this kind of practice so the motivation provided through the object/outcome is critical. This object/outcome is also the same for the students in this activity system; learning through your own art practice.

She describes a project that she has given her new first year students, which is the same as one she has undertaken herself. This is an opportunity for her to get the students involved in discussions and activities that are aligned to her own interests as an artist. The purpose of the project is for the students to act independently, as an artist would. She says:

It was all about somehow a creative response to research material and how, as artists, you might then use it. (...) ...what it needed to do was to start to give them methods and techniques for self-directed...production... which is so, so crucial within fine art. (Tr12: 3)

There is also a statement about the students positioning themselves within the contemporary art world. For this tutor the object/outcome for students' learning is also that they envisage themselves as part of the same art world as she inhabits.

But I would encourage all students to...be aware about...what they were, engaging in and then having a confidence to take that position and then also finding...um the other thing, is finding a very good way to kind of contextualise themselves in relation to contemporary practice. So they have good examples of artists who are working in that way. It's all about...kind of establishing territory, in that way. (Tr12: 3)

There are not two distinct activity systems here, but a blurring of boundaries between the way she perceives herself as a subject in the activity system of fine art and also encouraging the students to see themselves as subjects in this activity system too.

## **Tensions**

There are tensions however in this newly constituted activity system of teaching art practice. The rules that constrain the tutor/student engagement in education, that limit the amount of time and determine the way that units of teaching are constructed, cause tension between the subjects and the object/outcome.

.....the only things that irritate me most are the bigger...um...ideological and policy shifts...specifically with regards to finance in recent years and...the consequences that's having for...the teaching...the way things, the course is taught, the way that art is taught... (Tr12: 5)

This is expressed as a tension between the object/outcome of fine art education (in her view) and the community and the rules. A complex tension, particularly frustrating for her because she has no power to change these and they represent a move away from the form that she would prefer art education to take. Although she does not express this overtly she implies that she would prefer the education system to more closely mirror fine art practice, referring to this as a 'fine art *training*'.

I also...really *loathe* this modularisation attitude and I also just...just think that...you know, they...the, the increasing sense that you can squeeze a lot more students in and...your teaching one-to-one or the smaller group teaching experience will still be... *qualitatively*...will still be a fine art *training*, is really questionable, so... The *worst* thing is being involved in teaching art which is something I feel really...*passionate* about and people, on an individual personal level, being involved in any kind, politically, socially, it seems like...the parameters of *how* that education system has been set up...is um, *destroying* the thing that I love. (Tr12: 5)

This is an impassioned plea for a much less constrained and restricted engagement in the activity system of teaching fine art. It appears that she would be happier if the kinds of rules that pertain to the activity system of art education were removed and thus more closely aligned to fine art practice.

Thus the boundaries between practice and teaching in this category of experiencing practice/teaching relations are very fluid. There are aspects of the rules and community that are different to the world of fine art, but the activity system of teaching practice is so similar to the activity system of practice that it is difficult to envisage them as two separate systems. Education as it is experienced here appears to be a part of the art world, not part of the higher education sector, although there is a presence of an educational community, those who produce the rules that instigate the tension for this particular tutor.

## **Conclusion**

The case studies illustrating each phenomenographic category of experiencing practice/ teaching relations bring into focus the individual practitioner, their histories

of development and relations within each activity system and between the two systems. This enables the contexts that influence ways of working to be examined.

From the accounts practitioner tutors give we can see that there are different ways to understand the object of activity in education. This can result in tensions between the tutor and the way they experience relations and the actions that they undertake in education. The underlying experience of practice/ teaching relations relates to their views and their motivation, the object and the object/outcome in practice and teaching. The context consisting of the individual's ontogeny or history of development, and the social worlds they work between interact to produce the experience of practice/ teaching relations. As the case studies represent phenomenographic categories of experience it is possible to see how certain affordances within the workplace enable or discourage actions and how personal dispositions construct relations. There are multiple factors involved in the actions each individual undertakes which produce certain ways of being, or experiencing practice/ teaching relations.

Through constructing the activity systems of practice and teaching from the accounts given by the tutors in the case studies described above it is possible to relate the variation in experiencing teaching practice relations to the individual operating within a wider social context. The understanding gained through a phenomenographic analysis of the transcripts is complemented and extended through using activity theory as a heuristic to view individual experiences. The case studies enable characteristics of phenomenographic categories to be explored in more detail and rich descriptions of experience offer insight into relations between individuals and work practices. The implications of this analysis will be discussed in the following chapter.

## Chapter 6

### Discussion of the research analysis

#### Introduction

In the previous chapters I set out the research methodology and my analysis of the research to explore variation in the experience of practice/ teaching relations, the impact that might have on the learning environment and the factors that might influence particular ways to experience practice teaching relations. The phenomenographic analysis of the interview transcripts, and the case studies which illustrated the resulting categories of experience, provided an anatomy of experience for practice/ teaching relations in art and design and a view of the context of experience relating to different phenomenographic categories. The key points from my analysis of the research are summarised below and then discussed in more detail. The research provides a framework to help understand the transition practitioner tutors experience between practice and teaching and the impact this has on student learning, but also raises further questions and possible avenues for research and these too are indicated in the discussion.

My analysis of the research can be summarised in the following way:

1. Practice and teaching relations in art and design can be experienced as an asymmetrical relationship with an emphasis on practice or teaching, a symmetrical relationship with tension and distancing between them, a symmetrical relationship with exchanges between practice and teaching, or the relationship may be experienced as a holistic one in which practice and teaching are seen as one practice.

2. There are different ways to experience the relationship between practice and teaching and these ways of experiencing impact on the student learning experience.

There are more complex and varied ways in which transitions between practice and teaching take place to benefit students' learning:

3. Working between practice and teaching environments does not appear to be a simple transition between contexts, or a question of adopting a dual identity or melding oneself into a hybrid practitioner teacher. There are different ways that this relationship can be constituted and experienced.
4. In this study it would seem that tutors in art and design can become mediating artefacts or links between practice and teaching in a number of different ways, not simply providing one way to bridge the worlds of practice and education.

Therefore, it is possible to say that:

5. The assumption that those who practice are the best teachers is too simplistic an approach to ensuring the currency of the curriculum in art and design.

The individual practitioner tutor is key to the way that experiences between practice and teaching are construed.

6. I would suggest that an individual's sense of identity is central to the way that teaching is undertaken and this is influenced by their multiple work contexts and perceived relations within and between the work contexts.

7. Practitioner tutors in educational institutions appear to experience work relations that lead to more or less sense of agency and engagement in the educational organisation. More engagement in educational activity systems seems to be associated with more interaction between practice and teaching and therefore the provision of better learning experiences for students.

In terms of developing practitioners as tutors the provision of materials alone (ADEPTT 2005) may not be sufficient to support development as teachers.

8. For art and design teaching in F/HE the development of practitioners, as tutors, may need to address the different ways it is possible to experience the relationship between their practice and their teaching, in both pragmatic and conceptual terms.
9. The individual personal histories of development of tutors and their experience of the contexts of working may provide an obstacle to institutional development activities.

The study also has implications for our understanding of educational research:

10. This study focuses on understanding the variation in experience of relations between two aspects of the lifeworld and indicates that it is a richer and more informative way to develop an understanding than a statistical approach. Studying the experience of relations between aspects of learning and teaching may be more useful than regarding them as individual and isolated.

11. Experiences based on the individual will be influenced by different aspects of their lives and are likely to be relational in more complex ways than traditional phenomenographic approaches suggest.
12. Phenomenography as a research approach provides a structured and detailed way to understand human experience, but is limited by a methodology that fails to account for the influence of context and the personal developmental history of individuals.
13. It is possible to combine a phenomenographic approach with activity theory to analyse the context of the experience and to relate categories of variation to contextual factors influencing particular experiences. This is a more sophisticated approach to understanding context than many phenomenographic studies have hitherto addressed.

However, there are limitations to this study:

14. The study is a small scale one and limited in its relevance to other art and design contexts, but suggests that practitioners who teach in other disciplinary contexts may also influence students' learning in different ways according to their experience of relations between practice and teaching.
15. The study does not address fulltime academics in art and design and it would be interesting to understand how fulltimers experience relations between practice and teaching and other aspects of their role in F/HE.
16. As a phenomenographic study this takes a broad look at subject areas in art and design but is unable to distinguish possible differences between practices

within the broad umbrella of art and design. There are suggestions that fine art may be different to design and this requires more detailed research.

17. The study is limited in identifying specific ways to change practitioner tutors' experiences of practice teaching relations; these are inferred from the literature on teacher development rather than a direct result of the study.

This summary of my analysis will be further explored in the following discussion.

***There are different ways to experience the relationship between practice and teaching and these ways of experiencing impact on the student learning experience. (Summary points 1&2)***

It is possible to experience the relationship between practice and teaching as a symmetrical, asymmetrical or holistic one. The referential components of experience consist of different ways that practice knowledge is employed when teaching, suggesting different ways in which students have access to knowledge of practice. Tutors can experience this as transferring, using, exchanging or eliding their practice knowledge with teaching. The resulting five categories create a hierarchy that is not simply a range from poor to excellent or from bad to good. The outcome space suggests that there are limitations and benefits for students associated with different categories of experience. As phenomenographic categories are not attributes of individuals and it is possible to experience more than one aspect of variation simultaneously this should be born in mind (Walsh 2000, Åkerlind 2005, Ashwin 2006). At different times different practitioner teachers will probably have a tendency towards different ways of experiencing practice/ teaching relations, and the case studies show more extreme association with one particular category is possible. As the categories are inclusive (with the exception of two strategies associated only with

category 2) tutors who demonstrate the more expanded ways to experience practice teaching relations can also demonstrate aspects of the other categories, but not vice versa.

The hierarchical inclusivity of phenomenographic categories (Åkerlind 2003) means that the more expanded ways to experience practice/ teaching relations also have more associated strategies to draw on practice knowledge in the teaching environment. Tutors with more expanded ways to experience practice/ teaching relations are potentially enabling a richer learning experience for their students as they have more associated strategies for relating practice knowledge to the teaching environment. Use of strategies is not therefore associated necessarily with the degree of experience that teachers have as Coffey & Gibbs (2002) tentatively suggested. This study indicates that using more ways to teach is associated with the way in which tutors experience the relationship between their practice and their teaching. However, for case study 1 a limited knowledge of higher education and limited time spent in teaching was part of the personal experience associated with transferring knowledge. This category of experience also forms part of the nested set of categories of possible ways to experience practice teaching relations and other factors are also associated with a transmission approach to teaching, such as lack of autonomy. For practitioner tutors in art and design employing a range of teaching strategies is not simply about skills or ways to teach; or indeed length of time spent in teaching; this study indicates that there is a link between tutors' experience of the relationship between practice and teaching and the use of experiential knowledge of practice in the teaching situation. The way that practice/ teaching relations are experienced is associated with the potential range of teaching methods used.

Where practice/ teaching relations are experienced as asymmetrical and practice focused there are distinctive separations between practice and teaching worlds. The

associated use of knowledge is a transmission one and such separation of practice and teaching worlds may account for some of the ways that orientation to (Kember 1997, Kember & Gow 1994) or conceptions of teaching (Prosser & Trigwell 1999) are formulated in practice-based teaching. This isolation between practice and teaching is also present to some extent when a symmetrical relation between practice and teaching is experienced, where there is an associated tension between the two worlds. Both these categories of experiencing can limit the flow of information and knowledge from practitioner to students who are not enabled to fully understand or vicariously experience the practice world through the tutor acting as or providing mediating or bridging artefacts between two activity systems required to enable exchanges (Ludvigsen et al. 2003, Konkola et al. 2007). If tutors focus solely on skilled production of the artefact in teaching it is unlikely that students will be able to access more complex understanding of the social world of practice, and if opportunities for sharing practice experiences are limited by the tutor experiencing tension between practice and teaching they are less likely to be offered bridging experiences into the world of practice. As a link between tutors' approaches to teaching and students approaches to learning has been identified, where student focused teaching is associated with deep approaches to learning (Trigwell et al. 1999), this study suggests that in practice-based subjects more complex ways to engage in practice are unlikely to be instigated in learners who have little understanding of the social and emotional aspects of practicing in art and design and for whom a focus on skills will constitute the whole learning experience due to the practitioner tutor's experience of practice/ teaching relations.

More complex interaction and use of practice knowledge with students is associated with tutors who engage more fully in the activity system of teaching or who reconstruct the system to incorporate their practice in a holistic manner. These more inclusive ways to experience relations between practice and teaching draw more fully

on all aspects of living and working in a particular practice, to allow students to understand what it means to practice. This is a central tenet of art and design education, as current practices constitute an essential part of the knowledge base of art and design (Logan 2006) and is a key reason for employing large numbers of part time practitioners to teach, with the implicit assumption that those who practice make the best teachers (Eisner 1974).

***Working between practice and teaching environments is not a simple transition between contexts, or a question of adopting a dual identity or melding oneself into a hybrid practitioner teacher. There are different ways that this relationship can be constituted and experienced. (Summary points 3-5)***

In order for students to learn about contemporary or current practices in art and design the practitioner tutor provides a key part in the learning process. Because it is possible to experience variation in the relationship between practice and teaching tutors act in different ways, transferring, using, exchanging or eliding knowledge of practice in their teaching. The transitions they make between their two working worlds are not a straightforward amalgamation or gluing together (Beckett & Gough 2004), but are dependent on the structure of their experience. Where tutors provide bridging artefacts between the two worlds this supports students' learning. There are a number of ways that this can take place, from the simplest forms of using or bringing physical artefacts into the teaching environment, to becoming a 'boundary crosser' (Konkola et al. 2007) or bridging artefact themselves.

It would appear that practitioner tutors have to take an active role in mediating between the two systems if students are to fully benefit from their knowledge. There are four possible ways that this can be done. Firstly they can become a mediating artefact in the student's learning, a tool to enable students to understand the meaning

and the context of the practice they are learning. In this case they would appear to fulfil dual roles as both subject and mediating artefact in the education activity system. Secondly they can become a boundary crossing object between the two activity systems (as described in Ludvigsen et al. 2003) where they move between the two worlds and enable students to have insights into practice, or to learn vicariously, a way to develop an identity of participation (Wenger 1998: 203/4). Thirdly, practice itself becomes a mediating artefact as its conditions are replicated by tutors, for the student. Fourthly practitioners can become a subject within the system alongside their students, learning together and sharing actions, more akin to learning in social apprenticeship models (Lave & Wenger 1991) where more experienced practitioners support engagement in the community through legitimate peripheral participation.

Practitioner tutors can fulfil the role of a boundary crossing object, or being a boundary crosser (Konkola et al. 2007) being a link that understands the two worlds or two cultures of practice and education, capable of mediating both, but only if they experience the relationship between practice and teaching in certain ways. They provide a link that enables the two worlds of practice and education to interact, in ways advocated by Garraway (2006) for example, but this can only come about if the relationship between the two worlds or activity systems is experienced as balancing or as moving across into teaching. Holistic ways to experience practice and teaching imply that there are no boundaries to cross, but education and creative practice are part of the same practice for the practitioner tutor.

Thus variation in experiencing relations between practice and teaching can have significant implications for student learning in art and design and will construct what and how students learn. This explains some of the concerns expressed about practitioners or artists in residence in schools (Burgess 1995) and the perceived need

to develop part time tutors in art and design as teachers (ADEPTT 2005). The particular ways in which learning experiences are constituted for students frequently centre on individual tutors and the experience of relations between and within two or more working environments affect how they convey practice knowledge. Simply employing a practitioner in the education environment is not enough to ensure that students or pupils will learn about current art or design practice. The assumption that those who make the best teachers are those who 'do' is a poor rationale for ensuring the currency of the art and design curriculum. Where students are enabled to learn most about practice the tutor is either focused on teaching and incorporating their experiential knowledge of practice as a tool for learning, balancing and bridging the worlds of practice and teaching through exchanging knowledge back and forth between the two worlds, or sees teaching as part of their practice, engaging students in the experience as co-subjects jointly participating in discussion and activities around the same issues. The relationship between practice and teaching, as the tutor experiences it, is fundamental in determining access to the world of practice.

Learning can therefore be seen to be dependent on the individual tutor and the way they experience the relationship between practice and teaching. Each tutor has a personal history of development and this implies that identity work relative to both work contexts is being constructed or enacted by tutors. Their sense of identity in relation to practice and teaching also forms part of the way they experience relations between both work contexts.

***The individual's sense of identity is central to the way that teaching is undertaken and this is influenced by their multiple work contexts and perceived relations within and between the work contexts. (Summary points 6-7)***

The two working contexts of practice and teaching are sites where identity is being played out. As practitioners *and* teachers there are different ways that this identity can be constructed. The five phenomenographic categories could be said to indicate the different ways that practitioner tutors experienced and reported their identity in this study and this sense of identity constitutes the relationship between practice and teaching in different ways:

1. I'm a practitioner
2. I'm a teacher, but able to do both
3. I'm in no-man's-land
4. I'm a multi-dimensional practitioner
5. I'm an artist educator

As phenomenographic categories are not mutually exclusive, but are relational and expansive (Ashwin 2006) it would follow that one can experience multiple aspects of identity (Parker 2000). But as the selected case studies also suggest, some people associated more fully with one particular category or way of identifying themselves at the time of the interview, with their practice or with education. An individual's sense of identity is therefore an important factor in experiencing practice and teaching and the relation between them, there is a kind of positioning of the person in relation to their work and the positioning is explicated in the way that they describe their practice and teaching. Identity formation seems to be comprised of a number of factors or associations in regard to a sense of self. The first of these is that more than one work context is involved.

Unlike previous studies of academics' identity (Menter et al. 1997, Trowler 1998, Henkel 2000) where only one work context has been identified, here practitioner tutors are working in at least two environments and both have a relationship to their

identity. Where there is confidence and ability to act, to take decisions, to cope with the unexpected, tutors seem to associate more strongly with the world where this happens, for example in case study 2 where he feels free to act and respond in positive ways to unexpected situations arising in the teaching environment. The examples of the case studies where autonomy is not present show that the tutor has little sense of being able to take action in education, case study 1, and neither practice nor education in case study 3. The latter case is particularly interesting as it indicates a problematic relationship to both worlds. Practice appears to need legitimisation, be fragmented and fragile. Her teaching is charged with tensions within the division of labour, she is uncertain about her role and what is expected of herself and others; she is in a state of liminality in relation to both aspects of her working life perhaps, not fully in control of either. She also feels that the division of labour and her own abilities to fulfil what is expected of her are unrealistic and do not support students learning and this causes tensions within the activity system in education. Such relations between the individual and the activity system in which they work are indicative of unsettling or problematic relations which impact on the sense of self and 'diminish' the identity (Menter et al 1997), in turn perhaps reinforcing the sense of allegiance with neither practice nor teaching in this case, but an oscillation between the two worlds.

Such feelings of lack of control and ability to act in the education system are also associated with an emphasis on reproducing skills when teaching. The tutor who conforms to the rules of the system that he encounters also transmits his knowledge to students and expects a technically expert product. This association between experiencing a lack of control in what and how teaching is performed and an ITTF approach to teaching has also been shown in more traditional academic subjects (Prosser & Trigwell 1997). The relationship between practice and teaching with an emphasis on practice means that the product, the technical ability and the skills, the

kinds of qualities needed to produce professional artefacts in a competitive world is to the fore in teaching as well as practice. In this study the conflation between the object of activity in practice with the object of activity in teaching changes the emphasis from learning and the student experience to the product, with the resulting ITTF approach. Therefore, lack of ability to take control in teaching in association with a product focused understanding about the object or purpose of teaching is likely to result in an ITTF approach.

If the individual's understanding of the object/outcome is the driver for actions in the activity system (Kaptelinin 2005) this is a way to understand the link between the conception of subject and the approach taken to teaching previously found in phenomenographic studies (Prosser et al. 2005). In design the understanding of subject or the 'design entity' associated with a skills focused transmission is the extrinsic technical category as identified by Reid and Davies (2003). It is possible therefore that there is an association between the sense of identity of the tutor, whether they position themselves as a practitioner or as a teacher, or both, the way they conceive of their practice as a subject and the autonomy or degree of agency they feel able to exert within the social context of teaching. These all seem to be linked through the way that practice/ teaching relations are experienced in art and design, which appear to constitute fairly fundamental aspects of being a practitioner tutor and drive the way that teaching is undertaken.

A sense of identity associated with teaching (case studies 2 and 4) also indicates a certain degree of engagement with the activity system of teaching. Tutors appear to be more involved and understand the people, their roles and the rules in the education system. When practitioner tutors identify more strongly with being a teacher they are very happy to describe themselves as teachers and see themselves and their future in education. They demonstrate more engagement with the activity

system of education which Nicol (2000) suggests is a key to developing part time tutors. They are also projecting a story of belonging to the world of education. These aspects of the interview constitute an example of biographic narrative (Gergen 2001, Taylor & Littleton 2006), consisting of a past, a present and a future, which projects a story of being part of the world of education. They are envisioning their future as being engaged with the community and the system in this social practice. Through engagement, imagination and alignment, they begin to see themselves as part of the community of practice in higher education (Wenger 1998: 189) and therefore are constructing and declaring their identity in the interview process.

Where tutors do not feel confident about declaring their identity as a practitioner or a tutor they experience tensions between the two worlds and this also seems to be associated with their experience of legitimisation, how they perceive that others view their work in terms of payment they receive and therefore 'success'. Two interviewees cite that earning enough money to live through your practice is a form of legitimising your practice. Although there is evidence in other accounts of the problem and difficulty of earning a living through practice, for some people it is a central concern and source of tension. I would suggest from the accounts that this is also associated with the construction of identity through the social influences which each individual has been involved with previously. This is 'identity work' (Taylor & Littleton 2006) in practice, examples of individuals drawing on wider social discourse, where the financial return for work, being able to sustain yourself through your work, is part of a narrative for a successful and independent life. This could be described as a discourse of the protestant work ethic perhaps, or of the capitalist society we live in. Payment legitimises what you undertake as 'work'. This experience is critical to the two camps case study and indicates that remuneration is a powerful influence in the structuring of relations between practice and teaching for certain people. Others appear to cope with this difficulty of remuneration through the integration of their

practice with their paid work as teachers, or they experience both practice *and* teaching as forms of legitimisation and remuneration. Where there are difficulties with adequate remuneration from practice, for some people this becomes a problem in terms of their identity as a practitioner and it appears to affect the way that practice teaching relations are experienced.

Where integrated experiences between practice and teaching occur it seems that the identity of the tutor embraces both teaching and art as extensions of one practice. One tutor cited examples of the 'artist educator' in fine art; a descriptive term often applied to those who practice art and work with the public in galleries (Ross et al. 2004). The fine artist is perhaps more likely to have access to such a discourse, as artists have been particularly prominent in setting out educational practices within the modernist art movements of the twentieth century (see Yeomans 2005 for example). There is little research evidence explicating the exact nature of the role however and whether it actually has a specific meaning in relation to an integrated identity or not would require further research. There appears to be less evidence in this study to support an equivalent role for designers, but as we have seen, boundaries between disciplinary practices are fluid and access to terminology or concepts as determining factors of variation in practices have been highlighted by Säljö (1997) to be methodologically flawed. Integrated identities could therefore be associated with a particular understanding of the object outcome, or purpose in art and design education, or to be structured by a concept which is socially determined, the notion of the 'artist educator' which accepts that art practice and teaching form a continuum of ones own artistic practice.

Thus for practitioner tutors in art and design their sense of identity appears to be a central part of the relations they experience between practice and teaching. Identity is a construct and projection of the self, possibly expressed through drawing on cultural

examples (Holland & Valsiner 1988, Holland et al. 1998) such as the artist educator, or narratives of identity (Gergen 2001, Taylor & Littleton 2006) such as legitimisation of work practices through payment. Such social constructs of the self appear to be nuanced and complex, so that each individual may construct or relate their own particular aspects of self according to personal experiences both historically and in their current worlds of work. These are ongoing projects of the self (Giddens 1991) where both their practice and teaching their practice influence how the project of the self is expressed.

***For art and design teaching in F/HE the development of practitioners as tutors may need to address the different ways it is possible to experience the relationship between their practice and their teaching, though individual ontogenies may provide an obstacle to institutional development activities. (Summary points 8 and 9)***

The variation in experiencing practice teaching relations is indicative of both restrictive access to current practice where there is an emphasis on learning skills and also of an holistic integration into current practices, where tutors act as facilitators. This accounts for the dichotomy in the reported value of part time tutors in art and design, as either excellent examples (e.g. Dearing 1997, QAA 1999) or as problematic and needing development as teachers (ADEPTT 2005) and a potential threat to quality assurance procedures (Bryson & Blackwell 2001).

Given that the relationship experienced between practice and teaching is variable and influenced by both the personal history of the tutor and the context of both working environments, the materials for both self development and institutional development provided by the ADEPPT project for example may not be sufficient in themselves to enable practitioners to develop as teachers. The different categories of

experiencing relations between practice and teaching range from those that isolate the practitioner from the world of teaching and those where the practitioner is engaged. The support materials of the ADEPTT facilitator's pack (ADEPTT 2005) are seen as a means to further engagement in F/HE, but unless the underpinning relationship between practice and teaching can be influenced it is possible that these kinds of materials will not lead to any more engagement than the prevailing experience of practice/ teaching relations determines. For example tutors who are aware of the educational activity system, such as the case study for category 3, do not engage in education to the same extent as in case study 2 or enable students to benefit fully from their knowledge of practice as they experience tensions between the activity systems of practice and teaching. If the fundamental experience of the relation between practice and teaching is not changed, simply knowing about educational practices in this case is insufficient to enable tutors to engage more fully and provide their students with an understanding about art and design practices.

This suggests that development as a teacher, taking an ontological approach to development (Dall'Alba 2005, 2007), or changing the way that practitioners experience *being* a tutor (Åkerlind 2004), is what development activities should focus on. In order to succeed in developing practitioners as tutors the underlying relationship between practice and teaching would require a predominant experience of 'moving across' into teaching, or being able to move fluently between practice and teaching and to learn while teaching or to see practice and teaching as contiguous. Where an integrated approach to practice teaching relations includes the students as co-subjects in the activity system of teaching this appears to place the tutor in the role of facilitator in engaging students in the same kinds of practices as they themselves experience, although the case study indicates tensions between the rules of the education system and the intentions of the tutor. Even here there are potential barriers to developing practitioners as teachers if they perceive that there are

conflicts or tensions between what their practice approach requires and what the rules or the prevailing structures of the education system require. The holistic relationship between practice and teaching is however based on an ontological approach (Dall'Alba 2007), rather than a skills based or content approach to teaching and this could be maximised in developing practitioners as teachers.

Development activities may also need to raise awareness of the ways in which tutors can use their knowledge of practice in teaching, that is, the strategies associated with the phenomenographic categories, and also to be made aware of the possible relations that can exist between practice and teaching. The emphasis on the whole experience of 'being a teacher', 'integrating knowing, acting and being' (Dall'Alba p361) also suggests that discussion and exploration of strategies associated with using experiential knowledge of practice in teaching might also support and develop more practical ways for tutors to change the way they experience relations between practice and teaching. If you are not aware of potential ways in which you yourself can become a mediating artefact or provide mediation between practice and students learning about practice it is also possible that this will inhibit development and identification with teaching. Developing practitioners as teachers is therefore not simply about conceptual change (Ho 2000, Ho et al. 2001), or about processes and techniques (Coffey & Gibbs 2002), but about understanding and experiencing relations between the different aspects of their working lives.

Where practitioner tutors in this study appear to be aware of the activity system of education and feel able to act with confidence within it there is already some degree of engagement. This is important for the development of practitioners as tutors according to Nicol (2000), in both formal accredited courses and the informal social structures they encounter in education (Tait 2002, Knight et al. 2006). However, the study indicates that active construction of relations between activity systems, the

exchange and use of knowledge between different aspects of tutors' working lives, could support the move towards engagement with the various components of the activity system of education in their local teaching context.

The apparent importance of identity in relation to practice and teaching also suggests that having access to narratives of identity as a practitioner/ tutor or artist educator may also help to construct an integrated approach to practice teaching relations; supporting 'identity work' (Taylor & Littleton 2006) might be a fruitful avenue to explore. It may be possible to construct ways to be both practitioner and teacher, with less conflict and tension between activities, perhaps by aligning common aspects of both activities through discussion and exploration from a theoretical as well as a practical understanding. I would suggest that developing tutors' understanding of relationships could also apply to teaching and research, or teaching and the concept of the subject (Prosser et al. 2005, Prosser et al. 2007). Developing part time tutors as teachers could therefore benefit from an exploration of their understanding of teaching and its relation to other contexts of their work, either as academics, researchers, or practicing professionals. This variation in relationships between different aspects of their lives is critical to the way that activities are experienced and undertaken. Variation in experience is an important factor in phenomenographic studies that look for relations between aspects of experience (e.g. Prosser et al. 2007), but it is not usually the relations themselves that are the focus of a phenomenographic investigation.

***This study focuses on understanding the variation in experience of relations between two aspects of the lifeworld and indicates that it is a richer and more informative way to develop an understanding than a statistical approach.***

***Studying the experience of relations between aspects of learning and teaching***

***may be more useful than regarding them as individual and isolated. (Summary points 10-13)***

Through focusing on the variation in relations as they are experienced between practice and teaching and also on the context and its influence or association with particular ways to experience the relationship, this study adopts a different approach to the study of relations than most phenomenographic research which uses statistics to examine relations (Prosser et al. 2005, Prosser et al. 2007). Where a statistical link is demonstrated between different studies this cannot explain why the link is there or what causes the link. By looking at relations as the primary focus of experience this study shows that there are different ways in which practice/ teaching relations are experienced and also different relations between the individual both within and between the work contexts of their experience. Both personal histories of development and the way that individuals experience their work relationships structure the experience for the individual as demonstrated by Billett (2001) and also in this study. Interviews provide a rich source of data or 'thick description' (Geertz 1983) and a phenomenographic approach on its own tends to flatten out the depth, although it provides an excellent description of the possible ways that something can be experienced (Prosser & Trigwell 1999).

The analysis of practitioner tutors' experience of relations between two work contexts in art and design has been enriched through using activity theory as a heuristic to examine the case studies illustrating each phenomenographic category of description. This provides a more comprehensive view than studies in other disciplines using single approaches to examining practitioners who also teach (e.g. Elcock 1998, Fairbrother & Mathers 2004, Gillespie & McFetridge 2006) and to phenomenographic studies that compare or relate aspects of teaching and learning (e.g. Prosser & Trigwell 1997, Prosser et al. 2005, Prosser et al. 2007). The benefit of

using phenomenography is that the process allows the researcher to reconstruct the ways in which experience differs and presents a conceptual framework to understand variation in experience (Åkerlind 2005). By focusing on variation in relations this provides a more direct way to understand relational aspects of working in higher education than looking for statistical significance between different studies of practice, or subject, or research and teaching (e.g. Prosser et al. 2007). These may indicate that there is a relationship, but cannot identify how the relationship might be experienced or what factors might contribute to this. My interpretation indicates significant qualitative variation within the experience of practice/teaching relations and unlike a statistical analysis I show how the relationship between practice and teaching can be formed in different ways. My analysis also indicates ways that variation influences practitioner tutors' approach to their teaching, through the way that knowledge of practice is used and the associated strategies for teaching which make this knowledge available to students, and this may account in some cases for the variation that Drew (2003) for example found in approaches to teaching in art, design and communication.

The introduction of a second phase of analysis provides a broader view of the relationships between the individual subject and the contexts of working which are important influences on experience. The context in phenomenographic terms is brought back into the picture in more relational ways (Billett 2001, Billett 2002, Edwards & D'Arcy 2004, Billett & Somerville 2004) than a statistical analysis can do. As this viewpoint is always that of the individual as subject within two (and sometimes more) activity systems the interrelationships are always reconstructed from the point of view of the particular person in the case study which is consistent with phenomenographic approaches which are filtered through individual's awareness (Marton 2000). This provides a different way to understand variation in the relationship together with the influences that help to shape variable experiences. The

case studies, through more comprehensive alignment with one particular way of experiencing practice teaching relations, provide an indicator of possible factors that are associated with ways of experiencing, not specific cause and effect. Thus the context, which remains outside the phenomenographic methodology can be brought into focus and related to the categories of experience, providing more explanatory means to understanding variation in experiencing practice/ teaching relations in art and design.

Although this study only looks at tutors in art and design subjects who describe themselves as practitioners as well as tutors, there are likely to be similarities to other discipline areas where practice based subjects are taught, such as nursing, law and medicine. The study does have some wider applicability, not only to practice based teaching, but to the educational research community as well, but as a small-scale research project it also has limitations.

***The study is a small scale one and limited in its relevance to other art and design contexts and does not address full time academics in art and design. It does suggest that practitioners who teach in other disciplinary contexts may also influence students' learning in different ways according to their experience of relations between practice and teaching. (Summary points 14-15)***

The findings in this study are likely to be applicable to wider contexts of practice-based teaching, which rely on those who are engaged in their practice to teach students in educational institutions. The study suggests that viewing the relationship between practice and teaching as a relatively straightforward transition or a matter of melding identities or practices together (Beckett & Gough 2004), misses the implications for student learning from practitioner teachers as a result of variation in this relationship. Even where practice and teaching are seen as conflicted or seen as

two camps or two distinct practices (Fairbrother & Mathers 2004) there may be other aspects of the relationship which can be developed to provide a better learning experience for students. This study shows that the relationship between practice and teaching is directly related to how tutors enable students to learn and to what extent they facilitate an understanding about the practice, rather than emphasise skills and products. Where practitioners also benefit and learn while they are teaching they are more likely to enable student learning, so it is likely to be important to address this relationship in other disciplinary contexts, rather than accept that there are simple transitions (Beckett & Gough 2004) or largely irreconcilable tensions between the two cultures of practice and teaching (Fairbrother & Mathers 2004).

The experience of those who describe themselves as practitioners and tutors in this study mainly consisted of part time tutors, but also included those appointed to fractions of a full time post. The phenomenographic methodology required a wide range in terms of experience and time spent in teaching in order to maximise variation (Trigwell 2000, Åkerlind 2005), but none of those interviewed was in full time employment in education. The case study illustrating category 2, moving across, was indicative of a trajectory of participation (Dreier 1999) into being a university teacher. There were also two strategies associated with this category of variation that were not present in other categories or part of the nested hierarchy of categories of variation. This suggests that there may be other ways that full time academics may experience the relation between practice and teaching, as their primary activities are associated with the activity system of education. It is possible that the categories of variation will be the same, but it would be surprising given the indications associated with category 2. There are requirements for full time academics to be involved in teaching, research and administration in variable proportions (Henkel 2000) and the relations between these aspects of their work may influence how they perceive practice and how they teach as well. Although the teaching research nexus has been

examined in art and design in a small scale study (Trowler & Wareham 2007), the teaching, practice and subject relationship in art and design has not been fully explored and would be an interesting and possibly rich source of information about current academic experiences in institutions. In comparing full time experiences of the relationship between practice and teaching with this study there may be significant differences or issues relating to full time employment in education for those who are also expected to be practicing artists and designers. It is argued that the influence of the subject or discipline can also influence what teachers do (Becher 1989, Neumann et al. 2002, Lindblom-Ylänne et al. 2006) and this study includes a wide range of disciplinary practices within art and design but is not able to distinguish between them.

***As a phenomenographic study this takes a broad look at subject areas in art and design but is unable to distinguish possible differences between practices within the broad umbrella of art and design. (Summary point 16)***

The phenomenographic methodology also required that a range of different practices were included to ensure variation in experiencing teaching practice relations (Trigwell 2000). In this study there are tantalising glimpses that there may be differences associated with fine art practitioners compared to those of design tutors. This may be related to the way in which the object of activity in education is understood, where developing the person, rather than developing the skills to produce artefacts is the focus (Shreeve 2006), or it may be the conception of the subject which is different and a critical factor (Davies & Reid 2000, Reid & Davies 2002). There may be different cultural means (Holland et al. 1998) to draw on in different art and design disciplines to describe and construct the relationship between practice and teaching, or there may in fact be no basis for discipline based variation, though Drew and Williams (2003) indicate that there may be differences between the way fine art and

design tutors approach their teaching. This is largely unexplored however and disciplinary difference may work at general levels, but not at the local level. A closer examination of differences relating to disciplinary practice would certainly contribute to a better understanding of the complexity of teaching and learning in the evolving range of subjects that are loosely connected by the term art and design and may help to identify more succinctly, different ways to support the development of practitioners as tutors.

***The study is limited in identifying specific ways to change practitioner tutors' experiences of practice teaching relations; these are inferred from the literature on teacher development rather than a direct result of the study. (Summary point 17)***

In order to support and develop part-time and fractional tutors to teach and enable students to learn about current practice, so essential to the creative disciplines, a more detailed investigation is really required. The discussion relating to development of part-time tutors above relies on inference from other studies (e.g. Åkerlind 2003, 2004, Dall'Alba 2005, Ho 2000, Ho et al. 2001) rather than knowledge directly acquired through the research process. However, on the basis of this study it is possible to speculate that a developmental approach which addressed the relationship between practice and teaching and the subsequent impact on student learning that resulted from the variation may move some way to enabling practitioners to understand how they, as individuals, might influence student learning more effectively. Combined with a more practical exploration of the means to both engage with educational activity systems such as those provided by the (ADEPTT 2005) project and also ways to provide different links and bridges between practice and teaching, as this is identified as critical to movement between activity systems (Ludvigsen et al. 2003, Konkola et al. 2007), a different approach to professional

development activities could be instigated. This could also form a valuable contribution to professional development in the sector and potentially be relevant to other practice based subjects. Putting these approaches into practice would provide an opportunity to evaluate their impact.

## **Conclusion**

This study has shown that the relationship between practice and teaching is not a simple transition from one work context to another for practitioners who teach in art and design. There are different ways that the relationship can be experienced and these differences can influence the way that students are enabled to learn about practice. What is ostensibly a straightforward or taken for granted assumption that those who practice are the best teachers (Eisner 1974) is not a reliable measure of success for student learning.

Practitioner tutors may experience practice teaching relations as asymmetrical, symmetrical or holistic, with an associated use of experiential knowledge in teaching. Where tutors become mediating artefacts (Engeström 1990) or enable bridging (Engeström et al. 1995, Ludvigsen et al. 2003, Konkola et al. 2007) to take place between the two worlds of practice and teaching, their students are more likely to be offered opportunities to understand the context of skilled production and therefore better positioned to access current practice, which learning in creative practice requires.

Individual tutors experience variation in different ways and it is possible to have a more comprehensive association with one particular way of experiencing practice teaching relations. The case studies indicate that individual tutor experiences and sense of identity with practice and teaching has an important role to play in the way that practice teaching relations are formed. There may be cultural means available to

shape experiences (Holland et al. 1998) such as the idea of the artist educator, or narratives of identity that help to formulate value systems, such as payment validating work practices. These complex and nuanced influences are present in all individuals and help to shape the experience of practice teaching relations. It may therefore be more challenging to develop practitioners as tutors or to develop part time tutors than simply enabling them to access information about the education system.

Development may require a combination of information about ways that practice/teaching relations may be experienced and knowledge about strategies to use exchange or elide practice knowledge in teaching. Without changing the experience of practice/teaching relations it may not be possible to change the way that tutors teach.

The study is a small-scale investigation into practitioner tutors in art and design, but it is likely that it has relevance to other practice based subject areas. The design of the research also contributes to studies that build on a phenomenographic approach through using activity theory as an additional analytic tool (Åberg-Bengtsson 1998, Coupland & Crawford 2002, Berglund 2004). The contribution to knowledge and research made in this study will be further explored in the following, concluding chapter.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Concluding observations**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter considers the main issues raised by this thesis and the contribution to knowledge the study has made. This includes new knowledge about the experience of relationships between different working contexts for practitioner tutors and the impact this has on students' learning. I have also used phenomenography with activity theory as a heuristic, in a way that is slightly different to those combinations previously employed in educational research and this difference is explained. I address the possible application of knowledge gained in the study to wider contexts in learning and teaching in higher education and suggest areas for further research arising from this small-scale investigation.

#### **Understanding the experience of practitioner tutors in art and design**

The conflicting evidence in the literature about practitioner tutors in art and design: the positive reports (QAA 1999) and the concerns raised through the need to develop practitioners as teachers indicated by the ADEPTT project (2003, 2004), suggest that the relationship between practice and teaching is not a simple transition or melding of roles (Beckett & Gough 2004). I indicate through my analysis in this study that the relationship between practice and teaching can be experienced in five qualitatively distinct ways. These categories are hierarchically inclusive, with the exception of two strategies associated with category 2, which are not part of the hierarchy. The use of case studies illustrating more comprehensive association with particular categories of experience also suggest that it is possible for certain individuals to have more

extreme associations with one particular category or way of experiencing teaching practice relations than with others. The case studies also indicate that issues pertaining to individual ontogenies and to the way that both contexts are experienced could influence the experience of practice/ teaching relations. This is similar to research in other contexts such as learning in work situations (Billett 2001) and to disjunction in beliefs and intentions (Norton et al. 2005) which have shown that both individuals and contexts have influence on the way experience is reported, but this has not been fully explained in the literature in regard to practitioner tutors (e.g. Beckett & Gough 2004, Fairbrother & Mathers 2004).

Concerns about the use of practicing artists in schools and whether pupils benefit from these interactions (Eisner 1974, Burgess 1995) are illuminated by this study which shows that interactions within and between the working contexts of practice and teaching are associated with issues of identity and the perceived ability to act or only to conform to rules encountered in the education system. The way that practitioners use their practice knowledge in teaching is associated with issues of identity, autonomy, and relations within and between work in practice and education settings. Transitions between these two working environments are not simply about melding one into another, however closely they may appear to be related, but are about complex interrelationships working within and across both work contexts. If students are to learn about practice, practitioner tutors may need to be supported through ways to understand how they can enable practice to be understood or experienced by pupils and students and also how they themselves might learn whilst they are teaching.

The categories of variation construed from the data in this study are associated with particular ways that tutors make their practice knowledge available to students when they teach. There are strategies associated with the categories of experiencing

practice/ teaching relations that imply that students are supported in their learning about practice in different ways. As the categories are hierarchically inclusive more expanded ways to experience practice/ teaching relations are associated with more ways to help students to learn about practice. This suggests that for practice based subject areas the way that two working contexts are experienced can have a direct influence on the way that teachers teach and students learn. Thus developing approaches to teaching is not likely to be simply about methods or time spent in teaching as (Coffey & Gibbs 2002) proposed, but to also be about ways that whole life experiences are mediated by individuals. Approaches to development of teaching may need to address relations to multiple work and life contexts, the understanding of knowledge of practice and how that might be made available to students. This relates to teaching in higher education being seen as both an epistemological and an ontological issue (Dall'Alba 2007) where students are taught both what to do and what it is to experience within a particular discipline. In art and design education tutors who best emphasise what it is to experience being a practitioner rather than focus on skills are those who experience practice/ teaching relations in particular ways, not isolating their practice from their teaching and not 'dropping in' to teaching to pass on their skills.

Through undertaking this study I would also suggest that individual ontogenies or histories of development and the way that individuals constitute their identity are a central part of the way that relations are experienced between practice and teaching. The case studies suggest that particular situations in the contexts of practice and teaching environments can lead to the formation of experience in relations as asymmetrical, symmetrical or holistic. Where practitioner tutors enable transitions between the two contexts and become boundary crossers, or boundary objects (Engeström et al. 1995, Konkola et al. 2007) for their students, this facilitates learning about practice. Boundary crossing activities in practice-based teaching appear to be

undertaken in different ways, not simply one way. If maximum benefits are to be gained from employing practitioners to teach then ways to facilitate or to become a boundary object for your students may need to be explored more explicitly when employing part time tutors. There may also be implications for other disciplines with significant numbers of part time tutors and improvements to employment might not be solely about integrating part timers into educational institutions (Bryson 2003) but exploring relations between different working contexts and the use and exchange of practice knowledge when teaching.

### **Using phenomenography and activity theory**

The way in which phenomenographic categories have been expanded in this study is slightly different to other studies combining phenomenography and activity theory (Åberg-Bengtsson 1998, Coupland & Crawford 2002, Gordon & Nicholas 2002, Berglund 2004). All these studies vary in their use of activity theory as a framework to analyse data generated through a phenomenographic analysis. Some take a closer look at actions within the activity system (Coupland & Crawford 2002, Berglund 2004) and Åberg-Bengtsson uses the idea of tools in an educational setting and their influence in the way that conceptions of a phenomenon are constructed by learners. There are also different constructions of the activity system itself.

I have employed a case study approach based on the phenomenographic categories of variation (rather than the course as the case study in Berglund) with activity theory used as a heuristic to examine in more detail how the individual practitioner tutor experiences the interaction within and between different aspects of their practice and teaching their practice in an educational organisation. The use of individual case studies representing the different phenomenographic categories of experience allows a greater understanding of the contextual factors involved in experiencing a complex phenomenon and is a broader examination of the influence of context than the

examination of single 'nodes' or aspects of the activity system as in Åberg-Bengtsson for example. The wider contextual framework examined is necessitated by the research questions in this case, focussing on the relationship between different working contexts, but does suggest that an examination of relations through a phenomenographic analysis extended by case studies of the categories can reveal aspects of relations in more comprehensive ways than a statistical comparison.

The use of case studies enables a more detailed examination of relations between the individual and the world, the premise on which phenomenography is based, but the paradox which traditional phenomenographic methodologies present. By using case studies and activity theory together a more emotional, individualised, personalised narrative begins to populate the structure of experience with human exchanges and interactions with wider social contexts. These allow empathy and understanding to be brought to bear on aspects of experiencing in complex social situations and enables issues of agency and the wider socio-political aspects of experience to be considered as they impact on the individual and their actions.

Activity theory, as it is largely practiced in the West currently, tends to focus on collective actions, rather than examine individuals operating within collectively generated and determined activities. Kaptelinin (2005) points out that an emphasis on the individual in activity theory was a feature of Leont'ev's original work on activity systems as opposed to the emphasis on collective action that characterises the work of Engeström (e.g. Engeström 1990, Engeström et al. 1999, Engeström & Rückriem 2005). Recognising that the individual is bound up in multiple activities and that these are not separate, but also relational through being centred on the individual adds to our knowledge of relations within and between different activity systems and the influences this has on individual work practices. Individuals also contribute to complex objects of activity within a collective activity system such as education.

Through focusing on the variation in the way that relations between two aspects of work, ostensibly a straightforward relationship: practice and teaching your practice, it is possible to glimpse the complexity inherent in this relationship. There are also complexities within and between two work contexts and these influence reported actions undertaken in the teaching environment. Seeing relationships between the individual and both their working contexts is possible though using activity theory as a heuristic.

Dreier's (1999) idea of personal trajectories recognises that identities are bound up with working in multiple social practices across time and space. This study shows how such individual selves and identities are acted out in and across two activity systems. It provides a detailed investigation of the interrelationships, the tensions, individual histories and organisational contexts that are a part of one person's interaction within and between two systems. It also indicates that the individual both conforms to aspects of the system and also shapes aspects of the activities that form the system, but feels constrained by the perceived amount of power they have to change aspects of the activity system. Stetsenko (2005) argues theoretically that activity theory resolves the dualism between individuals and social behaviour through dialogic relations between activity, being object-related, having a material practice and involving individual subjectivities. My research shows empirically how these relationships are acted out between particular work settings.

In examining teaching and teachers' multiple engagement with different aspects of their working lives it may be profitable to consider further research which focuses on a qualitative examination of the relationship itself, whether this is 'the teaching research nexus', how conceptions of the subject are related to teaching, administrative and organisational aspects of roles in education, or relations between other teaching roles in other places for part time tutors. All such relations and multiple

aspects of working life must have an impact on each other and on the individual's identity and sense of self in relation to work practices and more particularly to students' learning.

The two strategies which are only associated with the phenomenographic category where there is an asymmetrical relationship between practice and teaching, with teaching more to the fore, also suggests that a study of full time academics in practice based subjects would be worth examining. If contemporary practice is seen as central to knowledge in the disciplines of art and design (Logan 2006) then how do those in full time education experience the relationship between practice and teaching?

The indications in this study that experiencing practice and teaching as integrated may also be associated with particular discourses, or narratives of identity, such as the artist educator, would also merit more research. There may be significant differences between the sub-disciplines of art and design, or it may be more related to the way that the subject or 'professional entity' (Reid & Petocz 2005) is experienced, or the way that the purposes of education are understood by individuals within the discipline. There are certainly many more questions arising from this study that would contribute to a relatively under-researched disciplinary area.

**This study has shown that a systematic, small-scale study in one discipline area can provide illuminating information about how teachers enable students to learn and how variation in the experience of practice/ teaching relations is central to the ontology of learning to practice. Transition between practice and teaching is a complex matter and assuming that practitioners make the best teachers over simplifies the relationship and ignores the potential impact on students learning to become practitioners in art and design.**

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# Appendix 1

## Schedule of Interview Questions

Introduction:

The purpose of the research, consent forms, confidentiality etc.

Could you please tell me:

Your Name:                      your age?

How long have you been a teacher in HE?

How many days/hours do you teach each week?

What do you teach?

### Teaching

Could you think about a specific teaching situation for me? (or one recently done).

What did you do?

    Why do you do that/ do it in that way?

    How did you learn to do that?

What kinds of things are you using to help your students to learn there?

What kind of things are you doing to help them learn that?

    Why do you do that?

What, for you, is success when you are teaching?

    Can you give me an example of that?

(What is most important for you when you are teaching? What are you trying to achieve in your teaching?)

Are there things which you feel you *have* to do in your teaching? (Rules)

    Why?

Would you do it differently if you could?

    Why?

Are there other people involved in your teaching and learning environment?

    What do they do? Why?

    Who else is involved in helping students to learn?

What do you enjoy most about teaching?

What do you find most frustrating?

### Can you tell me about your practice?

What do you do?

    Where do you work – what kind of company/place is that?

Can you describe a particular working day there?

Can you describe a particular job you've done?

Do you work with other people? What's that like?

What kinds of objects or processes are important in this environment?

How did you learn that?

What do you enjoy most about being a..?

What is most difficult?

Unpleasant? Tensions?

Why?

**Teaching and practice**

How does your teaching relate to your practice?

Do you bring in anything from your practice to your teaching?

What do you enjoy most about being a practitioner and also teaching?

What do you find most frustrating about being a practitioner and also teaching?

Why?

How do you describe yourself to others?

Thank you for your time and your willingness to discuss these issues with me.