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What was that all about? Transforming identities of schoolteachers as academics.
A critical study of transition and meaning making.

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Abstract

This international research project explores the perceptions of university appointees transitioning from professional practice to academia. The experience of teacher educators as they move from teaching in schools to the university is discussed. By probing deeply aspects of the transition that emerged as critical to the negotiation of an academic identity we uncover differences in professional and academic backgrounds, experiences, personalities, supporting and systemic structures, values and politics yet very *similar* perceptions of the need to interrupt the traditional processes of academic transitions.

Through auto-ethnography and narrative we uncover ways that academics can reflect, poke holes in false identities thrust upon them, acknowledge the roles of their peers in their developing academic identity and work outward towards those spaces that make them human. But the narratives also illuminate despair and ontological insecurity as participants reflect on how they are positioned as 'deficit' academics and the confusing status of a doctorate.

Key words: academic transition; identity; narrative

The initial aim of this research project was to investigate the complexities of the development of an academic identity through comparing the transition experiences of the 'traditional' pathway to the PhD, post-doctorate research and university teaching, with a more recent move to the employment of practitioners directly from the professions to the academy. However it became clear that although the early narratives we collected enabled us to identify a range of practical understandings to benefit the transitioning academic (see Adams, Logan, Rorrison and Munro, 2013), the identity struggles uncovered through the reflective narratives became a more interesting project. To research the extent of the transitioning issues we extended the project to four countries. As we probed more deeply the lived experiences of the participants, a wide range of journeys, personalities, systemic structures, values and polities were uncovered that had wide reaching implications for practice. It became obvious that the participants had a story they wanted to tell, one of moral and personal reflection and struggle that left them deeply concerned and unsettled in terms of their identity as academics.

This paper explores the perceptions of university appointees as they transition from professional practice to academia. While the neoliberal discourse has succeeded in marginalising alternative conceptions through its dependence on accountability, surveillance and political posturing, the narratives of academics in this project offer alternative visions that question these practices. Through auto-ethnography and narrative we uncover differences in professional and academic backgrounds, experiences, personalities, supporting and systemic structures, values and politics yet very *similar* perceptions of the need to interrupt the traditional processes of academic transitions. We engage with this debate, not to provide definitive answers, but to interrogate the possibilities of alternative practices and new ways of understanding the transition process. Issues around opportunities to contest the dominant political consensus and powerful forces in the university that dictate how we might think and act are discussed.

As their academic identity develops these new academics reflect, poke holes in false identities thrust upon them by others, acknowledge the roles of their peers in their developing academic identity and work outward towards those spaces that make them human. But the narratives also illuminate despair, disappointment, alienation and frustration that culminates in dissatisfaction with their perception that they have moved from being successful and leaders in their field to being positioned as 'deficit' academics. This is most obvious in the conversations around the confusing status of a doctorate. Issues of a powerful university culture seemingly unable or unprepared to make the changes to successfully transition those from the professions emerge. Evidence of resistance and competition, crises in work/life balance and inability to translate the symbols and mores of academic culture are uncovered. Through taking a critical approach this project provides guidance through eight recommendations of ways to better understand how, through appropriate intervention or action, an alternative vision is possible.

Literature review

Substantial changes have occurred in the Higher Education sector over the last three decades. When we framed this research project there was limited literature interrogating the effect of the changes for academics. Increasing accountability and managerial agendas and their impact on the academy were discussed (Anderson, Johnson & Saha, 2002; King, 2001; Marginson, 2001), yet the identity and professional impact was seldom considered. More recent publications discussing university academic work environment (Boyd, Bakker, Pignata, Winefiled, Gillespie & Stough, 2011; Hil, 2012; Langford, 2010; Shin & Jung, 2013) have identified increasing demands, changing expectations, relatively low salaries, growing unrest and stress as well as differences between national traditions. There appears to be increasing dissatisfaction, alienation and low moral as a result of 'changing times' (Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas, 2008; Ball, 1999, 2000; Hil, 2012; Schostak, 2012; Yates 2011) as well as a plethora of papers, interviews and addresses that focus on the 'new possibilities' that might be created (see for example Archer, 2008; Bradley, 2011). With the Kemp-Norton Report on the Demand Driven Funding System now dominating policy debate within the sector in Australia (Bebbington, 2014) further major changes are expected in line with recent changes in the US and UK.

It appears that the significant changes in academic life and work frequently relate to the move to accountability and efficiency principles. In Australia and the UK, where the managerial reforms are most advanced, academics report higher levels of stress and dissatisfaction, while those in South America and Japan and other parts of Europe appear to still enjoy less stress and higher status and autonomy (Changing Academic Profession (CAP) survey, 2007-8). The move to 'measured research output' over the past two decades has resulted in unrealistic and ubiquitous research and publishing pressures. In countries where both research output and university teaching are expected, academics report highest stress levels (Cretchley, 2009; Goldsworthy, 2008; Shin and Jung, 2013).

Ironically the last decade has also seen an increase in the employment of practitioners directly from the professions to teach in the disciplines that prepare scholars for the professions (a practice turn). These practitioners are employed for their professional and practice knowledge with little consideration for their teaching or research skills. While the 'typical' new academic had previously completed an undergraduate degree, a research Masters and/or a PhD, these 'atypical' practitioners have learned their skills and knowledge while in the field and in practice. Archer (2008) also adds that employment of faculty with biographies quite different from the traditional university post-graduates is likely to become more common throughout the academy.

Since the 1970s when the neoliberal revolution began to reverse the liberation movement and contest the welfare polities by restoring global dominance of economic and vested interest, the Anglo-American academy has been slowly restructured through the new social and political settlement. As a consequence academics are finding less and less opportunity to access spaces for moral, critical, liberatory and independent thinking and acting. Discussion of values like morality, equality, autonomy and justice in the academy are silenced by the rationality of quality, evidence based, performance appraisal, accountability, branding and privatisation with a move towards research only universities (Goodson, 2007; Lingard and Gale, 2007; Massey, 2012). Yet it appears that it is not only the language, polities and policies that are having insidious affects. As a result of the competition for places and funding, behaviours that are competitive, scheming and appropriating are increasingly reported (Archer, 2008, Hil, 2012). Sadly the new agenda has also succeeded in marginalising alternative conceptions through its domination of the discourse and hegemonic logic (Hursh & Henderson, 2011; Apple, 2014).

Both the popular press and recent research publications tell us that many extremely talented intellectuals have been lost to academia during these years of accountability pressures and political posturing that limits opportunities for critical and independent thinking (Hil, 2011; Schell, 2014). Alexandre Afonso, a lecturer in political economy at Kings College, is reported in the Australian Newpaper (Wed. 27 Nov, 2013) as claiming "the life of academics is remarkably similar to that of drug gangs, with income distribution and job security skewed to the few at the top and the rank and file willing to be exploited in the hope of better prospects". He also "points to massive increases in the supply of PhDs since 2000 in all OECD nations" but laments the dramatic reduction in university positions and the growth of the unskilled element that the sessional employment contract mentality attracts (see also Leigh, 2014).

Archer (2008) refers to the folding of power (Foucault, 1980; Deleuze, 1992) and comments like "I felt I had a no choice, so I couldn't complain" are typical. The neoliberalist discourse works to close down the options and remove the dissent through not only the high levels of output expected but also the levels of surveillance experienced. Archer questions whether the pernicious reach of neoliberalism can only result in a closing down of the hearts, minds and souls of the academic. However, Gramsci (1971) reminds us that we are implicated in our own subjugation and that no hegemony is ever complete. More recently, Massey (2012) develops this argument in her paper "The Political Struggle Ahead" by challenging the dominant political consensus and reframing the questions about what we stand for, about society, humanity, ethics and in whose interest we act. Apple (2014) continues to address crucial controversies and contradictions confronting the rightist resurgence in education, as he has been doing now for nearly half a century. Such questions frame the research problem in this project.

Schostak (2012) positions the question very clearly when he asks what might the university become in the context of the entrepreneurial demands.

> …the increasing demand that university work is to add value for business and be shown to be 'world leading' through competitive publishing in high-ranking journals and in securing research funding [leading] to an increase in data manipulation, fraud and other forms of misconduct to secure the coveted ratings. (p. 255).

Similarly, the well-known Australian researcher Lyn Yates (2012) questions the normative view asking

> …whose answers to the question 'what is education for?' should get priority—those of economists? politicians? parents? educators? students themselves? (And where does the work of education

researchers and scholars fit in?) Whose interests are taken as the norm, and which qualities are made invisible or inferior in education policy and practice? (p. 260).

It is our view that Yates and Schostak reflect the prevailing concern that the world appears to be spinning faster, shaking, questioning or transforming the traditional institutions, processes and underpinnings of academic work. Questions are being raised about the purpose of the academy and the motivation of the current governments who wish to micromanage higher education.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century Ball (2000) also suggested "there are 'new modes of description' and 'new possibilities for action'; thus creating new social identities of what it means to be educated; what is means 'to be a teacher' or a researcher" (p. 4). In his quest to understand these new identities Ball refers to Deleuze (1992) when describing the changes and the "ontological insecurity" (p. 5) that might result. He too claims that "commitment, judgment and authenticity within practice are sacrificed for impression and performance" (p.6) and like Yates and Schostak, questions the devotion to 'performativity', given it results in inauthentic relationships and practices and an alienation of the self. He takes up the notion that the appearance of responsiveness to the consumers, the 'clients' and the market actually results in a "fabrication of performance" (p. 15) that replaces professional judgment and creates winners and losers. This is the environment that we began to recognise around 2007 that concerned us and led to this research project.

Critical Ethnography

The work of Richardson (1994, 2000), Ellis (1992, 1997) and more recently Sinner (2013) demonstrated how narrative and creative non-fiction can be both a literary connection and a method of inquiry to uncover the nuances within reflections on lived experience. The extant literature provides evidence that narrative, portraiture, stories and vignettes can be used "…to document how we live now so that we might change how we live now" (McLaughlin & Tierney, 1993, p.4). Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p.512) suggest we should "work outward from [our] own biographies to the worlds of experience that surround [us]" as we critically reflect on the social and physical structures that mould us. The use of critical narrative frameworks for the sharing of stories provides deeper understandings and can be a powerful medium for revealing tacit knowledge and contesting the hegemony (Richardson, 2000; Ellis & Bochner, 1996).

Popkewitz (1997) also supports the emancipatory potential of life-storying and auto-ethnography claiming

> [T]he historical task of placing ourselves into history is that we may, collectively through our actions in the present, poke holes in the causality that organizes the constructions of our 'selves'. And in the process, there is possibility of opening new systems for our collective and individual lives (p. 156)

We believe that critical ethnography is effective for uncovering and understanding the experiences of transition and academy identity. Bosetti, Kawalilak and Patterson (2008) report a small study where they were trying to make sense of responses by faculty to the changes occurring in Higher Education. They too provide evidence through auto-ethnography of the conflict between 'what is valued' and 'what is expected' by women transitioning to the academy. Through the construct of 'liminality' these women uncover both anxiety and caution as a result of their transitional status and a subsequent withdrawal from their work role. They discuss feeling "betwixt and between" (p.98) as they share their stories to help construct a better understanding of the way they feel and react. Schell

(2014) also suggests that a sense of liminality is important and can lead in the end to a more successful transition into academia.

Previously Rorrison (2002) used storying to establish a 'project of possibility' to help school teachers understand that they are a part of the diagnosis and part of the search for an alternative vision for education that can make a difference in the lives of their students. She revealed that by focusing on the consequences rather than the intention, on context rather than the personal, we can extend the ability of others to recognize and interpret the politics of their work so that they too can challenge hegemony.

Criticality, in terms of a commitment to democracy and challenge to oppressive practices and policies is also important to this project and both authors, previously practitioners, challenge the prevailing neoliberal context of the universities where we have worked. We both used narrative and perspective to 'tell stories that we fear to hear' and further our emancipator vision during our PhD research (Rorrison, 2007; Logan, 2008). We concluded that our roles as academics should provide us with spaces for discretion, choice, reason and the courage to acting differently. Similarly in his essay "Schooling and Education after Neoliberalism" Schostak (2012) suggests

> Education is about attending to and taking into account alternative ways of perceiving, experiencing, imagining… of seeing, of making visible, of perceiving and reflecting upon what is perceived (p.251).

By probing layers within the social geography of academia through reflective narrative we believe we can make visible a 'new' story and a more authentic story to inform transition practices.

Identity

There are a number of current research publications focusing on the identities of the academics who are negotiating an organisational structure that values what is *seen* to be done rather than substantively what *is* done. They question what 'identity' means in an organisation that has a well developed and funded corporate brand but provides few supports and little guidance to its new employees and where the experience of the transitioning academic differs dramatically from discipline to discipline, faculty to faculty and university to university. Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas (2008) propose an 'identity turn' to help negotiate these changing expectations. Through identity theorising and the development of frameworks for analysis, they suggest patterns and phenomena might be captured to help frame a new understanding of the transitioning academic. Although not committed to a particular 'theory of identity' they suggest that to focus on identity will provide a range of theoretical considerations and cognitive orientations. Although their study focuses on organisational life and not specifically the academy, they lead us through a discussion of the personal and social identity that helps us understand the "lived needs of a particular historical moment" (p. 13). As Kincheloe (2004) wrote

> We need to find a diversity of possibilities of what we might become by recovering and interpreting what we once were. (p. 124)

To probe more deeply the literature on multiple identities, and more particularly the past, present and future 'role', 'personal' and 'social' identities of the academic, we turned to the "Handbook of Self and Identity" (Leary and Tangney, 2003). In the preface of the volume the editors state

> One of the most notable things about human beings is their ability to self reflect…to form images and ideas of what they are like…To ponder important questions about themselves, to seek outcomes that are congenial to their sense of self, to exert deliberate control over themselves, and to engage in other

acts of selfhood. …researchers and theorists have made enormous strides in illuminating these quintessential human processes related to the self (p. xii).

In chapter seven Stets and Burke develop this idea of reflexivity and the ability to reflect back to evaluate past actions and plan future states, which they call a 'consciousness of the self'. Through reflexivity the symbols and signs of others are merged into perspectives of the self, so identity becomes both personal and social. They claim

It is this *self-image* that guides moment-to-moment interaction, is changed in situated negotiation, and may act back on the more fundamental self-views (p. 132).

Through linking self-image to self-esteem Stets and Burke provide evidence from identity theory that social, personal and role identities have a significant affect on self-image. Furthermore these studies stress the emergence of multiple identities linked to agency in the multitude of roles and self-views of the individual. They quote Thoits (2001) who states that through their agency

…individuals can make or create a role by making behavioral choices and decisions and engaging in negotiation and compromise as well as conflict. Research finds that making roles and accumulating role identities fosters greater psychological well-being (p. 134).

Stets and Burke also suggest that there is a hierarchy of prominence of these roles depending on support from others, commitment and rewards. This verification of role identities and counter identities is important to the analysis of the narratives of academic lives and will prove especially valuable as we look at role and personal identity transitions.

Churchman (2006) discusses identity in the different ways academic work is understood by other academics through the degree of compromise they perceive in relation to their roles. Churchman suggests three types of narratives; the corporate pragmatic narrative; the social collegial narrative; and the righteous altruistic narrative (p. 6). It appears that the modern university deliberately reduces this perceived complexity of academic work through privileging of corporate pragmatic images and simplification of social and altruistic roles, with a resultant disjuncture between the rhetoric and the reality voiced by practitioners employed from the professions. Clegg (2006) agrees that there is no one academic identity and that the space itself is

...part of the lived complexity of a person's project …multiply constituted, since for any particular individual, the site of the academic may include relationships with other colleagues globally, be a particular fragment of a department, and may include a range of activities, some of which are experienced as being academic and others of which are not" (p. 329).

The academics in Clegg's study constantly complained that the goal-posts were moving and despite their achievements they never seemed to be able to meet the changing criteria for what was valued by the institution. Never-the-less, they were prepared to practice with integrity and resist what they saw as the eroding of academic values through marketplace compromises. Indeed Clegg concludes that the strong academic ethos of the respondents bodes well for academe. That is not to say there were not grumbles and stresses but Clegg discusses these as a resistance or defiance and a way to deal with the difficulties (p. 342).

Coté (2006) also discusses identity as "multifaceted" (p. 8) and manifested at three levels; "the subjectivity of the individual, behavior patterns specific to the person, and the individual's membership in societal groups" (p. 8). Coté relates to the late postmodern view of identity in terms of an unstable interactional process that links with perceptions of agency. It is transitional, emergent and transformative and as a result can be both sustaining and debilitating. Coté warns of the dangers of "identity manipulation" and false

promises that result from the credentialing discourse of the modern university (p. 18). In a similar vein Reybold (2008) discusses the occupational-academic dialectic for practitioners negotiating their role and identity in the academy and sees professional meaningfulness as "located in vocational identity and discourse" (142). Reybold's study identifies the need for a dual identity for those transitioning from Adult Education to the academy, discussing the need for a "balancing act", a sensitivity to a new language, and the frustration of negotiating a "truce for the sake of professional survival" (p. 143).

Although space does not permit a further review of the literature it appears clear that current understandings support the need to research deep into the experiences, identity and responses of academics transitioning from the professions. It is clear that different university traditions provide different pathways and this research focuses most strongly on the Anglo-American tradition where the managerial and fiscal pressures are dramatically changing the culture and climate of the academy.

Research Methodology

In an attempt to confront the issues that worried us and provide our colleagues with the opportunity to be authentically represented our research problem asks *How do those entering the academy from professional practice develop their identity as an academic?* As Burawoy (2009) writes

> … to explore those differences in our midst and the divergent interests they foreshadow is not to discredit others, but to simply recognize that we, like the people we study, cannot escape the inequalities in which we are embedded, and that it is only out of confronting these inequalities that common enterprises can possibly be forged. (p. 4)

Associated research questions focus on how commencing academics from professional practice talk about their identity development as academics, the process of this development in contrast to traditional pathways and what they identify as the enablers and barriers to academic identity development. To explicate the way participants came to understand and manage their transitions to academia, we decided that feminist based conversational interviews that develop an emotional engagement and trust with the participant would provide the comprehensive and contextual narratives we sought. These conversations were prompted through four open questions related to (1) the participant's decision to enter the university, (2) what they thought the position would involve, (3) whether their expectations were supported in situ, and (4) what they felt the future would hold.

The 16 Australian participants for the pilot study were purposively sampled for maximum variation. Taking advantage of contacts in a wide range of universities, both general emails and personal recommendations led to self-selection through interest in the project. The pilot resulted in minor amendments to the question phrasing and clearer guidelines for interview technique. Sampling strategies for the wider study continued to be opportunistic relying on both recommendation and interest, though the need for maximum variation and balance were also influential. A total of 37 interviews were collected: 22 Australian, 10 British, three Canadian and two Swedish. Twenty-two Health Practitioner academics (Nurse, Pharmacist, Sonographer etc), six from Science Faculties (Physics, Geology, Physiology etc), two from the Arts (anthropology and media) and eight from teaching (Early Childhood, Science, English etc) were interviewed. As a result of the open interviewing with short prompting questions we believe that participants relaxed, 'dug deep' and frequently bored into levels of comprehension not previously uncovered. Indeed there were a number of comments after interviews thanking us for encouraging the deep reflection that led to levels of moral and political knowing they had not previously

articulated. The interview narratives were transcribed and after close reading and deep engagement the impacting phrases, thought changing comments, exceptional insights and common ideas were noted. Through a well structured and indexed audit trail of these memos or 'meaning units' and related propositions or speculations, patterns and connections emerged (at times as conceptual leaps). These 'meaning concepts' were then rubbed against the research questions providing 'clusters' and more speculations or deductions to explain the patterns that emerged. These 'clusters' and concepts were then linked, as themes emerged, and analysed through the critical questioning cycle. Clearly it is important for the researcher to show how they move from the empirical data or narrative to the research themes and theories and to ensure internal validity we used participant checking of the transcripts and dual analysis, and to ensure reliability we focussed on researcher agreement through discussing and clearly defining the patterns that emerged.

In a further and experimental attempt to ensure analytical reliability we used the qualitative content analysis program developed by Queensland University, Leximancer [©] 3.5. Leximancer[©] is a validated software package that builds a ranked list of terms according to their frequency and co-occurrence. These terms are used to develop a thesaurus based on iterative learning of the definitions determined by the context and these are then weighted to form a concept list. The context for a definition is created by the software examining words either side of the word being examined (Smith & Humphries, 2006). The program parameters were set to search across three sentence blocks. The relative co-occurrence frequencies are then used to develop the 2D concept map. A table of ranked concepts and connectivity for the entire data set was also provided. When the narratives from the 'teacher' group (n=8) was run against the others (n=31) there was little difference in the theme connectivity percentages. The concept maps do vary but it is clear that apart from the smoother transition to university teaching by those both qualified and experienced as teachers, their trajectory is very similar and their self-esteem equally challenged.

Following the method of co-mapping described by Penn-Edwards (2010) we lined up the manual examples and Leximancer derived examples for each meaning concept. It is apparent that the alignment is not precise, however it is equally true that the manually derived themes do not lie outside those the software identified. For example, there is a difference with regards to the meaning concept for 'competiveness'. Leximancer [©] highlighted many passages that identified the competition for time allocation required to undertake all aspects of the 'job' or 'work' while the manual analysis also identified the emotive aspects of competitiveness between academics. This highlights the importance of the manual analysis and indicates the limitation of using a fully automated qualitative analysis. We believe the software analysis of the transcripts however does act to support and add depth to the manual analysis by diminishing the risk of anecdotal evidence gaining undue prominence through researcher subjectivity. Apple (2014) would say the ability to include emotive aspects in the analysis raises substantive questions around inequality and power as competing definitions of ethics and social justice have persisted within modern systems of education since their inception.

The final step in our analysis was to act upon the themes that emerged through the critical emancipatory spiral to tease out new understandings in relation to an "identity turn" (Alvesson et al, 2088). Asking the critical questions stresses the moral and political nature of the narrative progressing the theorising of findings where the narrative is complex and multi-layered. Applying the critical questions (Smyth, 1989, p. 486) involves four steps with probing *critical* questions that direct each step; *describing* what is going on, gathering

information to work out *how it came to be the way it is*, confronting the evidence and asking *what this means*, and finally recommending or *reconstructing* things differently in light of the previous questions. In Smyth's iteration it is cyclic while the spiral nature (Rorrison, 2007) was developed to stress that the process does not go back to the beginning as in a cycle but builds on the new and reconstructed understanding as in an action research spiral.

Asking the critical questions of the data provides considerable focussed discussion that would be rather unwieldy and unmanageable in a paper such as this. The process has been completed in full and is available by contacting the authors. Eight findings or recommendations emerged from the four steps of the critical questioning spiral and are provided below. It is important to note that these findings or recommendations follow a clearly defined critical approach after the Leximancer and manual analysis of the empirical data. The emergent themes from the initial analysis are linked back to the research questions to inform, confront and finally reconstruct our thinking. Furthermore the recommendations should be refined further after papers such as this and discussions within the academic community.

Findings

One hundred and sixty six meaning units emerged from the close reading and deep analysis of the narratives describing the lived experiences of 37 participants and these were clustered as nine meaning concepts. These nine meaning concepts connected closely with the research questions, uncovering strong clusters or emergent themes. Six meaning units did not connect due to their random nature or mis-fit with what others were saying. Through asking the critical questions of the nine meaning concepts as they related to the research questions we offer our research findings as a series of recommendations. Through understanding that the university structures and processes are not immutable but are constructed in human interest with the resultant inequalities and injustices uncovered by our participants, we want to show that a new synthesis is possible, no, necessary, (Rorrison, 2002) because without this possibility there is little opportunity for those from the professions to access spaces to act with integrity and resist the practices they see as eroding academic values through marketplace compromises.

The first four recommendations (listed below) emerged from the first research question that focusses on how commencing academics from professional practice talk about their identity development as academics. The second research question that interrogates the process of this development in contrast to traditional pathways resulted in recommendations 5 and 6. The final research question aimed at identifying the enablers and barriers to academic identity development provides recommendations 7 and 8. Initially there were 10 recommendations but on further analysis some were found to be related and were grouped. Together we believe they bring us closer to answering our research problem that asked

How do those entering the academy from professional practice develop their identity as an academic?

Recommendation 1*(efficacy)* - Genuine support should be offered to ensure that new academics can negotiate their roles, practices and future. Through equitable and transparent processes they should learn what is reasonable and fair in terms of their workload and role. Due to the diversity of previous experiences of new appointments this will need to be personalised and timely with a focus on wellbeing rather than performativity and output.

Recommendation 2(empowerment) - During the transition of the academic, identity and agency issues should be prioritised and participatory and empowering practices used to support negotiation, compromise and open discussion.

Recommendation 3(collegiality) – Those who have had a similar recent experience of transition are best placed to support new appointees from the professions. They should be supported with time to do this and they will also benefit through this reflective and communicative process.

Recommendation 4(university culture)- University culture and traditions need to be translated for those from the professions as an important aspect of induction. The link between personal and social identity, self esteem and institutional and academic cultural knowledge should be acknowledged. The presence of competitive, patriarchal and nepotistic practices identified by the narratives needs to be addressed.

Recommendation 5(Doctorate)- Steps need to be taken to uncover university core understandings and attitudes related to both the award of PhD and a Professional Doctorate and the differences between them. The relative value of the two doctorates needs to be clearly documented to avoid continued confusion about any hierarchical positioning.

Recommendation 6(process)- Guidance and time for deep reflection (consciousness of self) and theorising are critical to academic identity development and transformation.

Recommendation 7(support)- Processes akin to a post-doctorate need to be developed to provide continued support to academics after the completion of a Doctorate. While stability in their professional lives and ongoing commitment to and verification of their current role in the university are necessary, their needs as early career (post-doc) researchers should be supported in innovative ways[1].

Recommendation 8(purpose)- Respected academics who epitomise the commitment to public good and the humanistic ideal through their teaching should be valued for this as well as their research. Universities should commit to guiding new academics to find the balance in their role, personal and social identities in a way that satisfies alternative beliefs of academia as a moral, critical and liberatory service to society.

Discussion

It is clear from our findings that the narratives are at the same time distinctly different and markedly similar. There is a sense of instability (Cote, 2006) and liminality (Bosetti et al, 2008; Schell, 2014) voiced by all our participants. Cote's three levels of identity, namely subjectivity, specific behaviour patterns and collegiate support are noticeable in the first three recommendations and here also we recognise the need for professional respect of the "lived needs" (Ashcraft et al, 2008, p. 13) and role identity verification (Stets et al, 2003) of the transitioning academic. We can also recognise what Churchman (2006) names the "corporate pragmatic narrative; the social collegial narrative; and the righteous altruistic narrative" (covered by recommendations 4 and 8), but our findings expand on these to acknowledge the effect of traditional processes and the contradictions and inconsistencies of university cultures (also recommendation 4). Apple's (2014) view of the conservative and rightist ideology of universities is also apparent through the reactivity of the narratives,

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[1] Fixed-term early career fellowships to provide aspiring academics with paid time to develop an internationally competitive research profile have recently been suggested by the NTEU http://actualcasuals.wordpress.com/2014/06/24/is-academia-a-meritocracy/ accessed Aug 12

highlighted through the equity and empowerment findings of recommendations 1 and 2 and the critical and humanistic aspect of recommendation 8.

Like Ball (1999, 2000), Yates (2004) and Schostak (2012) we believe our findings question the devotion to 'performativity' and its potential negative affect on relationships, practice and sense of self, and focus instead on the moral, critical and liberatory potential of the academic role (recommendations 1, 6 and 8). Our findings also highlight the importance of reflection, self-knowledge and a consciousness of self (recommendations 3, 6 and 8) (see also Stets and Burke, 2003, p. 131; Leary & Tangney, 2003) as ways of avoiding the "identity manipulation" and false promises to which Coté (p. 18) alluded.

Recommendations 5 and 7, however, are quite specific to this study and are linked to the second and third research questions where the focus is on process and barriers/enablers. What are the differences between the transition of those from the professions and those who follow the traditional academic pathway? So often we heard that our participants had perceived extreme pressure to complete their doctorate and then when they did, it was somewhat of an anti-climax and seemed not to matter after all. For those who chose a Professional Doctorate the explanation appeared to be that they should have chosen the Doctor of Philosophy, but we can report conclusively that the let down was just as extreme for those who completed the PhD. Indeed, this experience appears to be symptomatic of the transition experience of those from the professions. Their sense of liminality, of being betwixt and between, is palatable. Whether a change of post-doctoral process (recommendation 7) will alleviate this frustration is difficult to assess but its emergence as a major outcome of the critical process suggests its importance to the participants.

Conclusions and implications for teacher education

In our own institution the recommendations from this project are being shared with academics from the professions as a new initiative to support their transition. We believe that through dissipating the findings from research projects such as this and stressing the need for transparency in the employment process, both new employees from the professions and their colleagues in the academy can transform their practice. As stated earlier we do not attempt to provide definitive answers, but our findings do direct a focus on the need for a more reflective, moral and critical understanding of developing academic identity. We found that new academics need to be given space to negotiate and compromise but such decisions can only be made when they are clear about the choices they can make. This clarity can only come when they are supported in their reflexivity and a merging of their sense of "other" and "self" is possible. Our findings suggest this can be as a result of feelings of liminality (Bosetti et al, 2008), resistance and defiance (Clegg, 2006) or acceptance of a dual identity (Reybold, 2008). It is the recognition of the struggle that is important.

Finally we return to the research problem. Lack of information, poor clarity of process, limited support and guidance, identity challenges and role confusion were all reported by transitioning academics from the professions. Through analysing the narratives of 37 academics from four countries and a range of professional backgrounds and relating their identity struggles to current literature and theories, we have evidence to suggest that despite their vast differences in context and place their experiences of disjuncture between the rhetoric and the reality have been markedly similar. This has allowed us to make a range of recommendations that emerge from our critical questioning of the findings and connect well to the extant literature. The recommendations are still in an early iteration,

they need to be tested and refined through the action research steps of the critical spiral, yet we believe they offer a sense of possibility to those who take up the challenge on both an ideological and a practice level. It is clear that the experience of transitioning academics, be they teacher educators, paramedics, actors or scientists, will benefit from consideration of the recommendations from this study.

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