Title

'Exploring the impact of an ipsative literacy development intervention on first year university students' fear of failure in assessment'

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Doctor of Philosophy

'I, Caroline Collier, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.'

Abstract

This work enhances sector understanding of the impact of using an ipsative literacy development intervention on first year university students' fear of failure in assessment. The work explores the literacy experiences and practices of non-traditionally qualified undergraduates as they make their transition into their first year of higher education, academic study and assessment activities. Research literature continues to raise concerns around progression and attainment, particularly for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Academic study and writing in particular often present challenges for students without traditional entry qualifications. The literature further suggests that learners experience many influences as they enter higher education yet it is difficult for the university and tutors to influence learners at this point of transition.

The findings in this thesis suggest that through literacy intervention, course teams are able to influence points of transition and support at-risk first years into tutor preferred literacy practices for academic study and writing. The justification, design and use of a literacy intervention are presented, with findings demonstrating how ipsative assessment activities positively influence students whilst they are in points of transition. Participant accounts and written assignments at three different points during a literacy intervention situated in a discipline module are scrutinised. This uncovers complex participant reactions of fear, anxiety, confusion and not knowing what was required for academic study and writing. Analysis showed participants were unaware of how institutional provisions could support them. Although initially seeking support outside of the institution from family and friends, who were unfamiliar with academia, the assessment design within the intervention framework ensured engagement with the tutor-led learning environment. In particular, an on-line forum and materials supporting iterative ipsative feedback allowed tutor influence at points of transition. Findings of this research have the potential to inform policies on progression and attainment through informing educational practices to support learners in making successful transition to academic study and writing in Higher Education.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This introductory chapter introduces the rationale for the research by first outlining the background and context for the study. UK government increased and widening participation agendas, as described through government policy values and objectives within successive policy documents, are fundamental to understanding the current progression and attainment challenges experienced by some students within the higher education sector. The chapter continues by setting out the research aims and questions explored within the thesis and conclude by presenting an overview of the thesis chapters.

1.1   Background and Research Problem

Successive UK government policies (Robbins Report, 1963, Dearing, 1997) have increased participation numbers in higher education and widened the access base (DfES, 2003; Cooke, 2008). These policy initiatives have enabled entry from groups previously excluded or under-represented such as the unemployed, those on low incomes, part-time and temporary workers, and older adults, those with literacy, numeracy or learning difficulties, disaffected youth and some minority ethnic groups and those without qualifications (Kennedy, 1997; Fryer, 1997). However, despite various initiatives intended to support progression and achievement (e.g. see Macdonald & Stratta, 2001 and Harvey et al, 2006), recent research findings suggest it is still the least advantaged student groups who currently have lower attainment and progression within higher education (BIS, 2014; Mountford-Zimdars et al, 2015, HEFCE 2015). Working within a post 92 institution meant this challenge was familiar to me and I was aware of many initiatives institutionally to support students into study. Through my involvement with projects for the JISC I had become particularly interested in what might support at risk learners effectively into their academic studies. In its recent report (2015a) the Higher Education Funding Council for Education (HEFCE) recognises that institutions are responding to diverse learner needs and providing support during learner life cycles, particularly in the critical first

year. However, in the light of identified continued retention and progression challenges HEFCE also indicates the need for more systematic evaluations of interventions taking place (HEFCE, 2015a, pp: 11).

Research has for some time suggested that first year transition (Tinto, 1998; Harvey et al, 2006; Hussey & Smith, 2010; Fisher et al, 2011) and in particular academic writing (Lea & Street, 1998; Hammon, 2005; Wingate, 2006) is a key challenge for widening access students. Research into student transitions (for example see Meyer & Land, 2005; Gourlay, 2009; Wilson et al, 2014; Kift, 2014) suggest that curriculum design should make provision for supporting or guiding students during transitional points. Gourlay (2009, pp: 189), by linking learners' experiences during this stage with writing, reframes the struggles so it can viewed as a part of the normal academic process and not as a deficit or welfare issue that requires solving. This research focused on non-traditionally qualified students' experiences in literacy practices required for academic writing during transitions in their first semester. Understanding more about experiences of learners whilst navigating points of transition, from an academic study and writing perspective, might illuminate experiences of learners who are still identified as the most vulnerable in terms of retention and progression (Harvey et al, 2006; Mountford-Zimdars et al, 2015; HEFCE, 2015).

The study is therefore timely as it responds to an identified need and contributes to the current national agenda of support and progression within Higher Education (BIS, 2014; HEFCE, 2015; HEFCE, 2015b). In this thesis I first establish how UK educational policy has changed the type of learner entering university higher education. The term increased and widening access is deliberately used throughout this thesis rather than widening participation. This is to reflect the wide gap in participation rates between individuals from advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds in society, and between students with different characteristics, particularly at the most selective institutions (BIS, 2014). I identify particular challenges experienced by students which disadvantage them in terms of attainment and progression as identified in current research. I also re-examine university support designed to help learners adjust to university life through a particular lens of

transitions and literacy practices for academic study and writing. Findings are presented about the literacy experiences of learners with non-traditional A level qualifications during their transition to university; the context of the study is within a new university with a diverse student population drawn locally, nationally and internationally. These findings are used to draw conclusions and make recommendations for policy and practice and have relevance for both national and international practitioners and students.

1.2   Research Aim and Questions

Given the UK policies on widening participation and the challenges of student transitions into academic study and writing (see section 1.1) this study focuses on the experiences of novice undergraduates at the point of transition into Higher Education. In particular it explores participation in structured literacy activities, designed to assist academic study and writing development, as reported by the participants and demonstrated in their written outputs. Therefore, the research aim in this thesis is to explore novice undergraduates' experiences as they enter university and make transitions into literacy practices for academic study and writing.

In order to explore this, the thesis addressed the following questions:

1. *What is the UK policy context of literacies?*
2. *What history of research into literacies informs current practice?*
3. *How can we study novice undergraduates' experiences?*
4. *What can we learn from the study about non-traditionally qualified novice undergraduates' use of literacy practices as they make the transition into academic study and writing?*
5. *Do structured literacy activities benefit learners?*

The first two questions provide the context for the work, the third is methodological, and the substantive contribution comes from the final two questions. The research questions were investigated through a series of activities that examined previous research, respondents' accounts of producing written assignments and the assignments (essays) themselves. The respondent written assignments were generated as part of a structured literacy intervention, designed as a compulsory first year module, which makes explicit the tutor preferred literacy practices for academic study and

writing. The intervention framework used academic literacies design principles (Lea, 2004), formative assessments and a continuous feedback loop derived from Laurillard's Conversational Framework (1993). In particular the SCONUL Pillars (SCONUL, 1999) information literacy practices were explicated within the intervention framework. Information Literacy is defined by SCONUL as 'an umbrella term which encompasses concepts such as digital, visual and media literacies, academic literacy, information handling, information skills, data curation and data management' (SCONUL, 2011;pp:3). In line with the academic literacies design principles, in this study information literacy is seen as part of all literacy practices for academic study and writing. Specifically, to clarify the terminology used in this research study, when referring to academic literacies I accept the definition provided by Lea & Street (1998) that students undertake negotiation of conflicting literacy practices to acquire an understanding that their writing is meaning-making and contested. The term information literacy is taken from the SCONUL Seven Pillars model and in this work refers specifically to the practices required by learners in order to engage with discipline resources to achieve an understanding that their writing is part of a meaning making and contested conversation taking place within their discipline.

These design principles are discussed later in in chapters three and four of the thesis.

The Higher Education Institution (HEI) selected for this research study is a 'Post 92' university committed to social inclusion and diversity. The HEI supports first year progression and achievement through multiple avenues, including but not limited to: academic induction, a social programme, library induction, an academic writing and skills support unit, personal tutors and literacy development through a combination of stand-alone intervention modules or modules embedded across year one. For this study, evidence was drawn from two sources: participants' academic written work; and their accounts of producing this work whilst experiencing a literacy intervention. Discourses around academic writing appear to suggest that using appropriate curriculum design to support academic writing does enable

learners to engage in a variety of academic contexts (SCONUL, 1999 & 2001; Bruce, 1997 & 2006; Lea, 2004; Lupton, 2008; Parks, 2008; Kift et al, 2010; Itua et al, 2014). However, statistical analysis shows that least-qualified students achieve lower rates of attainment and progression with lower socio-economic students at particular risk of non-progression (Mountford-Zimdars et al 2015). Therefore, moving the focus to first year learner demonstration of literacy practices for academic study and writing whilst they are in transition to HE is novel, as it offers new insights into points of learner transition and therefore informs discussions of curriculum design.

1.3 Thesis Outline

This thesis has eight chapters. After this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 sets the UK educational policy within a context of enhancing equality of opportunity and inclusion through increasing and widening participation in higher education. Chapter 3 reviews the research literature on the challenges experienced by widening access students in higher education and considers the types of support provided by universities to address these issues. As part of this discussion the significance of literacy practices for academic study and writing and the role of assessment as students make the transition to university life are examined. Chapter 4 describes the literacy intervention used in the empirical study of the research. Chapter 5 outlines the research methodologies and approaches used to investigate the research questions. Chapters 6 and 7 present the research findings of two phases of analysis undertaken to explore learner's experiences and perceptions. Chapter 8 discusses the study's findings of learners' experiences as they adapt to HE studies and navigate curriculum. This discussion is framed by the earlier review of educational participation policies and literacy practices with particular reference to support and progression of least advantaged learners. Chapter 9 concludes the discussion with a summary of findings and suggestions for further research.

1.4 Summary

This chapter has introduced the background and context to the research and set out the research aims and questions, and outlined the structure of the thesis. The next chapter examines how UK educational policy discourses for increased and widening access and support literacy practices within universities have developed. University responses to challenges faced by widening access students, in particular the first year experience, will be considered in the context of student transitions and literacy practices for academic study and writing.

1.4 Summary

Chapter 2: UK Educational Policy Framing and Academic Writing

Whilst the UK policy of increased and widening participation (Robbin's Report, 1963; Dearing, 1997; DfES, 2003; Cooke, 2008 and HEFCE, 2015a) has provided opportunities for many young people to enter university who otherwise might not have, it has also led to challenges around the progression and attainment of students, particularly in their first year. Education involves changes often transforming a person and greater diversity in today's students means greater diversity in the way these transitions are achieved. This diversity led to an increased requirement to support the diverse student population (Harvey et al, 2006). Current research in higher education identifies that the least advantaged students continue to be the most vulnerable in terms of progression and attainment (Hussey & Smith, 2010; BIS, 2014; Mountford-Zimdars et al, 2015). Whilst there are many contributing factors to this situation, Longdon's (2004, pp: 129) argument that students from lower socio-economic groups *'appear to be unable to position themselves to take advantage of opportunities available'* to them appears particularly pertinent given Bowers-Brown's (2006, pp: 63) explicit link between progression, family support and cultural capital. This direct link indicates that some students experience particular challenges when entering Higher Education and academic study and might require particular support. A primary concern identified by Hussey and Smith (2010) is that some individuals may not have the skills and confidence to negotiate necessary transitions as easily and quickly as traditional students. The recent work of Mountford-Zimdars et al (2015) suggests that the challenges for the least advantaged student identified in the literature in 2006 continue to be a challenge:

> *"Analysis of HE outcomes for different student groups shows some consistent patterns, with the least-advantaged students (those from low socio-economic groups) having consistently lower attainment and progression outcomes even after controlling for other factors such as type of institution. HEFCE has shown these differences to be statistically significant with regard to attainment and*

employment outcomes (HEFCE, 2013/15, HEFCE, 2014/03)" (Mountford-Zimbars, 2015; pp 11)

Therefore the following section (2.1) examines the pivotal role of UK educational policy in the development of support for increased participation and widening access and the background context to this current issue of progression and attainment.

2.1   Educational Policy Context

The UK Government's well-established agenda for increased participation and widening access (Robbin's Report, 1963; Dearing, 1997; DfES, 2003; Cooke, 2008; BIS, 2014 and HEFCE 2015) has broadened the reach of Higher Education and radically changed the type of student engaging with academic curricula. The aim of increased participation in Higher Education came out of a Post-Second World War class analysis and discourses about the pursuit of social justice and equality of opportunity (Giddens, 1995). The 1944 Butler Act increased the number of secondary schools, thereby increasing the demand for university places. Policy makers emphasized the importance of science and technology and the Percy Report of 1945 (McClure, 2005a) recommended some technical colleges become universities. The Barlow report of 1946 (McClure, 2005b) went further and recommended that universities should be expanded and that the number of science graduates should double. This expansion was funded by the exchequer. However, by the 1960s, the growth in the number of university science students recommended by previous policy makers had not yet been achieved. The Robbins Report in 1963 states that:

> *'Large numbers of able young people do not at present enter university'*
> *(Robbins, 1963, pp: 52)*

It was at this point that current policy discourses of social justice, equality of opportunity and the needs of the economy through Higher Education began to emerge. The Robbins Report observed that:

The young people who will be seeking to enter higher education in the years 1965/6 to 1967/8 were born in the period when the population of this country was beginning to return to normal life after the upheavals and separations inevitable in war. The trials that their parents had to undergo are in themselves sufficient reason for the country to exert itself to meet the needs of their children. Moreover, if great numbers of these young people are qualified and eager to enter higher education it would be gravely unjust that, simply because so many were born at the same time, a smaller proportion of those qualified should receive higher education than in the age groups coming immediately before or after them. (Robbins, 1963, pp: 810)

Thus the notion of equality of opportunity based on ability as well as effort was embedded into contemporary UK educational policy discourses. The need for reform in Robbins (1963) was presented as a moral imperative resulting from the trials undergone during the previous war and a need for justice. Therefore the only appropriate policy response, it seems, was to provide an increase in university places to meet this demand. This was framed in terms of continuing university independence but within a new context of public funding:

Great pains have been taken to see that this position of financial dependence should not impair their legitimate rights of self-government. But it is only natural that the general direction of their development has come to be regarded as a matter of public interest. (Robbin's Report, 1963)

It was also made clear in the report that the country was dependent upon higher education to maintain its position in what was described as the:

Growing realisation of this country's economic dependence upon the education of its population has led to much questioning of the adequacy of present arrangements. Unless higher education is speedily reformed, it is argued, there is little hope of this densely populated island maintaining an adequate position in the fiercely competitive world of the future. (Robbin's Report, 1963, pp: 5)

Thus, three important messages enter the educational policy framing. Firstly, although categorical inequality was not addressed at this time, higher educational participation is to be based on meritocratic principles; secondly,

government intervention does not impinge on the freedom of the universities for self-governance, and thirdly, the role of universities is fully redefined as serving the economic requirements of the nation. Therefore the expansion of an elite educational system in the 1960s and 1992 was predicated on and morally arrived at through meritocratic principles (Ball, 2008). The argument of being able to gain economic and social advancement through education gave credibility to the structuring of societies' education provision and systematically embedded and supported the concept of a meritocracy: work hard and you will achieve.

> *'Educational reformers and sociologists alike saw the promotion of equality of opportunity in education as the key to a new, more egalitarian society – a meritocracy in which people could move freely up and down in the occupational hierarchy according to personal merit' (Bilton et al, 1981, pp:390).*

Milner (1972) described meritocracy as a compromise between commitment to equality and commitment to achievement. However as long as educational policy supports educational opportunity *for all* the perception has to be that individual effort secures achievement. This notion of education for all to meet the needs of the economy can be traced through the policy initiatives for increasing and widening participation in Higher Education during last half of the twentieth century, and even into current policy on progression and achievement (Robbins, 1963, Dearing, 1997, BIS, 2011, BIS 2014, HEFCE 2015). For example, the 2011 White Paper claims:

> *'around the world, the very best universities are building deeper links with business both to maximize innovation and growth, and to ensure students come out of universities equipped to excel in the workforce' (BIS, 2011; pp: 39).*

However, research (see for example Kettley, 2007) indicated that increased participation continued to be dominated by middle classes and therefore the UK Government made widening, as well as increasing, participation a policy priority through the 2003 White Paper, *The Future of Higher Education* (Bowers-Brown, 2006, pp: 60). Widening of access was presented as a

means of enhancing social justice, equality of opportunity and social inclusion in society (DfES, 2003, pp: 18). This 2003 policy initiative ensured that students without the traditional three A-level entry requirements, who may not previously have been able to do so, were able to enter Higher Education.

A continued growth of categorical student diversity and expansion of numbers meant that issues such as inclusivity and structuring appropriate support in the learning experience, particularly for first years, became research priorities for UK universities (Wilcox, Winn, & Fyvie-Gauld, 2005). These UK HEI research priorities were further focused by possible financial and reputational consequences resulting from poor student retention and progression (Palmer et al, 2009).

Harvey et al's review of the literature, examining experiences of increased participation and widening access students, indicated recurrent themes:

> *Factors impacting on performance and persistence, including institutional personal and external factors; Support for the first-year, including induction, adjustment and skill support; Learning and teaching, including new techniques for first-year groups and first-year learning behaviour.(Harvey et al, 2006,)*

Other research identifies that most universities adopt some form of deliberate intervention to help embed students, and enhance learning and retention during the transitional period (Gardner, Siegel, & Cutright 2001; Schnell, Louis, & Doetkott 2003; Lovitts 2005; Auburn 2007; Skyrme 2007). However, the challenge identified by Longdon (2004), of lower socio-economic groups not being able to position themselves to take advantage of available opportunities, persists, and is not necessarily mediated by the interventions provided. In fact Walker et al suggest:

> *Figures appear to indicate that the class gap has remained constant and seem resistant to change despite many higher education institution initiatives. (Walker, 2004, pp: 45)*

As will be seen later in this chapter this is an issue that continues. Harvey et al (2006) also linked a high incidence of withdrawal and non-progression to the process of transition and adjustment. At that point prevailing theories and

models for analysis were drawn from a mixture of sociological and psychological ideas and were criticised for the analysis being framed around the white, middle-class, private residential college experience focusing on social and academic integration (Harvey et al, 2006, pp: 34). Harvey et al argued that not all student characteristics had been taken account of and the process of transition and adjustment is complex. For Hussey & Smith (2009, pp: 159) these student transitions are large and complex transformations made up of many smaller lesser changes, such as changes to attitudes and values, knowledge, beliefs, understanding and skills. Further evidence supports the suggestion that a lack of preparedness for university life impacts on the period of student transition (Lowe & Cook, 2003; Longdon, 2004; Palmer et al, 2005; Christie et al, 2013). Whilst this lack of preparedness identified is due to a range of factors, Palmer et al argue it is essentially concerned with students' experience once they start their degree; knowing what to expect and not becoming suspended between one place (home) and another (university) resulting in a sense of 'placelessness' (Palmer et al,2009, pp: 38).

The work of Rickinson & Rutherford (1996) and Thomas (2002) supported earlier studies (McGivney, 1996; National Audit Office, 2002) when they identified that the process of establishing friendship networks aided the transition and adjustment process. Later research (Tinto, 2002; Yorke & Thomas, 2003; Palmer et al, 2009) also identified key influences on student retention as: the learning, teaching and assessment strategies employed and the quality of relationships between academic staff and students. Findings by Harvey et al also suggest that:

> *Although other theories, sociological and psychological, are being applied to the issue of retention there is a sense that (a) integration remains at the core of theorising and (b) the theories get no closer to solving the 'puzzle'. (Harvey et al, 2006, pp: 36)*

As Walker et al (2004) indicated, with retention of students from wider access backgrounds varying considerably from retention of traditional and increased access (increased number but with traditional A level qualifications) students,

how universities manage the experience of wider access students becomes important. As Walker et al ask:

> *One of the central questions that should be raised is if we can attract wider access students can we also retain them? There is an increasing recognition that educational disadvantage can also apply to higher education, that removing barriers to application or entry does not solve the problem of the link between socio-economic status and educational disadvantage. (Walker et al, 2004, pp: 45)*

More recently work by Penny Burke (2012, pp: 9) identifies hegemonic discourses shaped by neoliberalism as influencing these widening participation policy and practices. Burke uses an historical perspective to explore the broader context of social and economic contexts of widening participation and why access to higher education rather than other forms of learning are privileged in these hegemonic discourses. Burke presents persuasive arguments around subjective construction and identity formation being formed through the different discourses in widening participation policy. Burke suggests widening participation is about redressing historical inequality and disadvantage, and thus constructs recognisable subjects for its discourse (e.g., 'disadvantaged', 'non-traditional' and 'having potential'). Thus the discourse is identifying specific groups of students requiring special attention for a deficit. When learners hear these terms used in relation to their performance it affects how they see themselves against other learners. Therefore learner identity and subjectivity are central to understanding the complex forms of exclusion and inequality that play out in educational contexts. As Burke (2012) suggests, despite significant investment in widening participation there are groups that continue to be under-represented and where access is happening with 'non-traditional' students, retention is a continuing issue. Burke's argument supports Palmer's (2009) earlier work that often such students experience a sense of not belonging.

Both the department for Business and Skills (2014) and HEFCE (2015b) have recently reinforced the position of maximising and supporting participation in Higher Education. In their recent policy development report HEFCE (2015b) restate the aims of previous Government policy documents:

Widening access and improving participation in higher education are a crucial part of our mission. Our aim is to promote and provide the opportunity of successful participation in higher education to everyone who can benefit from it. This is vital for our social mobility and economic competitiveness. (HEFCE, 2015b)

Despite evidence that access to university level study has increased and a clear commitment from Government through policy and the actions of related bodies such as the Higher Education Academy, a body designed specifically to support research into learning and teaching within the HE sector, there continue to be concerns around whether the student population in higher education reflects the rich diversity of the general population in England (Burke, 2012; BIS, 2014; pp 7). The report suggests that to achieve this will require the creation of a system which delivers equality of opportunity and fairness, where age, ethnicity, gender, disability and/or social background present no barriers to accessing and succeeding in higher education and beyond (BIS, 2014; pp 7). The report acknowledges that progress has been made in recent years to widen access and improve student success, identifying that students from all backgrounds currently have increased opportunities to participate and succeed in higher education. However it also highlights that there are still significant gaps between the participation and success of individuals from the most advantaged and disadvantaged areas, and in outcomes for different groups of students (BIS, 2014; pp 8).

This moves national strategy from one of continued increased and widened access and retention, and broadens its scope to include, progression and success. This is signalled by BIS where they suggest this considers *"not only entry into HE but also students' progression through the curriculum and on to further study or employment (BIS, 2014)".*

The theme of access and progression continues in recent research commissioned by HEFCE where progression and employability are highlighted as areas adversely effecting socio-economically disadvantaged groups:

Among the patterns explored in the report are the tendency for socio-economically disadvantaged groups to do least well at university, even when prior attainment is controlled for, and the tendency for white students to achieve better outcomes (in relation to completion rates, attainment and employability), and to report the highest levels of student satisfaction. (Mountford-Zimdars et al, 2015)

Mountford-Zimdars et al (2015, pp:11) indicate that statistical analysis shows the least-advantaged students achieve lower rates of attainment and progression even after controlling for other influencing factors. Mountford-Zindar's research also confirms Palmer et al's (2009) earlier concern of least-advantaged students' preparedness for university study, identifying a need to continue to address differentials between outcomes for different groups through developments in curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment:

Developments in curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment are important in tackling differentials, such as the use of an 'inclusion lens' and of student partnership approaches. Support for academic preparedness and navigating the curriculum emerge as important areas of interest. (Mountford-Zimdars et al, 2015)

This call for research into supporting students' academic preparedness and navigating the curriculum, echoes calls a decade previously within higher education, (e.g. Harvey et al, 2006). In addition to linking widening access and improving participation to social mobility and the economy, HEFCE's commissioned reports encourage the sector to understand how to achieve attainment for the least advantaged student groups (Mountford-Zimdars et al, 2015, pp: 1). Whilst HEFCE (2015a, pp: 9) signal in the report that institutions have made progress in widening access and improving retention through interventions, they suggest a need for more systematic evaluation evidence:

The overwhelming message is that, while we know from national data that the sector has made significant progress in terms of widening access and improving retention, and institutions clearly recognise the need for better evidence to underpin policy and practice, there is little evidence to date of interventions and approaches being systematically evaluated. (HEFCE, 2015a, pp: 9)

HEFCE's recent policy document '*Student access and success', Policy and Practice 2015-2020'* (HEFCE, 2015a, pp: 9) recognises many and varied factors pertaining to support and progression of students. The document also identified student points of transition as a critical factor in progression and retention, particularly in the first year. A considerable amount of literature has reported on student transitions and the first year experience (for example see: McInnis, 2001; Lowe and Cook, 2003; Yorke and Longdon, 2004; Wingate, 2006; Mayes, 2009; Gourlay, 2009; Lizzio & Wilson, 2013; Gale and Parker, 2014; Meng, 2016), with Tapp recently highlighting that many students report:

> *'not understanding the discourses, practices and procedures of Higher Education (HE), and not knowing what standards are expected of them or what they should do differently if previous strategies are no longer successful.'* (Tapp, 2015, pp: 1)

In summary, what is emerging from the literature is evidence indicating that in terms of a first-year experience many factors contribute to student success during the process of transition and adjustment to university life. These factors have changed as educational policies have changed. Following the Robbins Report (1963), the emphasis was on increased participation, allowing more students with the relevant qualifications to enter an existing HE sector. However, with the widening of access agenda following the Dearing Report (1997), students with greater qualification diversity and support requirements meant the old model of support had to change and institutions also had to make adjustments. As retention and progression of widening access students became more challenging for institutions, in particular the post 1992 'new universities', so this area became increasingly more important. For the sector a specific focus of interest was how best to support learner transition into university and academic life. Section 2.2 first outlines the complexity of learner transitions generally and then locates transition specifically to academic study and writing.

2.2   Student Transitions into University Life

As discussed earlier in section 2.1, evidence continues to link socio-economic background and educational underachievement (Walker et al, 2004; Mountford-Zimdars et al, 2015, pp: 11). In particular Mountford-Zimdars et al (2015) specifically identify the challenge for least advantaged learners in terms of preparedness and navigating the curriculum. For example, explanatory factors relating to learning teaching and assessment and student progression in HE are suggested to be a mismatch of staff and students' perceptions and differences of understanding informal demands and hidden curricula resulting for instance in students becoming discouraged and not accessing support (see Figure 6: *Illustration of factors impacting on the student journey*, Montford-Zimdars et al, 2015, pp: 29). These findings echo earlier research undertaken by Harvey et al (2006) which suggests that students from this background need help in adapting to university life and becoming autonomous learners. Several studies have contended that the likelihood of student withdrawal reduces if there is successful integration into both the academic and social worlds of university (Tinto 1998; Wilcox, Winn, and Fyvie-Gauld 2005, Harvey et al, 2006). As Haggis (2006, pp: 1) argues, the growing diversity of students means that level and prior experience of learning at the point of entry into higher education can no longer be assumed. Sector responses to support increasingly diverse needs of students began to emerge as the impact of widening access began to be identified in progression and attainment statistics.

In an attempt to address student problems entering into university life various 'best practice' initiatives (Fox, 1986; Barefoot, 2000; Palmer et al 2009) have developed such as open days, induction processes, study skills and first year seminars (Wilcox, Winn, and Fyvie-Gauld 2005; Skyrme 2007; Palmer et al, 2009). A number of authors have considered the strategic design of support, for instance Whisker and Brown (1996) suggested that student support should promote: the facilities, the atmosphere and attitudes towards learning. Tait (2000) further categorised support in terms of its functions: cognitive (supporting learning), affective (ensuring a supportive environment) and systemic (ensuring effective administrative systems). Recognising the

importance of all aspects of student support Harvey et al (2006) also noted that students move from one source of support to another as they progress through the year.

There are many ways that support might be provided for students. This variety is reflected through university strategic planning committees, central units such as libraries and skills services and academic disciplinary contexts all inputting their particular specialist insights (Jacklin & Le Riche, 2009, pp: 736). However, whilst recognising that multiple factors contribute to learner support for transition and progression, as identified by Hussey & Smith some students may not have the skills and confidence to make these transitions quickly and easily (2010, pp: 157). For Harvey et al (2006, pp: 33), being in a university setting involves being able to access resources of knowledge, attitudes and attributes to deal with a variety of situations. Harvey et al (2006, pp: 32) suggest that some students are perceived, or perceive themselves, as social and academic outsiders. Bowers-Brown (2006, pp: 63) when exploring reasons determining the progression likelihood for those coming from lower socio-economic groups to higher education also make explicit links between likely progression, family support and cultural capital issues. More recently Gale and Parker caution that these non-traditionally qualified students are at an increased risk of early drop-out or failure if not provided with early targeted, appropriate support to complete a successful transition to university life (2014).

Therefore, it appears that despite the significant amount of research, practice and policy about how best to support students' transitions into university life, (Mayes, 2009; Kift, 2010; Meng, 2016), least advantaged students are still vulnerable to dropping out and non-progression (HEFCE, 2015a). For Tinto, successful transition into higher education requires a high-quality academic experience with academic support, paired with social involvement and peer support (Tinto, 1998). Kift et al go further and argue for a transition pedagogy that transcends each of the silos of academic, administrative and support areas to enact a holistic, systematically-managed, first year experience that is completely student-focused (2010, pp: 14). If however, as Palmer et al (2009) and Mountford-Zimdars et al (2015) contend, a key challenge for

lower socio economic students is preparedness and being able to navigate the curriculum, understanding the learner experience during these particular aspects of transition might help address this increasing concern.

For Wilson et al (2014) there is a relationship between successful transition in the first year of study and progression through multiple challenges presented as transition points. These multiple challenges are experienced as students are required to learn new academic skills while simultaneously acquiring new social skills and adapting to their role as an independent learner (Richardson et al, 2012; Wilson et al, 2014). Cassidy (2011) suggests that there is an ever growing necessity for students to be able to undertake self-regulated learning, where individuals are able to invoke systematic and regular methods of learning to improve performance and adapt to changing contexts (Cassidy, 2011: pp 989). However, as identified earlier by Hussey and Smith (2010), some individuals may not have the skills and confidence to negotiate necessary transitions in adapting to changing contexts. As argued by Dressel et al (2015, pp: 455) currently little is known about what is required to enable students to be successful in this capacity, therefore there appears to be an urgent need, as identified by Hefce (2015a) to systematically investigate this issue.

What is known is that as students manage the transition from a relatively structured school environment to university life, it is often stressful to adapt to the expectations of autonomy and flexibility (Fisher et al, 2011). Harvey and Knight, (1996) capture the challenges experienced by learners and describe it thus:

> *".. Before independence comes dependence. In order to be able to work on history, engineering or psychology problems, learners need to have a view of the domain and to know something of the issue in question – or know how to get that knowledge. Additionally, they need to know appropriate research skills and to be skilled in self-directed learning. Research skills can be taught, and learning how to learn needs to be learned. It cannot be presumed that learners know how to work independently, even as late as the final year of their degree programme. So, independent learning ought not to be characterised as an absence of structure. The opposite is contended. A structure is needed to*

guide learners to the point where they are ready to undertake work, alone or in groups, that is akin to academic research. It follows that academic staff who value independence need to have a view of learning and a view of how people get to be effective autonomous learners." (Harvey and Knight, 1996, pp: 128-129)

Meeuwisse et al (2010, pp: 95) argue that students who feel that they do not fit in, who think that their social and cultural practices are considered inappropriate, or who believe that their tacit knowledge is undervalued, are more likely to withdraw. As Palmer et al (2009) indicate students in transition often struggle to have a sense of belonging at university resulting from inhabiting a 'betwixt' or liminal space. As evidence suggests transition into higher education is a key challenge for learners this betwixt or liminal area is now considered in more detail.

2.3 Liminality and transition

This concept of liminality was first associated with Van Gennep's (1909) anthropological work on rites of passage or rites of transition and Turner (1969) who extends Van Gennep's concept to include understanding social structures and processes. Van Gennep identified transition phases as a stage where the individual was between social statuses; they no longer belonged to the previous status and had not yet joined the new status. Van Gennep regarded this transitional or liminal phase, in which the individual occupied a non-status, a kind of no-person's land, as potentially threatening and harmful for the individual (Draper, 2002, pp: 86). Van Gennep also identified that rituals within the liminal phase played a role in preventing or containing danger associated with the individual assuming the new status that marked the phase of incorporation (Draper, 2002, pp:86). Rituals therefore play a role to mitigate and manage fear and anxiety of the group and individual whilst in the no-person's land or 'betwixt space'.

This concept has been argued to be important in understanding students' transition into higher education (Meyer & Land, 2005; Gourlay, 2009; Palmer et al, 2009) Palmer et al (2009) argue that often students do not immediately fit in at university, resulting in them occupying a transient, betwixt space

between home and university. Palmer argues, this 'betwixt space' of transition is a space where university managers have a limited capacity to intervene, as students perceive it as a space that managers and lecturers couldn't possibly understand (2008, pp: 3). Thus, if a learner has a challenge during transition their perception might be they should rely on their own resources rather than university provision. Palmer asserts that despite the best intentions of universities to facilitate and manage student transition through interventions there are other influences such as family, friends and partners at the point of transition suggesting a limit to what universities are able to achieve (Palmer, 2008, pp: 3).

Whilst their work focused on the general transition between home and university, their findings confirm earlier research findings (Wilcox, Winn, and Fyvie-Gauld 2005; Solomon 2007), suggesting that when surrounding relationships of family and friends provide the individual with positive support the transience within the betwixt space is easier (Palmer et al, 2009). Palmer et al suggest that:

> *Significant in the process is the reliving and integrating of past, present and future experiences, which also confirms the recent work of Skyrme (2007). This is symbolically epitomized through the students' concept of a critical thread, which provides a sense of direction for the student's perseverance and allows them to regain control. Hanging to this thread, in the face of adverse turning point experiences, it seems, is a way of dealing with, belonging to, and making meaningful connections to, university life.(Palmer et al, 2009, pp:51)*

Palmer et al (2009, pp: 52) also concluded that there are a wide range of turning points that enable students to make meaningful connections with university life. Therefore, it follows that the same principle of managing fear and anxiety through positive influence applies for the transition associated with initial navigation of curriculum and academic study and writing. However, Palmer et al (2008) also establish that in terms of preparedness for transition experiences, each first year enters 'betwixt spaces' with different family and friendship networks and will require more or less support within such a transitional liminal space. On entering university, first years encounter multiple transition points associated with their new social status as a student.

Whilst some of the transitions can be managed by universities (for example, meeting a new group of friends can be facilitated through induction activities) some transitions might be harder to support. One such harder transition is the change from a relative novice into a knowledgeable, skilled participant of a discipline (Hussey & Smith, 2010, pp: 157) and epistemological obstacles, which are seen as potential stuck places that might block a transformed perspective of the discipline concept might be a part of that process (Meyer & Land, 2005).

However, as Hillman contends (2005) a challenge for novice undergraduates is tertiary study itself, and in particular developing capabilities for academic writing required for assessment within the discipline. Rattray (2017) suggests in her work on critical thinking and liminality that the speed of transformation is not uniform with some learners mastering threshold concepts more easily than others. With respect to academic writing in particular Itua et al (2014) suggest that students experience a range of barriers:

> *Predominantly in relation to referencing, finding academic text boring or difficult to understand, having a lack of time to engage with AW and the different expectations in school/college and university (Itua et al, 2014, pp: 322)*

Rattray argues that a change in knowledge and an associated change in practices bring about threshold concept transformations and that basic threshold concepts are part of the integrative complex picture that makes up ontological change for learners (2017). Academic transitions, particularly into academic study and writing, are complex and challenging for all undergraduates (Hussey & Smith, 2010; Tapp, 2015). Hussey and Smith (2009) argue that becoming and remaining a successful student involves:

> *'far more than merely turning up at induction and making a few friends: it involves identifying, understanding and assimilating a complex range of assumptions, behaviours and practices often tacitly represented by the range of disciplines, or fields' (Hussey & Smith, 2010; pp159).*

Generally for first years, the academic writing process presents new challenges and requires acculturation on the part of the writer (Krause 2001:

150). For vulnerable students such as those identified earlier in the work of Mountford-Zimdars et al (2015) cultural changes necessary for navigating the curriculum are also encountered in terms of unfamiliar approaches to study. New academic conventions must be learned and new literacy practices acquired – including those of using research strategies, critical interpretation and argument development (Krause, 2001 pp: 150).

Returning to the concept of transition points and liminal spaces; in the higher education context, these 'rites of passage' have been described by Meyer and Land (2005) as threshold 'conceptual gateways' or 'portals', that lead to a previously inaccessible and possibly 'troublesome' way of thinking about something within a discipline, as places where students might become stuck, unable to emerge following successful passage through a transformative liminal state into a new way of understanding, interpreting, or viewing something (Meyer & Land, 2005, pp: 375). Meyer and Land (2005) suggest that these stuck places might be a result of 'epistemological obstacles' that block any transformed perspective (2005, pp 377), and from a curriculum design perspective conceptual gateways or portals; if identified within a discipline, might be used to define powerful transformative points and serve a diagnostic purpose for tutors (Land et al, 2005).

Townsend, Brunetti, and Hofer (2011) argued that threshold concepts, as described by Meyer & Land (2005), offer a promising theoretical framework for identifying and teaching information literacy content. Building on this work Fister (2015) considers the concept of liminal states being good preparation for the ambiguous and uncertain places learners will encounter in the future. Fister (2015) suggests that instead of trying to make everything clear for a learner, we should encourage the learner to become practiced at navigating uncertainty

Fister also asserts that in addition to understanding the material to be learned the learner may, rather than become a convert to a particular way of knowing, select to take a critical stance. Thus the ability to manage transitional states might be, itself become a transferrable learning experience. As Fister states: '*You learn how information works by*

encountering, using, and creating it' (pp: 8). The conversational nature of discipline discourse is captured well by Fister:

> *'We can honor students understandable need to compete assignments as efficiently as possible while also avoiding language that presents research as purely consumerist behavior of shopping for sources. I've had a couple of small epiphanies that helped me make small changes to the way I talk to students. One was when the writing instructor Doug Downs wrote in an email, "sources are people talking to other people." It's important for students to realize that books and articles are not inert things manufactured at some knowledge factory, but are the thoughts of people like them, people who are trying to make sense of the world. People who decide as a community what kinds of questions are worth asking and how to go about answering them in a fair and even-handed way.' (Fister, 2015, pp: 8)*

Demonstrating discipline literacy practices in written assessment is a fundamental part of academic practice and managing student fear at this transition point would be particularly useful for at risk students. Recently, Scott, Bledscoe & Baskin (2014) identified failure at the point of the first written assessment as one of the most common student fears, with students often becoming preoccupied with fear of letting themselves, or indeed others, down. A great deal of previous research (see for example Sadler 1989; Yorke 2003; Falchikov 2005; Knight, 2006) has focused on assessment, suggesting that assessment is about making judgements on the quality of students' performance and might be used both to summarise students' achievements in order to award some kind of certification or grade (summative assessment) and to give feedback to students in order to support learning (formative assessment). As Weurlander et al (2012, pp: 748) point out assessment sends a strong message to students about what counts as knowledge in a particular learning environment. Christie et al (2008) and Lizzio and Wilson (2013) argue that students use their early assessment marks to make judgements about their ability for university level study, going on to suggest that those who do less well (e.g. fail, just pass or who do worse than expected) are likely to experience a loss of personal and academic confidence. This loss of confidence is harder to retrieve if the failure has

been on a summative assessment rather than formative. Haggis argues that the focus should be on *'learning how to do the learning in that subject – how to think, question, search for evidence, accept evidence, and put evidence together to make an argument that is acceptable in that discipline'* (Haggis, 2006, pp: 532). As the tricky transitions are often associated with acquiring an understanding of the learning process, making the process of academic study and writing explicit might support students through these transitions. Hughes (2017) argues that ipsative assessment provides an alternative to the normative and criterion-referenced assessment, offering a more individualised process that encourages learners to reflect on their own progress and continue to develop their learning. Rattray (2017) argues that this dialogical and developmental type of assessment is particularly suited to developing mastery of threshold concepts.

Further, with specific reference to academic writing, Gourlay (2009) highlights the complexity of writing practices and makes a compelling case for extending the notion of 'threshold concepts' as proposed by Meyer and Land (2005) and suggests considering academic literacies as 'threshold practices'. Gourlay argues that the notion of liminality in the context of student writing in transition explicitly recognises indeterminacy as a feature of the 'in-between' state (Gourlay, 2009, pp: 184). Gourlay also suggests that linking learners' experiences during this liminal stage with writing serves to reframe their struggles, so we can view them as a part of the normal academic process and not as a deficit or welfare issue that requires solving (2009, pp: 189). Gourlay's (2009, pp: 189) proposal of a liminality analysis, offering a deeper understanding of the role of writing in student transitions whilst adjusting to higher education, is useful as it enables a rethinking of the rite of passage concept and notions of university 'rituals' for support during this betwixt stage. In Van Gennep's account of rites of passage, the novice is supported by the elders and initiates whilst making the transition from one status to another. Notwithstanding Palmer's (2008, pp: 3) reservations highlighted above, that it is difficult for lecturers and managers to influence transitional stages, most universities do try to offer support to novice students through a variety of activities. However it is also worth noting Burke's (2012) contention

that the support provision for widening participation students is within the complex hierarchical nature of higher education institutions often located on the peripheral sphere. Therefore if a learner does engage with the support provided their identity and subjectivity are created within forms of exclusion and inequality that Burke suggests plays out in educational contexts. A critical review of the support for academic writing provided by universities and tutors will now be presented in chapter 3.

2.3 Summary

This chapter has examined UK education policy for increased and widening participation alongside student transitions. Transition points experienced by students, and in particular widening participation learners, as they enter their first year of university were highlighted. The social and academic challenge faced by some first year students in adjusting to university life was identified, in particular barriers to successful entry into academic study and writing. Discipline threshold concepts were identified as often being particularly troublesome (Meyer & Land, 2005, pp: 375) but were reframed within the context of being a betwixt or liminal space such as experienced in a rite of passage (Draper, 2002, pp: 86). Linking learners' experiences during this liminal stage with academic writing serves to reframe the struggles so we can view them as a part of the normal academic process and not as a deficit issue that requires solving (Gourlay, 2009, pp: 189). The following chapter examines the types of provision currently adopted by universities to support learners in adapting to university academic writing practices.

Chapter 3: Support for Academic Writing

As part of the increasing and widening participation agenda, universities identified a need for and have provided various supports to students to assist their adaption into higher education study. However, despite this support HEFCE identifies in its 2015 Policy document that:

> *There are worse outcomes – in terms of degree attainment and progression to postgraduate study and/or graduate employment – for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (as measured by POLAR3), students from ethnic minority groups and disabled students not in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance (DSA).(HEFCE, 2015, pp: 3)*

The report continues by suggesting that themes from independent research show that there is isolated work across institutions to address differential outcomes, but it is fragmented and not well evidenced. They conclude by indicating a need for a joined-up sector-wide response to secure a step-change that will maximise outcomes for all students (HEFCE, 2015). Support already identified and used within higher education institutions, specifically for academic study and writing, appears to happen broadly within three overlapping areas: the study skills approach, the academic socialization model and academic literacies model (Lea and Street, 2006). Another university support area, usually associated with the acquisition of library research practices, is often provided through the library as part of an induction or as a response to an identified need (Bruce et al, 2006). To illuminate areas of strength and weakness each of these support approaches is included as part of the discussion of university support for academic study and writing presented in Chapter 3.

3.1 Study Skills

Challenges experienced by students in academic study and writing in higher education has traditionally been analysed in terms of a deficit in students' academic capability (Hodgson and Harris, 2012). Challenging this notion, the work of Lea and Street (1998), shows how academic literacies work at the dual levels of epistemology and personal identity, effective essay writing

constructs the knowledge and the academic identity of the writer. For Lea and Street (1998) whilst study skills are part of academic literacies they cannot be separated out and taught in isolation. However, the notion of 'writing-as-skill' prevails in the UK, and has resulted in pedagogical approaches focusing on the technical aspects of academic writing (Wingate, 2006, pp: 462). Wingate (2006) identifies that practices at universities in response to the deficit model were to provide support to weaker students. Wingate (2006, pp: 458) further notes that where universities have perceived study skills as something that can be taught to students through a university wide service, courses and departmental handbooks and websites tend to cover such areas as time management, essay writing, presentation, note taking and revising for exams; and these are generally delivered through an instructional model.

The rationale for this approach can be traced through the development of policy contexts presented and discussed in section 2.1. The Dearing Commission proposed preparing graduates for employment through higher and further education. This, it was argued, could be achieved through the introduction of key skills in the areas of communication skills, numeracy, the use of information technology and learning to learn (1997, pp: 141). Dearing recommended that skills be made explicit; specified in the outcomes of degree courses; assessed as part of the curriculum and captured within individual progress files (Recommendation 21).

Many students have been enabled to enter Higher Education who might not previously have been able to do so. With widening participation came a responsibility for HE institutions to provide appropriate support. As a sector, post Dearing (1997), this agenda was driven by government funding policy; Dearing recommendation number two was that funding should be directed towards institutions demonstrating commitment to widening participation. In terms of supporting widening participation students joining Higher Education courses, the report was clear that there should be opportunity to access information literacy development and support. Recommendation 21 of the report specifically states:

'We recommend that institutions of higher education begin immediately to develop, for each programme they offer, a 'programme specification' which identified potential stopping-off points and gives the intended outcomes of the programme in terms of: The knowledge and understanding that a student will be expected to have upon completion; Key skills: communication, numeracy, the use of technology and learning how to learn; Cognitive skills, such as an understanding of methodologies or ability in critical analysis'. (Dearing 1997, Recommendation 21)

The QAA codes of practice for the setting and maintaining of standards and subject benchmark descriptors for higher education ensured that universities adopted the Dearing recommendation. However, over the following two decades a variety of terms emerged when describing skills in higher education, such as core skills, generic skills, personal skills, employability skills, capabilities, competencies and graduate attributes; and often these were used interchangeably (Washer, 2007, pp: 58). Wingate (2006, pp: 460) identifies that universities varied in how they responded to the Dearing and QAA skills agenda, with each prioritising skills according to their own particular context. Different approaches to supporting the QAA skills framework were identified across institutions and from department to department within institutions. Wingate traces the separation of study skills from key skills and argues that to perceive study skills as separate entities is detrimental to their effective development (Wingate, 2006, pp: 461). Study skills taught as a stand-alone training provision has generally resulted from the notion that they might be treated as a separate entity from the process of academic writing itself (Norris, 1992), however, Wingate argues this approach neglects the complexity of learning at university (2006, pp: 461).

As discussed earlier in this section, university wide support often takes place outside of the curriculum, and for academic writing in particular is often based on a deficit model of providing support to 'weak' students (Wingate, 2006, pp: 458). The emphasis is placed on elements such as grammar, punctuation and the structure of essays. Arguably however whilst this approach may have met the needs of an increased participation model – more students entering HE with traditional qualifications, it does not meet the diverse needs of a

wider participation group, drawn from diverse educational backgrounds and equipped with different types of qualifications. Haggis (2006) contends that the growing diversity of students means level and prior experience can no longer be assumed:

> *'Beginning students, at all levels, no longer necessarily 'know what to do' in response to conventional assessment tasks, essay criteria, or instructions about styles of referencing' (Haggis, 2006, pp: 522)*

Harvey et al (2006) also highlighted the limitations of standalone skills support and focused in on the lack of value that skill development often has in supporting a cultural transition context:

> *The development of skills seems to be most effective if it is embedded in the curriculum rather than taught as stand-alone courses or workshops. Most accounts of skills development courses tend to rehearse the content and process rather than provide an analysis or evaluation of the activity that would provide value to someone in a different context or institutional culture (Harvey et al , 2006, pp: 18)*

For students making transitions into new academic conventions, such as discourse evaluation and analysis, new literacy practices must also be acquired – including those of using research strategies (Meyer & Land, 2005, pp: 375; Krause, 2001 pp: 150). In order to be 'epistemologically blocked', as described by Meyer & Land, (2005) a student must first engage with discipline material, which means using library facilities to research the topic for their task or assessment. Mellon (1986) identified that many students experience anxiety about their abilities in using the library and shame about their anxiety. More recently McAfee (2017) has argued that this shame emerges as the dominant affect in library anxiety when users feel alienated and disconnected from library culture and staff. McAfee goes on to suggest that their shame is a painful and isolating experience, with most users who are in these shame states believing they are the only ones with these feelings. McAfee suggests that Library anxiety, as outlined by Mellon, has these features: students generally feel that their own library-use skills are inadequate while the skills of other students are adequate; the inadequacy is

shameful and should be hidden; and that the inadequacy would be revealed by asking questions (of library staff). The work of White & Noel (2004, pp: 4) suggests anecdotally some students feel so intimidated by the library they do not enter the building.

Bodi (2002) argues that research for undergraduate students can be difficult and daunting with some students confused by the library catalogue, perplexed by the Dewey system. Indeed, although extra-curricular skills courses are designed to support students who need them most, it has been proposed by Durkin & Main (2002) that they are often more likely to be attended by higher achieving students who want to further enhance their performance. Durkin & Main (2002) further suggest that often those students who need support the most fail to recognise extra-curricular support delivered through a central service as relevant to their subject. More recently Jacklin& Le Riche, (2009) have argued that Higher Education should be reconceptualising student support moving from 'support' to 'supportive'.

In summary, study skills are useful for students who require guidance on technical aspects of academic study and writing; however, as a stand-alone delivery it has limited value as an approach. In terms of support for development of literacy practices for academic study and writing, such as of discourse evaluation and analysis, as Wingate (2006) argues, a study skills approach does not support learners' into their discipline.

Concurrently, information literacy practices as defined by Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) also evolved as a response to the changing needs of widening participation students. Representing all university libraries in the UK and Ireland, as well as national libraries and many of the UK's colleges of higher education the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) published a position paper (SCONUL, 1999), "Information skills in higher education: a SCONUL position paper" which introduced 'The Seven Pillars of Information Skills Model'. Revised by SCONUL in 2011, it was updated and presented as a generic "core" model for Higher Education, to which a series of "lenses", representing

the different groups of learners, could be applied and renamed 'The Seven Pillars of Information Literacy Model'. The importance of embedded information literacy practices within the discipline area has also been highlighted in the literature and will be discussed below in sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.4. Therefore, if information literacy is included as part of stand-alone study skills, or delivered separately from the academic study and writing practice the limitations identified by Wingate (2006), of delivering skills through a separate stand-alone approach may also apply to information literacy practices.

The following section outlines SCONUL's Seven Pillars and their information literacy core model (1999 & 2011) and examines limitations in terms of supporting academic study and writing development.

3.2   Information Literacy

The policy context outlined above in chapter 2 suggests that, like study skills, generic library classes would meet the information literacy needs of most students; however information literacy has evolved to become more than just a set of specific skills to be taught and acquired. SCONUL defines information literacy as:

> *an umbrella term which encompasses concepts such as digital, visual and media literacies, academic literacy, information handling, information skills, data curation and data management. (SCONUL, 2011, pp 3)*

They go on to describe an information literate person as able to:

> *Demonstrate an awareness of how they gather, use, manage, synthesise and create information and data in an ethical manner and will have the information skills to do so effectively. (SCONUL, 2011, pp3)*

The Seven Pillars (1999 and 2011) definition of information literacy was developed over a number of years by SCONUL and was part of the sector response to the Dearing skills agenda and the evolving needs of students. Information literacy has also been defined by a number of other

organisations. The Chartered Institute of Library Information Professionals indicate that to be information literate is:

> *"Knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner." (CILIP, 2015)*

From this we can see a National and University librarians' perspective is that it is the understanding of information within specific settings that determines the information literate person. For a university student, this would be within the discipline and although not specifically indicated by Lea and Street (1998), from an academic literacies perspective would be considered part of academic literacies. However as shown in section 3.1, like study skills information literacy practice is generally provided as a stand-alone service through the library. The following section outlines how information literacy is perceived by the university librarians' professional association.

SCONUL presents the Pillars of the model as a 'three dimensional building' containing discrete and independent sets of competencies (SCONUL, 2011).
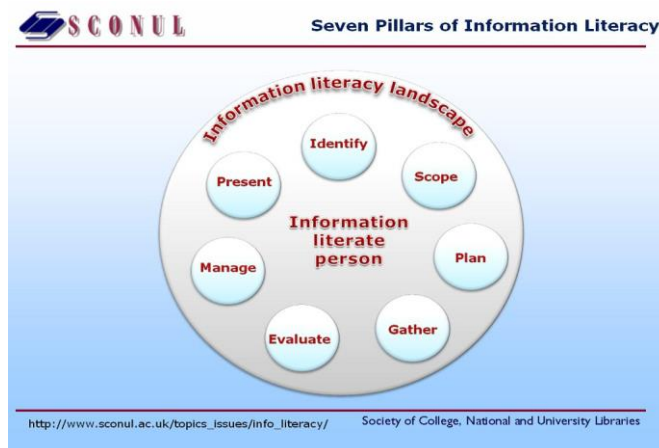
Figure 3-1 SCONUL Seven Pillars

SCONUL's (2011) model defines what they refer to as the core skills and competencies (ability) and attitudes and behaviours (understanding) at the heart of information literacy development in higher education. Thus in one setting a person might be highly literate whilst in another they might lack what SCONUL describe as the information literacy competencies required. SCONUL states that:

'Within each "pillar" an individual can develop from "novice" to "expert" as they progress through their learning life, although, as the information world itself is constantly changing and developing, it is possible to move down a pillar as well as progress up it.' (SCONUL, 2011; pp3)

This linear progression up and down pillars will depend on particular contexts which will determine the literacy practices required. There is an overarching pillar heading for each discrete set of skills and competencies, shown graphically in the SCONUL model above, Figure 3-1:

At the core of SCONUL positioning is the idea that becoming an information literate person is not an event but rather a process. Often activities might require simultaneous use of what SCONUL describe as multiple skills and competencies encompassed within the Seven Pillars of Information Literacy (Bent, 2008).

Working within an information management context, Bruce et al (2006) sought to make sense of the different perspectives used in curriculum design, teaching and learning, and by the need to apply theories of learning to information literacy education in coherent ways. Bruce et al (2006) categorised ways of seeing information literacy, based on their view that:

"People also see information literacy differently" As there are different ways of seeing learning and teaching, there are also different ways of seeing IL (Bruce, 1997; Limberg, 2000; Lupton 2004). Further, Barrie (2003) reports a clear relationship between ways in which university teachers see teaching and learning and their approaches to teaching graduate capabilities of which IL is one. (Bruce, 2006, pp: 2)

Bruce and her colleagues described ways that information literacy might be experienced by learners and suggested educators should strategically design curriculum support to develop what they termed as graduate information literacy capabilities, at different learner levels and abilities (2006). Research in the information science area by Kuhlthau, (1988); and Limberg, (2000a, 2000b) into the variety of ways needed to understand the searching process was particularly relevant to Bruce et al, in that they show that the variation in the users' experience of searching can highlight areas where a gap exists

between the search process and the learning outcomes. Limberg's work suggests that information seeking is actually not content-specific, but more of a general process. However, echoing Lea and Street's (1998) earlier academic literacies argument, Bruce and her colleagues suggest that this process cannot be described without relating it to the content of what is learnt. Edwards (2004) argued that these studies confirm that human factors in web-based searching behaviour must not be ignored. Having considered the variation in ways students search for information when using the Internet and library databases, teaching and learning strategies and a model for curriculum design based on managing student's experiences were recommended by Bruce and her colleagues.

Six frames are described in their model and Bruce contends that each frame brings with it a particular view of information literacy, information, curriculum focus, learning and teaching, content, and assessment. The first Frame, the *content* frame, has a focus on providing learners with information about tools and techniques for accessing resources. The second frame, *competency,* builds on the first frame by testing how effective learners are at accessing resources. The third frame, *learning-to-learn*, would ask the learner to think like a professional and seeks to help learners construct knowledge appropriately and develop professional thinking patterns. The fourth frame, *personal relevance,* asks the learner to consider what information literacy can do for them, how they might use information to meet their needs. The fifth frame, *social relevance*, suggests the learner should be considering how information literacy might address challenges within communities. Finally the *relational* frame asks learners to question power relationships of information within society and view the transformative possibilities of information.

Expressing different information literacy practices in different levels in this way allows the possibility of identifying aspects of information literacy a student might require at a particular transition point. For instance Meyer and Land's suggestion that 'stuck places' result from 'epistemological obstacles' that block the development of a transformed perspective (Meyer & Land, 2005, pp: 377) is equally applicable in an information literacy context. If a learner is within Bruce's (2006) content frame yet a tutor assumes a library

induction has covered all that is required or that the learner already has information identification and retrieval techniques, an information literacy practices epistemological block might be experienced. Therefore, from a curriculum design perspective, threshold concepts within information literacy practices might also be used to define powerful transformative points and serve a diagnostic purpose for tutors (Land et al, 2005). For instance, if the learner does not understand searching and retrieving sources and becomes 'stuck' at the *content* and *competency* frames, the impact might be indicated through types of resources used in an assessment task.

Bruce's 'Relational Lens' is particularly interesting as it brings together all five other frames at the point of learner experience (Bruce et al, 2006: pp: 6), the Relational Lens will now be more fully explained. Bruce asserts that the basis of a relational frame is that students experience information literacy in a range of ways that are more or less complex or powerful (1997: 60, 174). Bruce adapts a number of Ramsden's relational principles of learning:

> ➢ *Learning is about changes in conception – teachers need to assist students in developing new and more complex ways of experiencing information literacy;*

> ➢ *Learning always has a content as well as process – students need to learn about discipline content as they seek and use information;*

> ➢ *Learning is about relations between the learner and the subject matter – the focus is not on the student or the teacher or the information but on the relation between these elements;*

> ➢ *Improving learning is about understanding the learner's perspective – teachers need to understand the variation in students conceptions of information literacy. (Ramsden, 1988:26-27)*

Bruce et al's (2006) Relational Frame does not see the student and information literacy as separate entities; the relationship between the student and information is seen as one entity. Bruce's phenomenographic approach argues that information literacy is not a set of skills, competencies and

characteristics but a complex of different ways of an individual interacting with information which might also include:

> *Knowledge about the world of information (content frame)*

> *A set of competencies or skills (competency frame)*

> *A way of learning (learning to learn frame)*

> *Contextual and situated social practices (personal relevance frame)*

> *Power relationships in society and social responsibility (social impact frame) (Bruce et al, 2006, pp 5)*

From this perspective learning is understood as being able to adopt these more complex and powerful ways of experiencing what Bruce (2006) describes as phenomena. As indicated by Bruce (2006, pp: 6) this view of learning has also been labeled as 'variation theory' (Marton and Tsui, 2004; Pang and Marton, 2003). Variation theory proposes that learning occurs when variation in ways of understanding or experiencing are discerned by learners. Bowden and Marton (1998; pp: 154) argue that students need to experience and explore variation by comparing and analysing their experiences. Ramsden (1988; pp: 21-22) also argues that teachers should create situations where students are able to confront differences between current ways of thinking about the subject matter and new ways desired by the teacher. Locating variation theory within information literacy Bruce (2006) argues that in this context:

Information literacy is learned when different ways of experiencing it are discerned, information searching is learned when different ways of experiencing that are discerned. In the latter example, a person must discern the difference in searching based on knowing that a database is structured, and searching without understanding the structure, to appreciate the powerful influence of structure on searching. Bringing about learning through widening experience, and thus revealing variation, is the underlying principle. (Bruce et al, 2006; pp: 6)

Bruce (2006) further argues that in designing information literacy learning activities fundamental aspects must be explicit. For example, Bruce (2006) suggests that searching for evidence to support an argument forms the basis of students' experience when researching an essay. Bruce further suggests that students might not understand what is meant by an argument and how to present and build an argument or what is meant by 'evidence' and how to present evidence. Therefore, Bruce concludes that teaching and learning activities should be designed to enable students to develop more complex understandings of subject information through variation experiences.

However, in recalling how study skills support (3.1.1) often delivered through central services does not necessarily meet learner needs, it is possible to draw parallels with information literacy activities when located within the librarians' provenance. When information literacy practices are provided as part of induction sessions to the library provision and 'how to' activities around using library catalogues and databases the variation experience described by Bruce and others (Bowden and Marton, 1998; Ramsden, 1988; Marton and Tsui, 2004; Pang and Marton, 2003), are not created. Additionally, as Bodi (2002) argues learning discipline research skills from a librarian might also serve to mislead learners.

Kuhlthau (1993) also contends that a strategy for searching is based on certainty and order and the requirement from a librarian's perspective is to show students a systematic way of finding relevant sources that meet their need. However, as the research process does not progress in a tidy linear manner, the resulting challenges and confusion might leave the learner blocked in their transition 'betwixt' space and unable to identify appropriate material. Additionally, Kuhlthau (1993), and more recently also Bodi, (2002) further contend that as librarians do not address the complexity of the learning process, students might be misled into thinking information seeking is merely identifying sources and not interpreting them.

Leckie (1996) suggests that what presents in an essay as not engaging with the discipline discourse might actually result from using a coping strategy and not an information-seeking strategy. Moore et al's work on patch writing

illuminated the challenges faced by students in terms of using and recording sources, indicating that students relied heavily on summarising their sources, often misinterpreting what a source had said, or not citing a source (Moore et al, 2010, pp: 187). Moore et al suggested that perhaps their respondents did not understand the sources.

Thus it appears that:

> *All students could likely use a considerable amount of help from academic librarians in producing their research papers, particularly if they have not done very many, or if the topics are large and diffuse. Thus, while some students are reluctant to approach a librarian, many others want librarians to help them in narrowing their topic, finding citations, evaluating those citations, and even fetching the relevant material! (Leckie, 1996, pp: 206)*

More recently Bruce's proposal that students should develop more complex understandings has been echoed by the Association of College and Research Libraries. Similarly to SCONUL in the UK, in America, ACRL has played a leading role in promoting information literacy in higher education and published the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* in 2000. The changing nature of libraries over the last decade has seen convergence with other student services, in particular support for academic literacy / writing, as continued transformation of academic libraries as learning spaces bring central services under one umbrella. The storage and use of on-line digital content has opened up virtual library space and changed the time and space learner use, and also their interaction with resources. In tandem the roles of librarians and other support staff have evolved and developed to support learners within the changing landscape. This in turn has meant that the role of information literacy has been reconsidered.

Whilst SCONUL has retained its Seven Pillars Model, ACRL has refreshed its view of information literacy and developed the *Framework 'in light of changes in higher education and increasingly complex information ecosystems' (2016).*

Like Bruce's work the ACRL *Framework* is developed around a set of "frames," which are described as critical gateway or portal concepts. Students, it proposes, must pass through these to develop genuine expertise within a discipline, profession, or knowledge domain. Each frame includes a knowledge practices section used to demonstrate how the mastery of the concept leads to application in new situations and knowledge generation. Each frame also includes a set of dispositions that address the affective areas of learning (ACRL, 2016). This view allows a revised understanding of the disciplinary threshold concepts and suggests possible gateway or portal blockages at an earlier literacy stage in terms of academic writing.

This suggestion resonates with Secker's (2011) positioning of information literacy as being transitional, transferable and transformational. Coonan & Secker (2011, pp: 8) suggest that the lack of understanding by university lecturers and administrators of information literacy, highlighted by Stubbings & Franklin (2006, p.2) and Badke (2010), can be traced to a conflict of perception around the nature of information and how to handle it. They argue that this conflict has led to a separation between the functional and intellectual aspects of the term 'information'; and within this conceptual conflict, information literacy has become reductively aligned with low-level, functional or basic skills. Coonan& Secker (2011) argue persuasively in their ANCIL report for a curriculum that recognises and supports the transitions that occur in learners as they move from school to higher education and move from dependent to autonomous learning. They also argue for curriculum content to be transferrable equipping learners with appropriate information literacy behaviours, approaches, cognitive functions and skills to be able to generate strategies for new information contexts such as the workplace. Finally Coonan & Secker argue for information literacy to be transformational for the learner, possibly changing their world view. Coonan & Secker recognise the overlap with other bodies of scholarship such as academic literacies, new literacies, media literacies and digital literacy and the desire to develop critical thinking, evaluation and high level cognitive skills in individuals. Therefore, it appears high-level information handling by

learners is crucial to the academics' desire of bringing the learner into the discipline conversations.

According to Wilkes et al (2015) librarians suggest that academic staff could provide opportunities for student engagement with the core ideas about information within a discipline-specific context through designing well-constructed curricula and meaningful assessment tasks that foster these practices within the discipline. However, despite research which highlights the need for teaching and learning activities to be designed to enable students to develop more complex understandings of subject information through variation experiences (Bruce, 2006; Bowden & Marton,1998; Ramsden, 1988; Marton & Tsui, 2004; Pang & Marton, 2003), the discussion surrounding information literacy support is similar to the study skill support debate in section 3.1.1.; in that advocates focus on what is the best way to 'deliver' information literacy practices to students. Possible approaches range from aspects of information literacy provided during library induction courses, as part of generic study skill or IT sessions, through study guides developed for the purpose of information literacy support or on occasion specifically trained 'guides' to respond to user questions (White & Noel, 2004, pp: 5). Some proponents contend that information literacy is significant enough to be taught as a stand-alone module, assessed separately (Johnston & Webber 2003). Some advocate embedding it within modules as part of accredited undergraduate courses (Walton et al, 2007).

Despite the agreement in the literature indicated above, that it is useful to ensure that library instruction is integrated into courses and available for students at the point of need and that students need information literacy practices, it is not clear how they are expected to acquire them (Walton et al, 2007; Park, 2008). Without: *"Strategic and timely support in that crucial first year, many students may struggle in this area (Park, 2008, pp29)."*

Thus the interventions to support students into higher education study that have been described here have resided generally outside of the academic tutors' sphere of direct influence, often being delivered by a central service.

Both approaches discussed above support specific aspects of learners' literacy practices. However, as the above discussion shows, central services delivery of literacy practices which emphasises separation of literacy practices from the discipline limits a learner as they attempt to understand nuances of disciplines. The value of linking literacy practices to disciplinary curricula is well established within the New Literacies Studies (see for example Street & Lea, 1998; McVaugh et al, 2014). Prior to discussing the benefits of an academic literacies approach the following section 3.3 considers the limitations of an academic socialisation approach.

3.3   Academic Socialization

What has emerged from the above discussion of study skills and information literacy is that most universities provide some form of deliberate intervention to help students during the first year experience, and that this has proved useful in certain aspects of the transition process for learners (Gardner, Siegel, & Cutright 2001; Schnell, Louis, & Doetkott 2003; Lovitts 2005; Wingate, 2006, Auburn 2007; Skyrme 2007). However, as identified earlier in section 2.2, if learners successfully navigate the non-academic aspects of university life, a critical transition point is to enter disciplinary study and succeed in the assessment process, for which academic literacy practices are required. As Krause (2001) and Wingate (2006) point out assessment is still largely through the means of the written academic essay. Lillis (2001, pp: 20) further observes that students pass or fail a course depending on success in such written tasks. Hathaway (2015) has noted a growing recognition of the centrality of academic writing competencies which have led to calls for students to receive more effective preparation to deal with the demands of the academic literacy practices they will encounter at university. Therefore being supported into disciplinary writing and assessment conventions and cultures is important for success and progression.

Harvey et al (2006) observed that students adjust more rapidly to university life if they learn what Harvey et al describe as the institutional 'discourse' and feel they fit in (Harvey et al, 2006, pp: 18). Equally, Bodi (2002) argues that when learners first engage with subject content whilst scholars and tutors

understand the body of knowledge in their area and are familiar with theories, paradigms and nuances of their field, undergraduates (as novices to the field) are less able to cope with the self-doubt and ambiguity associated with research activities that must precede the reading and writing of an essay. Both these observations echo the earlier work of Lea and Street (1998) and the academic literacies argument, which is discussed later in this chapter, that academic writing should be understood within the context of institutional practices, power relations and identities.

Generally, before academic writing is reading. In the quote below, Northedge captures the complexity of novice undergraduates' first encounters with disciplinary reading:

> *Their eyes scan the words, most of which are familiar, but no meaning goes in. Struggling through even the first page or two is a huge and seemingly fruitless effort (Northedge, 2003, pp: 171)*

Northedge elaborates the challenge faced by the novice thus:

> *In ordinary life, the flow of events around us supplies enough of a frame of reference to enable us to understand immediately most of what is said. However, academic discourses work with propositional meanings of a decontextualised and abstract nature. Propositional meanings depend on rules and structures (Bruner, 1996b, p. 98), and on the frame of reference supplied by implicit questions and purposes shared within the knowledge community. (Northedge, 2003, pp: 172)*

Northedge (2003) contends that the frame of reference is in fact harder for the learner to grasp than the actual substance of what has been said. The primary manner in which a student will acquire a frame of reference for their discourse is to participate within the discourse. This Northedge (2003) concludes is a classic student dilemma:

> *They find themselves 'locked out' – unable to make sense of utterances they encounter because they cannot place them within the implicit frames of reference, but equally unable to make progress with internalising these frames of reference because they cannot engage with the utterances through which the frames are made manifest. (Northedge, 2003, pp: 172)*

For Northedge (2003) the role of the expert discipline tutor is to act as a bridge for the students into the particular discourse. This approach has been termed the academic socialisation model (Lea & Street, 1998, pp: 159) and as with the previous two approaches described above – studies skills (3.1.1) and information literacy (3.1.2) – there are also shortcomings.

> *The academic socialization model presumes that the disciplinary discourses and genres are relatively stable and that once students have learnt and understood the ground rules of a particular academic discourse they are able to reproduce it unproblematically. It doesn't address complexity associated with understanding what is required in the areas of 'epistemology, authority and contestation over knowledge' (Lea & Street, 1998, pp: 106).*

Thus, in this described socialisation context, the learner would reproduce discipline knowledge for assessments without necessarily understanding the changing nature of genres and discourses or their individual role in contributing to the discourse through their academic writing. Lea and Street, (1998, pp: 158), have argued that what constitutes good academic writing is often contested amongst institutions, staff and students; thus a novice entering this particular rite of passage would require more than technical study skills or information literacy competencies to successfully navigate the threshold concepts of the discipline identified by Meyer & Land (2005).

Therefore understanding academic writing on a number of technical and conceptual levels suggests that rather than one critical first year transition, it is likely multiple transitions will be experienced. From a study skills perspective the transition might be acquiring new grammar and vocabulary, whilst from an information literacy perspective each of the six frames identified by Bruce et al (2006) would constitute transitions. Krause (2001) argues that literacy practices are required to become a successful participant within a subject; therefore, developing proficiency with information literacy and the technical aspects of academic study and writing will be, as Gourlay (2009) argues, part of the normal transition into becoming a student. However, as discussed above (3.1.1 and 3.1.2), whilst separate standalone skills, information literacy induction and academic socialization might support learners who are adapting to certain academic study and writing conventions,

as the research literature and the discussion above indicates (Wingate, 2006, Harvey et al, 2006, Lea & Street, 1998), all have limitations when encountered in isolation from each other. Therefore, student groups who currently have lower attainment and progression (Mountford-Zimdars et al, 2015) might struggle during these points of transition.

If, as Krause (2001 pp: 150) suggests, new academic conventions must be learned and new literacy practices acquired, including those of using research strategies, critical interpretation and argument development, and are identified as ordinary transitions, then transitions for technical or information literacy 'stuck points' in academic writing might also be considered a normal part of the transition into discipline discourses as Gourlay (2009) suggests. Itua et al's (2014) research suggests that students are still struggling with information literacy practices with student requests similar to those in previous research over the past decade:

> *There should be more taught sessions on academic writing and essay writing, more opportunities to submit drafts, more feedback, the chance to use essays from previous years, more support for reading and more information on researching to help them to understand academic writing in practice. (Itua et al, 2014, pp: 321)*

This suggests learners, particularly those identified earlier in this paper as at risk; continue to need help with all aspects of literacy practices required to be successful in academic study and writing and not in isolation from each other. A third approach, the academic literacies model that builds on theories of reading and writing as social practices, or the New Literacy Studies (see (Barton, 1994; Gee, 1996; Street, 1984, 1995), was proposed by Lea and Street (1998). They identified three models of student writing, describing them as 'the study skills', 'academic socialization', and 'academic literacies' models. The first two and their inherent limitations have already discussed within this paper. Lea and Street argued (Street, 2009; pp: 4) that in some respects the third model, academic literacies, subsumes many of the features of the other two. They argued that their model:

Draws on both the skills and academic socialization models but goes further than the academic socialization model in paying particular attention to the relationships of power, authority, meaning making, and identity that are implicit in the use of literacy practices within specific institutional settings. (Lea and street, 2006; pp: 369)

This model is considered in the following section of the paper.

3.4 Academic Literacies

Whilst a library induction might enable a student to retrieve a reading specified on a discipline course or module list from a technical point, it does not help with understanding what Lea & Street argue is required in the areas of 'epistemology, authority and contestation over knowledge' (1998, pp: 106). The New Literacy School (Street, 2003) argues that we should think in terms of different literacies rather than different versions of a single literacy skill or competence being deployed for different uses. Lankshear (1987) challenges the single literacy skill or competence view, linking social literacy practices with a pluralist view of literacy: Lankshear (1987, quoted in Hannon, 2000:32) argues that 'there is no single, unitary referent for 'literacy' and that literacy is not the name for a finite technology, set of skills, or any other 'thing'. Lankshear instead argues that we should recognise that there are many specific literacies, in Lankshear's view each comprising an identifiable set of socially constructed practices based upon print and organised around beliefs about how the skills of reading and writing may or possibly should be used.

For Barton (2000; pp: 24), writing about the 'New or Situated Literacies', a key to this view of literacy is situating reading and writing in its social context. For Janks (2010), this critical approach to writing should recognise that language creates each of us as particular kinds of human subjects and that words are not innocent, but work to position us. Likewise, Janks approach recognises that our world – geographically, environmentally, politically and socially – is not neutral or natural. It has been formed by history and shaped by humanity (Janks, 2010, pp: 227).

This critical approach requires the orchestration of literacy practices by the learner, which itself requires understanding of the interconnectedness of the literacy practices in an academic study and writing context. These ideas of context and use, and individual development within context or situation, are significant when considered in relation to academic study and writing in a university context, and are at the heart of individual transitionary processes. Lea & Street's (1998) Academic Literacies model sought to move the discussion away from previous 'study skills student deficit' and 'Academic Socialisation' models (1998, pp: 158) towards an understanding of the complexity of writing practices at degree level (Lea & Street, 1998).

> *Academic literacies (…) suggests a more complex and contested interpretation in which the processes of student writing and tutor feedback are defined through implicit assumptions about what constitutes valid knowledge within a particular context, and the relationships of authority that exist around the communication of these assumptions. (Lea & Street, 1998, pp 170)*

Lea and Street (1998) see academic literacies as subsuming the features of the study skills and academic socialisation models. Lea and Street further point out that the academic literacies model is not presented as mutually exclusive of the other two models they identify, and that each should be seen as encapsulating the other (Street, 2009, pp: 4). They suggest that the academic socialization model takes account of study skills by including them in a broader acculturation process and the academic literacies model also takes account of the academic socialization and builds on insights developed there as well the study skills perspective (Lea & Street, 1998). The strength of academic literacies is the all-encompassing approach to the study of a discipline which allows learners to understand the socially situated nature of knowledge and the power dynamics of its creation.

Thus, as Lea and Street (1998) show, the changing nature of the discipline discourse is recognised, alongside the discourse of power relationships within the institution and department. Through writing as part of the discipline rather than being outside it is possible for the individual to become aware through the process that academic writing is constructed within institutional and departmental frameworks, and learning the rules (for instance about

plagiarism, referencing, essay structure, rules of discourse), is simply part of becoming a student. However as shown in section 3.2, the literature (Bruce et al 2006; Walton et al, 2007; Park, 2008; Moore et al, 2010; Wilkes et al, 2015) highlights this area, and in particular information literacy practices, as a challenge for many students. More recently when Itua et al (2014) posed the question 'what issues make AW *(academic writing)* difficult for you', three main issues emerged from their group discussions: 'referencing', 'academic jargon' and 'writing structure'.

> *The primary issue for the students lay with referencing: all groups identified this as a problematic aspect of AW. Concerns ranged from putting 'others' work into your own words' and being able to demonstrate that 'the data that you find is backed up [by] research' to simply not knowing how to reference correctly. The latter was in turn associated with 'different reference styles for different subjects', 'too many obstacles as you have to reference everything', not knowing 'how many [references] to use', and a general difficulty with 'getting it right' – as one group asserted:*

> *REFERENCING! No matter how many times we are given lectures, hand-outs or guides to referencing, it is so difficult to apply when writing an essay or report. (Itua et al, 2014, pp: 311)*

Interestingly, the academic literacies model doesn't explicitly explicate the role of information literacy practices or locate it in either the study skills or academic socialization models, which Street & Lea (1998) indicate their model encompass. Therefore, whilst it might be implicit that students will acquire information literacy practices, it is not clear how information literacy practices, as identified by groups such as SCONUL (1998, 2011) and Bruce (2006), will be developed in practice with learners as part of the academic literacies model. In her paper 'Academic Literacies: a pedagogy for course design' Lea (2004) describes how academic literacies, being developed as a design frame focusing on pedagogy, should take 'account of students' present and previous literacy practices'. This would appear to suggest that information literacy practices, along with study skills and academic socialization, would form part of the design frame as determined by the tutor. Therefore, for the academic literacies approach, success relies on tutors

identifying previous and present literacy experiences and building all literacy practices associated with academic writing, whilst concurrently revealing the complexity of disciplinary processes and their contested nature. Lea and Street (2006; pp: 376) argue that an academic literacies approach also allows for changing discourse and power relations through relating the range of genres, modes, shifts, transformations, representations, meaning-making processes, and identities involved in academic learning within and across academic contexts thereby explicating how literacy practices relate to epistemological issues.

However, as Hardy and Clughen (2012) demonstrate, there are significant dissonances between expectations of teaching staff and repertoires of novice students. If, as highlighted by Elton (2010, pp: 151), 'student writing is an academic discipline' rarely taught by those with expertise in academic writing the significance of information literacy as part of academic writing might be missed by the tutor. Itua et al (2014) echo the view that student writing in an academic discipline is taught either in an academic writing unit, which rarely if ever can go beyond the generic, or within a disciplinary department, where there is rarely the appropriate expertise in academic writing. Itua et al (2014) go on to suggest that difficulties with academic writing are therefore not confined to undergraduate students and have been reported in several studies of academics (Murray, Thow, Moore, and Murphy 2008; Moore 2003; Murray 2002). Therefore, unless the tutor has expertise in literacy practices associated with academic study and writing, as with study skills, information literacy might also be seen as the responsibility of library staff or students are assumed to already have the required information literacy practices.

This section now concludes with a summary of this chapter's discussion of support for learners in higher education. Lea's (2004) design frame is outlined further in chapter four where it is used as the basis for the design of the literacy intervention used in the empirical section of this thesis.

3.5 Summary

This chapter opened by noting that there were worse outcomes in terms of attainment and progression in postgraduate study and/or graduate

employment for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, students from ethnic minority groups and disabled students not in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance (HEFCE, 2015, pp: 3). The chapter continued by summarising, types of support for academic writing used within higher education, as mapped by Lea and Street (2006), against two different, but overlapping approaches: study skills as a response to students' deficits; academic socialisation with tutor as expert guide. Additionally approaches to support from university librarian staff for information literacy practices have also been identified through the work of SCONUL (2010) and Bruce (2006). It was argued that information literacy practices, although not included by Lea and Street (1998) in their academic literacies model originally, would be seen as part of the literacy practices of the academic literacies approach within this study.

Each of the areas discussed above have been identified through the literature as having a role in academic study and writing. Study skills, the use of information literacy and being socialised into the discipline discourse have been highlighted as important factors impacting on progression prospects of first year students (Northedge, 2003, Lawrence, 2005; Tinto & Pusser, 2006; Gibson, 2007; Einfalt & Turley 2009, pp: 105). The current provision appears to support certain aspects of transition into the academy; however limitations of the study skills and academic socialisation models in terms of academic writing have been identified, particularly if separated from the discipline and provided as a stand-alone experience (Lea & Street, 1998, Wingate, 2006; Harvey et al, 2006). Librarians' research indicates that Information literacy proficiency is required to become a successful participant within a discipline (Bodi, 2002; Johnston & Webber 2003; Walton et al, 2007). Information literacy research strategies (SCONUL, 2010; Bruce et al, 2006) are therefore critical to accessing disciplinary resources (Bodi, 2002; Johnston & Webber 2003; Walton et al, 2007); whilst academic socialisation with an expert tutor might act as a bridge into discipline frames of reference, with technical study skills aiding in the writing of an essay. All these different components are either explicitly or implicitly subsumed as part of the academic literacies model (Lea & Street, 1998) where previous and present literacy experiences

are further developed whilst the complexity of disciplinary processes and their contested nature are participated in. An academic literacies approach was identified as encompassing all the models discussed, and was identified as overcoming the limitations of stand-alone support models. The implication of relying on tutors who may assume students already have academic writing information literacy practices was also highlighted.

Therefore, learning academic conventions and new literacy practices, including those of using research strategies, critical interpretation and argument development (Krause, 2001 pp: 12; Pineteh, 2014, pp: 12) within the discourse will be part of the transition into becoming a student. Currently there appears to be a multiplicity of ways in which the novice learner might be supported but the acquisition of literacy practices for academic study and writing is essentially a 'piece-meal approach' with variations across departments within institutions (Kift, 2010, pp:2). This isolated work across institutions to address differential outcomes has been identified as fragmented and not well evidenced (HEFCE, 2015).

Thus, given the ongoing call for systematic evidence on approaches to supporting identified groups of students, with worse outcomes in terms of attainment and progression, there appears to be an opportunity to raise questions whether an intervention assuming an academic literacies approach, explicitly taking account of previous and present information literacy practices through formative assessment activities, supports students into academic study and writing. If this were the case, then it would follow that a literacy intervention encompassing diagnostic academic literacies activities could anticipate student transitions which in turn would permit pro-active support for transitions experienced by learners. The following section presents the literacy intervention used within the empirical study of this research and outlines the pedagogic design principles used.

Chapter 4: The Literacy Intervention

Chapter 2 established the changing type of learner in higher education resulting from increased and widening participation agendas (Robbins Report, 1963; Dearing, 1997). Through exploring notions of transition points for novice undergraduates, and seeing them as rites of passage and betwixt, liminal spaces, troublesome threshold concept blockages were identified as normal transition experiences (Gourlay, 2009). Chapter 3 considered the variety and type of support provided by universities and practitioners in the context of the 'rite of passage' transition experiences. Diversity of opinion across what and how support provision should be provided was identified but there was also consensus that situating support within the discipline was a desirable goal. Harvey et al (2006) also argue support that is situated, formative, socialising and focused on academic writing experiences through literacy practices, brings together key aspects of adapting to university life and becoming autonomous learners. In 2008 as part of a faculty wide quinquennial course review and specifically targeted at reducing what was considered high attrition and non-progression with first year undergraduates I was requested to lead the development of a cross faculty compulsory module that would prepare and support students into academic study and writing. The module was designed collaboratively with a team of university wide, student support specialists drawn from the areas of study skills, learning technology, library provisions and access tutors. Once validated the module was compulsory across all Business, Accounting and Law courses, delivered annually by a team of subject tutors and support specialists to approximately 300 first year undergraduates. This module was the subject of a number of funded projects that explored the use of re-usable learning objects embedded in curricula; however this PhD study is distinct in that it focuses specifically on non-traditionally qualified students' experiences of participating in structured literacy practices. These practices are required for academic writing and study and were experienced during transitions in first semester assessment activities. This study did not form part of any other funded study.

4.1   The Literacy Intervention background and design

This chapter describes the literacy intervention, which was embedded in the module, in which this study's respondents participated, and which forms the part of the context for the study reported in Chapters 6 – 8. It is useful to note that this particular module designed in part as a literacy intervention predates this PhD work and has been the focus of a number of Higher Education Academy (HEA) and Joint Information Systems Council (JISC) funded projects (Greaves, 2009, 2010 & 2011). Designed by this researcher as a pragmatic response to increased numbers and to challenges with literacy practices faced by students as identified by academic staff and examination boards, the module and intervention builds on existing research practices for supporting students into university life generally, and into academic study and writing in particular. During the funded projects' life-cycles the literacy intervention has been piloted, evaluated and adjusted by the researcher following critical peer review and feedback. Various university colleagues informed the design and assisted with the implementation. As the researcher I was involved in all deliveries of the module and literacy intervention including the one for this PhD study.

Whilst the operational delivery has evolved and been modified, the underpinning pedagogic approach remains constant and in tandem with Lea's (2004) academic literacies curriculum design principles in conjunction with a number of assumptions. Firstly, that becoming information literate is a complex of different ways of interacting with information (Bruce, 2006). Secondly, that a certain set of practices are required to engage with information (SCONUL, 2011). Thirdly, that equipping learners with research skills will require structure (Harvey and Knight, 1996). Fundamental to the design was recognition that students often experience tricky transitional stages at their first point of formal assessment. Therefore, the literacy intervention design focuses on creating transitions in literacy practices in order to create 'stuck stages' during early formative assessment activities. Students are guided through 'stuck stages' by supporting these 'betwixt spaces' and these experiences contribute to normal rites of passage into the tutor preferred literacy practices for academic study and writing. In this

literacy intervention, formative assessment is defined as activities where judgements are made by tutors, peers and self about the appropriateness of literacy practices selected for each particular task, and as suggested by Black and William, (1998) and Sadler (1989); where this information is used to facilitate student learning.

The literacy intervention design also recognises the richness and diversity, as identified by Gourlay et al (2013, pp: 10), of all the different approaches to supporting learners. As discussed in chapter 3, technical study skills (e.g. essay structure, grammar, spelling), information literacy (e.g. key word searching, retrieval techniques, referencing) and understanding of discipline genres and discourses are all deemed to be literacy practices and to contribute to academic writing. The literacy intervention further assumes that learners will be developing literacy practices with and through both print and digital means. Therefore, literacy practices are explicitly *not* treated as a deficit issue but as part of a normal transitional process into university academic practice. Formative feedback activities are iterative and allow multiple 'practice' attempts at various literacy practices, in particular selected information literacy practices as defined by SCONUL (2011). The iterative nature of the activities and feedback allow learners multiple opportunities to transcend possible 'stuck betwixt' spaces around literacy practices; the compulsory nature of the activities ensures participation. The assessment strategies also ensure all outputs from activities form part of a final portfolio and so are required to be completed (See Table).

Week	E Portfolio assessment submission (weekly)
	Assessment 1 (40% each component = 4%)
One	1,000 word essay
Two	Timeline for subject area
Three	Literature search on topic given
Four	Précis on topic given *(E Portfolio assessment/submissions check point)*
Five	Essay plan on the title provided using appropriate theoretical model/s
Six	Draft essay
Seven	CV for peer review

Eight	Company blogs and post available intern jobs *(E Portfolio assessment/submissions check point)*
Nine	Apply for intern role of other companies (Letter of application)
Ten	Revised Draft essay
Twelve	*(Final E Portfolio assessment/submissions check point)*
	Assessment 2 (60%)
Fourteen	Submission of the written essay and all E Portfolio assessments completed.

Table 4-1 Examples of E Portfolio assessment submission (weekly)

The assessment strategy of the literacy intervention is discussed in more detail below.

Whilst all Lea's (2004, pp: 244) principles of course design based on an 'academic literacies' model play an important role in designing curriculum experiences, the notions of 'taking account of previous literacy practices' and 'not creating a dichotomy between academic literacies and other literacies' were seen as pivotal for points of transition. Using Lea's principles, the literacy intervention created a curriculum design for a first year module where learners and tutors can identify gaps in literacy practices through what Brown & Knight (1994, pp: 19) describe as iterative criterion-referenced ipsative assessment. This assessment approach acknowledges that with widening participation comes greater diversity, students are entering their studies with a wide range of levels and abilities, and therefore have more diverse needs (Hussey & Smith, 2010). The diversity and complexity of learner needs is met through a design assumption that all learners may have an incomplete set of literacy practices for academic study and would benefit from an opportunity to align their practices with the current academic context and have support during transition stages.

Van Gennep's transitional or liminal phase might be regarded as potentially threatening and harmful. However, in this context, what Draper (2002) defines as rituals and practices have been designed by the tutor to act as repeated, structured activities that support the development of literacy practices (e.g information searching, information retrieval). Both the tutor and

the learners are therefore expecting misconceptions to emerge, and for appropriate interventions and adjustments to be made. Thus tricky transition points where learners might become stuck are built in as part of the curriculum design and used as diagnostic points to provide timely and meaningful support. This does not involve treating learners as having a deficit resulting from being increased or widening participation learners, but acknowledges the variety of literacy practices involved in academic study and writing, and provides appropriate activities for their practice and development.   Crucial in this development process is the use of ipsative assessment as described by Hughes (2011 & 2017). Hughes suggests that:

 *'There are many different ways of developing learning and to appreciate these we need to explore what enhancing learning through feedback might mean and how ipsative feedback that is visible and explicit might encourage students to engage enthusiastically in learning'.(*2017, pp: 7)

Hughes (2017) argues that from a social constructivist perspective higher order learning is about learners being able to move through recall, application and evaluation, building their current knowledge and skills. Hughes further argues that in order for this type of learning to occur learners require social interaction with peers and teachers including developmental feedback that enables learners to adjust their thinking.

Regular iterative and ipsative formative feedback allow the learner to correct misconceptions of literacy practices and work towards tutor expectations for academic study and writing. Embracing the idea that formative assessment methods can act as tools for learning by affecting students' motivation to study and by making them aware of their own learning, ipsative feedback (Weurlander et al, 2012; Brown & Knight, 1994; Hughes, 2011) informs the learner about how s/he has progressed since the previous formative assessment of literacy practices. Has learner response to developmental feedback resulted in changes to written outputs? Within the intervention, this response and associated learner actions is evidenced in a portfolio of attempts (assignment one), which must all be completed as a pre-requisite for submitting the final portfolio, which includes the summative essay

submission (assignment two). The summative assessment grade for the final essay is based on what Brown & Knight (1994) describe as specified criteria, in terms of academic writing. Thus ipsative assessment practices directly support the learner through the required learning for the criterion-referenced summative assessment.

Therefore, using the literacy intervention design as a 'guide', learners are supported whilst entering into a pre-existing academic and social world of university education (Tinto 1998; Wilcox, Winn, and Fyvie-Gauld 2005, Harvey et al, 2006). Using curriculum and *processes of interaction around the curriculum'* (Haggis, 2006, pp: 526), the design seeks to make the rules and conditions of the pre-existing academic world, as described by Harvey and Knight (1996), transparent to learners. Thus the structure of the academic literacies design frame acts as guided support for learners during transition points or rites of passage, thereby managing associated challenges with acquiring literacy practices preferred by the tutor. As students adjusting to higher education and existing conventions are managed into particular literacy practices, the tutor is able to accompany the individual and group and operate a measure of influence over the 'betwixt spaces'. This is achieved through constant structured academic and peer support, provided through collective activities, feedback and on-line group discussion of the literacy practices being practised. These repeated activities become 'rituals' and therefore play a role mitigating and managing fear and anxiety of both the group and individual whilst in the no-man's land or 'betwixt space' (Draper, 2002, pp: 86).

As identified by CILIP (2015), knowing where to find information and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an essay is the foundation of becoming information literate. Thus some information literacy practices described by SCONUL in their Seven Pillars (1999 & 2011) were considered to be fundamental literacy practices required for academic written work. Students as active participants practise or acquire literacy practices through designated academic writing tasks located within the general discipline they are reading. Each task is designed to engage them in using literacy practices to develop their understanding of what is expected of them in terms of

academic study and writing within a university assessment context (O'Donovan, Price, and Rust 2008). Thus, the intervention immerses students in literacy practices through supported formative and iterative assessment activities situated in the disciplinary academic writing context as suggested by the literature (see Race, 1995, pp: 73; Bruce, 2006; Wingate, 2006; Lea 2004; Kift, 2014).

Hughes (2017) argues that from a social constructivist perspective higher order learning is about learners being able to move through recall, application and evaluation, building their current knowledge and skills. Hughes further argues that in order for this type of learning to occur learners require social interaction with peers and teachers including developmental feedback that enables learners to adjust their thinking.

Using Laurillard's 'Conversational Framework', concept and (Laurillard, 1993, pp: 102) to provide concrete meaning for the learner, each literacy intervention task commences with the learner attempting to undertake a specific literacy practice in a task which is then presented to tutors and peers in seminars and on-line contexts for ipsative feedback.

For example, the entire cohort group is set the same essay question and then asked to undertake the task of preparing their first essay with justifications for their resource selections. This task is conveyed to learners by a Blackboard announcement sent as an email prior to the lecture, and learners are specifically directed to the marking criteria for the task. For this task during the lecture, discipline positions, key word searching and information selection and retrieval are introduced as preferred literacy practices for academic work within the discipline. This is an opportunity for students to reflect on their existing practices and make adjustments in the light of tutor explanations as they prepare their written examples. An on-line discussion forum runs all week, where ideas about how to undertake the task are shared by all participants and moderated by discipline tutors, thus providing another opportunity for reflection and adjustment. The ipsative feedback and feed forward opportunities then continue (as advocated by the

conversational framework) until the learner recognises the preferred literacy practices, is able to apply them and evaluate their efficacy within the task.

This developmental journey within the conversational framework takes place over a number of weeks with learners moving individually, but also collectively learning from and with each other. Constant monitoring by tutors in seminars and of all on-line submissions enables at risk learners to be identified and provided with support as required. Therefore, the literacy intervention is achieving the correcting of mistakes whilst simultaneously guiding the learner towards developmental steps required as suggested by Hughes (2017), achieving learning gain towards higher order thinking.

For example, written examples developed over the week following the lecture are presented peer to peer during formative feedback seminar activities. Tutors identify continuing misconceptions of literacy practices and conceptions of preferred literacy practices are reinforced. In terms of ipsative assessment this activity ensures recall of the preferred literacy practice introduced the previous week. The activity is a colour coding exercise which makes visually clear which aspects of the preferred practices have been used, and how effectively. For example, in the first activity, students all exchange their essays with someone from a different table. They are told they are now tutors marking the paper, and are provided with five highlighter pens. The activity is carried out in silence with no opportunity at this stage to check understanding with peers or for peers to explain what 'they meant to do'.

Learners are first guided to look at the references section of their peers' essay and identify whether it conforms to the university required Harvard referencing and mark it with a 'huge' green cross if incorrect or a 'huge' green tick if accurate. If learners are unclear of whether the work they are 'marking' is correct or incorrect, or if there is no bibliography, or if the 'marker' is unsure of whether or not the bibliography conforms to the required standards, the tutor is able to lead a group dialogue which highlights misconceptions about Harvard referencing, the purpose of a bibliography and the importance in terms of the marking criteria of conforming to university requirements. Thus

Hughes' (2017) argument that learners require social interaction with peers and teachers, and developmental feedback that enables learners to adjust their thinking, is put into practice through a shared activity focused on fundamental concepts for information literacy practices, discipline knowledge and university requirements.

The next exercise involves using a yellow highlighter to identify citations. No citations are permitted to be highlighted without a correct Harvard referenced bibliography listing. Again tutor led dialogue highlights for students' the role of citations in showing which body of work they have selected and the role of authors' work within the discipline conversation.

The next formative activity is to create a timeline of theorists from the discipline and research one theorist in particular. The activity that follows in the seminar is a physical time line made of students arranged in the date order of the seminal authors within their discipline. Each seminal theorist is represented by a student. Commencing from the earliest time point, each 'theorist' outlines their contribution to the field and indicates how they have built on the former 'theorists' contribution. The determination of where to stand within the line is undertaken by the students and the dialogue between students shows how this activity makes concrete the importance of referencing and using sources, whilst also showing how one discipline conversation has evolved and where current students are entering the existing dialogue.

Thus, the learner has a recent concrete example to reflect upon and is able to identify misconceptions by reflecting on subject tutor explanations and undertaking experiential activities (Laurillard, 1993). As all activities are formative they are able to resubmit work to tutor and peer scrutiny either in seminars or on-line to check their progress ipsatively before submitting for the assessed portfolio.

Laurillard suggests that the conversational framework is not 'normally applicable to learning through experience, nor to 'everyday' learning nor to those training programmes that focus on skills alone, all of which tend to occur at the experiential interactive level only' (Laurillard 1993, pp: 102).

However the use of the conversational framework as a mechanism for self-evaluation and reflection as it occurs in this instance is appropriate, as it allows tutors to influence transitional points and betwixt spaces *with* learners. Laurillard (1993, pp: 84) contends that the student brings previously constructed cognitive maps of how to undertake the required work to each new learning situation. However, as shown in section 2.2, non-traditionally qualified students are potentially at an increased risk of early drop-out or failure, so previously constructed maps appear not to be working in the newly entered academic context (Longdon, 2004; Harvey et al, 2006; Gale and Parker, 2014). If students bring misconceptions or no conceptions of what is actually required in the higher education academic writing context, being influenced at this point of transition allows literacy practices adjustment and support. This idea is captured by Laurillard's description of problem solving approaches to learning: 'the focus is not the solution, but the relations between the problem statement, the solutions and all the intervening steps' (Laurillard, 1994 pp: 54).

In summary, the design principles for the literacy intervention, which have drawn on work in academic literacies, allows literacy practices associated with disciplinary academic writing to be experienced by students in a developmental context. Using ipsative feedback as the engine to drive the learning process, each activity undertaken by the learner receives formative feedback. Misconceptions in literacy practices and academic writing are adjusted by learners in the light of feedback received, and immediately practised again. Regular iterative formative feedback on practices (such as essay writing structure, information identification and retrieval, and use of discourse nuances, as demonstrated by learners in disciplinary writing activities) ensures opportunities for discussion on all aspects of literacy practices. Therefore the elements of existing sector support identified in Chapter 3 as useful for learners (technical study skills e.g. essay structure, grammar, and spelling; information literacy, e.g. key word searching, retrieval techniques, referencing; understanding of discipline genres and discourses through content and assessment and feedback) are brought together within the literacy intervention which recognizes the complexities of literacy

practices and supports learners through transitional rites of passage into academic writing. Thus, literacy practices that a novice learner might encounter for the first time as they undertake their first written assignment are all included within the literacy intervention. The assessment strategy is a crucial part of the design and this is now described.

4.2   The Literacy Intervention Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy used in the literacy intervention was crucial in ensuring learners engage with the tutor preferred literacy practices. This is achieved through a portfolio approach made up of two assessments. Assessment one is made up of ten weekly on-line formative submissions evidencing an attempt at the relevant weekly literacy practices activity, e.g. evidence of a literature search or draft essay. Assessment two is a summative submission of a completed written essay demonstrating use of all the ten weekly literacy practices. An example of the assessment portfolio submissions is shown above in Table 4-1.

During assessment one, the ten weekly literacy practices activities, using ipsative assessment as described by Hughes (2011), illuminate the academic consequences of misconceptions, in relation to complex literacy practices for academic study and writing. The literacy intervention seeks to make explicit to learners the processes of 'learning how to learn' that are required. The formative design of these activities means that any consequences can be identified and addressed before an actual or perceived summative failure is experienced, as the learner may resubmit the activity as many times as they wish. The opportunity to reflect and reframe conceptions of literacy practices for academic study and writing whilst engaging within the frame of reference for the discipline serves the dual purpose of introducing procedural literacy practices and discipline knowledge (Northedge, 2003).

The literacy intervention uses a blended approach to support the practices being developed through activities and seminars. As part of the design process, this was mapped against the conversational framework to ensure that all the processes needed to support learning. Bearing in mind that learning online requires collective effort, the tutors provided a supportive

learning environment through building on-line relationships across peers, reinforcing the community of learners and engaging participants (Sheely et al, 2001; Krause and McEwen 2009). The literature suggests that tutors *'need to be skilled and committed to teaching online and be good listeners, observers, communicators'* (Krause and McEwen 2009, pp: 9). *'The key is to keep the focus of the learning squarely on the student experience'* (Horstmanshof & Brownie, 2013, pp: 67); therefore discussion forums are structured to provide effective online learning experiences, with tutors and peers responding with feedback to meet the learning needs of individuals, whilst tutors direct and lead the collective dialogue.

The literacy intervention takes the position that students should experience the required 'learning how to learn' practices through a structured approach. Using Laurillard's Conversational Framework the intervention makes explicit academic practices and discipline expectations (Laurillard, 1994; Harvey and Knight, 1996). Literacy practices that form part of academic study and writing, in particular the information literacy practices mapped in SCONUL's pillars, are staggered throughout the intervention as a series of linked and formatively assessed activities. These practices are introduced over a number of weeks and culminate in an activity that brings together all the literacy practices used in the previous weeks. This drawing together of practices involves completing a draft essay for further formative feedback. In line with an academic literacies approach, these formative activities served to introduce learners to discipline knowledge, whilst requiring engagement in developmental learning activities that provided experience of and feedback on the preferred literacy practices at each stage of the process. Each of the structured activities places the student into an individual learning experience which peers and tutors share on-line and in seminars (Horstmanshof & Brownie, 2013). By ensuring that literacy practices are practised concurrently and that developmental activities are staggered and repeated over a number of weeks, connections between literacy practices and academic writing are made explicit. As tutors identify individual or collective tricky transition, misconceptions can be explicated through dialogues in seminars and on-line sessions. Through examining and reflecting back to learners the processes

and approaches used in undertaking the prescribed task and related literacy activities, the learners themselves have opportunities to identify and to correct misconceptions (Laurillard, 1994). Multiple iterations occur for each learner, as recommended within the conversational framework, providing multiple formative opportunities to test their understanding and the application of various linked literacy practices.

In summary, the literacy intervention was designed using principles derived from an academic literacies perspective (Lea, 2004) and using strategies based on three assumptions: firstly, that becoming information literate is a complex of different ways of interacting with information (Bruce, 2006); secondly, that a certain set of practices are required to engage with information (SCONUL, 2011); and finally, that equipping learners with research skills will require structure (Harvey and Knight, 1996). Through participating in structured activities using literacy practices that are focused on academic writing, learners are ipsatively supported through potentially tricky transitional stages (Meyer and Land, 2005). Technical study skills (e.g. essay structure, grammar, and spelling) and information literacy (e.g. key word searching, retrieval techniques, referencing; understanding of discipline genres and discourses) are all introduced through practicing with discipline resources. Whilst novice undergraduates produce a draft written essay, continuous feedback is provided on all the literacy practices used and their role in the process of academic writing. Existing institutional practices around feedback, authority and authentic voice all form part of the iterative formative feedback. Thus the design avoids creating or presenting certain literacy practices as a skill deficit (Lea, 2004). Therefore transition points are managed through curriculum design strategies.

Having described the intervention, a concrete illustration of how this is achieved and enacted at module tutor and student level is included in appendix ten. Chapter 5 now moves on to present the methodology used to explore how novice undergraduates experienced this literacy intervention support whilst making the transition to higher education and academic study and writing.

Chapter 5: Methodology

In Chapter 3 underlying reasons for the current call for systematic evidence on approaches to supporting identified groups of students, with worse outcomes in terms of attainment and progression was established. Chapter 4 described a literacy intervention that assumes an academic literacies approach combined with ipsative assessment, that makes explicit use of SCONUL's '*Seven Pillars Core Model'* (1999 and 2011); Bruce's (2006) '*Six Frames for Information Literacy'* as literacy practices for academic writing. This chapter describes research approaches used to explore respondent's descriptions of their experiences of literacy practices and demonstration of academic writing whilst studying the module and during a literacy intervention.

5.1   Purpose and Aim of the Research

The key purpose of this research is to explore novice undergraduates' literacy experiences as they enter university and make transitions into academic study and writing. If models and approaches described above in chapter 3 are used as literacy intervention it would be expected that learners would be able to demonstrate academic writing in various contexts. Exploring this involved studying novice undergraduates' accounts of using academic literacy practices in various contexts during a literacy intervention. Descriptions of participating in situated, structured activities designed to introduce literacy practices used in discipline writing, provide a window into novice learner demonstration of literacy practices in an academic study and writing context during transition into their first semester in higher education.

Moving the focus to examining learners' understanding of contexts and applications of academic literacy during transition is novel, as it offers new insights into the challenges experienced by learners whilst in a transition space and highlights some needs of learners in this context.

5.2   Research Design – Moments of Choice

The research addressed the following questions:

1. *What is the UK policy context of literacies?*
2. *What history of research into literacies informs current practice?*
3. *How can we study novice undergraduates' experiences?*
4. *What can we learn from the study about non-traditionally qualified novice undergraduates' use of literacy practices as they make the transition into academic study and writing?*
5. *Do structured literacy activities benefit learners?*

My desire to gain an insight into multiple interacting factors, events and processes that give shape to learners' understanding of literacy practices in an academic context determined the qualitative philosophical and paradigmatic approach of this study (Denizin & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1984). The rationale and reflection for choosing this approach are now outlined.

My chosen research approach assumes that ontologically there is no single version of reality and builds on Lincoln and Guba's (1984:75) view that there are multiple versions of reality that are socially constructed, which therefore recognise diverging lines of inquiry. After Lincoln and Guba's (1984:75) position, I assume that these multiple and constructed realities are all interrelated and studying them individually and in isolation might limit my enquiry in seeing the bigger holistic view that illuminates possible interrelated influences. As previously indicated, there was particular interest in understanding learners' accounts of their experiences following a literacy intervention in relation to support for literacy practices for academic study and writing. A conventional scientific inquiry of experimentally based methodologies and approaches was seen as unlikely to capture the rich, inter-lacing picture that was sought. Conversely a naturalistic interpretative philosophy (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013; pp: 24) was seen as allowing my study to adopt an emergent design (Creswell, 2013; pp 47) adjusting and refining it as the work developed and as emerging findings directed the research.

Whilst using qualitative data gathering research approaches means different things in different moments, a useful generic definition is offered by Denzin and Lincoln (2003, pp: 4):

> *"Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study many things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them."*

My research focuses on interpreting learners' accounts of their experiences and on the impact of literacy interventions in supporting novice learners in transition with a view to enhancing our understanding. Creswell (2013; pp: 44) suggests that inherent in the Denzin & Lincoln definition above is a strong orientation towards the impact of qualitative research and its ability to transform the world. Creswell's definition of qualitative research encompasses Denzin & Lincoln's interpretative and naturalistic stance but also places emphasis on the process flowing from philosophical assumptions, to the interpretative lens, to procedures involved in studying social or human problems (Cresswell, 2013; pp: 44). For my work the implication of this was a requirement to be explicit about the approach, framework and reflexivity that guide my enquiry.

Therefore prior to developing my framework it was necessary to determine the fitness of a naturalistic interpretative paradigm for my potential research situation. I was mindful of Williams' (1986; pp: 85) guidance that to help decide if a naturalistic approach is appropriate, a number of questions about the phenomenon should be posed. I also considered Creswell's suggested Characteristics of Qualitative Research (Creswell, 2013, pp: 46) as a useful guide. Therefore a number of generic questions were used to aid in my reflection in determining the fit of a naturalistic interpretative approach for my research.

Firstly; Williams suggests that if not all the evaluation issues and criteria for making value judgments can be defined prior to the commencement of the study, it might be helpful to explore contexts and the nature of the evaluand as part of the research, allowing issues and criteria to emerge during the study (Williams, 1986; pp 86). As a key interest of this work was to identify and capture experiences associated with learner perceptions of literacy practices for academic study and writing, an emergence of issues and criteria during the study was a research imperative. Given the contested arena for definitions of literacy practices, for example information literacy (Secker & Coonan, 2011; pp: 5) and digital literacy (Gourlay & Oliver, 2013) are two examples of aspects of literacy practices which themselves are complex in terms of definition, the literacy contexts hold what Williams describes as a multiplicity of value perspectives (1986; pp 86). This resonated with Creswell's 'participant' meaning rather than the meaning that I or other writers in the field had. Thus as a key point of my research was to understand the learners' meaning (Creswell, 2013, pp: 47) it was therefore deemed that exploring the perspective of my student population through a naturalistic approach might reveal a richer understanding of learners' experiences of literacy practices. Williams further suggests that if a thick contextual description of the experience of the evaluand functioning within their natural setting is desired, then a naturalistic approach would be essential (Williams, 1986; pp: 86-87). As the focus of this study was not the literacy intervention or artefacts produced by learners, but rather the dynamic interplay between the literacy intervention and changes to learners' demonstration of literacy practices through academic writing, behaviour was of significant interest. Thus it was not the intention to directly study the intervention or artefact in isolation, but more the links between the two as perceived and described by learners. My desire to identify rich interactions, relationships, strategies and literacy practices as recounted by learners further confirmed the appropriateness of a naturalistic philosophical position.

Reflection (Williams, 1986; pp 86) and reflexivity (Creswell, 2013, pp: 47) were deemed to be an essential part of the researcher's development as part of this naturalistic research. A willingness to study myself as I conducted the

research design, data gathering and analysis to identify and uncover personal influence and biases was kept at the heart of the study. Using Boud et al's suggested (1993) prospective (looking forward), spective (looking now) and retrospective (looking back) structured my reflexivity throughout the lifespan of the work. Reflexivity (Willig, 2001) and willingness to critique my own work was built in systematically (Boud et al, 1993) throughout the work at all stages: consulting with critical friends and other professionals was seen as a way of ensuring rigour in the credibility of the study.

Therefore this study takes a naturalistic interpretivist (Denizin & Lincoln, 2005; pp: 13), is exploratory in purpose and uses emerging design as themes emerged from learner accounts.

5.3 Congruence between Philosophy, Phenomenon and Research Approach

Having identified interpretivist research as the preferred philosophical approach, it was necessary to identify my methodological position within the many different and diverse approaches that can be found within the qualitative research arena (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013). Savin-Baden & Howell-Major's (2013; pp: 45) researcher's 'Wheel of Choices' enabled a conceptual exploration of research design through a number of different lenses (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013; pp: 47), prior to finalising choices of research design. In recognising the importance of demonstrating congruence between my naturalistic philosophical perspective and subsequent methodological choices, a variety of possible options were considered (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013; pp: 47). Using the interactive wheel (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013 pp: 45) I explored possible combinations of approaches and methods. Through conceptual examination of 'what and how' questions (Cresswell, 2009; pp: 11) from a variety of positions, I was drawn towards a thematic dimensional analysis approach for the research. Committed to qualitative strategies of enquiry, I wanted methodological flexibility as the investigation unfolded which these approaches permitted. This will now be expanded further in the following section.

5.4   Research Approach

To explore non-traditionally qualified novice undergraduates' experiences I focused on learners entering HE who experienced the literacy intervention which is outlined further in section 5.5. To identify and explore any changes to learner understanding, it was important to use a data gathering approach that allowed themes to be developed during the process, whilst adhering strictly to transparent processes for purposes of authenticity and rigour.

As part of my framing for the research (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013; pp: 46) a number of methodological approaches were considered. One of the key considerations of my research is to gain insight into respondents' accounts. Initially, given the academic literacies approach for the literacy intervention, critical discourse analysis and its focus on the ways that social and political domination are reproduced in text and talk (Wodak, 2007; pp: 87) appeared to support the overarching requirements of the investigation. However, on reflection, considerations of learner accounts of academic literacy practices following a literacy intervention was different from identifying their perceptions of literacy in and its role in power structures and legitimating processes. This was an important distinction in terms of the data gathering and analysis approaches and I was concerned that use of critical discourse analysis at this stage would take the work into the issue of power and access, without first 'hearing' participants' meanings. I was attempting to more fully understand the literacy practices experience of non-traditionally qualified students generally and therefore a further decision had to be made whether the unit of analysis would be individual respondents or all respondents as a group.

After careful consideration I decided that as a central organizing concept I would use a thematic approach based on dimensional analysis (Schatzman, 1991), itself derived from a grounded theoretical tradition (Glaser & Strauss, 1968). Using this approach as a central data organizing concept presented a number of advantages, firstly permitting the unit of analysis to be the group rather than the individual, and secondly quite importantly permitting themes to emerge from the data as it was gathered and analysed (Goulding, 2002;

pp: 47). Whilst dimensional analysis is from within the tradition of grounded theory research it is not a grounded theory approach in itself. Corbin (1990) makes clear the diacritical juncture over the aims, principles and procedures associated with this method that was reached between the two original authors, Glaser and Straus. Strauss and Corbin (1990) moved theoretically and placed emphasis on systematic coding techniques, whilst Glaser continued to emphasise the importance of the interpretive, contextual and emergent nature of theory development. Strauss and Corbin (1990) assert that use of grounded theory's systematic techniques and procedures of analysis enable the development of a substantive theory that 'meets the criteria for doing "good" science: significance, theory observation compatibility, generalisability, reproducibility, precision, rigour, and verification' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:31). For Glaser this is potentially 'forcing' data into categories to make a fit.

This forcing was not identified in the work of Schatzman (1991) who whilst working in the tradition of grounded theory had encountered similar challenges. Acknowledging the tension between the approaches of Corbin and Strauss on the one hand and Glaser on the other, Schatzman developed the use of dimensional analysis (Schatzman, 1991). This approach theoretically permits the articulation and full disclosure of the discovery process, providing a structure for analysis and explanation, and thus can be seen to bridge the bifurcation between the original authors of grounded theory. This structured approach of dimensional analysis also helped in being explicit about the approach, framework and reflexivity that guide my enquiry (Cresswell, 2013; pp: 44).

The original objective of the grounded theory method (Kools, 1996, pp: 316) was to answer the conceptual question of 'what is the basic social process that underlies the phenomenon of interest?', (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, cited in Kools, 1996, pp: 316). Dimensional analysis is different in that it allows the researcher to view the generation of theory through a lens that asks the question '*what all is involved here*?' (Schatzman, 1991, pp: 310). Providing a broad view of the complexity of the phenomenon maximizes the number of salient themes or dimensions that might be examined within the research

focus (Kools, 1996, pp: 316). Whilst traditional grounded theory uses open, axial and selective matrices as a means for coding data (King & Howell, 2008; pp: 3), and for developing and relating categories, dimensional analysis uses an explanatory matrix as a framework to assist the process of moving beyond description and into the realm of explanation (Kools, 1996, pp: 317). Schatzman's (1991) description of the explanatory matrix as the overarching framework for analysis of a complex phenomenon provided me with both a structure and a context for the explanation of the 'all' that is involved in the situation (Kools, 1996, pp: 317). The ability to consider the 'all' at an early stage was considered important. I wanted an entry point within a complex context of learner accounts of changes following interventions. Essentially, learners bring previously learned strategies to assist them in undertaking new literacy tasks presented to them in their HE experience. Thus, understanding interrelated threads of learner holistic empirical accounts following on from a literacy intervention was the starting point of the study.

Perspective

Dimensions-

Properties (attributes)

(in) Context   (under)Conditions   Action/Processes   (with) Consequences

Designations
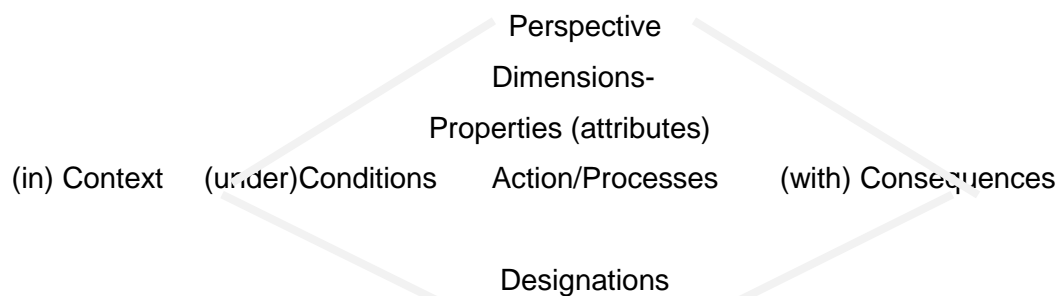
Figure 5-1 Explanatory Matrix (Kools, 1996, pp: 318)

A further strength of dimensional analysis was the 'explanatory matrix', which facilitates the organisation of dimensions or themes identified into conceptual components of context, conditions and process (actions and interactions) (Kools, 1996). This was seen as a powerful tool for considering the relationships between learners understanding of literacy practices and perceived changes as a result of a literacy intervention. Such a framework additionally supports the exploration of different kinds of participation in academic written tasks during such a literacy intervention. The use of

dimensional analysis complemented the desire to capture as rich a picture of the complex scenario as possible, whilst permitting a framework for analysis that allowed any central underlying theme to emerge. Use of a dimensional analysis framework also acted as a mechanism of rigour and validity in terms of William's (1986) call for transparency of data collection and management.

Using Savin-Baden & Howell-Major's Lens (2013; pp: 47) as a framing mechanism, my research choices and lens can thus be described in the following way:
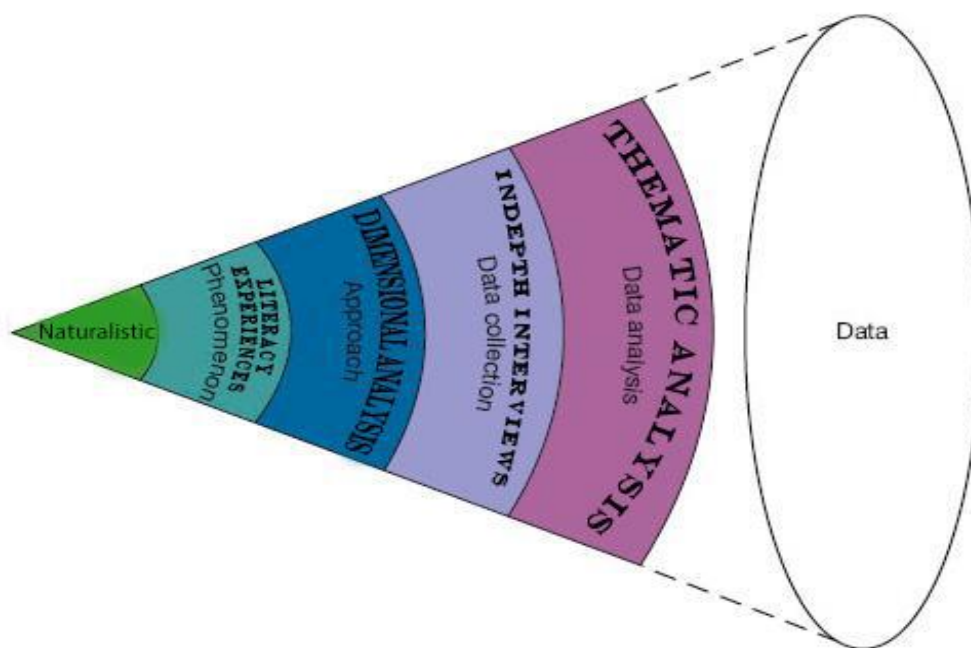
Figure 5-2 Research Lens (adapted from Savin-Baden & Howell-Major's Lens, 2013; pp47)

Thus, as described by Savin-Baden & Howell-Major (2013; pp67), this study is located philosophically within a naturalistic, interpretive research context. Drawing on a grounded theory tradition, the use of dimensional analysis (Schatzman, 1991; pp: 303) as a methodological approach and thematic analysis to develop codes into identified themes (Guest et al, 2012, pp: 10), allowed an understanding of the complexity of factors and interconnected relationships that underpin learners' understanding of contexts and applications of literacy practices for academic study and writing.

5.5 Location of Field Research

The choice of an appropriate research site is an integral part of the design of a study (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013; pp: 307). As my focus was the non-traditionally qualified novice learner experience rather than the institution, the intervention or graduate students, the research site selected had to provide access to learners who had not gained the traditional 3 A-Level entry requirement. This required selecting sites purposefully (Cresswell, 2009). As established in Chapter 3, following the end of the binary divide in 1992 (Further and Higher Education Act, 1992), successive Government policy initiatives (Dearing, 1997; Department for Education & Skills, 2003; BIS, 2009; BIS, 2011) focused on expanding the reach of Higher Education in order to make it more inclusive. As identified earlier in this work, this expansion was based on a principle of admission to courses for those who were thought to be 'able to benefit from them and wished to do so' (David, 2008). Since such learners have historically been concentrated in the post-92 institutions, one of these was selected in the London area, as this was geographically convenient and committed to the widening participation policy agenda.

Wilkins and Burke (2013) suggest that following the expansion and 'massification' of higher education, widening participation acquired an increasingly important role in redressing the under-representation of certain social groups in universities. However, Wilkins and Burke also argue that rather than higher education adapting to the needs of these new students, the students are required to adjust their behaviour and to learn to fit in with the implicit cultural norms and pedagogical demands of the university they attend. Wilkins and Burke (2013, pp: 4) further argue that higher education institutions, *especially the 'old' institutions, work to the detriment of working-class students since they offer up a field of identifications, symbols and cultural repertoires that are unfamiliar to them'*. This adjustment of behaviour would apply not only to working class students but also to other traditionally excluded groups. Scott (1995) indicates that diversity increased with HE expansion, with much of the expansion taking place in the former polytechnics which became known as the post -92 institutions. As Hussey &

Smith suggest (2010), with greater diversity, students are drawn from a larger variety of ethnic, social and educational backgrounds suggesting a wider range of levels and abilities, and therefore more diverse needs. Therefore, selecting a post-92 institution for this study involved an inherent complexity of the target group of students and therefore the participants in this research. The target group of learners for this research had all entered HE as a result of the widening participation agenda. The entry criteria for this particular institution was normally equivalent to 180 CATS points for school leavers, but for applicants over the age of nineteen years (mature learners) was based primarily on the ability to succeed and not prior qualifications. The cohort therefore reflected the broad diversity expected by researchers such as Hussey & Smith (2010) within a post-92 institution.

The second criterion for site selection was that the institution must permit the literacy intervention as described in chapter 4. Institutional membership of SCONUL was used as a proxy in order to identify possible sites for research data gathering (see Appendix 9). This was important for reasons described earlier in chapter four where complexity of learner needs resulting from wider participation is approached through a design assumption for the literacy intervention. It is assumed that all widening participation learners may have an incomplete set of literacy practices for academic study and would therefore benefit from an opportunity to align their practices with the current academic context.

In terms of what Savin-Baden & Howell-Major describe as context, values and background (2013; pp: 341), all of the London based institutions considered had similar student profiles. However, a key issue to be considered was access to respondents and gatekeepers (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013; pp: 341). The central issue for this study was to gain an insight into interrelated factors, events and processes that give shape to learners' understanding of literacy practices for academic study and writing. Access to students at their transition point into Higher Education and their studies was critical to the aims of the research. My own institution and department's curricula was known to me and access would be possible at the

times required – however, this required reflection upon and consideration of the potential challenges raised by undertaking 'insider' research, and my own position within the department. This aspect of possible positionality challenges is now considered in more detail.

5.6   Positionality Challenges of Insider research

One of the reasons that other institutions had been considered as possible locations for the research was that I was aware of potential power relationship dynamics influencing respondents, as they were students being taught by myself as part of a team of four first year tutors. Wolf (1996, pp: 11) writes that 'our power and control offers us the choice to construct and (re)shape ourselves to our subjects, playing on the different positionalities of the researcher and the researched.' I was in a position of power and authority over the students, and was thus anxious to remain aware of respondents' potential to engage in performative acts of representing themselves (Henry, 2003). I was also aware that perceived needs to 'please me' as their tutor might affect their answers. These concerns remained at the forefront of my planning and were addressed primarily by allowing self-selection of respondents and ensuring they were aware that there was no possible gain to them as individuals in participating. I additionally waited to recruit, conduct interviews and undertake documentary analysis until after my direct teaching involvement had been completed and the assessment boards had met. I therefore had no direct positional authority over the students during the period of investigation.

An advantage of being an insider researcher was that I had considerable knowledge of the student curriculum and institutional support for students; I was aware that the SCONUL 'Seven Pillars' had been designed into a module that was embedded into the point of entry curriculum (see section 3.3.1). However, insider research does give rise to several ethical aspects, which are considered next.

5.7 Ethical Responsibility and Access to Data

Ethical approval and ethical conduct in research are closely related (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013; pp: 320), and ethical issues were kept under review at all points of the research process. The British Educational Research Association's 'Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research' (2011) was used as a point of reference for this work. Their guidelines state: 'All educational researchers must protect the integrity and reputation of educational research by ensuring they conduct their research to the highest standards' (BERA, 2011). The guidance suggests a number of positive actions associated with ensuring the maintenance of an ethical stance. In particular Diener & Crandall's (1978) four reflective questions specifically address issues relevant for my research participants:

➢ whether there is harm to participants, physical or moral;

➢ whether there is a lack of Informed consent;

➢ whether there is an invasion of privacy;

➢ whether there is deception involved

Therefore, having made key decisions about location and respondents, an Institute of Education ethical review form was drawn up using both the BERA guidelines (2011) and the Diener and Crandall classification (1978). I considered and reflected on possible ethical issues in my research and how I could ensure 'excellent treatment of people' (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013; pp: 335). My draft research ethics form was submitted for review in the first instance by my supervisor. Following discussions with my supervisor and reflection on our discussions, a number of ethical issues were identified for review and consideration by the Institute of Educations ethics committee, and following certain amendments, my research was approved (see appendices one, two and seven).

5.8 Securing Informed Consent

Following approval from the ethics committee, ethical implications were approached from a number of considerations. Firstly, access to use my

university as a site for this study was secured through an interview with the Head of the Business School where the research was located. A meeting was arranged where the ethics of the work were discussed and explored, and assurances that I would be working within the BERA guidelines were provided. Beneficiaries of research findings were identified as primarily practitioners, researchers and policy makers in supporting students develop literacy practices for life learning that will be of value during and after University. It was explained that the research advances the work already undertaken in this field and within the university and school through enhancing understanding of the impact literacy interventions have on academic learner practices. On this basis, agreement was reached for me to have full access and use of all data gathered (the letter of agreement has been included as Appendix 6).

5.9   Recruiting the Participants

My criterion was for participants to:

> ➢ be in their first semester of HE undergraduate study;

> ➢ have participated in a literacy intervention to support development of academic writing

My investigation sample was drawn from my own institution where I have worked for many years and taught, alongside with a team of colleagues. Like many Higher Education institutions, both national and international, the University places emphasis on students being introduced to academic literacy practices at the earliest point of their studies. In particular, the Business School has ensured that all students entering courses of study are provided with the opportunity to acquire literacy support for HE studies through a core level four module dedicated to the preparation of academic practices for study. Therefore my sampling frame was (Bryman, 2012; pp: 187) a cohort of 150 predominantly ethnically Black, Asian and White European, 18 to 27 year olds, with approximately a ratio of 2:1 females to males. This population cohort had joined the university in September 2011 and had participated in the literacy intervention from September 2011 to

February 2012. They each individually met the dual investigative criteria of being in their first semester of HE undergraduate study, and of having received a literacy intervention designed to ensure academic literacy practices are developed, and thus were considered to meet the key research criteria.

Having understood from Emmel (2013; pp: 159) that sampling is instrumental in research to source information-rich cases to study in depth, a purposeful, criterion-based, self-selecting sampling approach was adopted to recruit participants.

To ensure that my respondent group was drawn using a self-selected sample of the population, requests for participants were made in two ways. Initially students were made aware of the research request through an announcement made by myself at a full cohort lecture. Here I detailed the aims of the research, what was involved and that I would be asking for volunteers through an email request. During the Q&A time I was asked two questions: firstly what personal advantage would there be for people who took part and secondly would there be financial reward. I was able to advise 'none' on both counts. I also made it clear that there would be no individual benefit in terms of grades resulting from participation. This verbal request was followed up with an email to all students through the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), inviting interested students to contact me via email for further information.

Each individual who responded was provided with a copy of the information leaflet (Appendix 4) and was invited to meet with me to discuss their possible involvement in the project. During each individual meeting prospective participants were given information to ensure they fully understood what 'voluntary informed consent' means. The purpose of the research was clarified and how the information gathered over the duration of their studies would be used was made explicit. It was also explained that the collection of 'sensitive' data as defined under the Data Protection Act 1998 would be confined to essential demographic information, e.g. ethnic origin, gender, age. Potential participants were assured they would be given pseudonyms

before any information was collected and pseudonyms would be used throughout on all interview and artefact transcripts, and confidentiality of materials not already in the public domain would be guaranteed as far as possible. At this point in the conversation we read and talked through each of the points on the information sheet (see appendix 4) to ensure that everything was fully understood. It was pointed out that original materials would be retained in a secure place and would not be made available to others.

Potential participants were further advised that they would be able to contact me to discuss any issues arising as the research progressed. This is described on page three of the participant consent form as follows:

> *"As a result of our conversation you might review your skills for learning. If changing your learning skill approach would be beneficial I would suggest this to you after our conversation. You are encouraged to contact me to discuss your thoughts or for information about tutorial support."*

During the conversation they were informed that they would be provided with copies of the research should they wish to see it. I reconfirmed that there was no offer to participants of financial incentives (e.g. shopping vouchers, entry in a prize draw) to take part in the research although participants' travel costs as required were offered to enable them to take part in the research. Prospective participants were also made aware that they could withdraw at any time from the study. Following the discussion all participants who agreed to take part were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix 5) to confirm their agreement. Meetings were then scheduled for one week later to allow a 'cooling off' period.

Of the 150 students contacted through the VLE, 11 made contact. One requested payment or improved grades and was rejected, one didn't respond to the invitation email to attend the information meeting and was deemed to have de-selected. Nine attended the information meeting of which six opted to participate whilst three indicated they would prefer not to continue as they had initially thought it was an opportunity to have private tuition. These three were provided with information of how support could be obtained through the

student support services. Having recruited six participants, dates were set for interviews as the first stage of data gathering.

Demographics of participants as follows or see appendix 8:

Home country	
Country	**No.**
United Kingdom	3
Holland	1
Iran	1
Lithuania	1

Figure 5-3 Summary of Participants' Nationality

Age	
Age range	**No.**
18 -19	0
20 -21	4
21-23	2

Figure 5-4 Age Range

Gender	
Gender	
Male	2
Female	4

Figure 5-5 Gender breakdown

5.10   Data Gathering Approach

In considering what data might prove a rich vein, the original questions of specific research interest were revisited. Firstly I was interested in novice

undergraduates' experiences' during a literacy intervention and in particular moments of transition. However, it was not my intention to directly study the intervention, rather the impact and outcomes the intervention might have on novice undergraduates' behaviour. So following Latour's approach (2005), which emphasises the need to describe events without interference of analysis or opinion, my intention was to identify rich interactions, relationships, strategies and literacy practices as recounted by learners. Starting from the premise that learners are experts in their own experiences (Creanor et al., 2007; pp: 10) I was keen to find a doorway into their complex experiences (Bryman, 2012; pp: 471), thus gathering data from the students themselves seemed obvious. To illuminate the research question I was also interested in exploring written artefacts produced by the respondents as a point of comparison with their expressions of literacy practices for academic study and writing.

An initial review of approaches to data collection indicated a number of possibilities and whilst focused interviews (Cohen and Manion, 1995; pp: 289) and document content analysis (Cohen and Manion, 1995; pp: 55) were adopted, a number of others were considered. Focus groups and journal keeping were evaluated and eventually dismissed; reasons are now presented.

Focus groups would have been a low-cost way of getting a sense of the range of informants' perspectives from a large group, or multiple groups (Knight, 2002; pp: 71) and would have facilitated a broad-ranging collective conversation (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2008; pp: 375) enabling an understanding of the particular issues, from the perspective of the participants (Liamputtong 2012). However, given the small group size, in terms of obtaining a rich picture that might illuminate subsidiary interrelated factors, this approach seemed limited. In particular, possible challenges around group management and potentially dominant individuals (Knight, 2002; pp: 71) made me think this data gathering approach was not the best for my data gathering requirements.

This decision led me to consider asking respondents to maintain a journal or diary as a research tool (Robson, 1993). Diaries as a data gathering tool were initially appealing as they might render exceptionally rich data during the period the respondents were participating in the literacy intervention (Kenten, 2010). However, it would have placed a great deal of responsibility on the respondent (Robson, 1993). This responsibility on first year students in addition to the transition to Higher Education would have been impractical and difficult to justify in terms of ethics. Additionally it would have meant ethical compromises by commencing the research prior to the completion of the module. As a result of this student journals/diaries were not used at any stage of the research.

It became clear that interviewing would most effectively illuminate respondents' understanding and allow access to their complex experiences (Bryman, 2012; pp: 471). Additionally, analysis of written artefacts produced by respondents would enable a cross reference of respondents' description of their literacy activities as represented in their actual documents' content, thus further enriching the picture gained.

Thus data were gathered by the researcher in two ways, firstly through respondent reports (Cannel & Axelrod, 1956) ascertained through interviews and secondly through a triangulation of artefacts/essays (Robson, 1993; pp: 290) produced by respondents during the literacy intervention. These activities took place over a period of a year. Thus data gathering commenced following the end of the first semester of study during which time respondents had participated in a literacy intervention designed, and embedded in a module to support their entry and progress in their higher education course of study. Data gathering was completed in the six months following the end of their literacy intervention. One set of evidence (18 essays, three per student) provides evidence of actual change in terms of literacy practices used by the respondents whilst the second set of evidence, respondent transcripts, contained respondent accounts of their literacy practices during the intervention as shown in the following Table 5-1. This is initially presented below in Table 5-1 and then described in detail in the following sections 5.10 and 5.11 which describes phases one and two in greater detail.

Phase	Where?	Focus	Evidence	Analysis
Phase 1	Chapter 6	Literacy practices (RQ4)	Written artefacts: 18 essays (3 per student) 2 formative & 1 summative	Documentary Analysis – Classification using a framework derived from the SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information literacy practices – core model to identify actual literacy practices used and showing change/development of literacy practices over the 3 essays for each respondent.
			Pen portraits,	Background context showing respondents as representative of non-traditionally qualified entrants.
			Comments from respondent transcripts	Respondent comments from transcripts illuminate perception of literacy practices
Phase 2	Chapter 7	Student's perceptions of practices (RQ4)	Interviews 1 per student = 6 Researcher field notes of interviews	Thematic Dimensional Analysis Temporal Analysis Explanatory Matrix Limits of Grounded Theory
Phase 3	Chapter 8	Synthesis (RQ5)	All the above	

Table 5-1 Data gathering and evidence

The advantages of software for qualitative data management and analysis were considered (Dey, 1993; pp: 55-62), but after careful reflection and in the light of my small data sample size I preferred to handle and feel the data myself (Bailey, 2008). I was keen to work with the data manually, physically sifting, sorting and cross checking until patterns and elements emerged through repeated interpretation (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013; pp: 431). This involved effective use of Word, Excel and hard copy data management techniques. The next section moves on to consider the data gathering activities and outlines analysis activities undertaken.

5.11 Documentary and Interview Transcript Analysis

In Phase one of the analysis I was interested in comparing literacy practices evident in the written academic work of the respondents produced during the period of the intervention with participants' descriptions of their literacy activities. Therefore, evidence of literary practices within written artefacts was sought. This examination for evidence was undertaken by examining written essay documents produced by each respondent using a classification framework derived from the SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information literacy practices – core model. These outputs were created at intervals during the literacy intervention and the analysis interweaves respondents' reflective voices describing their activities at the time of document creation. Within the literacy intervention all formative assessment activities explicitly link literacy practices as described by the SCONUL Pillar model required for producing a written piece of work. Students are made aware that evidence of these activities will be expressed in their written work and judged by their reader. Therefore it could be expected that there is an increase in terms of evidence in the written documents during the course of the literacy intervention. Thus the most basic aspects of the SCONUL Seven Pillars that students were introduced to as part of the literacy intervention are used to frame the documentary analysis and presentation.

The template below (Table 5-2) was devised to map the respondents' SCONUL information literacy activities and through concurrent consideration of the respondents' transcripts allow direct exploration of links between respondent descriptions and written outputs.

SCONUL Pillar	Expressed as:	Identified at:	Yes/ No 1 – 3	Comment
IDENTIFY Identify a lack of knowledge in a subject area Identify a search topic / question and define it using simple terminology	Evidence of correct Essay question addressed			
SCOPE "Know what you don't know" to identify any information gaps Identify which types of information will best meet the need	Evidence of using external sources			
PLAN Scope their search question clearly and in appropriate language Define a search strategy by using appropriate keywords and concepts, defining and setting limits	Variety and value of resources selected in references section			
GATHER Use a range of retrieval tools and resources effectively Construct complex searches appropriate to different digital and print resources	Variety of resources selected in body of work			
EVALUATE Distinguish between different information resources and the information they provide Choose suitable material on their search topic, using appropriate criteria	Value of resources selected in references section			
MANAGE Use bibliographical software if appropriate to manage information Cite printed and electronic sources using suitable referencing styles appropriately formatted bibliographies	Harvard referencing evident Correct citations			
PRESENT Use the information and data found to address the original question Summarise documents and reports verbally and in writing	Evidence of correct Essay question addressed Correct citations			

Table 5-2 Template used for identifying academic literacy practices evident in the artefacts

The respondents' written documents were scrutinized to identify SCONUL literacy practices evident in the text described in Table 5.2 in the column 'Expressed as', whilst their voices illuminate choices made at the time.

5.12 Interviews: Structure and Planning

A particular challenge for the design of the interviews was the need to explore and gather data on the multiple, individual instances of activity, all carried out at different locations, and at a time and place of the respondents' choosing. As I was the respondents' tutor and the researcher it was possible to use verbal cues in a meaningful way to prompt reflection as well as recall (Gass, 2001). Therefore, similarly to McDonnel (1985) who used interview prompts to assess students' learning by providing verbal cues to recently acquired knowledge, interview questions were devised that triggered recall and reflection of the respondent's experience of the literacy practices activities undertaken whilst undertaking tasks as part of the literacy intervention.

These prompts were also used to elicit respondents' general feelings of confidence, family support, and views of preparedness for HE study and motivation. In effect the information being accessed by verbal prompts is the conscious thoughts during a previous activity (Edwards-Leis, 2006; pp: 4). The same prompt notes were generally used in all the interviews; however they were adapted or restated according to the needs of each participant (Robson, 1993; pp: 231). Interviews commenced with questions aimed at relaxing the respondent (Babbie, 1992; pp: 270) and as a means of easing our way into the discussion around literacy practices.

I wanted the respondents to feel comfortable and reflect back to the start of their course. Questions around family therefore were serving the dual purpose of providing useful background information whilst simultaneously stimulating reflection of arriving at university having left their families.

The following Table 5.3 shows example questions used to prompt recall and reflection of feelings at point of transition to HE and illuminate background

and context of respondents' family and previous academic experiences (also see appendix three):

Could you tell me about -
Who are you?   Gender –   Age –
Demographics: Where did you spend your first 0 – 18 years?   Country –   Urban/rural   School –
Parental background: Did your parents go to Higher or Further education/professional training?   What was/is your father's work?   What was/is your mother's work?   Siblings?   Where are you in the order?   When you spent time together as a family what did you do?   How would you describe your socio-economic position -?

Language (cultural and foreign):

What language do you speak with your family?

What language did you speak at school?

Describe the aspect of school you enjoyed the most to me –

Describe the aspect of school you least enjoyed the most to me –

What do you do in your free time?

Table 5-3 Background and Context of Respondents' family and previous academic experiences

The second part of the interview prompted recall and reflection on the actual literacy activities they had engaged with during the literacy intervention, plus an additional verbal reminder of the first session and literacy intervention task that was set.

Table 5-4 below shows example questions used to prompt recall and reflection of respondents' information literacy practices at point of transition to Higher Education and first semester academic experiences during the literacy intervention.

What can the students explain about academic literacy practices?

➢ Can you explain how you tackled the first task (writing the reflective essay)?

➢ Can you explain why you tackled the task that particular way?

➢ Now how do you think you ought to have tackled the task?

➢ Can you describe the literacy development activities you participated in and any changes in your literacy habits as a result?

> ➢ Anything else you can tell me about your digital and information literacy habits that you think might help us to understand how people can learn how to engage effectively with digital literacies.

Table 5-4 Example Questions used to prompt recall of information literacy practices

5.12.1 Initial interviews

Individual interviews were conducted with each of the six respondents; in which semi-structured or focused interview questions (Robson, 1993; pp: 240) were used to stimulate recall (Lyle, 2000). The questions were designed to obtain reports of experience (for an example of prompt questions see Table 5.3 and Table 5.4) and elicit understanding of previous literacy activities (Edwards-Leis, 2006; pp: 4). The interviews were conducted over an extended period through March, April, and May 2012, at a time selected by the participant. Bearing in mind the role of place and power relations as considered by Ellwood and Martin (2000; pp: 649-657), the interviews took place in a small tutorial library classroom booked through the university. This was to place respondents in familiar surroundings in a space which was shared by tutors and students and therefore did not have the same power significance as my office. Whilst, as argued by Ellwood and Martin (2000; pp: 652), it is not possible to erase the inherent power dynamics of the situation, the location sought to make the interview more balanced and conversational as suggested by Richards (2009; pp: 42). The data gathering exercise elicited respondents' accounts of experiences that took place over a period of six months following arrival and commencement of studies. Each interview lasted for 45 to 60 minutes. All interviews were recorded with the participants' permission (Bryman, 2012; pp: 483) and were later transcribed by myself.

5.12.2 Transcribing the interviews

As the transcribing process was forming part of the analysis (Bailey, 2008, 129) it was also necessary to determine the process for transcribing the interviews. I was aware that as Bryman (2012, pp: 484) describes, it is very time consuming. However; I was keen to gain familiarity with the data and start to identify key themes and to facilitate realisations and ideas that might

emerge during analysis (Bailey, 2008, 129). Therefore I selected not to use a professional transcriber to undertake this work and transcribed it myself, which proved to be beneficial in terms of understanding the data, if a steep learning curve in the challenges of transcribing. I was aware that transcripts are not neutral records, but reflections of researcher interpretation (Bailey, 2008, 129); however, as far as possible, verbatim transcripts were produced. As Bryman (2012, pp: 486) points out, errors can happen even among experienced transcribers so this process entailed care being taken and constant referring back to the original recording and notes taken during the interview. For purposes of clarity, all questions posed by myself are prefixed with 'interviewer' and coloured blue, whilst all responses were left in black and 'respondent' precedes replies. For ease of identifying the location of quotes used in the thesis, each question and answer in the transcripts has its own unique reference, derived from the respondent's identity number. This careful attention to detail of the transcribing process contributed to the data analysis, which is discussed in the next part of the thesis.

5.13   Interviews – Transcript and Field Memos Thematic and Dimensional Analysis

My first step in Phase two data analysis was identifying dimensions and properties of the data through an open coding process. By conceptualizing my respondents' description of a particular situation or event in a more abstract manner (Kools, McCarthy, Durham & Robrecht, 1996) through examining the interview transcripts, I was able to select phrases and sentences to identify salient dimensions evident in the transcripts (Creswell, 1998). As an example if a dimension is 'motivated' the properties might include engaged, inspired, participating, self-starting or drive. Using dimensions and their assigned properties as a focus for the analysis I organized my questions around codes that emerged early on in the initial coding of the interviews. Self-doubt and seeking support were two codes that emerged very early on in my initial coding process and I was thus able to explore these aspects more fully in subsequent questions and identify types of support that were sought e.g. peer, family, tutor, on-line. This enabled a

fuller exploration of associated issues around the respondents' experiences with academic literacy.

Following a more usual dimensional analysis approach a first stage and second stage coding process was undertaken. However as discussed later in section 7.2 this approach left unresolved questions so a third, temporal, stage of analysis was carried out. Interviews had been concluded so expansion of data had ceased and I was able to focus analysis on differentiation of the identified set of dimensions and properties. During my final differentiation stage I identified the importance of each individual dimension in relation to each other allowing each dimension an opportunity to be the central perspective. Following this I identified the most persuasive explanation in terms of a key perspective from the dimensions and then I developed my explanatory matrix to present the salient dimensions into a meaningful conceptualization of the overall phenomenon. The following section will present how my dimensionalisation process was undertaken and the route to the findings.

5.13.1 Constant Comparison and Dimensional Analysis

Following Charmaz (2014) the following methodological flexible strategies were used to guide the inductive analysis of the transcripts.

1. Breaking the data up into their component parts or properties

2. Defining the actions on which they rest

3. Looking for tacit assumptions

4. Explicating implicit actions and meanings

5. Crystallizing the significance of the points

6. Comparing data with data

7. Identifying gaps in the data

Table 5-5 Flexible Strategies to aid initial coding process. Adapted from Charmaz (2014; pp: 125)

The use of these strategies was concurrent with coding which commenced immediately after the start of the interviews and did not, in fact, follow in the neatly presented order above. Throughout the open coding process to identify dimensions and properties of the data (Schatzman, 1991), analytic interpretations were developed and data collection further focused during the next interview. This in turn informed and refined the developing theoretical analyses (Charmaz, 2003). As I did not begin with an existing theory or predefined concept but an investigation into an area of interest I allowed ideas to emerge from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Categories were developed from analysis of the collected data and not taken from preconceived disciplinary concepts. Thus, because emerging dimensions (themes) were drawn from my data and not forced on the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) I was able to interpret experiences of my respondents and identify issues associated with participant understanding of literacy experiences and deployment in academic contexts. Although the use of the strategies was not sequential and often overlapped, for this paper I shall discuss them in sequential order.

Strategy one commenced during transcription of interviews. Each transcript was broken down into component parts, with each section further broken into an exchange between interviewer and respondent. This was to maintain the integrity of the dialogue. Each transcript was examined line-by-line to identify salient dimensions evident in the transcripts (Creswell, 1998). Charmaz (2014; pp: 125) suggests this approach is particularly useful when considering empirical problems or processes, so fitted my purpose well. A simple Word table was devised for a first cycle initial coding (Saldana, 2009; pp: 81) to record identified codes; the term 'code' is used here as an abstract concept depicting any idea or object under consideration. All transcript exchanges were first entered into the table without coding but by breaking the data into exchanges. Below is an example of the Word table used.

Transcript reference	Phrase/word
2.69	Interviewer: You did pretty well on that presentation then. Because here you've got..... Respondent: That's different, presentation........ It's nerves. I like drama, drama's always been my big thing, but panic is having something just put in front of you.

Table 5-6 Example of table used for breaking transcript data into exchanges

Strategy two was an opportunity to learn about my respondents' world through their words and statements (Charmaz, 2014; pp: 125). This involved interpreting and defining actions on which they rest.

Transcript reference	Phrase/word	Coding
2.69	Interviewer: You did pretty well on that presentation then. Because here you've got..... Respondent: That's different, presentation........ It's nerves. I like drama, drama's always been my big thing, but panic is having something just put in front of you.	Drama Panic

Table 5-7 Example of table used for coding of exchanges

Strategies three and four involved looking for tacit meanings – the challenge of unfolding implicit actions and meanings, again not known to the actors and based on personal life experiences, particularly in decisions made based on previous personal life experiences, which were not consciously apparent in the decision making environment or process for my respondents. For example respondent 103 describes wanting to belong and be part of a team and playing football to be sociable.

Interviewer: Football and.... Respondent: Yeah, well not through school but after school I played for a local team, but I mean just to be social again, it was just to be part of the team and a group of lads really, it wasn't like every night I played	Needs to belong Fit in with peers

football...	

Table 5-8 example of strategy three - belonging

This desire to belong is then echoed in later decisions to connect with peers:

Interviewer: And I'm interested in how you tackled it. So you panicked. What was the nature of your panic? Respondent: you know what it was – you were worried that you were going to be left behind...... I think you were behind already. Because after that lecture everyone was happy ...everyone was doing it. I think it was that you worried what other people – if they've got it right and you've got it wrong. It was a panic but then it was a kind of like we just need to sit down and......	Peer approval Panic

Table 5-9 Example of strategy three - belonging

Strategy five took place during second and third stage coding and I focused on what I discerned as most significant from the coded data and encompassed strategy six and seven, comparing data and identifying gaps. As well as working with the coded data I also coded my field notes. After each interview I made a short field note memo capturing what came out generally for me during the interview. Once all the interviews were completed I reviewed my field notes as one whole and generated a set of analytic memos at a meta-level which also formed part of the coding synthesising process.

These codes were subsequently used to direct and focus further data synthesis and analysis by organizing second stage focused coding and analysis around codes developed in the initial coding of interviews and field notes (Van Velsor & Nilon, 2006). As indicated by Charmaz (2014, pp: 138) second stage focused coding permitted the relative salience of each of the possible dimensions to be condensed and sharpened during analysis. Expansion of the data had ceased and analysis focused on differentiating identified sets of conditions, processes and outcomes in my data. I was

seeking to identify a key perspective or central dimension explanation for the relationship amongst all of the dimensions related to academic literacy practices used within a widening participation context as expressed by my respondents.

During this iterative second stage focused coding process I used both Word and Excel to create tables to assist in visual understanding of which overarching codes were revealed as significant through subsuming other codes. I also made use of a third stage of temporal analysis to aid the visualizing of the dimensions. This stage was particularly rich in terms of suggesting underlying themes from the collective coded data and a number of revisits to the data took place. In particular, the use of a temporal analysis revealed the importance of the transcripts in considering respondents' descriptions of 'before', 'during' and 'after' stages of the literacy intervention. This made explicit links between respondents' experiences and issues associated with information literacy experiences and deployment in academic contexts.

5.13.2 Explanatory Matrix

Once salient dimensions had been determined to fully interpret their meanings I based my explanatory matrix on the work of Schatzman (1991) by using five conceptual components. The Explanatory Matrix below in Chapter 7 (Figure 7.3) has a *central perspective* which is the dimension most central in the emerging theory and influences all the other dimensions; boundaries of the situation are shown in the *context element*. The *conditions* shown were identified as the most noteworthy in relation to the central perspective; the intended or unintended *actions* were driven by their related conditions and these actions or processes resulted in related *consequences*.

My explanatory matrices were revisited a number of times to enable each of my conditions opportunity to be considered as either a process or *consequence*.

5.14 Summary

Chapter 5 has described and discussed the methodology used across the research project. It has outlined how all data was collected and managed manually by myself. Research choices have been examined and established within the context of the project. The literacy intervention, used with the sample respondent group, has been described. The classification framework derived from the SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information literacy practices – core model used examination for evidence of literacy practices through examining written essay documents produced by each respondent – has been outlined. The use of a thematic approach based on dimensional analysis (Schatzman, 1991) as a central organizing concept for interview transcript analysis and the stages undertaken have been made explicit. As discussed in this chapter a number of different approaches were taken for data analysis, shown in two distinct phases, as there were two sets of evidence being considered.

With this in mind, Chapter 6 reveals respondent practices demonstrated within documents (essays) produced during the literacy intervention and discussed in the context of comments from the interviews with the six respondents. Chapter 6 further presents a triangulation of accounts and practices. This raw data provides the basis for the discussion of changes to learner practices with regards to information literacy within academic contexts.

Chapter 6: Data Presentation and Findings

Chapter 5 established the methodological framework for the research. Chapter 6 presents findings of the interviews in the context of the learners' experience of academic practices before entry to university, and then during the literacy intervention designed to aid students to engage and understand the role of the tutor preferred literacy practices for academic study and writing. Presenting a baseline biography and orientation, respondents' descriptions of their family backgrounds and previous academic experiences set the scene for the approach taken to activities as part of the literacy intervention.

The chapter continues by presenting findings from the analysis of literacy practices evident in essays developed by the respondents during the literacy intervention. Direct comments from respondents' accounts are presented concurrently to illuminate their perceptions of their literacy practices activities during production of each artefact. The essays are considered by using the seven SCONUL pillars to frame and classify the data, in relation to:

> ➢ Literacy practices used in first formative essay when first given the task

> ➢ Literacy practices used during intervention activities

> ➢ Literacy practices used in final summative essay

This summary of the research in phase one provides the basis for phase two in Chapter 7 where dimensionalised analysis, using an explanatory matrix of respondent transcripts, is developed to provide an interpretive account which provides depth and meaning to the respondent accounts.

6.1   Section One – Pen Portraits and Base-line Biography

As the individual was not the unit of analysis I decided not to ask participants to identify further in terms of ethnic and social backgrounds as I didn't want to classify them inappropriately. However, pen portraits and base-line

educational biography of respondents are now provided to allow a view of how collectively they represent the typical non-traditionally qualified students, higher education (see appendix eight for full demographic information).

Pen Portraits
Respondent 101 is a 20 year old Lithuanian female who had moved to the UK with her family when she was aged thirteen to improve the family financial position. This respondent described herself as popular with lots of friends; English was a second language but not a problem. Application to A levels was described as a problem as she said her preference was to be partying, in her words 'I went off the rails' with teachers being too strict. This respondent was happy and smiled a lot, indicated she was glad to be at university and expected to do well as she thought of herself as clever. Very strong views on the need for people to work for themselves and not expect an easy time, indicated that many students were lazy.
Respondent 102 is almost 21 years and described herself as ordinary with an ordinary background. Born and brought up in London, she had attended primary and secondary school until the end of her GCSE year, when she moved to a community college for A Level study. In her early teens family divorce had been disruptive but her view was that resistance to authority had caused problems during teenage years at school, describing teachers as patronising although she had gained two A' levels before leaving community college and going to work. This respondent described herself as clever but anxious and stressed by academic work and very dependent upon her family for support and although happy to be at university fear often made it difficult to believe in herself.
Respondent 103 is a twenty year old male who described himself as popular at school but not disruptive but simply not interested in applying himself. He said his family had no interest in him, with divorced parents he described spending time between them both, often living at home alone as they were out or in his father's case travelling. He described bringing himself up and not having very much spare money. This changed when he went to work at 16 and his mentor encouraged him, from then on he worked for mentor approval. He had left school to work full time but when he saw his friends going to university he started college in the evenings to gain A levels. He described still working for the same company but in a different

geographical location but retaining the same mentor who he still wanted approval from. He described himself as clever and able to do well at university.
Respondent 104 is a 21 year old Iranian female who moved to the UK when she was 16, this was without family, although they have since also moved to the UK. Found the language difficult so couldn't do well in studies. After attending a one year access course she felt able to continue with studies. Described herself as a loner preferring to spend time with her father in his company working for him. Very strong views on all the other students being lazy and not working hard, equally strong views about not wanting to work with them.
Respondent 105 was an exceptionally cheerful 21 year old female from Holland living in London with her boyfriend. Her description of her childhood was as rural and very family focused, the whole family enjoyed spending time together pursuing outdoor activities and sports. Described herself as enjoying school and friendships during her younger childhood but then from the age of 15 having to contribute to the housework and cooking so her mother could concentrate on the family business and also commencing part-time work. Happy to be in England and enjoying the new experiences.
Respondent 106 is a 20 year old male slight and shy who described himself as afraid of 'being found out' and asked to leave. He described a childhood that included trips to farms and his mum reading to him, playing football and being with friends most of the time. In his middle teens he left home to live with his grandmother after a falling out with his stepfather. He expected to fail his GCSE exams so was surprised when he went on to do A levels, didn't expect to pass those either and indicated he found them hard.

Table 6-1 Pen portraits

Whilst each respondent has had individual life experiences prior to arriving at university there are commonalities that could be observed throughout all these pen-portraits. All had experienced a personal disruption during their early/middle teen years; often associated with family changes such as parental separation or moving overseas. All had not performed well academically during their final exam period of formal schooling.

The following section explores more fully family and previous school experiences.

6.1.1 Family background

The first questions explored previous family history of Higher Education, including whether these non-traditionally qualified entrants were first generation undergraduates. As discussed in the methods section (see 5.5) all respondents came from a similar previous academic background and were entering Higher Education without the traditional 'A' level entry grades required for university.

When asked about their parents' qualifications, attendance at university or degree, there was a measure of confusion. For instance, Respondent 101 was unclear if her mother had a first degree:

> *R 1.10: I'm the first in my family to go to Higher Education, no wait a minute my mum's just finishing a course now she's done tourism*

Respondent 102 was also unable to be sure with regards to parent's education:

> *R2.20: Yes. I'm not sure what degrees they've got I think both, I'm certain one of them did. I'm sure my dad did.*

And Respondent 103 commented that:

> *R3.28: They don't have degrees actually. My dad's done quite well, but he hasn't actually got a degree.*

Respondent 106 also indicated that his parents had not attended university:

> *R6.10: None of them went to university, but I think my mum's done something – NVQ - she's a florist so I don't know... something in that area. She was in Childcare as well for a while; I haven't asked her to be honest what she's done other than that. But she certainly hasn't been to University.*

Interestingly there was variety amongst respondents in terms of their knowledge of their parents' university education. Three of the respondents

thought that one of their parents had a degree but were unable to identify the degree taken or the institution. The other three of the respondents were confident that their parents had not taken a first degree, although two of these three thought their parent may have taken a qualification of some vocational sort but again were unclear if this was the case or not. However, what was common to all was that none were clear about what qualifications their parents may have gained or in what area.

The table below is a summary of what we know about parental qualifications. It is worth noting that some of the parental study was concurrent with that of the participant, i.e. this was not a formative, background experience in a conventional way.

Respondent	Parental background
101	Parental higher studies unclear, mother possibly currently undertaking tourism course
102	Both parents possibly with first degree however parental higher studies unclear
103	Parental higher studies unclear
104	Parental higher studies unclear
105	Parental higher studies unclear
106	Parental higher studies unclear, mother possibly currently studying for NVQ Floristry

Table 6-2 Summary of respondents' parental educational background

6.1.2   Previous academic experiences

Informants were asked next about their previous academic experiences. Respondents talked about their school experiences, in particular their AS and A Level experiences, as previous experiences of information and academic literacy. As can be seen from the example comments below, there was a perceived lack of previous academic success amongst respondents. A variety of perspectives were offered as to why they had not gained academic

success ranging from teenage distractions through to family breakdown and low self-expectations and confusion. Respondent 101 indicates that whilst confident of their ability their application was interrupted by teenage distractions:

> *R1.52   It was not a choice, I went through clearing. Basically I failed my A levels I didn't do as well as I expected. Because obviously it was my teenage years so I was out and not studying it's not that I'm not clever enough if I would of studied I could've passed if I'd studied but hey I didn't. So I went through clearing and stayed with mum and dad.*

Respondent 102 indicates a more complex picture but nevertheless suggests they could have done better:

> *R2.14:   No 100% it wasn't the best that I could possibly do. I don't know, there were some problems at home, but they are kind of background. I don't know how I was affected; it's the kind of thing you don't really think about, but then my – I think it was the constant flow of academia, so you've got your GCSEs followed by your A levels and I worked so hard on my GCSEs.*

Both respondent 101 and 102 indicate that something outside of their control was the reason they had not gained better A Level grades. Respondent 103 described a different experience: essentially a lack of understanding of what was required from him in terms of studying.

> *R3.48:   The thing is I thought it was terrible because all my friends were stressed and they were revising and I remember thinking – what am I going to revise. I do not know what I'm doing. And I was – I was quite lucky. I didn't come out with particularly brilliant grades but........ I think that was quite embarrassing that.*

Regardless of qualifications and previous academic challenges all respondents indicated their desire to be at university. Respondents 101, 102 and 103 indicated that they were not at a university of their choice but at a university that would accept them; each felt that had circumstances been different they could have been able to attend a 'better' university. Table 6.3 provides a summary of participants' qualifications.

Respondent	Highest Qualification
101	2 x D grades at A level
102	1 x B and 1 x D at A level
103	Access Course
104	Access Course
105	Equivalent 3 x D grade A level
106	2 x D grades at A level 1 x C grades at A level

Table 6-3 Summary of respondents' qualifications

In summary the informants were all unsure whether their parents had attended university for a first degree; had all faced difficulties at GCSE Level; but were motivated to be at university and indicated they could have attended a 'better' university. There was a limited family experience of university life and what to expect and all respondents had entered university without the three A' Levels traditionally required.

Section 6.2 presents analysis of two separate data sets: informants' comments drawn from their transcripts are linked with the evidence from the documentary analysis. This is to identify SCONUL information literacy practices in respondents' written outputs. Each respondent's three written documents were considered in order of production, looking for evidence of SCONUL's information literacy practices in their work. Examples are presented with respondents' transcript comments describing their activities at the time of production of the artefact under scrutiny. For ease of identification the respondents' interview comments are in italics and the data from the essays is contained within boxes.

This consideration of respondents' descriptions of their responses when presented with their first written essay considered alongside three of their written essay outputs allows insight into the experiences of this type of learner when starting out on their academic career, the challenges faced and how these were met.

6.2   Information Literacy Practices as described by Respondents and evident in Document One

As explained previously in Chapter 5, using verbal cues, respondents were prompted to reflect and describe how they approached their first written task. All informants had been accepted onto a degree level course of study with less than 200 entry points by the university. As described above by the respondents, not all previous academic experiences had been positive; therefore it was illuminating to hear how they tackled the first task of their academic career and if and where they sought support.

During the first weeks and as part of the literary intervention respondents were asked to write a short formative essay and were given the following title through email and Blackboard:

> *"Making effective use of appropriate models and conforming to a recognised academic written standard write a reflective account of your own strengths and weaknesses of academic literacy competence for undertaking this course. Your work should not exceed 1,500 words." (Module study guide 2012)*

One aspect of the task design is to allow students to reflect on their current literacy practices and academic writing, benchmark themselves and be able to identify areas for improvement. Guidance on how to undertake the task is provided during a lecture and follow-up on-line discussion forums where students can check their understanding of what they are doing as the week and their work on the task progresses. It became apparent through the data analysis that there was an ambiguity of question for the first written document. However the approach taken by respondents for the second question was similar and no ambiguity was apparent within that question. Therefore ambiguity of question was not considered in this study to be impacting on the approach used by respondents.

The sections that follow explore informants' comments and written outputs in relation to each of the SCONUL pillars in turn.

6.2.1   SCONUL Pillar 1: Identify

The first pillar used in the template (Table 5.2) was 'Identify', and specifically, the first two actions within SCONUL's definition that information literate learners are expected to demonstrate. These were selected as they form the basis for the information literacy practices that follow within that and subsequent Pillars, and were used with the respondents in the literacy intervention (see sections 5.10 & 5.11).

SCONUL Pillar	Identify
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Identify a lack of knowledge in a subject area ➢ Identify a search topic / question and define it using simple terminology
Expressed as:	Evidence of correct Essay question used

Table 6-4 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

During interview a verbal cue was used to remind respondents of the essay question and ask them to describe how they tackled the first written task. The interviews took place after the module had been completed and each of the respondents knew they had successfully completed the first semester. Despite this recent success, respondents were visibly upset when describing their feelings of fear and anxiety and were clearly able to access those initial emotions easily.

Respondent 103 describes feelings of panic:

R3.57-63: I couldn't believe it; I was like "no way" (raised voice and strong emphasis).......I could tackle it a lot better now because I think the first four days I didn't know what we were doing. I was still panicking anyway because of the idea of it's the first assignment, I want to get, you know what I mean, I want to get full marks and I just wanted to do well in it. But also the worrying thing ...... you kind of forget about the assignment itself, and just think, what

am I doing, and then is it like this every week, etc. etc. and then worried about it.

Similarly, Respondent 106 conveyed his feelings of shock and anxiety:

R6.37-49: I had no idea what to do, so I was just.....I just thought "oh dear, I don't know what I'm going to do now". (Very low voice and emotional) Shocked to the system really I suppose. Because obviously it's always different, you get fed all the information and you know what you're doing, but this you had to find your own way. I just didn't know where to start; I've never even....I've never gone and looked in a book to find any answers before, so I didn't know how to look for the books or what I'd need to search...... I don't know.

Respondent 102 indicated reliance on a family member to provide support when the feelings became overwhelming:

R2.55-57: I went home got really upset, called my dad and said I don't want to go to University. I said no dad; I really can't cope with this. I was in a bad way.

Unlike the respondents above respondent 105 initially felt confident about undertaking the task but on reaching home fear had become the overriding sensation.

R5.51-53: At the moment I left the room I felt as if I could do this, and then I know what to do, and it's all going to be OK. But from the moment I came home it was fear; fear all along the whole week. So I was very afraid of not doing the right thing, and that was really scary the first week.

With the exception of the respondent who had taken the pre-sessional course and who was effectively in the second year of their studies, after being asked to undertake the academic task, the voices of all of the respondents show confusion, fear and anxiety. For some of the respondents this confusion is reflected when they transpose the essay question from the task to their assignment. Whilst respondents 101, 102, 103 and 106 accurately copied the question into their written documents as requested by the assignment brief, respondents 104 and 105 changed the question and in so doing changed the nature of the work required:

Respondent 104 – REFLECTIVE ACCOUNT OF YOUR OWN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF ACADEMIC LITERACY COMPETENCE FOR UNDERTAKING THIS COURSE (respondent's emphasis and capital letter choice)
Respondent 105 – Account of strengths & weaknesses , opportunities & threats'

Table 6-5 Examples of incorrect essay question

Respondents, possibly inadvertently, appear to change the question they are addressing and thus reduce the likelihood of being able to 'identify a search topic / question and define it using simple terminology' which is a fundamental part of addressing the essay question.

When asked what their next action was following their initial confusion or panic, all but one of the respondents indicated seeking support from peers, family members or close friends. After accessing this support, in all cases respondents felt able to tackle the task.

As can be seen from their accounts, our informants' first response was emotional and they experienced some level of fear, confusion or anxiety about what they had to do. This response was rapidly followed by another emotional response of seeking support from some member of their immediate or extended community. In all cases the informants reported that this was followed by an attempt to undertake the written task. Despite being shown in the lecture the importance of understanding a question and identifying their own existing knowledge base respondents indicate that they went directly to researching information for the essay. Without examining the question and identifying key topics, using appropriate resources to address the question would be challenging. It is this that we consider in the next section of the first essay submission scrutiny.

6.2.2   SCONUL Pillar 2: Scope

The second pillar used in the template (Table 5.2) was Scope and as with 6.2.1 above the first two information literacy practices within the Pillar were used to frame the analysis and scrutiny of the essay. We now consider how effectively the respondents identified their information requirements.

SCONUL Pillar	SCOPE
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ "Know what you don't know" to identify any information gaps ➢ Identify which types of information will best meet the need
Expressed as:	Evidence of using appropriate external sources

Table 6-6 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

As established above (see 6.2.1), following receipt of the first formative task the initial response was a sense of fear and panic. This was followed by a seeking of support where a sharing of what the task required took place. During the interview when prompted to reflect on what they did next, all respondents talked about doing research for their essay. For example some respondents described how they went straight to the library and found books.

Respondent 103 described using a serendipitous approach:

R3. 67: I remembered Gibbs (from the lecture) and we found a book, and we literally just.... (Trails off)

Evident from respondents' comments is a lack of any systematic approach to identify what they might already know about the topic or might need to find out; simply the serendipity of using what might be found. Respondent 103 goes onto describe using BlackBoard and various on-line support links provided by the module team on the discussion forum:

R3. 69: We got taught by the learner journey – type it in on Blackboard what you are looking for, and it gives you a dictionary of where it can be and it's also e-books as well.

Another respondent mentions being scared of the library:

R2.74: going on line, looking at reflective writing, looking at – not just on line. Looked at books as well – I was scared of the library....

These respondents report they started writing the essay:

R5. 66: I basically just started writing. I thought.... (Trails off thinking)

Or again writing and then serendipitously using a link sent from the module team:

> *R6. 46: I just started writing and then go on – its rubbish and getting a bit psyched.... Kolb's... I think it was on a link that you sent us...*

The basic SCONUL activity introduced in the lecture was to 'Identify which types of information will best meet the need' and how to identify where to find the information. What is of particular interest is that all respondents focused on the word 'reflective' and 'strengths and weaknesses' for their information gathering activities and written work. Whilst this might have been a consequence of the ordering of the components in the essay title, without exception all respondents misunderstood the actual task of identifying what is 'academic literacy competency' and reflecting on their own abilities in this area. As identified early in this section this might be a reflection of task design rather than respondent competence; however as a similar approach was used for the second essay writing task which resulted in similar misconceptions seen in the first draft it appears to be respondent approach rather than design.

Essentially, respondents started information gathering without first identifying what their topic requirements were.

Respondent 103 found and used Gibb's theory in the work but no other sources:

Respondent 103 Document one – first essay
➢ *Refereeing to Gibbs' theory, when it is broken down you can measure any situation and reflect on your actions and thoughts and feelings. When I started this assignment I had no idea what I was going to write, I went in to a panic stage but once I started researching I read Gibb's theory and I used his method to write this essay.*

Table 6-7 Example of information gathered for addressing the essay question

Respondent 106 also used only one external source, Gibbs. Respondent 102 however uses authors in every single paragraph of her work, as indicated in these three examples below:

Respondent 102 Document one – first essay
➢ *"The cycle has three stages: you have experiences (such as that of speaking to an audience); you reflect on those experiences and see what can be learned from them; then you work out ways of doing things differently – better – next time" (Peter Levin & Graham Topping 2006, p.1).* ➢ *Moreover, Anne Brockbank & Ian McGill (2007, p.85) state that "We need to be aware of our actions in order that we may evaluate them"* ➢ *Mike Hughes and Ian M. Franks (2008 p.1 & p.23) describes "one of the most important variables affecting learning and subsequent performance of a skill is feedback"*

Table 6-8 Further example of information gathered to address the essay question

To summarise, these excerpts suggest that respondents were aware of the requirement to engage with external sources. However, no formal identification of knowledge gap or need to address the question has taken place despite being guided during the lecture, the on-line discussion forum and the seminar session. They still attempt to identify what they thought was appropriate to their essay writing needs and without exception have all identified reflection as the topic to be researched. The work now considers what role planning took in respondents' preparations for their essay writing.

6.2.3   SCONUL Pillar 3: Plan

Turning now to consider the planning stage the third SCONUL pillar used in the scrutiny of the essay was 'Plan'. As with 6.2.2 above, the first two information literacy practices within the Pillar were used to frame the analysis.

SCONUL Pillar	PLAN

Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Scope their search question clearly and in appropriate language ➢ Define a search strategy by using appropriate keywords and concepts, defining and setting limits
Expressed as:	Variety and value of resources selected in <u>references</u> section

Table 6-9 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

In terms of evidence of external sources there are a variety of approaches and sources used. As shown in sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2, even though respondents had been advised during contact sessions to make use of formal strategies and despite no formal strategies in line with the SCONUL Pillars being used, there was evidence of attempting to identify suitable resources to meet their needs through informal strategies, such as asking their friends what they were using. However, there was little indication of having identified a search topic/question and defined it using simple terminology.

As part of the introductory lecture respondents were shown how to plan a basic essay structure and provided with a template of what should be in an essay. One respondent used the template:

R2.74: The list really helped me in working out what I really wanted to talk about;

Respondent 102 Document one – first essay
Everyone has strengths and weaknesses however it is important for one's self to recognise what they are in order to progress and achieve. Throughout this essay I will explain how the author's strengths and weaknesses led her to undertake the course of business studies with a year internship. In doing this I intend to prove with the use of reflective models that weaknesses can aid one's ability to self-improve and engage in unfamiliar areas and strengths are what makes one confident enough to do so.

Table 6-10 Example of planning stage

However, respondent 106 acknowledged that planning wasn't used:

R6. 46: I don't think I even planned it.

The following respondents clearly attempted to plan for their essay but don't plan for the question asked:

Respondent 103 Document one – first essay
This essay is going to look at why I've chosen business and finance and how it will help me with a graduate job. In addition I will look at Gibb's theory and how he uses his writing effectively and in what manner do I use my writing skilfully. I will discuss a past experience were I could of used Gibbs' theory to make it more satisfying.
Respondent 105 Document one – first essay
Throughout this essay I plan to give you a brief view about my upbringing, and what made me make the choice to follow a business studies course in the UK. In this essay, I will discuss my various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, for participating in this course, by looking at and discussing past experiences.

Table 6-11 Examples of students' incorrect planning attempts

It is evident that the planning process as defined by SCONUL was not evidenced in the respondents' thinking. They went straight from panic to data gathering without considering information needs, how to identify them or how to plan and execute a search. This lack of planning has an impact on the following Pillars and limits the written work.

6.2.4   SCONUL Pillar 4: Gather

The fourth pillar used in the scrutiny of the essay was 'Gather' and as with the Pillars above the first two information literacy practices within the Pillar were used to frame the analysis.

SCONUL Pillar	GATHER
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Use a range of retrieval tools and resources effectively ➢ Construct complex searches appropriate to different digital and print resources
Expressed as:	Variety of resources selected in <u>body</u> of work

Table 6-12 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

As discussed above in sections6.2.1, 6.2.2 and 6.2.3, the respondents did not scope, identify key topics for information gathering purposes or plan for their information gathering activities. As we see in the comments in this section, their lack of preparation follows through into the fourth SCONUL pillar.

> *R1.58: Yeah found some random books – found some books and then I sat down to write about it.*

> *R3. 67: I remember we went into the library, looking all over the library and we found some books.....*

> *R5. 66: I did go to the library yes, and I got some books... Yes, and I got some books. I went online to get some online research, to do some research. I went to the e-books on the library website – that was very helpful....   and that's how.....*

No consideration is given to the types of data bases used or the type of search undertaken, or materials best suited for the purpose, simply a gathering of materials on reflection. The materials identified are not used within the body of the work as shown by Figure 6-1 and as shown below the number of different authors cited in the body of the work is minimal to none at all:

	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
Citations in document one	0	4	0	2	0	0

Figure 6-1 Number of different authors cited in the work

Although some of the respondents use quotes from external sources as we can see from the below table they are not correctly cited and are simply included as an example of statements on strength.

Respondent 105 Document one – first essay
➢ *"Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will."*   ➢ *Mahatma Gandhi quotes (Indian Philosopher, internationally esteemed for his doctrine of nonviolent protest, 1869-1948)*   ➢ *http://thinkexist.com/quotations/strength/*   ➢ *"Failure will never overtake me if my determination to succeed is strong enough."*   ➢ *Og Mandino quotes (American Essayist and Psychologist, 1923-1996)*   ➢ *http://thinkexist.com/quotations/strength/2.html*   ➢ *"Strength does not come from winning. Your struggles develop your strengths. When you go through hardships and decide not to surrender, that is strength."*   ➢ *Arnold Schwarzenegger quotes*   ➢ *http://thinkexist.com/quotations/strength/2.html*

Table 6-13 Examples of quotes and citations

Respondent 105 in using this series of quotes in their work assumes they are addressing the question; however as the scoping and understanding of the question did not happen the information gathered was not relevant to the question being addressed.

6.2.5 SCONUL Pillar 5: Evaluate

As with the previous Pillars, the fifth pillar used the first two information literacy practices to frame the analysis of the respondents' writing.

SCONUL Pillar	EVALUATE
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Distinguish between different information resources and the information they provide ➢ Choose suitable material on their search topic, using appropriate criteria

Expressed as:	Value and appropriateness of resources selected in <u>references</u> section

Table 6-14 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

As described by respondent 103 the approach taken was generally serendipitous, chancing upon material/s:

> *Respondent 103: I remember we went into the library, looking all over the library and we found some books.....*

A brief consideration of the references shown in Table 614 also indicates a reliance on web pages for selections made.

101 and 103 essay
101: *Learning Theories Knowledgebase (2011, October). Experiential Learning (Kolb) at Learning-Theories.com. Retrieved October 2nd, 2011 from http://www.learning-theories.com/experiential-learning-kolb.html* <u>*http://www.scribd.com/doc/9700500/Models-of-Reflection*</u> 103: *Fish and Twinn(1997)* *Fish and Twinn (1997). Quality Clinical Supervision in the Health Care Professions: Principled Approaches to Practice. Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford.* *www.devon.gov.uk/reflectivepractice.com*

Table 6-15 examples of references & style used

Respondents 105 and 106 didn't provide any information regarding references. The lack of citations within the body of the respondents' essays further confirms the limited use made of both the competencies required to identify suitable material and the understanding of the importance of using other people's work appropriately. It is evident that selections were made purposefully, chosen by respondents as possibly useful for their work. However, a careful evaluation and understanding of their selections within a broader discipline context, in particular for positioning their argument, was not evident in either the transcripts or written documents. As will be seen in the next section this lack of understanding of how to manage resources

further confirms the lack of understanding the respondents have about what is required within this academic context.

6.2.6   SCONUL Pillar 6: Manage

The sixth analysis again used the first two information literacy practices within the Pillar to consider how the respondents managed their sources and resources.

SCONUL Pillar	MANAGE
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Use bibliographical software if appropriate to manage information ➢ Cite printed and electronic sources using suitable referencing styles ➢ Appropriately formatted bibliographies
Expressed as:	Correct Citations & Harvard referencing evident

Table 6-16 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

As established in earlier sections (see sections 6.2 to 6.2.5) the respondents provided no evidence of systematic approaches to any aspect of their work. With the exception of respondent 102 who attempted to follow conventional Harvard citation practice for the books used, the references presented were not using recognised referencing styles. Two students attempted to cite authors within the body of the work but the others didn't use citations at all. If we take the example of Respondent 101 we can see she started the task by finding out what was meant by reflection using Google as her search tool. We can see from this paragraph in her essay submission that she had identified and located one theorist's work on reflection from her Google search and indicates an intention to use the theorist:

Respondent 101 Document one – first essay

> *Having read Gibbs model of reflection I understood that it confronts practitioners to consider their normal way of thinking and responding within the situation. It encourages a clear description of the situation, analyses of feelings, an evaluation of experience and also examines what you would do if faced with the situation again.*

Table 6-17 Example of theorist identified for task

This respondent then continues with the written work without further reference to Gibbs or any other theorists and doesn't include any citations. The essay continues to explore in a frank and open way experiences that shaped the respondent before entering university. At no point in the work is academic literacy referred to or either Gibbs or Kolb's theories. The closing paragraph confirms that the author is reflecting on past experiences and strengths and weaknesses rather than on information literacy to underpin academic capability for her undergraduate course:

Respondent 101 Document one – first essay

> *Overall reflecting back to my learning experiences has reminded me that I should always look back to situations and try and learn how to either overcome a weakness or how to apply my strength to more than one situation. During this year I aim to continue reflecting throughout my course in order to achieve great results.*

Table 6-18 Example of closing paragraph

The question was specific in requesting that a 'recognised academic writing convention' should be used and the tutors reinforced this during the lecture session; however there were no citations used, and the references at the end of the work (see Table 618 below) do not conform to Harvard referencing as requested by the tutor and the question set.

Respondent 101 Document one – first essay

References used
 ☐ Learning Theories Knowledgebase (2011, October). Experiential Learning (Kolb) at Learning-Theories.com. Retrieved October 2nd, 2011 from http://www.learning-theories.com/experiential-learning-kolb.html ☐ http://www.scribd.com/doc/9700500/Models-of-Reflection

Table 6-19 Example of incorrect Harvard referencing

Understanding of the wider role of citations and references within a piece of written academic work resides at the heart of success for the learner. What has been evidenced thus far is a desire to comply but a confusion regarding what is required in the SCONUL information literacy arena. The sequential development of these skills has eluded our respondents and continues to do so in the final step of presenting their work, as shown in the next section.

6.2.7   SCONUL Pillar 7: Present

Thus far the respondents have not engaged with the SCONUL Pillars in any recognisable form. This lack of a systematic approach is carried through into the presentation of their work. Again the seventh SCONUL pillar used the first two information literacy practices to frame the analysis of how the respondents presented their sources, resources and written work.

SCONUL Pillar	PRESENT
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Use the information and data found to address the original question ➢ Summarise documents and reports verbally and in writing
Expressed as:	Evidence of correct Essay question addressed and Correct citations

Table 6-20 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

As indicated in the other six SCONUL elements, little evidence was demonstrated to underpin information literacy practices described in this pillar. In reviewing the written submissions for this section there was little to suggest that information and data had been found to address the original

question. The high levels of similarity indicate 'cut and paste' rather than summaries of information and, as discussed above, citations and references were incorrectly undertaken or left out altogether. All respondents at the time of producing the work were motivated to succeed yet were evidently confused about how to use and present materials. The lack of understanding of how to use information skills from the very early stages meant that respondents were unlikely to be successful in this final SCONUL pillar when they submitted their work.

6.2.8 Summary

Section 6.2 has presented findings from a review and analysis of respondents' interview transcripts and their first essay submission. It is evident that despite being guided by the tutors in lectures, seminars and on-line forums to follow the SCONUL Pillar stages, the respondents have not undertaken any of the steps in a recognisable form. For the informants, when faced with an unfamiliar task of academic writing, feelings of panic, anxiety and fear were their first response. The second response was to seek support from somebody, either a peer or family member. Once support had been forthcoming each respondent felt able to tackle the written task, albeit with reservations. The evidence demonstrates that they misunderstood the question, engaged in random searches for information on the wrong topic and didn't use citation or correct references. The consequences of this were a lack of development in their information skills and the submission of work that, had it been a final and not formative submission, would have failed against the grading criteria.

In the following section 6.3 respondents' second written formative submissions are considered. Using the same framework, the analysis continues to address the research question of whether an Information Literacy Intervention alters the novice learner's demonstration of academic literacy.

6.3 Information Literacy Practices as described by Respondents and evident in Document Two during Intervention Activities

In the previous section 6.2 it was established that, at the point of their first written academic task, the respondents had not engaged with SCONUL Pillars' information literacy practices even though they had been guided towards them quite firmly. During the preparation of the second formative written submission, respondents participated in a literacy intervention designed to make transparent and explicit the SCONUL pillars for information literacy practices. In the taught sessions between the first written submission and the setting of the question for the second written submission, respondents had repeatedly undertaken linked formative activities and assessments which were an integral part of this intervention. As shown in the above presentation of data (see sections 6.2.1 to 6.2.7) informants could easily articulate their fear and anxiety, and where, how and from whom they sought support. The respondents did not attempt the first essay task using formal systematic approaches derived from the SCONUL Pillars although they had been guided to them during the first two weeks of contact classes. The literacy intervention makes an assumption that errors will be made in the approach used to undertake information literacy practices and uses the next four taught weeks to reintroduce each of the SCONUL Pillars in the context of developing an essay within the respondents' own subject area. Each week the outputs of respondents' activities were brought in and shared to receive peer and tutor feedback. Their descriptions of how they approached the second task are quite illuminating in terms of how they were motivated to understand what was required yet were only able to gain access to fragmentary understanding of the SCONUL Pillars information literacy practices.

During the intervention they had one attempt at essay writing, received feedback on their academic literacy practices and were supported to make use of the SCONUL Pillars information literacy practices. They then produced a new draft piece of work within their discipline area for peer and tutor feedback in seminar sessions with supporting literacy activities running alongside. The second of the documents scrutinised is a formative draft of

their final written submission. This is analysed to see if behavioural changes had taken place as a result of the literacy intervention.

6.3.1   SCONUL Pillar 1: Identify

The same framework and SCONUL pillars information literacy practices were used for analysis of this second written document as had been used for the first, as indicated in section 6.2 above. This is to be able to identify any changes resulting from the literacy intervention.

SCONUL Pillar	Identify
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Identify a lack of knowledge in a subject area ➢ Identify a search topic / question and define it using simple terminology
Expressed as:	Evidence of correct Essay question used

Table 6-21 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

Like the first task respondents were provided with a question they should address:

> *Critically evaluate the classical and human relations approaches in management theory. Your essay should clearly define management theory and include industry examples to illustrate your answer. (Module study guide, 2012)*

If we recall in the first task, respondents 101, 102, 103 and 106 all accurately copied the question into their written documents as requested by the assignment brief but respondents 104 and 105 changed the question. In the second task 101, 102 and 106 copied the question correctly; 103, 104 and 105 all changed the question when transposing. We can see that things move backwards for 105 whilst two respondents have still not appreciated the importance of ensuring they are addressing the correct question.

Res	Title at the top of the essay

103	'Critically evaluate the classical and human relations approaches to management theory. Your essay must clearly evaluate management theory. '
104	THE CLASSICAL AND HUMAN RELATIONS MANAGEMENT THEORY INCLUDING EXAMPLES TO ILLUSTRATE PROVIDED ANSWERS, CRITICALLY EXAMINED
105	APPROACHES TO MANAGEMENT

Table 6-22 Second written submission - Essay title as written by respondent

Through changing the question, any activity within this pillar is likely to be misdirected and impact adversely on activity in the following pillars. These respondents are repeating the same behaviour used previously even though they have been given feedback on their misconception.

6.3.2 SCONUL Pillar 2: Scope

The same framework and SCONUL scope pillar information literacy practices were used for analysis of respondents'' approach to scoping their information needs as had been used for the first.

SCONUL Pillar	SCOPE
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ "Know what you don't know" to identify any information gaps ➢ Identify which types of information will best meet the need
Expressed as:	Evidence of using appropriate external sources

Table 6-23 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

There was evidence of a change in behaviour for this Pillar, as all respondents for this task used external sources derived from academic theoretical readings. However, as can be seen from the table below, only respondent 102 addressed all aspects of the question:

res	Classical	Human relations	Industry Examples
101	Taylor; Fayol	Herzberg; McGregor	none
102	Taylor; Weber	Herzberg; Maslow	McDonalds; Balfour Beatty; IBM

103	Taylor; Fayol; Weber	McGregor; Maslow	None
104	None	None	None
105	Fayol; Taylor	None	McDonalds; Virgin services
106	Taylor	Hawthorne	None

Table 6-24 Sources identified for use for second written essay – first draft for planning and feedback

Taking 103 as our example we can identify the impact of changing the question. The change identified above in relation to the SCONUL Pillar 'Identify' (section 6.2.1) has carried through to the pillar 'Scope' with the industry examples section being left out completely. In terms of our sample population they have not fully scoped the resources required to address the question fully. The implications for this are far reaching in terms of addressing the question set and meeting the requirements of the assessment criteria. As part of the intervention, respondents had been given exercises to demonstrate the importance of a complete search for resources. Despite not fully acting on these ipsative feedback activities, the evidence of a small change in behaviour resulting from the literacy intervention suggests that respondents were moving towards engaging with formal SCONUL defined information literacy strategies.

6.3.3   SCONUL Pillar 3: Plan

Again the same framework and SCONUL pillars were used for analysis of evidence of planning within this second document as had been used for the first. In this section the scrutiny is interested in the planning undertaken by respondents in preparation for the written work.

SCONUL Pillar	PLAN
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Scope their search question clearly and in appropriate language ➢ Define a search strategy by using appropriate keywords and concepts, defining and setting limits
Expressed as:	Variety and value of resources selected in <u>references</u> section

Table 6-25 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

For the second essay respondents drew more on formal academic language used in the lectures and seminars to describe their information literacy activities. For example, respondents interspersed formal terms such as 'key word searching' with their own usual vocabulary, such as "stuff".

> *R2.75: Heaps of reading. I would go to into our library and journals and stuff and look at key word searches and stuff.*

Although no evidence of specific planning activities, descriptions of key word searching suggest a movement towards using recognized information searching approaches. The following informant described how they went straight to the library and started to focus on key word searches:

> *R 3.88: First of all I looked at what context we were looking for, and then I did the research for it. I got the.... (Indicating a key turning)*

Despite a lack of use of earlier SCONUL Pillars Identification and Scoping, informants are describing nascent deployment of information literacy practices, seeking to locate the task in the wider context and then homing in on the key words in the question for guiding their literature searching activities. What appears to be happening is that during the planning stage they are focusing on the question and its requirements. Similarly this respondent's focus was on understanding what the essay question was requesting them to do:

> *R1.82:   the first question I focused on reflection this time I focused on what it was asking me to do. …..*

There is also evidence of a greater understanding of the importance of addressing the whole question. Likewise this respondent also attempts to understand the question and undertake key word literature searches:

R6.52-54: I read the question properly, gone off and tried to research some information I kind of picked out the key points in the question….

However, despite limited use of SCONUL Pillar practices the evidence suggests an attempt to understand components of the systematic literacy practices for academic study and writing approach being demonstrated and requested in the Literacy intervention activities. What is evident from sections 6.3.1and 6.3.2 is that whilst professionals might understand the components of literacy practices for academic study and writing and their interconnectedness, these respondents saw the planning stage as the starting point. As novice undergraduates they were able to plan what they thought they might need to meet the requirements of the task but were unable to identify what information they didn't know; in fact they didn't understand this as a concept during these early stages of engagement. This lack of 'knowing what they did not know' continues into the next pillar and affects their gathering strategies.

6.3.4   SCONUL Pillar 4: Gather

Again the same framework and SCONUL pillars were used for analysis of evidence of how respondents gathered their materials within this second document as had been used for the first.

SCONUL Pillar	GATHER
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Use a range of retrieval tools and resources effectively ➢ Construct complex searches appropriate to different digital and print resources
Expressed as:	Variety of resources selected in <u>body</u> of work

Table 6-26 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

As seen in section 6.2.4 above, the respondents indicated that they headed for the library for information. Interestingly this student's budding attempts to develop their independence in information literacy practices was actually thwarted through the good intentions of a librarian. In the following vignette we see the librarian making selection decisions on behalf of the student:

> *R6.55-56 I think I just asked the librarian person where I could find books related to the question very much, and they kind of helped me a bit; found me some books and I did a bit of reading on it....they actually walked me over to the books where everything was on that subject, and then they actually picked me out some books which were quite useful for the task.*

Rather than further developing the student's independence by exploring what their information literacy needs actually are and supporting them the librarian actually limits the cycle of practice and development by their intervention. Respondent 103 describes looking all over the library to find books.

> *Respondent 103: I remember we went into the library, looking all over the library and we found some books.....*

If we consider the table below it is possible to see that respondents have made use of predominantly books, many of which are quite dated.

101	References P. Dick and S. Ellis (2010) Introduction to organizational Behaviour. 3rd Ed. London. McGraw Hill Education. Miner, J. B. (1980). Theories of Organizational Behaviour, New York. Dryden Press Mullins, L. J. (1979) 'Approaches to Management', Management Accounting, vol. 57. London. H. A. Simon (1976), Administrative Behaviour, third edition, New York. Free Press.
103	References G.A Cole- Organisational Behaviour Teamwork 1995 S. Robbins & T. Judge – Essentials of Organisational Behaviour (9th

	edition)
106	Reference Laurie J. Mullins (2005). Management And Organisational Behaviour. 7th ed. Great Britain: Pitman imprint. p67-81. Shaun Tyson and Tony Jackson (1992). The Essence of Organisational Behaviour. Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall International Ltd. p134-140.

Table 6-27 Examples of references used for draft formative submission of second essay

Whilst materials gathered by respondents may or may not be the most appropriate for the task the reference lists are now in alphabetical order even if still not correctly presented in terms of the Harvard format. Thus, although no evidence of use of the information literacy practices as described by SCONUL, this small change in behaviour indicates a shift by the respondents towards adopting the formal literacy practices for academic study and writing demonstrated in the taught sessions. We now move on to consider their use of evaluation strategies.

6.3.5 SCONUL Pillar 5: Evaluate

In keeping with the previous sections the same framework and SCONUL pillars were used for analysis of evidence of how respondents evaluated their materials within this second document as had been used for the first.

SCONUL Pillar	EVALUATE
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Distinguish between different information resources and the information they provide ➢ Choose suitable material on their search topic, using appropriate criteria
Expressed as:	Value and appropriateness of resources selected in <u>references</u> section

Table 6-28 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

As discussed earlier in section 6.3.4, although respondents placed greater emphasis on attempting to understand which resources might be the most appropriate, they identified the wrong subject area and still relied on an informal approach to gathering materials. Despite this the respondents are generally in the correct area for the essay topic. However, as might be seen from respondent 101's comment, the impact of not fully understanding the information requirement is evident.

> *Respondent 101:*   *by simply picking out like the words like leadership so I would go into the leadership section of say organisation behaviour book for instance*

The question being addressed (see 6.3.1) doesn't refer to leadership. However, this respondent has placed the focus on organisational behaviour and leadership rather than the actual topics of classical and human relations approaches to management. Through not understanding the need to deconstruct the question or identify individual knowledge gaps the respondent continues unaware of any errors in resource selection. The following respondent makes a similar error through focusing on a book mentioned during the lectures:

> *Respondent: What was the book called? I remember you kept saying [Mullins]... Mullins, that was it, Mullins. And I remember finding this really big book on Mullins, and that had all the references in the back. Then I went off for them books as well.*

In fact, the book referred to by this respondent was discussed during the taught session in relation to evaluating primary and secondary sources; however this respondent has taken the book as a useful text for the essay. The value of the sources used by respondents, as seen in the selection presented in Table 6-27, might also be considered to be limited as in most cases the nature of the selections is quite dated. Also although secondary sources and not seminal texts are used sources are presented as if the information is derived from the original seminal text as seen here in the work of respondent 105:

105:	There is no clear accepted definition of 'management'. Although, Henri Fayol's classic definition is still used and accepted nowadays. His general statement about management remains valid after more than eighty years. Only in the meantime it has been adapted by more recent writers. 'To manage is to forecast and plan, to organise, to command, to coordinate and to control'. <u>Henri Fayol (1916)</u>

As part of the intervention the distinction between seminal texts and secondary sources and the different roles they play in academic writing is made, particularly provenance and currency. Respondents are demonstrating partial understanding of this concept and are attempting to use this notion of seminal arguments albeit in a limited manner at this stage.

In terms of the SCONUL Pillar 'evaluate' we can identify some progress between the first essay and the second attempt. As with the first essay we continue to see a lack of scoping and planning strategies impacting on the selection of materials. We now move onto to consider how they manage and present their written work.

6.6.6   SCONUL Pillar 6: Manage

In this section we consider how respondents manage citations and references. In section 6.2 it was shown that there was little understanding of how to reference work or cite another's work. Tutor feedback on citations for the first essay submitted had taken place in between the first and second essay. Materials were provided during taught seminar and lecture sessions to support understanding of how to correctly cite materials and present references. The same framework used in section 6.2.6 was again used for scrutiny of this second document to identify changes to behaviour in respondents' citing and referencing their selected materials.

SCONUL Pillar	MANAGE

Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Use bibliographical software if appropriate to manage information ➢ Cite printed and electronic sources using suitable referencing styles ➢ Appropriately formatted bibliographies
Expressed as:	Correct Citations & Harvard referencing evident

Table 6-29 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

Despite the support provided to develop these practices as can be seen below in table 6.29, respondents are still using an incorrect or informal style for citations. 104 is fairly close to what was required, but it is worth recalling that this respondent had already undertaken the intervention once previously in the previous year.

101	Herzberg isolated two different sets of factors affecting motivation and satisfaction at work.
103	McGregor wanted organisations to lift their employees up to Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' so that they could taste recognition and self-fulfillment at work.
106	The human relation approach has also been subject to criticism. Some would argue that the Hawthorne experiments failed to recognise the extent to which environmental factors had an effect on productivity levels within the workforce.

Table 6-30 Examples of citations from draft formative submissions of second essay

Respondents, despite earlier ipsative feedback on citation and referencing, are still trying to understand how these are applied in their written work. It is evident that the earlier lack of understanding of SCONUL Pillar information literacy practices, in particular evaluation of materials gathered, has an impact at this stage of using sources effectively. The final section 6.3.7 shows further the implication of weak engagement on the ability of the respondents to present their work effectively and their use of 'cut and paste'

as a compensatory approach. Their presentation of work is now considered in the next section.

6.3.7   SCONUL Pillar 7: Present

The same framework was again used for this section as in the previous section.

SCONUL Pillar	PRESENT
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Use the information and data found to address the original question ➢ Summarise documents and reports verbally and in writing
Expressed as:	Evidence of correct Essay question addressed and Correct citations

Table 6-31 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

As seen in section 6.3.1 above, respondents were on this occasion using the correct essay question. However as noted in Table 6-24 respondents had been unable to identify resources required for addressing all aspects of the question; thus respondents were limited in the sources they could use for fully addressing the question. For example, where a respondent had not identified management theories, only industry examples, it would be likely they would only partially address the question.

Despite focused lecture and seminar activities providing ipsative feedback on the first essay, only one respondent was able to correctly cite the materials used. Importantly in terms of summarising documents and reports, respondents' similarity index is quite high, indicating 'cut and paste' activities. It is also worth noting the increased levels of similarity in the work where respondents are using material verbatim from the texts. This is not to suggest that there was intent on the part of the respondents to be academically dishonest, quite the contrary: a lack of understanding of literary or intellectual theft meant they didn't fully understand the academic implications of their actions.

When asked about the possibility of cutting and pasting for their work one respondent was clear and indicated they did:

> *R1.71:   yep I cut and paste*

However, when questioned about whether they had cited the respondent indicates that they were confused.

> *R101: yeah I cited it but I got confused I was speaking to someone and they said they dun footnotes but I didn't do no footnotes and stuff….*

Their next statement reveals an overall lack of understanding of how to correctly cite the sources used:

> *R101:I don't know I thought I was like a 100% I thought I was clear I thought I was doing it properly I didn't know it was going wrong*

The respondent believes they are acting correctly and is therefore not able to correct misconceptions. However as shown in 6.3.3 a lack of 'knowing what they do not know' continues to impact on the written work.

Figure 6-2 shows most of the respondents had a high similarity rate.

respondent	similarity
101	83%
102	29%
103	17%
104	48%
105	50%
106	12%

Figure 6-2 Example of similarity recorded on Turnitin

There is an increased use of resources by all the respondents in the second written submission being scrutinised. However, despite activities within the literacy intervention on how to summarise and précis authors' work, all participants used cut and paste techniques to support their writing. Again, as with previous SCONUL Pillars, the use of an informal strategy to meet the requirements of the task limits their ability to understand the role of other

authors' work in developing their own positionality in regards to the question being addressed. As this respondent indicates it is meeting a word count that is important and using quotes from sources aids the respondent to achieve this.

> R3.67: I think I put about a third of it in quotes. I thought if you want to hit that 1500 word count, then talk about..... That's what I did.

Individual positionality is another area that is as yet unknown to the respondent and again similarly to citation it is not known as an unknown. There is however evidence of motivation, changes in behaviour and approach to task and a desire to achieve the required academic written piece may be identified through the use of the cut and paste technique.

6.3.8 Summary

Section 6.3 has explored respondents' responses to undertaking their second formative written essay following ipsative feedback on their first formative attempt. When describing their approach to the second written essay task all respondents described that they were able to commence work immediately without reverting to panic, anxiety and fear. Although not yet using information literacy practices as defined by SCONUL (1999) or Bruce (2006), evidence shows they do use basic information literacy strategies such as key word searching. In section 6.3.1, SCONUL Pillar Identify, respondents had still not understood the importance of addressing the question posed, and so repeated behaviour used previously in the first written submission. In section 6.3.2, SCONUL Pillar Scope, respondents partially scoped resources required to address the question. Moving on to section 6.3.3, the evidence suggests an attempt to understand components of the systematic information approach being demonstrated and requested in the Literacy intervention activities. However a lack of 'knowing what they do not know' results in respondents not understanding or identifying links between SCONUL Pillar information literacy practices and this continues to impact on all their activities. As discussed in section 3.2 The SCONUL Pillars model is presented as a 'three dimensional building' containing discrete and independent sets of what SCONUL describe as competencies (see Figure 3-

1 SCONUL Seven Pillars). What is emerging is a weak understanding of each of the individual pillar practices which in turn is impacting on respondent ability to make connections between practices within a pillar, and certainly across pillars as indicated by the circular movement within the model. It is evident that the earlier lack of use of SCONUL Pillar practices, in particular scoping and evaluation of materials gathered, has an impact on respondents using sources effectively. The final SCONUL Pillar, Present, section 6.3.7 shows further the implication of weak engagement on the ability of the respondents to present their work effectively as they use 'cut and paste' as a compensatory approach.

Evidence of a change in behaviour occurring during the literacy intervention suggests that respondents are moving towards engaging with SCONUL information literacy practices. However, at this stage they are clearly still attempting to understand the SCONUL Pillar information literacy practices and are not yet able to understand the links between pillar literacy practices and their own written academic work. As their written work is formative at this point and improvement can be made prior to final submission motivation to participate and a desire to succeed remains evident. We now move onto consider their final summative written submission following further peer and tutor ipsative feedback activities.

6.4 Information Literacies Practices as described by Respondents and evident in Document Three following full Literacy Intervention

The third and final written submission of the respondents is now considered. This submission is a reworking of the second submission following repeated ipsative feedback opportunities during the literacy intervention. As the intervention focuses on improving understanding of academic writing processes and literacy practices improvement might be expected in all areas of the respondents' use of information literacy as defined by SCONUL.

6.4.1 SCONUL Pillar 1: Identify

As per the above sections 6.2.1 and 6.3.1, the same framework was used to scrutinize the third and final documentary submission of the respondents.

SCONUL Pillar	Identify
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Identify a lack of knowledge in a subject area ➢ Identify a search topic / question and define it using simple terminology
Expressed as:	Evidence of correct Essay question used

Table 6-32 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

Following peer and tutor feedback during seminar and on-line sessions, all respondents except 104 changed their titles to ensure the correct question was displayed as their title. Respondent 104 retained the incorrect version.

R4.1: Classical and humanist management theories have had a major influenced on modern theories of leadership, critically examined.

The changes made by two of the respondents between the draft and the final version suggest they have acted on feedback and revised the question to ensure the correct wording is used. It is these small behaviour changes that indicate respondents are continuing to be motivated to succeed within the new academic environment and are trying to understand what is required from them.

It is their activity of scoping for resources in their final summative submission that is considered next.

6.4.2 SCONUL Pillar 2: Scope

For consistency of approach, the same framework was used for the SCONUL Pillar Scope in the final submission.

SCONUL Pillar	SCOPE
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ "Know what you don't know" to identify any information gaps ➢ Identify which types of information will best meet the need
Expressed as:	Evidence of using appropriate external sources

Table 6-33 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

Earlier in section 6.3.2 it was shown that respondents had not identified resources to support the industry section of the question being addressed. Additionally, they had selected few academic sources for their essay (see Table 6-24). When scoping resources for their draft written submission the sample respondents from the cohort had not identified any gaps in their selections to address the question. However as might be seen from Table 6-34 following feedback and opportunity for revisions a different picture emerges. Every single respondent increases the number of sources used substantially. Even respondent 102, who had a reasonable selection in the earlier draft, increased the quantity of sources used. The sources used for the written submission continued to be within the organisational behaviour arena and were generally secondary source material, but nevertheless was generally useful for addressing the essay question.

res	previous submission	Number of References	Industry Examples
101	Four	Eleven	none
102	Four	Twenty two	McDonalds; Balfour Beatty; IBM
103	Five	Nine	None
104	None	Thirteen	None
105	Two	Seven	McDonalds; Virgin services
106	Two	Eleven	None

Table 6-34 Sources identified for final written submission following feedback on draft submission

Whether respondents had understood SCONUL information literacy strategies to identify the gaps in their information selections or chose simply to add to the number of selections is unclear. However, what is pertinent is that respondents made changes to their written work following ipsative feedback and increased the number of sources during the formative feedback activities. Unlike the first essay attempt where few sources, academic or otherwise, were indicated, in this submission the sample

respondents have understood the importance of using academic source material in their written work. This is an important development as it lays the foundation for building an understanding of the role of resources in academic writing. In the next section we consider whether respondents have adjusted their planning approach in the light of the formative feedback received on their draft work.

6.4.3   SCONUL Pillar 3: Plan

The same framework as used in sections 6.2.3 and 6.3.3 was used again for this scrutiny.

SCONUL Pillar	PLAN
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Scope their search question clearly and in appropriate language ➢ Define a search strategy by using appropriate keywords and concepts, defining and setting limits
Expressed as:	Variety and value of resources selected in <u>references</u> section

Table 6-35 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

As indicated in section 6.4.2, the variety of source material increased for all respondents and generally all materials in the reference listings are of value in addressing the question. However many of the sources remain dated as seen in the example in Table 6-36.

Example of References from respondent 103
Burns, J.M. Leadership, Harper & Row (1978)   Drucker, P.F. The Practice of Management, Heinemann Professional (1989) p.156   Mooney, J.D and Riley, A.C The Principles of Organisation, Harper and Bros (1939); revised by Mooney, J.D., Harper and Bros (1947)

Table 6-36 Example of References in final submission

This use of dated materials was common for all respondents and suggests SCONUL Pillars one (Identify) and two (Scope) are still underdeveloped. The

source material is also referenced in a way that doesn't permit the reader to access the material used. For example in Table 6-37 below we can see that the link for Taylor, 1911 takes us to a site where we might purchase the book rather than an on-line resource that was actually used. The reference for Martin & Fellanz, although current (2010), is linked to the user's university access code so again the reader is unable to access the actual resource used. This suggests that whilst the respondents have understood the importance of using resources they have not understood the purpose of the reference for the reader.

Example of References from respondent 105
Martin, J. and Fellanz, M. (2010) *Organizational Behaviour and Management* [online]. Available from: http://lib.myilibrary.com?ID=328470 [Accessed: 05th of January 2012] Taylor, F. (1911) *The principles of scientific management* [online]. Available from: http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=4qM7yJKC_nkC&printsec=frontcover&dq=frederick+taylor&hl=nl&sa=X&ei=sT4VT4T5M5GChQfA45G_Ag&ved=0CDEQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=frederick%20taylor&f=false [Accessed: 3rd of January 2012]

Table 6-37 Example of References in final submission

In short, the respondents are not yet able to "Identify a lack of knowledge in a subject area" as they do not yet 'know what they do not know' to enable them to identify information gaps in their knowledge. However they have certainly made greater use of resources than in either the first essay or the first draft of this submission.

6.4.4   SCONUL Pillar 4: Gather

In moving on to consider SCONUL Pillar Gather, the same framework as previously is used to identify any changes in how searches are undertaken by the respondents. Previously in section 6.2.4 scrutiny of the draft written work indicated that sources were not used in the main body of the work. In

section 6.3.4 we saw use of sources but generally selected by respondents for their perceived usefulness in addressing the question. Part of the support provided through the literacy intervention is to ensure that use of databases, catalogues and e-journals is made explicit. Using the same framework the written documents were scrutinized to identify the range of resources used and to identify evidence of use of Boolean and complex searches.

SCONUL Pillar	GATHER
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Use a range of retrieval tools and resources effectively ➢ Construct complex searches appropriate to different digital and print resources
Expressed as:	Variety of resources selected in <u>body</u> of work

Table 6-38 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

The respondents participated in a library induction and were required to bring in evidence of their searches to share and discuss with each other as part of the literacy intervention. Whilst all the respondents have used a variety of sources the materials are drawn predominantly from books or easily accessible online materials. Evidence of complex searches remains absent. However, there is evidence of more complex thinking emerging about how to approach using resources within written work. Respondent 102 captures quite well how a number of activities helped locate a number of SCONUL Pillar information literacy activities together:

Respondent 102: The Timeline and the management theories made it click a lot. The first week I couldn't – I came in and I think X was taking our class and she said anyone who doesn't have anything, you can't give anything to this lesson, so go and do some research. And the rest of us had to present. And I hadn't – I had about three beginnings to a draft and I'd done loads and loads of reading but I didn't know how I was going to put it together. And the… we had to present our ideas to the class, and when people started talking about their different ways and the ways they had structured it, and I kind of came up, gave the information I had and made a couple of suggestions that I know links that I've made between theories…. information, and I kind of realised that I did really have what I needed to know, I just needed to know about the way I was

going to position it. Hearing other people's contributions made me kind of think of, right, this is the way I want to structure mine. And it's not copying anyone else's structure, because you DON'T have the same information that they do......

The timeline activity referred to is a role-play where members of the cohort form a human time-line and each member on the time-line represents one of the management theorists. Each 'theorist' has to place themselves on the line in the correct date position, describe their work briefly and indicate how their theory builds on the preceding 'theorist's' theory and sets the scene for the next 'theorist' who then does the same. This activity is conducted as an interactive lecture and all cohort members have the opportunity to practise their understanding of the different management theorists. They then have an opportunity to present their draft essay plans in the seminar sessions and receive feedback. From this example it appears that through activities, peer feedback and tutor feedback, the respondent understood and started to make connections between the literacy activities and their written outputs. It is evident that connections were made between the SCONUL Pillars as the respondents progressed through the Literacy intervention activities. The respondent below indicates that referencing was a point that triggered an understanding about reading.

Respondent: Probably. Obviously because you have to reference and everything, that made me think right, well I actually need to go and read the books, find the books, citate it and reference it, so that was a big kind of shock for me I think. So I had no idea about referencing or anything, so when we started having to do that, I think it kind of helped because I then had to obviously – it forced me to go and read some stuff, and I had to do it. So I had to search for books and have to do that.....

What is surprising is the respondent is describing discovering that he had to locate and read resources. When students describe themselves as 'going to uni' in sessions the tutors challenge the cohort to understand the notion of 'reading for a degree'. This again is suggesting a movement along a continuum towards making links between information literacy practices for academic study and writing. We now move on to consider if a change in

approaches to evaluation of materials took place following the literacy intervention formative feedback activities.

6.4.5 SCONUL Pillar 5: Evaluate

Respondents have participated in interactive feedback sessions and had been asked to undertake a reflection and revision of the sources they have selected for their drafts and improve before they submit.

SCONUL Pillar	EVALUATE
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Distinguish between different information resources and the information they provide ➢ Choose suitable material on their search topic, using appropriate criteria
Expressed as:	Value and appropriateness of resources selected in references section

Table 6-39 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

There was a significant improvement in terms of quantity of sources used in the final document submitted in relation to the first essay. The selection of materials for the previous draft version had been predominantly in the subject area of organisational behaviour and the selection of organisational behaviour sources continued in the materials used in the final written submission. The newly selected materials were used in conjunction with the previous materials; however the newly selected sources were more current. The ipsative tutor feedback had indicated that more sources should be used and they should indicate current thinking. The changes made indicate a straightforward increase in quantity and currency. Respondent 103 indicates that whilst they made no effort in the first assignment in the subsequent work they were attempting to use citation:

> *Respondent 103: No I didn't even try on the first assignment I didn't know what I was doing I was just doing it to get it done but this time I was I was trying to actually do the citations and I did do quite a lot of citations.*

There were also indications of a deepening understanding of the importance of the material in terms of their own work. Respondent 102 still indicates that they are not conscious of how they achieve the end result but is closer to understanding the process:

> *Respondent 102: I don't know how. I've learnt how to link information together and trying to get rid of irrelevant information, so a lot of the times I write lots, but by cutting down, having to reduce it to word count anyway, I've worked out what kind of information I can take out and what kind of information shouldn't.*

This example suggests that respondent evaluation of materials takes place after the selection and during the writing editing process, which further confirms that engagement with SCONUL Pillars is non-linear for respondents even when presented in a linear fashion. The SCONUL argues (see earlier discussion in chapter 3) that an individual can move up and down what they describe as a Pillar's skills and competences set, being at various times a novice or an expert depending on the context. What is emerging through this documentary analysis is that an understanding and use of information literacy practices; even at novice level, is not occurring spontaneously, independently or systematically. We now turn to consider the penultimate Pillar of Manage.

6.4.6   SCONUL Pillar 6: Manage

Using the same pillars again the second submission was scrutinized for use of citations. In section 6.2, scrutiny of the first respondent written documentary submission, there was no evidence of citations. As part of the formative feedback the literacy intervention made explicit Harvard referencing, specifically how to present citations in the body of the work and record these at the end of the written work. EndNote was introduced as useful bibliographical software, specifically for managing academic information sources. This was identified during a lecture; seminar and on-line discussion forum as feedback on the references presented in the draft submission, and therefore respondents may have made use of this tool. Respondents may have chosen not use the electronic tool; however an increased use of manual citation and references might be expected.

SCONUL Pillar	MANAGE
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Use bibliographical software if appropriate to manage information ➢ Cite printed and electronic sources using suitable referencing styles ➢ Appropriately formatted bibliographies
Expressed as:	Correct Citations & Harvard referencing evident

Table 6-40 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

In Figure 6-3 below the citations have improved but are aligned with the increased use of cut & paste. If we recall in Table 6-35 and Table 6-36 the references remained incorrect.

Res	similarity	Example of citations
102	30%	Contingency and transformational leadership theories will be analysed using examples of House (1971), Hersey and Blanchard (1993), Bass (1994) and Yukl (2006).
103	40%	Leadership is defined as the ability to influence a group towards the achievement of a vision or set of goals. (Robbins)
104	56%	According to Stephen and Timothy (1943, p.316), Management is about coping with complexity.
105	29%	By using the classical approaches to the management concept such as Taylor (1911) and Fayol (1916) it is an effective example of showing how the classical management theories have had an influence on modern leadership theories, and also how it correlates with them.

Figure 6-3 Example of citations and similarity Turnitin index on final submission

Even though limited improvement in the use of Harvard referencing has been noted in the preceding scrutiny for evidence of SCONUL Pillars use, there is evidence of clear improvement in this final submission. This was noted in terms of all respondents' practices in citing materials and their referencing of the sources used. This suggests respondents' acknowledging the academic requirement to do so and attempts are made to comply as in general the references are all correctly presented and reflect the citations within the work.

The literacy intervention provided multiple examples specifically developed to demonstrate citation and references so at this stage this shift might be

technical rather than understanding the academic importance of citations and references. However this change in behaviour does seem to suggest movement in terms of literacy practice in information use generally and a possible understanding of what is required in terms of engaging with resources.

6.4.7 SCONUL Pillar 7: Present

Our final SCONUL Pillar revisit is to identify any changes in behaviour in terms of Present. The same framework was used.

SCONUL Pillar	PRESENT
Aspects of Pillar used	➢ Use the information and data found to address the original question ➢ Summarise documents and reports verbally and in writing
Expressed as:	Evidence of correct essay question addressed and correct citations

Table 6-41 Taken from 'The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy – Core Model for Higher Education' (2011)

For the final essay submission there is evidence that the written work has improved in terms of presentation with all respondents attempting to use correct citations. However we must be cautious drawing any firm conclusions from this as every respondent had a significant similarity count which might offer a different reason for their improved citation ability – cut and paste. The following Figure 6-4 shows two things happening: firstly respondents 101 and 105 who had correctly identified appropriate materials and with a significantly high similarity score in the early draft both reduce their similarity for the final submission.

respondent	Similarity in draft	Similarity in final submission
101	83%	69%
102	29%	30%
103	17%	40%

104	48%	56%
105	50%	29%
106	12%	29%

Figure 6-4 Example of similarity index in draft & final essay submission

Respondents 103, 104 and 106 all increased their similarity score through increasing the number of sources used. Whilst some respondents decreased their similarity rate and some respondents increased similarity rate as seen in Figure 6-3 all respondents made use of citations to acknowledge their sources. Thus different types of engagement with source materials are occurring but importantly, engagement by respondents with academic sources and literacy practices is happening.

6.4.8 Summary

This final section has shown through a temporal analysis of the three sequential respondent written documents; undertaken during initial first experiences of Higher Education, a development of respondent understanding of citations and referencing has emerged. Firstly, analysis of the first written submission showed no use of sources or formal citation or referencing. Secondly, analysis of the second documentary submission indicated a significant use of cut and paste as a response to feedback requiring use of recognised academic convention in their written work, but limited citations and referencing. The final written submission in Figure 6-4 shows many of the cut and paste sections being acknowledged and identified as others' work. This change in respondent behaviour occurred over a period of time and following successive formative feedback activities. However other information literacy practices as defined by the SCONUL Pillars model remain apparently absent.

6.5 Chapter 6 Summary

In summary, this chapter has investigated the use of some literacy practices as defined by SCONUL in their Pillars (1999 & 2010) by novice undergraduates entering Higher Education for the first time. It reports on novice learner demonstration of literacy practices during a literacy

intervention. The intervention takes the basic components of each pillar as described by SCONUL in their model and uses three written essay submissions and ipsative feedback to aid student engagement and understanding of the role of the tutor preferred literacy practices for academic study and writing.

Chapter 6 has presented findings from an analysis of specifically how students used particular practices, described by SCONUL in their Seven Pillars Model, during a literacy intervention as part of a module. In sections 6.1, 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 a baseline biography was presented, showing the previous non-traditional study of the respondents and their family backgrounds in terms of academic qualifications. This showed a limited success at GCSE level and a lack of respondent clarity over whether their parents had formal higher level qualifications. The above documentary analysis presented in sections 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 has considered three written outputs produced by the sample respondents during their first semester of study whilst undertaking a formal structured literacy intervention.

Section 6.2 presented findings from review of respondents' comments in the interview transcripts and documentary analysis of their first essay submission. The first document analysis in section 6.2 shows respondents demonstrating little understanding of the essay question or of formal academic literacy practices with little evidence of engagement with academic resources. Despite guidance by tutors in lectures, seminars and on-line forums in how to use SCONUL Pillar practices, respondents did not use these approaches. When faced with an unfamiliar task of academic writing, respondents described experiencing feelings of panic, anxiety and fear. They then sought support from somebody, either a peer or family member. Following support respondents then approached the written task. They misunderstood the essay question, engaged in google searches for information on incorrect topics and didn't use Harvard referencing as requested. Consequences of this were identified as a lack of development in literacy practices and submission of academic written work that had it been a final submission would have failed against the grading criteria.

Section 6.3 explored respondents' responses to undertaking their second formative written essay following ipsative feedback on their first formative attempt. Respondents described immediately commencing work on their written task without reverting to panic, anxiety and fear. The second documentary analysis in section 6.3 showed that following formatively assessed literacy activities there was an increased attempt by respondents to use SCONUL Pillar defined information literacy practices e.g. understand the question, key word searches and use of references coupled with cut and paste activities.

Although not yet using information literacy as defined by SCONUL (1999 & 2010) or Bruce (2006), respondents do use basic information strategies such as key word searching. However respondents not understanding or identifying links between SCONUL Pillars suggested a lack of 'knowing what they do not know' which impacted on their information literacy activities. As discussed in chapter 4, the SCONUL present the Seven Pillars model as a 'three dimensional building' containing what SCONUL describes as discrete and independent sets of competencies (see Figure 3-1 SCONUL Seven Pillars). What is emerging through the analysis of the written documents and respondent comments is evidence of a weak respondent understanding of each of the individual pillar practices which in turn impacts on respondent ability to make connections between practices within a pillar, and across pillars. This in turn impacts on respondent academic study and writing.

The third and final documentary analysis presented in section 6.4 shows respondents beginning to demonstrate initial engagement and use of information literacy practices and a desire to understand how these practices should be used. In particular respondent use of citations and references improved significantly in the last written submission following successive immersive literacy intervention activities related to this particular academic convention.

What has emerged from the analysis of Chapter 6 is that respondents did not initially make use of available formal support and were not deploying practices described in the SCONUL Pillars. Respondents also had much in

the way of formal literacy practices support provision available externally to the module team, such as advanced induction sessions and activities available through library staff, but did not access it until required to do so as part of the literacy intervention. What is particularly interesting about this data is that despite being made aware of the importance of using literacy practices as described by the SCONUL Pillars and how to obtain support, respondents do not independently seek out the support offered and appear to be seemingly unaware of the literacy practices required for academic study and written work.

The picture presented by the above analysis is partial as whilst outcomes of transitional points can be seen in the documents, e.g. not using citations, experiences and choices made whilst in betwixt spaces was not visible. I was keen to explore possible reasons underpinning respondents' approaches to their written work and engagement with literacy practices within an academic study and writing context. Through use of dimensional analysis for understanding and describing respondents' experiences Chapter 7 uncovers rich dynamic interactions underpinning the respondents' experiences and actions. The following chapter presents an alternative analysis of findings through a dimensional analysis exploration of respondents' transcripts.

Chapter 7: Dimensional Analysis of Data

Chapter 6 considered respondents' transcripts at the level of their descriptions and accounts alongside their written contexts; however I wanted to analyse respondents' experiences through a lens that allows the expansion of other explanatory possibilities (Schatzman, 1991, pp: 310). As discussed in Chapter 5 dimensional analysis allows this through the development of an explanatory matrix. My explanatory matrix, derived from initial and focused coding of interview transcripts, memos and field notes, explores general processes associated with the development of learner understanding of and participation in academic literacy tasks following a literacy intervention. Through further exploration of the interview transcripts, in this phase two of data analysis, it was possible to make visible less transparent respondent literacy practice choices within transitional betwixt spaces which had been created by the literacy intervention.

The following section presents analysis from three separate analysis stages of the interview transcripts. The first two are in line with usual dimensional analysis practice: first stage open coding presented at section 7.1 and second stage coding presented at section 7.2. The third stage of temporal coding is not usual in dimensional analysis but was an important stage in uncovering respondent developmental stages during the literacy intervention. Each transcript exchange between interviewer and respondent was considered at first stage coding to identify initial codes. Second stage coding allows macro dimensions or themes to emerge by subsuming similar codes under one code. This process of synthesis continues until all first stage codes have been subsumed into second stage dimensions (themes). A third stage coding used second stage dimensions (themes) and their subsumed codes and considers them in a temporal manner. The work then moves on to present analysis from second and third stages in the usual dimensional analysis method through an explanatory matrix.

7.1   First Stage Open Coding –identifying codes

The use of Charmaz (2014) methodological flexible strategies were used to guide the inductive analysis of the first stage coding of transcripts and commenced immediately after the start of the interviews. As I collected, coded and analysed, themes that had emerged during earlier analysis in Chapter 6 were also identified during first stage coding. For example, earlier in section 6.2.1 analysis identified that fear and confusion affected all the respondents during the first written task which led them to seek support. This is also the case in the following exchange (Table 7-1) where respondent 106 described their feelings on receiving the first written task:

Exchange between interviewer and respondent	1st stage coding
Interviewer: So what did you feel? Respondent: Shocked to the system really I suppose. Because obviously it's always different, you get fed all the information and you know what you're doing, but this you had to find your own way. I just didn't know where to start; I've never even....I've never gone and looked in a book to find any answers before, so I didn't know how to look for the books or what I'd need to search......	Shock Lost Used informal strategies
Interviewer: How did you tackle it? Respondent: I don't know. A group of us come together and tried to figure out...... and in the end people came out with ideas and we just got to work...	Peer support
Interviewer: So was that after the lecture or after the seminar. Was it from your group? Respondent: Probably after the seminar, then we had a little more information......	Peer support
Interviewer: So you talked about it with friends, and then what did you do, because you were on your own again....? Respondent: Just started writing. I can't even remember what I wrote or how it started, but I remember thinking this is going to be awful.	Low self-expectations
Interviewer: But I'll do it anyway. Respondent: I always worry a lot, a lot... and I think that stops me from getting started and get going on anything. I'm always embarrassed and some other people were just like "I don't know what I'm doing..."	Anxious Seeking peer agreement

Interviewer: So you just wrote it? Respondent: Yes, I don't think I even planned it; I just started writing and then go on – its rubbish and getting a bit psyched....	Low self-expectations Anxious

Table 7-1 Example of First Stage Coding of an exchange

Although in this analytic stage many codes were similar to themes that emerged from the documentary analysis (refer back to chapter 6), I followed the coding process through systematically in order to remain open to all possibilities. These exchanges were scrutinised to define possible actions upon which they rest. Many codes generated were subsequently reduced in number as I worked through the transcripts. For instance, language was an initial code that was included on a number of the excerpts but was not included later, as it became evident that language as a code was not useful in addressing my research question. Three of the respondents had English as a second language but all had gained IELTs 6 to enter the programme, and all of them during interview demonstrated command of the English language.

Whilst there were a number of themes that could be identified at this stage (such as, self-doubt, self-worth and seeking support), what was evident from the first stage coding was the level of anxiety and fear experienced by respondents when first asked to undertake a task requiring independent use of literacy practices for academic study and writing. As all respondents expressed some level of fear, anxiety or confusion when prompted about their reaction I considered this in more detail. When respondent 101 was asked how they tackled the task, this was their response:

Exchange between interviewer and respondent	1st stage coding
Interviewer: Could you reflect back to the first week and you were given the task of writing the essay. Once you were given the task how did you tackle it? Respondent: At first I decided to find out what reflection means. I researched the reflection word on google what is reflection that was my first thing to do and then I decide to talk to my peers as I was confused what we had to reflect on. So I spoke to my group and we discussed and then I figured out like my strengths and weaknesses to think back to my 6th form because I figured they are the same now because it's just the	Motivated Took Decisions Specific Information seeking

start. I went to the library then and found some books read about some theories which was a bit unclear as it was the first time yeah that was all I done.	Confusion Peer Discussions Testing understanding Lack of clarity
Interviewer: You found some books? Respondent: Yeah found some random books	Random information seeking
Interviewer: Googled on the word reflection, chatted with your mates Respondent: found some books and then I sat down to write about it	Task related actions
Interviewer: How did you feel when you sat down? Respondent: I didn't feel like too panicky, I mean it was like the first essay so I tried my best I know how to write an essay, I planned it out then I just like wrote it out	Academic confidence Task related actions

Table 7-2 Example of First Stage Analytic coding of an exchange

As may be seen from the above exchanges, there is a complex series of actions and motivations. This respondent expressed confusion (other respondents similarly expressed fear, panic and anxiety) which triggered them to seek peer or family support. In the above exchange it is possible to identify a cycle of activities undertaken by the respondent. As a starting point they took a decision to identify what the word reflection meant and I thus determined that they were motivated in taking an action and coded accordingly. This vignette and the cycle of activities were similar for each of the respondents.

In the above exchange another decision to research the word "reflection" on Google was taken, I therefore coded a decision regarding the tool to be used for the search. The respondent chose not to follow guidance of the library induction or the module tutor and use the catalogue or the library catalogue search tool ('Summon') but chose to use what she was familiar with – Google. Both these decisions were then eclipsed by a sense of confusion and a further decision was taken to speak with her peer group members,

which I coded as 'peer discussion'. Her purpose in speaking with fellow group members was to clarify her understanding of the task. I coded this as 'testing understanding'. At some point in the group discussion another decision was taken to reflect on strengths and weaknesses at the respondent's exit point of sixth form. The respondent went to the library to 'find some books'. This was described by the respondent as 'some random books' so we can see that a decision had been taken not to use of any formal tools or Google searches, simply searching in the library. As my final example using this series of exchanges I coded this as 'random information-seeking'. This code was revisited during second stage coding when all forms of respondent information seeking activities were subsumed under the dimensions (themes) of formal strategy or informal strategy deployed.

Interestingly during this example there is a perceptible shift in the behaviour of respondent approaches to the task during this cycle. The respondent moves through being motivated and using a familiar search approach, Google, into confusion. This confusion was allayed by peer support which results in a hurried desire to find books and complete the task. Even though our respondent suggests she was unclear when reading theories she still proceeded to tackle the task. This was similar to the other respondents, feeling the fear, panic, anxiety or confusion and then seeking support which enabled them to move forward. As can be seen from the example above the respondents didn't move towards using identified SCONUL information literacy practices or recognised tools and approaches, despite being introduced to all available support.

First stage coding continued through the exchanges to the end of each transcript by coding each exchange and at this first stage only codes "Fear" and "Seeking support" appeared to stand out. It was unexpected during first stage of coding for these to appear significant as codes are not subsumed to fit an overarching dimension (theme) group at this stage and don't usually become significant until second stage analysis commences. This in itself made me look closely at the relationship between these two codes at a later stage once they had been confirmed as dimensions during second stage coding.

Prior to undertaking the second stage coding of the first stage codes I undertook a first stage coding activity on my own field notes and memos recorded at the end of each interview. Using the same coding approach adopted for the respondents' transcripts, I took each field note as a complete entity and coded as I read. An example of this can be seen in Table 7-3 Example of coded field note below.

Field Note Two 08/03/12 – 102	
She was anxious and nervous throughout, thinking carefully before replying, always with a furrowed brow, I felt a sense of seeking approval for the answers. She became quite tearful when describing support from family, in particular support from her father. When prompted about the first writing task she appeared visibly worried at the memory and described her feelings of fear of failing again with emotion in her voice. Talked about being 'really bad' at things and how she didn't like authority figures. Used strategies and sought peer support although talked a great deal about her panic and particularly fear. Used BB for support – lurked and so did her father. Was cheerful when describing finding a way into the studies and earning the right to be at university.	Anxious Fear Panic Low self esteem Seeks support Responsible for own learning Formal strategies

Table 7-3 Example of coded field note

In working through my field notes and memos, patterns became clearer, with certain areas appearing significant, in particular fear as experienced by respondents. I revisited each of the transcripts and tapes and reflected again on each code. For instance the codes, 'fear', 'anxiety' and 'panic' were all present in the respondents' transcripts as well as my field notes and analytic memos. In revisiting my coding for my own field notes and memos I remembered the tone of voice used when each of the respondents talked about how they felt when first presented with the academic task and was struck by the intensity of emotion. In listening again to my tapes it was evident that fear and anxiety had been experienced intensely. The respondents suggested fear as the feeling they experienced and it seemed that anxiety and panic were how they responded to the feeling of fear.

As can be seen from the example provided in Table 7-3 fewer first stage codes were generated from my field notes than from the transcripts. Whilst there are a number of possible reasons for this, having reflected, this was due to becoming more familiar with the themes that were emerging.

In summary, section 7.1 has outlined the steps taken during the first stage coding process. A number of recurring codes were identified at this stage: seeking peer support; seeking family support, self-worth; fear, self-doubt; responsible for own learning; seeking family approval; seeking peer approval; seeking mentor approval; social outgoing; seeking structure; formal strategy deployed; informal strategy deployed, language and fear. Respondents were motivated to undertake the task and used a familiar search approach, Google, leading to confusion which was allayed by peer support. During first stage coding 'fear', 'anxiety' and 'panic' started to emerge as possible overarching themes, being clearly present in both respondent transcripts and my own field notes and memos. Following completion of first stage coding of both respondent transcripts and researcher field notes and memos, I moved to second stage coding. We now move on to consider the analytic findings of the second stage coding process.

7.2   Second Stage Open Coding – identifying dimensions (themes)

In second stage coding through constant comparison and seeing which codes could be subsumed into another code the total number of codes was reduced. As interviews had ended expansion of the data had ceased and analysis focused on differentiating dimensions (themes) into identified sets of conditions, processes and consequences from my data for the explanatory matrix. I was seeking to identify a key perspective or central dimension explanation for the relationship amongst all of the dimensions related to academic literacy practices use within an academic writing context as expressed by my respondents.

During this iterative second stage focused coding process I used both word and excel to create tables to assist in visual understanding of which dimensions (themes) might be significant. I also made use of a third stage of temporal analysis to aid the visualizing of the dimensions. This stage was particularly rich in terms of suggesting underlying themes from the collective coded data and a number of revisits to the data took place.

Using codes from my first stage coding I went through each transcript again, this time considering what overarching code each first stage code might

reside under. Through comparing data I was able to explicate implicit actions and meanings to clarify the significance of the first stage codes being subsumed into overarching codes, which would later become dimensions. Second stage coding was a process of synthesising not only the transcripts' first stage codes but all the data gathered and scrutinised to date. This consisted of: coded transcripts; coding of my own field notes and memos taken immediately after the interview and during the first stage coding process. During second stage coding I was immersed in data and considering a more complete, richer picture and possible analytic meanings.

Using Excel spreadsheets I placed all codes into a meta-level category that had emerged in the first stage coding. For instance I initially identified the following as second stage dimensions from first stage codes:

Seeking peer support; seeking family support, self-worth; fear, self-doubt; Responsible for own learning; seeking family approval; seeking peer approval; seeking mentor approval; social outgoing; seeking structure; formal strategy deployed; informal strategy deployed, language, fear

Table 7-4 Second Stage Coding - Transcripts

Initially, during first stage coding 'fear' and its related aspects had all been coded as self-doubt. However as discussed in 7.1 during first stage coding of field notes and memos it became evident that fear played a key role in underpinning respondents' actions in their literacy practices decisions in an academic context. Thus self-doubt and fear became dimensions in their own right. Additionally, during the second stage, constant comparison and iterative process, motivation and lack of motivation emerged as individual dimensions. Similarly, although motivation had previously been classified under 'Responsible for own learning', through the second stage process of trying different codes under different overarching codes and revisiting the transcripts I identified that my respondents were motivated but not always able to take responsibility for their own learning. As an example in the following exchange respondent 106 was clearly motivated; however the responsibility for identifying appropriate resources resided with his friends:

Interviewer: And how would you get the book on that?

Respondent: I'd ask them what book it was.....and then go and get it from the library.

Many of the respondents' comments described this kind of peer or friend discussion and their comments were typically followed by statements about actions. For this reason, motivation was classified as a dimension.

As a further example comments classified as being about self-doubt included the following type of comments:

Respondent: I think I've got..... I don't believe I can do it before I've tried....

Respondent: no probably not, I tried but probably not.

These sorts of comments were typically followed by a comment indicating seeking support or approval from an external source or using an informal strategy such as cut and paste. These sorts of statements were therefore also classified as a dimension such as 'Seeking support' or 'Informal Strategy Deployed'.

Following the usual second stage dimensional analysis practice of reflecting on whether first stage codes could be defined as other first stage codes; could a code be subsumed within another code and if so why, the number of codes were iterated and synthesised until a final set was established as a result of each remaining code not being able to be subsumed into another code.

Second stage analysis indicated similar findings to those I had identified earlier in the documentary analysis of the three written essays (see 6.5). However, the dimensions (themes) from second stage analysis didn't provide detail of how each of the dimensions operated at each stage of the literacy intervention. The dimensions when placed in a visual format (see below Figure 7-1 Dimensions following Second Stage Coding) indicated Responsible for Learning as the most densely populated dimension (the most first stage codes subsumed within it); however from reading the respondents' transcripts and revisiting my first and second stage coding again it was

evident that the dimensions (themes) of Fear and Seeking Support occurred during the initial stages of the written task and receded once the literacy intervention was underway.
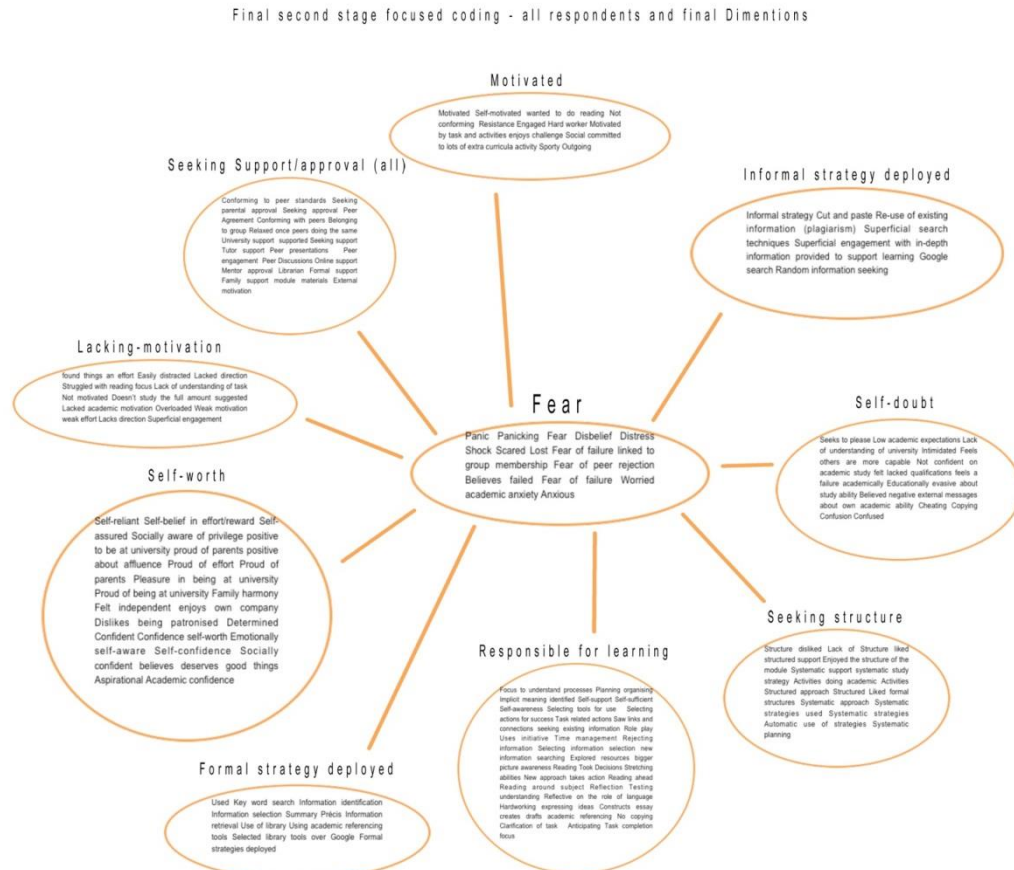

Figure 7-1 Dimensions following Second Stage Coding

This was puzzling as in the earlier data analysis (see 6.5) seeking support had figured centrally in respondents' comments and been noted in the field notes. The difference of findings within phase two analysis (first and second stage coding of the data) indicated something was still hidden within the data which was located between each of the stages of the three written essays. Somewhere between working on the first draft essay and the following two written essays, changes in respondent behaviour occur. This suggested a temporal analysis might reveal further understanding of points of transition in literacy practices behaviour of respondents.

The remaining codes were now considered as dimensions and used for the next stages of dimensional analysis, the explanatory matrix. These final second stage dimensions are as shown in Table 7-5 Second Stage Coding – Transcripts, Field Notes and Memos

> Seeking-support-approval; Self-worth; Self-doubt; Responsible for own learning;
> Seeking structure; Formal strategy deployed; Informal strategy deployed; Fear;
> Lacking-motivation; Motivated

Table 7-5 Second Stage Coding of Transcripts, Field Notes and Memos –final dimensions (themes)

In summary, section 7.2 has outlined the second stage coding process. The analytic process identified similarities between all respondents in terms of literacy practices deployment and development; in particular what had emerged in the dimensions (themes) was an indicated preference for being 'Responsible for own Learning'. However, after revisiting the documentary analysis (see section 6.3) it was evident that it was only <u>after</u> the second essay draft that formal SCONUL Information literacy practices were used and respondents started to adopt formal academic conventions. Thus, similarly to the documentary analysis of the use of SCONUL Information literacy practices (see section 6.2), this second analysis was also seen as a partial explanation, in this instance of the interaction between identified dimensions. I decided a further analytic coding stage that focused specifically on the temporal relationships between the dimensions during each of the three written document productions was required to explore this. Whilst not usually used as part of Dimensional analysis methodology it proved to be illuminating in terms of the relationships between the dimensions and illuminate the betwixt space during transition. The following section outlines the process of how this temporal analysis was undertaken.

7.3   Third Stage Temporal Coding

The temporal presentation of conditions is about data gathered at three separate points in time as well as respondent accounts that take place in one interview where respondents address the three points in time when they produced their written artefacts. In particular the use of a temporal analysis

revealed the importance of the transcripts in considering respondents' descriptions of 'before', 'during' and 'after' stages of the literacy intervention. This made explicit links between respondents' experiences and issues associated with literacy experiences and deployment in academic writing and provided a glimpse into the transitional betwixt space of the respondents.

For this stage of analysis I took all the second stage dimensions derived from the respondent transcripts and separated them into three distinct temporal sections:

1. Time section one: Information literacy practices as described by respondents when approaching document one – first essay (draft);

2. Time section two: Information literacy practices as described by respondents when approaching documents two – second essay (draft)

3. Time section three: Information literacy practices as described by respondents when approaching documents three – third improved final submission

The third stage temporal coding process revealed a much richer picture in terms of the interplay between respondents' feelings and actions, in particular during the production of their written artefacts. In separating out the dimensions to show the different time periods of activity during the literacy intervention and written essay production, it is possible to see the changing position of each dimension. This is shown as a column graph in Figure 7-2.
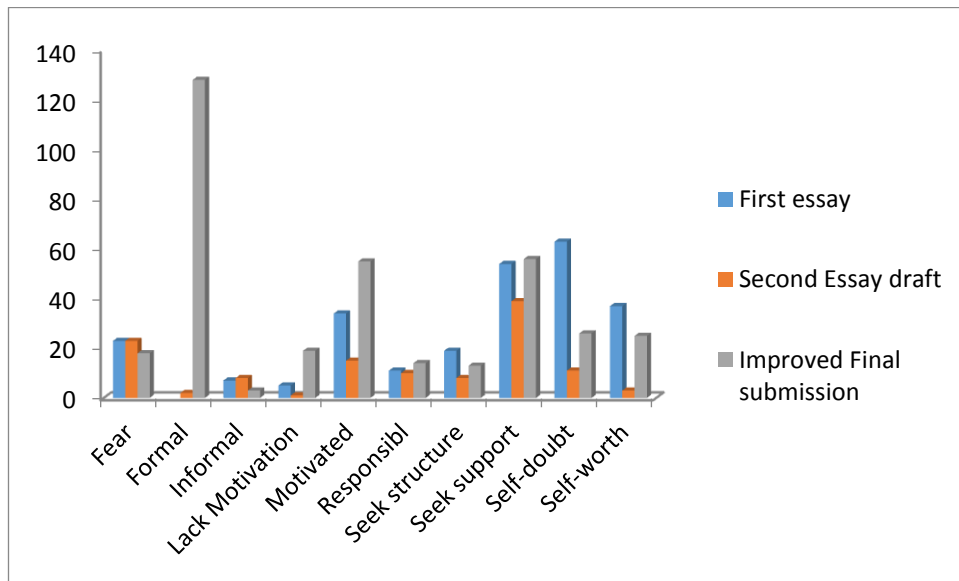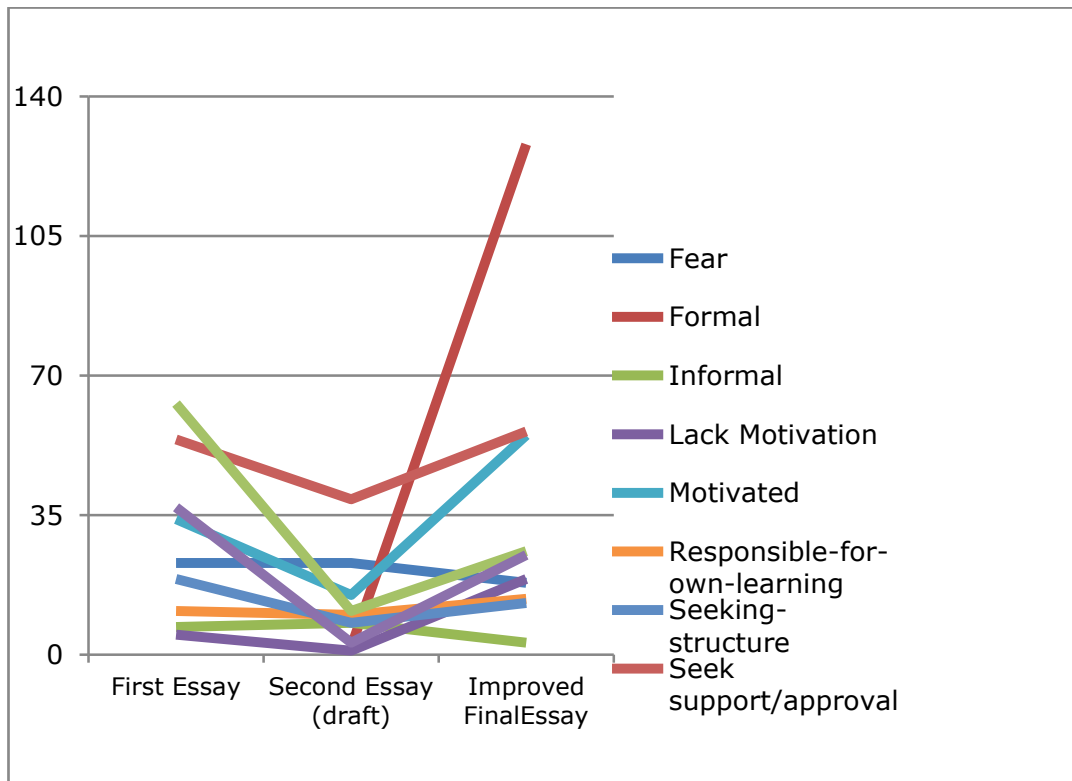
Figure 7-2 Temporal column presentation of Dimensions during the production of first essay, Second Draft essay and Final improved submission

The figure above (Figure 7.2) shows each dimension and its prevalence within the transcripts during the temporal aspect under scrutiny. Through this presentation of the dimensions it is possible to identify how each dimension is present or absent during the three written tasks and its relationship to all other dimensions. This is represented in Figure 7.3 as a line-graph, showing the points in time at which changes in prevalence occurred. It is the development over time shown in figure 7.3 that will be referred to in the following analysis.

Figure 7-3 Temporal line-graph presentation of Dimensions during the production of first essay, Second Draft essay and Final improved submission

Figure 7-3 shows the dimensions at three points in time. The first point on the axis is week one of the semester when respondents were given the first written task. The second point shows week four when the respondents are given the second written task and the third point is week twelve after the full literacy intervention has been completed and the final essay is submitted. It is worth noting that in figure 7.3, the important feature to note is the rank order in which the themes appear at each point in time, rather than the frequency of times a theme was mentioned. What this makes clear is that the use of formal strategies leaps from being the lowest ranked theme in terms of prevalence to the highest.

At point one on Figure 7-3, First Essay, anxiety expressed by respondents in their transcripts is clearly seen through the prominence of '*Self-doubt'* and '*Seeking-support-approval'*. The dimensions of '*self-worth'* and '*motivation*' were next followed by '*fear'*. However, taking '*responsibility for their learning'* and '*seeking structure'* were not a first response to tackling academic written work. '*Deploying formal or informal strategies'* was also not identified as

significant in the respondents' accounts for approaching their work. Interestingly, '*formal strategies deployed*' was not evident until the second written submission. This suggests that upon being given the first written task the respondents had a complex set of responses and were clearly unsure of what was expected from them. This is captured by respondent 103:

> Respondent: I could tackle it a lot better now because I think the first four days I didn't know what we were doing, and then after I first met XXX, my friend,

At the commencement of the first written activity in their university career the dimension fear, in particular of failure, is evident. All respondents experienced this but it is expressed most clearly by respondent 102:

> Respondent: Fear of failure definitely. Rejection.

A key driver for respondents during these crucial first few weeks is fear leading them to reach out for support; to speak with others and ensure they are doing the same thing as the people they speak with. Doing the same thing as others is regardless of whether the other is undertaking the work and activities through a correct approach, as can be seen from respondents 103 and 101 comments below:

> *Interviewer: And then you calmed down because you realised everyone was confused.*
>
> Respondent 103: I'm in the same boat; at least I'm not the odd one out.
>
> Respondent 101: Because you don't want to be like, because when it's something new you want the agreement, you feel more confident and sit down and write it you feel like you know what you're doing. Rather than if you come to someone and they are like I'm doing this and your like I'm doing this it's like confusing and you want everyone doing the same then you think you'll be graded the same way.

Moving on to consider the dimensions at the second temporal point of analysis on Figure 7.3, week four when the respondents are given the second written task of the literacy intervention. At this point the dimensions *self-doubt*, *self-worth*, *motivation* and *seeking support* show a pattern of

movement indicating they are less prevalent than in the first temporal point. *Seeking structure* also appears less prevalent but from an initially less prevalent starting point. One possible explanation for this change of prevalence of dimensions might be due to respondents participating in literacy intervention activities during these first few weeks as outlined here. *Fear* remains constant as does taking *responsibility for their learning* and *deploying informal strategies*. Again participation in directed literacy activities might explain no change occurring in these dimensions in relation to the other dimensions.

Throughout the period of the temporal analysis key tutor directed literacy intervention activities were taking place. What is significant at the second temporal point of analysis is it follows ipsative feedback on SCONUL Pillar literacy practices in the first essay. This formative feedback was provided in f2f and on-line discussion sessions and misconceptions in literacy practice are being reflected back to the learners. The documentary analysis (see 6.2) revealed that in the first essay few formal SCONUL defined information literacy practices were evident with basic things such as citation and referencing missing. We can see from this temporal analysis that all dimensions that were prominent at the start of the research timeframe, dropped during the period between the first written essay and the second. The literacy intervention provided a support for development of SCONUL information literacy practices whilst participating in academic study and written activity and this can be seen as a key factor here in changing behaviour during a transitionary point.

Continuing with analysis from the second temporal point; the start of the second essay, the dimension of *deploying formal strategies* inclines sharply with change also indicated in the dimension '*being responsible for own learning'*. Fear as a dimension starts to dip as the literacy intervention continues to support the respondents during the final six weeks. We can see that the respondents describe their activities in ways which were coded as '*formal-strategy-deployed'*. However, whilst this visual (Figure 7-3) is useful insofar as on the surface there is a marked shift towards SCONUL defined information literacy practices being used, it disguises certain important

aspects of what is actually occurring at points of transition. Looking specifically at movement of dimensions between the first essay and the final submission the visual suggests a sharp contrast for the *'formal strategy deployed'* dimension. However, when written outputs of the respondents were considered in section 6.2 we saw that the formal strategies being deployed were at the most basic end of the SCONUL defined information literacy practices e.g. attempts to reference correctly and to use citations. Further, this basic use of literacy practice was only as a result of repeated developmental formative interventions as part of the literacy intervention.

Through this analysis of Figure 7-3 at the second temporal point it became clearer that dimensions were shifting <u>after</u> the commencement of the task. It is possible to identify *motivation* changing position; however, *seeking support* remains the strongest dimension. The earlier documentary analysis for this second essay written piece (see section 6.2) suggested that respondents had begun to connect with recognised formal literacy practices; for instance, attempting to understand the question and identify sources. Possible explanations for both the prevalence of *support seeking* and the increased use of formal information literacy strategies are derived from two sources. Firstly, the structured use during the literacy intervention of continuous ipsative feedback activities during seminars and on-line forums. Secondly, increased participation by respondents in the tutor moderated discussion area on BlackBoard. This on-line participation has nominal assessment grades awarded and all students on the module must have participated by week five to be eligible to receive those grades. The activities, both on-line and seminar, focus on general literacy practice errors made by respondents and corrects misconceptions of approach.

What became evident through the course of third stage temporal analysis was that revisiting respondent accounts of their actions at the particular second temporal point under scrutiny might allow relationships of dimensions at points in time and activity to emerge. Possible effects that the on-line discussion support might contribute to respondent behaviour change at this particular temporal point of analysis appeared worthy of consideration. These observations encouraged me to look in more detail at what was happening at

the pivotal point on Figure 7-3 when *Formal strategies* started being deployed. I had three sources of data that I could consider concurrently: the dimensions as presented in Figure 7-3, the earlier documentary analysis presented in Chapter 6 and the respondent transcripts. I therefore returned to my temporal analysis using all three data findings and in particular the respondents' voices, listening again to what they were saying.

7.3.1 Temporal Analysis of Point Two on Figure 7-3 using all Evidence Sources

In considering all three evidence analysis (essay documentary analysis; respondent comments and dimensionalised data analysis of interview transcripts) at temporal points on Figure 7-3 it was possible, through returning to the documentary analysis, to identify a number of key catalysts that indicate why change in prevalence of certain dimensions might be occurring. Firstly, respondents describe approaching the second written task through searching for information based on key words (see 6.3.3). However, connecting with academic literacy practices appeared to remain generally at an informal level as evidenced by the amount of cut and paste undertaken, limited sources identified and limited use of correct citations and references and the lack of citations and correct referencing identified by the analysis of the second written essay presented in section 6.3. Despite the informal approach used the evidence shows all respondents have partially addressed the correct question, though some respondents disregarded the latter part of the question requesting industry examples. However, turning to consider the temporal dimensional analysis shown in Figure 7-3 at the same point in time, although using informal strategies is still the most evident literacy practices behaviour in respondents' written work, concurrently there is a shift in the dimension '*responsible for own learning'*. Turning to consider respondents' accounts in their transcripts of the same point in time they describe deriving information from the on-line discussion forum at this point in their studies. This focus on the discussion forum comes into sharper view in respondents' comments and the documentary analysis in the stage between the formative second essay submission and the final improved version, which is also evident in the temporal analysis in Figure 7-3.

As described previously in chapter 4, each of the SCONUL information literacy practices to be 'understood' were introduced systematically at a descriptive level (lectures), and activities (seminars and on-line discussion forum) were structured to allow students to practise and receive ipsative feedback in a supported environment over a ten week period (4x4x2) with two final weeks for independent study. Whilst it might be expected that following structured activities a shift in respondent behaviour might occur it is particularly interesting to be able to identify evidence to suggest a shift in terms of behaviour following the submission of the second written document whilst respondents were participating in formative feedback activities in seminars with follow-up activities in the on-line area.

Through this temporal analysis it became clear that the discussion forum was pivotal in the respondent's journey and their development in information literacy practices. Respondents' comments describe how important they found the tutor supported discussion forum. The following comment, for example, shows the value of peer engagement around how to tackle the assignments:

> *R5.80: Definitely what we've learnt on Blackboard, using Blackboard, being able to engage with each other about how to tackle the various assignments.*

It is important to note that the discussion forum was tutor moderated so misconceptions about approaches to the assignment could be corrected. As indicated by the following comment, the tutor presence was valued:

> *R1. 106: The discussion board's good because like that's completely new to me being on line interacting with people and the teachers that was useful. I did because if you can see what everyone's saying you don't really need to go and discuss it you can see all the ideas and things.*

The respondent indicated that being in the virtual forum reduces the need to physically meet peers, whilst also permitting tutors to observe dialogues and lead discussions. One respondent, who preferred to rely on their own judgment and not that of their peers, also indicated that the discussion forum played a role in their learning journey:

R4.58: I don't rely on people that much because I know people might give you not exact and correct information as much, but I do listen to BB.

Thus, although the respondent indicates they prefer working independently there is support being derived from the on-line discussion forum even if this support is not recognised by the respondent.

This respondent expressed regret at not using the discussion area in the beginning:

R3.77: But I remember we were all just thinking this assignment – it was just on my mind a lot but I should have just really entered the discussion board, looked at what other people were doing, what books had been found, had I done some independent research as well, found some books and put that into the discussion board so…. there was a proper community going on, instead of doing it myself, then I would have had a much better piece of work to show for it.

His comment about the 'proper community going on' shows the sense of community perceived within the discussion forum. When asked about how he might have approached the first written essay differently, he reflected that using the discussion forum earlier might have been useful.

Respondent3.103: I should have literally not panicked, I should have gone straight to the discussion board, found out what other people were doing, better books anything like that.

The portfolio assessment requirement, the tutor tracking and following-up absent participants were all also shown in respondent comments as being key in ensuring participation and subsequent benefit.

The above respondent entered the forum when required to do so in week four, after being identified by the tutor as being absent from the previous discussions. The following comment shows clearly that it was the requirement to find the task questions and tutor follow-up that led this respondent into the area.

R.2.1002: I went on blackboard as suggested - I hated doing that as well, yes I did. Just to go and find out what the question is, but it has helped massively.

We can see from the respondents' comments above that the BlackBoard discussion forum played an important role in terms of learning. Whilst participation in the discussion forum is asynchronous there is a formal requirement to participate, which is monitored by tutors. Each of the informants arrived in the discussion forum at different points; however, once in the on-line environment, respondents describe developing to deployment of some sort of formal strategies built into the literacy intervention and the discussion forum.

As well as showing the pivotal role of the discussion forum in the respondents' personal learning journeys, this experience was also important in changing the type of support they were seeking. In the first written task the comments categorised within the dimension of *seeking support* typically involved peers, friends or family. What emerges at this particular point in the temporal analysis is the importance of tutor led and moderated peer support in an on-line discussion forum. The dimension of *seeking support* is still important, but the need is met through the tutor mediated seminar, on-line discussions and embedded on-line literacy practices materials. There is evidence of this participation in the discussion forum leading to a transition from relying on friends and family, external to the university course, towards more formal support within the discussion forum, which is tutor led. This transition is shown in the following section where the changes resulting from these ipsative activities are described by the respondents.

As shown in chapter four, the literacy intervention makes explicit academic practices and discipline expectations (Laurillard, 1994; Harvey and Knight, 1996). Literacy practices, in particular SCONUL's information literacy practices as represented in its seven pillars model, were introduced in a staged manner throughout the intervention as a series of linked and assessed activities, using an ipsative approach as described by Hughes (2011). This process of illuminating 'learning how to learn' information literacy

practices and academic writing through structured ipsative experiences as described by respondents comments is now discussed through the respondents' comments.

The developmental intention of introducing these formative practices over a number of weeks was clearly recognised by students, as described in the following respondent's comment:

> *1003:   Each task was related to a task you should do with your essay writing.....   They were all linked in a sense and you could see the connection...... in each report.... like CV writing one, there were all different areas of writing. I don't think there was one in particular; I think it was across the board, picking up little bits from each one.*

The following respondent also refers to the recurrent nature of the highlighter activity:

> *R3.103: Yes, week by week we had a different highlight and thing....*

The 'colouring' referred to in these comments is an ipsative exercise using highlighters (the details of which are available through a YouTube video produced as part of a JISC project for digital materials), which was described in section 4.1. In a practical exercise, peers reviewed each other's' work using a different highlighter colour to indicate evidence of a particular information literacy practice. For example, references correctly indicated will be highlighted with a green tick, incorrect with a green cross; citations correctly presented within the written document will be highlighted with a yellow highlighter. This activity was undertaken by respondents in a seminar and subsequently discussed in the on-line support forum and finally sent out to all users as a You-Tube link in an email. The following respondent comments indicate how pivotal the roles of the ipsative activities of the intervention were in aiding respondent connection to the preferred literacy practices:

> *R4.46: There was a lot of activity that we have done that said how we have to do the citation and activity in your essay, they had to reference it correctly; referencing was the biggest part – Harvard referencing - I have done a lot of*

activity on that, and a lot of practice on this, and there was finding out through the highlight marking, markers that what aspect of your essay is most important? So if you have a citation in your essay, show it with a green highlight, if you have a good reference show it with a yellow highlight, or different highlight. And so that helped me to understand what is the most important in the essay when you're reading it. So it's not just about the writing in flow and reach the next conclusion, it's about how you're mentioning a person's obviously and written work, you have to like mention the year, you have to mention its name, you have to mention how many other sources did he use. And it does start over support in your essay. And we have done a lot of activity and practices in the class according to that.

Similarly, another respondent explained:

R1.:   But then it becomes so natural to do it by then, so I didn't even have to consciously have to do it; referencing I was doing straight away - I didn't have to think about it. Key word searching I was going on looking for certain things; journals - all of that - it had just become natural by that point.

The comments above indicate the importance in terms of coming to a realisation of what is required for academic study and writing, but critically also in relation to their own current practice. The following comments show that the opportunity to reflect and reframe conceptions of literacy practices for academic study and writing provided through an ipsative assessment strategy were pivotal in their development. Whilst engaging within the frame of reference for the discipline the ipsative activities serve the dual purpose of introducing procedural literacy practices and discipline knowledge.

This respondent describes their journey through the ipsative formative portfolio activities and submissions:

R1003: As I went along I felt like I got stronger in my writing ability and I did get stronger.   I was a bit more daring in the way I wrote in my approach. I was a lot more - I remember for one assignment, I can't remember which one it was now, I think it was the one involving Maslo; I remember looking forward to writing and I've never looked forward to writing an assignment before.

Their comments illuminate first progression and engagement, followed by exploration and finally motivation. This respondent had earlier described feelings of fear and panic when first given an assessment task but within the literacy intervention has progressed to a place of anticipation and looking forward to assessments. Motivation continued for the respondent throughout the semester:

> *R1003: So when I got the essay just before Christmas, I didn't mind about to tackle that one. because I remember my friend who I lived with.... and he didn't get his first assignment until just before the Christmas break, so he literally just went to lectures all the way through and when he got his assignment it was "oh my god I've got work to do" and I was I've done my assignment every single week, so I said I'm happy to go and do work over Christmas now, where he was like I can't believe I've got work. He needs to be put in that mind-set of work straight away; that was the positive of what came out of it. Was that I was in the mind-set to work straight away.*

The above comments are describing a process of developing a regular work habit. This has developed through undertaking short weekly ipsative activities that have strengthened understanding of academic practices, which has in turn led to increased motivation.

The following respondent also describes their journey of 'coming to know', spread across a four week period of ipsative feedback. What they describe results from the activities undertaken around discipline provenance and the 'timeline' activity described in chapter four, 4.1.

> *1002: The Timeline and the management theories made it click a lot (week two lecture). The first week I couldn't – I came in (week four seminar) and I think X was taking our class and X said anyone who doesn't have anything, you can't give anything to this lesson, so go and do some research. And the rest of us had to present. And I hadn't - I had about three beginnings to a draft and I'd done loads and loads of reading but I didn't know how I was going to put it together. And then we had to present our ideas to the class, and when people started talking about their different ways and the ways they had structured it, and I kind of came up, gave the information I had and made a*

couple of suggestions that I know links that I've made between theories information, and I kind of realised that I did really have what I needed to know, I just needed to know about the way I was going to position it. Hearing other people's contributions made me kind of think of, right, this is the way I want to structure mine. And it's not copying anyone else's structure, because you DON'T have the same information that they do......

The respondent is describing their experience during the seminar in week four of the semester; however the activities they refer to took place over the previous three weeks. This illustrates how ipsative activities from the earlier weeks are impacting on subsequent decisions cumulatively and positively. The respondent's comment that they had *'done loads and loads of reading'* shows they had understood through feedback that there were conversations happening within the discipline, as evidenced by resources such as the readings. The comments of *'three beginnings to a draft'* and *'didn't know how I was going to put it together'*, indicate that the emphasis within the literacy intervention activities on reading around the topic have encouraged them into a liminal space, where they have begun to engage with threshold discipline concepts. However, they go on to describe passing through this concept gateway during the fourth week's seminar, as shown in their comment; '*I kind of realised that I did really have what I needed to know, I just needed to know about the way I was going to position it'*. This shows a nascent understanding of the discipline conversation that they were entering, and their possible role within it.

Moving the lens to consider respondent use of the on-line materials, comments further show the move to greater independence through using the 'learning to learn' resources. Crucially the materials are available at a time of their choosing for a purpose identified by them:

1006: I think it was on a link that you sent us... yes then I used it again for my OB report as well, which helped in writing up, so I thought that was that page - it helped me do it, it was a lot easier anyway, without it I didn't have a clue .....

This link the respondent refers to is a set of dedicated literacy materials designed to support each of the SCONUL information literacy practices used in the literacy intervention, either as a stand-alone resource or, as in this case, an embedded resource. These materials were produced as part of the JISC Anytime Learning Literacies project (http://hermes.tvu.ac.uk/learnerjourney/journey3.html) and were used throughout the literacy intervention. The following respondent specifically indicates the Learner Journey materials, and in particular the academic writing materials embedded within the 'Writing for Academic Purposes' section:

> *R2.74: I went online and looked at that kind of writing...academic writing. So that people talking, going online and reading about academic writing and using the learner journey thing as well.*

Both the above respondents used resources provided by the team as part of the literacy intervention, but did so independently of tutor guidance and direction. The respondents applied the resources to new situations and other academic writing contexts of their choosing. Other comments show respondents being stimulated into independent new experiences following conversations on the discussion board. This respondent was able to reflect on the use of journals by their peers and become motivated to find out more:

> *R1.106: The discussion board, seeing what other people are doing a bit more, I wouldn't have thought of doing some stuff like the journals they were all talking about how good they were and I thought let me see what's going on so that sort of triggered my journals research.*

Induction for this cohort was spread over two weeks and included extensive explanatory in-situ sessions about the library, its staff and its facilities; the learning support unit; the Academic Writing Centre; and accessing on-line support materials. All students' attendance at the sessions was recorded, and those who missed parts of the induction were contacted by course leaders and asked to attend the supplementary sessions during the first two weeks of the semester. Yet the above comment indicates that despite having had a library induction where journals are introduced and a further contact

seminar activity around using a variety of sources including journals, it was the on-line follow-up activity where students had to present their selected materials that triggered this respondent's use of journals.

The following comments also show respondents using the discussion forum as a source to inform their planning and resource gathering:

R4.58: I try to get some idea and then I search through the e-books so I can find my sources...

And:

R5: I actually find it quite interesting, because I could gather a lot of information from other people because they put things on Blackboard.

This respondent involved her father in the BlackBoard discussion group and uses the embedded literacy practices on-line materials:

R2.106: Well for me, kind of getting told to get involved on Blackboard, Blackboard then led me to realise that it's not that hard to adjust to something new. My dad goes on these threads as well and I ask "well how did you do that"...

This suggests that the role of support coming from her father included him understanding what was required in terms of the tutor's preferred literacy practices. Evidence points to the on-line tutor supported discussion forum as an area of support that was considered by respondents as important in the developmental journey. This respondent describes feeling connections to peers:

R5: Yes exactly, and you kind of feel the same way, because you're all in the same position. So Blackboard is definitely one of the things... I wouldn't want to take this module away actually. No I wouldn't, I think it's been very helpful.
And;

R5.80: Definitely what we've learnt on Blackboard, using Blackboard, being able to engage with each other about how to tackle the various assignments.

And for this respondent:

R1.106: BB's good because like that's completely new to me being on line interacting with people and the teachers that was useful.

The above comments suggests a focus on literacy practices which in terms of temporal analysis further supports the rise in prevalence of the dimension '*Formal strategy deployed'* in the temporal analysis at the second point.

The use of the discussion forum was explicit in the literacy intervention through ipsative assessment building up a summative portfolio submission. The daily formative feedback across all literacy practices, (for example, if in week five someone continued to ask for clarification on how to correctly Harvard reference the forum for that topic was still available on-line and continued to be tutor and peer supported), ensured that as a learner entered a tricky transitional stage there was someone available who could help them become un-stuck. By the end of the Literacy Intervention respondents indicated they were engaged in the tutor led on-line community focused on the SCONUL information literacy activities. The documentary analysis of the final written essay (6.4.8) also shows that a transitional shift occurred, with respondents adopting some aspects of SCONUL information literacy practices.

However, at this second temporal point of analysis respondents are still primarily using informal strategies to meet task requirements, and it is only after further formative feedback on their approach to undertaking the second essay that a behavioural change occurs, as captured in the research data. As shown in section 6.4, the third and final documentary analysis shows respondents beginning to demonstrate initial engagement with information literacy practices and a desire to understand how these practices should be used. In particular, respondent use of citations and references improved significantly in the last written submission following successive immersive literacy intervention activities related to this formal academic convention.

In summary, section 7.3 has described the process of the third stage of dimensional temporal coding. Whilst not usual in Dimensional analysis this additional temporal stage was essential as it made transparent respondent development during the production of their written artefacts and the activities

in the Literacy intervention at points of transition. Separating out the dimensions showed time periods of activity during the literacy intervention and written essay production and enabled identification of the detail of the changing position of each dimension. Figure 7-2 and 7.3 showed that during the first essay production the dimension '*self-doubt'* was experienced quite sharply with fear leading to respondents seeking support from peers, friends or family. It was also evident that during this first written essay they made little use of formal SCONUL information literacy practices. Figure 7-3 also highlight that during the time frame from the production of the first essay to the production of the second essay there was no sharp contrast identified for any of the dimensions.

However, turning to consider the point of the second document submission as shown on Figure 7-3 it was indicated that formal SCONUL information literacy practices started to be used by respondents <u>following ipsative feedback</u> in the literacy intervention on the second draft essay submission. A sharp change was visible in respondent use of *'formal strategies deployed'* at this second point in Figure 7-3. Through considering all data sets concurrently for this time point it was possible to identify that scaffolding through immersive activities and embedded literacy practice resources, as seminars and on-line, the respondents altered their demonstration of academic literacy practices at a similar time point between the second essay submission and the third. The altered behaviour was also similar for all respondents and was primarily in the area of references and citations. This indicates that Literacy Intervention does change the novice learner's understanding of literacy practices for academic writing. It also suggests that it is possible to ensure the timing of tricky transitions through curriculum design and support learners through these rites of passage.

To more fully explore the relationship between the dimensions and changes in respondent literacy behaviour during the literacy intervention, the next section returns to the more usual dimensional analysis approach and considers the dimensions presented in above Figure 7-3 and discusses them through the explanatory matrix.

7.4   Explanatory Matrix

As described earlier in section 5.4, in Dimensional analysis based on the work of Schatzman (1991) the Explanatory Matrix presents dimensions within five conceptual components. The Explanatory Matrix (Figure 7-3) shows the *context* that pre-exists and bounds the situation or environment that respondents were in with *conditions* being the most relevant dimensions in relation to the *central perspective*. The specific *conditions* act as drivers to the *actions* of a formal or informal strategy being deployed with *consequences* as the outcome of *actions* set in motion by specific *conditions*. In the following Explanatory Matrix there are three *context elements* acting as a boundary to the situation. These are: all respondents were novice undergraduates, with non-traditional qualifications and were all experiencing a Literacy intervention. The *central perspective* is the dimension deemed most central in the dimensions and in this analysis was fear (of academic failure), as it was seen to influence all the other dimensions; the *conditions* shown in Figure 7-3 were dimensions identified as the most noteworthy in relation to the central perspective of fear; the intended or unintended *actions* were driven by their related *conditions* and these *actions* resulted in related *consequences*. Thus having completed my iterative analysis of the dimensionalised data through successive coding activities, it became possible to present the dimensions and explain relationships between the dimensions through the explanatory matrix.

Having considered the ten dimensions from an overall perspective of both the documentary analysis, first and second stage and a temporal coding analysis the dimension of 'Fear' (specifically of failure in academic literacy activities) remained constant and was therefore identified as the central perspective.
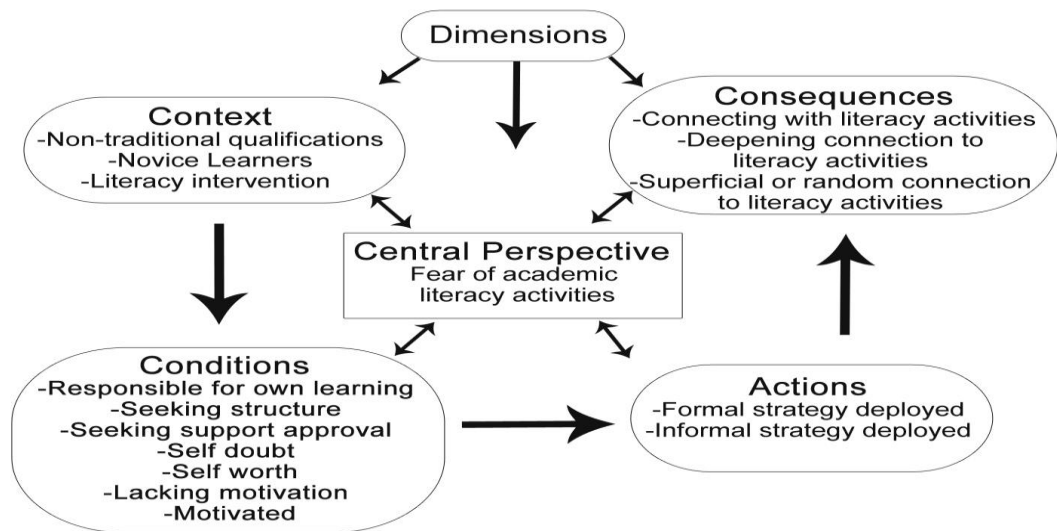
Figure 7-3 Explanatory Matrix

In considering Figure 7-3 the *context* that bounds the situation is that the respondents were all novice undergraduates with non-traditional qualifications. This institution, in-line with many institutions in the sector, provides specific information and academic literacy practices support in recognition of the challenges facing students entering Higher Education. This particular support provision is embedded into and across the first years' first semester and is designed to ensure that the tutor preferred literacy practices required for success are acquired. Thus the first two headings in the *context* section of the explanatory matrix (Figure 7-3) are denoting respondents' formative experiences, previously poor academic experiences resulting in fear of academic failure, are historical sources of respondents' fear and anxiety as they enter another academic stage in their lives. The third heading in *context* is derived from the institution and is the literacy intervention designed as a compulsory module to mitigate the risk of failure. This third *context* heading might also be a source of fear and anxiety for the respondents.

It is within this *context* that the following consideration of the *conditions* and their relationship with the *central perspective,* Fear, is placed. Subsequent

actions of Formal and Informal strategy deployment resulting from the identified *conditions* are discussed in terms of the resulting *consequences*.

7.4.1 Designation of conditions and actions

Seven salient dimensions were identified as *conditions* for non-traditionally qualified students' participating in academic literacy experiences: (in no particular order) Lacking-motivation; Motivated; Responsible-for-own-learning; Seeking-structure; Seeking-support-approval; Self-doubt; Self-worth. These seven *conditions* show the range of contributing factors existing among the respondents' literacy experiences.

The final two dimensions of Formal and Informal strategies were designated as *actions* which resulted from the *conditions*. Each associated combination of *conditions* and properties impelled different *actions* (formal or informal strategies deployed) with resulting *consequences* ranging from a superficial or random connection to literacy activities to a deepening connection to literacy activities.

In their interviews all respondents described experiences that changed their relationship with literacy practices and how they deployed them during the three different essay writing activities. *Consequences* of *actions* that were changed during the literacy intervention were demonstrated and identified in the essay artefacts produced during the literacy intervention through the documentary analysis (see 6.2).

By identifying the general processes associated with SCONUL information literacy practices whilst learners are engaged in written academic activities it is possible to identify choices that are made. The *conditions*, *actions* and *consequences* provide a framework for understanding the journey travelled by respondents from an initial use of informal literacy strategies in a formal academic setting through to connecting with formal literacy activities and developing that connection. The temporal analysis allowed this richer picture to emerge and it is this temporal analysis that now frames what follows with each point of essay submission represented. The following section presents the relationships between Conditions, Actions and Consequences at each of

the temporal points identified at 6.3 and identifies changes in respondent behaviour in using information literacy practices as defined by SCONUL within their written work.

7.4.2 Relationship of conditions, actions and consequences in first written essay

In Chapter 6 (see 6.2), analyses showed that respondents when faced with an unfamiliar task on their arrival at university panicked and were afraid of how to start the activity. They sought support from peers and family members and were then able to embark on the task. The prevailing *Conditions* of self-doubt and seeking support led them to the *Actions* of using informal strategies that they were familiar with. This is clearly seen in Table 7-6 with the *Conditions* self-doubt and seeking support at the top of the table and seeking structure and responsible for own learning at the bottom. The consequences of respondents' Actions of using informal or no strategies are evident in the first written artefact submitted as shown and discussed in section 6.2.

Conditions	Actions	Consequences
Self-doubt Seeking Support/approval Self-worth Motivated Seeking structure Responsible for own learning Lacking Motivation	Informal strategy deployed Formal strategy deployed	➢ Superficial connection to literacy activities ➢ Connecting with literacy activities ➢ Increased connection to literacy activities

Table 7-6 Conditions, Actions and Consequences during the first written task

Thus, the evidence shows respondents on arrival at university as motivated and keen to succeed but when faced with new academic challenges they do not use the formal institutional support provision; rather, they panic and seek support from each other or family and friends, as shown in section 6.2.1.

Following support, respondents undertake the written task using familiar informal information literacy strategies. The next section considers respondents' behavioural changes as represented by the *Conditions* whilst they are immersed in a compulsory literacy intervention which uses formative feedback activities based on respondents' written work to make literacy practices transparent.

7.4.3   Relationship of conditions, actions and consequences in second written essay

This section proved to be rich in showing temporal points of respondents' Actions and Consequences. In Table 7-7 below it can be seen that following the second written essay submission changes in the Conditions section indicate respondents appear to assume more responsibility for their own learning and self-doubt is less prevalent. Evidence shown in the documentary analysis of the second written submission (section 6.3.8) indicated little change in demonstration of using formal recognised SCONUL Pillar information literacy practices and suggested that respondents were still using informal strategies. However respondent accounts and the process described in the temporal analysis at 7.3.1, indicate that there were first steps taken towards connecting with formal information literacy strategies. Thus, although informal strategies are still being demonstrated in the written essay submission the Consequence changes to denote a connecting with literacy activities as indicated by the other data sources. This is the case as the Condition seeking support has moved to a more prevalent position and as we saw in section 7.3.1 the nature of the support being sought by respondents has moved to the tutor mediated on-line discussion forum.

Conditions	Actions	Consequences

Seeking Support/approval	Informal strategy deployed	➢ Connecting with literacy activities
Motivated		
Self-doubt		➢ Superficial or random connection to literacy activities
Responsible for own learning		
Seeking structure	Formal strategy deployed	
Self-worth		➢ Deepening connection to literacy activities
Lacking Motivation		

Table 7-7 Conditions, Actions and Consequences at start of second written essay

What has emerged through temporal analysis was the changing nature of the support being sought by respondents. This wasn't evident in ordinary second stage dimensional analysis. Whilst in the first written essay support sought was from family, peers and friends at this critical point of transition the support was derived from activities structured into the intervention. Therefore although the strategies deployed by respondent were still informal their accounts and the temporal dimensional analysis suggest there was awareness by respondents at this point of the tutor preferred literacy practices to be acquired. Through repeated embedded literacy activities respondents had started to understand literacy approaches and academic conventions they previously had not known were required. As discussed in 6.3.8, SCONUL presents the pillars as a 'three dimensional building' containing discrete and independent sets of competencies (see Figure 3-1 SCONUL Seven Pillars). Weak understanding of each of the individual SCONUL Pillar information literacy practices impacted on respondent ability to make connections between practices within a pillar and across pillars, as shown in their first written essay. This 'knowing that they do not know' appears to become visible to respondents during the seminar and on-line activities related to the submitted second draft essay. As shown in the next section recognition at this point of the tutor preferred literacy practices to be acquired marks a transitionary moment for the respondents. This recognition was followed by engagement with the tutor preferred literacy practices being more visible in the final written essay submission.

7.4.4 Relationship of conditions, actions and consequences in third written essay

Turning now to consider the final stage of dimensional analysis shown in Table 6-8, it initially appears that there is little change in the conditions, as they remain almost in the same order; however when considered in conjunction with Figure 7-3, our temporal view of the dimensions, the change that occurs between the second and third written essay is notable. This change was also indicated in the documentary analysis in section 6.4.7. Table 7-8 also indicates the shift in behaviour as the Condition "seeking support" moves to the top of the Conditions driving the Actions. As discussed earlier in section 6.4.3 the nature of the support being sought has been identified as more formal in the tutor moderated discussion area and seminar activities.

Conditions	Actions	Consequences
Seeking Support/approval Motivated Self-doubt Responsible for own learning Self-worth Seeking structure Lacking Motivation	Formal strategy deployed Informal strategy deployed	➢ Deepening connection to literacy activities ➢ Connecting with literacy activities ➢ Superficial or random connection to literacy activities

Table 7-8 Conditions, Actions and Consequences at submission of final written essay

This movement towards more formal support is also seen in the Actions column where Formal Strategy Deployed replaces Informal Strategy Deployed. The Conditions of Self-Worth and Responsibility for own Learning are also more prevalent in this final coding section than in earlier sections Table 7-6 and Table 7-7. Explanations for this shift are identified by respondents in their accounts and are clearly located in the literacy

intervention activities in which they have been participating, in particular the on-line tutor moderated activities.

7.4.5 Summary

Section 7.4 has presented findings from data using a traditional dimensional analysis approach where first and second stage coding considered respondent accounts. During first stage coding 'fear', 'anxiety' and 'panic' were the codes clearly present in both respondent transcripts and field notes and memos. Second stage analytic process identified similarities between all respondents in terms of their information literacy practices deployment and development; in particular what had emerged was an indicated preference for 'responsible for learning'. Considering the findings described in 6.4.8 where 'formal strategies', or recognised academic literacy practices, were not indicated until the final essay submission it was unclear what literacy practices were being used as part of respondents being 'responsible for learning' so a further coding stage was undertaken which considered three temporal points from a longitudinal perspective over the course of the literacy intervention.

The strength of taking a naturalistic approach, as described in 5.3, towards the analysis of the data had the benefit of a required flexibility of method which allowed rigour of investigation of all possible emerging lines of enquiry. Thus it was methodologically powerful in terms of richness of understanding respondent actions within a complex scenario to use a non-traditional dimensional analysis approach which included all three data sets. Firstly, the findings from documentary analysis of the three essay submissions, respondent accounts and the dimensions from coding stage two. This connecting of all three data sets highlighted that at the second temporal point on Figure 7.3 it was possible to identify a number of key catalysts such as the on-line discussion forum, that indicate why change in prevalence of certain dimensions might be occurring.

The discussion in Chapter 7 thus far has focused on the relationships between Conditions and Processes and the Consequences resulting. In dimensional analysis the Conditions would normally relate to the Central

Perspective and would usually indicate a predisposition to a particular Action and Consequence. The departure from traditional Dimensional analysis through the use of a temporal dimensional analysis used concurrently with other data sets has shown factors in this study as being derived from the Context aspects rather than the Conditions. It is therefore the relationship of the Context to the Central Perspective, Conditions, Actions and Consequences that that we now examine.

7.5 Context

In dimensional analysis methodology, usually the Context is fixed as this enables dimensions to emerge during the coding process. For instance, the non-traditional qualification status of the respondents will not change during analysis. During traditional dimensional analysis first and second stage coding all three of the Contexts remained constant. However, during the temporal analysis it became clear that, whilst placed in the literacy intervention, participation in the intervention was not immediate by the respondents. Therefore the Context of a literacy intervention could not be deemed to be fixed as participation evolved with respondents' development. It is this aspect and its role in contributing to the relationships between Conditions, Actions and Consequences that this section examines. Table 7-9 below illustrates the final positioning of the conditions and processes with their linked consequences after all the usual dimensional analysis and temporal coding processes were completed. The Context contains three fixed aspects all of which contributed to the respondents' fear of failure in academic literacy activities.

At the start of their studies although respondents were within a literacy intervention they did not engage with academic literacy practices. However evidence in chapter 6 suggests that change occurred as a result of a number of factors embedded within the literacy intervention, in particular ipsative feedback activities and the on-line discussion forum where tutor mediated peer support was available throughout the week. Whereas more usually within a dimensional analysis the movement of Conditions would influence Actions and Consequences, in this study the Context of the literacy

intervention plays a part in the Central Perspective, Actions and Consequences through subtle influences upon the Conditions.

Context Boundaries of situation/environment give rise to circumstances		Central Perspective
Non-traditional qualifications Novice undergraduates *Placed in a literacy intervention*		Fear of failure in academic literacy activities
Conditions	**Actions**	**Consequences**
Seeking Support/approval Motivated Self-doubt Responsible for own learning Self-worth Seeking structure Lacking Motivation	Formal strategy deployed Informal strategy deployed	➢ Deepening connection to literacy activities ➢ Connecting with literacy activities ➢ Superficial or random connection to literacy activities

Table 7-9 Conditions, Actions and Consequences associated with respondents' approaches to Information Literacy Activities

In this particular study the temporal dimensional analysis allowed points at which respondents change their behaviour in terms of moving from deploying informal to formal literacy practices to become visible. Throughout data analysis the temporal points provided insight into respondents' actions and aspects underlying their actions. By departing again from usual dimensional analysis presentation and setting out the data findings (Table 7-10) with the temporal analysis as central a new perspective of Context is possible and the relationship with Conditions, Central Perspective, Actions and Consequences is visible.

The following Table 7-10 takes only the dimensions that changed in prevalence during the three snap shots taken through the data collection points and as presented in Figure 7-3. By restricting the number of

dimensions to the most salient on submission the temporal presentation of all dimensions, it allows a focus on the dynamics between the dimensions and their changing position in relation to each other. For example in the configuration presented in Table 7-10 dimensions in the Context section move position to reflect their dominance in relation to the Central Perspective. Initially upon arrival as novice undergraduates with non-traditional qualifications respondents experience "Fear of academic failure", which in turn leads them to seek support from peers, family and friends, prompting the Action of using informal literacy strategies with a Consequence of superficial or random connection to literacy activities. Although respondents are already in the Context of the literacy intervention at the start of their studies it is not yet having an effect on respondent behaviour. The Context changes as soon as the respondents enter the literacy intervention following formative feedback on their approach to information literacy activities, Respondents make the cognitive shift of understanding that there are things 'they do not know that they do not know' in this new environment, i.e. information literacy practices for success in academic writing.

	Temporal Point one	Temporal Point two	Temporal Point three
Context	novice undergraduates non-traditional qualifications Literacy Intervention	novice undergraduates Literacy Intervention non-traditional qualifications	Literacy Intervention novice undergraduates non-traditional qualifications
Central Perspective	Fear of academic failure	Fear of academic failure	Responsible for own learning
Condition	Support from peers, family or friends	Support from seminars and tutor mediated on-line resources and discussion forum	Support from seminars and tutor mediated on-line resources and discussion forum

Action	Use of Informal literacy strategies	Use of Informal literacy strategies	Use of formal literacy strategies
Consequence	Superficial or random connection to literacy activities	Connecting with literacy activities	Deepening connection to literacy activities

Table 7-10 Temporal View

In considering Temporal point two, the submission of the second essay, key dynamics and interplay of dimensions are revealed. Although respondents remain novice undergraduates with non-traditional qualifications, with a continued fear of academic failure, the literacy intervention starts to have an influence as respondents seek support from within tutor mediated seminars and on-line resources and discussion forums rather than family, peers and friends. Even though respondents continue to use informal literacy strategies this transition indicates the formal support provided is critical as it ensures a connection with literacy activities is made and was not visible through the usual dimensional analysis methods.

Through this temporal presentation the final column in Table 7-10 shows that a transition has been made to the literacy intervention and it takes precedence over the other Contexts for the respondents. This results in the most prevalent dimension of "responsible for own learning" moving to Central Perspective as Fear of Failure recedes for respondents. The most prevalent Condition remains "seeking support" but now it is specifically through seminars and tutor mediated on-line resources and discussion forum. The Actions resulting from this are to use formal literacy strategies with a Consequence of a Deepening connection to literacy activities as shown in the verbal accounts and the documentary analysis.

To summarise, the use of temporal analysis has allowed an exploration of the Contexts and shown points of respondent transition. These points were identified in three distinct time periods with the first being a period of being afraid of failing and seeking support from family, peers and friends and using informal literacy strategies. The second point of transition followed ipsative feedback literacy activities on the first written submission and seminar and

on-line feedback activities on the submission for the second draft. At this second transition point formal strategies are not used but evidence indicates respondents, through formal tutor mediated seminar and on-line discussions are connecting with the tutor preferred literacy practices. At the third transition point, respondents have understood there is a formal approach to academic work and are attempting to use information literacy practices as described by SCONUL and a deepening connection to literacy practices for academic study and writing is commenced.

7.6   Summary

In summary, Chapter 7 has presented findings from initial and focused analysis from three stages of coding, the first two stages using conventional dimensional analysis practice and the third using temporal analysis of the second stage dimensions (themes). First stage open coding presented at section 7.1 outlined the steps taken during the first stage coding process and described how both respondent transcripts and researcher field notes and memos were part of the investigation. A number of possible dimensions were identified at this stage: seeking peer support; seeking family support, self-worth; fear, self-doubt; responsible for own learning; seeking family approval; seeking peer approval; seeking mentor approval; social outgoing; seeking structure; formal strategy deployed; informal strategy deployed, language and fear. Using Google search techniques respondents commenced the written task. Confusion experienced by the respondents was allayed by peer, family or friend support. This first stage of analysis identified fear as being significant for all respondents at the commencement of their first written essay.

Findings second stage analysis presented at section 7.2 identified salient dimensions and how they had been arrived at. Respondent similarities of information literacy deployment and development were identified through analytic coding process; what initially emerged was an indicated preference for 'responsible for learning'. However, after revisiting the documentary analysis (see section 6.3) it was evident that it was only after the second essay draft that formal SCONUL strategies were used and respondents

started to adopt formal academic conventions. Thus, similarly to the documentary analysis of the use of SCONUL literacy practices (see section 6.2) this second analysis was seen as a partial explanation of the interaction between identified dimensions. A further coding stage that focused specifically on the temporal relationships between dimensions during each of the three written tasks was undertaken.

The third stage of temporal coding described in section 7.3, whilst not usual in Dimensional analysis, was essential in illuminating respondent developmental stages during the literacy intervention and their written artefacts. The third stage temporal coding process in section 7.3 revealed interplay between respondents' feelings and actions, in particular during the time frame of the production of their written artefacts that had not been visible previously. Separating out the dimensions showed time periods of activity during the literacy intervention and written essay production and the changing position of each dimension. Figure 7-3 showed that during the first essay fear led to respondents seeking support and that they made little use of formal SCONUL literacy practices. Figure 7-3 showed that during the second draft essay there was limited difference in the position of the dimensions at the point of creating the draft submission but movement that was visible was downwards in fairly equal measure across the dimensions. However, Figure 7-3 importantly identified that following formative feedback in tutor mediated seminars and on-line discussion on the second essay a sharp increase occurred in respondent use of formal SCONUL literacy practices. This was confirmed in the analysis of the third written document submission where evidence of citations and references were noted.

Section 7.4 presented findings from all coding stages in the usual dimensional analysis method through an explanatory matrix. Designation of dimensions in the explanatory matrix allowed a view of relationships of conditions and actions and the consequences resulting therefrom. 'Fear' (specifically of failure in academic literacy practices and writing) remained constant and was therefore identified as the central perspective. Fear was connected to the previous context of the respondents, being novice undergraduates with non-traditional qualifications as they entered higher

level study. The literacy intervention was not part of the previous experience of respondents but was however connected to the central perspective of fear through requiring respondents to undertake academic written work.

The Conditions, Actions and Consequences provide a dimensional analysis framework for understanding general respondent processes associated with SCONUL defined information literacy activities whilst engaged in written academic activities. The positioning of each dimension in the framework allows identification of respondent choices as they connect to literacy practices through the activities to produce written essays. This further stage of analysis highlighted the significance of the timing of the literacy Intervention in altering respondents' demonstration of SCONUL Pillars information literacy practices in their written outputs. This analytical stage also illuminated change in the respondents' understanding of their literacy activities being closely connected to on-line tutor mediated support as part of the structured literacy intervention.

Whereas usually in dimensional analysis the Context that bounds the situation is fixed and the indicated consequences would link directly back to the Context, in this study the final temporal analysis in section 7.4.4 showed the significance of the literacy intervention and in particular the formative tutor moderated seminar and on-line discussion forum in respondent engagement and behaviour change in demonstration of SCONUL defined information literacy practices. This suggests that it is possible to create through curriculum design tricky transition points and support the betwixt space. Section 7.5 re-presented the dimensional analysis framework with temporal analysis as central to the placing of the dimensions and revealed respondent transition points and reasons for initial engagement with aspects of information literacy activities as described by the SCONUL Pillars. Interaction of dimensions within Context, Central Perspective, Conditions, Action and Consequences was made visible in a way not usually possible through dimensional analysis of first and second stage coding.

The following chapter now discusses these findings in the context of the earlier literature.

Chapter 8: Discussion and contributions

8.1 Introduction

Chapters six and seven reported the analysis of novice undergraduates' experiences of literacy practices as they made the transition into university study. Current research into experiences of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds continues to suggest that these students in particular are at risk of poor progression and attainment (Walker et al, 2004; Mountford-Zimdars et al, 2015, pp: 11). Research further suggests that students can encounter particular tricky transitions or betwixt spaces, that Meyer & Land (2006) suggest may be epistemological blockages in terms of a new way of seeing things. It has also been suggested that these transitions should be seen as normal rites of passage into higher education and supported appropriately (Gourlay, 2009). Currently the range of sector responses considered appropriate to support passage into academic writing discussed, in chapters two and three, consisted primarily of disaggregated support provision for skill development, together with the use of information practices and technical academic writing, all with limited success (Wingate, 2006). Therefore, whilst there are calls for early targeted support (Gale & Parker, 2014), given the limits of existing support strategies coupled with the previously reported contention that universities have little influence in liminal spaces (Palmer, 2008), appropriately supporting transition into tutor preferred literacy practices is challenging.

This research, through chronological and structured analysis, has shown the points of emergent use of literacy practices with novice learners when supported through literacy intervention into academic writing for the first time. The research has also identified that what respondents experience is a fear of failing within this new environment. It has shown (see chapter seven, section 7.3 and figure 7.3) that when tutors create and manage transitions it is possible to identify and design targeted aspects of literacy support. It was also shown that this targeted support assisted learners towards the tutor-preferred literacy practices when initially navigating the complexity of academic study and writing. This concept of supporting preferred literacy

practices through tutor-created transitions acts as a focus point for ideas further explored in this discussion chapter, which draws on insights derived from the analysis and findings presented in chapters six and seven.

What was interesting about the documentary analysis presented in chapter six is that evidence appeared to confirm previous research findings (see for example Harvey et al, 2006), as participants did not make use of available formal support and did not deploy basic information literacy practices as described in the SCONUL Pillars (2011). However, this initial analysis was revisited in chapter seven, where possible explanations for participants' choices and actions were identified through the use of dimensional analysis. This further analysis supports Tapp's (2015) view that some learners who enter university do not know what is required of them for academic study. Participants in this study seemed unaware of literacy practices required for academic study and writing and therefore were unable to identify their needs. This finding suggests tricky transitions occur at the very start of their studies, before encountering the possible 'conceptual gateways' or 'portals', as described by Meyer & Land (2005). What these learner perspectives on experiences of support contribute are new explanations for learner responses to academic challenges. These explanations suggest a revised, wider picture, of challenges experienced by some first year students when starting their academic studies. In particular, and in contrast to previous findings, this study showed that, through tutor designed points of transition, it was possible to influence learner behaviour and actions within betwixt or transition spaces. This highlights the potential of tutor design to offer early targeted and appropriate support to cultivate preferred literacy practices for academic study and writing.

Therefore, what follows in this chapter is a thematic discussion of the relevance of findings of this research study to the discussion of current support of literacy practices, in the research literature as presented in chapters two and three. Data is not presented here other than where the theme from the literature being discussed derived from the literature chapters relates directly to findings from chapters six and seven and it is relevant to illuminate the discussion point.

8.2 Progression and attainment

Previous research showed that progression remains challenging for learners from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Mountford-Zimdars et al, 2015). This was evident in the findings of this thesis firstly as shown in sections 6.1; where the participant group socio economic backgrounds were identified, and secondly in 6.2; where a lack of understanding of what is required for academic study is reported by participants. As shown in the baseline biography presented in section 6.1, this study's participants' families had little or no experience of formal academic qualifications, therefore in terms of the literature, placing this participant group as highly likely to be at risk. As might be expected, given the research discussed in chapter two, when presented with their first formal academic task the analysis in this study showed no participant use of formal academic literacy practices or engagement with academic resources, confirming their position as being at greater risk (see section 6.2).

The literature suggests (see for example chapter two, Meeuwisse et al, 2010), where a limited experience of university life is available from family and friends, advice as to what to expect will not necessarily prepare individuals for university. This is supported by findings; as shown in section 6.2, participants in this study were not prepared for academic study and writing. Historically the sector's response to this widening participation issue (e.g. Dearing, 1997; Harvey et al, 2006; Gale & Parker, 2014) has been to put in place support mechanisms to enable transition into university life and academic study. The discussion in chapter three of the literature (for example see Fox, 1986; Barefoot, 2000; Palmer et al 2009; Wilcox, Winn, and Fyvie-Gauld 2005; Skyrme 2007 and Palmer et al, 2009) identified best practice initiatives to support students through the transition process into higher education as broad ranging and covering a number of aspects such as study skills, induction days, library support, and changing teaching, learning and assessment approaches. Although the HEI in this study provides such supports for their first years (see section 5.5) as the evidence in 6.2.1 indicates the participants in this study remained unaware of what was required of them for academic study and writing. This suggests that generic

provisions are not sufficient to support students through the transition process into higher education.

This finding further supports Burke's (2012) analysis of learners' identity and subjectivity being shaped by forms of exclusion and inequality created by hegemonic discourses. As contended by Scott et al (2014) and discussed in chapter 2, one of the most common student fears is failing the first written assessment. If a student fails a first assessment they may perceive the supports they are directed to as remedial and required due to their own failings or some inherent academic lack. This study's findings confirmed this, with 'fear', 'anxiety' and 'panic' as the most recurrent themes in the temporal dimensional analysis of transcripts for the first written activity. These words were also clearly present in participants' actual descriptions of their initial experiences of academic study. Consensus across the literature (for example see Dearing, 1997; Harvey et al, 2006; Gale & Parker, 2014) suggests that appropriate and timely support will assist the individual with academic writing tasks and assessments. However, as none of the participants in this study indicated making use of the institutional support provided, Longdon's (2004, pp: 129) view that some students are unable to position themselves to take advantage of the opportunity for support available to them was supported. Participants' reasons for not making use of the stand-alone study skills and available library induction tutorials were not directly explored as part of this thesis, but the evidence in 6.2 shows that they did not know what was required of them in terms of academic practices and writing, or what sort of support might help them.

In terms of support, Palmer asserts (2008) that external influences come to bear at points of transition and students are likely to be influenced by external agency rather than the university. This was confirmed by the findings of this study. In all cases, when faced with a first assignment task they did not understand, participants did not seek institutional support and guidance on any aspect of literacy practices for academic study, but preferred instead to seek informal support and guidance from family and friends. As their external support network had not necessarily experienced university, the cultural and social capital that Tramonte & Williams (2010) and O'Shea (2015) assert

contribute to student success was not available to this student group. Significantly the participants did not identify a need for specialist support. As posited by Durkin & Main (2002), and as the evidence suggests in section 6.2.1, one explanation for participants not using central support was they were unaware of how these provisions might help them. The disaggregation of literacy practices, delivered as separated skills, competencies or practices across and through central services, each specialising in their own area, is another level of complexity for students who are unable to select where to go for support. This added complexity in turn impacts on students' ability to identify exactly which central unit might support their particular literacy practice requirement during tricky transitional stages.

This study showed a complete lack of participant use of the standalone support provided by the university, rather than unsuccessful outcomes following engagement. Therefore Wingate's (2006) reasoning that stand alone study skills are helpful for technical skill requirement, but do not support the development of literacy practices and entry into the discipline, might still be correct. However, what this study adds is that, at point of entry to higher education, these participants did not know what they did not know. Consequently they were not in a position to identify and seek appropriate support from the central university provisions. Moreover, this 'not knowing what they do not know' shows a lack of understanding of not only the technical application but also the relevance of literacy practices for academic study and the written task. This lack of ability to begin the academic writing task confirms Hillman's (2005) position that a challenge for novice undergraduates is tertiary study itself, and in particular what Hillman describes as developing capabilities for academic writing required for assessment within the discipline.

Consequently, Wingate's (2006) assessment of the weakness of stand-alone skills support, whilst pertinent in the overall literacies discussion, becomes irrelevant in this context since this provision was not utilised. What is surprising in these findings is that the challenge expressed by participants was much more fundamental – understanding how to commence the task. A typical participant comment about the first task; '*I didn't know what we were*

doing', is entirely consistent with Tapp's (2015) assertion that students are *'not understanding the discourses, practices and procedures of Higher Education (HE), and not knowing what standards are expected of them...'*. An implication of this is that, regardless of the type of support provided if the learner isn't able to identify a need, they will be unable to recognise a possible solution.

8.3 Influencing transition or betwixt spaces

As observed by Fisher et al (2011), stress is associated with adapting to the expectations of autonomy and flexibility required for academic study. As shown in section 6.2 of this study, stress was evident in participants' descriptions of not knowing what was required of them in the academic task. However, these participants were not managing the transition described by Fisher et al (2011) from a fairly structured school environment to university life; all had left school at least two years prior to applying to university. The findings in this study suggest a wider picture of the type of learner facing challenges in adapting to the expectations of autonomy and flexibility required for academic study than previously identified by Fisher et al (2011).

In terms of preparedness for the transition experience, Palmer's (2008) contention, that each learner enters this transition 'betwixt space' with a different set of skills, literacies, cultural backgrounds and family and friendship networks, was also supported by the findings. As shown in section 6.1, all participants came from family backgrounds that were different, both geographically and socio-economically, and started their courses following different life experiences between school and university. Therefore, recalling Draper's (2002, pp: 86) position that this transitional or liminal phase, in which the student occupies a non-status, a kind of no-man's land, in an information literacy context might be viewed as a stage where the student is encountering troublesome threshold literacy practices and might require different levels of support. As suggested by ACRL (2016), students must pass through these critical gateways or portals to develop genuine expertise within a discipline, profession, or knowledge domain. As the analysis in section 7.1 indicates, this transitional stage was entered by all participants in

this study, confirming Coonan and Secker's (2011) account which positions information literacy as transitional. However, despite differing life experiences, cultural backgrounds and family and friendship networks, there were common experiences. All participants experienced fear and confusion, and all responded in similar ways to the same intervention strategies. Therefore, Van Gennep's (1909) notion of using rituals within the liminal phase to help prevent or contain danger, marking the phase of incorporation (which in this instance was the tutor's preferred literacy practices), was shown to be beneficial to the participants in this study. Section 7.3.1, temporal analysis, shows that whilst in the no-man's land or 'betwixt space' when encountering literacy practices for academic study and writing participants found the on-line discussion forum as a valuable mechanism for support. This crucial engagement with literacy practices was achieved through specific assessment strategies and subsequently through repeated ipsative activities supported by an on-line forum; participants began demonstrating preferred tutor approaches. Therefore, through applying tutor support specifically to transitions associated with literacy practices for academic study and academic writing, prompted by the literacy intervention, participants were accompanied through these challenging transitions by tutor and peers, and this support enabled them to develop a changed relationship with the information literacy practices required for the tasks. This suggests that Meyer & Land's (2005) idea of troublesome threshold discipline concepts also applies to information literacy practices, as suggested by ACRL(2016, pp2).

This supports Hussey & Smith's (2009) assertion that students experience many little transitions and that these transitions are made up of many small changes around attitudes, values, knowledge, beliefs, understanding and skills. These suggested ongoing transitional changes in terms of literacy practices are evident in this study as indicated in section 7.2; here the analysis shows participants beginning to deploy the tutor-preferred literacy practices. The study reported on here, as shown in section chapter four, used a series of short formative writing activities to develop a formative written assessment as part of many small transitions. The evidence in 6.2.1 shows

participants' anxiety when first encountering a written activity. This supports Meyer & Land's (2006) and Harvey et al's (2006) suggestion that one of the first transitionary experiences students encounter involves undertaking a formal written assessment, commonly a writing activity.

However, what was different in this study and as described in chapter four, as the intervention design created, and anticipated appropriate support for, particular literacy practice transitions for academic study and writing, participants all encountered the transition concurrently. In particular, the use of ipsative feedback on the process use of specific literacy practices always used in academic study and writing; and as shown in section 7.2, allowed learners to move in and out of transitional or liminal spaces. Whilst moving into or out of transitionary spaces learners were directed, by assessment criteria and continuous tutor and peer dialogues, into further structured formative literacy activities which are tutor mediated. As discussed above in 8.2, analysis of the first tutor created transition showed that the support offered by stand-alone central services was not utilised by any of the participants. The separated nature of services providing stand-alone support renders the provision external to the students' department. Consequently, if students experience a betwixt space during their first written assignment, a departmentally external standalone service is unlikely to be in a position to influence the student. However, if as in this study, through intervention design the tutor is able to identify with learners where their needs might best be met, the role of central services might be focused on learner need. This is shown clearly in 6.3.4, where one participant describes using the library services in a specific manner: *'I think I just asked the librarian person where I could find books related to the question very much, and they kind of helped me a bit;'* and again in 6.4.4, where a participant describes their realisation of the need to read. Both these behaviour changes followed tutor and peer ipsative feedback on formative written activities that highlighted weak use of resources.

Therefore, supporting Draper's (2002) suggestion that pedagogic design should use rituals embedded as part of the learning process; in this study rather than learners having to make a decision as to which stand-alone

support they might require and seeking it out from the provision available they are guided as a result of pedagogic design. Thus, the betwixt 'rite of passage' space has been mediated through unsolicited, yet formal, tutor support embedded in the intervention design. Regardless of where the learner initially seeks aid the design frame ensures they have continuous tutor and peer support to guide them back to the tutor preferred literacy practices for academic study and writing.

Thus, contrary to Palmer's assertion (2008) that the university is not in a position to influence the 'betwixt space', findings from this study show that the tutor, through the intervention design, was influencing and taking the role of guide as described by Van Gennep (1909) and Draper (2002). As further shown in 7.4.3 following formative ipsative feedback, as part of the intervention following task one the participants began to engage with the tutor's preferred literacy practices for academic study and writing. Whilst caution is required when linking participants' lack of panic and their ability to commence work immediately without needing to seek support directly to the intervention framework, the findings in section 7.3's temporal analysis show that the participants began to engage with literacy practices following support from tutors and peers. This finding supports Wilson et al's (2014) suggestion of a relationship between successful transition in the first year of study and progression through multiple challenges presented as transition points.

The above findings support Gourlay's (2009) contention that such transitions should be seen as normal rites of passage and they are in contrast to Palmer's (2008) contention that little influence is possible by universities in betwixt spaces. The findings of this study show tutor influence of participant outputs, achieved through the deliberate creation of many little transitions, supported with formative literacy practice activities and feedback opportunities.

This finding also supports Gourlay's (2009) suggestion that linking learners' experiences during this liminal stage with writing serves to reframe their struggles. In this study, tutors explicitly did not treat any aspect of literacy practices used by learners as a deficit issue, but as part of a transitional

process into the tutor preferred literacy practices for university academic study and writing. As a result of this approach all participants in this study started to make connections with basic literacy practices for academic study and writing; e.g. key word searching, retrieval techniques, referencing; citations, plagiarism and correct use of grammar and punctuation. Therefore, the evidence of this study shows, it is possible to guide and influence participants towards, and through, what Draper (2002) and Meyer and Land (2006) describe as tricky transitions.

8.4 Supports for Literacy Practices

The literature suggests that where students are perceived, or perceive themselves, as social and academic outsiders they might be reluctant to enter the library building or take up support and experience library anxiety or shame associated with their lack of library ability (White & Noel, 2004, pp: 4; Harvey et al, 2006, pp: 32 and Longdon, 2004, pp: 122; Mellon, 1986, pp 163; McAfee, 2017,). Whilst library anxiety and associated shame remains a real phenomenon, fear of the library was not an issue identified in this study; something else was indicated. As discussed above in section 8.2, stand-alone study skills or library services were not utilised by participants in this study. The fear identified here was about not understanding what was required in terms of the academic task itself rather, than fear or anxiety of associated library activities required for undertaking the task. However, in contrast, findings presented in section 6.4 show that following the intervention, participants seek out books in the library, thus indicating a change in participants' perspective of the library. The library service has become something that has been given meaning within the context of the written task being undertaken and therefore useful to the participant. Therefore rather than being reluctant to take up support or enter the library as suggested by White & Noel (2004), this finding suggests that, as indicated in other studies (e.g. Durkin & Main, 2002; Wingate, 2006), the particular relevance of central services remains unclear to individuals until given meaning.

However, simply because learners access standalone provision does not mean literacy practices associated with the provision will have been accessed or understood. As the findings presented in section 6.3 shows, participants remained unclear of particular information literacy practices and their role in academic writing. There is also evidence in the findings supporting the contention made by Kuhlthau (1988) and Bodi (2002), that librarians do not address the complexity of the learning process and that students might be misled into thinking information seeking is merely identifying sources. The findings in 6.3 show a similar separation of library engagement from academic writing to that identified by Wingate (2006) in the context of stand-alone study skills. Interestingly as reported in this study (see section 6.3), once guided by the intervention to the library, the participants subsequently relied on a patch writing technique, as described by Moore et al (2010), to meet the task requirement. Copying text directly suggests a limited ability to use sources for academic writing. This use of patchwriting would appear to confirm Leckie's (1996) suggestion that what presents in an essay as not engaging with the discipline discourse might actually result from using a coping strategy and not an information-seeking strategy. Thus, Itua et al's (2014) suggestion that students experience a range of barriers to academic writing in relation to referencing is supported by the evidence.

Therefore, although learners might find their way or even be explicitly guided to standalone provision, the findings of this study support Longdon's (2004, pp: 129) contention that some learners are not able to position themselves to take advantage of the opportunities offered. Hussey & Smith's (2010) suggestion that learners might not have the skills and confidence to make these transitions quickly and easily appears valid and those identified as at higher risk, remain at higher risk. However, participants in this study are nevertheless responsive to intervention influences and attempt to use preferred tutor literacy practices when directed by tutor and peer formative feedback.

From a literacy practices perspective, when considering at-risk learners who are unable to identify their needs or where they might be met, Bruce et al's (2006) contention that information literacy is a complex of different ways of

interacting with information is supported by this study. As shown in section 6.2 all participants found it challenging to connect literacy practices to academic study and writing. Also shown in the analysis in Figure 7-3 was support for Harvey et al's (2006) and Meyer & Land's (2006) assertion that participants experience multiple 'little transitions'. What was contributed by this study in particular was that these participants experienced multiple 'little transitions' specifically related to literacy practices. Fisters' (2015) suggestion to encourage the learner to become practiced at navigating the uncertainty of liminal spaces is shown to be effective when learners are within a tutor mediated literacy intervention. Further, this finding also suggests a lack of awareness by the respondents of conversations taking place within their disciplines, or their requirement to enter these conversations, as an initial threshold concept within academic writing and study.   The finding also supports Fisters' (2015) assertion that librarians should be helping learners to enter discipline conversations, particularly with the convergence of librarians' and academic writing support staffs' roles.

This finding is consistent with Hussey & Smith's (2010) suggestion that first year undergraduates find some transitions harder than others. It also supports Hussey & Smith's (2010) claim that the change from a relative novice into a knowledgeable, skilled participant within a discipline is 'one such harder transition'. Because of this, the contention of Bruce et al (2006) and Wilkes et al (2015) that educators should strategically design curricula to develop graduate information literacy practices at different learner levels and abilities appears obvious. However, as Wilkes et al (2015) argue, and as shown in this study, literacy practices are more than acquiring a set of skills, competencies and characteristics. Rather it requires engagement within flexible and responsive well-constructed curricula that enables development of the tutor preferred literacy practices within academic study and writing. A meaningful assessment task that fosters and develops literacy practices within a discipline to support student progression and attainment requires educators with expertise in literacy practices within their discipline area and an understanding of learning through assessment. It is the theme of supporting literacy practices through assessment that is now discussed.

8.5 Support through feedback using assessment

As discussed in chapter two (see for example Knight, 2006), summative assessment makes judgments about, and on the quality of, the student performance and usually a grade is awarded. As shown in 6.1.2 all participants in this study had previously experienced a lack of academic success, and were anxious when presented with their first activity. This is in accord with Bledscoe & Baskin (2014) who suggest that during first assessment common student fears are of failure. What was shown in this study was that learners were unaware of what was required of them for academic study and writing. If, as Christies et al (2008) and Lizzio and Wilson (2013) suggest, students use their early assessment marks to make judgements about their ability for university level study; feedback provided with a summative assessment might be too late or insufficient guidance for the at-risk student, particularly if their fear of failure has been realised. As Hughes (2011) argued and as demonstrated in the findings of this study, students benefit from ipsative feedback. As demonstrated in the analysis in section 7.3.1 iterative formative assessment allowed literacy practices to be reflected upon without fear of failing the module or course. Therefore if, as discussed in section 8.3, it is possible to guide and influence participants towards, and through, what Meyer and Land (2006) and Draper (2002) describe as tricky transitions, by extension Hughes' (2011) contention that long term progress and development is promoted through ipsative assessment appears credible.

Therefore, to return to the notion of supporting 'tricky transitions' and betwixt spaces and ipsative assessment, participants in this study were within created transitions, where ipsative formative feedback was being provided throughout their activities; in particular specific feedback on the use of cut and paste in the drafts. Analysis of the first written submission in figure 7.3 showed no use of sources or formal citation or referencing, indicating that Leckie's (1996, pp: 206) contention that students need support in this area is still relevant twenty years after it was first identified. Participation in activities on how to correctly refer to others' work, and importantly the role authors play within developing individual discipline positions, results in a participant

behaviour change. As the evidence shown in figure 5.3 indicates, all participants reworked citations and references to meet the tutor preferred expectations for academic writing. This continuous cycle of action/feedback/action/feedback supports Wilson et al's (2014) and Kift's (2014) contention that curriculum design should make flexible and responsive provision for supporting or guiding students during transitional points. As shown in this study, the iterative ipsative assessment cycle focused on literacy practices whilst introducing discipline resources, before any summative assessment. Therefore, the participant has the opportunity to change their literacy practices in the light of feedback prior to submission which in turn enabled the enhancement of academic writing performance. Whilst the enhancement might be variable, for some students the difference could be the difference between failure and success in their first assignment. Analysis in this study showed that participants attempted to use the tutor preferred literacy practices following ipsative feedback during and after activities. Participants began to recognise an expectation of particular literacy practices required for academic writing. This change occurred after the second draft essay and before the third summative written essay; a successful transition was made by all participants into attempting to use the tutor preferred literacy practices for academic study and writing, as shown in Figure 7-3. This finding supports Hughes' (2017) argument that future learning gain should be built on past learning gain and should be achievable for learners. The findings in this study demonstrate a practical example of Hughes' contention in practice. It further supports Rattray's (2017) contention that threshold concepts bring together more basic level concepts within the discipline in an integrative and bounded way. This has important implications for developing learners' academic literacy practices through ipsative assessment approaches.

As presented in chapter seven, the influence of learner choices whilst they experience potential tricky transitions, allowed tutor monitoring and support for what Haggis (2006) described as the 'learning how to *do* the learning in *that* subject'. The movement reported here by participants towards the tutor-preferred literacy practices further support Weurlander et al's (2012, pp: 748)

position that assessment sends a strong message to students about what counts as knowledge in a particular learning environment. Importantly in this study, undertaking iterative formative assessment tasks associated with the 'learning how to do the learning' guided participants at multiple points of little transitions to engage with the tutor preferred literacy practices for academic study and writing. This evidence supports Wilkes et al's (2015) position, as presented in section 3.2, that opportunities for student engagement with core ideas about information within a discipline-specific context provided through well-constructed curricula and meaningful assessment tasks foster these practices within the discipline.

Therefore, following a particular pedagogical intervention, certain academic literacy practices, such as information searching and identification, started to be used by participants. As discussed in chapter three, The Chartered Institute of Library Information Professionals contends that to be information literate is:

> *"Knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner." (CILIP, 2015)*

Clearly, being information literate in the way described by CILIP (2015) is to be expert in literacy practices. This study has demonstrated that participants on arrival in higher education had a limited conception of what was required for academic study and writing, with literacy practices used only after the intervention had highlighted the tutor's expectation. As discussed in chapter 2, successive policy documents (Dearing, 1997; Harvey et al, 2006; BIS 2014, HEFCE 2015 and HEFCE, 2015 a & b), have identified particular groups considered to be at risk and they, as with the participants in this study, are unlikely to be information literate in the way described by CILIP (2015), on entry to higher education. These findings help us to understand the argument by Haggis (2006, pp: 1); that the growing diversity of students means that level and prior experience of learning at the point of entry into higher education can no longer be assumed, from a particular literacy practices perspective.

The findings presented in chapter seven clearly support the literature (Harvey & Knight, 1996; Black, & William, 2006; Hughes, 2011) that argues for the use of formative feedback to aid student development. In this study, following regular ipsative and iterative formative feedback, analysis (see section 6.3 and 6.4 and Figure 7-3), showed that participants, between production of draft and final assessment, were connecting with literacy practices. The analysis also shows participants acquiring an understanding of the tutor expectations of preferred literacy practices required for academic writing. Thus, the evidence indicates personal progress in developing academic literacy practices rather than the acquisition of individual technical skills. This suggests that using Laurillard's (1993) 'conversational framework' to help design the intervention created a continuous discussion between tutor and learners, between peers, and between participants and custom-designed learning materials. The focus of the discussion remained within an academic literacies context and was constantly about university and faculty expectations for literacy practices. Therefore, as Lea and Street (1998) and Street (2009) argue, when academic writing is constructed within institutional and departmental frameworks, as in this study, students are able to learn the rules, for instance about plagiarism, referencing, essay structure, as part of the of the discourse.

8.6 Supporting integrated literacy practices through an academic literacies framework approach

The strength of taking an academic literacies approach resides in its emphasis on the integration of literacy practices. Lea (2006) argues that this allows a more complex and contested interpretation of resources than a disaggregated approach which separates the literacy practices associated with student writing. Whilst explicating literacy practices for academic writing, a tutor, assuming an academic literacies approach, also challenges implicit assumptions about what constitutes valid knowledge within a particular context and relationships of authority that exist around the communication of these assumptions. Laurillard (1993) contends that a student brings previously constructed cognitive maps of how to undertake the required work to each new learning situation. Therefore the challenge by tutors, of implicit

learner assumptions of what is valid knowledge within a given context, as described by Lea and Street (1998) and Street (2009), becomes particularly important. If, as indicated in the evidence in chapter six, the students' cognitive maps for literacy practices differ from the tutors' preferred practices for academic study and writing, previously constructed maps must be challenged as early as possible; and as Gourlay (2009) argues, not as a deficit issue, but as a normal transition into academic study and writing. This challenging can be done in a variety of ways including online. In this study, the on-line discussion forum was identified as important by all the participants. As shown in section 7.2, through connecting all three sets of analysis (the three sequential essay submissions, participants' accounts and the temporal coding) it was possible to identify the on-line discussion forum used in the second task as a key catalyst for participant engagement.

The evidence presented in section 7.3.1 shows support for Richardson et al's (2012) and Wilson et al's (2014) arguments that students learn new academic study practices whilst simultaneously acquiring new social skills and adapting to their role as an independent learner. Participants' descriptions presented at 6.1 shows the anxiety associated with all these changes and how the participants in this study met this challenge. However, Dressel et al's (2015) observation that currently little is known about what is required to enable students to be successful in undertaking self-regulated learning is challenged by these findings. Participants in this study clearly place emphasis on support from tutors and peers through the on-line forum; and the dedicated on-line materials. The evidence presented in Figure 7-3 shows participants engaging with the tutor preferred literacy practices following support. The design frame carefully timed the on-line forum and materials to ensure support was available to direct and guide development of different literacy practices at specific points during transitions. Moreover, in this study tutors were responding to the learning needs of the individual whilst also directing and leading the collective dialogue around all of the literacy practices being used. In contrast to their initial tendency to seek support from external sources, by the final written essay all participants were seeking supports from the on-line arena.

As shown in chapter four, in this literacy intervention, participants were required to participate on-line through portfolio assessments combined with tutor monitoring and follow-up of participant engagement in seminars and on-line discussions. Here, on-line participation was explicitly integrated into the assessment strategy in line with the view of Sheely et al (2001) and Krause and McEwen (2009), who suggest that in blended environments the on-line aspect needs to be fully integrated into the curriculum. The integration of an ipsative assessment approach ensured draft participant work was presented on-line or in a seminar, where preferred literacy practices were identified and direction provided to the appropriate interactive on-line materials. Additionally, as evidence in 6.3 and 6.4 shows, the use of ipsative feedback allowed trial and error without penalty, whilst tutor support influenced participants' transitions; resulting in evidence of changed literacy practices for academic study and writing. Thus, as suggested by Hughes (2011), in this study, ipsative feedback signalled to students that learning occurs in stages.

The findings in section 6.4 indicate that a development of participants' use of citations and referencing emerged over the course of the literacy intervention, therefore also supporting original suggestions in the literature that support can enhance learning and improve retention during periods of transition (Gardner, Siegel, & Cutright 2001; Schnell, Louis, & Doetkott 2003; Lovitts 2005; Auburn 2007; Skyrme 2007). What becomes clear from the evidence in this study is the intervention allows continuous, and specific, feedback during points of tutor created transition. Through continuously linking all the tutor preferred literacy practices to each other, learners are guided and supported into particular discipline academic study and writing. The findings of this study show how, through an academic literacies approach that supports and integrates literacy practices, participant fears and anxieties were anticipated, deliberate points of transition created, and learner engagement with the tutor preferred literacy practices was enhanced. Thus given the representative nature of the participants as widening participation students a wide range of learner levels and abilities were supported, meeting the more diverse needs identified by Hussey & Smith (2010).

Whilst Tapp (2015) asserts that some learners are entering university without understanding what is required of them in terms of academic study and in particular academic writing, in this study the findings show all the participants entered university without understanding what was required for academic study and writing. Successive government policy documents (see chapter two), state that widening participation is about enhancing opportunity, yet the literature, and findings from this study, continue to highlight that some widening participation students are at risk. As a result of weak literacy practices for academic study and writing, the current reality for students such as the ones in this study is not only the possibility of failure, but failure with a large debt.

Summary

It has been argued that through a pedagogic design frame that assumes an academic literacies approach and creates transitions supported by ipsative feedback, it is possible to direct and support participant development towards the tutor preferred literacy practices for academic study and writing. This is important, as students from lower socio-economic backgrounds have been identified as at greater risk in terms of progression and achievement. Chapter eight has discussed findings from the empirical work and shown how they have contributed to the literature. These contributions were presented under the thematic headings of; progression and attainment; influencing transitions; supports for literacy; support through feedback and assessment and supporting integrated literacy practices through a blended approach.

Whilst previous studies suggest the university has a limited capacity to influence tricky transitional spaces, citing family and friends as having a greater persuasion power, findings of this study indicate a contrary position. When tutors create transition points, the university does have a measure of influence to support the betwixt or tricky transitional space of entering academic study and writing. As shown in chapters six and seven, through creating multiple experiences of using different literacy practices whilst developing a piece of academic writing within their discipline, participants were encouraged to have exploratory transitional experiences. It is

contended that points of possible influence, created by tutors, allow tutors to recognise and respond to the diversity of the different literacy practices used by participants as presented through the formative activities. The use of ipsative assessment, also built into the design of the literacy intervention, promoted multiple dialogues around those literacy practice experiences. These dialogues were successfully used to engender the tutor preferred literacy practices for academic study and writing.

Chapter nine concludes this thesis with a summary of findings, limitations and implications for the field.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Following the previous discussion chapter of findings of the documentary and dimensional analysis in relation to the literature contributions in chapters 2 and 3, this chapter presents concluding remarks and implications of the study. I also consider limitations of the work and possible future directions of literacy practices to support learners in transition.

9.1 Summary of Findings

This research set out to explore literacy experiences of novice undergraduates as they made their transition into Higher Education study, and in particular academic writing. The theoretical and methodological interests outlined in chapters two and three formed the basis of the enquiry, resulting in the following questions:

1. *What is the UK policy context of literacies?*

2. *What history of research into literacies informs current practice?*

3. *How can we study novice undergraduates' experiences?*

4. *What can we learn from the study about non-traditionally qualified novice undergraduates' use of literacy practices as they make the transition into academic study and writing?*

5. *Do structured literacy activities benefit learners?*

The research questions were designed to establish a policy context and history of literacy practices to enable a background to an exploration of current literacy experiences of learners. With respect to question one the literature review in chapters two established the policy context:

9.2 What is the UK policy context of literacies?

In chapter 2, the policies shaping current literacy practice were traced back to the Robbins report. This, and successive policies, changed the profile of participation in Higher Education, which in turn created new support needs. Research into progression and retention of students in higher education suggests that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more at risk on non-progression or lower attainment. This was deemed to be the case for a variety of socio-economic and cultural reasons resulting in a lack of academic preparedness. This in turn impacts adversely on the ability of learners to make a successful transition into higher education study. Research indicates that widening participation students in particular require support to make the transition into higher education.

9.3 What history of research into literacies informs current practice?

Question two was addressed in chapter three where the history of literacy practices was examined. In response to the changing needs of students universities started to research and develop best practice initiatives to support the transition process into higher education, thereby improving retention and progression rates. These initiatives were broad ranging and covered all aspects of support in terms of its functions such as e.g. study skills, induction days, library support, changing teaching, learning and assessment approaches. Higher education initiatives designed for supporting learners clustered around three broad approaches. Firstly, stand-alone, centralised services that arose from a deficit model response. Literacy practices were segregated and perceived as being a bolt-on study skills support that could be learnt if required to support a lack or deficit in student ability. Various models for information literacies were also proposed ranging from assessed stand-alone information literacy skills session, through to an embedded skills model delivered as part of the curriculum.

Secondly, the academic socialization model contends that the frame of reference is in fact harder for the learner to grasp than the actual substance of what has been said in the discipline. The primary manner in which a

student will acquire a frame of reference for their discourse is to participate within the discourse. Students find this difficult as they have no frame of reference. Thirdly, the academic literacies model argues for the integration of literacy practices and suggests a more complex and contested interpretation in which the processes of student writing and tutor feedback are defined through implicit assumptions about what constitutes valid knowledge within a particular context, and the relationships of authority that exist around the communication of these assumptions. However, the academic literacies model did not explicate the role of information literacies and this area developed as a parallel central service supported by librarians.

Researches into the experiences of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds continue to suggest that they are at risk of poor progression and attainment. Further research suggests that students can encounter particular tricky transitions or betwixt spaces around discourse studies, that may be epistemological blockages that don't permit a new way of seeing things. It has been contended that it is difficult for universities to have influence in this transition space as family and friends often are the source of support at this time. It has also been suggested that these transitions should be seen as normal rites of passage into higher education and supported appropriately.

9.4 How can we study novice undergraduates' experiences?

This research explored novice undergraduates' experiences as they enter university and make transitions into academic writing. Exploring this involved studying novice undergraduates' accounts of using academic literacy practices in various contexts during a literacy intervention. Descriptions of participating in situated, structured activities designed to introduce discipline writing, provide a window into novice learner demonstration of literacy in an academic writing context during transition into their first semester in higher education. A naturalistic interpretative philosophy (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013; pp: 24) was seen as allowing my study to adopt an emergent design (Creswell, 2013; pp: 47) adjusting and refining it as the work developed and as findings emerged they directed the research. From the

outset I knew that I wanted two forms of data as part of the study: learner understanding as expressed by themselves and content analysis of artefacts produced by the learners. Thus, naturalism was selected as my research paradigm. Drawing on the grounded theory tradition, dimensional analysis was used, including a non-standard temporal dimensional analysis. Documentary analysis of participants' transcripts was also used to identify participant use of SCONUL practices.

Chapter 5 described and discussed the methodology used across the research project. It outlined how all data was collected and managed manually by myself. Research choices were examined and established within the context of the research study. The literacy intervention used with the sample participants group was described and points of SCONUL information literacy identified. The process used for documentary and transcript analysis and the stages undertaken for transcript and field memo dimensional analysis was also made explicit. The use and stages of temporal dimensional analysis was also explained and outlined.

9.6 What can we learn from the study about non-traditionally qualified novice undergraduates' use of literacy practices as they make the transition into academic study and writing?

Whilst transitions into literacy practices for academic writing being made by participants were tricky for them, as evidenced by the panic expressed and seeking of external help, the transitions experienced remained at the level identified by Leckie (1996) of finding resources and learning to cite and reference. In the intervention design, literacy practices are not disaggregated and taught individually as digital, study, information and writing skills, as has often been the approach taken by higher education institutions; but treated holistically as all being part of academic writing within the discipline. Participants of this study all had difficult transitions and defaulted to strategies that didn't provide a gateway into successful literacy practices for academic study and writing. 'Fear', specifically of failure in academic assessment, remained constant throughout the study; the 'Fear' experienced was connected to participants' previous learning contexts, being novice

undergraduates with non-traditional qualifications as they entered higher level study. However analysis also illuminated change in participants' understanding of their literacy activities being closely connected to on-line tutor mediated support as part of the structured literacy intervention. Within the literacy intervention, taking Gourlay's (2009) position that betwixt spaces should be treated as normal rites of passage, students are guided and influenced through 'stuck stages' into academic practices.

Following methodological consideration of research question number three I was able to undertake data collection and through analysis I was able to bring insights into question number four. There are five implications from the study about literacy interventions and supporting at risk learners.

This study has shown that experiencing fear and not knowing what was required of them in the academic context was common to all participants. They all indicated an inability to commence the academic task and sought support externally as a strategy to manage this first transition. This transition was not at the level of tricky epistemological transitions, but at the point of entry into literacy practices for academic study and writing. These findings enhance our understanding of challenges experienced by learners at point of entry to academic study with particular reference to support for literacy practices for academic writing.

This study also identified that disaggregated literacy practices support delivered by central services was not utilised by participants. All participants preferred to seek support externally from the course and university support systems. This finding complements those of earlier studies by Palmer et al (2009). The research has also shown that confusion and anxiety outweighed their ability to seek out which central service might meet their learning need. Thus the literature is correct in the identified limitations of stand-alone services for developing literacy practices. However in this instance this contention was not relevant as the level of participant understanding of what was required for the task was limited and they were not in a position to make use of the provision. This research therefore extends our knowledge of

stand-alone services in terms of supporting first year students as they enter academic study.

The evidence of this study indicates that through creating and supporting tricky transitions and betwixt spaces, transitions can be experienced as normal rites of passage by learners. Additionally, in this study all participants were influenced and motivated to engage with the tutor preferred literacy practices for academic study and writing. Therefore contrary to the literature it is possible to influence the betwixt space, or if not an actual betwixt space then a blockage that impedes students' progress towards tricky epistemological discipline transitions.

The findings in this study further enhance our understanding of learner fear and panic by identifying it as being associated with 'not knowing what they do not know'. Further, the empirical findings of this study provide a new understanding of how seeking support externally might be replaced with an engagement with the various elements of the learning environment. The findings of this research also provide insights into the use of iterative ipsative feedback within a blended curriculum design which enhanced progression and achievement, with participants moving from no evident understanding to a weak but engaged understanding of literacy practices for academic study and writing. The present study confirms findings from previous studies on the benefits of the use of formative assessment to enhance learning. These findings also contribute additional evidence that suggests that ipsative assessment may be of particular value as a pedagogic approach for supporting students grappling with tricky transitions.

The most obvious finding to emerge from the analysis is that contrary to the literature the tutors, through use of curriculum design, can create transition points to appropriately support the learner experience. In particular, the on-line forum and materials to support iterative ipsative feedback permitted tutor influence at tricky points of participant transition.

The above five implications show that participants, all of whom would normally fall into the lower socio-economic group identified as at greater risk, were able to negotiate the tricky transition of entering into the tutor preferred

literacy practices for academic study and writing. This was through a literacy intervention that used iterative formative feedback at each created transition point. Whilst providing feedback on assessment is usual, this feedback was different in its approach in so far as it was provided during the production of written pieces, not after and was in relation to misconceptions identified in literacy practices for academic study and writing. Further feedback was provided to individuals but within a supported collective all working towards the production of an extended written piece of work.

9.7 Implications

What are the implications for practice?

This research has several practical implications, in particular for first year tutors, library managers and educational developers, which will be considered in the following sections.

Firstly, for first year tutors and curriculum design teams, it points to the potential to create and appropriately support early stage transitions. Earlier research has shown the importance of situating literacy practices that address understanding and participating in disciplinary discourses. Secondly, the work of Lea (2004) in particular, which emphasised the importance of academic literacies being developed as a design frame focusing on pedagogy, was used as a foundation for the literacy intervention. It is recommended that first year tutors consider literacy interventions within the context of Academic Literacies, as indicated by the work of Street & Lea (1998), to ensure learners are encouraged to enter discipline conversations once the initial literacy practices have been acquired.

This PhD study has examined learners as they engage with higher education literacy practices for the first time, and identified the fear and confusion experienced around literacy practices. It also identifies the impact of tutor created transitions, as evidenced by behaviour changes. It is therefore recommended that first year tutors creating transitional activities at the commencement of study that encourage early identification of and intervention in learner fear and misconceptions (or possibly, as in this study,

a complete lack of conceptions) of literacy practices by the tutor and the learner. Whilst it could be also argued that any first assessment serves to create transitions, the difference in this case is the iterative ipsative approach to developing literacy practices for and within academic study and writing. The individual produces their own short written pieces, but presents twice weekly within a collective forum where they receive formative tutor and peer feedback, and where the focus is on identifying how to improve the literacy practices used in the current piece. Through interactive materials and discussion forums, tutors are able to monitor further iterations of participant action and new attempts following this initial identification of issues and intervention. The success of this in changing behaviours documented in this study indicates that first year tutors should consider the role of ipsative assessment as a key component of their curriculum design approach.

In contrast to previous scholarship (Palmer et Al, 2009), this study's findings show that tutors, through literacy intervention, are able to influence students whilst they inhabit the 'betwixt spaces' of academic study and writing transition and act as guides through activities designed to develop multiple literacy practices. Participants in this study demonstrated a lack of knowledge of information literacy, and this precluded them from successfully participating within discipline studies. Therefore, whether or not previous literature has positioned information literacy as a transition or betwixt space, it was experienced as a point of transition to academic study and writing by the participants in this study. This intervention approach is unusual in that the information practices are identified and practiced as part of a holistic curriculum. These results suggest that educational developers working with tutors should emphasise curriculum design approaches that create transitions and support literacy practices by allowing learners to take small steps, fail and try again before being formally assessed. This approach will reduce student fears associated with academic study and writing, will help to manage risks around attainment and progression, and through this, enhance learner confidence.

Additionally, the blended support and iterative nature of the literacy intervention was identified by participants as providing appropriate and

always available specialist support at a point of need identified by the individual.

A combination of formative, ipsative and summative assessment proved effective. Unlike more commonly used assessment strategies where there is a passage of time between producing the written artefact and receiving feedback, this intervention was designed to provide immediate feedback on the practices being used, and allowed further attempts to be undertaken without penalty. This study has raised important questions about the role of ipsative assessment strategies for supporting literacy practices development, in relation to progression and attainment, which in turn raises equally important questions around institutional policies and strategies for learning and assessment. Therefore a further implication of the study for both first year tutors and educational developers is that assessment strategies should be developed that allow repeated attempts at the same activity and an opportunity to reflect on literacy practices through ipsative feedback in a tutor mediated and supported environment. Further work may be required to evaluate the wider efficacy of this approach.

Overall, this study strengthens the arguments of Jacklin and Le Riche (2009) that central services provided to support widening participation students may need to be rethought. These services were not engaged with until the literacy intervention directed the learners towards them. An implication of this is that stand-alone services should not be perceived either as a response to a deficit or as separate from course provision. Ideally, they should be experienced by learners as part of an interconnected and interdependent environment that is flexible and responsive to their emerging individual literacy practices. Therefore it is recommended that library teams continue their attempts to engage with first year tutors and be recognised as an integral part of curriculum development teams. This in turn suggests that institutional policies and strategies should be created that enable professional development for staff so that they are able to support learners' literacy practices. These institutional policies and strategies should not be restricted to academic tutors, but seen as a relevant for all staff involved in the development of academic study and writing, particularly with point of entry learners.

Building on the existing practices of higher education, and by aligning cross-institutional support for literacy practices as part of regular curriculum development activities individuals are supported into academic writing. Through literacy intervention rites of academic passage and tricky transitions can be supported by experienced tutors acting as guides as discourses develop.

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9.8 Limitations

This was a qualitative study carried out across six participants which produced rich and interesting data, however six is nevertheless a small sample size. Justification for this is the need to have participants drawn from the same student cohort in the first semester of study, with similar qualifications and who had experienced the same literacy intervention. Additionally although there was gender representation within the sample group in terms of diversity ethnic minority part-time and international students were not represented. This diversity limitation was the result of selecting a full time cohort and allowing participants to self-select for the study. Implications from this limitation might be that other studies situated in different disciplines and with different modes of study might provide different insights that would further inform new ways of understanding student transitions and supporting literacy practices with the most vulnerable learners. A further possible limitation of the self-selecting method is that the decision to participate in the study by these respondents may reflect some inherent bias in the participants. For instance they may have been motivated and naturally high achievers, or anxious and under-achievers. Whilst this was possible, longitudinal tracking of the respondents through their studies showed an

even distribution of 1ˢᵗ Class Honours, 2:1 and 3ʳᵈ classifications, which suggests the sample represents the diversity of the cohort academically.

A further possible limitation was the single institution approach. Specificity of institution means that the cultural influences of one institution are dominant. For instance, a sample drawn from across different institutions might reveal a different use of centralised services by participants. However, as the research was exploratory and required certain general criteria the decision to use a single institution that met the general criteria and with access possible determined the choice.

These limitations might suggest that the generalizability of the findings across institutions is limited. However, the research has demonstrated that these learners appeared unaware in terms information literacy of what was required to join a discipline conversation within an academic literacies understanding. Given that these learners were representative of the diversity of learners within a particular widening participation cohort, similar experiences might well arise in other institutions, especially – but not exclusively – where widening participation is a priority.
 The breadth of degree classifications shown in the longitudinal view of the respondents suggests learners' lack of awareness that they were joining a disciplinary conversation in which writing is form of contested meaning making may well extend across a broader range of learners. Exploring the prevalence of this lack of awareness would be a fruitful area of future research.

Limitations of dimensional analysis emerged during the process of the study itself. Dimensional analysis itself didn't reveal the developmental nature of the participants' use of information literacy practices or the move from seeking support externally to seeking support within the tutor led learning environment. As an overarching naturalistic methodology had been selected and dimensional analysis formed part of a number of tools of analysis, it was possible to extend the dimensional analysis to include a temporal aspect which permitted a more complete picture to emerge.

9.9 Suggestions for further research

This PhD study explored novice undergraduates' accounts of using academic literacy practices in various contexts during a literacy intervention with a specific interest in understanding student transitionary activities. The design of the literacy intervention itself was not part of the study so participants' experiences pertaining to particular aspects that might have been most helpful to students at points of betwixt spaces have not been isolated. It is suggested that the reasons why some aspects were useful, e.g. exploring students' experiences of the on-line discussion forum in supporting literacy development, could be fruitful future research. A temporal analysis of the impact of on-line discussion forums and dedicated on-line resources in terms of supporting individual literacy transitions in the context of collective discussions is an area that would be particularly pertinent.

Additionally studies such as the one described above in the use of literacy interventions designed to create and manage transitions into academic study through collective activities and discussion could usefully contribute to the discussion around managing large cohorts successfully in a continuing resource constrained environment.

9.10 Thesis summary

This PhD has contributed to the ongoing discussion of how to support first year progression and achievement. It has used a theoretical and methodological base to explore students' experiences of literacy practices on entering their first year of studies. It has brought together theory from literacy practices and transitionary support practice with methodological analytic approaches in attempting to understand how learners experience both simultaneously, thus adding to the existing knowledge base in both areas.

Relying on learners to identify their literacy practice needs and where they might obtain the required support whilst in a state of fear and anxiety is compounding the progression and achievement risk already identified for certain groups of students. Therefore for institutions and practitioners seeking to develop pedagogies which mediate fear and anxiety associated with first assignments and support learners through early transitional stages this research supports a framework which draws together curriculum design

approaches to stabilise and manage learner fear and anxiety whilst developing foundational literacy practices.

This PhD therefore provides a complementary perspective to other research approaches of literacy practices curriculum design and provides an alternative way for practitioners to meet an identified yet complex need of supporting fearful and anxious learners at points of transition.

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Chapter 10: References

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Chapter 11: Appendices

<div align="right">Appendix One</div>

Institute of Education, University of London

Ethics Approval for Doctoral Student Research Projects: Data Sheet

Please read the notes before completing the form

Project title	The roles of digital information literacies in a widening participation context		
Student name	Caroline Collier		
Supervisor	Dr Martin Oliver		
Advisory Committee members	Dr Niall Winters Dr Kaska Porayska-Pomsta		
Department	LKL	Faculty	
Intended start date of data collection	25th January 2012		
Funder	Self		
Professional Ethics code used	BERA		

Has this project been considered by another (external) Research Ethics Committee?

If your research is based in another institution then you may be required to submit your research to that institution's ethics review process. If your research involves patients or staff recruited through the NHS then you will need to apply for ethics approval through an NHS Local Research Ethics Committee. In either of these cases, you don't need ethics approval from the Institute of Education. If you have gained ethics approval elsewhere, please detail it here:

No

Research participants

Does the research involve human participants?

X Yes, as a primary source of data *(e.g. through interviews)*

Yes, as a secondary source of data (e.g. using existing data sets)

No *Please explain____*

_____

If the research involves human participants, who are they? (tick all that apply)

Early years/pre-school   X Adults *please describe them below*

School-aged children	1st year undergraduates on a BA Business Studies Course of study
Young people aged 17-18	
Unknown	

Research methods to be used (tick all that apply – this information will be recorded on a database of the types of work being presented to Ethics Committees)

X Interviews   Systematic review

X Focus groups   X Experimental research or intervention

X Questionnaire   X Literature review

X Action research   Use of personal records

X Observation

X Other

Stimulated recall interviews

Institute of Education, University of London

Ethics Approval for Doctoral Student Research Projects:

Planned Research and Ethical Considerations

1. Summary of planned research (please indicate the purpose of the research, its aims, main research questions, and research design. It's expected that this will take approx. 200–300 words, though you may write more if you feel it is necessary)

Purpose and Aim of the research:

Underpinning the widening participation agenda in the UK HE sector is an assumption that non-traditional entrants can be supported into acquiring information literacy skills required to participate in degree level study. More recent discussion has moved to include digital literacy within information literacy discourses. Within a contested arena of literacy definitions it is possible to identify an area of agreement in support of the assumption that if an appropriate intervention is made to assist an individual in information literacy acquisition they will be able to participate in degree level education as preparation for participation in the knowledge economy. The SCONUL Seven Pillars Core Model (1999 and 2011) and Bruce's (2006) '*Six Frames for Information Literacy'* in particular propose approaches and models to support literacy acquisition. Thus, the argument appears to be: if models and approaches advocated are used as an intervention it could be expected that following an intervention learners will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and an ability to deploy information literacy skills in various contexts as defined by literacy discourses.

Therefore the main aim of the work is to explore current digital information literacy experiences of students in a widening participation institution.

Research questions:

The proposed research will address the following linked research questions:

Do literacy interventions prepare for participation in Higher Education?

1. Where digital information literacy is built into a 1st year undergraduate course, residing in a widening participation institution, are learners able to demonstrate an ability to deploy digital information literacy skills for participation in Higher Education undergraduate study?

2. What is the nature of learner understanding of the role of digital information literacy in Higher Education undergraduate study?

Methods and approaches:

The methods will include interviews with use of stimulated recall to focus and elicit students understanding and use of digital information literacy skills.

2. Specific ethical issues

(Outline the main ethical issues which may arise in the course of this research, and how they will be addressed. It's expected that this will require approx. 200–300 words, though you may write more if you feel it is necessary. You will find information in the notes about answering this question)

Question 1: Summary of research

Please see above summary of planned research

Question 2: Specific ethical issues

Further information about who I intend to collect data from and how. Students from a 1st year BA Business Studies course at West London Business School, University of West London. Participants will be observed undertaking literacy activities and interviewed. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed.

Researcher/Participant relationship:

The researcher will have been tutoring this particular cohort for the semester preceding the research stimulated recall activity. Contact with the students to request participation will not be made until after marking of assignment work has been completed and returned to ensure no conflict of interest for any parties.

Who will benefit from this research? The research will mainly help students in future years in the acquisition of digital information literacy skills for learning.

What are the risks to research participants? It is considered that the risks are minimal. Some participants might understand digital literacies in a different way as a result of the activity and interview; they may experience some cognitive dissonance. They will be able to contact me to discuss any issues arising. This is described on page three of the participant consent form as follows:

'*As a result of our conversation you might review your skills for learning. If changing your learning skill approach would be beneficial I would suggest this to you after our conversation. You are encouraged to contact me to discuss your thoughts or for information about tutorial support.'*

How will participants benefit, now or in the future? Participants will have an opportunity to consolidate their understanding and deployment of digital information Literacy skills through the activity and interview. Serious misconceptions in skill deployment will be identified by the researcher and participants will be offered an

opportunity to attend additional learning support sessions following their participation in the research project.

How will I inform participants about the research? Purposeful sampling will be used. Possible participants will be contacted through the University of West London's Virtual Learning Environment and invited to contact me. If contacted I shall provide a copy of the attached leaflet. They will be invited to come and meet with me to discuss their involvement in the project.

How will you gain their informed consent to participate? During our meeting I will seek to ensure that prospective participants fully understand what 'voluntary informed consent' is and clarify the purpose of the research and how I will use the information gathered. I will also ensure they know that they can withdraw at any time from the study. I will ask them to read and sign a consent form (copy attached) to indicate their agreement.

I have already gained consent from the West London Business School, Head of School to undertake the research activity as outlined here.

Financial Incentives: There will be no offer to participants of financial incentives (e.g. shopping vouchers, entry in a prize draw) to take part in the research. I will meet participants' travel costs as required to enable them to take part in the research.

The collection of sensitive' data as defined under the Data Protection Act 1998 will be confined to essential demographic information; e.g. ethnic origin, gender, age. Participants will be given pseudonyms before any information is collected. Pseudonyms will be used throughout and confidentiality of materials not already in the public domain will be guaranteed. The original materials will be retained in a secure place and will not be made available to any others.

Participants will be sent a brief overview of the findings in September 2012. If requested on their 'Participant Consent' (see attached) form they will also be sent PDF copies of conference papers and final PhD submission.

3. Attachments

Please attach the following items to this form:

Approval letter from external Research Ethics Committee,

If applicable Information sheets and other materials to be used to inform potential participants about the research.

4. Declaration

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge this is a full description of the ethics issues that may arise in the course of this project			
Signed		Date	

Department Use

Date decision was made:

      Approved and reported to FREC

      Referred back to applicant and supervisor

      Referred on to FREC

Signature of Supervisor: …………………………………

Signature of Advisory Committee member: …………………….............
Note for reviewers: If you feel that a project raises particularly challenging ethics issues, or that a more detailed review would be appropriate, you may refer the application to the Research Ethics Coordinator so that it can be submitted to the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) for consideration. FREC Chairs, FREC representatives in your department and the research ethics coordinator can all advise you informally, either (a) to support your review process, or (b) to help you decide whether an application should be referred to the FREC.

Prompt/Memo Sheet

Participant: 000

Who are you?
Gender -   Age –   *Could you tell me about*   **Demographics**:   Where did you spend your first 0-18 years?   Country –   Urban/rural   School –
Parental background :   Did your parents go to Higher or Further education/professional training?   What was/is your father's work?   What was/is your mother's work?   Siblings?   Where are you in the order?   When you spent time together as a family what did you do?   How would you describe your socio-economic position?

Language (cultural and foreign):

What language do you speak with your family?

What language did you speak at school?

Describe the aspect of school you enjoyed the most to me –

Describe the aspect of school you least enjoyed the most to me –

What do you do in your free time?

What can the students explain about using digital information literacy?

Can you explain how you tackled the first task (writing the reflective essay)?

Can you explain why you tackled the task that particular way?

Now how do you think you ought to have tackled the task?

Can you describe the literacy development activities you participated in and any changes in your literacy habits as a result?

Anything else you can tell me about your digital and information literacy habits that you think might help us to understand how people can learn how to engage effectively with digital literacies.

Participant Information Sheet

Page 1

The roles of digital information literacies in a widening participation context

A research project

January 2010 – January 2014

Information for West London Business School Students

Please will you help with my research?

My name is Caroline Collier and I am an MPhil/|PhD Candidate at the London Knowledge Lab, Faculty of Children & Learning, and Institute of Education

This leaflet tells you about my research. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Why is this research being done?

This research is being done to help inform sector understanding of current digital information literacy experiences of students in a widening participation institution. Specifically I am interested in whether digital literacy interventions prepare learners for participation in Higher Education?

Page 2

Who will be in the project?

Students from the 1st year BA Business Studies course at West London Business School, University of West London. You may know some of the other people taking part from being on the module with them.

What will happen during the research?

I would like to observe your literacy activities and interview you about them. The interview will be recorded and transcribed. I will use the information gathered from our session to build a picture of how students use digital information literacy skills.

This picture will form part of my PhD submission and may also form the basis of journal articles or conference presentations which will be read by colleagues and people who work in the Higher Education community.

What questions will be asked?

Questions around digital literacy themes will be explored during the activity and interviews. These themes will include such topics as literature searching; accessing and retrieving information; recording information and using information.

What will happen to you if you take part?

If you agree, you will be asked about your use of digital literacy skills. We will talk about what, how and why you tackled activities in the way you did. I will record our conversation and transcribe it at a later date.

Page 3

Will doing the research help you?

The research will mainly collect ideas to help students in future years in the acquisition of skills for learning. As a result of our conversation you might review your skills for learning. If changing your learning skill approach would be beneficial I would suggest this to you after our conversation. You are encouraged to contact me to discuss your thoughts or for information about tutorial support.

Could there be problems for you if you take part?

It is not expected that you will experience any problems; however, if you want to stop any activity or talking, we will stop.

If you have any problems with the project, please tell me or my research supervisor: Dr Martin Oliver; London Knowledge Lab, Faculty of Children & Learning, Institute of Education, M.Oliver@ioe.ac.uk

Who will know that you have been in the research?

I will know and you will know. Participants will be given pseudonyms before any information is collected. Pseudonyms will be used throughout and confidentiality of materials not already in the public domain will be guaranteed. The original materials will be retained in a secure place and will not be made available to any others.

Page 4

Do you have to take part?

You decide if you want to take part and, even if you say 'yes', you can drop out at any time or say that you don't want to answer some questions.

You can tell me that you will take part by arranging to meet with me to discuss your involvement and signing the consent form.

Will you know about the research results?

I will send you a short report by September 2012. I will also send you a copy of any conference papers and the final reports if you would like me to.

Who is funding the research?

I am funding the research

The project has been reviewed by the Faculty of Children & Learning, Research Ethics Committee, [project no., 4, 01.01.2012].

Thank you for reading this leaflet.

Caroline Collier, University of West London A 300

St Mary's Rd Campus Ealing W55RF

Lyn.greaves@uwl.ac.uk

Participant Consent form for:

The roles of digital information literacies in a widening participation context

January 2010 – January 2014

Researcher: Lyn Greaves, University of West London A 300 St Mary's Rd Campus Ealing W55RF

Lyn.greaves@uwl.ac.uk

I have read the information leaflet about the research, discussed what will take place and understand how my information will be used

 (please tick)

I will allow the researcher to observe my digital literacy activities and agree to be interviewed. I understand the interview will be recorded and transcribed and used in papers

 (please tick)

I would like to be sent details of reports and publications   No   Yes

Name   _____

Signed   date

_____   _____

 Researcher's name

_____

Signed   date

Appendix 6

Mr Andreas Kyriacou,

Head of School

West London Business School

University of West London

St Mary's Rd

London W55RF

21st/12/2011

<u>To Whom It May Concern</u>

This is to confirm that Caroline Collier has my full support to undertake research activities regarding her explorations in her topic 'Do literacy interventions prepare for participation in Higher Education?' as part of her studies with the Institute of Education.

I have discussed the ethics of her work with her and am confident that she has fully explored and thought about the issues and am confident that she will be working within the BERA guidelines.

Regards

Andreas Kyriacou

Head of School

West London Business School

Ethical Considerations Submitted for review:

Further information about who I intend to collect data from and how. Students from a 1st year BA Business Studies course at West London Business School, University of West London. Participants will be observed undertaking literacy activities and interviewed. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed.

Researcher/Participant relationship:

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How will participants benefit, now or in the future? Participants will have an opportunity to consolidate their understanding and deployment of digital information Literacy skills through the activity and interview. Serious misconceptions in skill deployment will be identified by the researcher and participants will be offered an opportunity to attend additional learning support sessions following their participation in the research project.

How will I inform participants about the research? Purposeful sampling will be used. Possible participants will be contacted through the University of West London's Virtual Learning Environment and invited to contact me. If contacted I shall provide a copy of the attached leaflet. They will be invited to come and meet with me to discuss their involvement in the project.

How will you gain their informed consent to participate? During our meeting I will seek to ensure that prospective participants fully understand what 'voluntary informed consent' is and clarify the purpose of the research and how I will use the

information gathered. I will also ensure they know that they can withdraw at any time from the study. I will ask them to sign a consent form (copy attached) to indicate their agreement.

I have already gained consent from the West London Business School, Head of School to undertake research activity as outlined here.

Financial Incentives: There will be no offer to participants of financial incentives (e.g. shopping vouchers, entry in a prize draw) to take part in the research. I will meet participants' travel costs as required to enable them to take part in the research.

Appendix 8

Summary of Participants

Home Country	United Kingdom	x 3
	Holland	x 1
	Iran	x 1
	Lithuania	x 1
Age	18 -20	x 4
	21-23	x 2
Gender	Male	x 2
	Female	x 4

Appendix 9
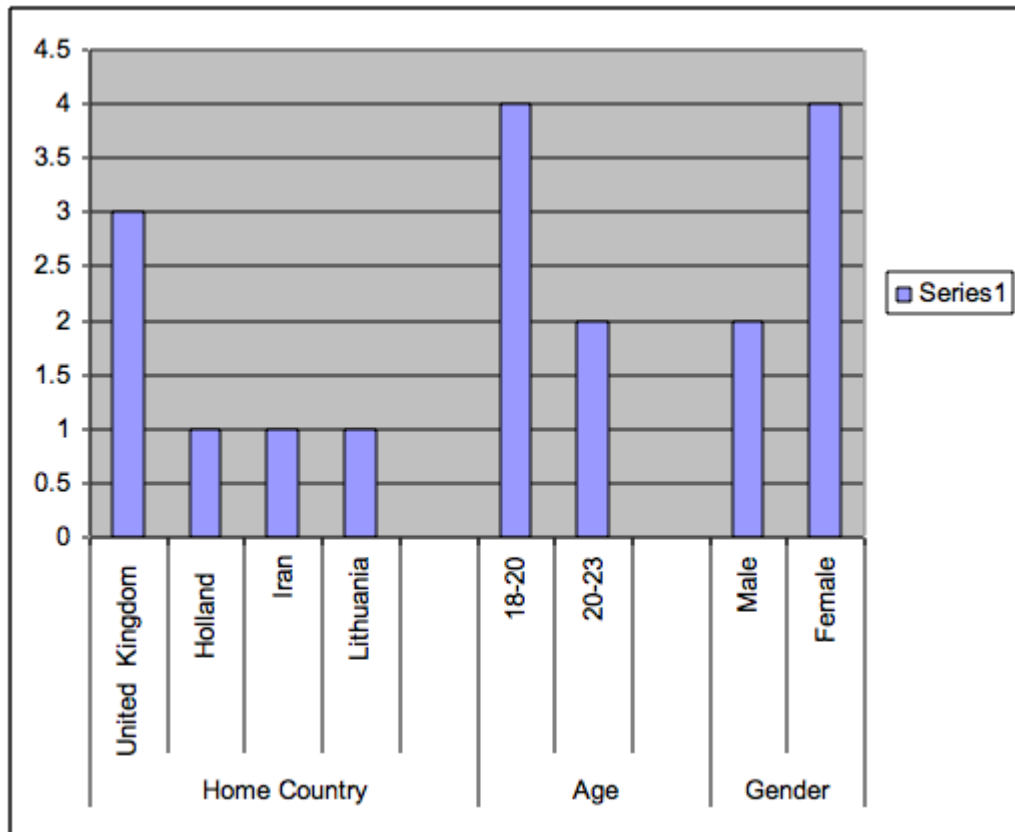
Identifying location for field research (information derived from HEI website 2011)

Post 92 Institution	Support statement indicated on Website	SCONUL member
Brunel University	No comments made about support – emphasis placed on research led nature of provision	Yes
Kingston University	'Many courses at Kingston University are vocational. This means that they are designed to prepare you for your chosen career by providing you with work-related skills'.	Yes
London South Bank	'All courses are accredited or developed in association with leading professional bodies. Strong links with employers ensure that our courses equip students with the skills they need to succeed in their career'.	Yes
London Metropolitan University	No comments made about support – emphasis placed on interaction between students and staff	Yes
Middlesex University	No comments made about support – emphasis placed on facilities for students	Yes
University of East London	No comments made about support – emphasis placed on facilities for students	Yes
University of Greenwich	No comments made about support – emphasis placed on facilities for students	Yes
University of West London	'The university places strong emphasis on high-quality teaching and practical skills to help you in the workplace.'	Yes
University of Westminster	'Outstanding teaching staff places as much emphasis on gaining skills relevant to the workplace as on learning the academic discipline you are studying'.	Yes

Appendix 10

Detail of Literacy Intervention for tutor and student at module level

Student Learning Hours: 200

Tutor contact hours: 42

Independent Learning Hours: 158

Module Learning Outcomes:

1. Organise, structure and present information in a logical and coherent manner

2. Identify and select resources appropriate to a given subject

3. Deploy resources appropriately, cite sources and use Harvard referencing correctly

4. Identify arguments and form an evidence-based view on a given topic

5. Give an account of examples of history, philosophy and ethics of your subject domain

6. Participate actively in employability activities during and after your degree using an ePortfolio for Personal and Professional Development Planning

7. Understand the role of active citizenship participation

Overview

Week	Lecture	On-line discussion	Seminar
1.	Introduce essay writing and academic study. Set first essay.	Getting to know each other. How will I tackle this task?	Dedicated Library induction with library staff
2.	Time-line and subject discipline provenance.	Explanations of authors and theories discovered for timeline.	Review of first essay submitted (1000 word essay). Presentation of artefacts, evidencing use of the full extent of the library resources.

3..	Introduce citations and referencing in context of essays and set key word search task.	How to use the full extent of the library resources.	Role play of timeline
4.	Essay planning.	How to tackle the essay.	Presentation of essay plan, justification of scoping, key words and resources identified, retrieved and selected.
5 - 8	Argument development in others' work and own essays	Argument development in 'my' essay and use of resources.	Draft essay reviewed with highlighter exercise prior to submission.
9 - 11	Employability activities (e.g. portfolios/CV/Group work).	Employability activities (e.g. portfolios/CV/interview preparation).	Other activities (e.g. portfolios/CV/working in groups/interview preparation).
12-13	Consolidation of all literacy activities	Review of literacy practices and academic writing	Draft essay reviewed with highlighter exercise and misconceptions identified.
14 & 15	Meeting with tutor as required	NA	Submission of final portfolio

Detailed outline of 14 weeks

	Week One	Week Two	Week Three	Week Four
Tutor Activity	Target and Expectation Setting Set 1st Essay title Introduction of ePortfolio	First colour coding activity (Green) Introduce concept of Subject discipline Timeline and Literature searching *Identifying at risk students through on-line tools and supporting*	Correct misconceptions regarding subject discipline timeline and literature searching Introduce concept and purpose of précis of an argument	Second colour coding activity (Green and Yellow) Correct misconceptions regarding resources/references and discussion about plagiarism What is a theory? Primary and secondary sources discussion Set 2nd essay title First formative assessment point
1 hr Lecture 1hr seminar 1hr e-support	Talking Directing group activity	Talking Directing group activity	Talking Directing group activity	Talking Directing group activity
Students activity during contact		Using their work for the activity to enable formative feedback and development	Using their work for the activity to enable formative feedback and development	Using their work for the activity to enable formative feedback and development
Students Activity and output outside of class contact (7 hours)	Producing a 1,000 word essay on their strengths and weakness using appropriate theoretical model/s Submitting portfolio submissions on-line for formative feedback	Producing timeline for subject area Undertaking literature search on topic given Submitting portfolio submissions on-line for formative feedback	Make good work from last week as required Undertake précis on topic given Submitting portfolio submissions on-line for formative feedback	Make good work as required Producing an essay plan on the title provided using appropriate theoretical model/s Submitting portfolio submissions on-line for formative feedback
Academic literacy practices concept development during independent activity: 7 hours	Information Identification Information retrieval Reading for academic purpose Critical analysis Writing for academic purpose	Information Identification Information retrieval Reading for academic purpose Critical analysis Writing for academic purpose	Information Identification Information retrieval Reading for academic purpose Critical analysis Writing for academic purpose	Information Identification Information retrieval Reading for academic purpose Critical analysis Writing for academic purpose
E-learning support activity	Daily discussion forum RLO Reflective writing	Daily discussion forum Library LO RLO Referencing: Books Journals Websites	Daily discussion forum Library LO RLO Referencing: Books Journals Websites	Daily discussion forum Library LO Essay writing RLO's YouTube 'The Highlighter Exercise' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0X3WE6orEdw

	Week Five	Week Six	Week Seven	Week Eight
Tutor Activity	Third colour coding activity (green/yellow) Correct misconceptions regarding resources/references and discussion about plagiarism Introduce concept of argument development through application of resources	Fourth colour coding activity (green/yellow/pink) Test conceptions regarding resources/references/ plagiarism Test understanding of concept of argument development and evaluation of resources as appropriate *Identifying at risk students through on-line tools and supporting*	Fourth colour coding activity (green/yellow/pink/blue) Test conceptions regarding resources/references/plagiarism Test understanding of concept of argument development through effective use of resources Introduce concept of argument development and contra position through effective application of resources	Fourth colour coding activity (green/yellow/pink/blue) Test conceptions regarding resources/references/plagiarism Test understanding of concept of argument development through effective use of resources Test concept of argument development and contra position through effective application of resources Introduce concept of study design
In-put: **1 hr Lecture** **1hr seminar** **1hr e-support**	Talking Directing group activity	Talking Directing group activity	Talking Directing group activity	Talking Directing group activity
Students activity during contact	Using their work for the activity to enable formative feedback and development	Using their work for the activity to enable formative feedback and development	Using their work for the activity to enable formative feedback and development	Using their work for the activity to enable formative feedback and development
Students Activity and output <u>outside</u> of class contact (7 hours)	Make good work as required Re-write essay in light of discussions Submitting portfolio submissions on-line for formative feedback	Make good work as required Producing related essay outputs on the title provided using appropriate theoretical model/s Submitting portfolio submissions on-line for formative feedback	Make good work as required Re-write essay in light of discussions submissions on-line for formative feedback	Make good work as required in light of discussions Prepare a current CV for peer review at the next session Continue draft 1,500 word essay on the title provided using appropriate theoretical model/s
Academic literacy practices concept development during independent activity:	Information Identification Information retrieval Reading for academic purpose Critical analysis Writing for academic purpose	Information Identification Information retrieval/evaluation Reading for academic purpose Critical analysis Writing for academic purpose	Information Identification Information retrieval/evaluation Reading for academic purpose Critical analysis Writing for academic purpose	Information Identification Information retrieval/evaluation Reading for academic purpose Critical analysis Research techniques Writing for academic purpose

| E-learning support activity | Daily discussion forum
Library LO
Essay writing
RLO's
YouTube 'The Highlighter Exercise'
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0X3WE6orEdw | Daily discussion forum
Library LO
Essay writing
RLO's
YouTube 'Constructing an argument'
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUce6GI79g4 | Daily discussion forum
Library LO
Essay writing
RLO's
YouTube 'Constructing an argument'
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUce6GI79g4 | Daily discussion forum
Library LO
Essay writing
RLO's
CV link on BB |

	Week Nine	Week Ten	Week Eleven	Week Thirteen	Week Fourteen
Tutor Activity	Set up group 'Companies' for role play activity Outline task and introduce CV writing and application letters. Introduce the importance of keeping your CV current and valid. The role it plays in communicating your success (or otherwise) to future employers in a competitive world. *Identifying at risk students through on-line tools and supporting*	Facilitate Role play: 'Companies' share job descriptions with other groups/'Companies *Prepare for Role play of employer panel for short listing of candidates based CV's and letters of application.*	Facilitate Role play: 'Companies' interview candidates for internship roles	Consolidation of Personal Development Planning for next stage of learning and tools to continue to support this activity	*Individual meetings with at risk students and support provision*
1 hr Lecture **1hr seminar** **1hr e-support**	Talking Directing group activity	Talking Directing group activity	Talking Directing group activity	Talking Directing group activity *Identifying at risk students through on-line tools and supporting*	Directing individual activity of at risk students
Students activity during contact	Designing of company structure and internship roles available	Using their work for the activity to enable formative feedback and development of applying for jobs	Using their work for the activity to enable formative feedback and development	Using their work for the activity to enable formative feedback and development	Final consideration of portfolios
Students Activity and output outside of class contact (7 hours)	Make good work as required Re-write C.V in light of discussions Set-up company blogs and post available intern jobs Continue draft 1,500 word essay on the title provided using appropriate theoretical model/s	Apply for intern role of other companies and prepare for interview if shortlisted Continue draft 1,500 word essay on the title provided using appropriate theoretical	Make good CV and letters of application as required in the light of feedback submissions on-line for formative feedback Continue draft 1,500 word essay on the title provided using	Complete ePortfolio for final submission paying close attention to the contents page and the criteria for marking	Submit final portfolio

		model/s Finalising portfolio for final formative assessment	appropriate theoretical model/s		
Academic literacy practices concept development during independent activity:	Information Identification Information retrieval/evaluation Reading for academic purpose Critical analysis Research techniques Writing for academic and non-academic purpose	Information Identification Information retrieval/evaluation Reading for academic purpose Critical analysis Research techniques Writing for academic and non-academic purpose	Information Identification Information retrieval/evaluation Reading for academic purpose Critical analysis Research techniques Writing for academic and non-academic purpose	Consolidation of all literacy activities	Consolidation of all literacy activities
E-learning support activity	Daily discussion forum Library LO Essay writing RLO's CV link on BB	Daily discussion forum All on-line materials as required	Daily discussion forum All on-line materials as required	Daily discussion forum All on-line materials as required	Daily discussion forum All on-line materials as required

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