NOTE-MAKING LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Within psychological and educational psychological communities, debates over strategies such as the practice of notemaking tend to focus on memory and/or behaviour change (Buzan, 1989: Buzan 1999). In the Learning Development community such exploration traverses contested terrain. Lea and Street (1998) set the scene with their typology of academic practices that moved from 'study skills' to 'academic literacies'. However, this literature review draws on Bourdieu's theory of 'habitus' and Burr's discussion of social constructionism to explore notemaking as a socio-political activity set within the wider discourse of higher education. At a time when education policy is ever changing, with frequently conflicting outcomes, particular attention is paid to New Labour's policy initiative to Widen Participation, considering the consequences of this policy for non-traditional students, i.e. "students from under-represented groups" (Medway, Rhodes, Macrae, Maguire & Gerwirtz's 2003, p.3). There is consideration of five different types of note-making, including linear, Cornell, mind maps, pattern notes and paragraph patterns, in an attempt to understand the usefulness of different note-making strategies to non-traditional students.

Introduction

Within psychological and educational psychological communities, debates over strategies such as the practice of notemaking tend to centre on memory, i.e. does notemaking improve the recall of significant information? (Buzan 1989; Buzan 1999) and/or behaviour change, i.e. does information in notes appear in assignments and examinations? (Sutherland, Badger and White, 2002). In the Learning Development community (see www.jiscmail.ac.uk/ldhen), exploration of academic practices such as notemaking traverses contested terrain. Lea and Street (1998) set the scene with their typology that moved from 'study skills' (seen as a deficit model, which "suggests that students lack a set of basic skills that can be dealt with primarily in a remedial study skills unit" (ibid, p.170)), through 'academic socialisation' (seen as a more inclusive model, which "is concerned with issues such as student and tutor assumptions and understandings " (ibid, p.170)), to 'academic literacies' (seen as inclusive because it "concerns the implications of modularity, assessment and university procedures on student writing" (ibid, p.170)). This literature review however, explores the practice of notemaking as a socio-political activity set within the wider discourse of higher education (HE); with a special focus on widening participation and issues of access.

Further this paper will discuss different models of note-making and critically explore them as socio-political activities within the current higher education (HE) context. Consideration may be given to examining whether or not note-making 'works', in terms of being used in assignments and/or exams (Sutherland et al, 2002), however this paper, informed by notions of 'habitus' (Bourdieu 1977) and social constructionism (Burr 2003), will set the discussion in the context of the New Labour policy initiative to widen participation in HE to 'non traditional' students, a

term used "as shorthand for students from under-represented groups" (Medway, Rhodes, Macrae, Maguire & Gerwirtz's 2003, p.3). These threads will be linked in an examination of the role that the practice(s) of note-making could play for the non-traditional student, especially how notemaking can play a role in making the student a stakeholder with a voice (Burns et al 2006). Five different types of note-making strategies will be critically examined, including; linear, Cornell, mind maps, pattern notes, and paragraph patterns (Burns & Sinfield, 2004). The discussion will highlight to what extent these differing note-making strategies constitute empowering practice for students. For the purpose of this paper, the term note-making is used to refer to the point where students begin to take ownership of their notes; conversely, the term note-taking refers to students writing what they hear, see or read, either from texts or lectures. Note-taking arguably constitutes the first stage of the notes process, but it should lead onto note-making, the second stage of the process (ibid).

Key theoretical concepts

The key theoretical concept underpinning this paper is Bourdieu's notion of habitus, a complex phenomenon, which according to Reay (2004, p.435), can be "viewed as a complex internalized core from which everyday experiences emanate". To reach this definition, Reay (ibid, p. 432-434) discusses habitus as a multi-faceted concept with four key aspects; habitus as embodiment, habitus and agency, habitus as a complication of collective and individual trajectories and habitus as a complex interplay between past and present. To take each of these in turn, we can see habitus as embodiment "demonstrates the ways in which not only is the body in the social world, but also the ways in which the social world is in the body" (ibid, p.432). Habitus and agency refers to "habitus as potentially generating a wide repertoire of possible actions,

simultaneously enabling the individual to draw on transformative and constraining courses of action" (ibid, p. 433). The idea of habitus as a compilation of collective and individual trajectories considers the role of the individual and society where "a person's individual history is constitutive of habitus, but so also is the whole collective history of family and class that the individual is a member of" (ibid, p.434). Finally, habitus as a complex interplay between past and present "refers to something historical, it is linked to individual history" (Bourdieu, 1990c, p. 86). At this stage Reay's (2004) mapping the field of habitus begins to take shape, and it is possible to see how the concept is useful for describing the way individuals view and experience the world and the effect of internalising discourses about the world. Further, whilst individuals have habitus, so too does collective society, including higher education institutions, which are bound up in and by their habitus. Consequently, factors such as power relations, social class locations and valued forms of knowledge are tightly woven into institutional habitus and is particularly relevant to HE and its changing context. The idea of habitus as an institutional phenomenon will be returned to and elaborated upon below.

Burr's (1995) theoretical work around social constructionism will also inform this paper. Social constructionism, according to Burr (1995, p.2-4), fundamentally requires belief in the following four ideas; "a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge", "historically and cultural specificity", "knowledge is sustained by social processes" where "knowledge and social action go together". These ideas point to the crucial ideology underpinning social constructionism: society is socially constructed through peoples' daily interactions with each other, and these interactions are largely manipulated to maintain the social and economic status quo. As such, social construction is useful to interrogate how note-making is a social activity that is

constructed differently by different people across different times, places and spaces (ibid).

Widening participation

The experiences of the non traditional student, and their attempt to access educational capital (Bourdieu, 1977) provides the impetus for this literature review. The increase of non traditional students' participation in higher education beyond the new universities is partly due to New Labour's policy initiative to widen participation (http://www.dfes.gov.uk/speeches/, March 2007). As a result of this government policy, Learning Development and the highlighting of the role that effective study strategies (of which note-making is arguably a key tool for active and critical engagement) can play for non traditional students have become topical and even controversial; this is contested ground (Jones, Turner and Street, 1999)[1]. A broader range of HE institutions are increasingly actively seeking to enrol larger numbers of those they have historically tended to exclude: the working classes, females, mature students and ethnic minorities (Burns, Sinfield and Holley, 2006). However, it is important to note that some HEI's, especially Polytechnics, have long had access policies. Indeed, from the early 1980's, Further Education (FE) colleges were offering Access courses with links to specific HE establishments. Typically on these Access programmes, 'study skills' (organisation and time management, active/creative notemaking, targeted research and active reading etc.) were universally delivered as empowering tools for the non-traditional student who had to operate within the exclusionary spaces/discourses of HE (ibid). However, the shift in emphasis away from Access programmes as a route in to HE for those traditionally excluded to a government push for Widening Participation across the sector, has arguably reshaped HE, raising questions about what and who

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[1] Study skills/academic literacies debate highlights the shift away from study skills has seen it devalued.

HE is for. That is, it depends on an interrogation of education's role in maintaining the status quo (consolidating inequity between classes and degrees, bolstering economic prosperity with scant regard to individual or class empowerment); similarly we can ask whether changes to education (such as widening participation ostensibly as part of a move to increase social justice) can change the status quo (giving voice, stake and power to those traditionally excluded from those realms). The Former Secretary of State for Education, David Blunkett, explicitly stated that "world class higher education ensures that countries can grow and sustain high-skill businesses, and attract and retain the most highly-skilled people" (http://www.dfes.gov.uk/speeches/, March 2007), suggesting that HE's primary role is to provide a labour force for the global economy.

When New Labour returned to government in 1997, Prime Minster Blair stated that his party's key priority was "education, education, education". As part of this ostensible commitment to education, New Labour "set a target for 50 per cent of the under-30s population to have participated in HE by 2010" (Medway et al, 2003, p.7). This increased provision of higher education is

> "based on the belief that a nation's economic competitiveness can be enhanced if a greater proportion of its population gain the kinds of knowledge, skills and understanding fostered by higher education and a social justice rationale where the concern is to extend the benefits of higher education beyond a middle-class elite" (Woodrow, Foong Lee, McGrane, Osborne, Pudner and Trotman, 1998, p.8).

Whilst some might challenge this purely economic rationale for HE, there is also a need to interrogate what is meant by participation in higher education: does it refer to an academic university education, to an old or new university education, or does it refer to a vocational

collegial education? If widening participation is an attempt to level the playing field between the classes, the type of higher education on offer is significant in a society which places differing values on different subjects. For example, within compulsory schooling, mathematics, science and English command compulsory status, whereas art, textiles, home economics, geography and history command optional status (Barlett, Burton & Peim, 2001) – and in British society academic courses typically have more status than vocational. As Bourdieu and Passeron (1979, p.190) note, education could be "the royal road to the democratisation of culture if it did not consecrate the initial cultural inequalities by ignoring them". Thus, it is arguably crucial that in the process of widening participation, that a two tier system does not emerge, which favours one social group over another and consequently maintains an unequal status quo. However, there is an emerging body of evidence that suggests that the current widening participation policy is in fact creating this two tier system (Thomas, 2001).

Institutional habitus

The desire to fulfil a social justice agenda, where the focus is on distributive, relational and associational justice (Gewirtz, 1998), means that equality of access to higher education is arguably critical. This is particularly pertinent when "73 per cent of young people whose parents are employed in professional occupations currently participate in HE, only 13 per cent of those from unskilled and manual backgrounds do so" (HEFCE, 2002: Lewis, 2002 cited in Medway et al, 2003, p.7). In this context, institutional habitus arises as a key issue. Liz Thomas (2002, p.431), following Bourdieu, notes that the traditional university habitus can make 'non traditional' students feel out of place, like 'fish out of water' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Thus the traditional HE discourse itself positions non traditional students as disempowered,

silenced and passive receivers of education, rather than engaged and critical learners (Burns, Sinfield and Holley, 2006).

The Access courses of the 1980's and a considerable body of research (Haggis, 2002: Medway et al, 2003: Sinfield et al, 2003) accepted that these traditionally excluded groups of students have differing needs compared with more traditional, male and female, middle class students. For example, whilst many non traditional students are prepared to study hard, few would know which sorts of knowledge were valued within the academy and why (Hoskins, 2007). Further, there is a newly emerging discourse of the 'new new student' (Haggis 2002, Sinfield et al 2003) including those with A'-levels who think they have the required knowledge to undertake a degree successfully, but still fail to understand the demands of HE study – and the onus on the independent learner. Haggis (ibid) suggests that these students are more reluctant to engage in learning and developing effective study skills. Interestingly, research (Warren, 2002) indicates that what benefits non traditional students, tends to benefit all students and therefore there are pragmatic as well as ideological reasons for utilising empowering study practices in HE (Sinfield et al op cit).

Non traditional students

The term non traditional student has been used increasingly during New Labour's term in government (1997-present), referring to a diverse group including the working classes, females, mature students and ethnic minorities. This paper will focus on the working classes' purported increased opportunity to access higher education, in the context of New Labour's policy initiative to widen participation amongst school leavers. It is important to note that research indicates that despite these policies of access, working class participation in education has

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actually dropped (Sinfield, Burns and Holley, 2003). According to Reay (2001, p.1) "working-class relationships to education have always been deeply problematic and emotionally charged, inscribing academic failure rather than success". If we agree with Kuhn (1995, p.98), that "class is something beneath your clothes, under your skin, in your reflexes, in your psyche, at the very core of your being", then class can be seen as a powerful discourse with potential to affect every aspect of an individual. Thus, it is important to understand how and why the working class student implicitly tends to fail, particularly in the light of a widening participation policy.

Another key issue is that of degree value; if more working class people get degrees then that qualification's value is arguably questioned by middle class parents, who themselves, have "an educational inheritance with which to endow their children" (Jackson and Marsden, 1962, p.42). Hodges (2002) reassures the middle classes that the working classes in higher education as a result of widening participation tend to be engaged in vocational qualifications and consequently these students are not a threat to traditional middle class spaces. Whilst this paper will offer a partial account of the complexities associated with non traditional students' participation in higher education, any analysis offered within this paper could be further problematised by issues of gender, ethnicity and age.

A class apart

Social constructionism allows us to see how non-traditional students' social class location is constructed as 'deficit', arguably because it challenges the middle class status quo (Burr, 2000) that operates in HE. Moreover, Lillis (2001) argues that the current debate about the 'crisis' in education stems from a fear of non-traditional students who are considered incompatible to HE spaces. Consequently, whilst student practices across the sector are arguably similar, it is those

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with the least power and influence over the realities of education who are frequently blamed for lowering standards and the dumbing down of HE syllabuses (Sinfield op cit). Arguably the skills debate itself has been manipulated to mask the exclusionary practices that operate within HE. At this point it is possible to see that such a deficit model is also bound up in the concept of institutional habitus, where working class students are on the outside of the institution's habitus (Reay, 2001). Indeed, according to Medway et al (2003, p.16),

> "HEI's (higher educational institutions) need to undergo more deep-seated changes in their 'institutional habitus', that is the nature of the cultural practices, values, priorities and social relationships which characterise the institution".

Thus, it is not just the student who has to change, but also the institution; however, this would require that curricular changes designed to embrace the different qualities that different students bring – and the different realities of the 21st century - were not condemned as further evidence of the dumbing down already mentioned. Currently, non traditional students find themselves needed within higher education to meet the governments targets, yet perhaps not wanted, as evident in the continuation of the exclusionary practices of institutional habitus.

If HE does not change, it is this very time of widening participation that is arguably the most hostile one for the non-traditional student (Sinfield op cit). For the overarching deficit model of the non-traditional student shapes and influences non-traditional students' perception of themselves as learners, constructing an ever more fragile student identity (Reay, 2001). Further, for most of the working class students the world of higher education tends to contradict the social and cultural norms and values of their local communities, resulting in feelings of being "truly an outsider" (Kuhn, 1995, p.95) at both home and in the higher education institutions.

Where there is 'success', it seems that, for many working class people in the academy, this frequently leads them to 'overwork', in an attempt to prove they are "worthy of their places" (Mahoney and Zmroczek, 1997, p.5). Indeed, for the minority of working class students who went on to work in the academy, they often report that their new found status within the academy makes them feel like 'frauds' (McIntosh, 1984: Mahoney and Zmroczek, 1997). Mahoney & Zmroczek (ibid, p.5) argue on the basis of their own experience as working class academics that "there are feelings of insecurity about positions attained but not 'deserved' and these are often expressed in the fear that one day the 'fraud' will be exposed". Social class signifiers such as accent (Hey, 1997), and 'dis/-respectability' (Skeggs, 1995), identify the working classes in a middle class setting (McIntosh, 1984). These practices of classed identification represent what Skeggs (1997) refers to as working class practices of dis-respectability, compared to middle class practices of respectability. All of these markers arguably serve to set out the working class student in the middle class setting as differentiated, as the 'other'.

Emancipatory practices

As a preface to a consideration of notemaking, it is worth noting Freire's (1977) criticisms, in his text *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, of traditional education and the way it positions learners as accepting and passive. Freire (ibid) viewed education as an opportunity for 'empowerment', especially where there are links between "knowing, learning and action" (Thomas, 2001, p.32). Crucially, "Freire sees the primary function of education and educative processes to be the dynamic development of critical consciousness, which involves critical thought and action" (ibid, p.32). Therefore, Freire (1977) sees learning as a reflexive and critical endeavour, and if these aspects are developed, they operate as a means to challenge disempowering political practices. If we accept Freire's (ibid) view, the consequences of a non-emancipatory pedagogy

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for the non traditional student, is a student body being actively dispossessed of its means to contest and struggle against dominant political discourses. Thus, equality of opportunity remains elusive and the student stakeholder is silenced (Burns et al 2006).

Why note-making?

In the 1950s, around 5% of the school population attended university (Thomas, 2001), whereas by the late 1990s around 70% of students participate in some form of higher education (Gleeson, 1996). This increase in participation is partly due to increasing recruitment of non-traditional students (Thomas, 2001). Therefore, with an evolving non traditional student body, increasing numbers of students entering higher education, and with recent governments becoming increasingly preoccupied with performance measures such as league tables (Burns, Sinfield and Holley, 2006), alongside a push for emancipatory practices, there is a pragmatic need to examine the practices that enable students to be successful.

Early access programmes overtly taught a range of study strategies to empower the excluded within academic discourse and emancipatory academics developed programmes for students to enable them to navigate the hostile HE terrain (Sinfield op cit). Key commentators (Sinfield and Burns, 2004; Crème and Lea, 1997) argue that, from a range of emancipatory techniques, notemaking empowers the most. Pragmatically, note-making has several uses; a summary/reinforcement of concepts and ideas; a record of where information comes from; an aide memoir; a form of revision; and finally, a means to becoming an active learner.

However, typically note-making is not rehearsed or reinforced by traditional academics who rather present information in lectures using PowerPoint slides and handouts and thus de facto discourage notemaking. This is exacerbated by amount of assessment new students encounter

and the associated reading they are expected to engage with, and from which they are 'encouraged' to make notes. With often insufficient time to read and make notes, students tend to struggle with their courses and, operating on the edge of their understanding in terms of subject content and academic practice, tend to plagiarise ideas rather than capture, manipulate and acknowledge them. According to one lecturer at a London university

> "I've had a few people who've said that they're dropping out because they can't do the reading and I think a lot of that is down to not really having had it explained to them what exactly is involved. People will get a twenty page reading list and just go, 'I can't possibly do this' and panic" (Medway et al, 2003, p.39).

The majority of lecturers still place value on lectures as an appropriate way of 'communicating information' (ibid, p.41) but only implicitly "try and instil in them that the student has got to work as well as the lecturer, and they must take down notes" (ibid, p.41). Thus whilst note-making still has some value in the academy for lecturers, and that students who are seen to utilise this approach are considered to be better positioned at assessment times than those who do not rely on their notes (ibid), few academics realise that they could reinforce this in active ways with their students.

Views among the student body about the usefulness of note-making vary, but the majority of non traditional students report that "there's very little lecturing and note-taking" (Medway, et al, 2003, p.40). As a result of this lack of note-taking, "students may avoid learning to take notes and acquiring skills of summarising, synthesising and ordering that require the material to be actively processed and understood" (ibid, p.41). By not developing these arguably essential study skills, students are disempowered to engage on a deep level with their 'learning processes' (ibid).

Moreover, one lecturer noted that "since the course notes had been available online, attendance at the lectures had dropped, even though the materials were on the intranet, not the internet, so that students had to be in College to access them" (ibid, p.41). It seems that students were prepared to travel into their institutions simply to download the notes, thus, passively receiving the information, rather than critically engaging with and interrogating it. Part of this can be attributed to time pressures that face non traditional students, who frequently have child care and/ or work commitments (Sinfield op cit). Which issue in itself helps to create a two tier education system between those who attend university with the financial support of their parents, and those who must provide their own financial support. The end result is a non traditional student body who frequently do not have sufficient time or money to allocate to their degree courses.

Learning Development

Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' enables an "[analysis of] the dominance of dominant groups in society and the domination of subordinate groups" (Reay, 2004, p.436), here we can see that the practices surrounding and of HE tend to disempower (non-traditional) students. Significantly, Foucault (1980, p.39) examines

> "the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their
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> bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning
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> processes and everyday lives".

Which has obvious significance for those intending to change student practice in empowering ways. Within the Learning Development community there are many who more explicitly emphasise the primacy of active notemaking strategies.

Neville (http://www.brad.ac.uk/admin/studev/studyskills/index.php, April 2007), for example, draws on the work of Hartley (1998) in an attempt to uncover if, in the students view, note-making is actually beneficial. Hartley (1998) suggests that there are three key reasons why students make notes:

1. "To relieve boredom, and because of peer pressure – everybody's doing it!

2. Students believe the processes will help them recall the content of lectures better in the future.

3. They feel the notes will help them to be more organised with their revision" (ibid, p. 5).

However, as Neville (2007), taking the more traditional psychological rather than a socio-political approach, points out, relying as it does on student perception, it is incredibly difficult to prove conclusively that these note-making practices actually do help students. Despite this, Hartley's (1998) research indicates that around 60% of students believed that note-making did help them significantly with their studies.

Learning development practitioners similarly argue that by empowering students, it is possible for them to be positioned positively within the learning discourse. It is a central tenet of this paper that note-making plays a key role in actively empowering the student to navigate the often hostile and definitely contested HE terrain and excavate academic knowledge for themselves. Drawing together the threads of the following section, explaining the pros and cons of different types of note-making, it is possible to argue that some of the strategies are empowering and some are not.

Introduction to different types of note-making

The following section critically explores five different types of note-making, ranging from the traditional linear note-making style to the more creative mind-maps and paragraph patterns. There is critical consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of these methods, however, it is important to note that different styles may work better for different people for a wide variety of reasons. The key point is that students should make notes in some form, for academic reasons and socio-politically because this positions them more powerfully within academic discourse. Making notes enables students to record knowledge claims (Holmes, 2002), test ideas and record bibliography details ((http://www.brad.ac.uk/admin/studev/studyskills/index.php, March 2007); when notes area gathered in this way, students can use information with more confidence and thus gain a voice within their own education. For notemaking allows students to take ownership of ideas and concepts and to play with ideas (Gibbs, 2001), which reinforces understanding and builds knowledge. These processes and practices can essentially help students to learn what they want to learn – and, pragmatically, to write essays that are adequately researched and correctly referenced (Burns and Sinfield, 2004).

Different types of note-making – linear notes

Linear notes are perhaps the most traditional type of notes (http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/ studserv/learningsupport/studyskills/notetaking.html, February 2007). This form of note-making involves making a list of notes, in a bullet point style list. Linear notes are most frequently used, perhaps because this seems the most logical (and traditional) way to progress (ibid). To make notes memorable, it can help to "colour code systematically, highlight notes afterwards, use Bracketing system - [to show own ideas]" (http://www.rdg.ac.uk/Counselling/studyskills/publish

/study%20guides/note-taking%202.htm, February 2007). To make this form of note-making

work, it is useful to use:

- Headings for main ideas and concepts

- Subheadings - for points within those ideas

- One point per line

- Underlining for key words

- Numbering - to keep yourself organised - (or letters or Roman numerals)

- Abbreviations, not full sentences

- Space - for adding detail - & for easy reading (ibid).

However, because these notes are in a list format, it can take up valuable time to locate a certain

piece of information. This form of note-making can also lock students' into the author's work –

its arguments, logic and hierarchy – and consequently students may tend to plagiarise work

because they do not take ownership of their notes and thus of their thinking. Furthermore, this

form of note-making can be disempowering to the student as it does not facilitate the student's

own critical engagement with concepts and theories, nor does it allow students to easily

compare, contrast and link up their ideas. Once a list is started, it's difficult to interject or make

changes to it – it is difficult to reframe ideas and re-structure arguments and evidence.

Consequently, these notes can tend to keep the student on the outside of their studies. Whereas

other forms of note-making, for example mind-maps can allow students to restructure

information and begin the process of critical engagement.

Different types of note-making – Cornell notes

Cornell note-making is akin to linear notemaking, but this method allows for some critical

engagement and so to some extent can be seen as empowering to students, for arguably students

learn by actively engaging with their notes (Burns and Sinfield, 2004). According to the University of Manchester study skills website, "this format is often suggested to students who wish to produce reviews and summaries of key ideas … useful when it comes to preparing for exams" (http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/ studyskills/notetaking/howto/ , February 2007). To utilise this strategy, students should

> "divide [the] note-making sheet in two – label one-half 'notes' and the other 'course'. Make notes in one column. Afterwards, go through [the] notes and in the 'course' column, relate the points in [the] notes to specific aims, learning outcomes or parts of [the] assignment" (ibid, 2004, p.88).

This form of note-making facilitates critical thinking and decision making about which information is useful and why. It can be seen as a very pragmatic way of working, but it offers an active engagement with and a way into ideas and it is better to go into note-making with some questions than with no direction at all (Buzan, 1989). The key benefit of this strategy is that it encourages students to understand why information is important and why they have noted it. It encourages critical reflection and the making of sense, meaning and connections. It puts the student's understanding and participation at the centre of the knowledge construction process (Burns and Sinfield, 2004).

Different types of note-making – mind maps

Whilst, "lists or linear notes are the most common, many students find the mind map a valuable way of recording information" (http://www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/studserv/learningsupport/ studyskills/notetaking.html, February 2007). According to the 'Learning Support Unit' at Manchester Metropolitan University, mind maps are a useful method for "when you're working out your ideas for an essay or report. Its great virtue is that once you've acquired the skill of this

method of note-making it's quick, also because it's so visual it's easy to memorise" (ibid). This view concurs with the University of Manchester's study skills advice, which urges that mind maps can be "useful when you are reviewing or summarising your lecture notes, or when you are taking notes from written materials. Mind maps can also help you brainstorm and organise your ideas about an essay topic" (http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/studyskills/ notetaking/howto/, February 2007). Moreover, a key feature of mind maps is that it can allow students "to see information as a whole and to relate points." An overwhenlming advantage is the way mind maps allow you to identify any "gaps which need more research" (http://www.rdg.ac.uk/Counselling/studyskills/publish/study%20guides /note-taking%202.htm, February 2007). For the emancipatory academic who puts students at the centre of their own knowledge construction, mind maps by their very nature encourage students to restructure and reemphasise that which they are recording.

Different types of note-making – pattern notes

'Pattern notes' is a term used to describe practically any non-linear note-making strategy. As with the mind map, the idea is that students select and connect information for themselves. The argument is that this very selection/connection process is itself an active learning strategy. According to Burns and Sinfield (2004, p.93) pattern note-making allows the formation of "a set of unique pattern notes" each time the student works. Distinction being an aid to memory in itself, they further suggest that learners should "illustrate notes with memory triggers, using colour, highlighting and illustrations to make the notes interesting and even more memorable" (ibid, p.93). Burns and Sinfield (ibid) advocate this model because of the way it can empower students to dissect, reengage with and then re-structure complex concepts on their own terms, rather than in a prescribed or passive way. Indeed, Burns and Sinfield (ibid, p.93) point out that

"this is an active system, one that allows you to 'play with ideas' and helps you to take control of your learning". If we return to the idea of habitus and agency, which enables "the individual to draw on transformative and constraining courses of action" (Reay, 2004. p.433), it is possible to see how placing the student at the centre of their learning can provide the potential for a transformative experience. Indeed, according to Foucault (1988, p.154)

"as soon as one can no longer think things as one formerly thought them,

transformation becomes both very urgent, very difficult and quite possible".

Thus, this form of note-making is powerful as it is non-hierarchical and allows for ownership of ideas. Non-linear, active note-making strategies are here argued to be central to transformatory and emancipatory education.

Different types of note-making – paragraph patterns

Paragraph patterns are similar to mind maps and the more generic pattern notes in that they tend to be non-hierarchal and allow students to critically and analytically engage with constructs. The 'paragraph pattern' is designed such that a student uses a series of a keywords or phrases from an assignment question as a set of research topics. Thus, rather than researching an assignment question in its entirety, the student is encouraged to break the question down into its constituent parts and to research each in depth - from lectures, seminars and reading. This strategy is really useful to facilitate students' attempts to build up a structured, for and against argument on each part of an assignment question. It also encourages students both to judge whether they have read sufficient sources and to get an overview of a position for each part of their answer. This strategy allows the non traditional student a way into understanding and actively engaging with their assignment, with their notes and with their thinking and writing processes.

Discussion

What can we take from this literature review? This paper has explored the social construction, not just of knowledge, but of notions of habitus, discourse and power and the positioning of, especially, non traditional students in passive, silenced and disempowered roles within unequal, elitist and hierarchical HE academic institutions/forms and practices. It is tentatively hinted that widening participation, rather than being an egalitarian or emancipatory process, has actually increased the inequities of the UK HE system and is actively creating a bipartite HE system. At the same time, there are academics, including learning development practitioners, who desire to practice empowering and emancipatory pedagogy within HE (Rogers, 1992; Freire, 1977) and it is argued that it is within this socio-political context, rather than a psychological one, active note-making strategies have a role to play. Indeed, when the issue of effective note-making strategies is placed into the political context, the inequalities and injustices surrounding certain aspects of the higher education system are revealed. The key reasons for this are bound up in exclusionary nature of institutional habitus, where the individual must assimilate into the dominant collective to be successful. For the non traditional student, succeeding in HE often means 'getting through' the course and completing it whilst managing family and/ or work commitments. This lack of equality between non traditional students and their traditional student counterparts is a key issue ignored by policy makers when designing and implementing policies of access. In this context there is little space in the academy for the autonomous learner, rather, students are expected to be "following well-trodden paths" (Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody, 2001, p.167). For the non traditional, working class student, entering HE does mean beginning a journey of change; at best this can be emancipatory and transformatory (Bourdieu, 1979) at worst this can mean the loss or annihilation of the self, as they increasingly find that they must adjust to the middle class norms and values of their institutions, in order to survive, let alone succeed.

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