

Changing Disabling Places

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Abstract

This thesis documents, develops and demonstrates a novel form of praxis in relation to disability in Scottish Higher Education. 'Praxis', as I use the term in this thesis, refers to an ongoing, irreducible, collective process through which is enacted, in one and the same process: 'knowledgementing' (the construction and legitimation of knowledge claims); 'radical reflexivity' (the bringing to awareness and critical problematisation of interests served by what is thought, said and done by all relevant parties); and 'ideologically progressive social action' (the pursuit of emancipatory process and just outcomes and the contesting of 'external and internal' institutional oppression). The meaning of praxis is explicated in this thesis and demonstrated in action with reference to disability in Scottish Higher Education. Particular attention is paid to explicating and demonstrating the conceptual unity of praxis and the interconnectivity in actuality of the practices, procedures and policies which disable in assemblages or apparatuses, as Foucault uses the terms. The interconnectivity of the praxis is, it is claimed, the key to unlocking the interconnectivity of the assemblages which produce and maintain disability in Scottish Higher Education. The thesis traces the connections between the various elements of the assemblage producing a novel account (and new knowledges) which, it is claimed, could only have been derived as a result of the praxis and which can also account for the knowledges presented in previous research into disability in British Higher Education, locating these studies as part of the disabling assemblage. The thesis concludes by drawing out wider implications of praxis for conventional research, for psychology and social science.

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Chapter One – Changing Disabling Places

In this first chapter, I introduce Changing Disabling Places and explain how this thesis is 'about' praxis, is the result of praxis and is a set of examples of praxis within praxis.

Fundamentally, this thesis documents praxis within praxis and develops, advances and demonstrates praxis in relation to disability in Scottish Higher Education.

'Praxis', as I use the term in this thesis, refers to an ongoing, irreducible, collective process through which is enacted, in one and the same process,: 'knowledgementing'(the construction and legitimation of knowledge claims) ; 'radical reflexivity' (the bringing to awareness and critical problematisation of interests served by what is thought, said and done by all relevant parties); and 'ideologically progressive social action' (the pursuit of emancipatory process and just outcomes and the contesting of 'external and internal'¹ institutional oppression.

The above sentence has the advantage of being a comprehensive yet condensed and succinct summary of a large number of interconnected ideas. However, it is likely to be inaccessible, incoherent or counter-intuitive to readers not already familiar with praxis or the related conceptual and ideological frames of reference, and I do not want to disable readers through an inaccessible text. Accordingly, rather than just provide information in the form of a lexicon of the terms used above to explicate praxis, I here try to explicate the frames of reference within which the terms make sense i.e. 'sharing knowledge' in the sense of Linda Tuhiwai Smith who wrote: "I use the term 'sharing knowledge' deliberately, rather than the term 'sharing information' because to me the responsibility of researchers and academics is not simply to share surface information (pamphlet knowledge) but to share the theories and

¹ The distinction between external and internal oppression is not clear cut because oppressive societal discourses and ideologically reactionary frames of reference are often internalised and experienced as 'subjective reality'.

analyses which inform the way knowledge and information are constituted and represented.” (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 16). In this explication, for the sake of the accessibility of the prose, I do not litter the text with references. Intellectual debts to Freire, Foucault, Martin-Baró, Parker, Rose and other critical scholars are clarified later in Chapter Two.

I understand the notion of praxis within a critical frame of reference which rejects naïve realism and positions reality as socially constructed but, none-the-less, as having ‘real’ effects; a frame of reference which rejects fragmentation in favour of holistic inter-connectivity in relation to knowledge construction, collective action and critique; a frame of reference which rejects individualism at every level and positions praxis as collectively accomplished. Crucially, in my frame of reference no distinction is drawn between power and knowledge.

Within this frame of reference, knowledge is not discovered or found but invented and truth is not a matter of correspondence of ‘statements’ with an independently existing ‘reality’ but a matter of whether a claim is accorded the status of truth according to locally agreed social conventions (whether it is ‘knowledgemented’); a number of knowledges can co-exist.

These knowledges can not be distinguished in terms of traditional ‘truth’ since none is more or less true than any other in the sense that none corresponds more or less accurately with an independently existing ‘real world’ (a notion which is not regarded as meaningful within this critical frame of reference).

However, different knowledge claims can be distinguished in terms of the power-knowledge of which they are manifestations and which can be identified through identification of the interconnections or assemblages which enact(ion) them.

Different knowledge claims can also be distinguished in terms of the nature and quality of the social processes through which they are ‘truthed’ or ‘knowledgemented’ (the social processes through which their truth status is legitimated). The quality of support for claims in psychology is conventionally presented as determined by disinterested evaluation against a set of methodologically determined criteria. However, within the critical frame of reference of this thesis, determination of ‘quality’ is seen as strategic, a social convention

whose political function is to legitimate claims which serve privileged interests. The serving of interests comes first; then come the evaluation criteria which 'truth' the claims or 'knowledgement' them. Knowledge claims can also be distinguished in terms of whose interests the various knowledges privilege. In the critical frame of reference of this thesis, knowledge claims which privilege the interests of the powerless and oppressed are privileged over the knowledge claims which privilege the knowledge claims of the powerful and oppressive. To be more specific with regard to this praxis, knowledge claims which privilege the interests of those who are disabled by institutional arrangements are privileged over knowledge claims which privilege the interests of those who benefit from or participate in institutional disabling. The relationship between the way people think, the way they understand the social world and their place in it and dominant societal discourses and narratives is a dynamic relationship which is difficult to disentangle. Accordingly, I do not take what people think, 'know' and say at face value but regard them as a complex product of external societal discourses which have been internalized. I regard people as being governed - in contemporary times - primarily through coming to think in ways which result in them serving the interests of the status quo.

I use the term 'surfacing' to refer to a process of making explicit the interests to which I have referred above. This is not a process of qualitative 'analysis' comparable to identifying 'emergent' themes by grounded theory analysis. Interests served are explicit only to those able to see them and this presupposes 'critical literacy'. Conscientizing and de-ideologisation are usually necessary in order to enhance critical literacy and make surfacing possible. Reflexivity, recursively surfacing interests served by the praxisitioner's 'standpoint', is an important strand of conscientizing and de-ideologisation but I regard reflexivity, as traditionally understood, as too limited: as at risk of becoming merely self-indulgent individualistic confession of problematic internalised discourses misrepresented as subjective experience. Reflexivity as traditionally understood can inadvertently re-legitimise positivism by positioning subjectivity as a source of 'bias' to be eliminated or at least to be brought into the public domain so its role in distorting the 'truth' can be made explicit. I use the term 'radical reflexivity' to refer to a process which goes beyond excavation of the

interests embedded in the author's subjectivity to uncovering and taking account of the institutional and societal foundations of those interests.

Surfacing involves collectively critically problematising, i.e. taking 'truths' which are taken-for-granted and showing that they, and the assumptions upon which they are based and upon which they are dependent, are not 'necessary' or 'essential' 'truths' but are ideologically charged, historically contingent, claims which are the result of social processes constructing and promoting them. A second sense of problematising within the critical frame of reference involves surfacing the ways in which 'problems' are invented, maintained, policed and exploited and asking who or what is positioned as a problem to be solved, by whom, upon what authority, how the problem-posing is related to the construction and policing of norms and the construction of the abnormal.

Knowledge and radical reflexivity are action in themselves but within this frame of reference that is not enough. It is vital for the praxis also to be, irreducibly, a manifestation of procedurally just, emancipatory social action directed towards progressive social change.

Most important of all, within my critical frame of reference, knowing the social world, changing the social world and critiquing the social world are one and the same process: praxis. It is vital to understand this aspect of praxis as I use it here. Although for purposes of exposition, I have above described these threefold nature of praxis sequentially, it is vital to re-emphasise that in praxis they are not separate components but actually three dimensions of one and the same process: every social action is simultaneously an expression of 'knowledge' and of an ideological standpoint; every ideological position has implicit or explicit knowledge claims and warrants particular social action; and every knowledge claim implies specific social actions and specific ideologically commitment.

Praxis is not, for me, three separate actions (knowledge, critique, social action) done by a praxiser either at the same time or sequentially, though that is a common misperception amongst many notable community psychologists who describe doing praxis.

Doing a bit of group work, then reflecting critically upon it then drawing out knowledge claims from it is not praxis. Nor is praxis a skill which can be learned like juggling three bean bags. It is vital not to make a conceptual category error. Praxis is not a technique but an emergent function of connectivity involving knowledge, critique and social action

which cannot be disconnected without destruction of the emergent functions of praxis (as hydrogen and water cannot be disconnected without losing the emergent functions of water). Just as for Foucault power-knowledge is irreducible to power and knowledge, each of which necessarily implies the other and power and knowledge in the Foucauldian frame of reference are meaningless abstractions from the power-knowledge nexus, for me knowledge, ideology and social action necessarily involve the other and each is on its own a meaningless abstraction from the praxis nexus.

As far as what is usually called 'methodology' is concerned in relation to disability 'research' in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the dominant modes of knowledge construction are surfaced through this praxis as being procedurally unjust and ideologically problematic, functioning not only to warrant (or as it is usually called to bestow 'validity' upon) accounts produced through problematic so-called 'research methods' such as realist (per)versions of grounded theory and dominant 'fragment and reassemble' methods of 'analysis' but also functioning to de-legitimise more progressive and holistic integrative methods of knowledge-construction (such as those used in this praxis).

This thesis demonstrates ways of working respectfully and critically with others to collaboratively go beyond dominant modes of knowledge production, to contest existing accounts which have an individualistic focus and to demonstrate alternative understandings of disability in Higher Education. It is essential that praxis is conducted in collaboration; it is not the isolated act of the 'academic' or the 'researcher' applied onto the 'participant' or 'subject'. This praxis was conducted in collaboration with an extensive network of co-praxisioners distributed across several Scottish Higher Education Institutions, performing various institutional roles (varying from under-graduate to post-graduate students, and from disability advisors to senior managerial personnel). Co-praxisioners were involved in a variety of communities of praxis (described in Chapter Six, Praxis in Action, Reflexion and Knowledge), some dipping in and out of the praxis and others remaining present throughout.

Furthermore, rather than being about 'finding out', the thesis also turns the process of knowledge creation into one of social action, which is supported by profound reflexivity. Nevertheless, although in this thesis I show a way of working differently and producing

different outcomes, I construct knowledge claims and show why they should be taken seriously: not because they satisfy traditional positivist criteria (positivism is rejected as inconsistent with the standpoint adopted) but because they are the result of a praxis involving multiple endeavours, exchanges and refinements, continued cycles of profound reflexivity and critical action on the world informed by theorising dead literatures and living texts, collectively negotiated shared inter-connected tissues of meaning which are not transposed into words.

The Form of the Text

This thesis is itself another manifestation of the praxis; praxis is 'in the DNA' of the text. In this thesis, praxis is deployed again and again, in differing ways, in differing domains and manifests interconnectedness. For example, in Chapter Five, Disability and British Higher Education - a review of the literature, I examine relevant published research into disability in Higher Education, first describing the key 'findings' and then surfacing and problematising aspects of the ontology, epistemology, methodology and ideology implicit within published research. The latter problematising draws upon co-praxioners collective engagement i.e. upon our critical problematising of the texts and our exposition of the underlying, unacknowledged, taken-for-granted 'truths'. Dominant knowledge claims in relation to disability in HEIs are shown through the praxis to be problematic epistemologically, to be oppressive ideologically and to function to legitimise unjust social action. These critical readings were informed by collaborative engagement with the literature which is described in Chapter Two, Resources for Theorising, in which I explicate the role of theorising in the work. The account of community critical psychology constructed in this thesis is informed by diverse theorists and scholars associated with critical, community and liberational versions of psychology as well as the published and unpublished contributions by disability activists and members of activist movements such as the British Disabled People's Movement. Extending beyond conventional texts our critical awareness was extended by engagement with the policies, practices and procedures enacted in relation to disability in Scottish Higher Education. In Chapter Four, The Constitutive Context of the Praxis, I introduce the reader to the national, political, legislative and educational setting within which the praxis

was carried out and with which we engaged. This is done to prevent the reader being disabled by the account of the praxis given later in the thesis.

Such engagement informed not only the reviews of the literature presented in this text, but also highlighted the need for alternative forms of collaborative working to examine disability in Scottish Higher Education, whilst simultaneously being a form of active critical engagement. In Chapter Three, A Meta-justification of Praxis, I draw out the subsequent theory of praxis described earlier in this chapter, outline a less problematic way of engaging in research, action and ideologically progressive process by elaborating notions of knowledge construction and legitimation (rather than knowledge discovery), emancipatory social action (rather than value free science) and systematic critical scrutiny of interests served by what is said, thought and done as part of research (rather delusional assumptions of political neutrality).

By the end of this section, the reader will have an understanding of: the constraints and opportunities afforded by the multi-level settings within which the Ph.D. praxis was done; relevant published empirical research already done, together with insight into why the latter was problematic and why it would have been be inappropriate for the praxis to have continued in the same vein; and the importance of the intellectual and ideological contributions by disability activists, popular movements and of reflexivity in relation to my own way of working. The reader will thus be equipped to proceed to move into the next section which describes the nuts and bolts of what was actually done as praxis by a collective of activists catalyzed by the work carried out by the author of this thesis.

Chapter Six, Praxis in Action, Reflexivity and Knowledge, is an account of the practical enactment of the praxis as theorised in Chapter Three. This chapter demonstrates the ways with which power was engaged at all levels, and subsequently sheds light on the multitude of working practices developed to contest the traditional hierarchical relations which dominate research and knowledge practices. I also explain the significance, for what are normally described as 'research methods', of the theoretically and ideologically critical frame of reference within which I was working. For example, from a critical perspective, an orthodox interview can simply elicit internalised dominant discourses, so I developed and used critically problematising conversations instead. Conventional steering groups are

problematic for the same reason so I developed 'conscientizing collective decision making groups' instead. The chapter gives an account of the activities of this 'conscientizing collective decision making group' committed to engaging at all levels of the praxis from the initial designing of the work, explicating the changing roles in the praxis of academic literatures, popular movements and participatory ways of working in the course of this work, right through to the 'collaborative knowledgementing' of the claims, explicating the activities conducted at the instigation of the 'conscientizing collective decision making group'. This chapter provides specific detail about these activities such as: the development and 'teaching' of an online inter-institutional critical disability studies course; conscientizing interviews with various members of various Scottish Higher Education Institutions; contributions to a government consultation exercise on disability; involvement in an institutional working party purporting to examine and develop existing disability-related policy and provision; work with and on behalf of various services operating within several Higher Education Institutions.

This chapter, whilst being an account of praxis, also explicates understanding derived from the praxis; in keeping with assumptions that the thesis is, at one and the same time, an account of action, reflection and knowledgement as well as being action, reflection and knowledgement itself. In this chapter I describe a variety of such ways of working which, when brought together and deployed simultaneously as 'praxis', constitute radical new ways of working.

Chapter Seven, Praxis: Action, Knowledge and Reflexivity, specifically reflects on the action element of the praxis, more specifically explicating forms of action which were present, intended and absent, exploring limitations of the action and why some of the social action was not as effective as was originally intended.

In keeping with a commitment to demonstrate oppression and discrimination in Higher Education, the next section presents claims about the disabling, oppressive nature of the HEIs in which the praxis was carried out and gives warrants / legitimising rationales for these claims, demonstrating why they should be taken seriously i.e. have a status equivalent to or superior to 'knowledge' in orthodox research theses. Consistent with previous accounts of the constructed nature of knowledge, this knowledge is constructed to

serve the interests of those people oppressed by the disabling system of Scottish Higher Education rather than to serve the interests of those enacting oppressed practices in Scottish Higher Education.

Chapter Eight, *Disabling Practices in Higher Education: Critical Issues*, draws together meta-claims to knowledge about the nature of disability in higher education giving insight into the "art of government" (in a Foucauldian sense) at work in Higher Education, showing why despite various supposedly progressive changes disabling practices remain intact or intensified.

Ultimately this section provides an account of the multifaceted nature of disabling practices which constitute an interconnected mechanism locking people into 'disability' and shows how challenges to one element of the system are countered by systemic change thereby enabling the system to carry on disabling. Such an interpretation of the interlocking nature of disabling practices was only achieved through sustained engagement in multi-level praxis, i.e. through collaborative knowledge production, profound reflexivity and critical action.

The thesis concludes with Chapter Nine, *Reflections on Praxis (Conclusions)*, in which I provide the key methodological, theoretical, practical, political and ideological outcomes of the Praxis as integrated knowledge production, critical action and profound reflexivity.

Conclusion

I conclude this chapter with a quotation from Bruno Latour:

"... at the beginning the bifurcation seems small but it will later on lead us into different territories. To be sure this nuance will be fully visible only at the close of the book – if the reader is patient enough to reach it! Yet we should try to get familiar with it as early as possible as it will be our shibboleth throughout" (Latour, 2007, p. 38)

Latour's cautionary remark, although made who noted in relation to the difference between 'intermediaries' and 'mediators', applies perfectly to differences between 'praxis', which is a key concept in this thesis, and 'research', which is a key concept in most social science. At first the distinction may seem minor but gradually the notion of praxis leads into a different territory. In this section of the thesis I have attempted a preliminary explanation of what I mean by 'praxis' in the context of this thesis but because the whole thesis is both about and

an enactment of praxis, praxis will become clearer chapter by chapter. Even so, praxis will not be 'fully visible' by the end of the thesis as, for reasons which will emerge as you read on, learning about praxis in isolation and in the absence of action is difficult: it is likely that the only way to really understand praxis is to engage in it. As Freire put it, a person "learns to swim in the water, not in a library" (Freire, 1970, p. 118).

The title of this thesis is 'Changing Disabling Places' and this was chosen because appropriate at a variety of levels. First, this thesis is about 'places which disable which are changing' (Scottish Higher Education Institutions are changing due to changing legislation and changing policies and changing procedures etc). Second, this thesis is about 'places which are changing in order to disable more effectively' (the praxis reveals that Scottish Higher Education Institutions are changing through the adjustment of the interconnected assemblages of apparatuses through which disabling is accomplished to render it ever more efficient). Third, this thesis is about 'attempts to change places which disable' (which was emphatically the aim of the praxis). Fourth, this thesis is about 'places which are changing as a response to contesting of the ways in which disabling is accomplished' (changing to adjust and tighten the ratchets of oppression as a result of challenges from the praxis). Fifth, this thesis is about changing the nature of the 'Ph.D. project' to prevent it from being a disabling experience for those involved in it as participants in various ways. Sixth, this thesis is about changing the nature of the Ph.D. thesis to prevent it disabling the authors and the readers. Seventh, and finally, this praxis is about changing the practices which constitute "the heterogeneous knowledges, forms of authority and practical techniques that constitute(d) psychological expertise" (Rose, 1999, p. vii).

Chapter Two – Resources for Theorising

This chapter introduces the resources for theorising and critique which have helped shape the work. This praxis might be identified as a specific version of Community Critical Psychology (informed by associated scholars such as Michel Foucault and Paulo Freire) and the work of the British Disabled Peoples' Movement (informed by associated scholars such as Paul Hunt and Michael Oliver). All of these resources for theorising have played important roles in framing the ontological, epistemological, methodological and ideological standpoint.

Rather than specifically explicating an account of each of the sub-disciplines sequentially, the theorising accomplished in this praxis is presented more meaningfully as an interwoven account of the literatures, scholars and activism which, as resources for theorising, have shaped the work. The task here has been to inter-weave the resources as appropriate in order to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the approaches and to replicate the mutuality of the resources in shaping the praxis.

The ontological, epistemological, methodological and ideological standpoint of the work was not established prior to the commencement of the Praxis but rather has been collaboratively negotiated throughout. Clearly then, this negotiated standpoint was not the solitary act of the author, or the 'researcher', but rather, as will become more apparent later in this thesis, the work of continuous engagement with the resources for theorising with co-praxisioners to engage in the processes of collaborative agenda setting and following. Subsequently, the interconnection of the texts demonstrates the interconnectivity of the resources for theorising in shaping this work as an associated account of their influence on the action of the communities of Praxis.

The chapter takes Community Critical Psychology as a starting point with which to articulate the other resources for theorising but it should be understood that the whole chapter is as much an account of Community Critical Psychology, as has both informed and been generated by this praxis, as it is about the specific other 'sub'-disciplinary influences; these influences are very much part of the wider account of community critical psychology.

A Community Critical Psychology

Critical (of) Psychology

Community Critical Psychology is concerned with contesting that which is accomplished in the name of psychology; it is critical of the discipline of psychology. Community Critical Psychologists have raised concerns about the ways in which psychology as a set of ideas and practices is constructed in support of the status quo and is being used to promote individualistic, reactionary and oppressive ends. As Collins (2004) states;

“The world is full of suffering, alienation, brutality and neglect, and psychology has responded with an erratic combination of ineffectual concern, willful ignorance and willing collaboration” (Collins, 2004, p. 23)

In response to the pernicious dominant version of psychology, Martin-Baró developed a ‘Liberational Psychology’ which sought to engage in changing oppressive circumstances rather than merely attempting to modify individuals to adapt to the destructive environment.

Founded upon similar concerns many versions of ‘Community Psychology’ were developing across the world. Despite an original dedication to similar core concerns, Seedat, Duncan and Lazarus (2001) suggest that the various approaches can be roughly split into two main divisions; those who are accommodationist, who largely occupy the Northern Hemisphere and those who are critical, which are found in the Southern Hemisphere (for example, South Africa and Latin America) (Seedat et al., 2001, Pp 4). The latter share more closely Martin-Baró’s concerns and are interested in “dismantling oppressive state structures and ideological state apparatuses” (Seedat et al., 2001, Pp4) of which ‘mainstream’ psychology functions as a significant part of the problem. Therefore ‘critical’ community psychology is concerned with challenging the “discriminatory foundation, theory, method and practice of psychology” (Seedat et al., 2001, Pp4). In contrast the former, ‘accommodationist’ community psychologies are characterised as “seeking greater influence within the mainstream fraternity without necessarily challenging the restrictions and outcomes imposed by exploitative economic arrangements and dominant systems of knowledge

production" (Seedat, 2001, Pp4) which further replicates Martin-Baró 's critique of psychology for failing to:

"tear down the edifice of common sense that in our culture both obscures and justifies the interests of the powerful by representing their techniques of control as character traits . . . psychologising has served, directly or indirectly, to strengthen the oppressive structures, by drawing attention away from them and toward individual and subjective factors" (Martin-Baró , 1994, Pp 19)".

Community Critical Psychology is a challenge to what psychology is doing to people but more than just offering critique or resistance to the discipline, community critical psychology is concerned also with developing an alternative approach seeking to work with people to contest oppression.

Commitment to Action

The discipline of psychology is indeed problematic, however, although psychology plays a role, in a Foucauldian sense, in many (perhaps all) contemporary forms of oppression much of critical psychology is preoccupied with psychology in the far narrower sense of the academic discipline (i.e. critiquing the ideologically problematic concepts, theories, methods, methodological issues and practices of the disciplinary practices of psychology).

Most of the critical work represented in Britain has rather egocentrically focused its criticality and theoretical concern on the discipline at the expense of any critical social change activism. Critical Psychology (in Britain at least) has been largely dominated by 'theoretical scholarship' which is a form of action in the Foucauldian sense but is seldom responsible for progressive social change in the form of practical action on the world with persons engaging in transformative or revolutionary practice. Prilleltensky (2000) is an example of Critical Psychologists being more concerned with the 'word' than action. With reference to Freire, Prilleltensky reemphasises verbal engagement: 'critique is not enough ... critical psychologists need to engage in annunciation as much as in denunciation' (Prilleltensky, 2000, p. 68). Actually Freire (1970) emphasises the need for both the word and action together:

"When a word is deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well; and the word is changed into idle chatter, into verbalism, into an alienated and alienating "blah." It becomes an empty word, one which cannot denounce the world for denunciation is impossible without a commitment to transform, and there is no transformation without action." (Freire, 1970, p. 68)

Collins (2004, p. 23) notes that "critical psychology is an attitude a disrespect for authority, an uneasy suspicion that something is wrong". The uneasy suspicion that Collins (2004) talks about extends far beyond the realms of that which covers abstract debate about the discipline of psychology, that which is practiced in the name of psychology and that which is informed by psychology. The approach taken in this thesis is one where community critical psychology is critical in knowledge, action and reflection and these are activities which are by collaborations of persons and are not activities done 'on' or 'about' people by community or critical psychologists. This approach is shown to be enacted by a collective of people who would not regard themselves, or who would not be regarded, as community or critical psychologists.

Community Critical Psychology should be about recreating a psychology that is moral, ethical and ideologically progressive and committed to working with people to reverse the ravages of psychology in practical as well as theoretical ways.

Popular Movements

Citing McLaughlin (2003), Parker (2006) claims that the impetus for action research in critical psychology has "...emerged from the political engagement with the mental health user movements" (Parker, 2006, p. 2). Likewise Holzkamp (1972) also notes the importance of popular movements, in particular he noted the ideas and actions of the student movements in and around the (West) Berlin Group in the 1960s, who had "challenged the status quo by criticising traditional structures and procedures in society, culture, politics, and academia" (Teo, 1998, p. 238). Likewise, Seedat et al. (2001), when noting the difference between the accommodationist community psychology approaches of the Northern Hemisphere with more critical community psychology approaches of the Southern Hemisphere, stated that the latter could also be characterised by its association with "broad democratic movements" (Seedat et al., 2001, p. 4).

Like McLaughlin's account, the impetus for the praxis to be described in this thesis, the ideological standpoint, emerged from immersion in the activities and the literature of the British Disabled Peoples' Movement and mental health user movements.

The Disabled Peoples' Movement in Britain

Disability and Impairment

One of the central tasks of the British Disabled Peoples' Movement of the 1970s was the reclaiming of the term 'disability'; to challenge its individually oppressive meaning and resultant action, and destabilize its usage by health science professionals (Thomas, 2004). In contrast to the medical/individualistic understanding of what constitutes disability, whereby the terms 'impairment', 'disability' and 'handicap' can be, and often are, used interchangeably, The Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) (1976) offered precise distinct alternative conceptualisations of impairment and disability. The Fundamental Principles of Disability set out a clear division, reformulation and clarification of the terms 'impairment' and 'disability'. Impairment, they noted was; "lacking part of or all of a limb, or having a defective limb organism or mechanism of the body" (UPIAS, 1976 p. 3) whilst disability, in comparison, was; "the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes no account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from mainstream social activities" (UPIAS, 1976 p. 4). In a shift from dominant ideological discourse, whereby disability resides within the pathological individual, UPIAS firmly re-located disability out side the body and away from the individual, noting; "...in our view, it is society which disables ... disability is something imposed on top of our impairments..." (UPIAS, 1976, p. 3). It was thus understood that it was not peoples' bodies which caused them disadvantage but a society which accommodated only a specific manifestation of embodied diversity. As Watermeyer and Swartz (2006) note;

"By identifying such bodily difference conceptually as impairment, and distinguishing this from the social and ideological notion of disability, early social model theorists underscored their contention that it is the social and political aspects of disability, not the bodily aspects, which afford the profound levels of disadvantage under which disabled people struggle." (Watermeyer & Swartz, 2006, p. 2)

The Fundamental Principles of Disability laid down the foundations for a fundamentally different ideological position, which threatened to challenge the hegemony of individualised disability and the dominance of a discourse which positioned disability as an avenue for

individual medical intervention. They offered a challenge to the assumption that medicine, and all associated apparatuses, could alleviate 'their' disabilities. Instead disability should be regarded as a social phenomenon, of social construction, and therefore society was the area for analysis, scrutiny and intervention; the solution to eradicate disability was the redressing of social, political and economic inequalities.

'The Social Model of Disability'

Drawing on the earlier work of UPIAS, Oliver (1983) formulated what he coined 'The Social Model of Disability'. In keeping with earlier statements, Oliver proposed that it was society's inability or failure to provide appropriate and accessible services which disables people, and not their bodies and/or minds. In other words, disability can be considered as a "socially caused" phenomenon (Abberley, 1987) where a person is disabled if society will not allow for their physical or mental impairments (Barnes, 1996). Thus, it is society which is required to change and not the disabled 'individual'. The nature and extent of disability is, therefore, determined primarily by organisational and institutional, practices and attitudes rather than by individual limitations.

At face value, the social model of disability might be considered to fit in well with the agenda of community critical psychology, which is concerned with social justice and the consequences for health and well-being of our social and socio-structural arrangements however, in relation to the specific version of community critical psychology adopted in this praxis, the model's failure to address the social construction of normality and the socio-discursive construction of health, illness and well-being is problematic.

The Social Model of Disability?

Few would raise any questions about the authenticity of this description of the History of the Social Model of Disability, it is certainly the accepted account which has come to dominate, however this particular history is might be considered one of many possible versions. One difficulty with this story is that it is often used to detail the history of the social model of disability where as it might be considered as nothing more than one history of the dominant approach which subjugates other historical knowledges.

Shakespeare (2006) has problematised this version of events, noting that the formation of UPIAS has come to be regarded somewhat as the “year zero” (Shakespeare, 2006) of the BDPM and disability politics. The prominence of this particular version of events is troublesome as it effectively masks the work and influence of other contributors. As Shakespeare (2006) notes; “British disability studies thinking has sometimes been guilty of marginalising or ignoring the contribution of other social contextual approaches to understanding disability” (Shakespeare, 2006, p. 10).

The other less Marxist and Materialist focused members of the family of Social Approaches are made absent from the history, slowly disappear from the popular movement literature and swiftly forgotten; silenced by these ‘key’ members of the movement (Shakespeare, 2006).

Instead it is suggested that rather than considering there to be two models of disability, the medical model of disability and its binary the social model of disability, that it is better to consider that there are two families of models of disability (Shakespeare, 2006); one family which assumes a broadly individualistic focus, to which the medical model belongs, and another which assumes a more social, political focus, to which the social model belongs. Priestley (1998) had already developed such a separation but in more detail he has mapped out the dominant approaches across a four fold typology, see table one, which further separated the individual and social models across idealist, relativist, and materialist, realist, lines; segmenting the family of social models into those which are predominantly social creationist and those which are social constructionist.

Table One – Adaptation of Priestley’s Four Fold Typology of Disability Theory (Priestley, 1998)

	Idealist Explanations	Materialist Explanations
Individual	Individual idealist models	Individual materialist models
Models	Disability is the product of voluntaristic individuals (disabled and non-disabled) engaged in the creation of identities and the negotiation of roles	Disability is the physical product of biology acting upon the functioning of material individuals (bodies)
	The units of analysis are beliefs and identities	The units of analysis are impaired bodies
	Psychology	Biology
Social	Social constructionist models	Social creationist models
Models	Disability is the idealist product of societal development within a specific cultural context.	Disability is the material product of socio-economic relations developing within a specific historical context.
	The units of analysis are cultural values and representations	The units of analysis are disabling barriers and material relations of power
	Culture	Structure

Realist Vs Relativist

Subsequently, the two social model approaches are often differentiated by either the realist or relativist nature of their claims. Social creationist approaches view the problem as located within the institutionalised practices of society and adopts a political stance, demanding changes in state and welfare provision to improve the material conditions for disabled people (Allan, 1996). Such approaches are fundamentally more Marxist inspired and position impairment as ontologically 'real'. Authors informed by post-modern and post-structuralist, in particular Foucauldian, approaches have come to challenge this position and instead come to provide a more extensive analysis of the social construction of the category disabled claiming disability has no 'fixed' or 'real' qualities rather it is nothing more than a linguistic, discursive, cultural production. However this approach is in turn contested, notably by those aligning themselves more closely with the Marxist, social creationist,

UPIAS stance, who claim that this relativist approach denies the 'reality' of disabling and the oppression of disabled people. The tenets of such an argument are relevant not only to disability studies but also to community critical psychology. Whilst community critical psychology would want to steer away from such realist claims as made by 'psychology' it would nevertheless seek to contest the dissolution of claims of oppression brought about by absolute relativism. As Parker (1999) has similarly noted;

"Critical psychology should not be defined as always `relativist` (although it may well treat all the discipline's facts as social constructions) or as `realist` (although it may want to give an account of the underlying social conditions that give rise to certain ideas in the discipline)" (Parker, 1999, p. 5)

Rather community critical psychology would critique the absolute, realist, stance of the suggested individual pathological ontology of impairment and instead recognise the historical and discursively constructed nature of the injustices. Nevertheless it would not seek to undermine the political, economic, structural analysis by gifting it away to relativity.

A Social Justice Model of Disability

Rather than an either/or approach, as may be implied by the Priestley (1998) typology, the approach to be adopted in this thesis is neither exclusively creationist nor constructionist. Abberley (1992) states that the aim is to develop a social theory which connects: the common features of economic, social and psychological disadvantage with an understanding of the 'material basis of these disadvantages and the ideologies which propagate and reproduce them' (Abberley, 1992, p. 244).

Consistent with Abberley's demands, the collective theorising conducted throughout this praxis engaged with the concerns of both the social constructionist (relativist) and social creationist (realist) perspectives, transcending them to create a Social Justice Model of Disability. The creation of such a model, utilised in this thesis, was permitted and enabled, in part, by engagement with the progressive rhetoric of traditional (but nevertheless radical in comparison to work from a medical/individualised perspective) British Disability Studies literature, scholarship and activism, informed by the political ideological standpoint of a 'social model' perspective. In offering an alternative position within the family of social models we are not meaning to undermine the work of the British Disabled Peoples'

Movement, to 're-invent the wheel', (Shakespeare, 2006, p. 14) or to falsely claim sole credit for a collection of ideas, a moral position and a distinct ideological stance. Rather this interpretation is firmly located within the ethos of the British Disabled Peoples' Movement and seeks, as Abberley (1992) states, to unify both the social creationist and social constructionist positions and to create an account which better describes the approach taken in this praxis.

Subsequently the position taken is one where by it is understood that disability is socially created but nevertheless it is suggested that whilst disability may be socially created, its creation is dependant on the social construction of 'normality' and by default 'abnormality'. Both positions are mutually supportive and supported by various elements of the apparatuses of disciplinary power (as will be explicated later).

Subsequently the term 'disabling' can be shifted beyond how it is traditionally understood and utilised to describe the conditions which support unjust arrangements. For example, British Higher Education can be considered disabling to those who have childcare commitments as Higher Education in Britain is fundamentally constructed for people who are expected not to have children, or alternatively British Higher Education could be considered disabling for people coming from state schools who do not provide the unwritten and untested cultural capital that powerfully makes Higher Education Institutions disabling places for those who lack it. Disability (or impairment) is not a material, pathological condition but rather a socially constructed phenomenon whereby some differences are abnormalised and pathologised into being and made a reality through social creation, where-in certain difference becomes a marker for unjust treatment and lack of access to society.

The Relevance of Foucault

The work of Foucault has influenced and informed both the work of people committed to community critical psychology and people committed to understanding disability in ways consistent with the family of social model approaches. Like the other influences Foucault has informed this praxis; informing the community critical approach adopted and collective reflexions on 'disability', 'power' and 'knowledge'.

Individualisation and Objectification

In *Discipline and Punish* (1977a) Foucault discusses the shift from sovereign power and punishment, whereby crimes were an act against the sovereign and perpetrators were subjected to, often public, brutal physical torture, toward a new era of disciplinary power, wherein crimes come to be identified as an act against society and punishment is shifted from retribution to rehabilitation. The deviant, criminal (and subsequently the sick or 'disabled' person) is now to be 'cured' and rehabilitated towards fulfilling their role and place in society (Foucault, 1977a, p. 98), rather than publicly brutalised as an example of the power of the sovereign. The goal of punishment was no longer revenge, it was reform.

"Power is now bent on generating forces, making them grow, ordering them; this is a power which 'exerts a positive influence on like ... endeavours to administer, optimize and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensible regulations'" (Foucault, 1980a, p. 137)

An important change from sovereign forms of punishment, which were discontinuous to the crime, and failed to provide retribution for crimes which were not perpetrated against the sovereign or were small enough to go unpunished, was the individualisation of punishment, both in duration and type, which paved the way for scrutiny and 'rehabilitation' (curing the person towards a return to society) of the most minute deviations from the 'norm'. Whilst sovereign punishment was notably public, disciplinary rehabilitation is notably secret, hidden behind closed doors, behind policies and oaths of silence.

Foucault (1977a) details the Objectification of the Criminal, as they become a 'species' to be studied, understood, measured, classified and rehabilitated. As Foucault's work has been examined closely, the body became the 'bearer of new variables' (Foucault, 1980b, p 172) which came to serve as the justification for the control of people, and justification for specific forms of governance. Normalisation of the criminal, the abnormal, became the new task. In order to 'Normalise' the criminal, they must be first categorised, studied and understood; as Foucault notes, using "hierarchical observation... to transform individuals... to make it possible to know them, to alter them" (Foucault, 1977a, p. 172). Just as criminals

could be reduced into fixed entities which could be studied and examined in great detail, and about which new facts and knowledges could emerge so too could disabled people.

The individualisation of disability can be linked with the shift towards modernity and capitalism (Finkelstein, 2002; Oliver, 1996), and so too can it be linked to the creation and dominance of the industries centred around the measurement, treatment and control of bodies and individuals. At the same time as we see the surfacing of an individual approach to disability new forms of power and knowledge emerged which “created new forms of domination in which the emergence of the human sciences, the formation of specific disciplinary apparatuses and the construction of the subject are all inextricably linked (Best & Kellner, 1991, p. 35). As Thomas (2004) notes; “in this perspective, being or becoming a disabled person is about being socially constructed and positioned as such by those who can exercise power through forms of knowledge.” (Thomas, 2004, p. 23)

Normalisation

Foucault recognised the role the Human Sciences played as ‘Apparatuses’ of Disciplinary Power, using the term ‘Apparatuses’ to describe the:

“thoroughly heterogeneous ensembles consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions...the apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements”
(Foucault, 1980c, p. 194)

Foucault (1980c) describes the creation and usage of ‘scientific knowledge’ to normalise human subjects through the practical application of ‘technologies’; as elements of assemblages.

As has been noted Foucault observed that the disciplinary apparatuses were legitimated in terms of humanism and enhancing ‘life’. Intervention was seen as progressive and beneficial but the treatment may not always been seen in this light and the consequences of labels are negative and profound (Oliver, 1990). The dominance of the medical/normalising position effectively reduces people to diseases or disorders, to be controlled or eradicated, as opposed to humans with rights. As Oliver (1990) notes; “The ideology of able-bodied normality underpins the professional approach from pre-birth to death” (Oliver, 1990, p. 36).

Disability became created as a category defined by an 'abnormal pathology'. To have an 'abnormal pathology' indicates the construction of a 'normal pathology', or 'able-bodiedness', which can be broadly recognised as one whose pathology does not interfere with the status quo, which is docile, compliant and works within existing modes of power/knowledge and one which fits in with the capitalist modes of production and the development of wage labour (Oliver, 1990).

As the medical profession has expanded new 'apparatuses' have developed, (e.g. psychology, physiotherapy, speech therapy) each carving out its own area of speciality, its own locus for control and its own part of the object in which to practice their normalisation and create new knowledges and skills. The objectification of people enables them to be easily studied in discrete isolation by discrete 'scientists', with their own 'technologies' with which to shape the control of the body.

Bodies became areas of power and governance; power was exerted upon them and knowledge was created to quantify and chronicle their deviance, and thus made them suitable sites of reform. Foucault refers to this as the object-effect, whereby something is brought into being, constructed, known and understood through a powerful form of knowledge. As Foucault states;

"What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A 'political anatomy', which was also a 'mechanics of power', was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies" (Foucault, 1977a, pp138 - 139).

Psychology could play an important role in dismantling and exposing these discourses for what they are, but psychology does not do this. Instead North 'American Style Psychology' (Parker, 2006, p. 8) is an apparatus; it is a strident force supporting the hegemony, through knowledge production, indoctrination and education, and thus supports the maintenance of these discourses; acting as an apparatus for the status quo. As Freire (1970) asserts; "the oppressors are the ones who act upon the people to indoctrinate them and adjust them to a reality which must remain untouched." (Freire, 1970, p. 75)

Power/Knowledge

Community Critical Psychology recognises that there is no form of psychological knowledge or practice that does not set up or support a certain relationship of power. All psychology, and human activity, is ideological; as Wendy Stainton Rogers (2002) defines ideology to mean "the use of knowledge to promote the power of certain groups" (Stainton Rogers, 2002, p. 299). Psychologists produce certain knowledges which prioritise a certain position (ideological) and marginalise others, as Hook (2004a) notes this is achieved by a tendency to "marginalise certain voices, gloss over certain kinds of social contradiction and ultimately collude with larger structures of power" (Hook, 2004a, p. 14)

So for example, the discipline has first premised that mental ill health exists and secondly that it resides in the faulty cognitions of individual people, who therefore can (and should) be confined, measured, diagnosed, treated, rather than considering social, discursive and attitudinal arrangements. From a community critical perspective this proves to be a convenient line of inquiry because it does nothing to challenge the status quo. Yet in contrast to the assertions of the community critical psychologists, mainstream psychology generally remains convinced that it is an apolitical and objective discipline, untainted by ideology; convinced that by being neither consciously engaged nor disengaged in contesting oppression they maintain neutrality. As Namenwirth notes "scientists firmly believe that as long as they are not conscious of any political agenda, they are neutral and objective, when in fact they are only unconscious" (Namenwirth, 1986, as cited in Lather, 1986a, p. 257). However, it is partially because of this supposedly neutrality that psychology has come to be so implicated in oppression. As Freire (1972) asserts, "washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral" (Freire, 1982, p. 102).

Despite the extent to which psychologists have traditionally made claims of objectivity, it is the community critical position that psychology is not a 'neutral' science. Indeed this position of the supposed objectivity and belief in the value-neutrality of the knowledges produced by psychology is of great concern, as the discipline not only fails to recognise but fails even to contemplate the political nature of psychological activity. Psychology effectively

produces mass belief in the story of disability residing inside the bodies of 'unhealthy' people and not in the unjust unhealthy society. The ignorance permitted under the guise of objectivity and the subsequent critical void where the consideration of the ideological implications of psychologist work and application, results in a complete and total lack of comprehension as to the roles in which psychological research and activity maintains the status quo, and provides legitimation and support for oppressive regimes.

The Relevance of Paulo Freire

The work of Paulo Freire pedagogical work might be considered as pivotal in relation to contesting such oppression and the dominance, power/knowledge, or specific discourses. Freire argues that oppression is maintained through the lack of opportunities to critically reflect on the structure of domination and that existing educational spheres only serve to deny such opportunities and to perpetuate this oppression. In contrast he proposes the need for a liberatory pedagogy, central to which is his theory of 'conscientization'.

Conscientization is the process through which collective understanding is transformed through demystification or de-ideologisation whereby persons collectively engage in problematisation questioning the status of dominant accounts (discourses or ideologies) examining and challenging the premises of social and political problems rather than focusing on conditions or symptoms, i.e. looking at structural, social causation rather than individual 'limitation', questioning that which is taken for granted and accepted as 'true' or inevitable (Freire 1970) sometimes involving the construction of counter-discourses, as a result of co-action upon the social world.

Freire is critical of existing educational means and in particular he critiques the "banking approach", in which "knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider know nothing" (Freire, 1996, p. 53). Such an approach clearly delineates between the knowers, teachers or researchers or psychologists (the 'subjects'), and the known, students or researched or 'patients' (the de-humanised objects). Subsequently, in specific relation to education, the 'students' are positioned as empty "receptacles to be filled by the teacher" (Freire, 1996, p. 53) with 'facts' which are presented as unquestionable 'truths' or 'reality'. Instead for Freire it is the

teacher's role to engage in a dialogical method, to critically reflect on meanings and to co-construct new knowledges from experiences and critical reflection or critical enquiry.

Community Critical Psychology is concerned with critiquing oppressive ideological positions, and is especially concerned with the uses of psychology to support the less powerful. Community Critical Psychology achieves this by studying the forms of surveillance and self-regulation in everyday life (Parker, 1999), exposing the social contradictions, contesting oppressive and being critically reflexive, enabling potentially transformatory forms of practice that disrupt imbalances of power and which have social equality as their goal (Parker, 2005, p. 13).

Technologies of Subjectivity

Foucault (1977a) discussed this new mechanism of "disciplinary power", which he observed as coinciding with the birth of "an art of the human body" (Foucault, 1977a, P138.), he described its productive rather than repressive traits, observing how it brought things into being, producing new knowledges (the human sciences) and in turn controlled and shaped subjectivity. As Hook (2003) notes;

"Psychology (Medicine) is a Disciplinary Apparatus, employing normalising technologies, (the elimination of all social and psychological irregularities and the production of useful docile subjects through a refashioning of minds and bodies) Technologies, confessional technology, the knowledge's they construct infiltrate the technologies of the self," (Hook, 2003, p.612)

The disciplinary control exerted through self-regulating subjectivity, increased people's general docility, optimised their capabilities, integrating them into systems of efficient and economic control (Hook, 2004b), through individualised technologies of the self and broader technologies of subjectivity.

People come to understand the negative message that all disabled people's problems stem from having 'abnormal' bodies as truth and fact, believing that it is their impairments which automatically prevent them from participating in social activities. Under this model, disabled people's inability to join in society is seen as a direct result of having an impairment and not as the result of features of our society which can be changed. The internalised oppression from the personal tragedy understanding and dominant ideological position powerfully maintains itself by making people less likely to witness or challenge their exclusion from

mainstream society. The ideology which shapes disability as an individual phenomenon precludes and prevents consideration of social factors which threaten its existence. By controlling the validity of knowledge produced it has the power to dictate what there is to be known about disability, what it means to be disabled and how people can challenge 'disability'.

The technologies of subjectivity make people understand disability as an individual phenomena, where the disabled person has the problem and it is them who must adjust (or be adjusted) to fit the perfect, natural and fixed world.

Foucault noted that production of such internalized oppression is promoted through the power of 'the confessional'. He notes:

"The obligation to confess is now relayed through so many different points, is so deeply ingrained in us, that we no longer perceive it as the effect of a power that constrains us; on the contrary, it seems to us that truth, lodged in our most secret nature, "demands" only to surface; that if it fails to do so, this is because a constraint holds it in place, the violence of power weighs it down, and it can finally be articulated only at the price of a kind of liberation. Confession frees, but power reduces one to silence" (Foucault, 1978 p. 60).

Foucault notes the extent to which 'the confessional' permeates, noting its deployment in a series of relationships, for example in, "children and parents, students and educators, patients and psychiatrists, delinquents and experts" (Foucault, 1978, p. 63). The confessional is deployed for example by research experts in the form of interviewing for judgement, correction or validation by the 'researcher', forensic experts deploy the confessional to achieve 'factual' admission of ones guilt for judgement, correction or validation by the judiciary, or teachers in education as the representation of one's thoughts and beliefs for judgment, correction or validation by the educator. The purpose of all the above as Foucault notes:

"is no longer a question simply of saying what was done ... and how it was done; but of reconstructing, in and around the act, the thoughts that recapitulated it, the obsessions that accompanied it, the images, desires, modulations, and quality of the pleasure that animated it" (Foucault, 1978, p. 63).

Foucault even goes so far as to note confession as: "one of the West's most highly valued techniques for producing truth" (Foucault, 1978, p. 63).

The surveillance of disabled people is inextricably linked to confession. Through confession the person must enact and observe dominant discourses, present themselves for

measurement against, or conformity to, some 'normality'. Subsequent confessions are required to monitor and develop the persons' progress. Beyond the potential of subsequent confessions, there is also the opportunity of subsequent surveillance, for example, in relation to higher education this might take the form of continued monitoring of arrangements or the discrete observance of assessment performance, arranged in tandem with subsequent confessional opportunities as students might be expected to return to 'support staff', to confess how good or bad they are doing, how they are suffering etc. Such systems of surveillance have been well defined by Foucault. Foucault described the implications of Bentham's model prison, the panopticon, which Foucault describes as:

"an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery" (Foucault, 1977a, p. 200).

The architecture of the panopticon allows for continual scrutiny and observation, it also facilitates the conditions of self surveillance. A guard need not be on hand to watch each and every inmate for the architectural form of the panopticon allows always the possibility that the inmate might be being watched, but all the time without them knowing. The architectural form of the existing services is such that disabled students, once marked out, can be subjected to continual surveillance through various processes of checking grades, receiving feedback from course tutors, co-ordinators, disability advisor's and the confessional mechanisms, framed as the altruistic workings of a system dedicated to developing and refining the best individualised system possible, in which the individual is to confess their experiences of the term for the compassion and scrutiny of the other who is keen to help, but in doing so only reaffirms their position as a disabled, in the pathological medical model sense, person.

Disciplinary Bio-Power and Governmentality

In later works Foucault went on to discuss the conglomeration of Disciplinary Power and Bio-power, linking the bottom-up forms of Disciplinary Power, which operate at the level of

the individuals, increasing their capabilities, and integrating them via self regulated subjectivity, with the knowledge producing, resource gathering, 'problems of the population' work of 'Bio-power', which he latterly developed into the notion of Governmentality, which he notes:

"must be allowed the very broad meaning which it had in the sixteenth century. 'Government' did not refer only to political structures or the management of states; rather it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or states might be directed: the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick. It did not cover only the legitimately constituted forms of political or economic subjection, but also modes of action, more or less considered, which were designed to act upon the possibilities of action of other people. To govern, in this sense is to structure the possible field of action for others" (Foucault, 1982, p. 221).

An illustration of such Disciplinary Bio-power or Governmentality comes from the 'compensation' offered to disabled people. To gain access to such 'compensation' or financial benefits disabled people must succumb to an individualistic theory of disability (to confess), taking personal responsibility for their own problems and oppression, subjecting themselves to the mercy of the medical profession, who will then measure, categorise, record and report the bodies and provide legitimation and validation of the 'individual impairment' (to subject themselves to surveillance).

In this one simple act we can see the investigation of population problems and gathering of the 'body of information' (Bio-power) working alongside the disciplinary power of, operating at the individual level, increasing docility (through the receipt of finance and medication), the optimisation of capabilities (for work), interrogation, (benefits, 'compensation' will only be awarded after an interview with a doctor or a psychologist) and the subjugation and subsequent self-governance of the person to the individual, medical model of disability. To receive benefits people must bow to the power and knowledges of the medical profession, come to accept their position as inferior and adopt the medical model discourse and individualised diagnosis. Through the individualistic model of disability, the power/knowledge in this exchange is located with the medical profession and through compulsory compliance controlling access to resources, it maintains its position (Bickenbach, 1993).

Focussing at the individual functional limitation level, neatly directs attention away from intervention to challenge social injustice and discrimination in favour of intervention focused

on individual people through medicine, measurement, pity, charity and goodwill. Effectively maintaining dominant interests, creating and supporting existing job and business opportunities', leaving unjust systems unchallenged and unchanged.

Illustrative of the strength of Disciplinary Bio-power any failure of the human sciences, inability to find effective cures, treatments or rehabilitations, does not reflect badly upon their abilities or lead society to consider a fundamental flaw in the area of analysis, understanding and intervention. Instead this is represented as evidence for the need for even more knowledge creation, intervention, measurement and rehabilitation, and for further finances to be dedicated towards the professions or apparatuses looking at controlling and normalising the population. As Oliver (1998) observes, this "link between disability and social deviance ... influences health care and research and supports the continued dominance of professionally controlled health and welfare services for disabled people" (Oliver, 1998, p. 1448).

Conclusion

This work is an example of community critical psychology, in the sense that it is a blend of community and critical psychologies and not the accommodationist, United States of America style 'community psychology' which has come to dominate. The theoretical standpoint is informed by the work of the British Disabled Peoples' Movement and their attempts at challenging conventional, oppressive, discourses of disability and impairment and subsequent theoretical reformulations in a social model of disability. In keeping with the resources for theorising made available in particular by Michel Foucault and Paulo Freire the dominant accounts of the theoretical reformulations of the British Disabled Peoples' Movement have been developed and a new theorised approach to disability is created which, as Abberley (1992) suggested, addresses and transcends the social constructionist and social creationist perspectives. The Social Justice Model of Disability facilitates the provision of accounts of the social construction of disability in Higher Education which do not necessarily preclude the necessity of both documenting and challenging the very 'real' experiences of material, social and economic oppression, or disability, despite understanding them to be socially created.

As well as inspiring new conceptualisations of disability, the works of Freire and Foucault also inform and develop a community critical standpoint which goes beyond merely offering yet more critique of the discipline of psychology toward incorporating critical action; seeking to prevent or reduce the negative consequences of our societal arrangements by working collaboratively with persons, to both expose their workings and to promote social change.

The follow chapter develops upon this account of an emancipatory social science and provides an explanation of a sophisticated emancipatory methodology to match the ideals of Community Critical Psychology and the work of the British Disabled Peoples' Movement.

Chapter Three - A Meta-justification of Praxis

"Insofar as we have come to see that evolving an empowering pedagogy is an essential step in social transformation, does not the same hold true for our research approaches?" (Lather, 1986a, pp 262 - 263).

A conventional thesis is expected or required by the academy to have a methodology section where methodology is a highly theorised meta-justification for the use of particular methods to discover 'what is the case'. Even if one rejects the ontological assumption of an independently existing world and the epistemological assumption that knowledge about such a world can be gained by systematic objective utilisation of certain standard research methods, and instead positions knowledge as claims privileged because of their methodological genealogy (knowledgemented), a section is still be required to explicate the framework of meta-assumptions and values within which knowledgement processes occur and are legitimated. So at a minimum I require a meta-justification of the why the knowledgementing the praxis collective has done should be taken seriously (and simultaneously why the degree of seriousness accorded to 'research' should be problematised). However, as has been made clear, knowledgementing is only one dimension of irreducible praxis, a meta-justification of the other dimensions (critique and social change) is also required. Therefore a theorised meta-justification for the use of praxis to understand, critique and change disabling practices is required. However this will not be provided within the frame of reference of conventional modernist science but within a critical 'other' frame of reference. So, below, in this chapter I explicate praxis as it's understood in this thesis, interleaving and making explicit the meta-criteria against which praxis is seen as preferable to research as a way of engaging with the social world and stating unambiguously why it should be taken more seriously than 'research'.

Theorising the Praxis

Within a critical frame of reference the notion of praxis is understood to be the act of knowing the social world, changing the social world and critiquing the social world in one and the same process; a frame of reference which rejects naïve realism and positions reality as socially constructed but, none the less, has 'real' effects; a frame of reference

which rejects fragmentation in favour of holistic inter-connectivity – in relation to knowledge construction, collective action and critique; a frame of reference which rejects individualism at every level and positions knowing-changing-critiquing i.e. praxis, as collectively accomplished; crucially, a frame of reference which draws no distinction between power and knowledge². It is a position which therefore distances this work from that of Nelson and Prilleltensky who talk of the 'cycle' of praxis; which is the "constant cycle of reflection and action" (Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2005, p. 155), advocating a method similar to the Lewinian oscillation between action and then reflection. Ironically, such an account falls disturbingly close to their critique of the actions of researchers committed to the "so-called 'scientific method' (positivism and post positivism)" which they note is concerned with "hypothesis testing derived from theoretical positions" (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005, p. 233).

Within the frame of reference of this thesis, knowledge is not positioned as being discovered or found but as constructed or invented (or as this way of putting it may suggest that individual agents are fabricating accounts it is better to put it that knowledge claims are constituted within and through the interconnections which constitute power-knowledge).

Within this critical frame of reference, knowledge is not positioned as being 'about' an independently existing reality but as constituted through an interconnectivity, or assemblage, of social phenomena. Within this critical frame of reference, truth is not a matter of correspondence of 'facts' with an independently existing reality but as a matter of whether a claim is accorded the status of truth according to locally agreed social conventions i.e. whether a claim is 'truthed.' A social process through which claims are given the status of knowledge (truthed) is referred to, within this frame of reference, as 'knowledgementing. According to studies in the history and sociology of knowledge, the

² "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault, 1977a, p. 27).

locally agreed social conventions on 'truing' vary widely from culture to culture and across time and, within the critical frame of reference of this thesis, the local conventions on knowledgementing of twentieth century psychologists and other orthodox acritical, positivist-inspired social scientists in neo-liberal Western societies is positioned as a historically interesting but curious cul-de-sac. Current knowledgementing conventions create and emphasis the distinction between researchers, the knowers, and 'the researched', the known, individualise the act of knowledgementing³, inspiring exploitative relations between 'researchers' (the deciders of theories to be applied, the knowers of the 'real' and complex knowledges, the creators, validators and beneficiaries of the new knowledges) and the researched (whose knowledges are devalued, are filtered through the academic process (are de-constructed, de-contextualised, cleaned, translated, re-constructed and re-formulated through the lenses of the academy) before they are legitimated). Such concerns are raised in regards to the application of praxis as described by Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005) and are consistent with Montero's critique of Lewin's account of Action Research, characterised by Montero (2000) as 'the field collection of data; discussion and elaboration of interventions in the researcher's institution introducing the subjects opinions; modified field action, and back to the working room, and so on' (Montero, 2000, p. 132), describing the oscillatory movement between the 'field' and the office, the division between the known, who always lives in the field, and the knower, who conducts their field work then goes back to the solitude of their office to think and re-theorise, decide on new action, test theory, on another occasion. Such an account is unfortunately often labelled as 'praxis' but is clearly devoid of the emancipatory/critical intentions required by others who advocate praxis as a means to progressively change the

³ Foucault has asked similar questions about the individualisation of the author, asking how the author (or instead we could also substitute this for 'the knower') became "individualised in a culture like ours, what status has he been given, at what moment studies of authenticity and attribution began, in what kind of system of valorisation" (Foucault, 1994b, p. 205).

social relations of research production; in this account they remain unchanged. It is the critique of this 'Epistemology of Distance' (Fernández Christlieb, 1994, as cited in Montero, 2000, p. 132), which Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005) fail adequately to capture in their tabularised account of Praxis. Though critiquing elsewhere the positivistic emphasis on the "separation of the researcher and the subject" (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005, p. 233) the division between those whose role it is to know and those whose role it is to be known) is not sufficiently addressed when it comes to describing or enacting emancipatory alternatives. Such a failure to engage with issues surrounding the processes of knowledge is widespread, even amongst those claiming to engage in praxis, participatory action research or emancipatory social science.

Regardless of what the original scholars intended, many contemporary self-appointed praxisioners adopt a form of praxis which is heavily weighted towards two distinct activities: one conducted in solitude, by those coming from the academy and the other conducted in pseudo-collaboration with those whose 'experiences' are being explored. The solitary elements are those which determine when the collaborative elements are permissible and what form they take. Through their separation the elements are ordered hierarchically, thus it is the theories, research, ideas (i.e. the knowledge from the academy) which determine how the practice and action will be developed, and then any understandings constructed through this interaction is returned to the academy to become knowledge, worked on in solitude and to become property of the author residing in the academy. There is a clear distinction between the power of those who work with, develop, shape and determine the theories and those onto whom they are applied. A position which Oliver critiqued when confronting why 'researchers' position themselves as the deciders of the theories, knowledges, to be applied, such an idea he suggested did not fit into praxis for it was "the product of a society which has a positivistic consciousness and a hierarchical social structure which accords experts an elite role" (Oliver, 1992, p. 102).

Such research relationships are merely another manifestation of exploitation, which as Young notes:

"shows that this relation of power and inequality is produced and reproduced through a systematic process in which the energies of the have-nots are

continuously expended to maintain and augment the power, status and wealth of the haves.” (Young, 1988, p. 278)

Fundamentally, then such praxisioners are likely to engage in an unauthentic form of praxis (Freire, 1970, Pp 68 - 69). Freire’s definition of Praxis combines reflection and action, he notes that;

“Action

} word = work = praxis

Reflection”

(Freire, 1970, p. 68)

Thus Freire is describing an activity in which action and reflection, in tandem, equate to praxis, not action then reflection as isolated activities. Subsequently he warned of such separation and distinction between those who assume the power to create the theories, ideas or research and those who they assume ought to be studied. Freire asked rhetorically;

“How can I dialogue if I consider myself a member of the in-group of pure men, the owners of truth and knowledge, for whom all non-members are ‘these people’ of ‘the great unwashed’? How can I dialogue if I start from the premise that naming the world is the task of an elite and that the presence of people in history is a sign of deterioration, thus to be avoided?” (Freire, 1970, p. 71).

Yet it is clear, in the accounts provided by those claiming to engage in praxis, that there is a demarcation between those who do the naming, and who introduce the theories, the owners of truth and knowledge and the non-members, as those assuming the role as the owners of truth and knowledge engage in their truth and knowledgementing activities in isolation from the non-members. Reinharz (1979) has referred to such research relations as the ‘Rape Model of Research’ (Reinharz, 1979, p. 95). In short the existing knowledgementing conventions are viewed as ideologically problematic, epistemologically naïve, methodologically unimaginative and procedurally unjust.

Within this critical frame of reference, a number of knowledges can co-exist in a society, each knowledgemented in different ways. These knowledges can not be distinguished in terms of traditional ‘truth’ since none is more or less true than any other in the sense of

corresponding more or less accurately to one independently existing 'real world' (which within this critical frame of reference does not exist). However because, within this frame of reference, knowledge claims can not be distinguished in terms of the correspondence theory of truth, that does not mean that - as ontological absolutists claim - we are left mired in an ontological and moral relativism in which all knowledge claims are equivalent.

Within the critical frame of reference of this thesis, different knowledge claims can be distinguished in terms of their dominant or subjugated position. Dominance is positioned as a manifestation of the effectiveness of the knowledgementing (or truthing) processes which have been deployed on their behalf. However, in order not to slip into an individualistic conception of power in which power is positioned as a personal property used by some to dominate others, I prefer to put it in a way more consistent with Foucault⁴: different knowledge claims can be distinguished in terms of the power-knowledge of which they are manifestations and they can be surfaced through identifying the interconnections or assemblages which enact them.

Different knowledge claims can also be distinguished in terms of the nature and quality of the knowledgementing process through which they are given their truth status: knowledge claims are legitimated in different ways on different occasions by different parties for different purposes. Within acritical social science research communities, legitimation of a claim is usually superficially presented as disinterested evaluation against a set of methodological criteria e.g. whether a research sample was large, representative of a bigger population, whether measures had proven reliability and validity etc. However within the critical frame of reference of this thesis, legitimation is positioned as a political function to do with serving the interests of those who benefit from the claim which is being

⁴ "it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge" (Foucault, 1977a, p.28).

privileged. It is partially for this reason that Emancipatory Disability Research agenda, as defined by the British Council of Disabled People was not viewed as methodologically problematic. As defined by the British Council of Disabled People (2003) there are seven core points:

“Control: ... Emancipatory disability research must fully involve disabled people from the beginning to the end of the research process...”

Accountability: Accountability extends to all those involved in the research process. Research procedures and practices must be open and explained to research participants and participating organisations...

Empowerment: ... research must attempt to leave disabled people in a better position to confront the disabling barriers in their lives and must not exploit their experiences for career benefits to researchers.

The Social Model of Disability: Emancipatory disability research should adhere to the social model of disability.

The Need for Rigour: Researchers must ensure that their choice of research methodology and data collection strategies are logical, rigorous and open to public and academic scrutiny.

The Choice of Methods: While emancipatory disability research has generally been associated with qualitative rather than quantitative data collection strategies; the choice of methods must adequately reflect the needs of the project concerned and the wishes of disabled people...

The Role of Experience: Discussions of disabled people's experiences, narratives and stories should be couched firmly within an environmental and cultural context in order to highlight the disabling consequences of a society that is increasingly organised around the needs of a mythical, affluent non-disabled majority.” (BCODP, n.d.)

Of particular relevance here, points five and six effectively de-politicises the knowledgementing potential of the work; as colleagues attempting to engage in emancipatory action are restricted to the dominant, ‘acceptable’, legitimation and method preferences of the academy.

The specific ways in which this legitimation is accomplished is seen, within this critical frame of reference, as a pragmatic matter dovetailed to local preoccupations. In other words the interests-serving claim is primary and the means of legitimating it is secondary and entirely pragmatic: accomplished according to local evaluatory sensibilities. What was once legitimated through satisfaction of the evaluation criteria of positivist research emphasising the importance of objectivity is increasingly legitimated through satisfaction of the evaluation criteria of ‘participatory action research’ emphasising the importance of subjectivity. Despite changing forms of legitimation, the oppressive claims legitimated and the interest groups whose interests they privilege remain just the same. This connects up

with concerns raised later in this thesis in connection with the 'neological marathon' and also with the irrelevance of the turn from quantitative to qualitative research from a critical perspective. Finally in this connection, the construction and maintenance of evaluatory frameworks which 'deliver the goods' is also seen within this critical frame of reference as part of the wider strategic and tactical process of legitimation.

Within the critical frame of reference adopted here, as far as evaluation criteria are concerned, the legitimation of knowledge claims in terms of the problematic conclusions achieved on the basis of fleeting, superficial, uncritical, individualistic, by-stander, voyeuristic engagement typical of positivist-inspired, naive realist, acritical, mainstream psychology, and other equivalently epistemologically and ontologically problematic social sciences and legitimation as a strategic political function benefiting the interests of the oppressive status quo is rejected as unacceptable. Within this critical frame of reference, conclusions achieved on the basis of sustained, in-depth, critical, collective, participatory, committed engagement are preferred and whilst legitimation is still positioned as a strategic political function, the interests of the oppressed are privileged. Here I use oppression in the sense of Iris Marion Young i.e.:

"Oppression refers to systemic constraints on groups that are not necessarily the result of the intentions of a tyrant. Oppression in this sense is structural, rather than the result of a few people's choice or policies. Its causes are embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying intuitional rules and the collective consequences of following those rules." (Young, 1988, P272)

Apart from the issues raised above in relation to legitimation and interests, knowledge claims can also be distinguished in terms of whose interests the various knowledges privilege in other respects. Within the frame of reference of this praxis, the relationship between the way people think, the way they understand themselves and the social world, what they 'just know' and dominant societal discourses and narratives is a dynamic one which is difficult to disentangle. What people 'think', 'know' and tell researchers is not automatically taken at face value as unproblematic but is regarded as a complex product of internalised societal discourses subjected to a great or lesser extent to a process of critical reflexivity. This orientation provides further reason for the rejection of the Emancipatory Disability Research agenda which relies simplistically upon the 'role of experience', enabling, as shall be explored further in relation to the empirical literature, the advanced

oppression of persons using their own 'experiences' and 'voices' as legitimation of their complicity or satisfaction with unjust circumstances.

It is assumed, drawing upon the work of Foucault, that governmentality is - in contemporary times - achieved primarily through people coming to think in ways which result in them serving the interests of the status quo. Note in passing the important irony that agency is here positioned as functioning to discipline the agent and that this way of conceptualising the issues has the merit of bypassing the old sterile agency versus structure debate.

Within this frame of reference the term 'surfacing' is used to refer to a process of making explicit the interests to which I have referred above. It is important to realise that, within the critical frame of reference, this is not a process of qualitative analysis equivalent to identifying 'emergent' themes by grounded theory analysis. Interests served are explicit only to those able to see them, this presupposes 'critical literacy' and many of us have been ideologically disabled by education which not only fails to develop but actively discourages critical capacity. Conscientizing and de-ideologisation are usually necessary in order to enhance critical literacy and thus make surfacing possible.

Reflexivity, recursively surfacing interests served by the practitioners' own 'standpoint', is an important strand of conscientizing and de-ideologisation but reflexivity, as traditionally understood is, within the critical frame of reference, too limited and risks becoming merely individualistic self-indulgent, confession of discursively problematic narrated subjective experience and also risks re-admitting positivism by positioning subjectivity as a source of 'bias' to be eliminated. I use the term 'radical reflexivity' to refer to a process which goes beyond excavation of interests embedded in the author's subjectivity to uncovering and taking account of the institutional and societal foundations of those interests.

Surfacing is a continuous, heterarchical, collective process, does not consist in top-down hierarchical individual transmission or banking of information from books or lectures; and does not produce an individual expertise which is transferable from one setting to another. Surfacing involves collectively critically problematising, i.e. taking 'truths' which are taken-for-granted as just 'the way things are' and showing that they, and the assumptions upon which they are dependent, are not necessary or essential 'pure truths' but are ideologically

charged, historically contingent, claims which are the result of social processes constructing and promoting them. As Foucault put it, critique:

"consists in seeing what type of assumptions, of familiar notions, of established, unexamined ways of thinking the accepted practices are based" . . . "showing that things are not as obvious as people believe, making it so that what is taken for granted is no longer taken for granted. To do criticism is to make harder those acts which are now too easy" (Foucault, 1994a, Pp 456).

Critical problematising can be likened metaphorically to ideological archaeology. A second sense of problematising within the critical frame of reference draws on another aspect of Foucault's critical thinking highlighted by Rose (1999). Problematisation, in this second sense, involves surfacing the ways in which 'problems' are invented, maintained, policed and exploited. As Rose (1999) puts it problematisation involves recognising:

"the emergence of problems in relation to particular moral, political, economic, military, geopolitical or juridical concerns, or within the operations of particular practices or institutional sites...; the authorities who define phenomena as problems...; the criteria in relation to which certain persons, things or forms of conduct come to be seen as problematic...; the kinds of dividing practices involved" (Rose, 1999, p. xi).

Knowledge and radical reflexivity are action in themselves but within this frame of reference that is not enough. It is vital for the praxis itself to be simultaneously (rather than sequentially) a manifestation of procedurally just action in relation to the involvement of all co-praxitioners; it is vital to engage in social action as part of the emancipatory process of praxis and it is vital to achieve progressive social change as a result of praxis. As Martin-Baró put it: "the concern of the social scientist should not be so much to explain the world as to transform it" (Martin-Baró in Aron and Corne, 1994:19). The importance of the simultaneity is apparent in the knowledge/action of the British Disabled Peoples' Movement when establishing the foundations for the Social Model of Disability. Although the standpoint of the British Disabled Peoples' Movement is apparently politically radical and progressive, the consequences of an apparent lack of radical reflexivity in relation to knowledge led to a theory, the social model of disability, which re-inscribed individual pathology (in the form of impairment) in what was designed to be an alternative to an oppressive medical model of disability, thus reproducing it. Without, or with only partial, critical reflection on interests served through the production of the accounts, without exposition of the ideological and discursive foundations of the dominant discourses we are left with a model which at its core maintains a pathological element to disability.

Subsequently this is incorporated into the dominant, 'just', methodological developments and subsequently becomes a requirement of Emancipatory Disability Research to 'follow a social model of disability'.

In this frame of reference as it is recognised that all theories have the potential to enact and reproduce dominant discourses, praxis seeks to put this into reverse and to apply the critical orientation developed (as part of the praxis) out with in all aspects of life. Praxis is a living critical process. The critical theorising developed in the praxis is always living through the everyday interactions of the colleagues engaged in the Praxis. So one is confronting oppression whenever one experiences it and using living criticality to inform collaboration and discussions; always engaging in Praxis, not just from 9 – 5.

Conclusion

The body of work presented in this thesis is an attempt to demonstrate a praxis approach consistent with 'Emancipatory Social Science', from which alternative conclusions can be drawn about the nature of disability in Scottish Higher Education and from which the 'subjugated knowledges', 'disqualified knowledges' can be 'insurrected' (Foucault, 1980d, pp 81 - 82). Praxis in this work refers to the irreducible collective process through which, simultaneously: knowledge claims are constructed and legitimated ('knowledgemented'); interests served by what is thought, said and done by all relevant parties are brought to awareness (surfaced) and critically problematised, extending beyond excavation of interests embedded in the author's subjectivity to the uncovering of the institutional and societal foundations of those interests (or as I call it here radical reflexivity); and institutional oppression is contested through the pursuit of emancipatory process and just outcomes, demonstrating in action the contesting of externalised oppression (positioned as socially constructed) and internalised oppression (or as I call it here ideologically progressive social action). The rest of this thesis is dedicated to demonstrating attempts to meaningfully engage in praxis.

Chapter Four – The Constitutive-Context of the

Praxis

In this chapter, I introduce the reader to culturally specific national, legislative and educational issues necessary for the reader to make sense of the praxis in its application to the specific context of disability in Higher Education. In a traditional thesis these would be presented as components of the multi-level context within which the praxis uncovered and contested disabling practices in Scottish Higher Education but, in this thesis, I contest the 'individual-in-context' notion, dominant in the uncritical community psychology drawing upon Bronfenbrenner's (1979) notion of the ecology of human development and Orford's (1992) individual-in-context as re-inscribing individualism, so I here I position national, legislative and educational issues as important inter-connected components which both partially constitute and contextualise the praxis.

National issues

The praxis reported in this thesis was carried out in Scotland, a small country located in the North of the British Isles, which forms, along with England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the United Kingdom. Through the United Kingdom, Scotland is a member of the European Union. As a result, Scotland is governed by complex legislative arrangements, which involve the Scottish Government in Edinburgh, the UK Government located in Whitehall and the European Union based in Brussels.

Although the United Kingdom is may be considered to be wealthy in terms of Gross National Product it has been repeatedly shown to be one of the most unequal countries in terms of the distribution of wealth. Such inequitable distribution of wealth is consistently associated with a wide range of indicators of morbidity and life expectancy (Wilkinson, 1996; WHO, 2008). Scotland has the lowest life expectancy rates for women in the European Union and the second lowest for men. Scotland has the highest death rates from heart disease in Europe and amongst the highest rates of lung cancer in the world. Deaths from liver cirrhosis and cancer of the oesophagus are currently rising in Scotland and

Scotland has a suicide rate (often associated with mental illness diagnoses) double that of England (one of the highest suicide rates in Europe).

Moreover Scotland suffers from some of the worst poverty and poorest education in Europe with large areas of severe deprivation and poor quality housing. According to international literacy surveys more than 50% of Scottish people have been so poorly educated their lives are made difficult by illiteracy and innumeracy. Therefore Scottish people are less likely than people in other European countries to be in a position materially or educationally to contest disabling practices and procedures.

These manifestations of oppression are relevant for this praxis because they indicate higher rates of particular manifestations of physical and intellectual diversity which are likely to be socially re-constructed as disability (as individual pathological characteristics) aided by a combination of factors including medical diagnoses and the medical model core of the DDA (1995; 2005). In Scotland, therefore, it might be expected that there will be more people being at risk of being disabled in Scottish HEIs than elsewhere.

The Scottish Higher Educational System

The honours degrees offered in Scottish Universities usually take four years for completion as opposed to the three years expected in most places elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The first year is spent gaining a broad higher educational background in various subjects offered by Higher Education Institutions, which need not be directly related to the degree course of study; it is suggested that this is "designed to articulate with the ... intentionally broad secondary school curriculum" (National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Report of the Scottish Committee), 1997b) specific to Scottish secondary education. The subsequent two years are spent mostly studying the core course subject. Following three years students may elect to leave with a broad general degree, though in reality this option is usually forced upon students who fail to obtain the necessary grades to be admitted entrance to the honours year programme. The final year (the honours year) is generally more specialised study. Students select from a wider complement of advanced units and due to the specificity, study in smaller more intense groupings. In addition, most courses require students to complete a period of original research, dissertation or honours project,

over their final year. Unlike elsewhere in the United Kingdom, University level education is now available free to Scottish domiciled students who, upon completion of their degrees no longer, unlike their English, Welsh and Northern Irish counterparts, have to pay back their course fees.

The Legislative Context of Scotland

There are a multitude of different authorities with the power to evoke, amend and create legislation in Scotland. Matters which are devolved to the Scottish Parliament include; health, education and training, local government, social work, housing, planning, tourism, law and home affairs, the police and fire services, the environment, natural and building heritage, agriculture, forestry and fishing, sports and the arts, and statistical, public registers and records.

Such devolved powers have enabled the Scottish Executive to shape the lives of Scottish People quite differently from that of other British citizens. In specific relation to this body of work, as 'Education and Training' is a devolved matter the Scottish Government has the power to make necessary changes on a national basis, to intervene and distinctively shape the future of Scottish Higher Education in ways different from the rest of the United Kingdom. Subsequently these devolved powers have resulted in quite marked differences in relation to the legislation (and resultant policies and procedures) governing Higher Education in Scotland compared to those in other areas making up the United Kingdom. The implications of such differences are discussed more fully later in the section specifically explicating the various legislative acts related to Education.

In contrast, where as Education is a devolved matter, Equal Opportunities is a reserved matter for the Westminster Government. This is of particular relevance to this work as, section L2. (Equal Opportunities) of Part II (Specific Reservations) of Schedule Five (Reserved Matters) notes 'Equal Opportunities' includes; "the subject matter of, the Equal Pay Act 1970, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995*" (Section L2. (Equal Opportunities), Part II (Specific Reservations), Schedule Five (Reserved Matters), The Scotland Act 1998 (emphasis added)).

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (most recently updated to become the Disability Discrimination Act 2005) is represented as the most significant piece of anti-discrimination legislation which makes provisions for protecting the civil rights of 'disabled people'.

Consequently the legislative context of this work is both distinctive and complex, located at the intersection between Equal Opportunities legislation administered in Westminster and national Education and Training legislation administered locally by the Scottish Government.

The Legislative Context - Disability

The plight of disabled people in the United Kingdom has received considerable interest in recent years and as a result there have been multiple calls for action, in particular legislative, to eliminate disabling practices. Concerns have led to a prolonged series of successive legislative amendments and the introduction of new bills. The first of which was the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), which it was claimed at the time was the; "only comprehensive Bill for disabled people ever introduced by a British Government" and which marked "the United Kingdom out as one of the world leaders... in the move towards comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation for disabled people" (Hague, 1995). Hague's claims come despite repeated obstructions by the Conservative Government of which he was a part to block attempts to introduce progressive disability legislation.

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 made it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people when providing employment (Part II) and goods, facilities, services and premises (Part III).

Part I of the DDA (1995) was concerned with providing 'Definitions' of Disability. In terms of the DDA (1995) disability was defined as; "a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities", adding that the definition includes, "any impairment resulting from or consisting of a mental illness", but only if the illness is "clinically well-recognised" (DDA, 1995).

To obtain protection under the DDA (1995) a person had to demonstrate that; "their impairment; lasted for at least 12 months, was likely to last for at least that period, was likely to last for the rest of the person's life or is recurrent" (DDA, 1995). Additionally, a person also had to show that their impairment had a substantial effect on certain defined activities, including mobility, speech, hearing or eyesight, memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand.

The DDA (1995) specifically disregarded any treatment or medication used to control or alleviate symptoms, therefore persons undergoing treatment were still to be regarded as being disabled for the purposes of the legislation. The legislation also applied "to persons who have a history of disability". For example, if a person 'suffered' from an impairment some years previously and this was now being used to discriminate against them then they would also have protection under the DDA (1995), as long as they would have met the criteria for a 'disability' during the period that they 'suffered' with the particular impairment.

Part II Employment replaced the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 and 1958, memorable for the 3% employment quota for disabled people. Part II required employers not to treat a disabled person less favourably for reasons of disability and to make 'reasonable adjustments' to features (including physical premises) of the employment so disabled people were not discriminated against, though part II only applies to employers with more than 15 employees.

Part III Discrimination in Other Areas provides protection against discrimination against access to goods, facilities, services and premises, again service providers are encouraged to make "reasonable adjustments" to ensure that disabled people are not treated "unfavourably because of a disability" (DDA, 1995).

The legislation placed anticipatory duties on service providers; they were to anticipate any necessary adjustments rather than react as problems became apparent. They were required to consider whether there were any barriers, physical or other, to access and to make reasonable adjustments in anticipation of disabled clients or customers.

Criticisms of the DDA (1995)

The Act failed, in many ways, to protect the rights of disabled people. It received a number of criticisms from disabled people, the British Disabled Peoples' Movement and allied organisations including Human Rights groups who noted it as falling far short of that which is necessary to escape the systemic oppression and disabling experienced by some people in the United Kingdom.

Firstly, it started by introducing a definition of disability which asserted an individualistic medical model of disability; stating that disability was; "a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities" (DDA, 1995), "disability" here is ultimately reduced to the individual person and her or his impairment (Chadwick, 1996, p. 26). Rather than creating legislation with a focus on the disabling society, emphasizing civil rights, the legislation focused on 'individual needs' and 'individual' disabled people.

The dominant individual/medical model view portrays disabled people as figures of intrinsic limitation and restriction. This negative perception limits any attempt to achieve equality in any meaningful sense (Chadwick, 1996, p. 25). Chadwick (1996) notes it serves only to promote "action which involves accommodating these individual 'deficiencies' in a framework of pity, philanthropy and generosity" (Chadwick, 1996, p. 27) as opposed to one in which people are provided with protection of their rights to be equal members of society.

The dominance of the individual medical model in the definition of disability (i.e. disability as an individual limitation) served to undermine any constitutive link between social barriers and disability. As Barnes and Oliver (1995) note, the legislation set out to "prohibit discrimination against disabled people on the grounds of their (not society's) disability" (Barnes & Oliver, 1995, p. 113).

Secondly, not only did the legislation promote the assumption that disability was something located within the individual, it also provided justifications for discrimination in some areas.

As Lord Lester of Herne Hill noted during its passage through Parliament; the act was "riddled with vague, slippery and elusive exceptions making it so full of holes that it is more

like a colander than a binding code.” (Lord Lester of Herne Hill, Parliamentary Business 22nd May 1995, Column 813

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199495/ldhansrd/vo950522/text/50522-04.htm>)

In particular, in relation to Chadwick’s comments on the accommodatory nature of the act which privileges individual adaptation at the expense of systemic re-organisation, legislation also restricts necessary adjustments ones which are ‘reasonable’ and without providing any specification of what counts as a ‘reasonable adjustment’, leaving it to the courts to determine the specificities of such a definition.

A third major criticism of the Act related to its failure to introduce a Commission with similar powers to the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality. Baroness Hollis of Heigham (1995) reported to the House of Lords when they were considering the Bill that; “although the Bill has the power to make discrimination illegal, it has no power to prevent it because it lacks an enforcement agency.” (Baroness Hollis of Heigham, Parliamentary Business 22nd May 1995, Column 807

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199495/ldhansrd/vo950522/text/50522-04.htm>)

Instead, the legislation introduced a National Disability Council merely to ‘advise the minister’ (DDA, 1995) and which had no powers to undertake investigations, issue non-discrimination notices, take up test cases and offers advice to individuals.

Fourthly, criticisms were made in relation to the length of implementation. Despite the act becoming legislation in 1996, it was to take in excess of 25 years for the act to fully come into effect.

Fifthly, the legislation failed to address discrimination in many crucial areas of people’s lives, for example in relation to transport and local authority policies, or in relation to employment when it exempted employers with under 20 members of staff. The implications of which was highlighted by Baroness Hollis of Heigham, who reported that “small firms employed 20 per cent of the labour force, representing ... 96 per cent. of all businesses in this country” (Baroness Hollis of Heigham, Parliamentary Business 22nd May 1995, Column 808

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199495/ldhansrd/vo950522/text/50522-04.htm>).

Most importantly in relation to this thesis, as enacted, the DDA (1995) did not provide any specific legislation relating to the provision of education. Ministers justified the omission of measures to deal with discrimination in compulsory education by claiming that Special Education Law (then the Education Act 1993, now included in the Education Act 1996) was so effective that there was no need for further or additional protection or rights. The situation was similar in relation to tertiary education, as it was claimed that cover was already provided by existing legislation (then the Further and Higher Education Act (1992) or the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act (1992)) which required further and higher education institutions to 'have regard' to disabled students. Part 4 of the Act did amend the Tertiary Education Acts placing a duty on the higher education funding councils to require HEIs to publish Disability Statements describing existing policy and provision, detailing future activity and potential policy development, however it did not place any specific prescriptions toward content based on the development of anti-discriminatory practices. Furthermore, research (HEFCE/HEFCW, 1999; Brown, Duffield, Sutherland, Phillips, Riddell, Cox, & Amery, 1997; Hall & Tinklin, 1998) had already indicated that HEIs in the United Kingdom were already publishing Disability Statements. Thus, the DDA (1995) failed to require either the compulsory, primary or secondary, education sectors or the voluntary tertiary education sectors to address disabling practices. In essence, it was not illegal for the providers of Higher Education to discriminate against disabled people, thereby denying them their Human Right to Education.

In relation to education, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1947) asserts that;

"(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace" (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1947).

There was no protection to ensure that disabled people could expect the right to be educated, without prejudice or segregation, in mainstream schools and colleges.

There was wide spread recognition that the legislation was insufficient; it neither protected civil rights nor made discrimination illegal. The Act failed to provide the comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that disabled people had been demanding for nearly 20 years. The mounting criticisms lead to various calls for improvements, amendments or entirely new legislation.

The Disability Rights Task Force

Perhaps strategically, given the disquiet and dissatisfaction, the Labour Party Manifesto of 1997 included an open commitment to full and enforceable civil rights for disabled people, a commitment which the disability lobby set about trying to ensure they fulfilled when they won the election. In October 1997, the new Labour Government announced that it would fully implement the DDA (1995), introduce a Disability Rights Task Force to review the DDA (1995) and introduce a Commission to enforce the DDA and any subsequent legislation.

The Disability Rights Task Force was established in December 1997. Its job was to look at the full range of issues that affect disabled people's lives and advise the Government about action required in order to promote comprehensive and enforceable civil rights. The Task Force also set about addressing negative attitudes towards disabled people; recognising that these needed to be changed in order to make real anti-discriminatory progress.

Its formal terms of reference were: "To consider how best to secure comprehensive, enforceable civil rights for disabled people within the context of our wider society, and to make recommendations on the role and functions of a Disability Rights Commission."

(Disability Rights Task Force, 1997)

In 1999, the Disability Rights Task Force published "From Exclusion to Inclusion" with 156 recommendations for action across all areas of disabled people's lives, many of which could only be introduced by means of a complete overhaul of the existing legislation.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act (2001)

Following recommendations made by the Disability Rights Task Force in 1999, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 was created to extend the provisions of the DDA

(1995) to cover education. The legislation came into effect in September 2002 under Part IV of the DDA (1995).

SENDA (2001) placed responsibilities on local authorities, nurseries, schools, colleges and universities to ensure that people are not treated less favourably than others as a result of "their disability", requiring such services to ensure that they do not discriminate against disabled people.

The legislation placed a duty on schools to prepare accessibility strategies and plans to increase the extent to which young disabled people can participate in school activities and access premises, but this was not required of the providers of tertiary education.

The specific requirements for Further and Higher Education were phased in gradually between 2002 – 2005; from September 2002 it was unlawful to discriminate against disabled students in admissions, enrolment and any services put on specifically for students, including teaching and learning, student trips, leisure facilities and cafeterias, libraries and learning centres, work experience and student accommodation, by September 2003 'reasonable adjustments' were to have been made in relation to the provision of auxiliary aids and services to ensure that people are not placed at a 'significant disadvantage', and from September 2005 premises were to be made physically accessible.

The Act imposed a duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' so that disabled students were not put at a 'substantial disadvantage' compared to others. However, in the case of universities and colleges, less favourable treatment could be justified if it is necessary to maintain 'academic standards'. Thus, as previously discussed, the legislation still enabled 'legitimised' discrimination. In an audit of disability provision in Higher Education in the United Kingdom, Riddell, Tinklin and Wilson (2005) note that senior management reported "only 'a little nervousness'" (Riddell, Tinklin & Wilson, 2005, p. 54). Echoing Lord Lester of Herne Hill's earlier sentiments, they reported that the senior managers viewed the legislation as 'limited in extent' with lots of 'get out clauses' and, until case law is established, with an indefinite interpretation.

The Disability Discrimination Act (2005)

As a result of the publication of the Disability Rights Task Force recommendations, new Disability Discrimination legislation was enacted in light of the recommendations. Building upon the previous legislation and subsequent amendments, and modelled on the Race Relations Amendment Act, the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (2005) received Royal Assent on the 8th April 2005 and came into effect on the 5th December 2005.

Though there were many minor alterations, significantly the DDA 2005 extended the definition of disability to include more people (for example people with HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis), though it should be noted that this was merely an extension of the preoccupation with medical categorisation which was maintained from the original 1995 Act.

Among other minor amendments the new legislation also: extended cover in relation to discrimination in public transport (the DDA (1995) covered only the transport infrastructure, in essence the DDA (1995) applied only to services such as buying the tickets, the actual journey itself was not covered), the extension of duties on landlords and managers of premises (to include a duty to make reasonable adjustments to policies, practices and procedures and provide auxiliary aids and services, where reasonable, to enable a disabled person to rent a property and facilitate a disabled tenant's enjoyment of the premises), and introduced provision in regards to clubs with 25 or more members.

Importantly the Act also reversed the burden of proof (where once the accuser, the person who was being disabled (the employee, student or person attempting to access the services) were required to provide proof of unlawful or unreasonable actions, now, once the accuser (the employee, student or potential user of the services) has established a prima facie case that discrimination has occurred, the institution is then responsible for proving otherwise.

Despite the plethora of minor amendments by far the largest and most relevant to change was the introduction of a new duty to promote disability equality, The Disability Equality Duty (The Duty) (Part V). Described by the Disability Rights Commission, whilst still at Draft Bill Stage, as: "a substantial move forward in terms of disability rights" noting that this represents a fundamental shift in terms of tackling discrimination as it "will not occur as long

as the only mechanism for enforcement is reliant on individual disabled people taking cases” (Disability Rights Commission, 2003).

Part V sets out two types of duties, General and Specific. The General Duty requires public authorities, including HEIs and Colleges, to have “due regard”⁵ to the need to:

*“Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act;
Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and
Take steps to take account of disabled persons’ disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons” (Chapter Two, paragraph 2.2).*

In addition certain public authorities, including HEIs, are named in the Act as being subject to additional ‘Specific Duties’. The main element of the specific duty regulations is the production, implementation and publication of a Disability Equality Scheme (DES). Which, amongst other elements requires: that disabled people should be fully involved in the production of the scheme and that documentation of this involvement should form part of the scheme itself; that the institution should assess the impact of its decision making and functioning in relation to disabled people; should provide stated actions which the organisations will undertake to address disabling practices and how the effectiveness of these actions will be assessed. Publication of the first DES was required by the 4th December 2006 and subject to regular revisions thereafter.

Institutions are required to produce action plans detailing how they intend to fulfil the general duty and implement their DES and then to carry out the actions specified in the

⁵ “Due regard” is defined in the Code (paras 2.33 – 2.43) as consideration of:

- Proportionality – the impact on disabled people of positive changes to a particular decision or function, and,
- Relevance – the relevance of disability equality to a particular decision or function.

scheme, evaluate its success over time and make appropriate revisions at least every three years.

Reaction to the Act was mixed, on one side are the charities and organisations 'for' disabled people who have generally provided very favourable feedback, in particular welcoming the wider definition and the duty to promote equality. On the other side are those charities 'of' disabled people which are less enthusiastic. The United Kingdom's Disabled People's Council (UKDPC), formerly the British Council of Disabled People (BCODP), noted that disability discrimination legislation would remain weak even after these amendments, noting that the Act fails by "favouring the powerful, and the disabled are not powerful" (BCODP, n.d.). The Council added that: the Act failed to meet the Government's commitment to rights; that the government had introduced yet another long awaited Act that fell short of requirements and proposals; and that the Act had failed to ensure basic human and civil rights.

The Legislative Context – Education

Like disability legislation, the legislation relating to the government of education has also undergone considerable change. Even before the formal creation of devolved powers, education practices in Scotland have been quite different from the rest of the United Kingdom. This section briefly outlines the main legislative developments related to Scottish Higher Education in the most recent years.

The Further and Higher Education Act (1992)

The Further and Higher Education Acts of 1992 made significant changes in the funding and administration of higher education. The most notable being the creation of separate funding bodies; thus for example in Scotland the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) was established and similarly in England the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) was formed. In addition to changes to the distribution of funds the Further and Higher Education Acts (1992) introduced changes which allowed the former polytechnics to become Universities. Subsequently following this there was a considerable rise in the overall number of universities.

In direct relation to the topic of this thesis, as noted earlier, The Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act (1992) also drew attention to equal opportunities, special needs and provision for 'students with disabilities'. Requiring Further and Higher Education providers to 'have regard' to the rights and needs of 'students with disabilities'. However this was only made a statutory duty in relation to Further Education. In effect, this meant that only Further Education had an established legal obligation to consider and make alterations or provision for the 'needs of students with disabilities'; higher education establishments had not legal obligation to make provision.

Teaching and Higher Education Act (1998)

Following the Dearing Report's recommendations (NCIHE, 1997a), the Teaching and Higher Education Act (1998) introduced another shake-up of funding but this time relating directly to who was paying the cost of Higher Education. Specifically, the act introduced tuition fees of £1000 per annum as the student's contributions to the costs of their learning, replaced maintenance grants with student loans (thus subsequently also the creation of the 'Students Loan Agency'), and introduced bursaries for students on health and social care courses (for example nursing and social work) and teacher training. Following contributions from the Garrick Report (NCIHE, 1997b), the Scottish counterpart to the Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997a), Scottish students were required only to pay tuition fees on three of their four years of studies, matching their contribution with students studying elsewhere in the United Kingdom where undergraduate degrees typically only last for three years.

The Higher Education Act (2004)

Post-devolution, Scotland moved away from shared, though slightly specified, legislative developments with the rest of the United Kingdom resulting in more marked differences. Most recently the Higher Education Act 2004 was introduced. The most notable element of the Act was the introduction of 'Variable Fees', which permits institutions to charge students

anything from £0 - £3000⁶ in additional up-front fees⁷ per annum. Almost all Universities eligible have chosen to charge the full £3000. In contrast the Scottish Government is moving in the opposite direction towards greater access to free Higher Education. Post devolution the Higher Education Act (2004) does not apply to Scottish Institutions

Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005

Like the Higher Education Act (2004), the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act (2005) was introduced to amend existing legislation governing Higher Education in Scotland, and received royal assent on 1 June 2005. Like previous acts the legislation introduced changes to the manner in which institutions were funded. One of the main outcomes of the Act was to establish a new funding council, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), to bring together funding and support across the further and higher education sector. Thus it replaced both the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) and SHEFC and took on the role of distributing finances to Scotland's colleges and universities for teaching and learning, research and other activities in support of Scottish government priorities (SFC, 2007).

Unlike the Higher Education Act (2004) which introduced a greater financial burden for individual students, the Scottish Government has agreed to abolish tuition fees, for Scottish domiciled students, altogether. In addition the minority Scottish National Party led government have pledged to fight to remove loans and bring back grants, and to write-off

⁶ In order to charge more than the existing standard fee of £1250 per annum, the University must demonstrate to the Office of Fair Access (a new agency established by the Act) that their access procedures and policies are not discriminatory.

⁷ Though labelled 'up-front fees' the initial payments will be made by the Student Loans Company whom students will be required to pay back following graduation at the same time as they are paying back any loans they have taken and, likewise, only when they are earning more than £15,000 per year.

the existing loans of former students, though these pledges have yet to win approval from other members of government.

In specific relation to the thesis the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005, also requires the SFC to require that the Further and Higher Education Institutions which it funds have arrangements in place for; "taking into account the educational and related needs (including support needs) of persons who are, and the likely educational and related needs (including support needs) of persons who might wish to become, students of the body" (Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act (2005), Part 1.7.2 g).

Naturally, echoing the increasing financial demands placed on British HEIs by the Conservative Government in the late 1980s and early 1990s, where in order to make 'efficiency gains' the amount the government would pay per student 'unit cost' was reduced by 35% whilst simultaneously institutions expanded the number of places available in order to meet the financial shortfall (Riddell, 1998, p. 206), there is disquiet amongst the leaders of the Scottish Institutions who are concerned about how they will be able to sustain themselves financially whilst continuing to remain competitive to their potentially richer counterparts else where in the United Kingdom.

The Educational Context

The developing legislation and the growing interest and awareness in relation to equal opportunities has resulted in the development of many initiatives aimed at widening access to higher education; initially mainly in relation to gender and race (Hall & Tinklin, 1998) and more recently disability has attracted specific focus. Interest in the experiences of disabled students in higher education and the addressing of avenues for potential discrimination, has been lead by both the Disabled Peoples' Movement and organisations such as SKILL: The National Bureau for Students with Disabilities. Subsequently there have been a series of specific initiatives aimed at encouraging and enhancing the participation of disabled students in Higher Education.

Special Initiative Funding

In the context of the ongoing calls for civil rights legislation coupled with the recurrence of Bills proposing legislation and successive refusal to introduce comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, the Secretary of State for Education, following the announcement of The Further and Higher Education Act (1992), suggested that the newly formed funding councils, the SHEFC and HEFCE, should pay particular attention to meeting the needs of disabled people (Hurst, 1996). Subsequently both responded by offering special initiative funding to institutions to improve their provision for disabled students. HEFCE (1995) announced that £3m was available to fund special initiatives in selected institutions, and institutions were invited to submit bids to support their projects. Hurst (1996) notes that projects which "built on existing good practice and which could act as exemplars for the sector" were preferred as the money was not intended to support projects based on "little evidence" (Hurst, 1996, p. 128). Also, the money was to be considered pump priming and those projects with institutional support were viewed more favourably by those determining who should be funded (Hurst, 1996, p. 128).

In contrast, SHEFC decided that the benefit of the additional funding was to be distributed more evenly across institutions. SHEFC funded three main initiatives. The first project, The Disabled Students' Initiative (DSI), conducted between 1993 and 1994, produced audit on provision in HEIs and a guide for disabled students called 'Access to Success'. The second initiative, Support for Disabled Students with Disabilities – Staff Initiative (SSD-S), running from 1994 and 1997, provided funding for a part-time disability coordinator for 'students with disability' in every Scottish HEI and a national coordinator to support the local institutional disability coordinators. An equivalent to the national co-ordinator, the e-Quip team, was established some three years later. The third initiative, Support for Students with Disabilities – Equipment Initiative (SSD-E), introduced September 1994, encouraged HEIs to bid for funds to improve their levels of equipment for supporting for 'students with disabilities'.

The initiatives were the subject of SHEFC audit reports (Curran, McGee & Reynolds 1994a and 1994b) and an analysis lead by a team from Stirling University (Brown et al., 1997). Brown et al. (1997) were particularly scathing of the SSD-E initiative for whilst it provided

funding for the equipment it provided no funding for staff to support its use. Additionally the funding was found to be vulnerable to misuse. For example, Riddell (1998) notes that the funds were used by one institution to purchase a mini-bus under the guise that it would be used to transfer people between sites but which 'ended up used as part of a general transport service (Riddell, 1998, p. 216). Brown et al. (1997) also found problems with the DSI initiative, in particular noting that because no funding was provided to maintain dissemination or publicise the 'Access to Success' report most key informants were unaware of its existence (Riddell, 1998, p. 216). SHEFC have continued to fund special initiatives aimed at promoting and supporting wider access and participation.

Teachability

The Teachability project, lead by the University of Strathclyde and funded by SHEFC from 1999 through to 2006, supported institutions, and specifically departments, to audit and amend their curriculum, teaching methods and assessment practices in order to make them more inclusive.

The main ideas and aims of Teachability project were;

"to be informative, grounded as it is in the real experiences of disabled students trying to access courses of study, and of academic staff devising often innovative ways of enhancing that access, to be persuasive, and not prescriptive. Academic staff are responsible for designing and delivering courses of study. But certain features of design and delivery can support, or alternatively act as an obstacle to, the participation of disabled students. It is hoped that the presentations of arguments and ideas about practices will persuade of the need to consider changes to practices" (Teachability, 2006)

The project involved the delivery of a number of seminars in a number of institutions across Scotland which targeted specific areas of pedagogy, and interested parties were able to enrol at any one of a number possible institutions offering the seminar on various days.

The project also created several publications designed to support academics to evaluate the accessibility of course provision for disabled students and to make amendments in light of any problems which appeared, in addition to clarifying some of the complexities of the various legislative amendments.

The Accessible Curriculum

Running simultaneously with the Teachability program, the University of Stirling created their own institution-specific program entitled 'The Accessible Curriculum', which aims to 'provide the academic community with points of good practices regarding design and delivery of academic units of study'. The program encompasses nine⁸ 'Accessibility Indicator guide sheets' which relate to specific aspects of the curriculum which it is noted are placed on an intranet site which members of the 'academic community' are 'informed' and 'occasionally reminded' of, though it should be noted that in my time working in a variety of teaching roles in this particular institution I was never made aware of its existence⁹. In addition there is a 'single page questionnaire', 'Review of Accessibility Indicators Questionnaire', which course co-ordinators are asked to disseminate and gather from colleagues each term. The questionnaire includes a total of seven questions relating to specific areas of pedagogy and in some instances reference to appropriate 'indicators' provided in the guide sheets. For example, one of the questions asks if it was necessary to inform support services of a class test and another asks whether 'you' were able to "use the shot-gun microphone systems?" Each question is coupled with a blank space for staff to add their responses. It is stated that the data gathered is used to "assist the support services within the University and identify areas of greater need."

The Institutional Context

In addition to the shifting educational context, there have been a number of notable changes with direct influences on the institutional context.

⁸ In publication, it is noted that there are eight 'Accessibility Indicator guide sheets' in practice nine are counted.

⁹ I was aware of the existence of these indicators due to this Praxis but was not made aware as a general member of the 'academic community', as is implied is the process.

Disability Advisors/coordinators

One of the first acts of the SHEFC initiatives was the establishment of part-time disability co-ordinators in each Scottish HEI. Due to increasing student numbers these roles have developed and it is now common for institutions to have at least one full-time disability advisor, one full time dyslexia advisor and a number of workers to support the use of assistive technology.

In addition to the increasing presence of disability services within institutions, the National Disability Coordinator is now Director of a National Disability Team, whose remit now goes beyond just providing support for various institutional representatives and involves a variety of representative activities on various boards of various national (Scotland) and wider national (United Kingdom) developments.

Funding

As a result of recognition that the existing system is likely to cause disabled students "additional financial hardship" (Hurst, 1996, p. 127) additional top-up loans were introduced in the 1990s. The Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) was initially means tested until 1998 and restricted to students studying on full time undergraduate courses until 2000 when it was extended to part-time students on a pro-rata basis both changes resulting from recommendations by the National Committee Enquiry into Higher Education (1997).

Disabled Students' Allowance

There are three allowances which make up the basic DSA. Applicable institutional members are entitled to a basic (annual) allowance of up to £1640 per year for items "like tapes, Braille paper, extra photocopying charges, other small items of equipment and so on" (SAAS, 2007), any spare basic allowance may also be used to supplement the other allowances. DSA recipients also have access to an allowance for large items of equipment currently in the region of £4,905 expected to last for the duration of the current program of studies and any future programs enrolled on without a break of more than two full years in-between. This allowance is to be spent on "the cost of equipment such as a personal computer, a Braille printer or note-taker, a portable loop or a radio aid, or close circuit

television to enlarge book print" (SAAS, 2007), including additional warranties or repairs. The final allowance is for 'Non-Medical Personal Help' of up to £12,420 per year which is intended to cover the cost of "readers for people with sight difficulties; sign language interpreters; lip speakers; note-takers; or helpers for people in wheelchairs" (SAAS, 2007). Money from the Non-medical personal help allowance is traditionally used to pay for the services of Personal Learning Assistants whose roles might involve taking notes in class or getting books from upper floors or shelves in the library. This allowance also covers costs associated with assessments required by the Students Awards Agency Scotland, the funding body who distributes the DSA, to necessitate their requirement for proof of need. The total amount of additional financing available per student per course is just over £60,000 pounds. As will be explicated later, institutions have become increasingly more competent at directing some of this additional individual financing into their institutions, in particular through the creation of new products and services to be purchased using these funds.

Disabled Students' Premium Fund

The Disabled Students' Premium Fund, introduced in 2001, is an annually awarded premium for institutions calculated on the basis of the total number of students the institution has registered who are in receipt of DSA. The figures with regard to the number of institutional members in receipt of DSA are based upon reports made by Institutions to the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA). See Figure 2 for a detailed account of the Disabled Students' Premium Fund Allocations from the year 2002 through to 2008¹⁰.

¹⁰ Most recently, the funding methodology has changed and these methodological changes have implications for the funding allocations for the academic year 2007 – 2008 onwards.

Disabled Students' Premium Fund Allocations 2002 - 2008

Institution	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004	2004 - 2005	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007	2007 - 2008	
	Based on No of students receiving Disabled Students Allowance (FTE)					Based on FTE	Recalculations
University of Aberdeen	£29,000	£57,000	£86,000	£102,000	£132,000	£173,000	£173,000
University of Abertay Dundee	£48,000	£46,000	£48,000	£61,000	£71,000	£61,000	£61,000
Bell College	£21,000	£21,000	£20,000	£25,000	£32,000	£53,000	£53,000
University of Dundee	£69,000	£82,000	£83,000	£83,000	£164,000	£144,000	£144,000
Edinburgh College of Art	£16,000	£42,000	£58,000	£83,000	£95,000	£23,000	£50,000
University of Edinburgh	£107,000	£215,000	£211,000	£249,000	£329,000	£277,000	£277,000
Glasgow Caledonian University	£91,000	£43,000	£59,000	£105,000	£125,000	£197,000	£197,000
Glasgow School of Art	£69,000	£73,000	£90,000	£103,000	£137,000	£25,000	£50,000
University of Glasgow	£118,000	£100,000	£120,000	£140,000	£184,000	£280,000	£280,000
Heriot-watt University	£29,000	£43,000	£58,000	£62,000	£75,000	£87,000	£87,000
Napier University	£30,000	£50,000	£18,000	£131,000	£156,000	£167,000	£167,000
Open University in Scotland	£38,600	£40,000	£46,000	£63,000	£47,000	£69,000	£69,000
University of Paisley	£109,000	£67,000	£93,000	£96,000	£106,000	£121,000	£121,000
Queen Margaret University College	£21,000	£14,000	£49,000	£62,000	£74,000	£45,000	£50,000
The Robert Gordon University	£41,000	£49,000	£69,000	£75,000	£89,000	£126,000	£126,000
Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama	£2,000	£8,000	£18,000	£220,100	£22,000	£11,000	£50,000
University of St Andrews	£42,000	£22,000	£88,000	£106,000	£127,000	£84,000	£84,000
University of Stirling	£48,000	£55,000	£72,000	£82,000	£120,000	£112,000	£112,000
University of Strathclyde	£155,000	£95,000	£106,000	£114,000	£149,000	£222,000	£222,000
UHI Millennium Institute			£4,000	£15,000	£21,000	£65,000	£65,000
TOTAL	£1,045,000	£1,122,000	£1,396,000	£1,977,100	£2,255,000	£2,342,000	£2,438,000

Figure 2 Disabled Students' Premium Fund, amounts distributed per Scottish Higher Education Institution from 2002 through to 2006. (Figures obtained from and amalgamated from Scottish Funding Council)

*The amount of Disabled Students' Premium for 2002 - 03 for the Universities of Dundee and Aberdeen includes additional Disabled Students' Premium Fund which would have gone to the former Northern College of Education, whose teaching activities were divided and absorbed by both institutions.

^Estimate based on Scottish funding Council statements suggesting that the 2003 - 04 figure for the Open University for Scotland was calculated based on the 2002 - 2003 figure plus 3.5%.

Prior to 2007, HEIs have received within the region of £600 per student they have recorded who is in receipt of DSA. The calculations do not take account of the type of course, grade distributions in relation to those averages for the year or the quality of teaching nor any attempts made to make teaching more accessible, the Premium Fund is awarded solely on the basis of how many of the institution's members are in receipt of DSA.

Conclusion

It is clear that the constitutive-context of the praxis has undergone considerable changes over recent years. Increasing collective efforts of the disabled peoples' movement have pushed the discrimination experiences of disabled people up not only the political agenda but also the public's consciousness and this has resulted in the implementation and development of new legislation. Increasing awareness of people's right not to be disabled by social arrangements has led to increasing emphasis on widening participation in HEIs; promoting moves away from being the elite institutions of the few, to learning resources and facilities of the many. Yet these moves towards widening access, and associated premium funding, have been coupled with a lowering of 'per-unit' income thus institutions have been encouraged to open up their doors to more students on smaller budgets.

The specific situation in Scotland is made more complex following the establishment of Scottish Government and power sharing governance with the wider Government of the United Kingdom. Specifically, equal opportunities matters are still governed by Westminster, whilst Education is a devolved matter, subject to the powers of the Scottish Government. Thus institutions and members find themselves located within a complex pocket of intersecting legislative arrangements, and at the centre of major funding struggles.

Chapter Five - Disability and British Higher Education; A review of existing literature

There are relatively few scholars who have examined disability in British Higher Education and it is fair to say that the majority of this work comes from a common methodological and ideological standpoint. Most studies lay claim to a congruence between their own approach and the work of the British Disabled Peoples' Movement (BDPM), and in particular the Social Model of Disability, as is the case for this praxis.

One of the earliest papers examining the current state of research into disability in Higher Education was produced by Hurst (1996) who sought to examine "some issues" associated with research examining how "disabled people are involved in Higher Education in Britain" which he noted was an "important but neglected social setting in which disabled people continue to encounter oppression" (Hurst, 1996, p. 123).

Examining such work he suggested that unlike his own work (which sought to explore the experiences of a group of "students with impaired mobility" (Hurst, 1993), but which he acknowledges is limited as it deals with only one impairment and focuses mainly on the processes of admission rather than the general experiences of student life) existing research had been dominated by quantitative studies and the quantification of disabled students. Central to his concerns was the absence of any work looking into the 'experiences' of disabled people in Higher Education in Britain. This should be understood within the context of British Disabled Peoples' Movement critiques of existing research and research practices, their rejection of positivist approaches seeking to categorise and quantify disability, a rejection of objectivity and objectification of disabled people, the reductionist positioning of them within the work as little more than numbers, or body parts, or problems, concerns that such work had failed to represent the interests of disabled people, the exclusion of disabled people from the work and the absence of their 'voice'. It was observed that research was yet another area from which disabled people were excluded.

In light of such work, Hurst (1996) set an agenda for future research into disability and higher education which should:

- focus on the **experiences** of disabled students (note also elsewhere in this paper he ties this into a need to focus on the **'lived reality'** and what has been missing from previous studies was 'an indication of the **lived experiences** of the disabled students' (Hurst, 1996, p. 126) and that there is 'an absence of research which treats seriously the perspectives of disabled students' (Hurst, 1996, p. 134); and
- be **qualitative** and not quantitative;

Additionally, elsewhere in his paper, when discussing his role in deciding which HEFCE Special Initiative Projects should be funded, he expands that future research should:

- be 'theoretically orientated approach to investigating issues of disability as they impinged upon participation in higher education' (Hurst, 1996, p. 138); and
- use 'a schema based around the social model of disability' (Hurst, 1996, p. 138).

In keeping with Hurst's calls, the research which has followed has; claimed to focus on disabled students 'experiences', implied a progressive alliance toward the BDPM, been predominantly qualitative and claimed to give 'voice' to disabled people.

Key findings from previous studies

Of the various studies which have explored disability in British Higher Education there are several recurring themes and issues, broadly assigned into three main categories: The Physical Environment; Access to Education; and The Failure of Institutional Procedures, Practices and Policies.

The Physical Environment

The disabling physical environment is, without fail, identified as an area of central concern. Like others, Baron, Phillips and Stalker (1996) note specific problems associated with: recruitment; accommodation; the general premises; teaching locations; and off-campus placements.

Recruitment

Baron et al. (1996) note that physical discrimination is present at the earliest point in academic careers, recruitment. They use the example of Social Work Training recruitment to illustrate, noting that the universally accepted selection procedures of social work (initial application followed by interview) might be recognized as disabling, observing that despite disclosure of disability being requested on the initial application forms, this information was seldom considered in relation to the arrangement of subsequent interviews. Taylor (2004) raises similar concerns about interview practices in Higher Education Institutions in several institutions in central England. In one illuminating account a student's experience of having to be carried up stairs by workers, having been told even before they had had the interview that their presence "was going to be difficult" (Taylor, 2004, p. 43) and how this contributed to make the individual concerned feel "really awkward", that they had given a "bad impression" of themselves and how this had lowered their self-esteem (Taylor, 2004, p. 43) is discussed. Despite the student's desire to "be an independent person", to be "like everybody else" (Taylor, 2004, p. 43), the person concerned was left feeling like they had let themselves down because they had failed to be an 'independent' person, though Taylor fails to appreciate that it was institutional arrangements and a failure to take account of their access needs along with everybody else's which results in this person being disabled.

Subsequently it was revealed that this student was denied a place at their first choice institution due to its inaccessibility, however it is not noted whether this person was denied a place formally by the institution concerned or whether this experience contributed to the person opting for a second, less preferred though less inaccessible, institution.

Institutional Selection

Several studies (Baron et al., 1996; Tinklin & Hall, 1999; Borland & James, 1999; Fuller, Bradley & Healey, 2004b; Shevlin, Kenny & McNeela, 2004; Hall, Healey & Harrison, 2004; Konur, 2006) have identified that accessibility is a deciding factor for students when

making decisions about which institutions, subjects and departments in which they will apply to study. It is reported that students are required to make careful decisions based on access issues (built environment, availability of support, the lack of availability of suitable accommodation or transport) rather than personal interest or desire. Shevlin et al. (2004) found that this ultimately left 'students with disabilities' with very limited choices when selecting institutions or courses. Yet this election to study at alternative, less preferred, locations is often presented as an individual choice based on an individual's needs, rather than particular institutions' inaccessibility.

Accommodation

Several studies have noted that the availability of accessible accommodation fails to stop being an area of concern after enrolment. Baron et al. (1996) report students being required to live in isolation from their peers due to a local accommodation principle of localising the few accessible rooms to one corridor of an accommodation block reserved only for first year undergraduates. Coupled with the lack of lift access to other floors, Baron et al. (1996) note that this effectively limits social contact; limiting any attempts to initiate social contact subject to the initiation of those residing on the other inaccessible floors (Baron et al., 1996, p. 366).

Additionally, though not noted by Baron et al. (1996), one might reasonably suggest that given the university career stage of the majority of those residing in this particular hall of residence, "a residence otherwise accommodating exclusively 17 – 18 year old first year undergraduates" (Baron et al., 1996, p. 366), it might be suggested that this accommodation is likely to be more noisy than other, particularly post-graduate, residences and therefore an environment less conducive to the demands of postgraduate study, thus the inappropriateness of the location of this accommodation is in itself a disabling barrier for students on more intensive or demanding courses.

Despite this analysis of the inadequacies of such isolationist, fundamentally un-social model, accommodation policies, both Riddell (1998) and Hurst (1999) pay great homage to the 'efforts' made by the University of Sussex and their development of Kulukundis¹¹ House. Hurst (1999) talks of the "widespread renown" for the "pioneering work" ... "which was a landmark in the provision of personal assistance for students with severe disabilities" (Hurst, 1999, p. 66) and Riddell (1998) comments on the rarity of such "innovations" (Riddell, 1998, p. 207), Riddell (1998) describes it as an "innovation" to create special accommodation "for students with significant impairments" (Riddell, 1998, p. 207). Yet one might reasonably question the "innovatory" aspects of Kulukundis House as well as this homage which Hurst talks off and apparently both he and Riddell share.

According to the University of Sussex guide for disabled students Kulukundis House is regarded as:

"adapted accommodation" ... "on campus for students with disabilities who need some assistance with day-to-day living" ... it "has four study-bedrooms, with furniture and fittings that are manageable for many wheelchair users" ... "students who need to live in Kulukundis House with personal support workers have additional care and facility charges" and "rooms are on a first-come, first-served basis, with continuing students having priority" (University of Sussex, 2007).

Thus this innovation appears to be a separate accommodation block purely for people who are disabled by the other accommodation provision, segregating, forcing people to live in isolation from their friends and peers. Such an approach is critiqued in other

¹¹ Note that both Riddell (1998) and Hurst (1996) incorrectly refer to the residence as Kulikundis, or Kalikundis (Riddell, Tinklin & Wilson, 2005), and not Kulukundis. Riddell seems to believe that it is a 'Hall of Residence' calling it Kulikundis Hall, quite different from the House, Kulukundis House, which it actually is. It is to be expected that 'Halls of Residence' can provide accommodation for large numbers of students, where as Kulukundis House provides accommodation for a maximum of five people.

studies and is entirely inconsistent with the social model of disability, and the work of the British Disabled Peoples' Movement, which both Riddell (1998) and Hurst (1996) claim informs their work.

General Accessibility of Campus

Amalgamation of the findings of each of the various studies paints a startling picture of the extent of the physical inaccessibility amongst Higher Education Institutions in the British Isles. Baron et al. (1996) note that none of the higher education institutions they worked with in Scotland were entirely accessible, (see also Riddell, 1998; Tinklin & Hall, 1999; Riddell, Tinklin & Wilson, 2004). Borland and James (1999); Holloway (2001); Fuller, Healey, Bradley and Hall (2004a); Fuller et al. (2004b); Hall et al. (2004) and Taylor (2004) all provide accounts of similar difficulties across a variety of institutions in England. Beauchamp-Pryor (2005) highlights similar concerns in Welsh Higher Education Institutions and Shevlin et al. (2004) identify issues in relation to the inaccessibility of campuses in Ireland.

Once enrolled it is noted that "access and mobility difficulties were seen as obstacles to overcome in the pursuit of normal involvement in college life" (Shevlin et al., 2004, p. 28). Baron et al. (1996) identified specific concerns about the general inaccessibility of the locations in which the teaching rooms were situated. They observed that allocated rooms were often so far away from facilities that it was not possible for some students to accompany colleagues for a coffee and return within the allotted break time. Likewise Shevlin et al. (2004) note the additional time it takes for people to negotiate physical barriers, often having to go out of their way to find a suitable route that ultimately takes much longer. Tinklin and Hall (1999) also note that the lack of available lifts means that students are often required to take "circuitous routes to get from the accessible entrance to the lift" (Tinklin & Hall, 1999, p. 187). The difficulties such general inaccessibility might cause were highlighted by one student's observations that there was "only one toilet for the disabled in the arts block" (Shevlin et al., 2004, p. 21). One can imagine just how uncomfortable that might be for students forced to go long additional routes to get to the only one toilet available. This is compounded by observations by Baron et al. (1996) about

the limited time given to such comfort breaks. Tinklin and Hall (1996) reported that inaccessibility was a difficulty manifested by a number of institutions, all noting that their libraries and teaching accommodation remained physically inaccessible (Tinklin & Hall, 1999, Pp 186 – 187).

In addition to the extensive routes that some students are required to take, several studies have mentioned difficulties with doors on these routes (Fuller et al., 2004a; Tinklin & Hall, 1999), in particular doors which are too heavy to open (Fuller et al. 2004a), require to be pulled (Tinklin & Hall, 1999) or which have two small narrow doors in place of one larger door thus requiring the negotiation of opening two doors (either push or pull) whilst simultaneously manoeuvring oneself through the gap (Laing, 2003). Holloway (2001) recounted the experiences of a student having to enter the teaching room via a fire exit, often sitting outside in the rain waiting for the door to be opened, because his institution refused to give him a key to the doors (which it was claimed had to be locked for security reasons) and even when unlocked he states that the door was “horrendously difficult to get into ... even with someone pushing me it's difficult” (Holloway, 2001, p. 603).

Holloway (2001) also points out that inaccessibility also results in students missing out on the private staff-student interactions that others take for granted. For example, it is noted that the above student was unable to meet with all but 'one or two' of his tutors due to them being mainly accommodated in rooms on the upper floors of a building with no lift to provide access to levels other than the ground floor (Holloway, 2001).

Similarly, Shevlin et al. (1996) identified concerns about the layout of teaching rooms. One student in relation to lecture halls states, “there is nowhere for you to specifically sit – you can end up at obtuse angles to the board or OHP and then you're in trouble” (Shevlin et al., 2004, p. 21). Baron et al. (1996) also noted difficulties with poor acoustics and a difficulty in hearing what was being said, a problem which was exacerbated by what they describe as “the tutor's ignorance” of the “interactive effects” of their teaching styles and the room lay-out (Baron et al., 1996, p. 367).

There was a general consensus that library facilities were also woefully inadequate (Baron et al. (1996); Tinklin & Hall; (1999); Holloway, 2001) For example it was noted that they were inaccessible due to the corridors being too narrow (Tinklin & Hall, 1999), the lack of lift access or heavy doors (Fuller et al., 2004a) lacked flexibility on loan periods (Fuller et al. 2004a; Holloway, 2001) ("The University is three hour loan's for some of them and I can't read a book, and get what I want from it, let alone copy it, in that time" (Holloway, 2001, p. 603)), access negotiations proved to be time consuming (requiring continual renegotiation) and subsequently could be very stressful for students needing access to the facilities in order to successfully complete assignments.

Tinklin and Hall (1999) suggest that whilst institutions are quite willing to state a commitment to improve accessibility of the physical environment, this is unlikely to be demonstrated in the near future, due to costs and competition for funds. Instead, institutions are opting to equip the person with assistants to open doors, get books and do some photocopying (Tinklin & Hall, 1999, p. 193).

Off-Campus Pedagogy

Similar experiences of physical inaccessibility were found in relation to off-campus pedagogy. Baron et al. (1996) note that the accessibility of placement locations was more complex than purely being either accessible or inaccessible. Often the locations might be considered by employees to be accessible (such that potential clients could be rightfully advised that the premises were accessible) however whilst the public areas, where the public practices of social work occurs, were accessible, the general staff areas were not. Baron et al. (1996) note that the inaccessibility of staff areas results in a poverty of educational experience as trainees can miss out on the "crucial informal moments of social work practice" (Baron et al., 1996, p. 367) which are happening behind the closed doors of the inaccessible staff sections. Furthermore they note that this serves to give out powerful messages about the role of disabled people to be the ones to be cared for and not those who do the caring. Effectively this inaccessibility made the already limited choice of practice placements extremely limited.

Similarly the inaccessibility of fieldwork locations was represented by Fuller et al. (2004a) who identified one in eight students reporting barriers to off campus learning “related to their disability” (Fuller et al., 2004a, p. 309), with partial or complete lack of access to the off-campus locations noted as being the primary problem (Fuller et al., 2004a, p. 311). Shevlin et al. (2004) reported one student’s experiences of an inability to attend fieldwork being used by lecturers to justify their questioning of the suitability of her career choice rather than to question the discriminatory nature of their own teaching practices or procedures (Shevlin et al., 2004, p. 21).

Access (and Inclusion) to Education

Borland and James (1999), Hurst, (1999) and Tinklin and Hall (1999) suggest that as a result of a failure of institutional procedures, either through their absence or their lack of enforcement or scrutiny, students are being denied access to their preferred courses due to institutional members’ interpretations about post-qualification employability and professional regulations.

Borland and James (1999) noted that discourses of competency, which are imported from elsewhere are used as a method to deny people access to the courses; acting as a significant barrier to the learning resources by effectively prohibiting student enrolment and subsequent access to the institution and the curriculum. Likewise Tinklin and Hall (1999) provide the example of teaching, whereby students were being encouraged to apply by the General Teaching Council ultimately find out that they were discriminated against by the imposition of the medical assessment “of fitness to become a teacher” prior to being granted a place on the course. Thus, it is suggested the departments are reluctant to enrol people onto education courses due to guidelines in the Education (teachers) Regulations 1993, regardless of the fact that these regulations only pertain to practices post-qualification, and should therefore not be a matter for the institution (Borland & James, 1999).

It is not only noted in departments where there are these post-qualification, occupational, regulations where such discrimination is taking place, but also in courses where academic staff are making decisions on the persons competency to perform the

occupational role which they are being trained for (Borland & James, 1999); post-qualification employability is used to discriminate against people even enrolling on the course. It is therefore noted by Borland and James (1999) that elements within the institution are involved in direct discrimination even at the 'pre-employment stage'. Similar fitness to practice decisions were reported in regard to forestry, marine science, archaeology (Borland & James, 1999, p. 94), psychology (Laing, 2003) and medicine (Tinklin & Hall, 1999).

Learning and Teaching

Fuller et al. (2004a; 2004b) focused specifically on disabled students' experiences of learning and teaching in Higher Education. Like the analysis in other studies, Fuller et al. (2004a; 2004b) primarily conceptualised difficulties in relation to individual incompetence rather than providing a broader more critical institutional, systemic level analysis. In relation to disabling practices with regards to access to education they report concerns Fuller et al. (2004a; 2004b) which highlight difficulties due to people talking too fast, speaking with their backs turned, removing material too quickly from data projectors (before people have had a chance to copy the information down), talking too quietly for students to be able to interpret verbal feedback (which in some cases was a precursor to assessment or an assessment itself (Fuller et al., 2004b, p. 461)), or moving around from topic to topic too fast (Fuller et al., 2004b, p. 461). Noting that in some instances pre-prepared course notes were inaccessible and ironically lecturers were not following their own demands for formatting (Fuller et al., 2004b). Though they conclude by suggesting that, for many students, it was the competing demands of having to listen, read the screen and take notes simultaneously which caused the most dilemmas, and resulted in "poor notes as a result" (Fuller et al., 2004a, P461). Fuller et al. (2004a) identified additional issues surrounding the group dynamics; for example, that people were not getting the opportunity to contribute as people were talking too fast or that people were not able to hear or lip-read what everyone was saying or that speaking out in front of larger groups was intimidating (Fuller et al., 2004a, p. 461).

Fuller et al. (2004a) suggest other general barriers which did not fit into their pre-determined categories but which were apparent: lack of staff cooperation (cited as an unwillingness to allow people to record their lectures or unrealistic reading demands or "failing to provide user friendly handouts" (Fuller et al., 2004a, p. 311)); insufficient library facilities (due to unhelpful library staff, confusing layout and inappropriate and inflexible loan times); and insufficient IT facilities (including inappropriate support and training for the equipment provided, missing software or equipment, a location which is inaccessible "11 sets of heavy doors ... which are very heavy" and "noisy and hot" (Fuller et al., 2004a, p. 311)). It might be suggested that it is the traditional format of Higher Education, its limitedness in approach and design, its inflexibility, which was disabling. Consistent with this view, students' verbatim responses suggested that a curriculum with more diverse teaching methods would be advantageous, though Fuller et al. (2004a) did not engage with this point. Borland and James (1999) identified similar barriers inherent in standard teaching and presentation methods, for example they name: the reliance on white boards; the presentation of videos in ways which disable some people; and the lack of willingness to loan copies to be watched on personal equipment, and the difficulties inherent in trying to lip read and to make lecture notes simultaneously.

Barriers in Assessment

As mentioned earlier, the accessibility of courses is taken into account during course selection, Fuller et al. (2004) note that assessment is one such aspect which has a significant influence. They provide examples of students selecting to study courses specifically because there were fewer essays or exams, in favour of other courses with assessment methods which were less, or not at all, disabling through which they could better represent their knowledge and understanding (Fuller et al., 2004, p. 312).

Specific methods of assessment were noted as barriers, including written course work, examinations and oral presentations. The issues surrounding each assessment method varied, but Fuller et al. (2004a) noted that reasons given were to do with the students' "own shortcomings" (Fuller et al., 2004a, p. 312), for example spelling or grammar or nervousness and anxiety. One participant did question the purposes and appropriateness

of some assessments suggesting, "they are tests of memory not understanding" (Fuller et al., 2004, p. 313) but Fuller et al. (2004a) did not expand this point. It is of note that despite committing themselves to a social model agenda in line with Hurst's (1996) comments, they fail to problematise these students' individualising of the disabling barriers in assessment (as about their own shortcomings); rather they perpetuated this account in their own analysis.

Concerns were also raised about the processes of assessment, for example in relation to their segregation during exams, as questioned by one student, "Why do they put us in a separate room for examinations? Do they think that dyslexia is contagious?" (Fuller et al., 2004, p. 313). Additionally, it was noted that certain processes of assessment were unfairly time-consuming to some and not others, and that grades did not reflect the amount of time and effort put in to the project (Fuller et al., 2004a, p. 313; Fuller et al., 2004b, p. 463) and it appeared that it was not appreciated by "lecturers" (Fuller et al., 2004b, p. 463). They note, "For many students the sheer amount of time that it takes to get written work in a fit state to be presented creates anxiety and exhaustion" (Fuller et al., 2004a, p. 463).

Fuller et al. (2004) note that students are often required to engage in negotiation, or to attempt, negotiations for alternative, less disabling forms of assessment. However they note that these negotiations appear to be less than adequate and give several examples of times when such negotiations have been ineffectual. Thus for Fuller et al. (2004a) there was an issue with the manner and clarity in which the assessments were agreed and the power vested in the tutors to make the final decisions without necessarily consulting or negotiating with the student concerned. This final point was further emphasised by an additional account of a final student who was given alternatives which were just as disabling as the original assessment.

Good Experiences

Despite listing these various barriers to learning and teaching, and including students' verbatim testimony to provide some further illustration, Fuller et al. (2004) suggest that the situation may not be quite as bad as the students make out. Fuller et al. (2004)

undermine the status of their earlier points by stating that students tended to focus negatively on barriers to their learning and this was encouraged by the format of the questionnaire, thus casting some doubt on the authenticity of the students' 'negativity'. They suggest that methodological limitations resulted in a false overly negative response from students and recommend reading Fuller et al. (2004b) as a counter balance, however when one does engage with this latter text it is made clear that, aware of the negative focus the initial study, interviewees were prepared to encourage students to report positive examples (Fuller et al., 2004b, p. 462). This seems incompatible with their stated commitment and interested in "giving voice" and taking seriously the "voice" and experiences of disabled students as they claim. Subsequently, the positive experiences reported were those where the people were not hindered by barriers to participation, either because the barriers had been effectively removed or never encountered in the first place. Thus students reported examples of staff being 'obliging', giving lecture notes when asked, allowing people to record lectures or being generally supportive. Most "positive" experiences were just examples of good general teaching practices which should have been taken for granted by all students: the tutor taking time to explain a certain theory or to answer questions; a variety of assessment methods on offer; material being delivered in alternative formats; or general guidance on essay writing.

Inadequate Provision of Assistive Technology

One often proposed solution to disabling barriers is the provision of assistive technologies, however Shevlin et al. (2004) identified several ways in which such individualised solutions can actively serve as a barrier. Firstly, they identify issues surrounding the time it takes from initial application through to actual receipt of the money required to pay for the support noting: people getting into debt; having to apply for additional funding to tide them over; waiting six months for the money but still nevertheless being expected to continue with their studies (Shevlin et al., 2004, p. 23); and having to do extra work which was both "time consuming and awkward" (Shevlin et al., 2004, p. 23). Secondly they identified concerns with the lack of support staff: once students finally receive the money there are often insufficient staff members to assist

them resulting in students having to work longer hours than other students to schedule their study time around others' commitments. Thirdly, they noted a lack of aftercare provision for the equipment and the time taken to fix it when it fails, noting that there are no facilities for loan equipment when existing items are being repaired and that whilst the institution offers support regarding the provision of the equipment this does not extend to its working. They also noted that students are expected to teach themselves how to use the equipment. It is suggested, ironically, that this lack of support results in students being disabled by the very 'enabling' equipment when they are expected to use. They suggested that these approaches do not facilitate the development of a "level playing field" (Shevlin et al., 2004, p. 24).

Problems with 'Typification'

Baron et al. (1996) suggested that 'typification' (Baron et al, 1996, p. 367) was evident in a variety of areas and precipitated by the medical categorization which dominates application questionnaires. They suggest that overt discrimination does exist but is largely absent from the classroom, however covert discrimination was more prevalent and more complex. To illustrate they report staff members being "pleasantly surprised" (Baron et al, 1996, p. 368) at the capabilities of certain disabled students, thereby suggesting that there was originally an under-expectation which it is suggested resulted from the covert influences of global typification of certain impairments (Baron et al, 1996, p. 368). They refer to a further example where a student had been privy to discussions by a potential employer about her likelihood of "achieving professional competence" (Baron et al, 1996, p. 368). During these discussions various stereotypical examples were used to question her ability. For example it was asked "could a visually impaired student properly work in offenders" services where, for example she might be required to identify witnesses in court?" (Baron et al, 1996, p. 368). Baron et al. (1996) they conclude that non-conscious processes characterised by covert discrimination are necessary to make the links from "sensory impairment to ... professional competence", that they are of interest and indicative of the barriers caused by the attitudes and awareness of the institution's

members which they note "attributed global passivity and dependence" (Baron et al, 1999, p. 368) to disabled students.

Similarly, Tinklin and Hall (1999) suggest that personal experience or interest in disability issues alters the manner in which members of staff treat 'students with disabilities'. They acknowledge examples of where this is not always a good thing, giving the example of a student patronised by a 'well meaning' staff member who continually reminded group members to speak up so that their colleague could hear. This demonstrating not only insensitivity, "she found his behaviour patronising and had been embarrassed that he had repeatedly drawn attention to her impairment" (Tinklin & Hall, 1999, p. 191), but also inaccuracy as this particular person needed people to face her when they spoke rather than speak up so she could lip-read.

Fuller et al. (2004a) also identified some variation in the treatment received from staff members, noting that some staff appear to have a "shut up and get on with it attitude" (Fuller et al, 2004a, p. 314), that they make students feel stupid, brush them aside and fail to be helpful (Fuller et al, 2004a, p. 314).

Additionally, it has been suggested that it is not just the academic related areas of institutional life where staff members' awareness and attitudes were cause for concern but also those services provided by non-academic groups. Tinklin and Hall (2004) note one particular institution's accommodation department who failed to take the requests of a student seriously and failed to fulfil numerous specific requests to provide a participating student with the accommodation and facilities that she required. It is noted that the particular participant had "difficulty convincing the accommodation office of her needs" (Tinklin & Hall, 1999, p. 190). It is suggested that they were making judgements based on their assumptions and the appearances of the person concerned rather than on the basis of the requests were made.

The Failure of Institutional Procedures, Practices and Policies

Disclosure

Several studies have identified concerns surrounding institutional policies relating to disclosure. References towards the blaming of individual students for these failures in disclosure are made covertly in various papers. Borland and James (1999) noted that, whilst no specific suggestions are made regarding disclosure, there is an implicit suggestion that procedures should be made more formal and greater emphasis placed on disclosure. This would alleviate cases in which the individual only discloses after "they" have failed, and subsequently could avoid the negative views of some staff members who might interpret this as "special pleading". Clearly this is a medical model interpretation that the institution needs better ways of recording the individual who is 'disabled', rather than better ways of ensuring that the individual is not disabled by institutional arrangements.

Riddell (2003) suggests the increased numbers of disabled students registered is as a result of a greater desire to disclose due to the greater knowledge of the incentives available to those recognized by the institution as disabled.

Fuller et al. (2004a) imply in their paper that students are in some way to blame for misinterpreting the system of disclosure. It is suggested that students fail to "appreciate that having declared their disability, whether on registration or subsequently, there was no mechanism within the institution for that information to be relayed routinely to all or any of their tutors" (Fuller et al, 2004a, p. 313; Fuller et al, 2004b, p. 465). However, the issue surely is not whether or not they were aware or 'appreciated' that there was no formal mechanism of dissemination but rather that the institution was failing to act efficiently and rationally, but that students might be expected to assume that they would. Students are in some way implicated for assuming that the system would use the information which it had requested. Yet one must question why it is expected that the students would think anything else, after all why would the institution request such

information if it was not intending to act upon it? This has the effect of forcing students to continuously disclose.

Similarly, Baron et al. (1996) talk about such difficulties associated with disclosure under the heading of "self-limitation" (Baron et al, 1996, p. 372). They discuss the implications of failing to disclose and the subsequent difficulties this causes at various stages: that arrangements are not put in place in advance; that not disclosing results in waiting for the institution to take a proactive approach; that it results in issues spiralling out of control which in turn makes disclosure even harder. Confusingly they also suggest that despite the title of this section, self-limitation, they do not wish to attribute individual blame to students, instead noting that a reluctance to disclose can, in context, be seen as "realistic attempts to deal with a hostile environment" (Baron et al, 1996, p. 372). Baron et al. (1996) identify issues relating to a reluctance to disclose, especially on practice placements which they argue are surrounded by even more complex issues, given that there is a need to do well and demonstrate an ability to 'cope' and do the job, and that to disclose an 'impairment' might be seen as an admission of being unable to cope (Baron et al, 1996, p. 368).

Other studies have suggested that a reluctance to disclose might relate to an alienation from the predominantly medical and individualistic categories of disclosure (Hall et al, 2004, p. 263). Shevlin et al. (2004) noted one such student's experience not wanting to be pigeon holed, and not wanting people to place judgments upon her through their assumptions about what people "like her" can and cannot do, "because you are disabled" (Shevlin et al., 2004, p. 25), or as identified by another student "not leaving people to be diverse – that's the problem" (Shevlin et al., 2004, p. 25).

Despite such concerns, Hurst (1996) talks proudly of some campaigning in which he was involved in as a member of SKILL, to refine the ways in which disability is acknowledged on the UCAS form. Hurst says that prior to the SKILL intervention there were just two categories, disabled and non-disabled, and suggested that this was putting people off disclosure for fear of being discriminated against. He notes how SKILL successfully lobbied for greater categorisation resulting in amendment of UCAS forms to request people to categorise themselves from a "range of disabilities" (Hurst, 1999, p. 131).

Whilst it is clear from other later research that this greater classification has had the opposite of the intended effect, it is interesting to consider the initial reasoning by SKILL (and Hurst) that more refined categorisation would be less discriminatory than a simple 'yes' or 'no'.

Subsequent studies generally suggested the need for greater structuring around disclosure, often failing, like Hurst (1996), to fully appreciate the reasons behind students' reluctance to disclose and instead opting for more rigorous mechanisms of identification and control, assuming that this is in the best interests of students concerned and the institution, as it affords the latter a way to more effectively plan and manage.

Student Access to Information

Several studies have identified difficulties surrounding access to information required to make informed choices about the selection of institution and/or course of study (Fuller et al, 2004 a; 2004b; Borland & James, 1999). Fuller et al. (2004b) noted difficulties accessing the relevant support information and reported instances of institutions refusing to enter into discussion with students about support arrangements until they were formally offered a place. The researchers note this as a difficulty in accessing information required to assess whether the institution might be able to meet 'their learning and assessment needs', yet one might be more interested in exploring the hostile nature of the prospective institutions. Similarly Borland and James (1999) note that some institutions were deploying the Data Protection Act (1998) as a reason to preclude any pre-enrolment discussions about support arrangements; stating that they couldn't enter into discussions on individual cases until students were enrolled, effectively disabling those students who were seeking this information to inform their enrolment decisions. The work of Ralph and Boxall (2005), who found that only 44 out of 132 HEIs provided prospectuses and information relating to disability support services when requested, suggests that the problem is not an isolated one.

Concerns about the poverty, or at least lack of public availability, of information about facilities and services was a recurrent theme though students' careers. Fuller et al. (2004a) drew attention to one startling implication of this failure to communicate

information adequately which became apparent during one of their interviews when two students on the same course, through discussion of their mutual experiences, realized that one was benefiting from individual adjustments and alternative arrangements whilst the other was unaware that alternative arrangement could be made or that such support was even available (Fuller et al, 2004).

Finance

Whilst the DSA has increased and, following the National Committee Inquiry into Higher Education (NCIHE) (1997), been extended to make it more widely available (Hurst, 1996; NCIHE, 1997; Riddell, 1998; Tinklin & Hall, 1999; Riddell, 2005), Holloway (2001) nevertheless still found that students were finding that the money on offer was insufficient to cover all of the additional costs incurred by some students. Holloway (2001) notes that "all students interviewed incurred extra financial costs as a direct result of their disability" (Holloway, 2001, p. 600), resulting in students having to find the additional funds from elsewhere or are having to "do without" (Holloway, 2001, p. 600). Holloway (2001) recounts one student's experiences of managing the inadequacies of his own institutional libraries provision by supplementing this insufficient access with additional resources obtained from a local library where there is a 'huge' selection of books on tapes, that the student finds both, 'helpful' and 'enabled' him not to be disabled by his University library's inadequate facilities and to "get through work at the same pace as non disabled students" (Holloway, 2001, p. 600). However he notes that due to the costs involved with using this additional library, coupled with the limited funds available from the DSA, he has to limit his use of these facilities despite his obvious appreciation of the benefits they provide. Additionally, as others have noted, the processes through which students obtain reimbursement for their additional expenditure is time consuming and generally problematic (Shevlin et al., 2004; Holloway, 2001).

Holloway (2001) goes on to acknowledge the 'time consuming' and stressful nature of the rigmarole required for DSA application and subsequent receipt: making the necessary phone calls; taking the necessary tests required to demonstrate need; completing the plethora of paper work and arrange the personal visits; all of which incur additional costs

(Holloway, 2001, p. 600) and demand both the time and energy of students, time which Holloway (2001) notes non-disabled students do not have to expend. Furthermore she acknowledges the many potential avenues for delays to be incurred, such as awaiting a letter from the institution or waiting for Local Authorities to make decisions regarding the authorization of the funding, which result in additional stress for students as they are forced to embark on a semester without the equipment required to facilitate the removal or navigation of some disabling barriers.

Similarly, Shevlin et al. (2004) reported students' experiences of the "inadequate procedures ... for getting assistive technology" (Shevlin et al., 2004, p. 23). Shevlin et al. (2004) provide students' accounts of the dilemmas they experienced: applying for funding in 'September' but not receiving any funds until 'December/January' (Shevlin et al. 2004, p. 23); having to expend personal money earmarked for other needs whilst waiting for the funding to come through; having to manage alone without the support of a PA because there are no funds yet available to employ them; and falling behind in the curriculum then having to work even harder later in the term just to catch up.

Thus, the procedures for obtaining the monies necessary for purchasing the equipment or support to help address institutional disabling barriers is, in itself, disabling. Finances take too long to arrive resulting in students being disabled in the interim as no institutional support is provided, resulting in students getting into personal debt or being disabled further through delays and the barriers remaining unchallenged.

The Failure of Practices and Policies

There is a general consensus amongst the studies that discrimination is as a result of an overall failure of policies. Riddell et al. (2005) noted that although disabled students have benefited from widening access policies this has been unequally distributed across gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status and age, and the distribution was worse than that reported in the general statistics. As Riddell et al. 2005 note:

"those from socially advantaged backgrounds, who make up a small proportion of all disabled people (Riddell & Banks, 2005), have been able to move into an expanded higher education sector, whilst ... those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds have yet to be included." (Riddell et al, 2005, p. 635).

Yet it might be that those from more socially advantaged backgrounds have had greater access to the facilities necessary to achieve 'disabled' categorizations and are thus more likely to be identified as disabled (Parker, 2007) and that people from less socially advantaged backgrounds are more likely to be written off by the state as individually incompetent, but not 'individually disabled', and thus less likely to be in attendance in Higher Education.

Baron et al. (1996) suggest that whilst policies may exist on paper they are not evident in practice, for example there were grand statements about the accessibility of premises but yet students regarded these claims as "widely inaccurate" (Baron et al, 1996, p. 366). Similarly, Holloway (2001) also notes that despite the rhetoric of the equal opportunity policy, there was no equality of opportunity.

Riddell et al. (2005) made connections between institutional difficulties in implementing the widening access agenda and new public management changes (Riddell, 2005, p. 628), questioning the competing interests of the public efficiency objectives introduced by the 'new management' focus (Riddell et al, 2005). They noted differences between the interpretations of relative policy importance by senior managers, who note the 'significant impact' of benchmarks introduced by the HEFCE and the QAA's, and non-senior academic members of staff, who are more concerned with the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). Whilst it is understandable that senior managers would be talking positively about the effects of initiatives with a centralized remit and reward, academic members of staff reported that their route to seniority was tied "more closely to their RAE rather than teaching performance" (Riddell et al, 2005, p. 636). They question the wisdom of bringing in the new disability reforms within the regime of 'performativity' which is resented by many, particularly pre-92, lecturers.

The Moral-Ideological Dimension

Borland and James (1999) suggest that there is a Moral-Ideological Dimension that underlies the provisions made by the institution. They state that "moral values inform ... practical issues" and "ideological issues are concerned with power relationships" (Borland & James, 1999, p 100). They noted that this was particularly obvious in relation to

tensions between the institutions policies which 'hold' the social model of disability and the actions of the institutions members (both staff and students) who often enact the medical model. Thus in effect, Borland and James (1999) are suggesting that the individuals are to blame not the institution, that the institution's commitment is clear and problem free and that it is therefore individual members who are to blame for the continuation of disabling practices. This is particularly ironic as Borland and James (1999) are in essence enacting an individual model when providing an individualistic analysis blaming individual members of the institution rather than looking for structural, social constitution.

Borland and James note in relation to this tension, despite the institution's 'social model' stance that disabled students' experience two hurdles which they must overcome; the academic hurdle and 'their disabilities'. The academic hurdle is described as objective and down to the student, but the 'their disabilities' is subjective and down to the "successful negotiation of the ... particular admissions officer" (Borland & James, 1999, p. 100). Yet a social model interpretation of the situation would appreciate that the 'academic' hurdle is not objective, and is not down to the student, it too is down to the institution and to what extent it is constructed to disabled some and not others. Thus it is down to the arbitrary nature of disabling institutional practices and not an objective existence which the student must overcome just like everyone else.

Various studies have indicated that the variation in treatment received across various departments and schools within institutions causes a great number of difficulties. Thus it is commonly suggested that there is the need for a move towards a system of provision which enables the delivery of more standardised practices and services across the institution. Holloway (2001) suggests that what is needed to achieve parity across the institution is "central policy, central co-ordinators and monitoring of departmental practice" (Holloway, 2001, p. 612).

Reactive Vs Proactive

Elsewhere in the literature it is suggested that the many of the previously mentioned barriers and procedural failures are due to an overarching failure of policies and

practices. Fundamentally many scholars have noted that there is a problem with the model of provision in operation which is reactive rather than proactive (Tinklin & Hall, 1999). Hall et al. (2004) note that this responsive approach is about addressing 'problems' at the individual level, rather than designing them out in the first place through a "comprehensive program of enabling" (Hall et al, 2004, p. 274). It is an approach which is fundamentally underpinned by a medical/individual model of disability and which then subsequently necessitates interventions which are focused on individual level change, ranging from providing the person with individually tailored assessments through to providing the person with assistive technology to overcome the institutional barriers.

Tinklin and Hall (1999) propose that students are "being individually equipped to get round obstacles that ideally should be removed" (Tinklin & Hall, 1999, p. 187) and are given "assisted access to a system which inherently includes obstacles to their participation" (Tinklin & Hall, 1999, p. 193). Echoing these sentiments, Shevlin et al. (2004) suggest that the support provided by the institution can be recognised as being predominantly focused around the addition of surplus technological and assistive personnel, as opposed to removal of the existing barriers. They note that, in effect, the institutions commitment is to offering resources and "not to including people with disabilities as visible and powerful members of society within the institution" (Shevlin et al., 2004, p. 27).

Additionally, Shevlin et al. (2004) note that whilst the institution adopts the role of providing the equipment, the technological fix, and access to assistive personnel, the personnel fix, it fails entirely to engage in alternative negotiations, necessary when either technological or personnel solutions are ineffectual or too costly. Leaving the arrangement of essential support or removal of barriers subject to student-staff negotiations results in them being positioned as a matter of grace and favour as opposed to a right. Students are thereby positioned as supplicants of asking nicely for favours, rather than positioned as citizens with the same rights to the same education services as others. Furthermore it places them in positions where it is more likely that they will experience the attitudinal prejudice of disbelieving staff members: one student noted that a "lecturer would not believe I was deaf, I suppose because I could talk" (Shevlin et al.,

2004, p. 23); and another student noted that their lecturer insinuated that they might distribute the lecture notes to friends and therefore agreed only to provide them to the particular student several days after the class (Shevlin et al., 2004, p. 26). Consequently, participants reported having to resort to 'favours', and asking fellow course members, friends and volunteers from the students' union to take or copy notes (Shevlin et al., 2004, p. 22). This in itself is identified as problematic as the participants reported concerns about what happens when there are no friends to ask, or when the volunteer's enthusiasm wanes. Likewise, Baron et al. (1996) note an example of fellow students establishing a 'programme secretary' system (Baron et al, 1996, p. 368) whereby other students would help collate notes and other material 'for those having difficulties'. However, like Shevlin et al. (2004), they note that these fell away when the curriculum demands grew, and arguably when the students needed it most. Shevlin et al. (2004) suggest that this reactionary and often "piecemeal institutional response" (Shevlin et al, 2004, p. 28) has inherent limitations to facilitating access and participation. Thus, Holloway (2001) suggests that negative student experiences are the result of inadequate policies and practice which view disability as a problem with the individual person rather than the consequence of an inaccessible learning environment which is disabling (Holloway, 2001, p. 613). Note that in the Baron et al. (1996) example the institution wasn't even adopting a reactionary approach, they were not making any arrangements at all, it was down to fellow students who were reacting and trying to help.

Reviewing the Literature as Praxis

Having introduced the key findings of existing work conducted in this area, I will now go on to problematise it. Before doing so, it is important to draw attention to the different ways in which the literature was problematised as befits praxis. As stated chapters in One and Three, it should be recognized that the praxis embraced and transformed all conventional components of 'research' and consequently the engagement with the relevant literature was also an integrated component part of the praxis. The literature was reviewed in collaboration with co-praxisioners and collectively problematised and discussed. This collaborative engagement was action, critique and knowledgement.

Though, as discussed in relation to Foucault in Chapter Three, it is proposed that the three elements are irreducibly entwined, for clarity the relationship of the collaborative literature as praxis can be considered as action in the sense that it supported our conscientization, changing our collective consciousness and supported the development of an alternative approach to research (praxis) which enacted a differing set of values. The collaborative literature review as praxis can be considered as knowledge in the sense that this collective engagement supported the development of alternative theorizing in relation to disability, disability in higher education and research. Such engagement with the literature informed both the development of the theorising of the praxis as well as the enactment of the praxis described in this thesis, produced through processes of collaborative reflection, problematisation and critical engagement. It can be claimed that the processes through which we went as a praxis collective to review the literature has produced a superior review of the literature. This literature review goes beyond merely recounting the key findings and identifying the gaps in which new work could be presented, to critically problematising the taken-for-granted, unacknowledged, assumptions behind the work presented, their constructions of knowledge, the poverty of their methods, their distortion of the progressive rhetoric and the problematic nature of their findings.

This next section illuminates the ontologically, epistemologically, methodologically and ideologically problematic nature of much of this work identified through the praxis, concluding that there are many ways in which future work in this area needs to be done quite differently in order to be consistent with the rhetoric espoused.

Ontological Concerns

Medical Model Slippage

Despite numerous studies aligning with the more progressive rhetoric of the BDPM or associated scholars and despite many studies claiming to be adopting a social model approach, the work described consistently reverts to a medical interpretation of disability.

This slippage was perhaps most apparent in authors 'definitions of disability'. Several studies use a modified version of the definition of a disabled student used in the SHEFC study, *Access to Success* (SHEFC, 1994), which states that a disabled student is: "any student with visual, hearing or motor impairment, specific learning difficulties (notably dyslexia), or any medical impairment who requires additional support, advice or guidance to enjoy equal access to educational provision." (Baron et al, 1999, p. 364)

Hall and Tinklin (1998), suggest that this definition is consistent with the social model as it is not based on "the notion of physical 'dysfunction' as the prime cause of 'disability' (a 'medical model' of disability)" (Hall and Tinklin, 1998, P6). Instead they suggest that it "emphasises equality of access and the barriers within society which prevent equal access" adding that "if they are to enjoy equality of access it is this deficit in the environment which must be overcome" however this appears to be quite a stretch beyond what is actually stated in the SHEFC definition. It is hard to comprehend how "this deficit in the environment" can be overcome by "support, advice or guidance" (Hall and Tinklin, 1998, p. 6). 'Support, advice or guidance' are all fundamentally mechanisms for individual level change, focusing on the disabled person, something which it can be argued is totally inconsistent with a 'social model of disability'.

Returning to, what is arguably the foundations of this corpus of work, Hurst's position paper in which he suggested that future research should position itself in alignment with the work of the BDPM and in particular should be "based around the social model of disability" (Hurst, 1996, p. 138), when answering the self-imposed question of 'what constitutes a disabled student' Hurst recounts some campaigning he was involved in through his work with SKILL, to refine the ways in which disability is acknowledged on the UCAS form. He describes, in a rather self-congratulatory manner, how he was part of the team at SKILL who successfully lobbied for greater categorisation from a full 'range of disabilities'. Alerted to potential applicants concerns that such information will be used to discriminate Hurst (1999) reports the provision of supplementary assurance that the information is to be used for planning purposes only and not for decision-making. Yet it seems extraordinarily naive to assume that this more specific categorisation and supplementary reassurance will assuage the applicant's reluctance to disclose for fear of

discrimination. It might also be considered unethical to address the valid points raised by the applicants (fear to disclose) solely by providing reassurance that this will not be the case rather than addressing the point which they are making and examining the discrimination, potential or otherwise, which people feared in the first place. Hurst presents this as the official definition of disabled students in Higher Education, which is solely medical and very similar to the SHEFC definition, as the one which he will use for his paper; a definition which is clearly inconsistent to his implication that work should be based around a social model of disability.

It would appear that there is a legacy still inscribing the root cause of disability in the person who is being disabled. To develop this point further, returning to the original definition, it is stated that 'the notion of physical 'dysfunction'' is not the 'prime cause' of 'disability', this in itself is still nevertheless suggesting that it is a cause of disability although not necessarily the 'prime cause'. The social model should reject interpretations which suggest that pathological characteristics have anything to do with 'disability'.

However, as already discussed, it might be suggested that the social model itself might be implicated in this core individualizing analysis, for fundamentally it states that whilst the individual person themselves is impaired, disability is the interaction between the impaired person and unjust social design. Though for most the distinction between *impaired and disabled, as defined in social model rhetoric, will be unapparent*. Essentially most appear to have interpreted that the social arrangements can be disabling to some, but they have still not shifted their focus from the conception of the disabled person as pathologically 'other' and therefore that it is this otherness status which ultimately, deep down, marks them out to be disabled by organizational arrangements. Therefore, ontologically, impairment, or disability, is still real, material, biological and fixed, and not a socially constructed or mediated state. Subsequently, Hurst's work with SKILL sought to better identify the underlying pathology so as to address, reactively and individually, the disabling environment. The individual is changed to adapt to the disabling world, the disabling world is not adapted so as not to disable.

Such an ontological commitment to an externally existing status of 'disability' is evident in the analysis of the material and the students' experiences. There is a consistent return to

descriptions and accounts more consistent with a medical model for example when discussing 'disclosure', a concept heavily reliant on an individualized account of disability, Borland and James (1999) suggested that procedures should be made more formal and that there should be a greater emphasis placed on disclosure, as this would alleviate cases in which the individual only discloses after 'they' have failed, and subsequently they could avoid the negative views of some staff members who might interpret their late disclosure as "special pleading" (Borland & James, 1999, p. 99). Clearly this is a medical interpretation; suggesting that the institution needs better ways of recording the individual who is 'disabled', rather than better ways of insuring that the individual is not disabled by institutional arrangements. Borland and James noted that 'they' (the student) have failed. Consistent with the social model it really is not 'they' who has failed but rather the institution who has failed them, or rather that they have failed (the assessment) as a result of the institution's disabling practices, or perhaps the disabling construction of the assessment. Alternatively, they might have suggested that the institution could develop more rigorous methods for recording times when the institution has failed and enabled disabling conditions; to be clear in how it is monitoring its failures and addressing the disabling barriers so as not to be seen as 'special pleading' with students who have been disabled and are threatening to take the institution to court for breach of contract.

Hurst (1996) demonstrates a similar individualistic interpretation where he launches into a particularly vitriolic attack against 'malevolent' dyslexic students. He implies that the number of people claiming to have dyslexia (it is interesting here that this opening sentence introduces doubt as to the authenticity of this particular group by noting that these students 'claim' as opposed to more definite 'are'), is exaggerated by a growing body of malevolent students who are merely unable to perform to the expected standards. He suggests that people are using dyslexia as a 'get out of jail card' (ironically similar to Borland and James (1998) critique of the attitudes of staff members) in an attempt to hide their "weakness in study skills" (Hurst, 1996, p. 131). Hurst also blames these people for the failings of the reactionary disability services, who are becoming overloaded by the increasing work loads, and for causing suffering to genuine students to

whom educational authorities are becoming hostile due to the number of applications they are receiving.

Hurst's medical model orientation is clear; he doesn't appreciate the disabling context of higher education, i.e. the social causation of disability, and instead understands disability as the functional limitation residing within the individual and which some students are falsely claiming. He exhibits his simplistic understanding of the epistemological nature of assessment, when he raises concerns about the ownership and originality of work produced by students who have had additional, non subject specific, tutorial support. He appears to fail to comprehend that some students will be getting similar support from family members, friends, extended networks, or will have benefited from similar tutorial support at schools. He fails to question the originality or ownership of the work produced in the 'standard' curriculum: many students will have been encouraged to produce synthesised accounts of the ideas discussed in class; those ideas which have already been pre-interpreted in text-books, in lectures, and by other class members in tutorials, for example. Fundamentally he fails to consider this as an issue only in an educational institution which is focused on categorising its members based on the ways in which they have retained and re-presented the knowledges which they have been fed, i.e. fails to recognise the social construction of Higher Education. It is a complex matrix surrounding those who function best in these circumstances, but it is fundamentally one of categorising those on the grounds of who best fits into the existing system, which serves to be disabling to some and not to others, i.e. a reading consistent with a social model of disability rather than an individual or medical model.

Thus it would appear that the social model has been interpreted by scholars in this area in particular, and perhaps across Higher Education more generally, to equate to adapting the individual person, either pastorally or through providing access to assistive technology or assistive personnel, to ensure that the barriers which exist are less disabling, but fundamentally this does not involve making actual structural or systemic changes beyond individual persons. There were many more examples in the texts of the authors breaking their ties with the social model with which they had previously claimed

association, when they resoundingly interpreted the failures at an individual, pathological level, though compounded by social arrangements.

When not providing accounts which position individual students as in need of medical/social intervention, the papers do not shift their focus onto the institution, instead they suggest that it is the individual staff members or other students who are not disabled who are to blame for the disabling experiences. For example, Borland and James (1999) when noting the moral-ideological dimension, demonstrate some understanding of the social model and state that the institution 'holds', whatever this might mean, the social model but it suffers because the individuals within the institution (staff and students) fail to fulfil the institution's policy. Yet we can see through their discussion that the institution does not actually 'hold' a social model, except perhaps rhetorically, and that the disabling barriers are systemic rather than the result of malevolent individuals. Such an individualistic focus bypasses any analysis of the instructional/structural/ideological causes of disabling practices, and saves the institution from any scrutiny or indeed any requirement to change.

Epistemological Concerns

The Status of Experience

As noted previously, many studies are linked to Hurst's paper in which he states a need to focus more on the 'experiences' of disabled students: the studies which have followed have taken on this task. Aside from more methodological concerns about their approaches, which will be discussed later, the manner in which researchers have interpreted 'experience' is problematic. For most garnering the experiences of students involves little more than putting a microphone under their lips and asking them questions, their responses constitute their 'experiences'. Yet it is clear that many of their 'experiences' might be considered ideologically problematic, self-oppressing, and heavily permeated with individual level, medical model accounts. Yet the authors seem impervious to the socially constructed nature of the accounts they record.

The objective status that the authors give to descriptions of experience is a concern extended to their objective approaches to gathering the material. Through a dedication to objectivity the authors fail to engage in ideological critique either during or post interview. The researchers fail to engage with the participant's response for fear of tainting the data based on their pre-determined epistemological preoccupation with objectivity. Yet of course all the time they fail to consider that the subjective accounts of the participants are already heavily saturated with dominant discourses. Thus their work might be considered ideologically problematic because their epistemological stance denies them the opportunity to engage critically with participants' responses.

Similarly, Tinklin and Hall (1999) talk of the researchers' difficulties when shadowing students and finding that they had access to additional understanding which would benefit the students. Their concerns were not do to with the inadequacies of information dissemination but rather about whether or not to inform the students of potential misunderstandings or additional services, for fear of 'corrupting the data'. They give knowledge an external, independent status, and not wanting to corrupt the data, let the epistemological stance stand in the way of getting involved in action or support.

Alternatively, other scholars were concerned with examining the experiences of disabled students as detached from any reality, positioning students' or staff members' experiences as only that, experiences, nothing more or real can be attributed to them. This too is problematic. Given that the accounts paint a picture of discrimination and oppression of some people on the grounds of perceived difference, it is morally wrong for researchers to busy themselves only with providing dead accounts of meaningless 'experiences'.

Methodological Concerns

Issues surrounding selection

The manner in which the researchers identified and approached potential participants was problematic. Many studies used various disability contacts in the institution as the primary gate keepers. For example, Tinklin and Hall (1999) used the disability co-

ordinators to pass on 'information about the requirements of participation' and invitations to 'potential participants'. They express concern that this inevitably meant that there was self-selection by the students but fail completely to acknowledge the potential manipulation of the recruitment process by disability advisors; selecting specific participants in order to ensure, for example, that the institution is represented positively. The disability co-ordinators, whose services undoubtedly have implications for the experiences of disabled students, were given the opportunity to effectively cherry-pick those students likely to have nothing negative to say about the services they provide. It should come as no surprise that disability services were absent from any criticism in Tinklin and Hall's findings.

Research construction

In several studies there was a notable disparity in the involvement of parties in the construction of the work. Several studies took advice from various disability related members of staff regarding the appropriateness of methods or the specific construction of questionnaires or interview schedules but in comparison very few, only Borland and James (1999), note any student involvement at the designing stage.

Utilising Hurst's (1996) position piece to justify the work, Fuller et al. (2004), when opening the paper, state that "despite growing interest in issues of inclusion, the voice of disabled students themselves has hardly been heard" (Fuller et al, 2004, p. 303) and suggest that their work will address this gap. Yet it is hard to comprehend just how these voices will be heard given the distance they have imposed through their choice of method, questionnaire. The extent to which the 'voices' of 173 out of 593 who responded, 'anonymously', are represented is questionable. As they note "we asked disabled students a series of questions" (Fuller et al, 2004, p. 309), surely answering questions does not constitute being 'given voice'.

In contrast, Fuller et al. (2004) note clearly the many staff members who were involved in the construction of the questionnaire, specifically in terms of accessibility, and who through this contact also inadvertently helped to shape and inform the questions to be asked. It is noted that the inter-departmental communication, for the construction of the

questionnaire, proved “instrumental in decided upon the nature and the wording of the questions, as it allowed for an input from a wide variety of standpoints with differing experiences of teaching, learning and assessment in Higher Education”, yet missing from this “wide variety of standpoints” is the students’ standpoint, somewhat ironic given the bold claims made at the start of their paper. The process of ‘rigorous drafting’ (the act of seeking input from various areas in the institution, and consultation and scrutiny from ‘teaching staff across a range of subject areas, library and information technology staff and the institutions specialist disability coordinator’) might have served well to quite ‘rigorously’ sterilize the questionnaire. Cleaning it of any potential to be critical of the institution and favouring an approach which individualized the students as to blame for the discrimination they encounter.

There is no mention of student involvement in the analysis of the material presented, thus they were denied any acknowledgement of how their voices were being used and denied any opportunity to contest their use inappropriately; once spoken they had no control over how their own ‘experiences’ were interpreted and represented they had no control over whether they were ignored or distorted. Fuller et al. (2004a) note that the open-ended questions were analysed only for ‘recurrent themes’, which suggests that those whose themes were not recurrent, were unique, were discounted and excluded. Thus, given the analysis technique, voice was given only to those in consensus with the majority.

In contrast Tinklin and Hall (1998) suggest that the students involved in their work were more like ‘partners’ than participants. When discussing the need to recruit ‘genuine volunteers’, they suggest that “the intensive and extended nature of the observation and interviews had the effect of making them [the students] partners in the research” (Tinklin & Hall, 1998, p. 12), yet it is difficult to see just how they were partners in the research. One can assume that a research partners’ opinions are requested in considerations about the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions underlying the project, or they are expected to be involved to some degree in the analysis and reporting, but the students involved in this project were not requested to be part of any of these discussions.

Despite stating that a draft of the final report was sent to all student participants for comments and feedback, this is insufficient to amount to partnership as it would be very difficult for them to reply at this stage stating that fundamental changes were required or that the findings are totally inconsistent with their experiences, or that there were major omissions, as this would no doubt result in major changes or additional unscheduled work. It is also unlikely that, at this stage, Tinklin and Hall would have been able to do anything about it if they had. Instead it seems that they were partners only in the sense that they were required to invest a considerable amount of time and effort in the project, but not partners in the sense that they had little if any power or position to instruct any changes, were unpaid for the time they invested and unlikely to reap any rewards for their involvement.

There is a distinct lack of procedural justice apparent in all the work described. For all the rhetoric that is espoused, the role of 'experts' is still reserved for the researchers or staff members and disabled students are firmly the passive recipients of the research. Those most considerably rewarded for their effort and time are the researchers and to some extent the staff.

Methods

Beyond the overall similarity in the findings there was also a striking similarity in the methodological orientation and the subsequent preference for specific methods; with most opting to conduct a combination of semi-structured interviews, policy analysis and/or questionnaires.

No study provides any information about their interview schedules beyond stating their existence; they do not discuss how the schedules were developed or what questions it contained. Thus we are left wondering how much these 'emergent themes' really were emergent or whether the semi-structured interviews were really little more than verbal questionnaires, with the core themes already pre-identified by the researchers. Indeed in some studies it is clear that the categories for discussion or the results are directly drawn from the interview schedule. For example, Shevlin et al. (2004) chose to ask participants about their thoughts on the course content, the authors reported that the students had no

thoughts except when pressed or when the question was clarified further but nevertheless course content is a theme which Shevlin et al. (2004) privilege. What is important here is not whether or not there is validity in their critique on the content of courses as some might say that the students' lack of comment is as informative as anything that they might have discussed, it is how the authors have privileged their own categories of importance, despite claiming to be representing the students' voice.

There was also evidence of potential manipulation of findings through the procedures used to elicit 'voice' and 'experiences'. When the accounts given in Fuller et al. 2004a and 2004b (two different elements of the same study) are pieced together it is clear that the researchers purposefully set about manipulating people into talking about a certain issue but this is written up as if it were something which students have spontaneously mentioned. This is only really apparent when the two papers are read together.

Morally Problematic

It is inarguable that each study has clearly demonstrated that the situation for disabled students studying in the British Isles is at least unsatisfactory. Each study has found numerous instances where the experiences of disabled students lag behind those which students who are not disabled can expect and many have uncovered evidence of overt, covert and systemic discrimination. Yet despite this resounding consensus, very few studies have offered anything in the way of recommendations as to how to tackle discrimination and those suggestions that there are have been largely uncritical calling for the need for policy refinement, despite some even drawing attention to the disparity between policy rhetoric and practical experiences or for rigorous individualised intervention (through the extension of disability services, the provision of more computer equipment or more segregated accommodation) at the expense of advocating systemic change.

In contrast the recommendation which appears most consistently is for more research and one must only assume that what is meant by this is more research in the same vein as those studies already conducted, studies which have failed to encompass any

progressive action set to effect changes to the current climate. For example Baron et al. (1996) state:

"The findings indicate that there is still a long way to go. To answer this question fully, further research on a larger scale is required. Issues which need closer examination include the drop-out rate from programmes, the cumulative effect of illness, opportunities to extend the length of training, access to specialist advice and the experiences of women and people from minority ethnic communities" (Baron et al, 1996, p. 376).

The need for research (rather than a glaring need for change), privileges a perverse research agenda in a climate of oppression and discrimination.

Hall et al. (2004) did suggest that, in addition to the need for further research, this shouldn't be at the expense of developing more inclusive curricula however despite this they provided plenty of ideas for future research and only little advice as to how inclusive curricula might look or be developed.

It might be suggested that the preoccupation with research is understandable given that the authors are 'researchers', thus perhaps the problem is more about the type of work they are engaged in rather than the preoccupation with research itself. The authors fundamentally are more preoccupied with measuring the current situation than doing anything to effect change and this is evident in the methods chosen.

Conclusion

Despite the plethora of studies claiming to represent students 'experiences' there are considerable reasons to doubt these claims. The work described is ontologically and ideologically problematic as it resorts to interpretations of disabling conditions in Higher Education as in some way related to individual causation. Despite claiming allegiance to the progressive accounts of the BDPM, the work does little to actually engage with the material, fails to deliver social model commitments and apparently includes disabled people in only tokenistic way. The authors make little attempt to make the work either mutually rewarding or beneficial. The authors neglect to consider procedural justice as a factor important to their ways of working. Instead only using their 'voice' to legitimate the researchers own accounts. Though one can express doubt about what has actually emerged from the material given the authors acritical approach to 'data gathering' and

their understanding that experience verbalized has some real subjective quality untouched by dominant discourses, or subjected manifestation of internalized oppression. The work fails to engage critically with the material presented by participants and is therefore complicit in the maintenance of oppressive discourses that they leave unchallenged or unquestioned and does nothing to address the barriers it identifies. Instead the interests of academics or researchers are prioritized by the conclusion that what is needed is more research rather than action.

Subsequently there is an absence of work which takes seriously a commitment to the ethos of the BDPM, which strives to work in ways which are procedurally just, which moves beyond face value when engaging with how people report their circumstances or describe experiences, which shifts beyond a commitment to measuring the situation and sets about trying to make progressive changes not only through outcome but also through action and for work which not only recognizes, but is open and honest about its political commitments instead of faux assertions of neutrality and objectivity.

Chapter Six – Praxis in Action, Reflexivity and Knowledge

The chapter begins by describing the processes of co-constructing the research agenda and demonstrates a way of engaging in respectful research which takes seriously claims to be both critical and emancipatory as stated earlier, see Chapter Three – a meta-justification of praxis.

The explicit multi-faceted nature of this praxis are introduced, including: problematising interviews; working within the system (assistant to; the exams process, the disability advisor, lecturing, tutoring); contributing the parliamentary enquiry; working with disabled students groups; and the creation and implementation of an online, inter-institutional, critical disability studies course). An account of knowledge making through dialogical means is presented; therefore providing insight into how the claims and conclusions to be made in this thesis were derived and why they should be taken seriously, or be considered 'valid' in the conventional sense. At each stage the chapter revisits the earlier explication of praxis to demonstrate the relevance of the actions.

Collaborative Enquiry – Communities of Praxis

It is important to assert that the limitations of presentation might imply that this work follows on from considered and extended engagement in relevant literature in the field, prior to engagement in any practical 'research/action'. The limitations of textual representation impose a format in which the more explicitly theoretical/literature elements of the thesis are necessarily presented toward the beginning to aid the reader to better comprehend the accounts of the 'research/action'. Traditionally however this presentational format also forms an almost chronological account of the author's engagement in their scholarship. Echoing the British Psychological Society's guidance for the suggested 'normal' path of a Psychological PhD should be: "1st Year - Literature Review & Differentiate, 2nd Year – testing, 3rd Year – write up" (Hanna, 2004, pp. 10 –

11). Whilst the structure of this thesis may hint at this format, it would be erroneous to assume that the process of the praxis did.

There are some obvious similarities between suggested 'normal' path provided by the BPS and the problematic accounts of community psychological praxis previously mentioned; thus the scholar engages in an extensive literature review, the differentiation of the research question and the selection of the theoretical application, before engaging in the testing, or action, preserving their status as knower and decider of labels and the status of those who they are working with as the known and passive members of the process. The agenda setting is thus the solitary act of the member of the academy and not the act of a collaboration of members whom the research is explicitly 'about'. In relation to his call for a new paradigm Oliver notes that: "Agenda setting, whether it be in politics, policy-making or service provision, is part of a process of struggle and this is equally true of agenda setting in disability research." (Oliver, 1992, p. 102)

It would be the establishment of an unauthentic praxis (Freire, 1970) if this work were to originate from the solitary engagement in the literature by the 'academic', looking for the theories to be applied, becoming the knower of abstract, potentially alienating, accounts, polishing their ability to speak in ever increasing levels of academic abstraction and generally controlling and setting the agenda for the work.

The Co-construction of the Research Agenda

"Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it." (Freire, 1970, P60)

The praxis started without any particular plan but a personal commitment to working respectfully and collaboratively with people to better understand and contest the oppression of disabled people in Higher Education. I had not specifically read around to see how others had done it before me, to see what methods and procedures others had used, in some acritical attempt at pre-determining what 'I' should do. Instead I started by talking about the area with members of an existing steering group who understood both directly and indirectly some of the oppression experienced by some people studying in Higher Education and with whom I had worked with previously and successfully on some

prior research/action. Therefore despite noting that the work did not begin with a mapping the existing field, it must be noted that both myself and other members of the group had previously engaged in some collaborative scholarship in this area. Some group members therefore already had some shared background knowledge of the existing literature. This group was to go on to become the first community of praxis, the co-constructors of the praxis.

The group initially consisted of four undergraduate members of one Scottish Higher Education Institution; an additional two members of the student body (one undergraduate and one postgraduate) were involved in previous work but had left the institution due to completion of their studies. One of the first tasks of the group was the recruitment of additional group members and guidance for the composition of the group. It was decided that no member of the group should be asked or expected to leave but that equally no member should be expected, or feel required, to necessarily remain involved throughout the entire duration of the praxis. The group was continually evolving, expanding beyond the realms of just one institution, as members came and went (due to a variety of commitments) and returned again, and several members, myself included, remained constant throughout. In total the group contained members from four Scottish Higher Education Institutions, included both undergraduate and postgraduate students and members who were formally identified by the institution as disabled and those who were not formally identified by the institution but who nevertheless considered themselves as disabled by organisational practices, policies, procedures or environments.

During the initial stages the group began meeting frequently to discuss our experiences of disabling practices in Higher Education, to support each other through the disabling environment and to discuss what form the praxis should take. In addition to engaging with our own experiences, it was suggested at an early meeting that we might read what

others had done in relation to the topic. This suggestion was sensitively problematised¹² by other group members, who questioned the purposes of such reading, expanding reasons for why if it were to establish a blueprint for this work then it would be problematic. The problematising had initially been initiated by myself of myself, i.e. reflecting on my own statements looking at interests served but others were also encouraged to engage in problematising. Soon we were engaging in a soft collective reflexivity about the properties of research, whose interests they served and how we could work differently.

When beginning this research we had no idea who Paulo Freire was but we subsequently came to appreciate that the work in which we were engaged was an organic form of conscientization. When we first started talking it was evident that there was a “Culture of Silence”; a term used by Freire (1970) to refer to the status when dominated individuals lose the means by which to critically respond to the culture that is forced on them by a dominant culture but gradually as our meetings progressed the culture of silence was replaced with growing voice which emerged both as our confidence in one and other grew, and also as our confidence to question and our appreciation of the ideological imposition grew clearer. Through our discussions we were working with each other, inspired sometimes by readings, to problematise our understandings, and those presented in other forms, to help us to understand, or at least begin to understand some of the mechanisms of oppression and disabling in Higher Education.

¹²Though I have referred to the points being ‘problematised’ suggesting reference to Freire (1970), at this time neither I nor my colleagues had engaged with Freire's text. Though we would later come to recognise what we had been doing as like what Freire termed ‘problematizing’ at the time we just understood our actions as supported engagement in open critique.

Collaborative Literature Reviewing

Rather than initially engaging with the empirical literature it was proposed that we might read something associated with the British Disabled Peoples' Movement and it returned to me to make the suggestion. The initially reading suggested was 'Final Accounts of the Parasite People' (Hunt, 1981), proposed with the intention of it being a useful stepping stone to challenge our understanding of what validated research and to facilitate some engagement in the potential inequity in the research process as this seemed relevant not only to the specifics of the group but also more widely to the work which we might embark upon.

We continued to read widely, mainly reading literature from the Disabled Peoples' Movement, but we did not read any literature examining anything to do with disability and Higher Education. We read articles that would inspire an alternative, critical, position to the mainstream and we used these as the basis for critical analysis of disability in Higher Education. In addition to reading articles, we also spent time de-constructing newspaper stories as well as the literature produced and presented by 'The University'.

Living Texts

We discussed other research that we had been involved in: it would be a mistake to assume that because my colleagues were 'students' not 'researchers' that they had little experience of research, to the contrary they had plenty of experience of being researched. We read the British Council of Disabled Peoples' Guidelines for Emancipatory Disability Research and appreciated that between us we had lots of experience.

Whilst our discussions centred on the praxis, we often slipped into discussing our own experiences of oppression and institutionalised disablism; including discussions had with various members of The University. These were our living texts and it should be noted that though I initially was presented as the provider of the 'text' members' living texts occupied as much prominence in the discussions during the initial, and all subsequent meetings, though initially their status as a text was not have been fully acknowledged. We

applied the same criticality we were showing to the texts originating external to the group, as well as the criticality we were deriving from them, to our living texts. These initial shifts from the external texts to the recognition of the texts internal to the group, laid the foundations for a living praxis to permeate our existence beyond the boundaries of the work. This sharing also helped to confirm an understanding of disability as a social construct rather than a function of our own abilities or inabilities, and in turn helped to generate an advance upon of the social model of disability which will be discussed in Chapter Seven. Most importantly the process had contributed to the shattering of the boundaries of 'research', had shone light outside and enabled the praxis to flow more freely.

Setting the Agenda

Kitchen notes that: "The research agenda needs to be wrestled free from academic researchers still using traditional research methodologies" (Kitchin, 2001, p. 62). In effect we were engaging in a far more sophisticated freeing of the research agenda. The research agenda needs not only to be freed from the hands of academic researchers using traditional research methodologies, as such work has still inevitably reintroduced oppressive research relationships. Agenda setting is still problematically the privileged activity of the academic, even those using more radical methodologies. The research agenda needs also to be wrestled free from academic tyranny of the research process; in particular in relation to Foucault's commentary on the "effects of the centralising powers which are linked to the institution" (Foucault, 1980d, p. 84). Our gentle approach was starting to achieve this.

Simply giving up the agenda to 'the group' without prior reflexivity could have easily been a freeing of the agenda from the hands of traditional academic researchers into the hands of others who then merely adopt traditional forms of knowledge, looking for theories, knowledges, already out there, thus placing the research agenda back into the hands of the 'academics'. Therefore the removal from the known academics hands to the unknown academic in text. In contrast, through our engagement in rudimentary conscientization type activities which problematised and scrutinised all approaches to the work, we were

engaging in the removal of control from the academic individual, me, into the hands of a collective other but also removing control from the knowledges imposed by the status-quo which might be seen to limit action and subjugate indigenous expertise.

We had set about abolishing the researcher-researched hierarchy and establishing an interactive group dynamic which brought out our experiences into full expression, which was surfacing subjugated knowledges and in which we were critiquing the power relations in relation to disability in Higher Education. It was to be our aim to replicate these circumstances beyond our own working dynamics into our relationships with other potential co-researchers.

Following sustained engagement in the various texts and collectively theorising the experiences captured during various initial elements of the praxis, for example, working with an exams team, working with a parliamentary enquiry and working with researchers from other institutions (which are all fully explicated later), we had established an agenda for the elements of the praxis which we would initiate.

Having eventually read some studies which had claimed to examine disabling practices in Higher Education, we had a number of concerns about the implications of other research, as introduced in Chapter Five. In particular we were concerned about the simplistic and acritical approach which these scholars took to the work and we wanted to be sure to address issues surrounding; recruitment, politics, procedural justice and 'experiences'.

Recruitment

We were critical of the manner in which the authors and researchers, whose outcomes did not concur with our experiences, had approached the institutions and requested to speak to disabled people about their 'experiences'. We understood that it was possible, indeed likely, that the organisations concerned might selectively refer potential participants who were most likely to represent the institution in a glowing light. This proposition was supported by living texts and anecdotal evidence concluded from first hand experiences of researchers and participants on projects conducted within our own institutions.

We were therefore concerned about establishing a method which enabled any potential research colleague to work with us and not just those who the organization might think will comply. Furthermore we wanted also to avoid only working with those whom this institution had recognised as 'disabled students' or who had already disclosed. We also wanted to ensure that those who took part could not be identified by the institutions from which they came.

Dangerous Working

It was identified that the potential political implications of becoming involved in this study were not to be overlooked. Group colleagues reported great difficulties attempting to challenge disabling practices, despite the legislation or policies. The extent of adverse implications for individuals who had attempted to contest their disabling was startling. Furthermore when they had done so, their difficulties were not appreciated, indeed in many cases were actually belittled, by organizational representatives charged with providing 'disability services'.

Colleagues asserted that, contrary to what policies may state or people may think, actively contesting disabling practices in an organization is not a safe business. It was therefore important to us that: we paid due regard to the potential danger; established 'safe' conditions for contribution; and did not replicate dangerous situations. We aspired to provide a safe forum for exploring and exposing disabling practices and wanted to find ways to legitimate potential co-researchers' actions and inputs, as well as offering some protection.

Anti-Parasitic/Procedural Justice

We discussed our concerns about how other researchers, both within this field and elsewhere, often failed to demonstrate any consideration of the interests of those contributing to the research. In the literature we had read accounts which referred to researchers as the "parasite people" (Abberley, 1992; Hunt, 1981; Oliver, 1998) and we were concerned about the parasitic nature of research relationships: where people are exploited and used for another's career gain; where the distribution of rewards is at best

inequitable and at worst totally skewed; and where people invest a great deal of time in a research project only to be forgotten about when the data has been harvested.

Prior to the group entering into discussions about parasitism in research, my initial standpoint when beginning this work was strongly determined by my reading of Abberley's paper on the 'Final Accounts of the Parasite People', and procedural justice was something which I was strongly committed to achieving. As such the development of the group itself was as much founded upon procedural justice and anti-parasitism as it was developed by it. It was determined that the research should strive to include people as meaningful collaborators and to aim to deliver rewards which were salient to co-researchers.

Contesting Internalized Oppression

Our experiences co-constructing the agenda enlivened the necessity for us to engage with people on a more sustained and critical level. We felt aware that our prolonged engagement and discussion had changed us and sparked our critical consciousness; we had engaged in ideological demystification and it seemed inconsistent, knowing and experiencing this change, to go back to anything less. We were aware of what might have been distorted during interviews previously and how we were now alert to an alternative way of conceptualising our experiences but we were also aware of the naivety of assuming that we were the privileged knowers capable of reading through the ideologically oppressed texts of our peers. Not only was it impossible, and we resisted such positions of superiority, but also we felt that this would be an opportunity lost, an unauthentic action to our experiences. We did not want to collude with others' oppressive standpoints through unconditional positive regard, instead we wanted to challenge and be challenged, as we had been doing and benefiting from over the year, and to use this as the basis for developing new theories, knowledges or accounts.

Reflections on 'The Group'

Foucault notes:

"It seems to me that the real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticise them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight them" (Foucault, 1974, p. 171).

Without having read Foucault, the task we had established was surprisingly similar.

Enlivened by our readings, questioning the neutrality and independence of 'research', our work was concerned with criticising the neutrality and independence not only of the 'research' we might be involved in but also, as an interim form of analysis and a co-founding of the 'research question', the neutrality and independence of institutions at work in relation to the construction and maintenance of disability in Scottish Higher Education.

Elements of the Praxis

As a result of the activities of the group, several alternatives to traditional data gathering techniques were developed, including; problematising interviews, working within the system (assistant to; the exams process, the disability advisor, lecturing, tutoring,) contributing a parliamentary enquiry, working with the disabled students' group and the creation and implementation of an online, inter-institutional, critical disability studies course. Each method has simultaneously been about knowledge production, 'research methods' in the traditional sense, profound reflexivity and critical action on the world. As a result each element of the praxis can also be understood as action, an intervention, a critique and a constructor of knowledge. The elements formed useful activities from which new knowledges may be derived through various processes of dialogical knowledge production. From each of these elements of the praxis, new accounts, or living texts, have been generated which interconnect knowledges. New accounts, alternative conceptualisations of disability in Higher Education, are created as a result of the richness of the process.

Disability in Higher Education; Critical Issues

The core elements of our initial re-conceptualisation of praxis are best exemplified in our first organised manifestation of the praxis. As noted, it was of great concern that the work we produced should be procedurally justice, should do no harm to those taking part, that

knowledges produced should not be ideologically problematic and damaging to broader communities, should facilitate the conditions where-by people can openly opt in to the project without first being filtered by institutional representatives, that it should be able to go beyond the realms traditionally available to the 'external' researcher and should involve conscientization and the collective contesting of the manifestations of oppression experienced by some people studying in Scottish Higher Education.

After several weeks discussing procedural justice, and in particular the creation of a praxis activity which would afford more equitable distribution of reward, it was suggested that a university degree credit would be ideal recompense for student co-researchers.

Whilst it was an interesting proposal it was suggested to colleagues that the distribution of such rewards was certainly out-with the power of a PhD student, and furthermore due to university rules and regulations could not be distributed without completion of an accredited unit. However in response to this rejection, colleagues simply suggested that a course should be created in order to facilitate this possibility.

As enthusiasm grew the value of such a praxis venture become more apparent. Course-members discussed the creation of a course which could 'teach' course-members about: the legislation (so they could pursue their rights with their own organisations); the work of the British Disabled Peoples' Movement (so they could challenge dominant discourses of disability) and research methodologies (to challenge conventional notions of what constitutes knowledge and research). When creating a course it was proposed that it could echo some of the process which 'the group' had been engaged in over the first year. It was suggested that the course could offer colleagues the opportunity to engage with the literature and texts which we had previously engaged with and then to have space for open discussion and reflection and critique about the texts and our responses, and to provide further living texts to be discussed and critiqued. Enthused with the prospect of delivering a critical disability studies course we used MindGenius to create mind maps to capture some ideas for course content.

Whilst the enthusiasm for the project was clear, its success was reliant on external organisations' agreement and support for its accreditation. To facilitate the negotiation processes we opted to make the course an e-learning initiative. Not only did this offered

course-members, co-researchers, the most opportunity to structure their own involvement, affording course-members the opportunity to contribute whenever and wherever they felt most comfortable and enabling the course to run simultaneously in multiple locations, despite differing academic term dates, it also supported the institutions' fulfilment of the funding councils specific pedagogic themes of the year.

Disability in Higher Education; Critical Issues - Structure

Despite being an academic unit the course was also to be praxis examining disabling practices in Scottish Higher Education. The course materials did not specifically focus on disability in Higher Education, instead course-members engaged with generic materials, provided to facilitate focused discussion of disabling practices in Scottish Higher Education.

The course consisted of a series of eight independent sessions covering topics such as; the Models of Disability, British Disability Legislation, Critical and Community Psychology, Research Methods and the work of the British Disabled Peoples' Movement. Each session was complemented by topic related discussion and activities, and a number of alternative readings. Each paper and task was electronically linked to a specific discussion board where course-members could engage in associated debate and reflection.

Although institutions had reported that their students were familiar with the virtual learning environments, course-members stated otherwise and the first session was amended to include an introductory session to support course-members to use the online platform. In order to protect anonymity the introductory session also included a session on the selection of pseudonyms. During the first session course-members were asked to provide their own code-name but this proved to be a difficult and excessively time consuming task, as a result during subsequent course sittings course-members were asked to select names from a list of rivers following recommendations made by previous course-members.

Subsequent sessions took a specific topic in turn and course-members worked through the relevant material and discussion related activities. For example, the session on the Models of Disability, begun with an explanation of the ontological and epistemological positions of the Individual and Social Families of Disability and then the task was for students to find and prepare an account of an alternative 'model of disability' and then collectively to problematise and discuss these accounts. Then, returning to the session, course-members were asked to read a short story, *To Deny or Not to Deny Disability* by Vic Finkelstein, which illustrates the social construction of disability and then to prepare their own similar story, a task which we called Finkelsteining although course-members came to call the task 'Problematic Stories' an homage to Freire's concept of problematisation and the problems some members had initially when creating their stories. The stories were then posted onto the discussion list and fellow course-members used them to facilitate further discussion. See Box 1 for one of the stories prepared by course-members.

Box 1 – 'Finkelsteining' Story

Message no. 389

Posted by Forth on Sunday, July 17, 2005 5:07pm

Subject: activity 1

Hello all,

Here is a story of the social causation of disability and how easy it can happen.

Once upon a time there was a planet called "No-Napland." A huge meteor was on its way towards this planet and was sure to make mince-meat of it. The most influential/important inhabitants did not want to die, so built a giant air-shuttle that held 123 people to seek out unchartered territory to make their new home. A few days before the meteor landed they all set off waving goodbye to the other "No-Naplanders."

Later the escapees witnessed the eradication from a safe distance of their planet. It was completely wiped out. The blast from the meteor was so vast that it blew them into another galaxy. Their air-shuttle was destabilised and flew throughout space with no control. Those who controlled it saw another planet and tried to make their way towards it. It was touch and go but they managed to crash land on to this planet.

The "No-Naplanders" were all made unconscious by the crash. One by one they all woke up and all they could see was blackness. Now there was one important fact about these people. They had all just come from a planet that was never dark. Throughout their life they had only known it to be light and never needed any sleep, hence the name "No-Napland." This was completely foreign to those people and they were terrified. Sleep and darkness would have a negative and debilitating effect on these people.

The planet they had landed on was called "Napland." The inhabitants slept 18 hours a day and were awake for 6. When they were asleep the entire planet was completely dark. All the plants, animals etc were accustomed to this. It was normal to them. The 6 hours were known as the "light dimension" and the 18 were the "dark dimension." The

socialising and working was done in the 6 hours and the eating was done by the way of a special drip through their navel in the 18 hours. In this time of darkness the "Naplander" inhabitants were connected to a huge drive that would feed them to keep them alive to be more productive in the waking hours.

All of a sudden the planet became light. The "light dimension" had started. The 123 strangers to this land saw others come towards them. It was the Nap-paramedics. The crash had been witnessed and they had to check it out. The "No-Naplanders" were taken to the nearest nap-medic (hospital) where they were examined.

After a few days the "Nap-paramedics" noticed the strangers needed no sleep. The strangers also did not have the connector navels only ones that were of no use. To the "Nap-landers" this was not normal and so the strangers were given special medication to make them sleep for 18 hours a day. Also a special artificial connector was fitted to their bodies to make them look as normal as possible. Although it was of no use to them at all as they could not feed this way as they ate with their mouths.

The psychiatrists were then involved. They stated that these people must be mentally unstable as it was abnormal to be like this.. The more the "No-Naplanders" stated they did not need sleep the angrier they got. The professionals advised that these people were dangerous to themselves and to others so should be kept separate. This led to segregation in their living quarters. Because they were being made to sleep, be in darkness and feed in a way that was foreign to them they began to be very unwell. This completely debilitated them. Before the strangers knew it they were labelled "disabled" and were being cared for by the "Napland" society. Many of these "disabled" had important and responsible jobs in their own planet.

When it came to work, they were separated in sheltered workshops to give them training the "Naplander" way. Social/support workers helped them out with their "disability problems." Charities/benefit was set up for the "poor-souls" with offensive images of those who did not need sleep. The public response was to treat them with fear and ignorance, creating social myths about what they called the "anti-nappers." The inhabitants from "No-Napland" were institutionalised, had feelings of hopelessness and were disempowered and all because of their "abnormality" in the eyes of those from "Napland."

Forth.

In an additional session on research methods course-members subjected three published texts about a graduating student to discourse analysis. The first text, 'Degree of Success for Student who defied Huge Odds', was a newspaper article published to coincide with a graduation ceremony. See Box 2

Box 2 – Newspaper Article

Degree of success for student who defied huge odds

A COURAGEOUS cerebral palsy sufferer who is unable to feed herself has defied the odds to graduate from university.

Julie Thomson, 35, who is a wheelchair-user and has the use of only one hand, graduated from Stirling University with a BA honours degree in criminology and sociology yesterday.

Her proud fiancé, Kenny Scott, and friends watched as she was presented with her certificate by university chancellor Dame Diana Rigg.

Miss Thomson's mother abandoned her in an Aberdeen housing estate when she was two.

She was taken to the city's children's hospital and then moved through a series of care homes across the country.

Miss Thomson was unable to move or speak when she was deserted but, with help from staff at Pitfodels Day Centre, she gradually began to talk.

Over the years, she was sent to homes in Edinburgh, Paisley and Inverness, always struggling to gain some education.

She never gave up and put herself through technical college, then an access course. She eventually went to Stirling University where she studied for four years with the help of a voice-activated computer and graduated with a 2.2 degree. Miss Thomson, who lives in a specially adapted flat on the campus during term time, hopes to study for an MSc in her subject in the autumn if she can get funding.

Miss Thomson, who lives at Deveron Street, Inverness, out-with term time, said yesterday she was very pleased to have graduated.

"I have loved studying at Stirling so much so that I want to go back to do my masters", she said.

Mr Scott said: "I am very proud of her"

Her friend, Esther Barrett-Ayres, of Sunnyside Terrace, Aberdeen, said her achievement was amazing.

She said "I have known Julie for a long time. My sister Marjory Craig, was matron at the day-care centre at Pitfodels and attended the graduation".

"She can't move her body very far, can't feed herself and needs help to dress but she is very determined and very courageous. She has had immense difficulties in her life but she has not let it hold her back."

A Stirling University spokeswoman described Miss Thomson as a "committed and talented student".

(The Press & Journal, 02 July 2005, Page: 22-23, Ref: PJ20050702049)

The second text was an image which taken by University photographers and featured the graduate and the University Chancellor, a well-known actress, posing outside on the University campus after the graduation ceremony. The third text, 'Breaking Through the Barriers', was the front page of a university magazine and featured the same image as text two (see Appendix A). This article was prepared for the University's magazine to commemorate the graduations and to advertise the protagonist's achievements. The protagonist gave her permission for the texts to be used as course materials.

Course-members' Reports

As a summative assessment course-members were required to prepare reports which examined disability practices in their own institutions. In some instances this meant that students reported and critiqued the policies, procedures and practices in relation to 'disabled students', as identified by the institution, critiquing the policies which advocate an individualistic and medical model focus and making suggestions of wider level

systemic change. For example, one student recommended that instead of making alternative exam arrangements for 'disabled students', noting that the definition of disabled students as stands, i.e. medical, fails adequately to capture all those students who are disabled by the current assessment arrangements, a more systemic change should be made which would allow students greater choice of methods of assessment which better suited their ability to represent their skills. This, it was suggested, would be preferable to a system which segregates and creates 'special people' for 'special arrangements'. Other students took a more critical conceptualisation of disability and examined how the institution was constructed such that it was disabling for some and not others. For example in one instance a course member discussed how their institution was disabling for parents with child care commitments as Higher Education was designed primarily around the interests of young people just out of school or college without children. Consequently late or re-arranged lectures disabled those who had to make child care commitments. This particular student therefore recommended that the institution introduced universal child-care facilities made available free to students.

The course enabled course-members to talk to colleagues about their experiences of disabling practices in their own institutions and to have some control over their involvement in the research. Co-researchers were able to investigate their own organisations and discuss what they felt was important, constructing a shared and evolving understanding of the nature of disabling practices in their institutions. Rather than the researcher getting wiser at the expense of the 'participants', the devolved dialogical process meant that the new knowledges were available for all to collate. Rather than having distorted discussions whereby the interviewer stays quiet and attempts to get the 'participants' to do all the talking and the interviewer is compelled to hide their own position but expects the 'participants' to open themselves (their feelings and ideas) up for scrutiny, the course involved open discussions and dialogue with all course-members (we identified ourselves as fellow course-members). Rather than limit the change to the individual researcher, social change activism was facilitated for all course-members. The course offered course-members a private, anonymous, forum to explore disability without

the risk of being victimised or punished. Course-members were able to support each other, not least to explore their experiences but also to 'play the system'.

Conscientizing Conversations/interviews

The praxis was not limited to working with undergraduate students: complementing other elements, 22 problematising conversations were also conducted with a variety of stakeholders from several Scottish HEIs, including senior management staff, administration, staff and student HEI members. Colleagues were recruited to take part in the conversations through a variety of means including; previous contact in relation to other elements of the praxis, direct recruitment through the extension of email invitations and in-direct recruitment through personal recommendations delivered via others involved in the praxis and by participants approaching praxis members seeking to become involved.

The Problem with Interviews

As noted in Chapter Five, interviewing is the dominant method used in studies examining disability in Higher Education. It is suggested that interviewing provides the researcher with an ability to gain insight into the nature of the topic that is studied through the direct opinions of the participants (Patton, 2002), an interpretation which has been problematised earlier. Engaging with similar concerns other community critical scholars have proposed utilising a 'suspended structure interviewing format (Duckett, 1998; Duckett & Fryer, 1998; Duckett & Pratt, 2001) combined with a 'person-centred approach' (Duckett & Pratt, 2001, p. 819) which seeks to establish a relationship of 'trust, openness and informality with each participant' in a bid to redress power imbalances between the 'researchers and the participants' (Duckett & Pratt, 2001, p. 819). Duckett and Pratt (2001) note that the format entails:

"Holding an unconditional positive regard for each research participant adopting a non-judgmental acceptance of each participant's experiences, opinions and feelings.

Reinterpreting research roles so that the locus of expertise shifted from the researcher to the participant—participants became the experts and the researcher became the novice.

Viewing participants as research collaborators, rather than 'subjects' of investigation.

Avoiding acts of deception and freely eliciting our own feelings and experiences if participants asked for them." (Duckett & Pratt, 2001, p. 819)

However this approach was rejected due to apparent tensions between a dedication to 'trust, openness and informality', a 'holding of unconditional positive regard' and, in particular, to 'avoiding acts of deception and freely eliciting their own feelings and experiences'. As has been critiqued in relation to others' work, whilst it might be considered inappropriate to be negatively judgemental to an individual who has been subjected to processes which have lead them to internalise problematic dominant discourses, merely adopting a position of unconditional positive regard is profoundly unsatisfactory as it fails to challenge disabling practices, policies, procedures and discourses in Higher Education and reproducing the means of production of the existing literature which, as is evident, positions the individual as the locus of 'the problem' and the area for intervention and risk defaulting simplistically, with naïve altruism, to the belief that 'good' will prevail if the opinions of the 'researched' are positioned as an independent, accurate and unproblematic account of their situations. Approaches seeking to 'give status' and 'take seriously' the 'experiences', verbatim, of those normally subordinated by the research process can be considered as ideologically problematic, or naïve. Ultimately the accounts presented, which not unsurprisingly often support and reproduce the dominant individualised accounts, are used to further oppress, as knowledges are presented stating that people are 'needing', 'wanting', or 'looking' for more individualised intervention, or that they are happy with the existing circumstances. Such an approach maintains and, through the dynamics of 'researcher as expert', validates, existing discourses which might be considered oppressive.

Unlike as is implied in the 'suspended structure interviewing format', we did not differentiate any 'real' researcher-researched binary of expertise; for us it was not that either one or the other groups should be recognised as 'expert' but rather, ironically as in Duckett & Pratt's third point, we viewed the praxis as collaborative whereby all have different expertise while recognising that various co-praxisioners carry into the encounter specific privileges relating to their being, for example gender or class etc., which cannot be left at the door. Likewise, in keeping with our understanding of the works of Freire, we

did not assume the phenomenological position which is also evident in the empirical literature of assuming some higher status from which to examine the accounts of others, instead we opted to approach 'interviews' as dialogical encounters, conscientizing conversations, in which knowledge would be produced in collaboration and which in turn would feed into wider knowledgementing and theorising in collaboration with other elements of the praxis.

Problematizing Interview Technique

Rather than replicating the problematics of existing interview relations, we opted to conduct 'conscientizing or problematising interviews' in which relations of power were resisted, such that there were attempts made to blur the distinctions of knower/interviewer and known/interviewee and matters were not taken at face value. Unlike phenomenological approaches, in which the researcher might come to privilege their ability to look beyond the ideologically laden nature of the accounts provided, privileging the researchers account of 'reality' over the 'participants', we aimed to facilitate the conditions for mutual, and collective, problematising. Therefore, rather than demonstrating unconditional positive regard, statements were problematised and the interview took a dialogical form to establish the accounts.

Though the interviews were conducted by myself they can be considered to be collaboratively produced accounts shared with, amongst other people, 'the group', I was as Deleuze notes a 'groupuscule' (Deleuze, 1972);

"Who speaks and acts? It is always a multiplicity, even within the person who speaks and acts. All of us are 'groupuscules'. Representation no longer exists; there is only action – theoretical action and practical action which serve as relays and form networks." (Deleuze in conversation with Foucault, Foucault and Deleuze, 1972 in Bouchard, 1997, pp. 206 - 207).

My contributions to the problematising interview were informed by work in other spheres of the multiplicities of the Praxis. My voice was not 'my' voice but rather a voice of problematisation determined and influenced by, amongst other elements, the work of 'the group', which was in turn determined and influenced by other elements of the praxis. Likewise the voices of colleagues in the interviews were part of the multiplicities of their own dialogical encounters, and their own inputs part of the multiplicities of the economies

producing disability in Higher Education. The form of the problematising interviews was to disrupt these economies, to challenge and problematise the re-narration of the dominant accounts, to challenge their neutrality, objectivity and status and to generate alternative, equally 'valid' accounts, but to do so without necessarily replacing one form of ideological domination with another, to do so whilst respecting the contributions of all colleagues (myself as a colleague, and those colleagues not present) in the interview encounter. As such the interviews were action. Yet it could be stated that all interviews are action, all knowledge encounters are action, all knowledge is action. Just as to accept the accounts provided is action, as it maintains the economies of truth, so to challenge and undermine the certainty within which we accept the elements of the apparatuses of the economies producing disability in Higher Education is also action.

Yet these encounters were also valid 'knowledge producing' encounters. Not because we were seeking to find absolute accounts but because such engagements and reflections enabled deeper, and deepening understandings of the processes at work in constructing disability in Higher Education; not just superficial understanding of the 'nitty gritty' manifestations of the apparatuses, but also at a meta-theoretical, ideological level, encounters contributed to an understanding of the micro-logical elements involved in producing the account. The encounters fed back into group discussions, more living texts, and enabled us to further deepen our theories of disability in Higher Education.

Working within the System

The praxis involved multiple diverse engagements in which the praxis collective engaged in action. In addition to working with one particular element of disability services during the exam time, support and problematisation and praxis was extended to staff members elsewhere in the institution and other universities; either through informal discussions with colleagues in the corridor or with fellow post-graduate students embarking on tutoring or lecturing, or informal support of other disability services.

Examination Support

The first engagement came towards the middle of our initial year of working, whilst we were still engaging with the various texts. Due to staff absence I was invited to support one element of a university's disability services tasked with providing alternative equipment and examination locations for students which the university identified as disabled during the examination period. The invitation was discussed with the group, the advantages and disadvantages were debated, and it was concluded that this would constitute an interesting opportunity to gain some insight into the arrangements 'behind the scenes', in addition to the opportunity to engage in challenging and changing of the system.

Three weeks were spent supporting the examination process and more than merely giving an insight into the workings of the system it also provided illustrative material of the nature of staff members' priorities. For example, during one day spent working for the examination team several calls were received about a broken electronic loop system in one of the lecture theatres. Two students were concerned because they were missing lectures due to the technical failure but both were told that they needed to change their batteries, when I questioned whether it was really likely that both batteries had depleted at the same (suggested in response to one student's claims that they had already done so and it was still not working) I was informed that my colleague knew that there was probably a problem with the equipment but that they did not have time to fix it, ironic because we had just spend an hour on a 'coffee break' as I had completed all the day's work in the morning. Despite this later in the day my colleague was able to drop 'everything' to make a hasty trip to visit the home of a female student to fix her equipment which she had called to report as not working as well as it should be. This was interesting as whilst it is conceivable that fixing the equipment in the lecture theatre might not have been something within my colleague's skills or that it could not have been achieved in the time available, there was no attempts made to do so or even to examine the nature of the fault which ultimately disabled a number of students who would be missing out on their final lectures in favour of helping one student immediately. This later became relevant as colleagues discussed the clear favouritism shown to certain students.

Invigilator for the Disabled Students' Examinations

In addition to helping out formally as a member of the team organizing the equipment for the examinations I was also working as an invigilator. In this role, as in other examinations, I would ensure that all desks were equipped with the appropriate test papers and that these were available on the computer screen, I ensured that the candidates were comfortable and informed each candidate individually, at various intervals (15, 10 and five minutes) how much time they had left. Due to differing arrangements some students were allowed extra time in exams or comfort breaks and these were calculated on an on-going basis, subsequently each student's remaining time was constantly being updated and their progress reported to them.

Most interestingly in relation to this thesis I was also privy to the reactions and discussions amongst departmental representatives who were required to attend at the start of each examination in order to answer any questions students might have about the paper. There was a clear resentment amongst a significant number of staff members, in particular directed towards the person who in charge of organizing the exams. The general attitude was that the person spoke to the academic members of staff in a very rude manner in front of fellow colleagues and students. Staff members were not happy about being made to sit in a row to one side whilst this member launched into a well rehearsed speech, they also resented the manner in which the colleague ignored them when they arrived, unless they were a more senior member of staff, and generally made them feel like 'naughty children', even when they were asking questions about the examinations which were intended to support the students. These exchanges informed our understanding of the growing resentment of members of academic staff and its implications for the discrimination experienced by some students who felt that the posturing of certain members of 'support' staff and their 'power games', in which they apparently purposefully set about undermining the authority of the course staff representative in a bit to demonstrate their own self-importance was ultimately detrimental to disabled students interests.

During both activities I witnessed the arbitrariness with which individualized support was dispensed and there certainly appeared to be the enactment of favouritism in relation to the support provisions made. Awareness of this favouritism was revealed in multiple elements of the praxis and was mostly noted in relation to describing the adverse effects this had for disabled students as staff members either erroneously assumed that all students were treated in such ways or in the suspicions of other institutional members of disabled students who were required to use these particular examination processes; suspicious of their 'cheating'.

Un-paid Disability Advisor and Un-paid Assistant to Departmental Disability Advisor

Throughout the research I have come to be recognised as an unofficial knowledge resource in relation to disability discrimination, and as a result of such I have come to find myself working as an unofficial un-paid disability advisor. Through contacts I have made personally through research, through referral from these contacts or through department contacts, I have spoken to a great number of people about a variety of disability discrimination related concerns across several Scottish HEIs. For example, a colleague asked for advice for a particular student who had just found out that she 'had dyslexia'. The staff member was having difficulties getting any advice from the disability service and had hoped that I could give her some informal advice. This was not an uncommon scenario, indeed most of my 'referrals' came about due to difficulties people were having with several components of the disability services.

In the past I had been asked to provide legislative advice about how people may wish to take matters further, I have had acted as a 'clued up scribe' at managerial complaints meetings, initially presenting as an anonymous note taker but then being invited into contribute as someone who has an understanding of the legislation or of accessible design.

In addition to providing support and advice to members in institutions in which I was working, I have also been contacted by colleagues in other institutions with which I had

no formal 'research' contact. In each of these circumstances the persons had found themselves experiencing difficulties with their institutions but apparently without anywhere or anyone to turn to for advice. Despite there being a Disability Rights Commission helpline available many colleagues also wanted to take the opportunity to discuss matters with someone not directly involved in the situation and from whom they could seek anonymous advice and in general support.

Tutor, Lecturer, Course co-coordinator, Member of Academic Staff

In addition to serving unofficial roles within departments, providing support and advice to colleagues, I have also gained understanding about the systems at work through my own personal experiences as a tutor, lecturer, course co-coordinator and member of academic staff at a number of Scottish HEIs. Being required to engage with the various systems operating within several institutions has enabled me to gather insight into the idiosyncratic micro-logical manifestations of power at work, and also to appreciate that, despite these idiosyncrasies, they nevertheless fulfilled the same functions of the synchronous deployment of the elements of the disabling apparatuses across Higher Education in Scotland.

Parliamentary Disability Enquiry

Around the early stages of the praxis our national parliament was holding an inquiry into disability in Scotland. The Removing Barriers & Creating Opportunities: Parliamentary Inquiry into Disability website notes:

"The Committee agreed the approach for its inquiry at its meeting on 1 June 2004 after careful consideration of all of the evidence it had received. Members agreed that they would wish to identify the issues that create barriers to the participation of disabled people, in particular in relation to accessing:

work;

further and higher education; and

leisure." (Scottish Government, 2005)

Prior to the establishment of these categories I had been in correspondence with a number of members of the Scottish Parliament with regards to this enquiry and the work

which we were doing looking at disability in Scottish Higher Education. I had been working both with MPs who would become members of the Enquiry Team in addition to those who ultimately did not, due to limiting parliamentary commitments.

My accounts of these meetings with the parliamentarians were fed back to 'group' colleagues, and subsequently we worked to ensure that colleagues would be able to provide evidence to the enquiry and how we could contribute. However, subsequent reflection on the Enquiry's findings would indicate that we may not have been as successful as we would have hoped. A specific sub-group of colleagues found that their institution was being held as an example of 'good practice', however they felt that the justification for this was naïve. It appeared that the recognition of 'good practice' was as a result of the rhetorical availability of services, the extent to which the disability practices and procedures were developed and refined and permeated through the university, which was critiqued by the group and which is addressed in Chapter Eight.

Ironically, this particular institution's status as an example of 'good practice' came at a time when a senior member of staff had embarked upon a relationship with an undergraduate student, which was both recognised and approved by human resources department. Colleagues did not consider this to an example of 'good practice' as it involves the potentially abusive relationship where one partner has far more power and resources at their disposal and is potentially in a position of direct power over the other.

Disabled Students' Groups

The praxis extended to supporting disabled students groups in a number of institutions. I attended meetings and provided information, as appropriate, which was derived from the praxis; for example, knowledge about the various texts and processes operating within the system, understanding (and insider knowledge) of the workings of the system and reflexive critique for stimulation of debate. By far my largest role in relation to the disabled students' groups was supporting resistance and challenge to institutional disabling practices; for example in one particular institution this took the form of contesting the silencing of the group in relation to their institution's production of new policies and schemes directly relating to 'disabled students' and disability on campus, supporting the

critique of the institution's attempts to publish accounts which presented the institutions services as exemplary and relatively unproblematic much in contrast to the experiences and stories of those members of the group, and supporting their action in attempting to formally have the problematic account published. A fuller account is presented in chapters Seven and Eight.

Working Group

Lastly, following recognition of my work in other elements of the praxis, I was invited to be part of a Review Group (documentation sub-committee) tasked with examining and amending existing provision, policies and procedures relating to disability within one particular institution. The conclusions of the review were collated into a report which was submitted for approval and ratification by various high level institutional committees. The reason professed by the University for this working-group was to take a fresh look at the University policies, procedures and processes in relation to disability in the changing context of legislative requirements and changing expectations of people within and outside the University. However it soon became clear that many of the institutional representatives associated with the services the institution provided for disabled students understood that the 'real' underlying reason for the working group was to deal with an acrimonious and time consuming power struggle which had developed within the University between two separate groups, each intent on assuming ascendancy over the other. This was evident in the process. Subsequently the process might have been considered to be more focused on resolving the institution's warring parties than developing an institutional focus addressing disabling practices. The review group produced a document underwritten by a policy formally committing the institution to a 'social model of disability', but of all the elements only the policy was found to be problematic by the ratifying committee, and subsequently rejected.

In addition to the working group, I was also approached for support by various members of senior academic staff from other institutions. Many of these colleagues were approaching me following initial interview contact, which they had found interesting,

stimulating and/or challenging, and which they wanted to become a more sustained dialogue.

As a result of these meetings I was asked to support the development of various institutional policies and schemes but rather than providing 'expert' opinions I used these meetings as discussions to facilitate a more critical approach to their suggested policy enquiries or working groups, and attempted to facilitate the inclusion of approaches that would take seriously the internalised oppression of individuals within the institution, the predisposition to the medical model (both in discourses narrated within the organisation as well as within the many aspects of the economy operating within the institution, for example the domination of a medical model in the legislation and the literature and instead suggested that colleagues might appreciate the value of reflexive working practices, I advocated for a greater inclusion of the experts already located within the institution.

Gathering Material and Generating Claims

Whilst in each element there was a common over-riding commitment to be simultaneous knowledge creation, reflection and action, the 'methods' involved distinct mechanisms for recording materials.

Field-notes

Field-notes were used in all elements of the praxis, from the co-construction of the research agenda through to parliamentary enquiry processes and from reflections as a tutor through to providing informal disability advisory support to students and were maintained as appropriate throughout the duration of the praxis. Events recorded through field-notes included the processes of creating, managing and running the online critical disability studies course, as well as reflection on the meta-levels of power being required and enacted through my actions as 'course director' or my experiences and reflections of working with the working group and my descriptions of the nitty gritty processes of negotiating policy structure, including various members' rejection of specific terms and the workings of institutional rhetoric in specific relation to the documents being created,

and the performances of other stakeholders, whose actions demonstrated the deployment and inaction of various discourses and representational economies. Such examples delivered material relevant to the understanding of the workings of the economies producing disability in Higher Education, and their enactment through individual agents. Thus they broadly captured two different types of accounts, reflexive and textual.

Field-notes were recorded in both audible and textual form. For example when working intensively with the IT advisor during exam-time there was insufficient time or opportunity to prepare adequate textual accounts, instead verbal recordings were made as and when appropriate throughout the day and supplemented in the evening with short field-notes or additional verbal accounts. The original intention was that the recordings would serve only as an interim measure and more detailed accounts would be created later when times were quieter, however the use of audio equipment made for an alternative to traditional field-notes which was able to capture essences less easily captured in texts, for example emotion. The added value of the mixed method field notes technique became apparent when as an interim measure, whilst still working with the IT group, the audio accounts were played to 'the group' rather than waiting for an appropriate time for the written accounts to be created. These initial accounts captured emotional and disturbing recounting of an 'insider' viewing of the system.

The depth of account conveyed via the audible field-notes was far greater than could have been presented in written text; enabling the aloud capturing of a praesentic¹³ understanding of disability in Higher Education. In addition the audible notes also had added value of not requiring group members to spend extensive amounts of time reading.

The material recorded in field-notes formed living texts for subsequent analysis and account creation and was presented in both the group meetings and the other elements of the praxis. It was delivered for problematisation and interpretation, both at the superficial account level and at the meta-level analysis of power and both levels informed the generation of the accounts.

Interview Transcripts

Conscientizing Conversations/Interviews were recorded and transcribed then returned to those involved in their production. Further conversations were had to explicate points of interest or contention and were also recorded and transcribed, and this process repeated as necessary. An understanding of the material generated in the conversation, as derived both through conversation, subsequent reflection and group discussions, was discussed

¹³ Hetherington (2003) describes Praesentia as: *“an intimate and touching encounter with the presence of an absence that is other to direct and previously known representations. Praesentia is a way of knowing the world that is both inside and outside knowledge as a set of representational practices. It is performative and generative of knowledge communicated other than through representation. Both a form of the present and a form of presencing something absent, it can be found in tacitly skilled, haptic reaching out and does not presume in advance the necessity of an engagement in the act of visual representation, let alone its outcome as knowledge that can be communicated discursively to others. Rather, praesentia presumes only an involvement and a confirmation of subject formation in the materiality of the world (see Brown, 1981; Josipovici, 1996)”* (Hetherington, 2003, p. 1937).

and debated, and formed part of secondary conversations. Subsequent meetings included mapping of emergent themes arising from discussions. The collaborative production of the emergent themes resulted in an expansion of conversation surrounding these specific themes. For example the rhetorical deployment of the social model was one emergent theme which emerged, greater understanding and accounts of its action in the institution and the construction of the model itself was derived from subsequent discussion and problematisation.

In addition to subsequent interviews/conversations, initial praxis contacts also generated sustained correspondence through other means, for example through email and telephone dialogue. Such discussions also served to inform the accounts derived in this thesis, and were most often precipitated by colleagues' need for supportive problematising dialogue about the actions they were taking or being required to take.

Disability in Higher Education; Critical Issues

In addition to the gathering of material as previously described, material was also gathered in methods specific to Disability in Higher Education; Critical Issues which provided a rich source of material supporting the generation of an account of disability in Higher Education.

Course Discussions

The on-line platform enabled course-members to insert their own research inputs over several weeks of discussion and debate about disability in Higher Education. Each week course-members were given a new set of reading and activities to work through and discuss. Through reading the material presented and recommended, and other originally sourced literature, course-members were able to engage in debates pertinent to the topic of disability in Higher Education. Activities involved collaborative analysis and critiques of the legislation (conducted in the on-line chat rooms), researching, presenting and critiquing various models of disability and discussion of the models and discourses dominating their institutions, and Higher Education more generally, and discourse analysis of the institutional policies, practices and procedures, including the public

relations material distributed by institutions. Such methods provided novel dialogical processes of knowledge production which were sustained over a number of weeks. The method of recording materials (on-line discussion forums) enabled discussions to be more easily sustained beyond that which can traditionally be maintained during face to face exchanges. Subsequently course-members could revisit previous debates, in light of the presentation of new material or later debates, and problematise their own, and others' previous, interim conclusions on elements of the nature of disability in Higher Education.

Course Members' Reports

As a summative assessment course-members were asked to prepare reports examining disability in their own institutions, though how and what each course member elected to study was left up to their own decisions. Subsequently the focus, content and depth of reports varied, as members selected what was appropriate. Some reports focused on specific issues of access within their institutions, others looked at the construction of disability within their institutions and others examined existing facilities.

Collaborative Documentation and Discourse Analysis

A multitude of documents were assembled for analysis both in and from various elements of the praxis. These documents included the various literatures prepared and presented by Scottish HEIs which are of relevance to the study of disability in Scottish Higher Education, for example these included documents detailing policies and procedures, letters distributed to students the institution identified as disabled, various legislative acts and supporting documentation. Additionally alternative documentation which was not publicly available was collected, such documents included email correspondence distributed internally to members of educational teams, for example course co-ordinators or tutors, email correspondence between research collaborators and supporters and material passed to me for the purposes of exposing existing practices.

The material collated was subjected to analysis by various praxis collaborators. It formed the basis of many discussions, in which the texts were problematised, and subjected to a collective form of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis which looked at power and interests

served, and textual and rhetorical, strategies deployed. The documents were problematised and the discourses underpinning their construction exposed.

Such processes of problematisation of texts and analysis of discourse, were conducted with and within: the group; the parliamentary enquiry (with the group members involved in working through the texts of the enquiry); the disabled students groups (with DS group members working through text associated with the production and implementation of the universities disability equality scheme); the working group (with group members examining and critiquing the texts of the working group); and in *Disability in Higher Education; Critical Issues* (when group members and course-members examined the various literatures, texts, policies and procedures, associated with disability in Higher Education).

On Ethics

Application for ethical approval was made to the departmental ethics committee at every major stage of the research process. Initially ethical approval was sought from the department ethics committee for the co-construction phase of the research. Permission was requested to meet with people to engage in participatory discussions about disability in higher education, research and how best to engage in a collaborative or participatory research project. Participants taking part in the online critical disability studies course were provided with consent forms and self-addressed envelopes as part of the course materials package. Course-members were asked to either return the completed consent forms in the envelopes provided or to send an electronic message expressing their consent (whether given or not) as presented in the outline provided.

As standard, co-researchers were advised that they could withdraw their consent at anytime, however it was made clear that whilst their own material would be withdrawn due to the nature of the knowledgementing processes it was not necessarily possible that their influence could be isolated and removed from the knowledges created. For example, course-members were permitted to have their explicit material omitted from the wider praxis project, however their contributions to discussion would invariably stimulate debate and knowledge creation, enhancing colleagues' interactions and informing discussion, but

other conversers inputs (assuming that they had given their consent) would be part of the praxis. In the event such attempts at untwining some of the knowledges produced were not required as all colleagues gave consent and none later withdrew it.

By organizational standards the Praxis was therefore successful in terms of conventional notions of ethics. However part of the Praxis was also to challenge the conventional notions of what constitutes ethics. The differences in our concerns might be considered to be more about the social construction of ethics. Existing ethical procedures characterise participants as the vulnerable objects (or subjects as traditionally used in psychology) of the research; they are positioned as knowledgeless and de-powered etc. and instead peer reviews are based on the specificities and logic of the process are conducted. In contrast something which aims to be pro-actively ethical, i.e. to support the interests of the participants', raises suspicion given the current construction of concerns with notions of 'objective knowledge'. This contrast was evident in the lack of apparent concern relating to the ethical application for the online course component compared to the concerns raised about the initial aspects of the research (the work to support the participatory agenda. The difference being that (in relation to ethical pre-approval) 'participants' (course members) involvement could be presented in a more passive role (an impression perhaps supported by conventional beliefs and the dominance of 'the Banking Model of Education') and the specifics of the project could be pre-specified in more detail (required for external accreditation and approval).

Traditional ethical concerns are also marked by their pre-occupation with the individual. The ethical concerns focus around to harm to the individual, neglecting to consider the harm done by the objectionable knowledges which may be produced. It would not be 'ethical' if this work insulted or harmed individual disabled people in its production, but yet there is nothing to stop the over all outcome of the project producing objectionable disabling accounts which are harmful to a whole community of people. The ethical process does not concern itself with the outcome products of the research only the process. The processes of ethics committees are just another manifestation of governmentality: denying opportunities for participation and privileging the status of knower, and knowledge production as the sole domain of the academy.

In contrast Praxis has more rigorous ethical demands. The praxis would have been considered unethical had it not taken action to contest oppression, resisted an individualistic focus, involved meaningful participation, been procedurally just, contested oppressive discourses and 'knowledges' and resisted their production in its own work. Subsequently, like other aspects of the praxis, it takes a broader collective community position towards ethics, not only 'to do no harm' but to 'do good' in relation to contesting disabling thereby promoting the interests of students in general rather than merely avoiding harm to individual participants. In addition to meeting the requirements for ethical approval (which are an organizational requirement) this work also met the more rigorous demands set out as a requirement of the praxis, as shall be demonstrated.

Generating Claims

Dialogical Processes of Knowledge Construction

As Parker (2005) observed: "we should remember that 'analysis' is a series of interpretations that are open to question" (Parker, 2005, p. 146). A conventional thesis would be expected or required by the academy to have an 'analysis' section which provided a theorised justification for the use of particular methods to analyse a body or 'corpus' of 'data', be it numbers, words, other 'texts' or whatever, which have been assembled by the researcher to see what can be discovered or found within, or to 'emerge from', the corpus and also to provide a form of 'accountability' and transparency through a description of exactly what was done, how it was done, to what by whom by way of 'analysis'.

However this is not a conventional thesis describing research but an unconventional thesis describing praxis and, within its critical frame of reference, knowledge is not positioned as being 'about' an independently existing reality but as an element in the construction and deconstruction of knowledges of dependently existing (because existing through being enacted) interconnectivities or assemblages which though socially constructed and maintained have 'real' effects.

Although the work described in this thesis is positioned as 'praxis' rather than research and refuses and problematises 'analysis', it does seem reasonable to provide at least as impressive a theorised justification of the use of particular methods to construct or invent knowledge (and at least as informative a description of exactly what was done by way of construction) as a conventional thesis provides regarding 'analysis'.

Matching the transparency of explications of analysis in research would be a huge, formidable task, because the praxis processes through which knowledge claims are constructed are radical, innovative and resistant to surfacing and explication, if the explanation and justification of 'analysis' were more impressive than it is. However, the process of actual 'analysis' in conventional research is left almost totally a mystery. To elaborate: the creative, sense-making, aspect of 'analysis' is seldom addressed in the methods textbooks I have read and courses I have attended. These have largely positioned analysis as a 'technical' matter and they have thus devoted much effort to documenting a) techniques to ensure sustained engagement with the material; b) techniques through which the consequences of analysis can be legitimated. Almost no effort has been devoted to explicating either the analytic process achieved through sustained engagement or the analysis whose consequences are subsequently legitimated.

For example, the use of N-Vivo may result in the user engaging again and again with texts and N-Vivo may be an efficient means of storing, retrieving, annotating, fragmenting and sorting text but N-Vivo does not tell you which text to annotate, which annotations to make, how to fragment, how to sort and recombine or the manner of repeated engagement i.e. does not throw light on the process of analysis. How those decisions are made, and by whom, how the actual analysis is done, is not satisfactorily explained but rather appears taken for granted as requiring no explication. The point being made here is that the orthodox research literature says virtually nothing about the actual process of analysis as opposed to the circumstances within which analysis occurs or the way the post-hoc rhetorical legitimation of the results of analysis. As Parker puts it: "What is analysis . . . These open questions are puzzles for us and our colleagues, and good research puzzles about them a bit further and positions itself in relation to them" (Parker,

2005, p. 140.) In relation to the actual process of knowledge construction through praxis I do here at least begin to surface the processes. The surfacing is not yet complete - completing this task will take longer than this piece of work – but it is at least recognized as a task to be accomplished and it is a task which has been begun in this work.

Within this praxis knowledge construction is not positioned as something which occurs through a bottom-up process starting with transcriptions of discursive 'texts' and ending with knowledge of assemblages. During the course of this praxis, various members of the praxis collective have engaged in a wide variety of ways with a huge number of 'texts' (verbal transcriptions, un-transcribed lived experience, processes and procedures etc) but these texts have not all been exhaustively processed through an algorithmic 'knowledge producing procedure' which has somehow mysteriously generated 'truth claims'. Rather than being algorithmic or mechanical knowledge construction is creative.

Moreover, knowledge has not been constructed individually by an 'analyst', 'researcher' or 'praxitioner') but collectively by diverse co-praxitioners. As Parker put it in relation to analysis in research but is perhaps even more the case with knowledge construction in praxis: the task of the "is not to rummage around in the material and dig out the correct interpretation, but to act as a catalyst for the analysis to appear" (Parker, 2005, p. 120.).

Moreover, knowledge has not been constructed in a discrete, self-contained 'component' at the end of a period of praxis (as 'analysis' usually is in research) but has been constructed in a seamless, irreducible, continuous process throughout the praxis from the very beginning and is still being constructed and reconstructed as I write. Furthermore, knowledge has not been conjured up out of de-contextualised fragments of transcript (as often appears to be the case in qualitative analysis). The problem is not that the task is time consuming or difficult but that it is impossible: a collection of de-contextualised fragments simply does not afford the possibility of knowledgement of the inter-connected bigger picture. Fragmentation and de-contextualisation disable holistic integrative sense making.

Rather than knowledge construction proceeding only from the micro, what is said and done, to the macro, apparatuses of power, knowledge construction in this praxis has been multi-directional. In this it turned out to mirror Foucault's work. Foucault wrote:

"I would like to see if it is possible to make a radically different analysis . . . start from an apparatus (dispositif) of power. That is to say, to what extent can an apparatus of power produce statements, discourses and, consequently, all the forms of representation that may then . . . derive from it . . ." (Foucault, 2008, p. 13.)

Note that here the starting point for Foucault's analysis is the apparatus rather than statements and the discourses they presuppose, which could be found in transcripts. It might be objected that here Foucault is writing about the locus of power but note that for Foucault power-knowledge is irreducible.

Indeed, the praxis described in this thesis could, like Rose's work, usefully be considered "In the spirit of Foucault . . . field work conducted upon particular apparatuses of truth, power and subjectification" (Rose, 1999, p. ix.) Rose refers to "a different critical strategy . . . exemplified in Foucault's writings". According to Rose "this involves the attempt to try to trace, in very concrete and material forms . . . the actual history of those forms of rationality that comprise our present, the ways of thinking and acting with which they have been caught up, the practices and assemblages which they have animate, and the consequences for our understanding of our present, and of ourselves in that present." (Rose, 1999, p. x). Likewise, knowledge construction in this praxis has involved illuminating the actual functional interconnectivity of what at first sight might appear a multiplicity of 'real' (because having real effects) but unrelated practices, procedures and policies which together 'animate' oppressive institutionally disabling assemblages. Referring to his own Foucauldian fieldwork, Rose wrote that "it is possible to identify a number of dimensions along which this analysis is conducted" (Rose, 1999, pp. xi-xii.) These dimensions included problematisations, technologies, authorities, subjectivities etc. Rose continued "These six dimensions do not amount to a formal analytical grid appropriate for all problems. They simply serve to generate the kinds of material chosen for examination and the kinds of questions which I ask of these particular materials. Perhaps they are best described as perspectival. They sensitise us to the kinds of connections and relations amongst diverse elements. . . ." (Rose, 1999, pp. xi-xii). The

materials chosen for examination by praxis collective members, the questions they asked of them and the kinds of connections amongst diverse elements constructed as apparatuses and assemblages, were also the result of sensitization through collective problematisation of technologies, authorities, subjectivities, reflexivity and so on. These could also be called 'perspectival', pertaining to a perspective, although I prefer to think of them as elements of the critical standpoint which characterises this entire praxis

Praxis is simultaneous engagement in action on the world, critical reflection and the construction of new knowledges, or accounts. As Freire notes a person "learns to swim in the water, not in a library" (Freire, 1970, p. 118). Rather than subjecting accounts to the conventional sterilizing processes of 'analysis', as the after activity of the 'academic' or the knower, knowledge construction achieved through dialogical processes of knowledge production, reflection and action. As Goodley and Parker (2000) note: "Knowledge is not 'found or taught. It is created by means of a dialectical interaction" (Goodley & Parker, 2000, p. 7).

Lather (1986b) puts out a call for 'a kind of validity after post-structuralism in which legitimation depends on a researcher's ability to explore the resources of different contemporary inquiry problematics and, perhaps, even contribute to "an unjamming' effect in relation to the closed truths of the past, thereby freeing up the present for new forms of thought and practice" (Bennet, 1990, p. 277)."

Lather might be understood as implying a distinction between the 'researcher' and the 'researched'. Such a distinction is challenged in this work. It is recognised that the knowledgemaking process is one in which all are engaged. Foucault questioned the individualisation of the author stating;

"it would be worth examining how the author became individualized in a culture like ours, what status he has been given, at what moment studies of authenticity and attribution began, in what kind of system of valorization the author was involved in, at what point we began to recount the lives of authors rather than of heroes, and how this fundamental category of "the-man-and-his-work criticism" began." (Foucault, 1994b, p. 205)

Likewise in this approach similar questions are asked about the 'knower'; at what point did the knower, or the knowledge processes, become constructed as a task of individuals; why is it that knowledge production has come to be understood as the activity

of an individual in isolation, working on the dead texts of others, at what point did individuals come to take ownership of collective works; what processes of valorisation is the knower involved in?

In this praxis, we have founded communities of praxis, multiplicities of collaborations, our accounts, the knowledges to be recounted in this thesis are generated through multiple dialogical interactions, concerned with 'unjamming' closed 'truths', exposing and contesting dominant discourses and surfacing subjugated accounts. Through our sustained reflexivity, problematisation, negotiation and re-negotiation our critical understanding and appreciation of the economy of disability in Higher Education is under constant definition, deconstruction and re-definition; undergoing continual cycles of analysis and, as Freire, notes resistant to the constructions of the possibility for only "normalised" and "well-behaved" knowledges to emerge, rather "A praxis of commitment" has lain at the core giving unity to the "multiplicity" of our endeavours

Like Mishler notes on Martin-Baró we have been "stubbornly resistant" and "suspicious of efforts" to understand the work, the situation, through processes of "de-contextualised, abstract, neutral analyses" and of the enforced "fragmenting and compartmentalising" of our "different spheres of activity" (Mishler on Martin-Baró , 1996, pp. vii – viii). Instead of the knowledges claimed being derived from conventional reductionist methods of 'analysis', they are derived through iterative cycles of negotiation, critical reflection and action, dialogical interactions between previous elements of the praxis and the present, producing a considered account which supports an understanding of the totality of the situation as a whole (and each manifestation, element, of the praxis adds to the warranting of the knowledge claims), rather than to split and reduce the knowledges into isolated spheres for ease of communication.

This attempt at exploring different contemporary inquiry problematics, has been to established the working relations whereby the membership of the inquiry team is extended beyond those 'commissioned' to conduct the body of work and where those about whom the praxis is concerned are involved as genuine collaborators. This is consistent with Lather's postulations about the next stage in new-paradigm enquiry in which she suggests "post-post", "post-theory" and "participatory dialogical policy analysis"

(Lather, 2007, p. 164). For example, here we have demonstrated participatory dialogical policy analysis, but have also taken this far further, extending it beyond mere policy analysis into a participatory, collaborative, dialogical method of knowledge production.

Reflexivity activities, promoting ideological exposition and conscientization, form the unjamming effect described by Bennet (1990) permitting the recognition and validation of closed truths, both those of the past as well as those of the future. The new forms of thought and practice involved in this praxis enable the conditions for new techniques of knowledge production to emerge. Scholars have talked about the processes of dialogical learning here it is used to form the conditions of dialogical knowledge production. Where knowledge is generated through multiple cycles of reflection (collaborative, conscientizing, critical) and action (founded upon the critical reflections and commitments to social justice and anti-individualism), which aims both not to endorse status-quo discovery epistemology and crude realist ontology or slip into relativist ontology, as opposed to methods which support transmission and filtration.

The iterative process of knowledge construction in this praxis has no clear beginning, however in relation to the specifics of this praxis the actions of the group who went on to begin the co-construction of the research agenda may be used as a point with which to begin the description, but in acknowledgement of the dialogical nature it is recognised that there is a pre-praxis of praxisioners' histories with which present praxis was in dialogue.

As noted, the group engaged in discussion and problematisation facilitated by engagement with living and written, published, texts: as Parker (1992) recommended we "considered all tissues of meaning as texts" (Parker, 1992, p. 7). In this sense it might be considered that we have engaged in a form of analysis consistent with the work of Foucault. Though there are certainly some similarities between our processes of analysis and what others have come to refer to as 'Foucauldian Discourse Analysis' (Willig, 2001) it is not the case that we have merely adopted the prescriptive method of analysis, in this case discourse analysis, recounted in textbooks; like Parker (1992) we have rejected the proposition that such forms of analysis can be pulled out of the methodological tool-bag and applied as dictated onto any "text" (Parker, 1992, p. 106). To go further our position

was one more consistent with Rose (1999) who notes his disinterest in the derivation of a "formal methodology" (Rose, 1999, p. xi). However like Rose (1999) it is also possible to identify some of the dimensions of the analysis. One of the most notable differences between this work and other accounts of discourses analysis, and analysis in general, is an analysis process which is immanent as opposed to the traditional account or performance of analysis post-collection of all material and necessary texts. In addition, our analysis was not dependent on the prior textualisation of the texts before they become incorporated into our analysis. Indeed many of the texts with which we were working in, returning to Parker's (1992) recommendations above, could never have been textualised; all tissues of meanings cannot be textualised. Moreover to textualise would have disabled some co-researchers, limited their opportunities to engage in the co-construction of accounts.

An important aspect of our processes of knowledge construction was, like Rose (1999) problematisation; though perhaps unlike Rose (1999), this problematisation was engaged in collaboratively, for example, we begun by engaging in a collective problematisation of our construction as disabled people. As part of our problematising activities we also incorporated activities akin to that which Rose (1999) calls "Explanations" (Rose, 1999, p. xi). We sought to uncover the taken-for-granted which upheld the discursive construction of ourselves as 'disabled people', traced the historical contextualisation underlying our positions, to show the discourses involved, the knowledges required, to produce this meaning. We explored the technologies and apparatuses involved in the production and maintenance of the existing disabling context. This analysis goes well beyond pure representation in text: it extends into material effects of the deployment of these meanings hence the need to move beyond the simple reliance of textualisation. For example, in relation to this early stage whilst sharing our 'living texts' of our negotiation through the disabling in Higher Education, our representations of disability as bodily dysfunction were problematised. We examined the ways in which this 'truth' had been constructed historically and this was supported by our collaborative engagement with the literature. We exposed the knowledges operating to produce such an account and examined the power manifested by these 'truths'. Our appreciation of the material effects

of such accounts was surfaced and latterly action was taken to contest this oppression.

Such expositions went beyond look at the implications of the discourses at individual levels and instead looked at their structural, material, and ideological manifestations.

As described praxis is understood to be at one and the same time reflection, knowledge and action; specific attempts at engaging in action on the world are also therefore reflection and knowledge construction. Whilst engaging in the activities described in the aforementioned example, the opportunity arose for engagement in some 'work within the system', in the first instance with an institutions disability services. The material documented during this element was shared as a further text for facilitation and problematisation with the group. Our existing analyses were supplemented and developed by the 'texts' provided from this engagement. As already noted texts associated with this element included audio recordings of events and experiences occurring throughout the engagement, written texts presented by this section about their particular activities, written texts provided by other members of the institution who had been involved in these activities (for example email correspondence from course co-ordinators), textualised accounts from meetings and our own living texts of engagement with this specific system.

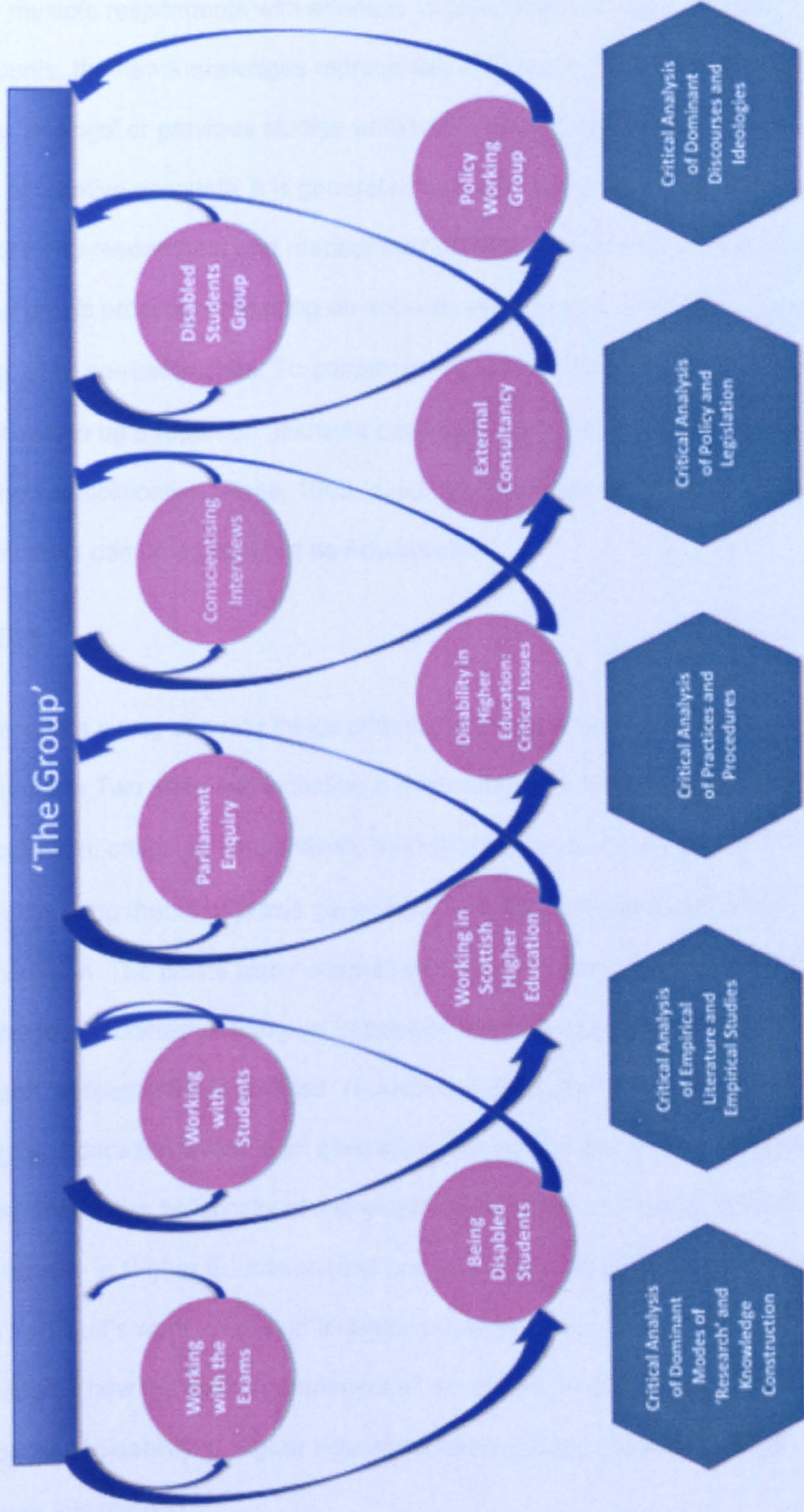
This work supported the intervention and contributions to subsequent elements of the praxis from which material was also generated and turned back to the group for further analysis (problematisation and discussion). In addition to the texts generated through the praxis, field-notes etc., other published texts were also incorporated into the dialogical process, for example the published documentation relating to the parliamentary enquiry or alternatively the documentations presented by various HEIs or funding agencies. These processes informed the development of 'Disability in Higher Education; Critical Issues', from which material generated was cycled through the group for problematisation and discussion, and in turn, these discussions were also part of the cycle flowing through on-line discussions.

The processes of analysis extend into to the other elements of the praxis. Each element fed into a wider economy of profound reflexivity and knowledgementing process. At each stage the material was debated, discussed and problematised. Questions were asked

relating to whose interests were being served, what discourses were being enacted, or what discourses were required to be in place in order to 'truth' these claims, on what foundations were these discourses founded, what elements of the assemblage support their being and was there an alternative account which better described the circumstances as we understood them? The dialectic process is not limited to the interaction with 'the group' but they act as a constant throughout the whole praxis (knowledge, action and reflection). Figure 3 represents this process of knowledge construction diagrammatically. Within the other elements of praxis (represented in pink spheres) are other co-praxisioners who also engaged in cycles of problematisation, reflection, action and new knowledge negotiation and construction, which is again at each stage fed back to 'the group' and whom also feed back again into and within the element(s).

Figure Three - Diagrammatic Representation of the Processes of Knowledge Construction

Construction



This prolonged iterative process is of as much 'validity' as any conventional measure. It should be taken seriously on the grounds that multiple knowledgemakers were involved in the continual text gathering and meaning negotiation, all accounts were problematised and questioned by multiple respondents with attempts to go beyond the mere reproduction of dominant accounts, the new knowledges represented in Chapter Eight simultaneously account for the 'findings' or previous studies whilst also contesting their status and providing new alternative accounts, it is generated through means which value the contributions of all co-researchers and respect their abilities to become involved in all elements of the praxis process, producing an account which is grounded in the challenged understandings of all co-researchers. To paraphrase Rose (1999): in the spirit of Foucault, I intended this thesis to be a report on fieldwork conducted upon particular apparatuses of truth, power and subjectification (Rose, 1999, p. ix). It is in this sense that the analysis enacted in this praxis can be considered as Foucauldian.

Conclusion

This chapter recounts a way of doing things differently, in keeping with the literature described in chapters Two and Five, including a presentation of the different relations of knowledge production, critiquing conventional modes of analysis and instead offering, consistent with the living theory of praxis generated, a collaborative dialogical means of knowledge production. The praxis also demonstrates a way of working with people which respectfully attempts to contest ideological imposition through collaborative reflexivity as a means to surface "subjugated knowledges" (Foucault, 1980d) and to produce an account of disability in Higher Education which is an alternative to that imposed by conventional scholars, which looks more holistically at the wider nature of the economies at work in constructing disability in Higher Education (this account then follows as Chapter Seven), again echoing Foucault's work in relation to apparatuses of power. The following chapters further demonstrates how the action component of the praxis served to illuminate the alternative account of disability in Higher Education and explicate the key 'findings' produced through this method.

Chapter Seven – Praxis: Action, Knowledge and Reflexivity

A strong case has been made for a Praxis which is simultaneously knowledge production, critical action and profound reflexivity. This chapter further explicates action dimensions of the praxis. Firstly, the social action element of knowledge construction accomplished through the praxis is explicated. Secondly, social action aspects of the praxis connected to practical, material, economic and authority-subversion change accomplished through the praxis is explicated. Thirdly, social action which was attempted as part and parcel of the praxis but which was neutralised before it took place by institutional counter-action is explicated. Finally, problematic forms of harmful social action which were unintentionally brought about through the praxis are explicated.

Part One - Social action element of knowledge construction accomplished through the praxis

Individual Consciousness Raising and Collective Conscientization

Even though the Spanish word 'conscientization' is sometimes translated into English as 'consciousness raising', in this thesis a distinction is made between individual consciousness raising and conscientization. The former is taken to involve changes in individual cognitions and emotions as a result of interpersonal and dialogical activity. Such changes may lead to behaviour changes which may superficially 'look' collective but are essentially still aggregations of individual behaviours. Conscientization, on the other hand, is taken in this thesis to involve transformation of collective understanding, sometimes involving the construction of counter-discourses, as a result of co-action upon the social world.

Individualized consciousness raising as a social action component of the praxis.

Texts generated by members of the on-line critical disability studies course suggested they arrived at the course steeped in dominant (individualistic, medical model) discourses in relation to disability and one part of the course was specifically designed to facilitate course members in surfacing and challenging these dominant discourses. In particular, course members were facilitated in simultaneously engaging with a formal academic theoretical account of the social model of disability (in the form of a virtual lecture, as discussed in Chapter Six) and also an exemplar of a story written by Vic Finkelstein (Finkelstein, 1975) and then to produce their own individual stories which problematised the medical model of disability and thus simultaneously threw the socially constructed nature of disability into relief.

From transcriptions of text recorded during the on-line critical disability studies course we were able to see the process of individual consciousness raising of a course member. After the virtual lecture giving an academic theoretical account of the social model, the course member said "the social model makes a lot more sense than the medical model for disability. A lot of the stigma of disability is socially imposed" but then went on to express scepticism saturated with the medical model :

"I know that this may come across wrong but heavy doors and inaccessible public transport could make someone disabled but if they had no legs then wouldn't getting about be hard anyway?" "I hope this doesn't cause offence but I just thought that maybe not everything can be blamed 100% on society." However, after engaging with the Finkelstein story and related activity, an altered position was taken: "I realised this was all rubbish when I read the short story. It put a different perspective on it changing angle like that really made me think about it." (Message no 52. Posted by A4 Refill on Wednesday, May 4, 2005 2.23pm, Subject: Social model)

Collective Conscientization

Beyond individualised consciousness raising activity, collective transformation in the course of attempting to change the social world, was also a demonstrated social action feature of the praxis. For example, as the on-line critical disability studies course progressed and colleagues attempted to engage in collective action to change their HEIs disabling

practices, procedures and policies, a sophisticated spontaneous extrapolation was achieved by on-line critical disability studies' course members, of the application of the 'social model of disability' from its orthodox traditional domain to the equally legitimate but less orthodox domains of gender and class. Collective conscientizing occurred during on-line discussion surrounding the social construction of disability. For example, several group members explored their status as students with dependent family members, 'mature students', students from 'non-traditional' backgrounds in terms of an extrapolated social model. Course members spontaneously abstracted the principles of the social model of disability to account for socially structured pedagogic and educational disadvantage due to child care unfriendly practices, the requirement to participate in evening 'social' engagements with heavy alcohol consumption or demonstrate the possession of middle class / private education endowed intellectual/cultural capital in order to prevent contempt and marginalisation by fellow students etc.

Problematizing debate switched first from deploying the social model of disability in its orthodox domain to new unorthodox domains such as in relation to gender and class. The discussion then reverted to disability, the orthodox domain of the social model of disability but in a distinct leap of sophistication, assumptions about what constituted the 'social' element of the 'social model of disability' were critically reconsidered and the focus of attention changed from the role of the local and proximal nexus of Higher Education Institutions in constructing disability to the far wider societal construction and maintenance of educational disadvantage through the denial of class and cultural privileges to certain sub-groups. Thus, in collectively attempting to change disabling practices in HEIs and collectively theorising their 'diagnoses of learning disability' as more appropriately ascribable to social injustice than either individual pathological characteristics, colleagues collectively conscientized each other and thus engaged in political action which neatly refocused attention away from individual pathology or institutional pathology back upon wider societal injustice.

The social action dimension of the praxis was thus essential to developing insightful alternatives to the firmly lodged, constricted and suffocated, ideologised understanding which permeates every aspect of the experience of Higher Education Institutions. In this it

echoes Dreyfus' account of Foucault's approach which, Dreyfus notes, seeks "to derealize and move beyond, a certain constricted and suffocating understanding of reality which has gradually emerged as the history of the west" (Dreyfus, 1987, p. 331).

Praxis action through surfacing subjugated knowledges

Social action was also accomplished through the praxis in relation to the surfacing of subjugated knowledges. By 'subjugated knowledges', are meant the non-dominant, counter-understandings which, through praxis social action came to be collectively repositioned to rival or supplant the dominated knowledges. Typically subjugated knowledges are the knowledges of the marginalised and oppressed: of the colonised rather than the coloniser; of the minority rather than the majority; or in the case of this praxis the knowledges of those who are disabled by those who disable them. In some cases several forms of oppression intersect or overlap constructing intersectionally subjugated knowledges.

In the case of Scottish Institutions of Higher Education, the dominant 'knowledges' i.e. the dominant claims which are 'knowledged' or 'truthed' (socially ascribed the status of truth) in relation to disability are claims of efficient services staffed by selfless, altruistic, hard-working, competent staff motivated by philanthropic zeal, high minded ideals of inclusion and social justice and respect for the spirit as well as the letter of legislation and policy. The subjugated knowledge 'surfaced' by the praxis, on the other hand, was of services constituted by assemblages of interconnecting disabling practices, procedures, policies creating niches for disrespectful, predatory and abusive behaviour by egocentric, incompetent, self-serving service providers, who cynically utilised their place in the system to exploit their power over others.

These subjugated knowledges were surfaced through the praxis in the following fashion. During a period of social interaction, prior to a meeting of a disabled students' group in one of the HEIs included in the praxis, group members started sharing humorous stories about their difficulties gaining technical support from the University's disability support service. The atmosphere of the discussion soon changed from one of jocularly about the unfitness for purpose of the service to outrage as subjugated knowledges of the service as a

hazardous zone for disabled students was collectively surfaced and given group assent and legitimacy as an authentic account. Group members shared experiences of students having to put up with gender-based favouritism, sexist discrimination; support being contingent on heterosexist compliant behaviour (amiability, flirtatiousness, compliance and acceptance etc.), support staff divulging in public offensive graphic anticipatory sexual fantasies in relation to their student clients and repeated actual 'relationships', sanctioned by the institution, between middle aged male support staff and different teenage students.

Through the stories shared, subjugated knowledges were also surfaced of the construction and maintenance by the support service of a hierarchy of attributed 'impairments', one's place within which, in combination with gendered discrimination, was a factor determining the level of support which could be expected.

A subjugated knowledge widely shared by disabled students surfaced in which level of support received could be predicted as a complex function of gender, physical appearance and attributed 'impairment': a sophisticated subjugated knowledge of the extent to which, and the processes through which, intersecting gender and disability discrimination was enacted within the disability support services of their own institution to the detriment of the students. Moreover, through this praxis subjugated knowledges of the intersection of institutional disablism and sexist oppression were brought to the surface.

The Action constructed new knowledges

This section demonstrates that – in addition to the surfacing of previously existing but subjugated knowledges - the social action aspects of the praxis collective were essential to producing new knowledges about disability in Higher Education. To explicate this point, I below discuss several cycles of sustained social action by a Disabled Students Group in a Scottish HEI (members of the praxis collective) in relation to their University's disability equality scheme (DES).

The first cycle of praxis-collective social action involved the group's pro-active attempts to become involved in the generation of the University's DES.

Acting as a catalyst, drawing upon the collaborative cycles of critical reflection on the policy and legislation aspects during various phases of the praxis including work with 'the group' and work on the online critical disability studies course, I alerted group members, as soon as I heard about it, to the introduction of new disability legislation which placed a duty upon Higher Education Institutions to involve disabled students and staff in non-tokenistic and meaningfully participatory ways in the production of a DES demonstrating how they would promote equality. For example, early on I drew their attention to the Disability Rights Commission guidelines which stated:

"involving disabled people is the cornerstone of the Disability Equality Duty. There is a legal requirement for public authorities to involve disabled people in developing their Disability Equality Schemes...This 'involvement' requires more active engagement of disabled stakeholders than 'consultation'. It will need to use accessible mechanisms and must be focused, proportionate, influential and transparent...Real and sustained involvement will allow public authorities to really understand what the issues are for disabled people and help them tackle issues at their root causes." (Disability Rights Commission, Involving Disabled People, 2006)

At that stage the organisation had not even alerted its members to the requirement to produce a DES nor had it yet begun its processes of constructing the scheme or recruiting collaborators. The group, in the spirit of the participatory requirement of the DES, offered to meet with the HEIs person responsible for the production of a DES (called 'HEI liaison person' below) at a mutually convenient time. The HEI liaison person invited himself to one of the Disabled Students Group regular meetings but members declined his offer as it would have required the sacrificing of precious time ring-fenced for activist group work in order to meet the objectives of the Institution. The group was also vigilant that a meeting was arranged to serve the Institution's interests which would have required that members had to miss out on classes or make alternative transport or child care arrangements. The group was also resistant to attempts by the HEI liaison person to structure the encounter, neither prospectively, by setting the terms of discussion, questions asked etc. nor retrospectively through selective quotation from what was said i.e. resistant to allowing the HEI liaison person scope to selectively pillage group members' accounts of their experiences in order for him to serve the HEIs interests. The Disabled Students' Group acted to ensure that any input was proactively structured by the group; that the information presented was what the group deemed important and not merely reactive to the HEIs questions and agendas. The Group's offer to meet the HEI liaison person and contribute to

the production of a DES was not in the end taken up because the HEI allocated insufficient time for genuine respectful participation (as opposed to Institutional information trawling).

In addition to offering to meet with the institutional representative as a collective, group members had opportunities to contribute to the DES through other means, for example through a questionnaire distributed via web CT, but these means were problematic.

Firstly, the questionnaire used had been heavily criticised a year before by members of a focus group of disabled students convened on behalf of one section of the University's support services by a member of the praxis collective (this was itself another action element of the praxis). Members of this focus group had pointed out the questionnaire was problematic. For the HEI to use the questionnaire for the production of the scheme despite such criticisms confirmed the hollowness its claims to be genuinely interested in participatory development of its DES and its contempt for the letter and spirit of legislative and policy documents. Secondly, the WebCT format afforded an opportunity only for individual rather than collective participation. Thirdly, the WebCT format allowed people completing the questionnaire to identify others doing so did not guarantee anonymity. Fourthly, the WebCT format required those completing it to log on before doing so, thus providing the means for comments to be traceable to those making them. Fifthly, group members were unhappy with potential for reprisals from the information services section, which managed the online services, against those critical of that section. Sixthly, the questionnaire was made available only to those who had already disclosed to the university thus excluding those disabled students who chose not to disclose. Seventhly, the questionnaire was presented in an inaccessible format. The screen readers of some potential participants were unable to 'read' the form due to its specific formatting and the form questionnaire could not be completed electronically, requiring it to be printed and completed manually, excluding others still. Eighthly, the HEI cynically attempted to use the DES process to increase the number of people disclosing (which was in the HEIs own financial interests). The advertisement notifying potential participants of the webCT questionnaire also advised that those who had not disclosed a disability could contact the university's support services if they wanted to discuss their disability with the disability advisor. Ironically such a recruitment process was inconsistent with both the spirit of the

scheme and the guidance from the DRC, which specifically required that schemes should be produced with colleagues beyond those traditionally targeted and already identified by the institutions.

In addition to offering to meet with the institutional representative as a collective and opportunities to contribute to the DES through a Web CT questionnaire, focus groups had been arranged by the HEI through which disabled students could contribute to the HEIs DES, but these focus groups were also regarded by praxis collective members as problematic. Field work recordings and notes showed that group members who took part in the focus groups regarded them as having been 'policed' by disability service personnel who contested inputs critical of the services, positioned those who gave negative feedback as ungrateful 'whiners', silenced critical voices through fear of retribution and fished for positive feedback.

Despite the requirements of the scheme to involve disabled people, the HEI did not consult its members or disabled members groups on draft schemes. Instead the first time that the DSG were able to view the final scheme was when it was made public on the HEIs web site. In fact in order to comply with legislative requirements, the HEIs DES was published before it had actually been approved by the HEIs relevant committee process.

Given its non participatory aetiology, the DSG prepared a statement recommending the HEIs rejection of the DES scheme to be presented at the meeting of the HEIs committee at which the DES was to be approved. Permission was not given for the group to address the committee itself. A committee member through whom the group's objections were to be channelled failed to do so, the profoundly flawed and a-participatory DES was rubber stamped and the minutes of the meeting were inaccurate.

In summary, praxis related social action played an essential part in the construction of knowledge of the processes in which radical legislative requirements are transformed and subsequently delivered as conservative practices which further serve the interests of HEIs.

Part Two – Practical Action

Changing Disabling Places

Beyond the action in process and as an outcome of the knowledges produced through the praxis, as the title of the thesis would attest, we also envisaged that through praxis we would be able to make a real difference to the operating of the institutions and to take on disabling practices and procedures. We aimed to change the disabling places of Higher Education.

This action was less successful than envisaged, as is further discussed below, yet despite the limited success of our actions we were still able to make some changes to the context of disabling practices in several Scottish Higher Education Institutions. These changes can be classified into three main areas; material, economic and authoritative.

Material Transformation

The praxis described afforded some changes to the material environment of disability in Higher Education. In particular through my living praxis, working as an informal advisor and supportive ally I have precipitated and informed several material changes in several institutions.

In one particular example, the work precipitated the total rebuilding of one of the major lecture theatres used by all disciplines in a HEI in order to make it comply with the legislation and HEIs own reported commitment to becoming an accessible institution.

The praxis involved informing, conscientizing and supporting a department disability advisor to write authoritative, accurate and rhetorically powerful communications to various key senior university administrators. Such letters were required to persuade various senior administrators that despite their boasts of award-winning expert staff members the room layout was inappropriate, poorly designed and subsequently required various organisational members to deliver classes in disabling conditions. As a result of the persistence of the campaign, the informative nature of the material distributed and effective interaction with senior staff members, the institution conceded that the lecture theatre would be totally refurbished during mid-semester break, thereby amending disabling pedagogical conditions

for future generations of the institutions membership who would use the lecture theatre during its life time

The praxis also brought about the modification of an arterial hallway in another institution which due to its glazed construction, running the full length of the hall way, was disabling to some members due to glare at some times of the day. Such modifications had previously been discounted on the grounds of an accessibility report conducted by external auditors, but the praxis was able to establish connections between senior managerial personnel with unpaid institutional experts, who had been involved in other elements of the praxis, who were able to work with the Estates groups to provide justification, information and explanation about the importance of the necessary changes. Tinting was retro-fitted to the glass which filtered the light such that it enabled the space to be illuminated without impairing vision or creating excessive disabling temperatures during the summer months.

Economic Transformation

In addition to material changes, the praxis has also precipitated economic transformation in relation to a number of conditions; in particular in relation to the funding provided to a number of disabled students.

Prior to the praxis additional economic funding of up to £14,000 per person per year (plus an additional £5000 for the purchase of large items of equipment) was available only to students on government i.e. SAAS funded courses. However only a very small proportion of these SAAS funded courses were post-graduate and the majority of post-graduate disabled students were unable to obtain any financial support for the purchases of equipment or additional support staff, as many of them had been able to do on undergraduate courses but were expected to apply to various charitable bodies for additional provision.

During the course of the praxis the funding policy changed to make all disabled postgraduates on taught and research courses, not only those funded by the funding councils, eligible for funding (a campaign which had been supported by various elements of the praxis). However the officers within one particular HEI in Scotland were firstly unaware of the changes and then denied that the changes had taken place when this was pointed

out by a member of the praxis collective. As a result they had been mis-advising for over a year, before the marshalling of evidence from official policy documents, the indication of willingness to take advantage of human rights legislation, the volunteering of one of the praxis collective to act as a test case, and the securing of the agreement of several university officers tasked with supporting disabled students to pursue the test case, finally persuaded the university of the change in policy which had taken place the year before. The consequence of this was that all postgraduate students at that HEI were from then on recognised as eligible with massive increase of funds available to large numbers of students.

This praxis also revealed through a number of channels that the 'support' services within the university charged with advising students about disability support systems and the availability of additional resources to provide equipment to complement the university's disabling practices, were permanently understaffed, a state of affairs frequently exacerbated by staff illness. Such understaffing frequently resulted in disabled students being required to wait for excessive amounts of time, often several weeks, before meetings at which assistance could be arranged, which was frustrating and stressful. This led to another aspect of social action as part of the praxis: the provision of informal advice and support sessions to such students. Support took place both individually, whereby a member of the praxis collective would speak to students on a one-to-one basis and collectively at meetings at which colleagues would be informed of how they could go about obtaining support from outside the university, thus also subverting the institutional system of disabling, and the requirements, and processes, for successful completion of DSA applications. Students were supported to obtain appointments at preferred recognised assessment centres, guided through the completion of funding forms, equipment recommended on the basis of first hand experience and honest unbiased information given. In addition, staff members were also supported.

Authority Transformation

In addition to material and economic transformation, the praxis also achieved social action through undermining the authority of reactionary elements within the university and

promoting the authority of progressive elements within the university through explicating the subjugated knowledges, providing them with rhetorical warrants derived from legislation and policy which would be taken seriously by the university.

For example, I was asked by a member of the praxis collective to support them at a meeting with the Director of Estates at their institution, in which they wanted to raise a grievance about the disabling nature of the physical layout of the campus and in particular to raise concerns about the apparent haphazard and inconsiderate manner in which physical changes were being made. I was allowed into the meeting in the unthreatening and low status capacity of assistant and student but once in the meeting I deployed the skills and information acquired through the praxis to support my praxis colleague to challenge the Director. For example I enhanced the input of my colleague by offering legislative and policy insight embellishments. Through this extension of the praxis my colleague was able to successfully contest the HEI representative's claims that newly installed doors were accessible. It subsequently emerged that the Director's confidence in the doors arose from assurances given by a high level disability working group, including the institutions Senior Deputy Principle, which had clearly internalised and regurgitated dominant problematic discourses with regards to accessibility with the result that the new doors were entirely unsuitable for my colleague due to how they were arranged and no better than the previous doors which had been inaccessible due to their sheer weight.

The praxis thus effectively contested the legitimacy and authority of both the senior management and its so called disability experts. During the meeting we were able to explain with simplicity an alternative solution which simply required the re-hanging of the doors such that, in each corridor, there would be both a push and a pull exit and entrance preventing a person being stuck between two inoperable pull type doors. The simplicity of the resolution and the undermining of the authority of the problematic self-elected group of experts resulted in the Director agreeing in future to consult the broader institutional membership before undertaking amendments.

A second example of authority subversion is exemplified in relation to collaborative letter writing activities in relation to unsatisfactory services, unjust assessment decisions, unlawful treatment and inaccessible premises. In these examples, I worked with disabled

colleagues to produce authoritative documentation representing their interests but with the added power of accurate deployment of legislative rhetoric in order to facilitate the seriousness and authority with which the readers take the case. In one case, I assisted with the construction of a letter to an institution demanding a response to an academic session's worth of delayed or missed appointments which had resulted in the colleague having to manage through the session without the necessary promised arrangements. The letter facilitated the swift introduction of the amendments and ensured that, should the colleague wish to take up legal action at a later date, the institution had both been alerted to the series of failings and through their response had acknowledged them.

In relation to three out of four of the above cases demonstrable changes occurred, which it is reasonable to attribute to the praxis at least in part.

Part Three – Non Action

In this section I describe action attempted as part and parcel of the praxis which was neutralised before it happened by institutional counter-action.

It was originally intended that the online disability course members would create enhancement driven reports which could be collated and delivered to the organisations in order to support change. In practice however we found that this aim was unrealisable.

Firstly, despite hoping for, and to some extent achieving, collaborative pedagogical means, having just one person responsible for the entire course management and delivery meant that it was just not possible to provide sufficient support required to foster the development of critical reports and critical interventions. Secondly, the limitations of academic calendars meant that courses could only run for 7 weeks in one institution and 8 weeks in another and this proved detrimental to the facilitation of radical action. The problematic time limitations are exemplified in the poverty of criticality in the reports compared with the relative critical sophistication of on-line discussion. Colleagues in one course setting established an additional forum to continue discussions and subsequent discussions were more sophisticated and critical. Thirdly, Paulo Freire commented upon the difficulty of reconciling systematic education with educational projects:

"But if the implementation of liberating education requires political power and the oppressed have none, how then is it possible to carry out the pedagogy of the oppressed prior to the revolution? ... one aspect of the reply is to be found in the distinction between systemic education, which can only be changed by political power, and educational projects, which should be carried out with the oppressed in the process of organising them"(Freire, 1970, p. 36).

A problem for the on-line course was that, for good reasons, I tried to set up an educational project within systemic education. Offering it within systemic education was intentional in order to fulfil commitments to procedural justice by enabling the delivery of meaningful rewards to those taking part as co-praxitioners. Yet ironically, according to Freire, this necessarily resulted in the de-radicalising and de-liberation of the project. This particular aspect of the praxis project can be considered as a layering of the two aspects of Freire's distinctions between the opportunities for liberating pedagogy. Situated within, or cutting through, the systemic education sphere is an educational project which was firmly liberational in its intention and radical in its process.

In keeping with the Foucauldian analysis of the apparatuses of disciplinary power, the praxis demonstrates the processes through which this attempt at an educational project within systemic education, as Freire predicted, was frustrated and that even when awareness of the operations of power is achieved, such are the workings of the apparatuses that progressive action is prevented. Through applying Foucault's framework to our analysis of disability in Higher Education, it is clear that the apparatuses operate to inhibit any social action attempted.

This was apparent in many areas of the praxis. For example, the disabled students group might be considered to have obtained political power which they attempted to deploy in their contesting of their institutions disability equality scheme, but the alternative elements of the apparatuses, in this particular case administrative procedures, regulatory decisions, discourses, laws and moral and philanthropic propositions, conspired to silence the dissent and to deny them political power.

Likewise, despite the attempts of members in one particular institution to exert political power in relation to the parliamentary enquiry and to inform parliamentary colleagues of the oppression they were experiencing in their own particular institutions, and despite a middle

aged staff member having a relationship with a student, the institution was still singled out for praise.

The project was tasked with changing systemic education, which requires political power but the knowledges of the co-praxisioners, as Foucault has noted, are subjugated and therefore denied political power. Throughout processes of praxis we acquired an understanding of the operations of power about which we are able to draw some conclusions and which can be used to inform future attempts to successfully assert political power. The act of producing a thesis which not only supports the conditions for the surfacing of these knowledges but also through academic rhetoric the PhD-knowledgementing of claims can provide the conditions for future action to emerge, prefiguring it. Thus praxis provides accounts with the status of 'knowledge' which in turn given them the political power to be built upon to begin to contest systemic education.

Part Four – Social action making things worse rather than better for disabled students unintentionally brought about through the praxis

Such is the complexity of the nature of disabling practices in Higher Education, that it is sometimes necessary to make interventions to support those already being institutionally disabled whilst simultaneously taking steps to address the disabling apparatuses at large. Whilst longer term systemic change is attempted, shorter term support at the individual level is required to assist those currently institutionally disabled but this support may perpetuate disabling practices, procedures and policies and to reduce chances of restructuring.

There have been several examples of times when the action of the praxis has unintentionally furthered the interests of the existing oppressive apparatuses. For example, the economic transformations for post-graduate students not only positively increased their material resources, it also negatively exposed them to greater surveillance, individualisation, medicalisation, normalisation and internalisation of problematic dominant medical model discourses which they might otherwise have escaped.

Positive intentions were also co-opted by the status quo for negative ends. Nowhere was this more apparent than in relation to the distortion of the discursive propositions which posed a threat to the maintenance of the status quo. For example, when working with the working group to prepare an alternative policy, time was spent explicating the social model perspective to various senior members of institutional personnel and, in effect, we were providing authoritative accounts of the social model, to those who wished only to use it to cloak and legitimate oppressive anti-social model action. We thus added apparent integrity to the oppressive work of the other groups, giving them the knowledgementing power and moral authority to further the new representational economies of the 'institutional version of the social model'

Conclusion

Following the account of the apparatuses, which we learned and generated throughout and as an outcome of the praxis, it is now clear why attempting to change the systemic process of disabling practices, the apparatuses of disciplinary power, was an unrealistic aim for a small group of praxisioners working across several Scottish Higher Education Institutions. That which might be considered as 'failings' might be otherwise considered as further illustration of the power of the apparatuses. Despite admitted limitations, the praxis still afforded action in various realms and has had various positive impacts on the disabling context of Higher Education. Aside from material, economic and authoritative action, the work has also influenced the epistemological and methodological potential of work examining or contesting disability in Higher Education, and in turn the knowledges which they might produce. Additionally, the ideological work and the new account provided by this praxis prefigures future radical work.

Chapter Eight – Disability in Higher Education;

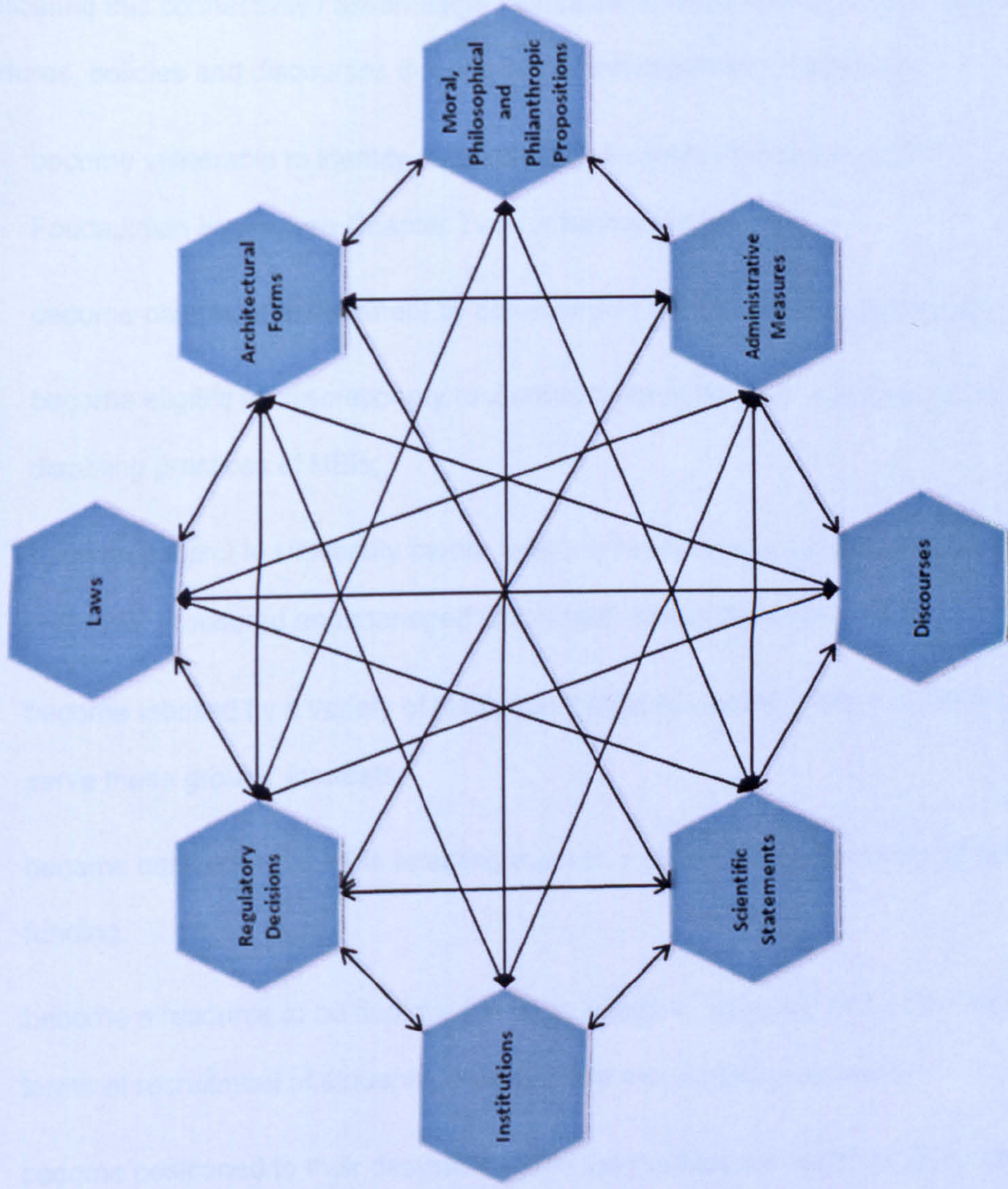
Critical Issues

In this section of the thesis I am going to explicate the way disability is constructed and maintained in Scottish Higher Education Institutions through interconnectivity between (or as Foucault might have put it assemblage or apparatuses consisting of) interconnected practices, procedures, policies, discourses and other key frames of reference. I argue here that disability is constituted through interconnectivity.

Due to the linear nature of text, I explain interconnectivity in terms of that which is connected, starting with a particular practice, procedure, policy, discourse and/or other key frame of reference and then working outwards trying to clarify the web of interconnections. To demonstrate the interconnectivity I provide graphical representations¹⁴ of the web of interconnections, gradually developing into an increasingly dense web illustrating the connectivity as the chapter progresses. Figure Four represents the beginning web of assemblages upon which the interconnectivity of disability in Higher Education will be presented.

¹⁴ The illustrations which follow are purposefully placed in the text without instruction. This is done so as not to fracture the interconnectivity of the prose by inserting an artificial stopping point. The relevance of the illustration does not occur at a particular moment in the text but is generally relevant for the issues which are being discussed throughout the text. Full size copies of the illustrations are included in Appendix B.

Figure Four – Graphical Representation of the Web of Interconnections



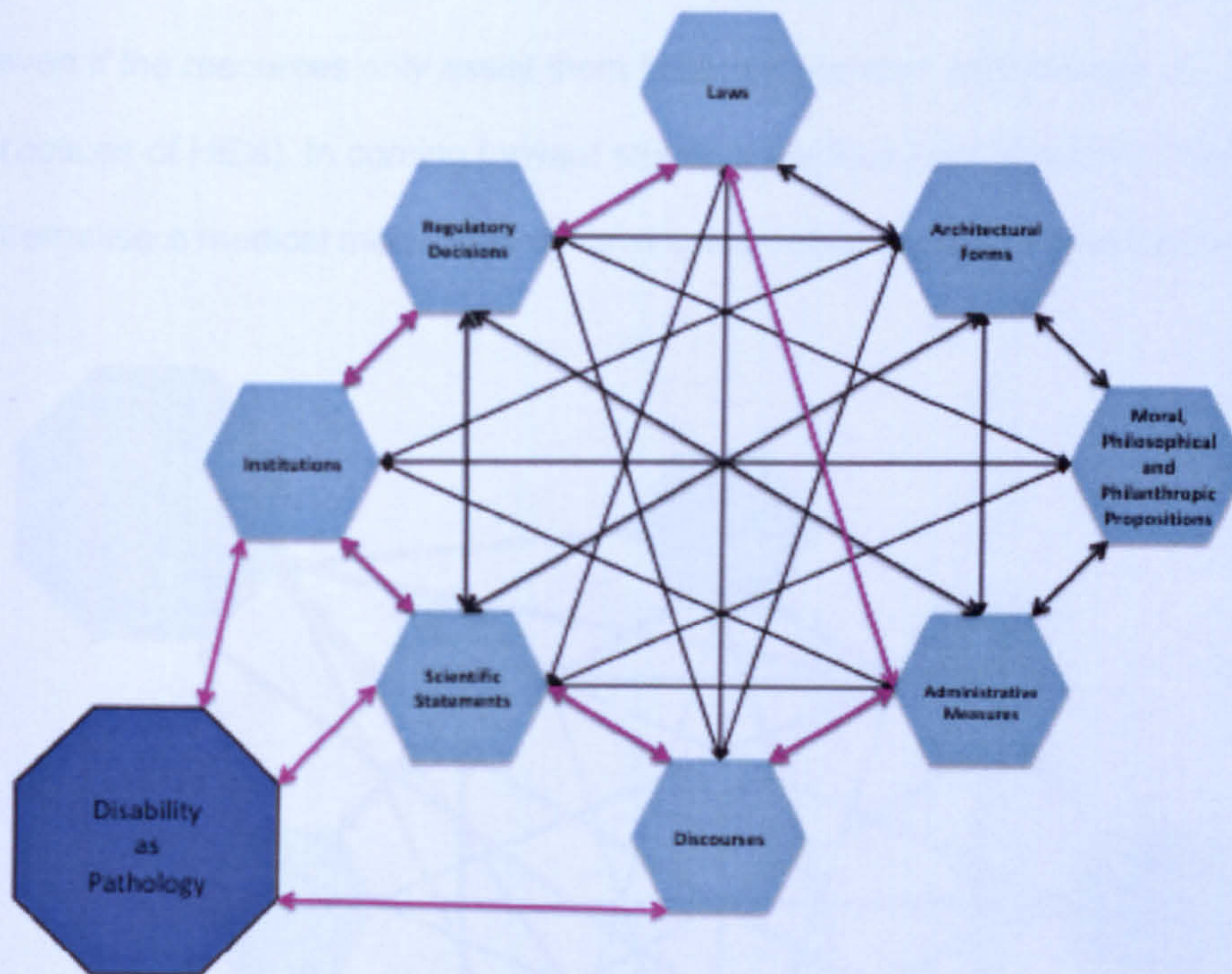
For no other reason than disclosure being a key preoccupation of key figures the HEIs in which the praxis took place, I start this explication with disclosure but it is important to remember that disability is accomplished primarily through the interconnectivity / assemblage of which disclosure itself is just one connected component and that disclosure was selected as the departure point for this explication not because disclosure is 'key' or 'central' or in any way more important than any other 'connectee'.

In explicating this connectivity / assemblage I explicate a set of interconnected practices, procedures, policies and discourses through which individuals simultaneously:

- become vulnerable to identity reconstruction through confession (in the Foucauldian sense, see Chapter Two for further detail);
- become objects of assessment by commercial medico-scientific professionals;
- become eligible for discretionary resources to navigate their way through the disabling practices of HEIs;
- become subject to University career length surveillance as an object to be recorded, monitored and managed within institutional bureaucracy;
- become labelled by a variety of institutional special interest groups in ways which serve those groups' interests;
- become cash cows for HEIs enabling them to meet external criteria for special funding;
- become a resource to be deployed in HEIs efforts to compete with other HEIs in terms of recruitment of students, claims to the moral high ground etc.
- become positioned to their detriment within the medical model of disability and other dominant societal discourses and frames of reference;

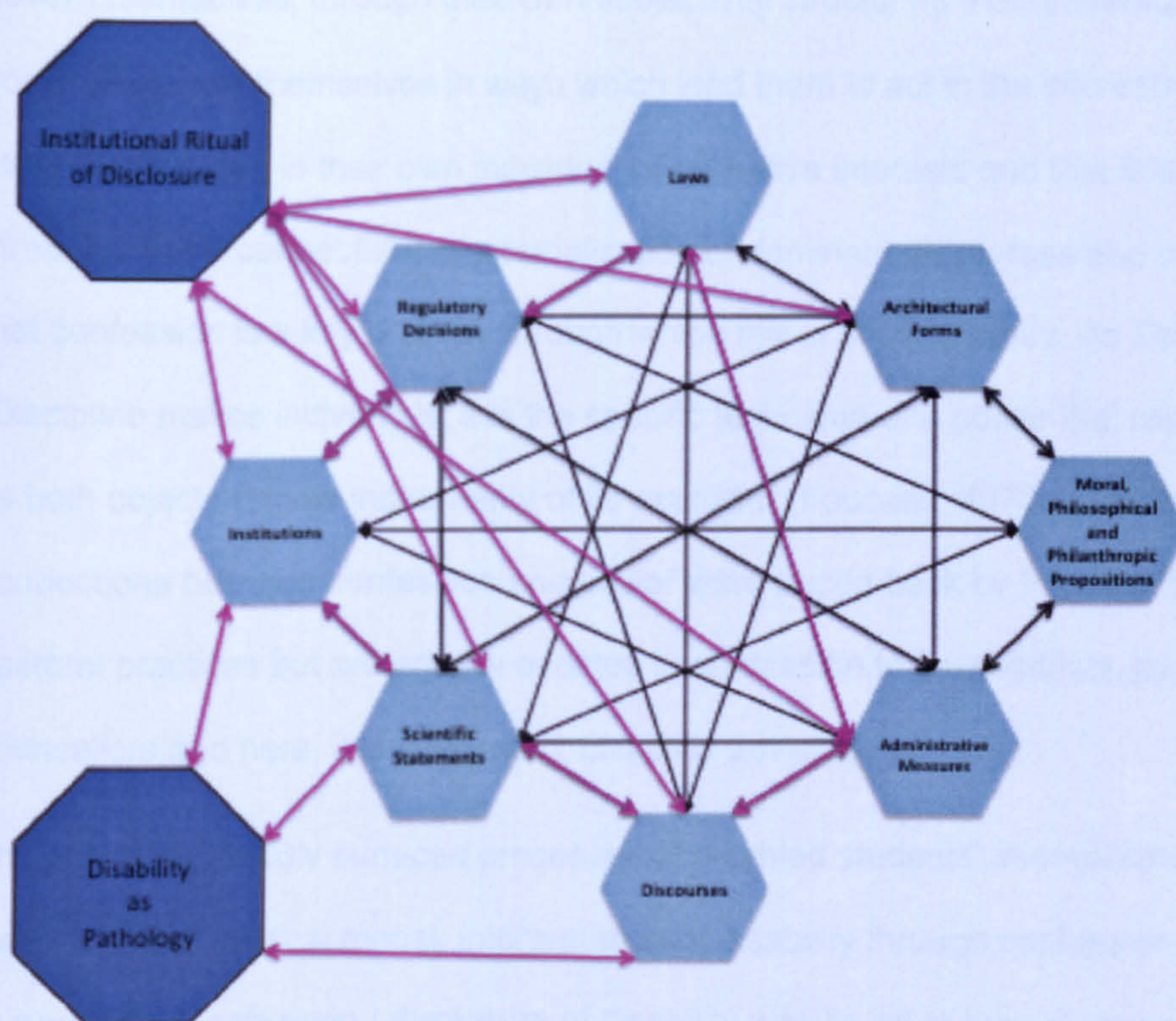
These practices, procedures, policies and discourses are not just enacted in parallel but each is an enabling condition for others. For example, disclosure can only take place if something has been constructed which can be disclosed (i.e a 'disability'). However, the construction of a 'disability' can only be achieved within a discursive framework (for

example, the medical model of disability discourse). However that discursive framework will only be the dominant if it is in the interests of the most powerful interest groups.



Moreover, disclosure is a formal institutional ritual which can only take place within an institutional system: for example to someone 'authorised' by the institution to receive it (an academic staff member rather than a maintenance staff member for example) but such institutional authority can only be bestowed if a legitimating bureaucracy exists centrally which efficiently allocates responsibilities and obligations upon institutional members and records, updates and deploys the results as required. A HEI will only devote its resources to implementing such a bureaucracy if it is in its interests to do so – earning revenue or meeting a legal or contractual obligation (for example, if additional institutional funding is received according to the number of students recorded as having disclosed or it is a requirement of an Act of Parliament – both of which are shown by the praxis, to be the case). However, external bodies will only allocate such funding if they are assured that the disclosures are 'accurate' or 'genuine' so disclosures are required to be authenticated by authorised 'experts' (within the medical model of disability these are medico-scientific experts). These experts examine the de-contextualised individual in order to confirm that

they are 'disabled' but only provide this service if they are paid (so funding, and people to administer it, is required), if students come forward for diagnosis etc. But students will only come forward for diagnosis if they are first being disabled by organisational arrangement and then in carrying forward are eligible for resources to alleviate the disabling conditions (even if the resources only assist them in navigating their way through the disabling practices of HEIs). In coming forward students confess / disclose their disability and internalise a medical model way of viewing the social world and themselves within it.



The above is a greatly simplified sketch to indicate the interconnectedness / assemblage. Below I try to unpack disability as interconnectedness / assemblage in detail showing the essential role of the praxis in surfacing this interconnectedness.

An assemblage of interconnected processes, practices, procedures, discourses and subjectivities which produce Disability in Scottish Higher Education

As explained in Chapter Two, in line with Foucault's expressed wishes¹⁵, I treat Foucault's work as a tool for critical thought rather than as a text for hermeneutics. I take a core insight of Foucault to be that the most effective forms of governmentality are those in which people govern themselves, through their own subjectivity structuring their understanding of their social world and themselves in ways which lead them to act in the interests of powerful others rather than in their own individual or collective interests and that this is achieved through an interconnectivity of internalization of dominant discourses and surveillance and that confession is a key process through which this is accomplished. As Foucault noted: "Discipline makes individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals as both objects and as instruments of its exercise" (Foucault, 1979, p. 170). The connections between confession and power were traced back by Foucault to Christian pastoral practices but are equally enacted in confession to psychiatrists, psychologists, counsellors and here, it is suggested, disability advisors.

The praxis repeatedly surfaced processes of disabled students' internalisation of the individualistic, medical model, interpretation of disability through confession, narration and re-narration. Confession / disclosure of disability was found to take place in person by students during informal exploratory encounters between them and advisers/tutors, during formal meetings between students and 'disability services' staff in HEIs, during assessment by medico-scientific specialists and during appointments at in-house assessments centres

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"I would like my books to be a kind of tool-box which others can rummage through to find a tool which they can use however they wish in their own area... I would like the little volume that I want to write on disciplinary systems to be useful to an educator, a warden, a magistrate, a conscientious objector. I don't write for an audience, I write for users, not readers." (Foucault, 1974, 523-4)

and also in writing by filling in needs-assessment forms, additional funding applications and communications with suppliers of equipment.

Even after formal disclosure had taken place and been noted by the HEI, the praxis revealed that students frequently found they had to disclose again and again during the course of their studies to each new course co-ordinator, lecturer, tutor, workshop or practical facilitator and, indeed, frequently also had to confess / disclose to or in front of other students. For example, in my own role as a course tutor, students often came to see me prior to the tutorials to 'confess' that they were 'disabled' because they were expecting that no necessary steps would have been taken and that they would therefore find the classes disabling. For my part, I had – almost without exception - not been informed of their earlier disclosure of disability elsewhere in the HEI. Despite the labyrinthine and oppressive bureaucracy (explicated below) which the Institution created and maintained to handle, record, process and deploy disclosure' it did not efficiently achieve its most elementary function: i.e. ensuring disclosure recorded in the HEIs central data base was effectively relayed to those engaged with the disclosee in the teaching process so that teaching and assessment did not – within the Institution's own medical frame of reference - selectively disadvantage the discloser. I had actually, in line with my awareness of the anticipatory duty imposed by the SENDA, my prevention orientation as a community critical psychologist and my commitment as a disability activist to emancipatory process, designed my teaching to avoid discriminatory disabling practices so their pessimistic but realistic expectations were hopefully not confirmed but this did not prevent them from the ritually having to position themselves within the medical model of disability and through this internalize this problematic discourse, re-construct the self as flawed and accomplish their own auto-governmentality.

A further observation underlines the interconnectivity of the institutional disabling assemblage: in the absence of institutional bureaucratic forewarning, having had no institutional encouragement to ensure their own teaching and assessment were not discriminatory and faced with the members of their tutorials, practicals etc. 'confessing' their disability, my teaching colleagues frequently approached me for advice and practical guidance. I generally provided this for the students' and my colleagues' sake but was aware

in so doing that this rear-guard action was aiding and abetting the HEI in evading the consequences of its own inefficiency.

The fuller picture (to which I can only gesture at this stage of the explication) only emerged later in the praxis: disclosure was only important to the HEI because it was a prerequisite for 'premium funding' provided to the HEI on the basis of the number of disclosed students on its books. Once disclosure and the associated institutional income had been secured, the HEI had little real interest in the information being used in the students' interests.

Various members of 'the group', the disability in Higher Education course members, and the disabled students' group, also reported similar experiences in relation to confession. Each time this was raised we theorised the role confession played as one of the technologies of subjectivity supporting the internalisation of the discourse of the individual as disabled within the medical model of disability and, more broadly, the role of continuous confession in the production of the disabled identity. The groups' theorizing and problematising first revealed itself through knowing glances, commonly appreciated irony and forensic humour and gradually we articulated our awareness of how the surveillance functioned in the Institution's interests and against ours. We shared our insights into how such confessional conversations: played a role in the internalization of dominant discourses; contributed to identity reconstruction; constituted disciplining surveillance; and promoted the HEIs financial and wider interests. Later in the praxis, after we had engaged with Foucault's work (see Chapter Two) and especially his explanation of the role of the architecture (which we interpreted as enactment of power through the utilisation of spatial relations between interest groups) of the panopticon in continual surveillance and ultimately self-surveillance and self-policing of its 'inmates', we readily extrapolated from the penal complex to the pedagogical complex, in both of which the architectural-spatial form affords the possibility of continual covert surveillance. Through this we realised that in HEIs the architectural form of the existing services is such that disabled students, once marked out, can be subjected to continual surveillance through various processes of checking grades, receiving feedback from course tutors, co-ordinators, disability advisors and that the confessional mechanisms are misleadingly framed as the altruistic workings of a system dedicated to developing and refining the best individualised system possible, in which the individual is to confess for the

compassion and scrutiny of the other who is keen to help, but in doing so only incarcerates themselves in the educational panopticon.

From the Institutional working party element of the praxis it became clear that, in at least one HEI, a policy was developed and adopted that, should a student have an informal exploratory discussion with an academic member of staff about concerns they had in relation to disability, then the academic member of staff had a duty to advise the student to 'disclose a disability' to the institution. If the student proceeded to disclose as recommended, all was well and good as far as the HEI was concerned but if the student decided, despite such advice, not to proceed to disclose, the policy required the academic member to inform the student that if they chose not to disclose the disability, the academic member was required by institutional protocol to make a note on the student's file stating that the discussion had taken place and that the student had decided not to disclose a disability. Even when explicitly not choosing to 'disclose', the student is entrapped in a process of identity reconstruction through being forced to engage in reflection upon whether 'to confess or not to confess'.

In addition this is also intrusive bureaucratic 'knowledgementing': the student simply has no option of not associating herself institutionally with a disabled identity in the sense that bureaucratic linking of the student with disability occurs centrally. A note on the student's file indicates that a disability related discussion has taken place between the student and a staff member and the student chose not to disclose. This neatly disadvantages the student simultaneously in a variety of ways: some identity destabilization if not reconstruction is achieved; the student is institutionally bureaucratically linked with disability; and the student's chances of holding the HEI to account for disabling practices are reduced (see below).

Note that as though it may seem strange to regard an informal conversation between a student who felt that 'something was wrong' in relation to their progress and a trusted staff member as a 'confession', it might well (depending on the nature of the discussion) be so in Foucauldian terms, and certainly one HEI in which the praxis took place considered it as such, or at least it took such a conversation as one to be reported and logged bureaucratically and potentially used in the HEIs interests as a quasi-disclosure.

Actually, other elements of the praxis within this institution, revealed that students were largely unaware of this University policy and the praxis also revealed that some academic members contested this policy recommendation and refused to note anything on students' files following such discussions (indeed in some cases it transpired staff advised students not to 'disclose'). Of course, institutional adoption of a policy is one thing and enactment of it is another. Praxis members did not know the extent of such student file notes being written and fed forward. It is possible that few such disability related discussions, which did not result in formal disclosure, took place. However, as will become clear, it is definitely in the institution's financial interests that students disclose but only possibly in its interests for a note of non-disclosure to be recorded since the latter is only of value to the institution in the remote possibility of a retrospective legal challenge whereas the former reliably generates annual income.

The time taken debating this issue in the working group suggested the intended outcome was maximum formal disclosure following any disability-related discussion between students and staff. Why was the HEI so keen to bring about disclosure? The reasoning made public behind these contortions re disclosure was two fold.

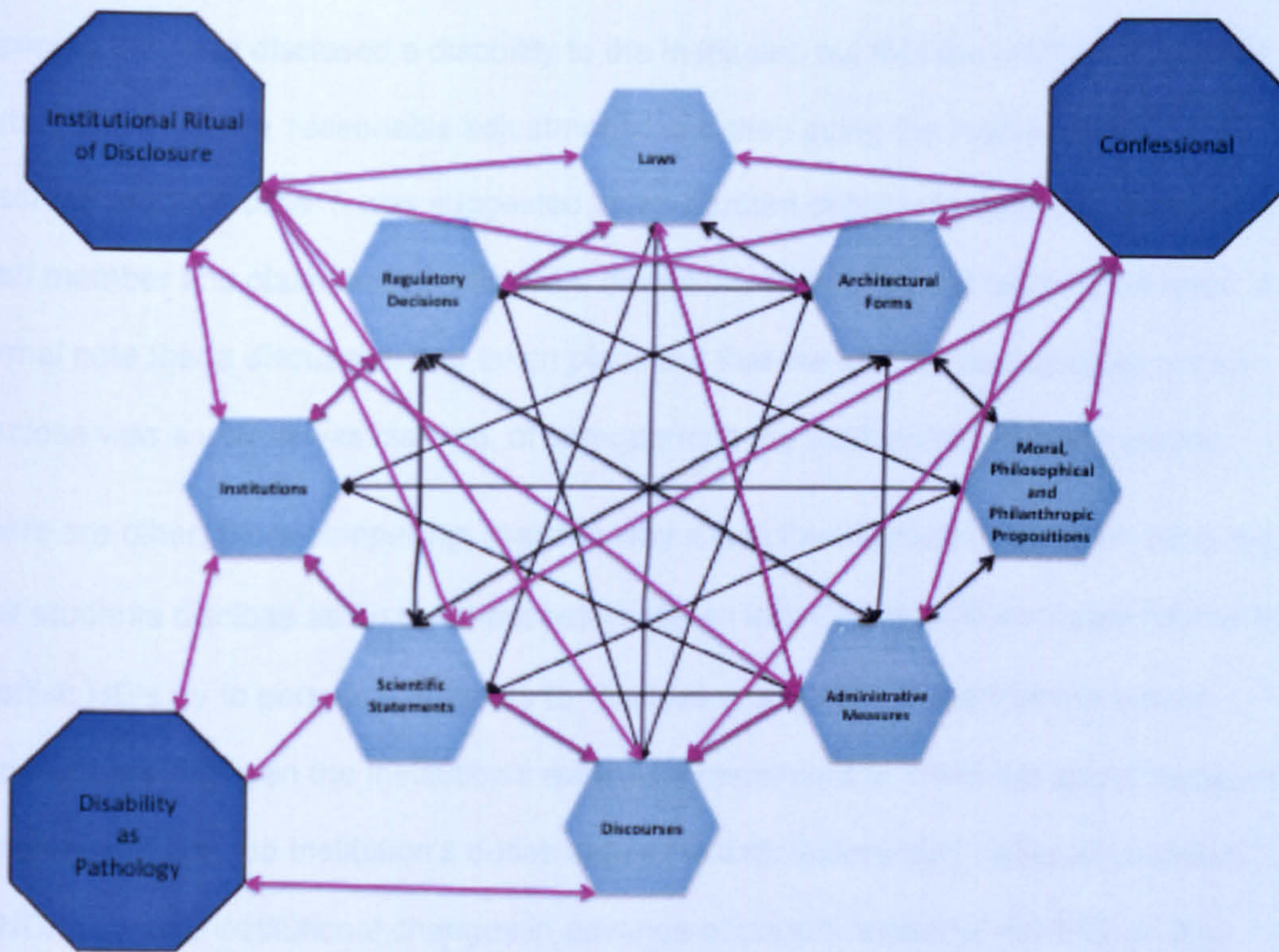
First, it was problematically argued that if the students did not disclose then the university would not know which reasonable adjustments would be required to be made and so could not make them to ensure students were not disadvantaged

It was argued that if the students did not disclose then the University could not make legally-required 'reasonable' adjustments to ensure students were not disadvantaged and this was linked, for purposes of legitimating the Institution's position, to legislation with which the HEI has to comply – note the connectivity between Foucauldian confession, institutional procedures 'enabled' by bureaucracy and discourse of philanthropy and legislation.

These issues were illuminated by praxis in one of the HEIs. In this HEI self-positioning within the individualised medical model discourse of disability through confession is formally required in order for individual 'adjustments' to teaching and assessment practices to be institutionally sanctioned. Whilst the whole issue is positioned superficially within a

philanthropic and moral rhetoric (as if the intention is to ensure the confessor is not disadvantaged), the praxis revealed an interconnectivity which accomplished near total powerlessness for the student and near total power for the HEI in relation to 'adjustments'. To be more explicit: it is stated in the Institution's procedural guidelines for staff (micro-management of staff behaviour via procedural policy) that students who refuse to disclose (Foucauldian confession) (i.e. auto-govern through positioning themselves within the medical model of disability) are to be checked (surveillance) to ensure that they "understand the implications of not disclosing" and then reminded that "this may limit the individual adjustments which can be made to facilitate their learning experience". Elsewhere in this Institution's documentation (policy) it is confirmed that this will, in effect, mean that no adjustments will be made, given the combination of statement 9.4.7 "no individual adjustments or other forms of support should be made by departments or staff except through the procedure set out in section 9.5" and section 9.5 which begins "Upon disclosure of a disability" (where disclosure has already been defined as of an individual characteristic rather than an institutional practice, procedure or policy).

Here, then, we see the inter-connectivity between discourses of philanthropy, procedural policy, Foucauldian confession, auto-governmentality, surveillance, the medical model of disability, micro-management of staff-student relations with regard to both pastoral and teaching/assessing activities and institutional policy to the advantage of an HEI and the disadvantage of students in that HEI.



Note that the restriction of 'reasonable adjustments' to those who had formally disclosed a disability, in combination with bureaucratised surveillance and the centralisation of decision-making regarding what, if any, adjustments were to be made, also had a 'filtering effect' which ensured that institutional changes were tightly monitored and controlled by a few 'disability specialists'. Whilst this was likely to be presented in terms of concern to prevent the emergence of diverse idiosyncratic, ad hoc, inappropriate adjustments across the HEI and legitimised by linking it with: discourses of academic standards (see below); and 'independent learning' (see below); ensuring institution-wide parity of treatment of 'disabled' students; and compliance with legislation; it has the material effect of the institution being policed by a few trusted medical model fundamentalists to ensure reactive, minor, individualistic medical model depowering adjustments and prevent proactive, major, social model emancipatory systemic change and thus safeguarding the Institution's financial interests by ensuring disability was not designed out of its practices and procedures and that there would be a steady stream of institutional income-generating 'disclosers' of disability (see below). As usual here, when one gets below the mission statement rhetoric of philanthropy and occupation of the moral high ground, the interests of the Institution are privileged over the interests of the student.

Second, it was argued that there was a risk to the Institution of a student retrospectively claiming they had disclosed a disability to the Institution but that the Institution had not subsequently made 'reasonable adjustments' and then suing the Institution for discriminatory practice. It was suggested that a student might refer to a discussion with a staff member and claim that constituted a disclosure which had not been acted upon. A formal note that a discussion had taken place but that the student had decided not to disclose was a way, it was claimed, of safeguarding the Institution from such claims.

There are other, more compelling, reasons why it is in the interests of Scottish HEIs that their students disclose as disabled but before we go into that, we will explicate further how Scottish HEIs try to persuade students to 'disclose a disability.' Note that there is an inconsistency between the Institution's avowed commitment to enact the social model of disability and with the Institution's duties under the anticipatory duty ushered in under SENDA to make institutional changes in advance of people 'entering' the HEI on the reasonable expectation that people will enter the University who would be disadvantaged by the institution if unchanged). The legislation (DDA, 2005) is individualistic in the assumptions underlying its application. In order to pursue or defend against a case, the focus of the act comes down to individual disclosures of disability, which require individuals to subscribe to an individualistic account of their experiences which positions their own pathology at the heart of their disability. However, despite the legislation requiring an individualistic focus towards disclosure, there is no legislative requirement that institutional efforts to prevent disability have to be related to individual disclosure. Indeed, the opposite is the case as far as the SENDA (2001), which pre-dates the DDA, 2005), is concerned. As discussed in Chapter Four, SENDA imposes an 'anticipatory duty' upon institutions requiring them to 'anticipate' necessary adjustments before students are even enrolled. If HEIs were adequately meeting their anticipatory duty, there would be no disabling and therefore no need for disclosure. In brief the Institution could and should, according to its anticipatory duty under SENDA, be proactively auditing its practices procedures and policies and making reasonable changes quite independently of its duties under DDA with regard to disclosure and institutional changes reactive to disclosure.

The inconsistent simultaneous commitment to both the medical and the social models of disability inscribed in legislation mirrors a similar inconsistent position in HEI policies and allows HEIs to equivocate, appealing to the medical model on occasions when serves their interests and appealing to the social model when that suits their interests (this is elaborated below).

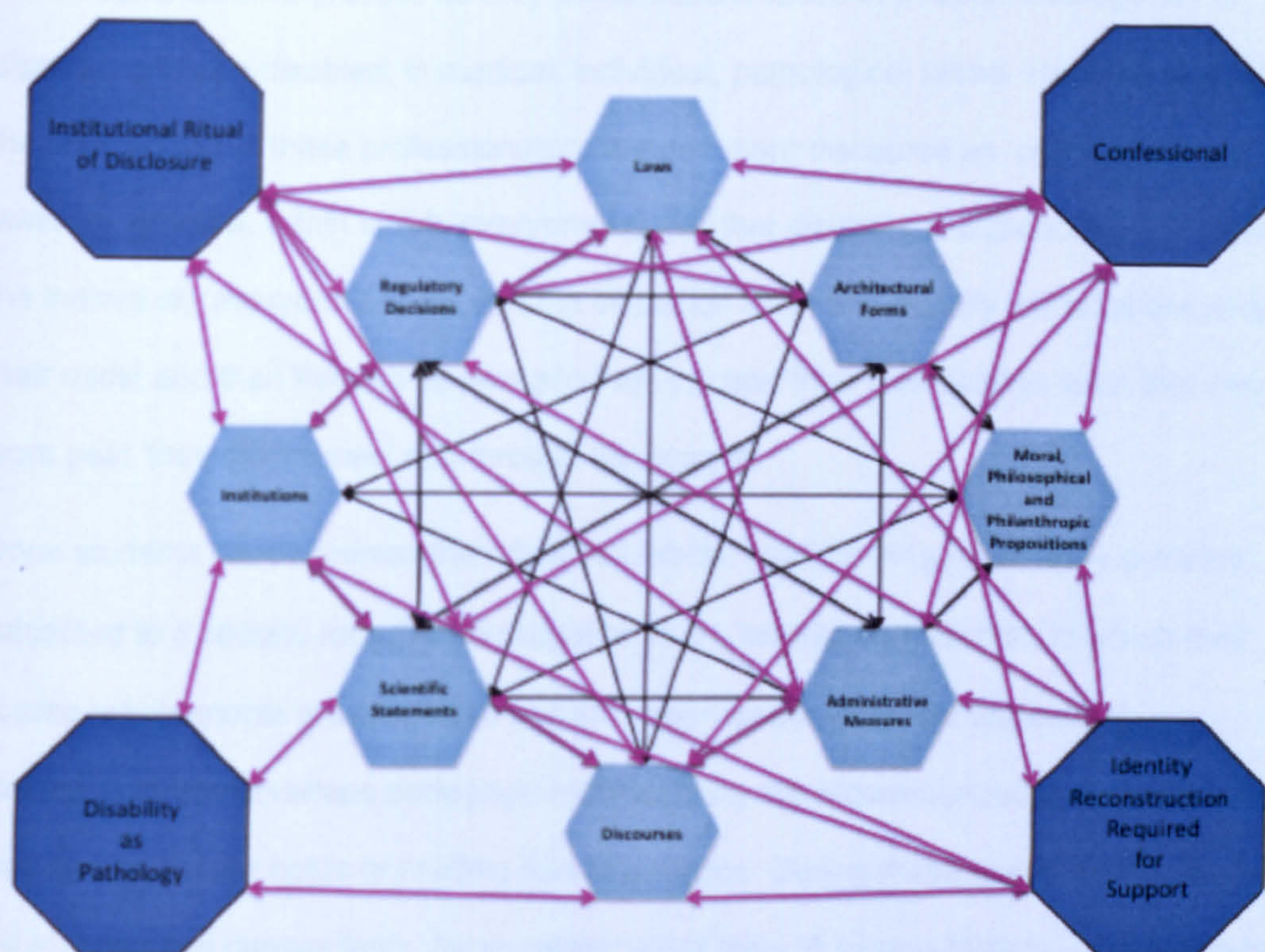
The praxis revealed that, in Scottish HEIS, students are strongly advised to 'disclose a disability' in order to enable them to have access to additional resources for hardware, software, consumables and personal assistance. Within the medical model these are positioned as compensation for medical deficits but of course from the perspective of the social model they are individual fixes to compensate for the effects of the HEIs systemic failure to educate and assess in a fair and accessible manner. Centrally arranged discretionary resources conditional upon disclosure / confession / evidence of internalisation and compliance with an individualised medical model disabled identity might include, depending upon that which is 'disclosed': recording equipment; lecture notes; hardware and software; alternative assessment procedures; additional reading time between seeing an exam paper and the start of the examination; checking and correction time after the end of an examination. Students are thus confronted with an unpalatable 'choice' between confessing and internalising an individualising positioning of themselves within the medical model of disability within a discriminatory socio-institutional environment in order to become eligible for discretionary resources which could be used to mitigate the consequences of disabling practices, procedures and policies or attempting to cope with disabling practices without the amelioratory financial and technological rewards for being compliant.

The discretionary nature of some resources means that opportunities for selective and manipulative behaviour are created to be exploited by unscrupulous staff. For example, the praxis reported that some staff used the power this gave them over students to give some students unwanted attention. Some staff were reported by the praxis as selectively sexually harassing preferred subgroups of students, of visiting 'favoured' students repeatedly at their homes ostensibly to sort out hard and software problems and requiring students to comply with heterosexist overtures in order to get services (and those who could or would not to

receive lesser services). Some institutions claim that they offer the loan of specialised equipment to students who are awaiting delivery of equipment (once approved) but reports to the praxis indicate that ultimately very few students actually benefit from this resource. As there is insufficient equipment to meet the demand scarcity can also be used by unscrupulous staff to manipulate students. Furthermore, receiving a loan of hardware does not mean one will necessarily be in a position to use it: praxis revealed that students in receipt of equipment had, on a number of occasions, been required to use it in examinations despite not being given any training in using the equipment or software packages and that as this had been 'sprung' onto the persons concerned as they entered the examination room they were unable to do much to contest it at the time, effectively they were being doubly disabled by organisational arrangements.

Upon formally disclosing disability to a staff member students are required to attend meetings with various 'professionals' who will 'measure' and 'assess' the extent of the 'students' 'disability'.

Medicine, psychology and psychiatry are all heavily implicated in the construction of the person as disabled, providing them with suitable labels to (mis) refer to the 'causes' of their experiences in Higher Education. This confirmation is usually required before institutions will start to make necessary next set of institutional arrangements.



Such assessments are to be paid for by the individuals concerned, often involving unwaged students in laying out significant amounts of money, in the first instance at least. For example the educational assessment for dyslexia, which usual takes little more than one hour, costs on average between £150 and £200. Those students whose labels are rubber stamped to the HEFC satisfaction will be recompensed by the relevant awards agency, funded by the Higher Education Funding Councils, so having once 'disclosed' a disability and having paid out for an assessment, it becomes imperative to achieve the status of 'disabled' as this is essential for reimbursement, a factor which is apparent to both the student and the assessor. Many institutions have attempted to demonstrate their 'philanthropic credentials' by offering to pay for the initial assessment and then recoup the costs from the Awards Agencies. In addition, many HEIs have also been developing or purchasing pseudo-assessment procedures which they conduct as an interim assessment prior to making referrals to the appropriate professionals. Laing (1988) critiqued such labelling, in relation to the DSM-III, as nothing more than a "billings list for third party payments. You have to get an entry from DSM-III for the insurance party to pay up" (Laing, 1988, p. 62). The HEI disability labelling process is also a billings process for the various professionals who profit from the existing processes. Such professionals are key elements

of this administrative process as they police the allocation of people to categories of disabled and non-disabled, in medical, individual, pathological terms. Here we also witness the contribution of these professionals to the dominant discourse as 'common sense', or taken for granted, within which 'everyone knows' that disability is a pathological function of the individual, 'everyone knows' that the institution must first identify the disabled people in their midst and then through its own good will support their modification such that they can work past 'their differences' and through the system.

Once students have received their disabled labels, medical diagnoses, they are then subjected to a second round of investigation in an 'assessment centre', in which their course requirements are taken into account, appropriate technical equipment recommended and various pedagogic modifications are recommended, for example the provision of lecture notes or reading lists in advance. During these assessments students are subjected to various tests, for example typing tests to assess their typing speeds in order to determine extra time for examinations and discussions about their course requirements and any difficulties which they are experiencing. Recommendations are primarily at the individual level, for example that individual A will be given lecture notes in advance or individual B will use a computer to take a test, rather than systemic e.g. all students will be given lecture notes in advance or all students will have an option of using a computer to take a test. Assessment centres are also paid for their work ultimately by the awards agency and for this reason assessment centres will not conduct an assessment without appropriate medical documentation confirming the labels which the students has received so far, in case they are unable to recover their costs. In some instances assessment centres will conduct an assessment prior to the validation but only if the student concerned makes the initial payment and the costs are then recovered from the awards agency by the student. These various assessment related requirements often result in lengthy delays between initial disclosure and the purchase of equipment and training and support to use it. As a result of the delays the Students' Awards Agency for Scotland trialled, and eventually accepted, the development of several in-house assessment centres. Subsequently, most institutions in Scotland have now got their own general purpose assessment centres. These centres are usually portrayed by their HEIs in an altruistic light

as having the purpose of providing students with a quicker more efficient service. However, these in-house assessment centres are also a rich source of institutional income as each assessment commands in the region of £400 for, on average, a couple of hours work. In addition, the praxis revealed that due to the rise in numbers of applicants some disability advisors undertake ad-hoc consultancy work which they were paid for personally to ensure that all the assessments were carried out swiftly.

Confession of disability, in the guise of disclosure, occurs, then, repeatedly: to institutional academic staff members; to members of specialist sub-groups such as 'Information Services' and 'Counselling Services'; to medical-scientific specialists; and in-house assessment team or other specialist assessors. Once diagnoses / measurements have been made, detailed reports are prepared by assessors which are then sent to the awards agency with a recommendation (or not) for the funding of specific assistive technology and equipment. In most instances a copy of the assessment and the recommendations are also sent to the student concerned.

The praxis revealed that such accounts and descriptions of the person are often startling by their overtly medicalised account of the persons concerned. For example one such report read:

"X has already been diagnosed with dyslexia, but is currently being investigated for Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome, which it is believed that this condition affects, to varying degrees, approximately 12% of the population and that the condition is somehow caused by the brain and/or eye incorrectly/interpreting what the eye is seeing (i.e., it is neurological). These people will have increased difficulty reading and studying. Please see: http://www.irlen.com/sss_main.htmj for further details" (documentation prepared by an in-house assessment team for the Student Support Agency Scotland).

Interestingly the above quotation was found by the praxis to contain unreferenced i.e. plagiarised verbatim text from the personal webpage of Alison Hale who also notes:

"It is believed that this condition affects, to varying degrees, approximately 12% of the population and that the condition is somehow caused by the brain and/or eye incorrectly processing/interpreting what the eye is seeing (i.e. it is neurological). These people will have increased difficulty reading and studying" (Hale, 2006, <http://www.hale.ndo.co.uk/scotopic/definition.html>).

The student who was the subject of the above report was systematically involved in all elements of the praxis, was very assertive about the understanding of the social constitution of their disabling experiences, reported finding it extremely distressing to read of

themselves being so totally depersonalised and characterised in this manner and was particularly alarmed that this pseudo-diagnosis had been made by a member of the institution's disability services team who had no training or authority to make such diagnoses. The student also made available to the praxis the information that the case for support to SAAS with regard to this particular student's abilities was entirely without foundation. For example, it was reported that this particular student was unable to 'physically clearly see whole words' which it was noted made 'learning to read extremely difficult' but this particular student actually had no problem reading whole words and rejected the implications that they had had problems learning to read. Aside from being inaccurate and falsely attributed, such accounts served to further individualise disability by attributing it to specific individual limitation and thus supporting the medical model of disability.

However, this example also demonstrates the interconnectedness of the various disciplinary apparatuses producing disability in Higher Education. The praxis revealed that authors of such reports constructed their accounts with the intention of persuading civil servants in charge of administering the funding for the purchases of additional equipment in the belief that these civil servants themselves operated with a medical model of disability refracted through legislation and policy documents. They therefore deployed 'scientific' statements reinforcing the dominant medical model discourse to further the likelihood of success for individual cases.

Such disciplinary techniques are rituals in which people reconstruct themselves through using the instruments of power upon themselves. Disabled students are 'made' as they internalise the position of being disabled and come to describe themselves in pathological terms. They then further support the system by accepting their status and narrating accounts, as technologies of the self, consistent with interpreting themselves as disabled. As I said earlier (see Chapter Five), mainstream research then 'knowledgements' this account and deploys it as 'the voice of disabled students', who narrate gratitude to the disabling system for attempting to normalise them, through the provision of technology or extra minutes in exams, or lack of gratitude for the system's inability to normalise them in good time. The system is further upheld by those who it doesn't produce as disabled

students but also by others within and outside the Institution who come to accept that 'the individual is disabled' and in need of change.

Disclosure is a necessary initial step in order to be eligible for Disabled Students Allowance, additional funding worth in the region of £60,000 per student over the course of a four year undergraduate program. As discussed in Chapter Two, eligible institutional members are entitled to three sources of additional funding; the basic (annual) allowance of up to £1,640 per year (for items such as "like tapes, Braille paper, extra photocopying charges, other small items of equipment and so on" (SAAS, 2007)), a second allowance of up to £4,905 for large items of equipment (for example; "the cost of equipment such as a personal computer, a Braille printer or note-taker, a portable loop or a radio aid, or closed circuit television to enlarge book print" (SAAS, 2007)) and the Non-Medical Personal Help allowance of up to £12,420 per year (for "readers for people with sight difficulties; sign language interpreters; lip speakers; note-takers; or helpers for people in wheelchairs" (SAAS, 2007)). Additionally this allowance also covers costs associated with assessments required by the Students Awards Agency Scotland, the funding body who distributes Disabled Student Allowance, to satisfy their requirement of 'proof of need'.

Whilst this money does not go directly to the institution, it does subsidise existing budgets in the sense that recipients are less likely to call on central HEI resources if they receive DSA.

It was argued above that a variety of interconnected factors (from dominant discourses to legislation) encourage individualistic approaches to disability based on disclosure. Several times above it has been indicated that what HEIs do and do not do in relation to disability is strongly related to their financial interests and that this would be unpacked later. It is argued here that regulatory decisions made by the Higher Education Funding Councils effectively reward HEIs for operating individualised systems. Not only do they not provide incentives for HEIs to engage in structural, organisational change but actually provide incentives not to do so.

The praxis revealed the funding structure related to 'disabled students in Higher Education' which elucidates why it is in the interests of an HEI to maintain disabling practices, but yet the financial benefits that HEIs enjoy from the various additional sources of disability

related-funding are very rarely acknowledged, indeed it is more often asserted that HEIs are financially worse off because they include 'disabled people'. For example, during conscientising interviews and encounters with colleagues recorded in my field notes, many colleagues proposed that their institutions were being forced into making multiple and extensive structural changes, which it was proposed, were expensive. Whilst contributors were unlikely to state explicitly that this was detrimental to their institution's financial interests, that would often be effectively implied by supplementary statements alluding to financial pressures facing higher education institutions, suggestions that this was yet another problem on which the institution has to spend money or statements that usual supplementary finances gained through sub-letting HEI premises to other organisations over vacation periods was not available due to structural work needed to comply with disability legislation and best practice. As one of the practitioners remarked: (disabled students) "are often characterised as 'greedy dinner guests who having been invited out of the host's own good will go on to consume more than they brought with them'.

From the critical conscientising interviews (see Chapter Six) conducted within the praxis with various people who were tasked with providing some type of disability-related service at one or other of the praxis HEIs, it was clear that there was resistance, sometimes strong resistance, to admitting that their Institution was benefiting financially from 'disabled people'. When invited to consider whether this might be the case, reactions ranged from being startled and shocked at the mere suggestion, via discomfort that this might be entertained as a possibility, to vociferous resistance to it. Here, however, the benefits of the critical conscientising approach over orthodox interviewing became apparent. My role as a co-reflector and critical thinking catalyst frequently seemed to lead to people engaging in personal reflexive questioning and thinking aloud, problematising taken-for-granted assumptions that disability did not benefit institutions, surfacing and exploring counter-cases to those assumptions and in some cases admitting that in some ways institutions did actually benefit from disability.

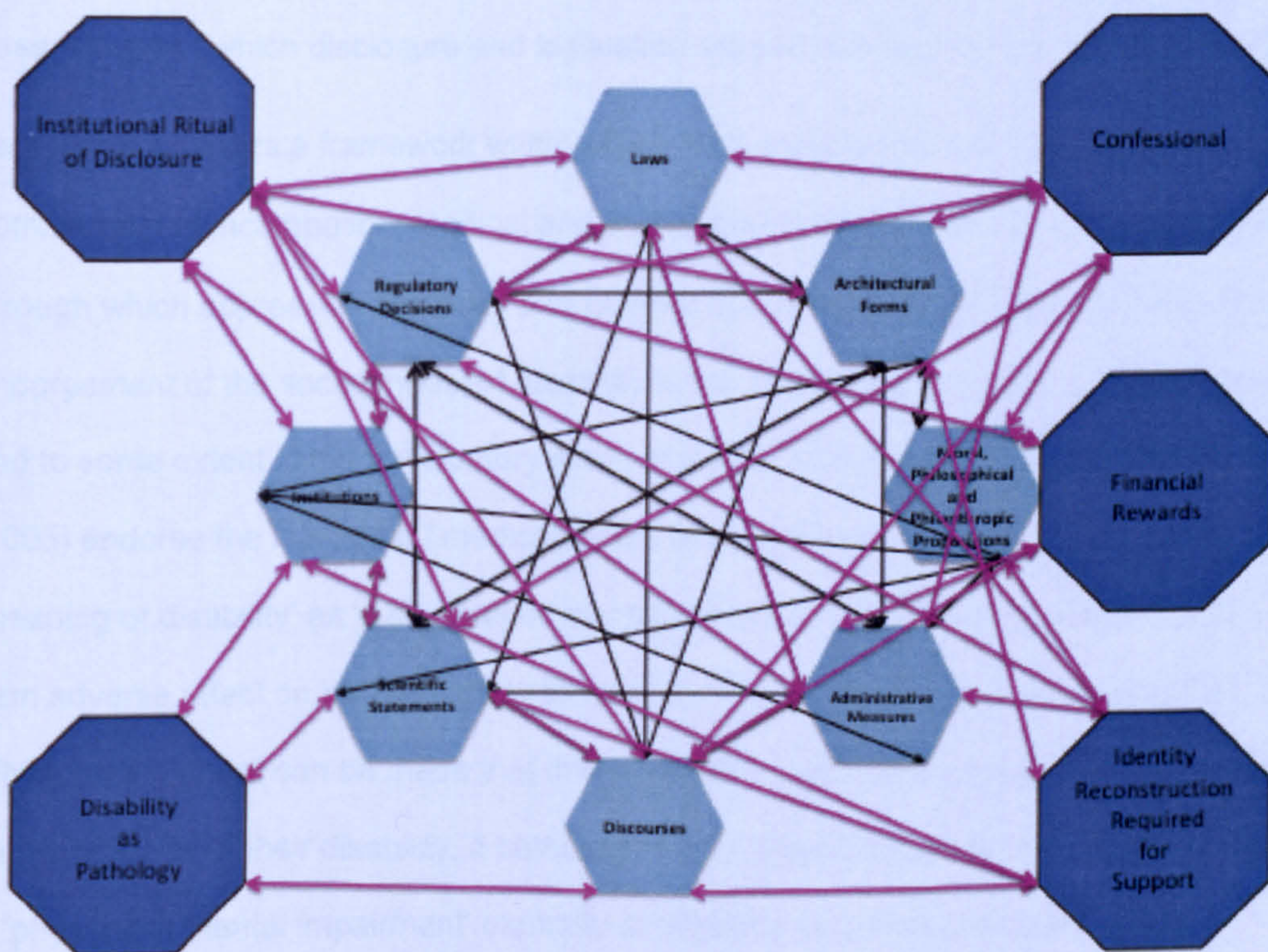
The Disabled Students' Premium Fund is a major source of disability-related funding of which relatively few people are aware. Introduced in 2001, the annually awarded fund is calculated on the basis of the total number of students the institution has registered who are

in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). See Figure 2 (in Chapter Four) for a detailed account of the Disabled Students' Premium Fund Allocations from the year 2002 through to 2008. Crucially, the number of institutional members in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance are based, not upon the records held by the funding bodies (the various administrators and distributors of money made available by the Government for supporting students in Higher Education who provide the DSA) but upon figures reported by HEIs themselves to the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA). The more disclosures reported, the more funds for the HEI. Students who have not disclosed disabilities to their HEI cannot be returned on the HESA forms even if they are in receipt of, or eligible for, Disabled Students' Allowance so their HEI would not benefit financially for them via the Disabled Students' Premium Fund unless they disclose, the more disclosures reported, the more funds for the HEI.

Whilst at first glance, the income from the Disabled Students' Premium Fund may seem relatively little, especially when compared with the total funding received by HEIs each year, it is certainly not insignificant: the twenty Scottish Higher Education Institutions in receipt of Disabled Students' Premium Fund have shared almost £8,000,000 of additional institutional finance in the last five years which amounts, on average, to almost £400,000 per Institution. Of course some institutions have benefited significantly more than others: the University of Edinburgh received a total of £1,111,000 over the five year period. Moreover not only does the Disabled Students' Premium Fund deliver disposable income, but it is not ring-fenced for disability related expenditure. The money can be used in any way in which the institution deems appropriate. It does not have to be, and evidence would suggest it seldom is, spent on anything disability-related and there is no institutional accountability as to how it has been spent. This does not inspire confidence that HEIs would choose to spend it in disability-related institutional improvements. Indeed, it is clear that previous funding has not always been used strictly for the purpose for which it was intended even when its use was specified. For example, as was noted in chapters Four and Five, Riddell (1998) was critical of the misuse of the Support for Students with Disabilities – Equipment Initiative funding, providing the example of an institution which purchased a 'bus claiming that it was needed

to transfer disabled people between sites but noting that it 'ended up as part of a general transport service (Riddell, 1998, p. 216).

In sub-summary, the Disabled Students' Premium Fund is uncomplicated, low risk and easily obtainable additional funding and it is in a HEIs financial interests not only to ensure that it keeps receiving it but to increase the amount of premium funding the institution receives. This can be achieved quite simply by increasing the numbers of students the institution enrolls which are a) able to be categorised as disabled, b) willing to disclose and c) who they can report to HESA as being in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance payments. Note that many, and one in particular, of the HEIs in which the praxis took place placed great store in building and publicising a reputation for being 'the best HEI in Scotland for disabled students'. This was normally positioned by institutional 'ambassadors' as done for philanthropic and social justice reasons but as can be seen from the above it is also an effective strategy for generating income.



Thus, contra to policy statements, there is actually a strong disincentive to tackle systemic institutional disability policies, practices and procedures, as this would result in a reduction in subsequent Disabled Students' Premium Fund revenue. It is clear to see that institutions

under this funding model are unlikely to adopt anything other than an individual medical model of disability. Changes to the structurally and attitudinally disabling environment would be likely to reduce the number of disclosures because fewer people would be disabled and less likely to need Disabled Students' Allowance support, which would ultimately result in less money available for the institution to spend as it chooses. Success in reducing institutional disabling would result in institutional financial loss.

In this section of the thesis I have been explicating the way disability is constructed and maintained in Scottish Higher Education Institutions through interconnectivity between, or assemblages of, interconnected practices, procedures, policies, discourses and other key frames of reference. I have used disclosure as a departure point for that explication but legislation, policy affecting higher education and dominant discourses have been repeatedly mentioned above in relation to other issues and are crucial elements in that interconnectivity. Relevant legislation was reviewed in Chapter Four but below I explicate the role of legislation in the accomplishment of institutional disabling through the complex assemblage of which disclosure and legislation are just two interconnected components.

Legislation provides a framework within which HEIs have to operate but the apparent commitment to incompatible medical and social models of disability provides loopholes through which oppressive practices and policies can pass. Despite a qualified rhetorical endorsement of the social model of disability in the DDA 2005, the DRC guideline notes and to some extent in the anticipatory ethos of the SENDA, both the DDA (1995) and DDA (2005) endorse the individual / medical model of disability, for example, they position the 'meaning of disability' as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his (sic) ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities' (DDA, 1995). Whilst an argument can be made that this legislation prohibits discrimination against people on the grounds of their disability, it pathologises the disabled person in so doing by building in 'physical or mental impairment' explicitly or implicitly as a presupposition, so is oppressive. The legislation would be comparable to a Race Relations Act which prohibited racist discrimination against people but in so doing pathologised their skin. Imagine the furore which would ensue if the Race Relations Act effectively made it illegal to discriminate against someone because they had a pathological skin condition! Yet the Disability

Discrimination Act does much the same with regard to 'physical or mental impairment'. In both racism and disablism the key issues are social justice and diversity rather than impairment. The social justice model of disability which is one outcome of the praxis recognises and addresses that (see Chapter Two for an explication of the social justice model of disability).

In addition, the praxis also revealed that the legislation was being deployed in various HEIs in various ways to legitimise disabling practices. Five examples of this are given here.

Firstly, as already emphasised, the disability legislation was found to be deployed to legitimate oppressive individualistic confessional medical model procedures and policies by neatly pairing it with a philanthropic claim to be serving the students' interests. It was suggested by reactionary disability related personnel in the working group, for example, that disclosure was in the students' interests because they could only – under the legislation – take legal action against the Institution for breaches of the Disability Discrimination Act if they had first disclosed 'their disabilities' and 'reasonable adjustments' had not then been made.

Secondly, the disability legislation was found to be deployed within a senior committee of one of the praxis HEIs to legitimise individualistic organisational practices. For example, within the 'working group', progressive members allied with the praxis had urged revision of institutional procedures in relation to disclosure to make them consistent with the Institution's avowed commitment to the social model of disability. As a tactic of resistance, reactionary members of the working group claimed that the legislation, under which the institution is required to operate, positioned institutions as breaching the DDA (2005) if they did not know about their students' disabilities. They argued that this required them to have a mechanism of recording individual disclosure, referring for support to section 28S of the DDA (2005), 'the meaning of discrimination', which states that:

"a responsible body discriminates against a disabled person if—

(a) for a reason which relates to his disability, it treats him less favourably than it treats or would treat others to whom that reason does not or would not apply; and

(b) it cannot show that the treatment in question is justified"

with the following caveat that;

"a responsible body does not discriminate against a person if it shows—

(a) that, at the time in question, it did not know and could not reasonably have been expected to know, that he was disabled; and

(b) that its failure to take the step was attributable to that lack of knowledge.” (DDA, 2005)

By comparison, the importance of sections of the same legislation which required a more systemic, non individualistic, approach such as Part V ('The Duty to Promote Disability Equality') was downplayed by reactionary working group members.

Thirdly, the disability legislation was also found to be deployed to legitimate institutional disabling practices on the grounds of 'maintaining academic standards'. As has previously been mentioned in Chapter Two, the SENDA has a number of notable exemptions. For example it is noted that adjustments may be considered not "reasonable" if they "would undermine or lessen academic standards", "would place the institution in financial difficulty", "would contravene health and safety legislation" or "would substantially adversely affect other students" (SENDA, 2001).

It was observed during the praxis that concern about 'the lessening of academic standards' was often deployed as a means of resistance to progressive change. 'Special academic arrangements' for assessments or examinations (especially when such arrangements were made centrally i.e. outside departments) were frequently positioned as simultaneously responsible for reduced academic standards and disabled students getting an unfair advantage. For example, praxis revealed that a member of staff had stated at the end of a tutorial to a disabled student that she should not be at the University if she could not manage the assessment procedures, and that it was 'people like her' that were causing the institution to 'fall down in the rankings', that they were having to lower the pass rates, such that 'anyone can get a first nowadays' and that her getting 'what is in effect unfair advantage in exams' is unfair on those who work hard to achieve their grades. It was noted that the student concerned had previously requested lecture notes in advance, additional time in the examination to read the paper and some additional advice about the assessment procedures. Note that the positioning of the disability in 'people like her', rather than in the institutional arrangements, enacts the medical rather than social model of disability and that the reference in legislation to academic standards provides a

(threadbare) cloak for the offensive positioning of disabled students as responsible for reduced institutional ranking.

Fourthly, disability legislation was found to be deployed to legitimate institutional disabling practices on the grounds of another variation of the 'academic standards' argument articulated in relation to the requirements of external regulatory, or supervisory, bodies which accredit particular professional courses. For example, it was maintained that the British Psychological Society requires graduates to acquire specific professional skills if they are to be receive the GBR (Graduate Basis for Registration) necessary to proceed to postgraduate professional courses such as clinical psychology. Insight into this deployment was gained through living praxis, in which understanding was achieved as a colleague operating in one of the praxis HEI Departments, as a colleague to others operating in Departments elsewhere and through the reports of various key personnel involved in the conscientising interview discussions. It was often claimed that particular disabling barriers could not be dismantled because of the external requirements of accreditation bodies. When pushed to explain the nature of these external requirements it was often claimed that professional bodies required the fulfilment of certain specific courses, the acquisition of certain specific skills etc. for accreditation by the external body and it was claimed that individual ad-hoc amendments to what was taught could mean that the Departments were not fulfilling their commitments to the external bodies.

In every instance encountered in this praxis, the proposed changes (for example the use of a computer instead of hand written production of responses, the use of a dictionary or verbal presentation of the responses as opposed to the textual accounts) were merely insignificant variations of the pedagogical means through which accreditation requirements were satisfied so that it was unlikely that external bodies would raise concerns. However, if major changes to the pedagogical means through which accreditation requirements were met, had been required to avoid institutionally disabling practices and to comply with disability legislation, so be it: accreditation can not be an excuse for disability related discrimination. No external professional body could or should require the University to breach the DDA (2005) by requiring them to operate disabling discriminatory assessment or teaching practices. Over several years of praxis, there was no evidence that departments of

the HEIs involved in the praxis had fallen foul of external accreditation bodies due to pedagogic amendments to enable them to fulfil legislative duties. Nevertheless, despite this, the deployment of the 'professional accreditation' argument to protect disabling pedagogic practices from change has continued. The SENDA – external accreditation tale has become something of an urban myth, but a useful myth to the status quo, deployed whenever changes are proposed with which the apologists for the disabling status quo disagree.

Fifthly, disability legislation was found to be deployed to legitimate institutional disabling practices on the grounds of a variation of the 'academic standards' argument articulated in relation to a discourse of 'independence' dominant in orthodox (as opposed to popular education) educational circles. Whilst the discourse of the independent learner is best seen as a Higher Education version of individualism (and is just as problematic), it is positioned as tapping into moral and philanthropic propositions that it is good to be an independent learner and good for institutions to support the development of disabled people into independent learners.

Through the praxis it became apparent that facilitating the development of 'disabled students' into 'independent' learners was positioned as a moral and philanthropic duty in Higher Education. Note that positioning disabled students as requiring facilitation to become 'independent', positions them initially (or intrinsically) as 'dependent', as distinct from 'independent' 'non-disabled people' who do not need facilitation to become 'independent'. Support for the development of the 'independent learner', most commonly takes the form of supplementing the learner with additional IT facilities.

In the praxis, group members also identified that the discourse of independence was deployed to extend the provision of a certain model of support even though this might be disabling for the student concerned. For example the use of a scribe in examinations, which some unpaid members preferred, was strongly resisted by IT staff or, in some reported instances, actually denied. It was witnessed in many instances that this was to the detriment of people forced to use IT equipment for which they were not trained or with which they were not comfortable. Requests for support from other people rather than the availability of IT prosthetic devices were reported in the praxis as being routinely rejected by

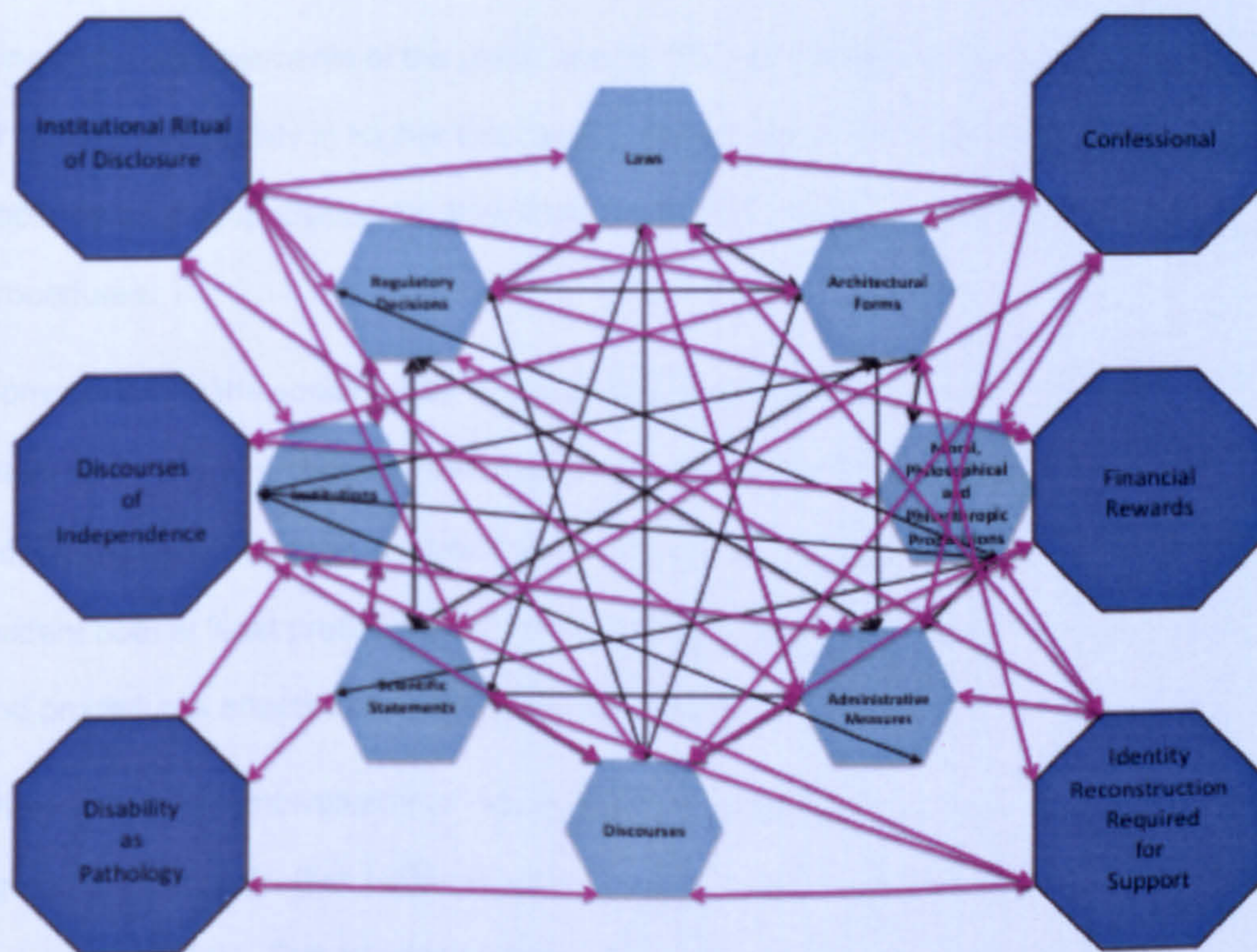
the HEI on the grounds of that they were not in the interests of the person as they did not support their development as an 'independent learner'. Members of 'the group', 'The Disabled Students Group' and staff members in 'Conscientising Interviews' all reported having witnessed learners being coerced into accepting individualised IT provision, when they would have preferred personal assistants through tactics to make them feel guilty about being 'bad' rather than 'good' independent learners.

This notion of independence was also surfaced through other elements of the praxis relating to the support of disabled students going through disciplinary or grievance procedures with their institutions, in particular in relation to questions surrounding plagiarism and the authenticity of students' work. This was most apparent in the number of persons whose academic integrity had been questioned by institutional representatives querying the 'ownership' of work created with the support of scribes or personal learning assistants. For example, one student's work was questioned on the grounds that it was not clear whose ideas were represented, and to be graded, in assessed work because the student had discussed the assignment questions with a personal learning assistant in order to instruct the assistant to obtain the most appropriate literature for the topic.

Yet in other elements of the praxis, most notably working with 'the group, it was observed that some form of plagiarism were actively encouraged by some lecturers: in certain courses students were encouraged to effectively represent in their assignments the theories and ideas of the lecturer as represented in their course texts and that the best grades were awarded to those who most closely 'plagiarised' these ideas. Members of 'the group' asked why the institution was not concerned to question the authenticity or ownership of the ideas represented in these assignments but was quite concerned to establish the authenticity of ideas represented following original dialogue with an assistant.

It was also noted that professors in the institution frequently employed personal learning assistants, discussed research questions with them, asked them to find material in the library and on the internet, solve problems and write drafts of text but that these professors were not categorised as 'dependent', demonised as plagiarists, did not have the ownership of the work produced problematised and were not required to use IT instead of personal learning assistants ('research assistants').

Institutions have developed measures to create independent learners out of students who have previously been disabled by the institution itself. Individual intervention to create 'independent learners' is cost effective for the organisation, paid for by external bodies, requires no institutional change on their part of the institution. The result is the development of an ever strengthening IT empire focused on individual change and premised upon an individual medical model of disability. Such development, positioned as supporting learning "independence", actually preserves the disabling status quo, furthers the institution's interests through awards and recognition, positions it positively within a discourse of philanthropy and is utilised for marketing purposes to recruit more students to use such facilities and thus develop them further.



Here we see the inter-connection between the discourses of dependence and independence and the architectural form of Scottish Higher Education Institutions as centres of 'Independent Learning' furthering the organisation's administrative measures and regulatory decisions about its procedures towards 'disabled students' and being rewarded by external bodies as an acknowledgement of the philanthropic work of the organisation.

It is worth noting two points here: firstly the praxis embraced, as a component, an on-line disability course designed on popular education principles and an enactment of collective inter-dependent learning which is a direct repudiation of the concept of independent learning (which within a popular education frame of reference is actually a form of learning which creates dependence and credulity). This interdependent learning was interconnected with critical thinking, social action and the construction and legitimation (knowledgement) of knowledge claims in this chapter. As Audre Lorde said: "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (Lorde, 2007, p 110) but the alternative tools of critical pedagogy have in this case loosened some of the nuts and bolts. Secondly, the whole praxis explicated in this thesis in so far as it is related to pedagogy and assessment of a PhD is a living contesting of the rhetoric of independence in Higher Education.

One of the achievements of the praxis was to uncover and demonstrate the omnipresence of models of disability in Higher Education, both explicitly in formal statements and policy, implicitly as presupposition for other statements and policies and enacted in practices and procedures.

Commitment to the social model of disability is privileged in the rhetoric of official statements of and pronouncements by those authorised to speak for Scottish Higher Education Institutions but, despite this, a commitment to the medical model of disability is evident both at least prefiguratively in the rhetoric and emphatically in the actual practices and procedures enacted by Scottish Higher Education Institutions.

There is thus an ambivalence or inconsistency between incompatible models of disability right at the top of Scottish HEIs (as well, as we saw above, at higher levels in legislating and policy bodies). This tolerated inconsistency creates the institutional conditions within which disablist oppression is almost certain to occur but for which institutions (backed by ideologically problematic 'research') can claim they are not responsible.

The rhetorical institutional commitment in Scottish HEIs to the social model of disability was first flagged up as an issue by unpaid colleagues in 'The Group' early in the praxis.

Colleagues observed that institutional texts (policy documents, handbooks, web pages etc.) were 'littered with references to the social model.' Although colleagues had not been

specifically directed or prompted to attend to the issue of models of disability, the group's collective engagement with critical writing, research, scholarship and activist writing, with their collectively critically processed subjective experience as members of Scottish HEIs as well as with institutional texts will have heightened *their sensitivity to this*. However, as I have argued earlier this intersection of de-ideologising factors makes the inputs of members of 'The Group' more valuable rather than less, as they are, to a greater or lesser extent, conscientised co-researchers whose observations are to be taken more seriously because they were made by members of a collective which offered its members opportunities for supportive collective critical reflection. Note here that this collective critical resource was only available because of the praxis which had been catalysed as part of this PhD related work and is, it is argued, part of the reason why praxis is essential for critical knowledge construction. (For further arguments for the 'knowledgement' benefits of praxis please see Chapter Six).

The rhetorical institutional commitment in Scottish HEIs to the social model of disability was also evident from discourse analysis of key institutionally endorsed documents in the public domain by the author. For example, in one Scottish University's Disability Equality Scheme, it explicitly states: "In relation to disability the University recognises a social model of disability which defines impairment as an individual limitation and disability as a socially imposed restriction." (Reference available from the author upon request but with-held to preserve the anonymity of the institution).

However, it must also be appreciated that whilst key institutionally endorsed documents in the public domain emphatically endorse the social model of disability, they also contain clear endorsement of the medical model of disability in its recommendations and requirements for institutional practices and procedures and in its policies.

The commitment of Scottish Higher Education Institutions to the medical model of disability is however most clearly evident in the actual practices and procedures enacted. Grounds for confidence in this claim come from critical scrutiny by 'The Group' of the activities of the Institutional Disability Working Group which, despite claiming "to commit the University to the social model of disability", actually demonstrated in its practices and procedures a clear commitment to the medical model. For example, the Institutional Disability Working Group

spent a great deal of time and effort refining ever more rigorous procedures requiring, surveillance, recording, monitoring and deployment of individual disclosure of information relevant to the medical model (i.e. medical diagnoses relating to individual students), developing and providing flowcharts positioning disabled students as organisational units to be processed through a series of medical and individualistic modules of a bureaucratic system, micromanaging staff to ensure they enact medical model procedures (which position the problem of disability in the student's body) , and no detectable time and energy at all designing and implementing ways to audit the institution for discriminatory practices, procedures and policies which transform diversity into disability.

More grounds for confidence in the claim that Scottish Higher Education Institutions are committed to the medical model of disability in their enacted practices and procedures come from scrutiny of information gathering processes of a Scottish HEI in relation to the creation of its Disability Equality Scheme. Through the Disabled Students Group's work it was evident that the institution categorised students *on the basis of individual medical diagnosis* rather than on the basis of institutional disabling practices. For example, this HEI organised contributions of participants within a medical model frame of reference, i.e. on the basis of their having diagnoses of 'dyslexia', "visual impairment' etc. rather than on the basis of the social model frame of reference, i.e. on the basis of their being disabled by institutional pedagogic or assessment procedures. Whilst this might be considered consistent with the medical model ethos of the legislation's definitions of disability, it is entirely inconsistent with the guide-lines produced by the Disability Rights Commission which require; "The social model should inform not only how the research or information gathering process is designed and analysed but the method of its production" (DRC, Guidance on the DED), but nevertheless this institutions scheme was in no way contested by the DRC despite it clearly breaching their requirements.

Further grounds for confidence in the claim that there was institutional commitment in practice to the medical model is found in praxis colleagues' observations that medical model practices persisted, indeed became strengthened, during the course of the praxis, despite it being increasingly fashionable to enact the social model and increasingly institutionally problematic, almost to the point of being stigmatising, to be seen to be

committed to the medical model. During the course of the praxis the social model was increasingly positioned - not only in HEIs but in a variety of policy, legislative and broader societal spheres - as 'good' and the medical model as 'bad'. Although it would have been to the advantage, in many respects, of a variety of institutional parties to enact social model practices, the commitment to the medical model was evident in continued medical model practices rather than changing or abandoning them. Instead of changing the actual practices, extraordinary amounts of time and energy was spent addressing the way those practices were seen and described: in other words, trying to represent medical model practices as social model ones. This was witnessed by members of 'the group' in relation to discussions relating to the provision of additional adjustments, whereby it became apparent that each service was increasingly emphasising their 'social model' credentials whilst simultaneously belittling those of the competition as being 'medical model'. Group members' awareness of the importance of these interactions, and living texts, was heightened by previous engagement with critical literatures, academic literatures and profound critical reflexivity. Such positioning was witnessed within the working group processes during one such occasion when two members of the competing groups were engaged in a public bid to 'out-social model' the other. For example, one group (who provided information and support) suggested that the other were 'not really social model' because their processes were merely concerned with enforcing individualised amendments for individual disabled students, whilst, in contrast, they themselves were concerned with developing services with the students and their departments. In response the competing group (who provided the IT solutions) suggested that their services were social model because they were providing students with the tools to become independent learners and that the other service was medical because it was denying independence by making students dependent on the support of others, for example through personal learning assistance. Ironically both criticisms were accurate, neither service delivered services which were consistent with a commitment to the social model of disability, both services delivered individualised, reactionary, medical model services. Yet both groups saw fit to argue that their own services were consistent with the social model.

Unlike Borland and James (1999), see Chapter Five, who suggested that the institution upholds the social model whilst being let down by its members' medical model practices, it is proposed in this thesis that the medical model is at the very core of the economies producing disability in Higher Education, despite any rhetorical posturing otherwise. In direct opposition to Borland and James' assertions, it is noted that institutions are permeated by the medical/individualistic model approach. Again in contrast with the claims of Borland and James (1999) which attribute blame for organisational failures to individual institutional members, it is claimed here that it is the circulation of an medical/individualistic model discourse permeating the laws, policies, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions, which makes it difficult if not impossible for institutional members to work in ways consistent, or to effect change in line, with the social model of disability.

Conclusion

An account of the apparatuses of disability in Higher Education

This chapter demonstrates the interconnectedness of the assemblages that go together to produce disability in Scottish Higher Education. The first half of the chapter focuses on the elements involved in constructing the disabled person (and the construction of disability in Higher Education) and the second part describes the elements which either specifically promote more of the same (financial policies and procedures), promotes more of the same whilst simultaneously providing defence against change (the legislation), provides specific discourses which defend against change (academic standards, external regulation), or specific discourses operating social ideals for producing "good selves" and "celebrated autonomy" and "self-realisation" (Rose, 1989, viii), all perpetuated by the rhetorical performance of the social model but the enactment of the medical model, legitimated by inconsistencies in legislations, policy and practices.

Most important are not the various elements of disabling practices but rather their interconnection and interlocking. Subsequently, whilst existing research finds problems with the existing state of affairs it only advocates more of the same, or greater reformed,

interlocking mechanisms which produce disability in Higher Education, or alternatively advocates the need for greater research, which serves as part of the interlocking machinery necessary to reproduce and validate accounts which support the individualistic focusing on the philanthropic status of institutions, whilst all the same time maintaining the conditions in which people are disabled, and are constructed as disabled. As Young notes;

"Oppression in the structural sense is part of the basic fabric of a society, not a function of a few people's choices or policies. You won't eliminate this structural oppression by getting rid of the rulers or making some new laws, because oppressions are systematically reproduced in major economic, political, and cultural institutions." (Young, 1988, Pp 271 – 272).

Chapter Nine – Reflections on Praxis (Conclusions)

Theorising *Praxis*

In this thesis, over the last eight chapters, I have theorized praxis as an irreducible nexus which is simultaneously knowledge construction, action on the world and profound critical reflexivity and I have drawn attention to, and demonstrated the effectiveness of the conceptual unity of praxis in understanding and acting upon the interconnectivity which is institutional disabling. I have described what was done by a number of people working together, described the outcomes in terms of knowledge constructed and legitimated, actions accomplished (or not) and critical reflexivity. However there is a great difference between *writing about* praxis and *engaging in* praxis and a great difference between engaging in praxis as recommended in this thesis and how some engage in what they describe as praxis but which is not authentic praxis from the standpoint of this thesis.

Below, therefore I first consider whether the praxis described in this thesis can be regarded as authentic praxis in terms of the frame of reference explicated in this thesis. I then spell out what are, from my standpoint, the major achievements of the work for the substantive issue addressed: change-resistant institutional disabling. I then spell out the major implications of the praxis both for disciplines and disciplinary practices which constitute the psy-complex and for the social practices which constitute 'research'. This involves re-integrating, or rather de-fragmenting, material which is actually interconnected in socially constructed reality in the form of assemblages of apparatuses and dispositifs but which, because difficult to communicate in the linear text required by the thesis form, I had dispersed throughout the previous chapters of the thesis for purposes of exposition or rather, as I would prefer to put it in the frame of reference of this thesis, in order not to disable the reader.

Demonstrating the authenticity of the praxis

In Chapter One I wrote:

"this thesis is 'about' praxis, is the result of praxis and is an example of praxis" in which "praxis is deployed again and again, in differing ways, in differing domains". I explained that "praxis", as I use the term in this thesis, refers to an ongoing, irreducible, collective process through which is enacted, in one and the same process: 'knowledgementing' (the construction and legitimation of knowledge claims); 'radical reflexivity' (the bringing to awareness and critical problematisation of interests served by what is thought, said and done by all relevant parties); and 'ideologically progressive social action' (the pursuit of emancipatory process and just outcomes and the contesting of 'external and internal' institutional oppression" (Chapter One, p.1).

The question arises as to whether what has actually been done by the collective, and described in this thesis, is authentic praxis in terms of the above. Every reader will bring their own set of criteria against which they will judge the work but for transparency purposes it is important to make explicit the criteria against which the authenticity of the praxis is implicitly judged by the praxis collective members and to evaluate the praxis against those criteria. I attempt this in the next section.

The Praxis was collectively accomplished

From the collective's standpoint authentic praxis must be collectively rather than individually accomplished. Whilst not every decision was made collectively (slight variations on decisions previously made collectively were not always taken back to the collective and decisions which had to be made very hastily sometimes could not be referred to the collective), all key decisions about the praxis were always made collectively. For example, key decisions regarding how the praxis was to be enacted were made collectively through a process of sustained discussion in which different members of the collective raised and argued for different ways in which the praxis could be accomplished, critically discussed them and collectively negotiated an agreed decision. I illustrate this here by tracing the process through which the collective decision to carry out conscientizing interviews was reached. Some in the praxis collective made the case for extending praxis group membership to people outside the group who were in a position to provide important perspectives on issues and also in privileged positions to lobby for progressive change. However, others in the praxis collective raised concerns that one-to-one interviews would constitute a reversion to individualism in the praxis, though others suggested that a case could be made that such participants would not be individuals so much as extended members of the collective. (Later, on the basis of reading and discussing Deleuze we

considered whether extended members would be better understood as 'groupuscules' in the sense of Deleuze.) Yet others in the collective expressed scepticism about the status of text constructed under conditions approximating to conventional interviews. Others drew on collective critical reflection catalysed by engagement with Freire's arguments for conscientization and Foucault's arguments for alertness to the reproduction through conversation of internalized dominant discourses and these praxis collective members made a case for any means adopted being required to promote critical reflection. Out of this sustained, challenging but supportive flux of collective problematisations in the course of trying to act upon the social world to change it, came the innovative and effective suggestion that 'conscientizing interviews' should be facilitated. The praxis was clearly collectively accomplished.

The Praxis spurned individualism

From the collective's standpoint authentic praxis must fastidiously spurn individualism. The praxis collective did this in many different ways. For example, in the course of attempting to tackle institutional oppression the collective engaged with the critical literature, transformed its understanding of oppression by engaging with the work of Young (1988), coming to understand oppression as operating at the level of the societal group rather than at the level of the isolated individual and it surfaced and contested individualistic victim-blaming (the positioning of the responsibility for enactment of the medical model of disability in HEIs with the staff rather than the Institution) implicit in the prominent disability research literature contributions of Hurst (1996) and Borland and James (1999). Impressively, the collective simultaneously surfaced subjugated knowledges about manipulative, exploitative, abusive and other oppressive behaviour by individual staff members whilst refraining from individualistic and psychologistic explanations, developing instead an understanding based on inter-connectivity inspired by the Foucauldian notions of assemblage and apparatus. In the course of attempting to change institutional policy in relation to disability, the praxis working group also uncovered the role of a particularly hostile institutional member in a key committee decision but still refrained from individualistic explanation of the limited praxis success, instead explaining it as an instance of the status quo resisting challenges through

resilient reactionary interconnectivity. Praxis members also spurned individualism in relation to reflexivity. Within the qualitative research tradition it is usual for those involved in knowledge generation to engage in a form of reflexivity which seeks to uncover the role of the qualitativist's subjectivity in research processes and outcomes in which they are 'instruments' of research. The praxis collective would have rejected this form of reflexivity in any case because it reproduces positivist preoccupations with detecting and taking account of 'bias' and thus presupposes the possibility of unbiased accounts. However, this form of reflexivity was also rejected as individualistic and psychologistic. Instead the collective engaged in radical reflexivity which surfaced and problematised the role of institutional, cultural and societal factors relayed through praxisioners. Finally here, the praxis rejected reactive individualistic commitments to ethical behaviour (which privileged cognition and individual behaviour) in favour of proactive commitment to socially just action (which privileged ideological and collective action.) *The praxis clearly spurned individualism.*

The Praxis effectively contested institutional oppression

From the collective's standpoint authentic praxis must contest oppression. In this context 'contest' does not necessarily mean 'bring about progressive change' since, as the praxis makes clear, institutional oppression is very resilient to challenges due to the assemblages of interconnectivity which resulted in the massive imbalance between the power and resources of the status quo and those of a small group of pre-dominantly low status, transient co-praxisioners. Contesting oppression means seriously attempting to bring about progressive change in the longer term but in the mean time making small gains, testing for weaknesses, subverting and sabotaging wherever possible and constructing emancipatory knowledges which afford new and effective ways to contest, resist being silenced and disappeared by demoralisation and malaise and collective recognition that limited success in achieving progressive change in the short term is understandable in the context but that such contesting can contribute to institutional change in the longer term.

I illustrate this in relation to the disabled students' group's activities trying to contest the legitimacy of the disability equality scheme. These attempts were frustrated by assemblages constituted through interconnectivity but nevertheless were not worthless.

The group had attempted to become meaningfully involved at a number of stages in the production of the DES but despite an obligation on the institution (backed up by legislative and enforcement agency guidance) to ensure the participation of disabled people and existing disability groups, the group was prevented from becoming involved in any meaningful way in the production of the DES. By 'meaningful' I mean involvement in ways which afforded group members opportunities to contribute to the construction of the scheme from their own standpoint and in their own interests and in ways other than those problematic ways offered by those tasked with 'constructing' the scheme, ways which privileged the interests of the institution.

To elaborate: the group had only come aware of the opportunity to become involved after I had alerted them to legislative amendments which meant that the institution ought to invite them. Indeed the institution should have been in touch with them long before as there was, at this stage, only two months before the final scheme had by law to be produced. Having contacted the institutional representatives and a deputy principle to ask why they hadn't yet been consulted, the disabled students' group was advised that institutional representatives had, conveniently, been 'just about' to contact them. By this time many decisions, in particular about the scheme's production, had already been made and implemented by the institution including, for example, decisions resulting in the means to contribute to the DES being inaccessible (illegible by a screen reader), PDF's which could not be completed electronically (requiring some people to require assistance in order to complete them) and the implication that only students 'registered as disabled with the organization' could contribute. Due to the group's late invitation to contribute and the impending deadline, very few times were made available to the group for them to participate in 'consultation'.

Moreover, the group resisted dates proposed by the institutional representative which would have monopolized time the disabled students' group could use on their own priorities. The group resisted being restricted to such limited time for participation that it would be merely be a form of tokenism allowing the institution to endorse and legitimate the scheme in a form which served the interests of the institution but rather attempted to make it possible to be involved fully in all decision making, construction and 'analysis'. The upshot was that no time was found which was mutually acceptable to both the group and the institution. A

number of members opted to contribute in a personal capacity to other sessions pre-arranged by the institution but felt that their inputs were distorted by the discussion facilitators, who were representatives of the services being scrutinized. For example, these group members fed back to the praxis collective that they had been asked not to be so negative and that they had been were informed by the focus group facilitators of 'positive' aspects of specific services with which they were expected to concur. Disabled students were not consulted on any drafts of the DES prior to its publication on the University WebPages in compliance with the DDA (2005). It was only after publication that group members noted that the 'results' of the consultation were not consistent with their own experiences as students disabled by the organization nor with what they had actually contributed as members of the institutions focus groups from which the material on the website was represented by the institution as being at least partially based. It was clear that the production of the DES had been rushed as a number of the links did not work on the day it went public: even still containing Lorem Ipsum as a holding text. The group felt this reflected the high priority the institution showed to paying lip service to their legislative commitments but the low priority the institution placed upon actually addressing disabling discrimination and oppression implicit in the practices, policies, procedures and environments. Administrative protocol was deployed to deny the disabled students' group access to the meeting, at which the scheme was to be formally adopted by the university, in order to make its position on the DES clear. Instead the gatekeeper to the meeting (in this case the secretary) advised the group that administrative protocol meant that it was not possible for the disabled students' group to add agenda items, to attend or to be represented in their own right at the meeting and advised them instead to have any points they wished to make raised by the students' union representative (the students' union president), who did have a place at the meeting, at an appropriate place on the agenda drawn up by others. Members of the disabled students' group were not therefore able to attend the meeting in person, had to submit a statement to the union president to be read on their behalf and had to rely on minutes of the meeting and hearsay from others attending the meeting as an indication of what had actually been discussed and decided. In the event the minutes of the meeting, when eventually available, did not make it clear whether or not

the statement provided to the union representative by the group had been read out of not. However it was unclear if that was because the University minute taker had sanitized the record of the meeting by omitting reference to the document or whether the representative had not read or even summarized the statement. Since members of the committee who praxis members were able to persuade to say what they recalled of the meeting did not report there being any vociferous disagreement with the scheme being read out, it seems likely that the matter was 'managed' rather than addressed. A witness of the committee discussion reported that an institutional spokesperson on the DES institutional process used the ongoing nature of the DES, its openness for continuous adjustment, to position objections to the current DES as a constructive contribution to improving it in the longer run. Note that this tactic of acknowledging flaws in contemporary arrangements whilst deferring actual change until a 'later' time which can be indefinitely postponed, whilst constructing the institution's position as one of one of commitment to long-term change i.e. is an effective way to resist progressive change.

Note that by allocating only the student union president a place on a high level institutional committee, the University simultaneously demonstrated a commitment to the inclusion of students in participatory democracy but excluded other (disabled) students from participation. Moreover once a member of the committee, the student union president is vulnerable to pressure of various sorts and can be courted or engaged in concession bargaining in order to achieve longer terms agendas. Moreover, disabling practices, policies, procedures and discrimination are not restricted to institutional management but can be found throughout society and also in union organizations. That this was the case in this institution seems to be borne out by the praxis revealing that a student union representative had previously resisted the creation of a seat for a disabled student on a working group developing disability policy in the institution on the grounds that all students were already represented by the union. Note again that this tactic of including some who can be relied upon to be compliant or be gagged in order to exclude others who can not, allows the institution to appear progressive whilst actually being reactionary as far as social justice for disabled students is concerned. This is a way of resisting change whilst constructing the institution's position of promoting long-term change.

In addition to this specific example the contesting of oppression was achieved throughout the praxis in a number of ways, for example; contesting disabling and offensive discourses whenever they were being presented by persons both within and outside the praxis and the academy; facilitating the introduction of accounts of disability more consistent with the social family of models of disability into institutional policy and discussion; supporting individual students to contest and survive the disabling system and lastly theorising the construction and maintenance of disabling practices in Scottish Higher Education as an interconnected assemblage is itself action against external oppression. The praxis clearly contested institutional oppression.

The Praxis surfaced the interests served by institutional disabling

From the collective's standpoint authentic praxis must surface the interests served by institutional disabling. The collective created an account of the 'Positive Functions of *Disabling*' inspired by Gans (1972) paper on the 'Positive Functions of Poverty'; i.e. the collective prepared a paper explicating the positive functions of disabling practices for various parties. For example, through piecing together material from: a) living textual awareness; b) conscientizing interviews with 'senior personnel' and c) document analysis, the praxis collective identified: how institutional finances benefit from more students disclosing as disabled; how disabling practices create profitable employment for various persons (disability advisors, dyslexia advisors and tutors, assessors, psychologists, civil servants in funding administration); how disabling practices support existing occupations (e.g. staff members taking on additional managerial roles in relation to disability); how disabling practices supports the employment and credentialising of researchers (like myself); how disabling creates an advantageous market for 'special' software providers (a protected market which enables companies to keep their product prices high and is less subject to competition), the list could be extended almost indefinitely.

Part of the collective problematising of our own readings of our 'experiences' was the surfacing of interests served by institutional disabling and in particular the construction of disability as a function of ourselves, as a problem with our individual pathology and

subsequently made us susceptible to accepting the 'good will' of the institutions services.

The institution's role was recast from the constructor of disability to the saviour of disabled people, whom it accepted and attempted to 'cure' or 'support' as a philanthropic, moral and philosophical duty.

The still wider positive functions to Higher Education of disabling practices was surfaced through our collective problematising of the living texts of our being processed through the system. For example, the construction of a pathologised sub-group of students who are identified as 'disabled' distracts attention from the disabling practices to which the whole student body is subjected. For example, the banking model of education deployed in Higher Education is pedagogy disabling from a critically standpoint. This became surfaced particularly through the online critical disability course. As another example, the 'special' examination circumstances of 'disabled students' draws attention away from the everyday disabling examination circumstances of the whole student body. As another example, the emphasis on the 'preservation of academic standards' when making 'special' arrangements for 'disabled' students misleadingly implies that everyday life in Higher Education is characterized by high academic standards. The praxis clearly surfaces the interests served by institutional disabling.

The Praxis was characterized by emancipatory and procedurally just processes

From the collective's standpoint authentic praxis must enact processes and procedures which are emancipatory and procedurally just. This was achieved by surfacing, problematising, reducing and preventing (potentially) oppressive relations of power which might otherwise have been enacted within the praxis. Mutual facilitation by praxis collective members of radical reflexivity surfaced whose interests would be served by specific possible research processes, for example asking who would gain most from them. For example, the enactment of the praxis through participation in a (critical pedagogy) module through which collaborators would gain an academic credit was intended to ensure that the praxis would not eat into colleagues' personal time but into time already 'colonized' by HEI for (acritical) pedagogical purposes and also to ensure that collaborators were rewarded, if

only by a minor academic credential in the form of a module credit, for time devoted to the praxis - just as the researcher was to be rewarded by a more major academic credential in the form of a Ph.D.

The development of the social justice model of disability is another manifestation of the praxis commitment to emancipatory process and procedural justice. At first the praxis collective took it for granted that their work would be committed to 'the social model' of disability and initially the literature associated with the British Disabled People's Movement was subjected to less critical attention. As we became more comfortable with engaging collectively in problematisation and as we applied our critical problematising skills further into the academy we began also to problematise that which had appeared more radical and founded upon claims of social justice (isomorphic to our developing application to the apparently radical legislation, policies and procedures claiming to be committed to social justice) and to develop an alternative account which went beyond the social model. Apparently progressive discourses as said can form one element of an oppressive assemblage, or as Foucault states can be an element within "a system of power which blocks, prohibits, and invalidates" other "discourse" and "knowledge, a power not only found in the manifest authority of censorship, but one that profoundly and subtly penetrates an entire social network (Foucault in conversation with Deleuze on Intellectuals and Power, 1972, in Bouchard, 1977, Pp 208). Further reading (of external literature, grey literature and our living texts) had inspired us to think of the social model as one of a family of social model approaches rather than as the social model, to critique whose interests were served by the social model (begun through HU11 and continued through the group) and to develop an alternative account consistent with our own approach. The praxis clearly enacted processes and procedures which were emancipatory and procedurally just.

The Praxis was irreducible and not sequential

From the collective's standpoint authentic praxis must be theorized as a radically different irreducible meta-concept within which knowledgementing, acting and critique are inseparable rather than as the performance of three separate activities of knowledgementing, acting and critique in sequence or in parallel. It is crucial to appreciate

that I am NOT claiming that the knowledge which is generated whilst acting on the world is ideologically superior to that generated in an armchair NOR that knowledge positioned as progressive by an ideological divining rod leads to more effective action on the world.

Rather I am saying that praxis is manifested as a knowledgement-critique-action nexus. In other words: a) to act on the world is in one and the same process to enact an ideology and to instantiate a knowledge; b) to 'know' something is in one and the same process to take up an ideological position and to engage in action on the world; c) to take up an ideological position (and no non-ideological position is possible) is in one and the same process to bring a knowledge of the world into being and to instantiate it as action. Of course a, b and c all say the same thing. This means that one is accountable for the ideological and knowledgement implications of one's actions; accountable for ideological and action implications of one's 'knowing'; and accountable for knowledgement and action implications of one's ideological position.

Others claiming to be engaged in praxis are seldom engaged in authentic praxis. Cyclical, sequential versions of praxis are common in which people recommend acting and then reflecting and then pulling out implications for knowledge or even generating action from knowledge and then auditing it ideologically. Others privilege the importance of ideology and knowledge and recommend a sort of watered-down conscientizing which is divorced from engagement in action on the world. Others locate critical reflexivity in the keeping of field diaries and log books to be read and problematised away from the field with a supervisor. The problem with keeping diaries is that produces a sequential process with critical reflection taking place at a different time in a different place and with different people thus diminishing the collective that is required by authentic praxis. The more important point here is that radical reflexivity is not an intellectual process of reflection, but an intrinsic dimension of action and knowing.

The praxis demonstrated the potential of understanding through holistic inter-connectivity rather than through fragmentation and reassembly. Accordingly, the processes of knowledge construction were holistic, and the accounts constructed are enhanced as a result. 'Holistic' means keeping things together as one as they occurred, it means not breaking things down into parts to try to understand better how they work. Dismantling is

problematic because it involves decontextualising events, it minimizes understanding of the totalising aspect of oppression; reducing complex social phenomenon, which are interconnected, into their component parts effectively masks the power of their interconnection and changes the nature of what is concluded, or 'found'. The praxis was clearly irreducible.

The Substantive Issues Addressed by the Praxis

In this section I spell out the major achievement of the work in relation to the substantive issue addressed: the resistance of disabling practices, procedures and policies to progressive change. From the collective's standpoint authentic praxis must result in the construction and legitimation of persuasive knowledge claims which in one and the same process take up a progressive ideological position and engage in emancipatory action on the world.

Alternative accounts, new contributions to knowledge, contesting and resisting the construction of disability in Scottish Higher Education have been presented. Such 'new' accounts would not have been achieved using conventional methods, as discussed in relation to the previous literature, the processes of praxis enabled colleagues to go beyond the reproduction of dominant accounts and to collectively construct and theorise new knowledges about disability.

Despite apparently progressive practices, policies and procedures, well intentioned people, and despite students battling hard to succeed, Scottish HEIs are still disabling places. They are still places where the likelihood of success or failure is distributed unevenly and unjustly across the population. For all the amendments to the legislation, and proposals to amend existing policies, practices and procedures in order to make institutions places which do not disable or discriminate, it is evident that little have changed or for the worse.

Rather than addressing this matter as other researchers have done, for example the vast body of work discussed in Chapter Four which essentially advocates for more of the same, the praxis sought to look beyond the existing state of affairs, to question the taken-for-granted, and to consider why, in spite of all the apparent efforts, policies and legislations to challenge disabling institutions, things still hadn't changed. Yet we wanted to do this without

adopting the same critiqued individual level analysis, informed by Young (1988) we understood that; "oppression' designates the disadvantage and injustice some people suffer not because a tyrannical power intends to keep them down, but because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned liberal society" (Young, 1988, Pp271.) In keeping with our reading and understanding of Foucault who stated that power is omnipresent, we understood that circulating throughout higher education, and beyond, were the elements of the assemblage which produce the existing conditions of disability in Higher Education, which are oppressive to some and not others.

In engaging with this problem we have constructed an account which exposes the wider economies at work producing disability in Higher Education, and those economies that mean that despite all the apparently progressive changes to the system, it continues to function just as it always has done.

There were many claims which could have been derived out of the work, including some relating to workings of disability in Higher Education similar to those described in the existing literature, and others which could only have been achieved through the praxis but which relate to the more micro level manifestations of disabling practices as the outcomes of the disabling assemblage, however what was most important, and original, in relation to this work was our theorising disability in Higher Education, looking holistically, identifying this wider machinery which locks people into a disabling environment: those trying to change it, those who work in it and those who are disabled by it.

Unlike other work which individualises its analysis and blames the individual members of institutions for creating the disabling practices, be that staff members for not demonstrating enough care or compassion or for being uncompromising or students for being lazy or ungrateful, this work has sought to demonstrate a wider systemic analysis. I could have provided such individualised accounts of individual members of staff exploiting their positions, for example staff members having relationships with students, but rather we are interested in exposing the circumstances that permit a member of staff to be in the power to exploit their position, one where students are subject to the whims of an individual to decide their access to resources which might enable them to achieve parity with their colleagues. In short we were interested in exposing the systemic institutional discrimination and

oppression within Higher Education and the processes which produce and maintain disability.

Therefore the most important point of this work, the most important account, is not that of the various elements of the apparatuses, though we recognise them as being oppressive, harmful and 'real' in the sense that they cause some to be disabled and not others, but rather it is the synergy, the interlocking, the interconnectedness which is to be emphasised: providing an account of why the systems are the way that they are and why individual elements of change have thus far made no difference.

We have surfaced an account of disability in Higher Education in which the various apparatuses of disciplinary power function together, interlock, as pieces of a disabling machine which keeps practices the same no matter what changes are attempted. The account which we have surfaced is consistent with a vast body of scholarship developed and refined by scholars such as Paulo Freire, Patti Lather, Michel Foucault, Giles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Nik Rose, but was produced largely independent of it.

Implications of the praxis for psy-discipline 'research'

In this section I spell out some implications of the praxis for the social practices which constitute 'research' and for psy-disciplines more broadly.

In this thesis I have, so far, focused attention on the authentic praxis in which I have had the privilege to be involved for a time limited period (a few years) in a specific domain (Scottish Higher Education Institutions) with a particular focus (disabling assemblages of procedures, practices and policies). Although I consider this important in itself, authentic praxis has far wider implications for other times, other domains, other focuses and the set of ways of thinking, talking, writing and acting which constitute the psy-disciplines or as Rose (1999) puts it: "the heterogeneous knowledges, forms of authority and practical techniques that constitute psychological expertise" (Rose, 1999, p. vii). Authentic praxis has transforming relevance not only in relation to 'disabling education' but in relation to all oppressive institutional apparatuses. Engaging in authentic praxis has transforming relevance not only in relation to disability research and scholarship but in relation to all

'research', 'scholarship', 'knowledge', 'theory' and indeed to 'academia', 'psychology' and social 'science' more broadly.

Having engaged in authentic praxis has transformed my understanding of the social world, the ways I problematise what I see and ways I am prepared to understand and act in relation to oppression and there is no turning back.

Having engaged in authentic praxis whatever substantive issue I now address I am faced with a set of unavoidable obligations to problematise. Right at the outset the way the problem is constructed, by whom, with what consequences, for which interest groups becomes problematic. Problems for which there are resources to afford their investigation are almost always constructed by funding organisations, politically powerful lobbying groups or senior academics. They are seldom constructed by those who are positioned as the problem to be investigated or resolved. Authentic Praxis obliges me to work with co-praxisioners from the very beginning, working with them to co-construct the problem, to problematise dominant accounts of the problem and to engage in new knowledgementing with the intention of contesting oppression and the oppressive discourses, acting on the world to change oppressive environments (collaboratively) and generating new emancipatory knowledges.

Having engaged in authentic praxis whatever substantive issue I now address I am faced with a set of unavoidable obligations to problematise the 'literature review'. Rather than positioning a literature review as an essential procedure to see what has already been done and to derive theoretically orientated questions, I consider it to be a problematic way to start 'research'. Literature reviews do not contain independent, neutral, facts or truths about the world, they are not a report of an independently existing social reality, what is independently the case, but rather they are part of the apparatuses through which truths are social constructed and must be taken as such. The literature review is a social practice through which a new reality is constructed and that reality impacts on people but the literature requires a discursive reading as to what tactics are being deployed to give claims legitimacy and whose interests are privileged by those claims.

Similarly, having engaged in authentic praxis in relation to disability theory whatever other substantive issue I now address theory has to be rejected and theorising substituted. Orthodox theoretical activity in psychological research is a manifestation of problematic knowledgement, one which has been rejected in this work. Much, indeed most, contemporary research starts with theoretical activity and most knowledge is legitimated through its connections with theory. This takes a number of forms. 'Applied psychology' takes theory and tries to 'apply' it. Positivist research psychologists start with theories and derive hypotheses from them for 'testing'. Most psychological researchers saturate themselves in theory and subsequently see the social world in terms of the frame of reference of that theory. Theory, or at least claims of relatedness to theory, is deployed to rhetorically strengthen funding bids, ways of working and substantive claims. Moreover, the positioning of theory at the beginning of research is problematic from a critical point of view because the construction of dominant theories in psychology has been monopolised by white, middle class, male theorists from intellectually colonising nations like the United States of America and so builds racist, classist and masculinist privileges into the core of the discipline. Moreover, teaching and learning about these theorists by those being socialised into the discipline is usually accomplished through techniques of the banking model of education so effectively critiqued by Freire.

The praxis was highly theorised but that is different from it being in any straightforward sense a result of engaging with theorists' work. The principle theorising was done by the praxis collective not by academic theorists, dead or alive, privileged in text books.

Theoretical activity in praxis is not confined to a knowledgementing or intellectual dimension of praxis but critique and social action are equally processes characterised by theoretical activity or, to put it differently, knowledgementing, critiquing and progressive action are all part of one irreducible process within which theoretical activity is central. Parker notes that; "there is nothing so theoretical a good practice" (Parker, 2005, p. 125), a pun on Lewin's comment with respect to action research that "there is nothing so practical as a good theory" (Lewin, 1951, p. 169). Having engaged in the praxis described, I would suggest that there is nothing so theorised as an authentic praxis.

Having engaged in authentic praxis in relation to methodology whatever substantive issue I now address I am faced with a set of unavoidable obligations to problematise methodology. Within a mainstream frame of reference, methodology is often about the choice of appropriate methods to investigate particular issues with particular participants in order to maximise scientific objectivity. For example, methodological questions may be asked in relation to the literacy level of intended participants in relation to the appropriateness of questionnaires as opposed to interviews in order to discover 'what someone really thinks'. From a praxis perspective, on the other hand, methodological questions can not be isolated from ideological, epistemological and ontological questions. Whilst for positivists engaging with subjectivity may be problematic because it is not 'objective (informants are not trusted not to forget, distort, lie or withhold) in terms of praxis engaging with subjectivity is problematic because subjective accounts are a product of dominant discourses. The problem from a praxis point of view is not that subjective understandings of oneself are not 'real' but that oppressive beliefs they may be made 'real' through the research process and the wider apparatus of which research is a component. For example a persons' subjectivity can be hi-jacked and traditional research can support this becoming part of their own oppression when they un-problematically reproduce the claims, as truth, that persons are (for example) satisfied with being labelled disabled, or relieved to have finally been identified as disabled (labelled) as an explanation for 'their' failings, or that they note the need for greater individual intervention, monitoring or scrutiny as a means for overcoming 'their' being disabled. This is used as a means to further oppress as it is problematically deployed to reinforce the dominant discourses by sanctioning or legitimating them as the consequence of thorough consultation with the person and revealed in the person's subjective accounts or 'lived experience' (Hurst, 1996). Whilst these points have been explicated in detail in relation to institutional disabling they are universal, widespread concerns in relation to newer trends in social research. From a praxis perspective social relations within the research process are not problematic because they are a hazard as far as objectivity is concerned but they are a hazard as far as ideology is concerned. Social relations are not problematic because they are a hazard as far as ethics is concerned but they are a hazard as far as social justice is concerned. Having engaged in authentic praxis

in relation to ethics whatever substantive issue I now address I am faced with a set of unavoidable obligations to problematise ethics. Traditional ethical concerns are exemplified by their pre-occupation with the individual. Orthodox ethical concerns focus around harm to the individual, neglecting the harm done by the objectionable knowledges which may be produced. Subsequently it is not 'ethical' for work to insult or harm individual people taking part in a project but yet there is nothing to stop the overall outcome of a project producing objectionable disabling accounts which are harmful to a whole community of people.

The ethical process does not concern itself with the outcome products of the research only to the process and even then, having engaged in praxis, the processes advocated or condoned cannot be considered just. As noted above ethical and methodological issues are not hermetically sealed sub-components, they are inter-connected, methodological and ethical questions arise in relation to research procedure. Which must be both just and safe as well as *epistemologically and ontologically satisfactory*. In regards to safety the research must do no harm in the broader collective sense. The knowledges which are *produced must* promote the interests of the oppressed collectively, rather than reproducing dominant oppressive accounts.

Having engaged in authentic praxis in relation to analysis whatever substantive issue I now address I am faced with a set of unavoidable obligations to problematise the processes of analysis. 'Analysis' in research usually means taking a large data set (quantitative or qualitative) and reducing it in some way to a smaller set of claims which are legitimated, at least in part, through a process called 'analysis'. Quantitative researchers frequently present their material as having been analysed by packages like SPSS. Qualitative researchers frequently present their material as having been analysed by packages like N-Vivo. In both the task is how to generate claims about the whole corpus of material through fragmentation and reintegration of a subset of fragments into a different order imposed by the researcher.

Having engaged in praxis, the very notion of fragmentary analysis is problematic. Drawing from the praxis, in reference to Chapter Five, it is clear that analysis is about drawing connections and seeing patterns rather than an algorithmic method of fragmenting and

combining. Fragmentary methods serve to mask the interconnectivity between the various elements.

Having engaged in the praxis I understand that whatever the actual process used to make sense of material what is described as 'analysis' is nothing more than a performance academics use to give post-hoc legitimacy to their conclusions. In other words researchers reach a conclusion through one set of practices but use a problematic rhetoric to legitimise what they have done. Existing modes of analysis are predominantly unjust in that they privilege the interests of the 'researcher' at the expense of the 'participant'.

Orthodox ways of doing analysis are not acceptable and the processes through which sense is made of a large body of information about texts, practices, procedures and policies is not clear. No text book tells you how to analyse they only tell you how to represent the consequences of the analysis on paper. However it is clear that whatever integrative sense-making is done, it is not achieved within a statistical package and that computer packages can not engage in holistic interpretation. Having engaged in the praxis which was about "produce a different kind of knowledge in a different way" (Parker, 2005, p. 1) existing dominant approaches to 'analysis' are viewed as problematic.

Having engaged in authentic praxis in relation to radical reflexivity whatever substantive issue I now address I am faced with a set of unavoidable obligations to problematise the processes of reflexivity. In the social (or psy) sciences reflexivity usually refers the process of self-examination which the researcher goes through to examine how their subjectivity might have influenced the conclusions derived from the work. It is supposed that making such subjective accounts evident for the reader will allow them to scrutinise or bypass any biases in the work. For example, the researcher might draw out how their gender may have influenced their conclusions. It is at risk of becoming merely individualistic self-indulgent, confession of discursively problematic narrated subjective experience; and at risk of re-admitting positivism by positioning subjectivity as a source of 'bias' to be eliminated. In contrast having engaged in praxis I now understand a broader notion of reflexivity, radical reflexivity, which is concerned with collaboratively exploring how our subjectivities are constructed and mediated through discourses (Foucault, 1970). Having engaged in praxis I understand 'radical reflexivity' to go beyond mere excavation of interests embedded in the

author's subjectivity to uncovering and taking account of the institutional and societal foundations of those interests.

Praxis doesn't break down into a set of discrete concerns but each of the concerns is interconnected with all the others. So the concern with ontology, constructing what becomes 'real', cannot be separated from the concern with ideology, the interest served by what is 'real', or the concern with legitimation, how claims as to what is real with their ideological implications become legitimated or 'truthed'. Every concern is at the same time ontological, ideological and political.

Conclusion

Disability

This praxis provided an original contribution to knowledge about the nature of disability in Higher Education. Building upon existing accounts which, despite claiming progressive alliances, produced individualised, medical model analyses of the context of disability in Higher Education, this thesis meta-theorised disability in Scottish Higher Education, informed by Foucault, which recognises roles of assemblages in producing and maintaining disability in Scottish Higher Education. Subsequently the apparently innocuous elements of the assemblage, often dismissed as insignificant or representative of the institution's philanthropy were identified as problematic, consistent with members concerns, in contrast to the findings of existing research which concluded there was a need for even greater refinement of such apparently altruistic services.

Furthermore, collaborative critical reflection on 'the social model of disability' raised concerns about the remnants of a medical model located within it. An alternative was of thinking about disability was offered which denied any fundamental biological cause of 'disability' or 'impairment', conceptualised these as social constructions of difference, (informed by Foucault, locating these within the assemblages which work together to create 'disability') but nevertheless recognised the 'reality' of the pain, harassment, and discrimination such social construction causes. Furthermore, this analysis does not necessarily preclude the role of medicine (for example, to relieve feelings of pain) but rather

challenges the discourses upon which there is a continuum of difference and upon which there are arbitrary cut-off points of acceptability.

Primarily due to word limits but also due to the wealth of claims knowledged and the potentially litigious nature of some 'findings', it was beyond the scope of this thesis to detail all the minute aspects of discrimination and each specific legitimated claim regarding disabling practices, as could have been done. Instead selected examples of disabling practices were presented within the broader framework of the interconnected assemblage to both illustrate its nature but also to give some insight into discrimination and disabling practices witnessed. The decision to do so was also made to focus on the most important new knowledge claims to be presented: the construction of change resistant disabling in Scottish Higher Education.

Research or Praxis

This praxis provides new legitimated knowledge claims in relation to its theorising and demonstration of; new ways of producing knowledge which are participatory and socially just; new ways of working with people to engage in emancipatory social research; new ways of engaging with texts to form analysis, and claiming an alternative form of validity for these knowledge claims.

The thesis theorises praxis as encompassing simultaneous knowledge construction, action on the world and profound critical reflexivity; emphasising the importance of the interconnectedness of each of these elements with each other as core to an authentic application.

The thesis demonstrates that people can be meaningfully involved as collaborators in each stage of the praxis. Their involvement in novel approaches to knowledge generation, and analysis, demonstrated both the importance and success of this development. When lines between 'expert' and 'non-expert' are erased and it is recognised that all contributors bring with them weaknesses and expertise, better working relations are established, a truer form of participation occurs. This thesis demonstrates that people can participate in action on the

world, draw novel conclusions and construct new knowledges from it, in ways which are just and emancipatory for all.

Foucault noted that; "the real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticize them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight them" (Foucault, 1974, P171). In this thesis I have demonstrated how the multiplicities of this praxis has afforded the creation of an account which unmask the working of institutions and which demonstrates that they are neither neutral nor independent, but more than just doing so, the processes of the praxis has enable the account to be generated by a group of activist scholars who have collectively been engaged in "attempts to break with unifying and totalizing strategies, to cultivate multiple forms of resistance, to destroy prisons of received identities and discourses of exclusion, and to encourage the proliferation of differences of all kinds" (Best & Kellner, 1994, P14) and through our action to do so we have demonstrated a praxis which is at one and the same time, knowledge construction, profound reflexivity and critical action on the world.

Changing Disabling Places

The title of this thesis relates to many ways in which the praxis has attempted to 'Changing Disabling Places'. The thesis has provided new knowledges about the 'Changing Disabling Places' of Scottish Higher Education; places which are changing as a result of amendments and introductions to legislation and policies, and in response to the additional requirements these policies places upon them. The work has demonstrated, in chapters Seven and Eight, attempts to change the disabling places of Scottish Higher Education through praxis and shown how institutions have 'changed' in response to such contesting and action. In praxis this work has exemplified a means of changing the disabling places of research; disabling in the sense with which it: disables potential collaborators; disables criticality and radical reflexivity; and disables action to change the world and contest disabling and oppressive environments. Lastly, that the disabling nature of PhD thesis has been changed. It is hoped that the thesis has given insight into a novel way of working with persons to engage in

simultaneous knowledge construction, radical reflexivity and action on the world to contest oppression, in a manner that is clear and appropriate for the work itself in spite of the restraints placed by academia.

Conclusion

In conclusion this thesis has demonstrated socially just ways of working (acting, reflecting and theorising) with people to produce novel knowledge claims, through attempts to engage in action to contest oppressive situations, aiming to change the disabling places of research and Scottish Higher Education.

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Appendix A

Disability in Higher Education: Critical Issues, Third Text - 'Breaking Through the Barriers'



Julie Thomson (above) was among 1,400 students who received their degrees from Chancellor Dame Diana Rigg in July.

Breaking through the barriers

Inspirational student Julie Thomson graduated with a BA honours degree in Criminology and Sociology this summer.

Julie, who has cerebral-palsy, has refused to let her disability hold her back. She put herself through technical college before coming to Stirling and has vowed to keep on learning. Julie said: "I have loved studying at Stirling; all the staff have been very supportive. I've

liked it so much that I plan to go back to do a Master's if I can get funding."

Julie graduated alongside more than 1,400 students in July, receiving her certificate from Dame Diana Rigg. The Chancellor also awarded four honorary degrees.

Member of the House of Lords, Baroness O'Neill CBE was presented with the

Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University for her contribution to philosophy and public affairs. Professor O'Neill is Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge and is Chair of the Nuffield Foundation.

Sir James Armour CBE was also awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University in recognition of his contributions to veterinary science and the development

Appendix B

Graphical Representations of the Web of Interconnections

