

Looking before you leap: reflecting on Portwood's design process of doctoral projects

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Background and introduction

Work based researchers undertake research in the workplace in their capacity as worker researchers, insider researchers and or practitioner researchers. What they have in common is undertaking an inquiry within the work place setting. In this paper through an analysis of a design process of doctoral projects we shift attention away from the work place setting to focus on the work situation of the project including how the work based researcher is related to the place, their situatedness. The paper proffers an edited transcription of a seminar on Portwood's design process of doctoral projects and reflections of Volante and Weller around the treatment of situatedness within the design process to further dialogue and debate by the professional doctorate community and others concerned with work based research projects and impact¹.

Our starting point is an annual seminar on the nature and uses of projects given by Portwood in past years to professional doctorate candidates preparing for the project phase of their studies. An audio digital recording was made of one seminar and since Portwood's retirement has been listened to by candidates to reflect on the nature and use of their proposed doctoral project. We took the opportunity to transcribe² the recording to make Portwood's design process of doctoral projects available to a wider audience interested in professional doctorate work based

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research projects. The recording was transcribed verbatim and the version presented here copy edited to remove personal information and repetitions of material.

Our continued engagement with Portwood's design process of doctoral projects and interest in resources, power, affordances and impact of doctoral projects (Burgess et al (2013); Weller et al (2011)) has caused us to pause and reflect on how candidates are situated by the undertaking of a doctoral project and in so doing extend Portwood's design process of the nature and uses of projects. Portwood provides us with a design process for the worker researcher to interrogate and know why they are interested in a particular phenomenon: the *intent* of the research; how they are going to generate data of the phenomenon: *initiation* followed by *implementation* and produce outcomes: *impact*. We argue that within the design process the situatedness of doctoral candidates is deserving of greater attention at project conception to encompass a pre-project intention phase (and in the other design phases) if we are to further understandings of impact e.g. a co-emergent tendency of project processes and processing rather than Portwood's post doctoral completion occurrence. Furthering conceptual understanding of impact through attending to situatedness may illuminate how some professional doctorate projects have greater impact than others within the work situation.

Portwood's design process emphasises fitness *of* purpose, the relationship of the intent and initiation of the project located in the subjectivity of the interaction of place and researcher: in other words the situatedness of professional doctorate projects. Neumann and Neumann (2015, p. 799) define being situated as '*having awareness of the relationship between one's self and one's context*' and identify situatedness as necessitating different analytical treatments depending on the stage of the project. Their exploration is set against the traditional research context of the researcher as 'apart' from the research setting. For the work based researcher this is not the case, rather they start from a position of being in and of the research setting *a priori* (Costley et al 2010). While Neumann and Neumann (2015) consider treatment of situatedness as either reflexive (how interlocutors affect the researcher) or analytic (how the researcher affects interlocutors), situatedness of professional doctorate projects encompassing

change in and of the work situation needs to be concerned with both. In addition, our view is that the professional doctorate work based researcher needs to address situatedness as part of formulating the intent of the project. In this paper, Portwood's design process is used to explore how situatedness of the worker researcher might be addressed as a prelude to formulating the project intention. The edited transcript of Portwood's seminar is presented now as the building block for exploring situatedness of work based doctoral projects.

Introducing projects and the doctoral project

"I'm talking about the nature and uses of doctoral projects and I'm talking in fairly general terms about projects rather than focussing on any specific professional field. I see the doctorate as a project. Candidates quite often use other images; sometimes they use the image of a journey or a tree with all sorts of roots and fruits. The one thing this doctorate is not is a course. You can easily see a modular programme of this nature as a course, a bit like a Grand National at Aintree where you've got to jump over hurdles and when you get to the final project it feels a bit like jumping Becher's Brook (a horse racing track at Aintree, near Liverpool, UK). I want to emphasise the Doctorate in Professional Studies is not a course. You gain a totally different feel to this doctoral experience if you do not regard it as a course. It is a programme. It is a coherent, cohesive type of exercise where it draws on the past, it lives in the present, and it is looking forward to the future: a project.

Projects are very, very important to this doctorate. In fact you can understand the doctoral programme as a project-driven exercise. The whole thing is a project-driven exercise: in its totality and in its parts. One of the major processes in this doctorate is reflection. For your programme you are reflecting heavily on projects, on the past. When you reflect on your past one way in is to think of it as a whole collection, a constellation of projects, often with an overarching project. For instance, a professional career is a project, and a professional career has many projects within it. There are training projects, postgraduate projects, a whole range of different kind of projects which make the overarching professional career. This DProf Studies programme is a constellation of projects. So for instance one project you are reflecting on is

your personal professional learning. A review of that nature is a kind of project in its own right as is reflecting on and reviewing your learning of research and development. Reflection is a means and aid to develop projects. We'll come to what these projects are about in a moment or two. One of the things we had to tackle when we got into workplace learning was the relevance of the research approach of the universities. We had to start thinking research and development and the 'and' is absolutely crucial: research *and development*. It is not simply the validity of a method that you are looking at; you are also looking at the value of the outcomes. This whole question of value is "what's the value of what you're getting up to, what is happening"? Certainly knowledge must be an outcome of doctoral study, clearly. There are many other kinds of different values. From a project point of view work-based learning cannot ignore this question of value: what's the value of your work based research doctoral programme to whatever public is being involved, whatever community, and whatever organisation, whatever audience is being involved in this particular work. I tackle this question of the nature and uses of projects by looking at various processes involved in project activity, starting by using a couple of illustrations which I keep using to illustrate the points that I want to make.

Illustration one

The National Trust has a building, an estate really, just north of Cambridge. There was an abbey there at one time in the 12th century and there is very little of it left, the only bit of it left is the old refectory, beautiful arches. A country estate house was built on the old site of the abbey in 1600 and that's what's now called Anglesey Abbey. It's a fabulous building, a liveable in building not like the usual National Trust ones with these huge stately homes. This one is a very liveable in kind of house. It sits in a hundred acres of parkland and gardens and is famous for its national collection of snowdrops.

The project I want to refer to from Anglesey Abbey was the previous owner before he handed it over to the National Trust: Lord Fairhaven. He was an avid collector like a lot of these ennobled people are and he had made all sorts of marvellous collections from all over the world. He was

not able to really display these collections adequately and so he came up with the idea “I’ll build an annexe to Anglesey Abbey”. You can just imagine a Grade I building and all the complications of putting an extension onto a Grade I building to display his various collections. For instance there is the incredible collection of paintings of Windsor Castle, 50 different paintings of Windsor Castle. Probably his most famous collection is of clocks; there are many, many clocks from all over the world in working order in all the different rooms. It was a very, very difficult project that he had to undertake, putting up this extension to Anglesey Abbey, conforming to all sorts of rules and regulations.

Illustration two

The second project is also a building in the middle of Broadmead, the Galleries, in the centre of Bristol. Right in the middle is an oasis, what I always think of as an oasis, it is the place where John and Charles Wesley started their ministry. In 1739, John was a vicar in the Church of England, and he had a very strong social conscience. Right in the middle of Bristol he built a dispensary and schoolroom for impoverished children. This attracted a lot of working class people and he began to realise he had to put across from his point of view the gospel message to the poor of Bristol, and so he built a chapel. It was the very first Methodist chapel built in 1748 the work of John and Charles Wesley.

When I first found this incredible building stuck in the middle of this shopping arcade I couldn’t believe it. The old stables were still there, the old dispensary, sickroom for the children and there was the chapel. In the chapel the thing that struck me most of all, and I’ll use it to get some messages across in a minute or two, was the pulpit. It was a two-tiered pulpit, most unusual, there were two tiers, and the preacher used the upper tier, not simply because he was high and mighty up there but because there was a door behind it. There was a lot of agitation from the establishment, often a mob was incited and they would flood into the chapel. The preacher would escape through the door down a back stairs, an escape route. A mob in a church is not something one thinks of nowadays but it makes a point. He was engaged in a project, starting with the educational and health needs of poor children and then preaching his

particular version of the Protestant religion. As a consequence Methodism was born: a massive movement of millions or more members worldwide.

Four key points about projects

Now from those two illustrations there are a number of points I can already make. First of all projects are about purposeful activity. That's the first point. Projects have always got a purpose. They are a purposeful activity, but there's always a 'but'. That's how I think, I think in terms of paradoxes and contradictions, and there's always a 'but' or a 'however'. The purposeful activity obviously has consequences, but those consequences may not be the intended consequences. Quite frequently there'll be unwanted consequences. So although projects are all about purposeful activity, do not be surprised if there are unintended or unwanted consequences.

A second point about projects: all projects are collaborative. This is not the lonely scholar in the attic: this kind of work that we're engaged in is always collaborative by nature; it's not you by yourself. One of the important things to bring out in your studies is the whole collaborative nature of your work; who is involved. Even the lonely scholar in the attic has got the library and that's a form of collaboration. To use the ideas which have been published from whoever, that is a form of collaboration, to see literature as a collaborative activity rather than simply as "I'm reading it to try to get some quotes which will bolster my arguments". Rather try to see reading as a dialogue, using literature in terms of dialogue. But there's always a 'but' with the collaborative. There are two meanings to collaboration: one is what most people think of, working together, engaging in something which is mutually agreed. But as the French would say, there is another form of collaboration, and that is with the enemy and that's treasonable activity, punishable by death.

And there is an angle to collaboration that some people will not take kindly to: they find it threatening. From their point of view it's a kind of treasonable type activity. "Why are you upsetting the applecart? Why do we have to change"? Collaborative activity does require leadership and management: the whole question of having to manage projects. Two very, very

important capabilities of projects are political awareness and astuteness, and the other one is this whole project management and capability. So that's a second message which comes through: collaboration.

The third message is that if you are into a project you have got to be very committed. There is a certain amount of single-mindedness about being involved in projects, but again, you may be single-minded, you may be very committed, but that doesn't mean anybody else is. I don't think we're really at doctoral level unless there's some contention around, unless there's some controversy aroused. I don't think we're breaking into the kind of territory needed if everybody's just sitting around saying oh how wonderful all that is, because necessarily doctoral level is into development and change.

The final thing about doctorates and the final message by way of introduction is that when you conclude a project you begin the next. And so this project of the doctorate, I always look forward to the post-doctoral activity because that's when this highly capable expert person is really going to make a very big impact, because they'll take all this learning, knowledge and capability and they'll start using it. That's all by the way of introduction.

The Nature and Uses of Projects

There are four processes I now want to talk about in the nature and uses of projects. They all begin with the letter 'I': intention, initiation, implementation and impact.

Intention

The first is you always start with projects with an intention. Kerzner (2001: 1) takes the view that '*A project is an endeavour that has a definable objective, consumes and resources and operates under time, cost and quality constraints*'. All projects are resource laden. There are three main types of project activity when we talk about what is a definable objective of projects: informative, reformative and transformative.

The informative type of project is where you are trying to clarify; where you're trying to extend knowledge; where you're trying to embellish. This is why I've used Anglesey Abbey. What Lord Fairhaven was trying to do was saying "I've got all these very interesting things, I'd like you to see them and think about them and I want to be able to display them in a way which captures your interest". It was an informative project. All theatres are informative projects. Informative projects entertain people; they stimulate interest; they capture people's attention. That's one major type of project, and within the academic sphere it's highly relevant at bachelor level. That's the kind of project we would expect at bachelor level the informative type of project. And to some extent you get this at master's level, but master's level goes beyond informative to the next type of project: the reformative type. That's why I used the Wesleys; they were part of the Protestant reformation. To reform, interesting word isn't it: this is all about modifying systems, sets of beliefs, redirecting what's being believed, what's being done, changing the emphasis. Interesting with John Wesley, when he was dying as a very old man he said, "I am an Anglican," because by that time because of their approach which was highly methodological, hence they'd got this name of Methodists, he said, "I am an Anglican." In other words, although he had spawned this huge new religious movement he still said, "all I've done is reform it, I haven't brought a new religion, I've reformed what was already there," it was a reformative project. When we get into the academic circles this is what we're really looking for; the reformative type project at master's level and particularly at doctorate level.

Now, many people think that they're going to change the world and therefore they think they're into the final type of project which is the transformative. Transformative is not simply where you're using old ways slightly differently but where you're bringing in new ways: you've transformed it, you haven't reformed it, you have transformed it. You are using entirely new ways, a new paradigm is created. The key word for the transformative project is strategy. Many people use the word strategy wrongly; strategy is always about new direction. Wesley unintentionally was into a transformative mode. He thought only that he was into a reformative

mode, but the fact that an entirely new denomination emerged was a transformative type of outcome.

Where it's simply an individual beaver away, even at doctoral level, it is highly unlikely you're going to be in the transformative mode, it's beyond your capacity. That's why when we wrote the doctorate we made it for teams as well as individuals because teams can get into a transformative project: whereas for the individual it's very difficult unaided to get into that kind of level. What we are looking for at the doctorate level is clearly projects which to some extent will span these categories. They have got to be informative to some extent, but they will be heavily into the reformative aspect, otherwise why are you bothering if you're not going to bring about some change?

Cleland (1996: 23) said three things about projects. He said, '*projects are about the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes to support future enterprises*'. That is characteristic of an informative type. And he said, '*projects are also about providing a focal point for integrating resources to create products and processes*' (Cleland 1996: 23): new products and processes. Projects provide a focus for integrating resources to create products and processes, that's the reformative type, that's what reformative is all about. And then his other point was that projects can also provide a strategic pathway for the commitment of people and resources to create value in the future. That's a transformative type, a strategic pathway for commitment of people and resources to create value in the future.

So at the doctoral level what is the intention? Is my intention in my project to be informative, reformative, transformative? What is my intention? This is so important and the demands that we are making is that at the doctoral level it must be reformative. Clearly it will involve informative, it might even impinge on the transformative but it will be essentially a reformative type project. The kind of knowledge which the reformative type demands is praxis: praxis is this interplay between practice and theory. The typical academic approaches to work based learning is to say okay, "you want to be a teacher? We'll tell you all the theory, here's the

philosophy, here's the sociology, here's the psychology, here's all the theory, go in the classroom and apply it". That's a typical academic way traditionally of using work based learning. Our view of work based learning takes a reverse direction. The knowledge, the theory, is coming from the work within the work context, and the work is producing theoretical understanding, new conceptual understanding. The interplay between practice and work, this is what we're looking for in the doctorate. If you're at the reformative level it's inevitable that your knowledge is going to be of a praxis type where you do this combination of theory and practice: working in directions, theory informing practice, practice informing theory.

The importance of praxis in a professional doctorate such as this one is that you produce your knowledge not by being detached. There is a certain value in academic circles of being disinterested because it said then you are objective. What this professional doctorate activity is about is not detachment it's about participation where you're actually involved in this whole knowledge application, knowledge generation and you're immersed. That's why collaboration is absolutely vital, you cannot do this by yourself; others must be involved. So when one looks at the intention, the knowledge competency that one is really looking for is this whole business of praxis, that's the knowledge, this interplay between theory and practice.

In conclusion one comes up with an understanding of projects when you look at this whole question of intention. You're looking at focused, purposeful activity of a collaborative nature, which demands high levels of commitment. But that doesn't exclude controversy and contention. It was Giddens (1994: 58) who said '*the more we try to colonise the future the more it is likely to spring surprises on us*'. That's one of the wonderful things about doctoral work I've seen over and over again with candidates; the surprises which come their way. They think they know what it's all about and then they're surprised and of course that's marvellous, that kind of surprise. So that's one process. And all projects must have intention. Then naturally enough they must be initiated.

Initiation

It is one thing to have an intention, you can have a very good intention but what are you going to do about it? So there's the initiation. The initiation is where knowledge comes into play. At this early stage of the intention where you're really trying to get this definable objective sorted out and praxis is now starting to be your major knowledge competency you've got to start bringing knowledge into play.

Now what do we mean by knowledge? And again there's a great deal of confusion about knowledge. A lot of people call data knowledge, it isn't, data is not knowledge data are facts. When you make those facts relevant and purposeful then you have information, you are then informed, data doesn't inform, it's only when data's relevant and purposeful from your point of view that it becomes information. I went into Thomas Cook recently and said, "could I have a look at one of your catalogues, brochures?" and there it all was, data, all about these hotels, all about the flights. I was not informed until I said to myself these are the dates we want to go, these are the places we want to go, this is the money that we want to spend. Then when I looked at it I was able to start extracting from the data and then I became informed. Data is not information. The relevance and the purpose of the data turn data into information. And information by itself doesn't mean you do anything. It's only when you apply that information that then you start having knowledge, knowledge is in this process of making data relevant and applying information, then you get knowledge.

You get full knowledge when you've tested out this information. So until we go on this holiday that we're booking we won't have full knowledge. We'll learn a lot of things in the process, we'll gain in knowledge, we'll know how to navigate Ryanair which will be a major piece of knowledge. In this whole process of the development of knowledge the ultimate kind of process is where you add to knowledge, intuition or imagination and then you start having wisdom: you transcend knowledge into wisdom. All project workers by definition are knowledgeable and learned. They wouldn't be engaged in project work unless they'd got some clues. They've been taught, they've learned by experience, they've learnt by working alongside others, and that's the reason why people are admitted onto a doctorate, because they're

already learned: because they're already knowledgeable. They are competent in project work. They wouldn't be in the positions that they are unless that was the case. The thing about admission to this doctorate is all about that and the doctorate itself celebrates that. Takes on board that learning and actually gives accredited status to that learning formally through the recognition and accreditation of learning exercise.

Going back to Anglesey Abbey and Lord Fairhaven, when I first went there and went into this new annexe there was a plaque on the wall where the entrance was and the plaque read, "Lord Fairhaven imagined, Professor Sir Albert Richardson KCVO President of the Royal Academy designed, and Mr Percy Golding built": imagined, designed, built. A collaborative activity and full of English social class but nonetheless it was there. And it wouldn't be there without Mr Percy Golding, just like it wouldn't have been there without Fairhaven in the first instance. So you've got structure and you've got collaboration. And imagination is so important in this whole initiation, this imagining. Imagination is where you start connecting ideas, often ideas which haven't really been connected together previously because people don't think of them as being joined together.

Wesley you see wrestled with competing or conflicting concepts. On the one hand his intention was to bring about salvation, that's what his intention was, but he had to wrestle with two concepts, one was faith and the other one was works and he had to say "what is this relationship"? Faith and works; what's the relationship between those? Because if you can get some kind of relationship between them that is what salvation is, wholeness, the word only means 'wholeness', 'health': a very good word for mental health, salvation: wholeness. Bringing together the faith and the works, that's what this whole initiation area is, this use of the imagination. It is also in the initiation stage where the intention is becoming clearer; what you're after, and where you suddenly realise, especially if you're working with other people, that there's a lot which you know already.

What we're doing in work based learning at the doctorate level, we're wrestling with two concepts, one is validity and the other one is value; they don't mean the same, and validity by itself needn't necessarily produce anything of any value. You'd be absolutely perfect in your approach but you're not producing anything worthwhile, useful. And on the other hand, you can go entirely after what you think is valuable and you don't have the right means by which you get there. I think the real current issue that we should be addressing is this whole question of the relationship between validity and value.

So it's this connecting of ideas, often of conflicting ideas, but when one gets into this one finds that there's a lot buried inside: what we call tacit knowledge, and one of the most important outcomes of the doctorate is to get hold of what is tacit within a person's knowledge bank. The whole point of working with advisers and consultants and having a peer group on the doctorate is for a kind of dialogue and feedback that is eliciting and articulating the tacit knowledge that one has. Because tacit knowledge as is well said in the literature is the main source of innovation. This is where the apprenticeship scheme does actually work because what the apprentice gets out of the master is the tacit knowledge and that's where the deep learning comes, it's not all the explicit stuff all of the time, it's that which becomes so embedded, so internalised that you don't even think about it anymore, you know it in a tacit manner. That's where the innovation is. Now this initiation phase means you do not only have to be clear in your mind but you have to be quite brave: Wrigley (2006:254) refers on this matter to AJP Taylor 'Conformity may give you a quiet life. All change in history, all advances, comes from nonconformists.'

What an incredible insight that is. If you really want innovation, if you want to bring about change, you'll have to be a nonconformist. One of the watchwords that I have is "you have to redefine the past in order to reimagine the future". You can't just keep going along with the same old thing if you're going to develop and change. But that isn't necessarily an easy option, this whole initiation thing. If you're going to be a non-conformist it doesn't mean necessarily

you're going to be a rebel, but it does mean you've got to have a look at it in a critical way which means you've got to start thinking differently from what you have done previously.

'There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things because the innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions, and lukewarm defenders in those who may do well under the new' (Machiavelli 1532/1908)

Well you've experienced that many times. Where you've tried to bring in something new there will be those who oppose it, and those who might benefit from it will be very guarded in their support. You might now and again have a champion, it's very helpful if you have, but frequently you have lukewarm defenders of what you're trying to introduce.

When I introduced work based learning here into the university there were a few who said, "oh this sounds like a good idea," because this was very much into trying to bridge work and academic study. There were those who felt very threatened by work-based learning, very threatened fought me tooth and nail. You'll have enemies; there'll be those who don't agree. The vested interests which you necessarily will come across and they will be able to put forward very potent arguments because all vested interests are tied into ideological forms which always sound quite plausible and persuasive. So the thing about initiation, it's not a comfortable process. It's one thing to have a definable objective, you see even for Fairhaven, all he wanted to do was put up an extension to Anglesey Abbey so that these collections could be made available to the public, and there was a lot of opposition: "How dare he mess about with this ancient building". And as for the Wesleys they fled the mob many times.

Implementation

The third process I want to talk about is the one that most people start with when they talk about projects. People get so preoccupied with implementation and they haven't really thought through the intention and initiation side of things. "How do I do it" and it's almost that kind of preoccupation that people have, have a bit of an idea and straight away what they're bothered about is "how can I do it"? You see the first two, intention and initiation; they're really about

the fitness of your purpose. It's a definable objective which you've got right; this is a right thing to do and is going to be valuable. So there's a fitness *of* purpose and what most people become preoccupied with, especially in academic circles, is a fitness *for* purpose of "have you got the right means". Not worrying about the ends but worrying about the means and this is one of the great weaknesses of academic working methodology: puts it on a pinnacle. The methodology is simply a means; it's not an end but it's treated as though it's an end and quite often you'll find that the whole assessment is all about the means and the ends is more or less, "well it's not really our concern". And certainly in professional doctorates we've got to worry about the ends as well as the means, so there's a fitness *of* purpose, the intention initiation kind of processes *and* a fitness *for* purpose: the means, the implementation.

So that's the design bit, this is the Professor Sir Albert Richardson on the plaque at Anglesey Abbey, the designing it, figuring it out. And the most important thing I think about figuring out: "Who's it for? Why are you doing it? Who's going to read it? Who's going to take any notice? Who's going to take some action?" Who's the audience, the most important question with all projects is who's it for? The two Wesleys were quite clear, it was about poor children, that's who it was for, and then they extended it to the working class. They realised that the elitist, Anglican religion was just not reaching the working classes; they had to make it so it did so they reformed it in that kind of way.

They were clear about their audience, the working class movement. And then when you're clear about who's it for then you can start worrying about what means and the means, is a question of resources. There's a whole range of resources that we need to have. These aren't simply the cognitive resources, there are technological resources, there are psychological resources and there's a lot of emotional investment in projects. There are moral resources, there's a whole range of a certain business and resources. In the design issue have we got our resources sorted out? You see with the Wesleys that meant they had to have buildings: the dispensary and schoolroom and then they had to have a chapel and then they had lots of other

chapels and that was one of their resources. And they also had to have horses to get round to these various places.

So it is a major planning exercise that we're involved in but you'll notice where it comes in the project process, the planning is not where you start. You start with the intention and then the whole question of the initiation, and then you come to this implementation side. Quite often what the implementation does of course is it's not quite as simple as what I'm making it here, it's not simply this kind of circular kind of thing, quite often what happens is that when people are implementing they revise the intention, they get a much clearer idea about the objective. In some projects when they're getting to the implementation they find they can't do it anymore, they've been obstructed, they haven't got the resources, haven't got permission, all sorts of things and they have to change the intention.

So there is this issue about marshalling the resources and projects fail because of what's known as the 'articulation error'. The articulation error is to match what's wanted with what's available. You might have great ideas but can you match what you want with what's available? And the other reason why projects fail is because we cannot handle incapability. If you're a project worker you have to be able to handle incapability, you have to begin to realise limitations within yourself, within your colleagues, and within the associates. For instance, if one has got a piece of commissioned project work there will be a committee that you're accountable to, and on that committee there will be those who never, ever will be able to understand what you're talking about, absolutely inevitable, anybody who's been facing committees knows this only too well and you have to be able to handle that incapability. And it is a major competence, it's very interesting how, we always talk about these are the capabilities you have and we miss out handling incapability. It's a major competence to be able to handle incapability, and for project workers it's indispensable.

Impact

The final question is 'what's the impact'? At doctoral level you will be different when you finish: it will impact and not only will you have greater know how you'll certainly know about yourself in ways which you didn't know previously, a new understanding of oneself, and you also will have a new authority. One of the advantages of the doctoral status is the authority that it confers on the holder of the doctorate; you will have authority in a specialised area and you will be expected to be able to use that constructively for impact for others. That is those who have been participants with you in the doctoral work. It must have made a difference to them, and that does include the academics who are being involved, if academics are not changed by working with the candidates those academics are not worth anything. It must change us. Not so we're adding more knowledge but how we ourselves know and so on. And it will certainly affect our community of practice and because it's at doctorate level it will have some influence within the professional field. But, there's always a 'but', and here is where Wesley differs from Fairhaven, for Fairhaven there wasn't a 'but' because his project was informative, whereas Wesley's was reformative and Machiavelli, as with Wesley, had unintended consequences. Altruistic as he was about the poor, he (Wesley) realised that poverty and exploitation came through social systems and the greed of individuals. He realised all that. And he knew that in his day the prevailing economic order, a certain form of capitalism, was the perpetrator, driven by the profit motive of exploiting labour but lo and behold, unwittingly Wesley bolstered the capitalist system because what did he preach?; hard work, invest your savings, all these things, all these virtues, and they aided and abetted the capitalist system. Unintended, totally unintended and yet there was a very clear altruistic intention that this was the unintended consequence and it may well be that your own work will have some unintended consequences. But the intended ones may well, hopefully as they did in Wesley's case, far outweigh the unintended ones. That's how it works. And I think I'll leave it at that".

Reflections from practice on Portwood's thesis for professional doctorate researchers

The above transcript has been found to be incredibly helpful in building a mental model of the situated researcher in practice, who is at a stage prior to intention. As academics involved in

advising professional doctoral candidates, we have gained a range of learning experiences through collaborative work based learning doctoral research. However, we have reflected that for the experienced practitioner, who may also be a novice researcher, there are further themes that we recognise, which could be useful in deconstructing and redefining the past to understand the present complexity of situatedness, in order to imagine a future project.

Fitness of purpose

Fitness for purpose is a theme that, as noted by Portwood above, is often the focus of much useful critical discussion within a number of research texts (see for example Robson & McCarten 2015; Gray, 2013). There is a long tradition of considering fitness for purpose for research design. However, this would seem to contain an assumption that the purpose has already been arrived at. We concur with Portwood in that before one can consider 'fitness for purpose', there should be a more important consideration of '*fitness of purpose*'. We argue that in order to understand fitness of purpose, the researcher would need to be cognizant of the situation within which they find themselves. Modeling an initial situational analysis could help to expose researcher positionality, grounded in their personal and professional experience, as the basis for enhanced understanding of value and intent.

Ontological and epistemological positioning

Starting with the concept of situatedness the connectivity of the practitioner researcher and the workplace setting, can be considered within the organisation at micro, meso and macro levels, for example as individual, group and wider organisation. Stabler (2015) took this approach when trying to untangle and find a way into the realities of the complexities of team working at the micro context level. Costley et al (2010, p. 4) consider that much of the literature has remained silent on the ontological perspective of situatedness other than to recognise the 'insider-researcher' concept, which, as Portwood suggests, could benefit from an earlier 'situation analysis' in order to better model reality.

We postulate that the ontological perspective of organizational life is important to assess from the unique position of the worker researcher. Aspects of political acceptance, power and hegemony, formal and informal networks should all be considered. Such a process may enable the tacit, unconscious positionality of the individual to be more attuned to the organization mood. This concept of 'attunement' or 'mood' was defined by Heidegger (1962) and was closely linked to another of his key philosophical aspects of being a human being, that of 'thrownness'. The idea of *thrownness* is intended to capture the existential meaning of how an individual may feel thrown or projected into the life course and experiences/position that they find themselves situated/located in. The other strand that Portwood considers as vital is around the epistemology for knowledge to be understood through the potential of the project focus; this we consider, as with the ontological considerations, as residing at a pre-intention stage when the intention is still being formulated. By exploring the situatedness of the insider worker researcher, the worker researcher creates a possibility to define and redefine the ontological and epistemological picture of the situation³. A process of modeling the reality of social life, designed to capture both positionality as well as potential information sources (being formed from the product of data plus meaning) may enable the researcher to form a more balanced and attuned project intention.

Formulating the project intention

A number of writer researchers have indicated the benefits of a pre-project modeling process, though the approach has tended to be more reflexive in nature, through drawing together features of the work/learning situation. Clarke (2003) considers three types of mapping processes: that of key human and non-human elements, social worlds and arenas and positionality along analytical/political positions taken or not by actors in the situation. These maps are intended to provide an initial analytical process to research using a grounded theory methodology. The three styles of map represent levels of analysis, starting with the more basic messy situational map, charting key elements of a situation including differences of opinion and meaning; meso level analysis of social worlds and discursive arenas, and a broader macro level

³ Vignette provided at end of paper

map of issues and discursive positions and differences. Clarke's (2003) situational analyses is intended to illustrate at an early stage, pre grounded theory, the complexities of the social world of the research situation. However, regardless of the methodological approach that is eventually adopted for the doctoral project, we feel that charting and mapping a likely research situation would have potential beneficial outcomes for the clarification of the work based project intention.

The situational mapping process is intended to focus upon the complexities and sensitivities of the situation and not necessarily concerned with action oriented process analysis. The situational messy map can also provide a more existentialist understanding of the thrownness and attunement of the situation. A criticism of Clarke's situational mapping approach could be that there is a potential danger of misinterpretation of the position, information and events purely from the insider researcher perspective, which would threaten the attunement of the analysis in misunderstanding the mood or the social life under analysis. This is an important point to unpack in terms of reflexive analysis in that if the intention is misaligned, this could affect the resulting initiation, implementation and overall impact of the project. Dall'Alba and Barnacle (2015) have considered the juxtaposition of affect or influence within any research situation; to consider not only the researcher / research impact upon the organization, but also the organization affect or influence upon the researcher (see also Neumann and Neumann, 2015). By overlaying the conceptual dual influences and contradictions within any situational analysis, the worker researcher may be able to develop a more attuned understanding, with potential benefits for a project intention including being alert to unintended consequences.

Value and Impact

Two points that can help the worker researcher, at the pre-intention stage, would be to consider aspects of value and impact in the nature of their situation. In the first instance, we can take Portwood's discussion of value, as a useful basis for understanding potential value, not only to one's self as researcher, but within a community, which will likely comprise stakeholders either consciously or unconsciously. These stakeholders, may be supportive or not

of you and any potential project development that you may be considering. Both you and they, may not have considered in any great depth, the often fragile relationships that hold a community together. It is as well to think of potential consequences of change and the role of the stakeholders or not; as noted in the earlier discussion, collaboration can be viewed in a range of ways, both positively and negatively. Hindsight may be a wonderful thing, though foresight may help to avoid unintended consequences. The situation analysis modeling exercise may help the worker researcher to explore, through illustration, the potential linkages, barriers and opportunities for change and development; elucidating the emergence of potential 'unknown unknowns' and 'black swans' (Rumsfeld, 2002; Taleb, 2007).

Impact as a final outcome of a project is explored in Portwood's four phase design process (intention, initiation, implementation and impact) would seem to have a logical place within what is presented as a linear process. However, we feel that impact also has a relevance to value in understanding the situation that a researcher is 'thrown' into and that through attuning the analysis to the stakeholder community, that impact potential could be surmised. Understanding their situatedness has an anticipatory element in ensuring the value of a potential project and impact on stakeholders could be explored. So often, researchers go to studious means in order to devise impartial data collection methods. Participants often freely contribute their time and views on a research theme, though beyond this, they may receive no immediate gain. Furthermore, they may experience unintended consequences as an eventual impact of a project; willingness to accept and take part in what could prove a significant risk, should involve a sense of gratitude on the part of the researcher. Gibbs (2009), for example considers the potential exploitative nature of work based projects, which can have a variety of impact possibilities. The 'messy map' charting positionality and information within a given situation, can through sufficient iteration and depth of analysis, enable the researcher to start the first stage of Portwood's project 'Intention'. An example of an early stage situational analysis was developed by Stabler (2015) in her DProf project, and is described and illustrated in the vignette below.

Stabler vignette

Stabler (2015, p. 9) describes her doctoral project as

'...neither linear nor cyclical in its development, activity and writing up. Rather its iterative and experiential nature is more closely captured by the notion of epiphanies or moments of sudden clarity, as unconscious processes became available to conscious awareness and sense-making, responding to emergent realities and reflexive intrapersonal and interpersonal processes'.

Immediately preceding her doctoral project she had been working as a development practitioner undertaking a culture change project. Her doctoral project was an evaluation of the culture change project. Utilising Clarke's situational analysis she created a messy map of *'the major human, nonhuman, discursive and other elements in the research situation of inquiry'* (Clarke, 2009, p. 210). From the messy map she developed an ordered abstract situational map. *The process of constructing a situational analysis in this way* led Stabler (p. 52) to *'reposition her relationship with the project and to consider how best to proceed'*. An aspect of the repositioning was a clarification of the fitness of purpose against a clear project intention to generate a *'framework for evaluating future culture change interventions with clinical teams in difficulty'* (p. 13).

Stabler (p. 51) describes evocatively her learning and development from undertaking the situational analysis:

'The non-linearity of the mapping exercise helped me to see the situation beyond myself as knowing subject and to play with the possibilities for meaning in the context of this team. I found it useful to return to my messy maps in particular to help me consider the situation afresh when I felt stuck. In doing so, I could see how I tended to privilege particular discourses or elements over others. It was particularly helpful at the beginning of the project and I believe it would be a helpful exercise before starting any evaluation/intervention process. It kept the complex, non-linear and fluid nature of this social situation in view and maintained a range of perspectives in the research process rather than a fixed account. ...'

The harnessing of her tacit knowledge in undertaking the situational analysis is linked to an ontological shift and a new epistemological position. Moreover the attunement of worker

researcher and situation is remarkable because of the clarified fitness of purpose through the refined project intention.

In conclusion

From our experience professional candidates are similar to Derek's point about focusing on the means too early in the design process of the project. There is a tendency to leap from "here is my topic" into "this is how I'm going to do it" with insufficient looking at the work situation that pertains then and there to fitness of purpose. Through our reflection on Portwood's design process we are exploring within our pedagogical practice, situational analysis as a way of supporting doctoral candidates to start looking into the situatedness of their project as a preparation to formulating a situated project intent attuned to the work situation possibilities. Portwood asserts in the seminar that if academics are not changed by working with candidates those academics are not worth anything. Our pedagogical thought has been challenged and changed in terms of what creating and writing a professional doctorate programme plan requires if the project intention and value of fitness of purpose is going to give meaningful direction to the means of project implementation, fitness for purpose, to achieve the intended impact. More over we are using our insights around fitness of purpose and situatedness as a way in to investigate the work situation of work based research project to further understandings of impact, how impact is generated and what it produces.

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