The Pedagogy of Business Schools

By

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This book first published 2023

Ethics International Press Ltd, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Print Book ISBN: 978-1-80441-232-9

eBook ISBN: 978-1-80441-233-6

Acknowledgements

I thank my family and my friends for their kind patience and understanding during times when I was less than sociable.

Also, my heartfelt thanks go to all those who contributed to my research, without their candour and honesty this book would not have been possible.

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Foreword

This book has its origins in a research project that was started as a demonstration of how the interpretive phenomenology and hermeneutics of Hans Georg Gadamer could be applied to the study of business pedagogy. It became a journey that ended as a narrative of how engagement in a phenomenological enquiry changes the perception of the researcher of the matter-at-hand and an example of how a phenomenological process can unexpectedly uncover insights that transcend the original intent of the research question. The narrative moves of the research from a normative contextualisation that sought to establish how key factors in the evolution of business in general and business pedagogy, in particular, informed the positionality of the research project. Then by using a phenomenological approach to reviewing the relevant literature the narrative uncovers the contingent nature of what the Business Academy is and how there is no current unifying theoretical principle as the current normative manifestation of the Business Academy, describing how of Business Schools emerged through mimesis and contingency. Starting from the position that the epistemological congruence between key stakeholders, students, academics and employers is one possible measure of the effectiveness of business pedagogy in the higher education sector the narrative describes how an operationalisation of Gadamer's hermeneutics formed the basis of an informing methodology. Describing in detail how this was applied and facilitated through the use of hermeneutic circles that utilised an asymmetric process of reflection on texts that explicitly addressed epistemological congruence, the project unfolded and developed into a demonstration of how phenomenological enquiry can be used in practice. The analysis of this material and the reflection on the discursive and interrogative process revealed unexpected themes and essences that altered the original perception of what would constitute a valid congruence of epistemological boundaries. The expected agreements through discourse or fusion of horizons amongst participants did not take the expected form and the analysis of the material uncovered thematic concerns common to students, academics and employers that have implications for

the shape, intent and development of pedagogy in the business academy. Underpinning all of these is the challenge of complexity and the need for transparency and honesty amongst key stakeholder groups to develop an effective pedagogy to effectively manage this. The key insight uncovered by the research project is that it may be possible to address the fragmentation of subject disciplines under the Business Academy through a phenomenological approach. In the instance of this research it was through the application of Existential Hermeneutic Phenomenology (EHP) which uncovered underlying themes and essences that crossed internal pedagogical differences and debates within the Business Academy. Reflecting on the unfolding of the research, the criticality of ethical honesty and an acknowledgement of the positionality of the researcher are identified as fundamental to the effective use of phenomenology as a research technique. This research journey has an implication for personal pedagogical practice as the essences uncovered by the research create a call to action. The next step in the development of this form of Existential Hermeneutic Phenomenological research will be to articulate insights from this research project on how the reflective techniques informed by Gadamer's hermeneutics can be used to enhance the process of discursive exchange amongst key stakeholders in the evolution of Business pedagogy.

Chapter 1

Origins and Context

Originally, I aimed to question our understanding of what "Business" is and to challenge the manner in which we teach students to become effective business practitioners. A question that I reflect upon daily during my teaching practice is am I doing the right thing? In more formal academic language; is the pedagogical approach adopted by the Business Academy in the United Kingdom (UK) appropriate for our students, the organisations, the enterprises and the contexts within which they wish to form careers and derive a livelihood? Do we have across the academy a coherent pedagogy that is both effective and relevant to students and other stakeholders? These are not complex questions and my original intent was to answer these through the methodological lens of Existential Hermeneutic Phenomenology, a process that I hoped would deliver a multiplicity of meaning and a unique insight. I had anticipated that the structure of the methods derived from a specific application of phenomenology a technique not commonly used as a research process in the Business Academy would deliver unique insights. What I did not anticipate was that by using this methodology was that the research would evolve as the discursive process at its heart unfolded. So, the two key research questions set at the outset of the research went through parallel evolution. The question; Is Business School pedagogy appropriate for key stakeholders? Became, What pedagogy might be appropriate for key stakeholders? and the allied question; Does the Business Academy have a coherent pedagogy? Became, what could a coherent pedagogy look like? This research became a record of a journey moulded by the unfolding insights of the methodology. I was motivated to ask the original research questions as the numerous conversations I have with students at varying stages of their passage through the higher education process seem to indicate that despite the investment in time and money involved in acquiring a business degree there is little focus or clarity regarding the end goal. This lack of clarity extends in most cases to the career

destination of the student and in almost all cases to some reflective idea of what the experience of university has or will deliver in the context of personal development. My original intent was to help address these uncertainties and in order to understand the full extent of the journey, I must begin with a transparent account of where I started.

Origins

I will cover in more depth what I had believed to be the relevance of my methodological approach in the succeeding chapter. First, though, I will contextualise the memes that have dominated my perception of the business academy and in this latter part of my working life my involvement as an educator in a large business school.

I am not alone as a business academic in questioning the efficacy and purpose of the contemporary form and delivery of Business pedagogy in the context of higher education. Two prominent contributors to this debate are Marie-Laure Djelic and Martin Parker. My first degree was in History and Politics and I was drawn to Professor Djleic's article *History of management–what is the future for research on the past?* In this Professor Djelic eloquently articulates the contingent nature of what "Management" (and by extension business) means in an evolving historical context.

> When management emerged, at the turn of the twentieth century in the United States, it was a tool of power for decision makers without ownership rights. They used this tool in their interactions with both labor and shareholders. Management, hence, was a highly political instrument. Then, after the Second World War, management was clearly constructed and presented as a geopolitical weapon. Management would bring wealth and prosperity to battered countries, it was claimed. Wealth and prosperity would keep Communism at bay. In that context, management was a major weapon of the Cold War, and again a highly political tool.
>
> (Djelic, 2016, p. 7)

If we accept Djelic's assertion that "management is, in reality, neither neutral nor de-politicised" (Djelic, 2016, p.8) we should reasonably expect that contemporary business schools recognise this contingency by embedding within their curricula formal mechanisms that would aid students by inculcating, for example, a historical perspective. Unfortunately, the teaching of the history of business as a discrete subject is in decline and not a common or core part of the curriculum in the contemporary academy (Van Fleet, 2005, Wright, 2010, Murcia, Rocha & Birkinshaw, 2018). As a historian by original inclination and with an awareness of historiography and its implications, my view agrees with that of Djelic when she observes "management has reached a status of taken-for-grantedness that makes it essentially transparent and invisible to us" (Djelic. 2016 p. 1). This has significant implications for how we conceptualise business pedagogy. In many of the subject disciplines of Business, we as teachers encourage students to reflect on the nature and relevance of that which they are taught (Brunnquell & Brunstein, 2018) and yet outside our relevant academic fields we have no systematic process of holistically looking at that which we teach other than through programmatic reviews within individual schools. However, within the context of the United Kingdom (UK) Higher Education Sector there is some evidence that the advent of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) has galvanised movement toward wider questioning of the pedagogy (O'Leary & Cui, 2018). This research is my contribution to this emerging reflective process and I used the interpretive phenomenology of Hans Georg Gadamer as a methodological lens and I called this project PHAEDRUS.

PHAEDRUS, in the context of this research journey, is an acronym that stands for Phenomenological Hermeneutical Analysis Extending Discursive Reach Utilising Subjectivity/Inter-subjectivity. This is indicative of the intended novelty of my research into the concerns I have listed above. The first two words are descriptive of the philosophical origins whilst the ambition of deepening discursive understanding through the medium of language and text is encapsulated in the remainder of the acronym. Gadamer outlines the potential of interpretive phenomenology to extend discursive

reach through the process of hermeneutical analysis in *The Scope of Hermeneutical Reflection,* one of the essays in a collection entitled *Philosophical Hermeneutics* first published in 1977.

> Hermeneutics being confronted with a disrupted subjective understanding seeks to place communication on a new basis and in particular to replace the false objectivism of alienated knowing with new hermeneutical foundations. Just as in rhetoric and hermeneutics so also in sociological reflection an emancipatory interest is at work that undertakes to free us of outer and inner social forces and compulsions simply by making us aware of them.
>
> (Gadamer, 2008, pp. 29-30)

The methodology directly draws on Gadamer's notion of the "fusing of horizons" and the acronym itself is an allusion to the discursive process of the Socratic Dialogue as Phaedrus was, as described by Plato, Socrates' interlocutor in his dialogical method (Hackforth, 1952). In turn, the acronym also acknowledges the philosophical bearings of Heidegger and Gadamer and their grounding in classical Greek philology (Gadamer, 2008; Heidegger, 2014).

The novelty of this research proposal is in the unique application of Hans Georg Gadamer's (1972, 2000) phenomenological perspective in the examination of pedagogical discourse in the discipline. The use of Gadamer's interpretive phenomenological approach places language and its continually evolving form as a carrier and mediator of meaning at the centre of both the methodology and the method. Furthermore, it is the primacy of meaning to the individual as expressed through the discursive exchange that places the individual and their perception of the "Life-World" (Gadamer, 1972) at the heart of the analysis.

This research seeks to examine where the epistemological boundaries are drawn in the academic discipline of business. This is subject to the prejudice and perception of whether practitioners subscribe to whether Business and Management is considered a

science (Anderson *et al..*, 2015) or an art (Badua, 2015) or whether it is a mixture of both (Richardson, 2008). Bauda (2015) argues that the widening of business school curricula to include "the ROOT disciplines of rhetoric, orthography, ontology, and teleology" is not only desirable but a vital balance to the dominant pedagogic narratives within the discipline. Most contemporary critical writing that examines the epistemological fit of Business Pedagogy is still predicated on either humanist or rational/positivist approaches which both focus on outcomes and procedural delivery. Academic thought on business pedagogy from the humanist, sociological perspective (Amann *et al..*, 2011, Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2015) attempts to re-centre the core of Business School epistemology in an ontological base predicated on the contingency of social relationships arguing that business is fundamentally a social transactional process. Accordingly, pedagogical strategies must focus on outcomes that enhance students' social and transactional skills. In contrast, rational/positivist writing (Fourcade & Khurana, 2013) directly locates business epistemology in the positivist ontologies of empiricism and natural science. Conceptualising Business as a procedural discipline in this manner emphasises such skills as mathematics and analysis and promotes the desirability of defined outcomes (Anderson *et al*., 2015, Taylor, 2015). Whilst these differing ontological and epistemological perspectives may often be in conflict over pedagogical approaches, (Steiner & Gaskin, 1999) they nevertheless coexist in contemporary Business School curricula. On the periphery of this ontological battle are approaches that have the potential to offer new insights Badua (2015). Amongst the alternate ontological perspectives increasingly gaining traction in the consideration of Business Pedagogy is that of Phenomenology (Nilson, 2015; Berglund, 2015; Gill, 2014). I am suggesting thorough this research that an examination of the life-world of respondents and the merging of their epistemological horizons has the potential to resolve the bifurcation between these two dominant perspectives and bring the individual as the embodiment of meaning and the carrier of relevance into focus as the true object of pedagogical effort.

So, in order to contextualise this research, I am going to stay true

to the principles and practice of interpretive phenomenology as this forms the methodological basis of my study. Drawing on the work of Heidegger and Gadamer I am accepting that my conceptualisation of the world is fundamentally a complex, historical web of pre-understanding or prejudice as Gadamer would have it. My epistemological horizon is bound by this life-in-the-world experience and my internalised interpretation of events and my perception of phenomena that have relevance and meaning to me. By engaging in a reflective, discursive examination of this set of prejudices through a process that will merge my horizon with the epistemological horizons of others I hope to accomplish two things. First to deepen and reflect on my understanding of the relevance and effect of that which I do – namely the teaching of the discipline of Business in the Higher Education sector in the United Kingdom (UK) and second to contribute to the common horizon of understanding of the Business Academy in the field of its pedagogical practice. To be faithful to this aim I must be as transparent as I can with a personal evaluation of how Business has evolved during my own experience of Business as a series of activities, normative social practices and manifest consequences. This reflective process is critical to the practice of interpretive phenomenology as a method for academic purposes. Additionally, I must acknowledge and situate my being-in-the-world or as Heidegger terms it Dasein (1996). I must with honesty locate my epistemological horizon, for without this clarity I cannot expect my horizon to be merged with others in the process of creating a new understanding. Clarity, transparency and honesty are essential in establishing my prejudice, the method demands this and requires me to set out a personal account of how I perceive the field which I am studying. The following contextual writing is an account of the memes that I judge as crucial to the construction of my prejudice regarding Business Pedagogy in the Higher Education sector in the UK is necessarily personal as it locates a personal horizon and acts furthermore as orientation in what is an area of infinite complexity and multiple perspectives. This contextualisation is inescapable.

Contextualisation

I entered the world of full-time work in October 1978, starting as a "Local Assistant Manager" (LAM) based at the Gaumont State Cinema, Kilburn, a cinema, theatre and bingo hall owned and run by what was then called the Rank Organisation. I was an oddity as I was a graduate of London University with a degree in History and Politics. The normal educational level of my peer group, other LAMs as they were affectionately known was at most the possession of Certificate of Secondary education qualification and possibly an Ordinary level or two. Education per se was not prized in the context of what was seen as a "calling" a vocation to the cinema trade and what was more highly valued was a commitment to the job and an aptitude for dealing with the general public. Beyond a basic acuity with numbers and adequate literacy, it was clear that the corporation assumed that the in-house training which took place informally "on-the-job" and formally in company facilitated sessions would be used to educate new junior entrants about the culture and the mores of the managerial community that was specific to the corporation. In fact, a clear and overtly stated aim of recruitment was to find individuals that would commit themselves to the company for their entire careers, a job for life was on offer for those who conformed, worked hard, developed themselves along company lines and who remained loyal to the corporation's aims and policies. On reflection in the very act of writing these words, I realise how alien this may sound to the contemporary reader with no direct visceral experience of this culture. It was not however at odds with the normative assumptions of the time (Kalleberg, 2013). Now I work as a senior lecturer in a Business School part of a faculty in a major regional university in the United Kingdom preparing graduates for similar entry-level jobs in corporations that will avowedly not offer the same psychological contract of security and commitment as often its historical iteration once did (Kalleberg, 2013). In the intervening decades, there has a significant change in the normative values not only of corporate culture but also in the structural manner in which we anticipate that new entrants into the job market will prepare themselves and assume a greater degree of personal risk and uncertainty.

My perception is that there have been four key memetic changes in the relationship between organisations, society and individuals that have both enabled this change and in turn been reinforced by this structural shift in cultural norms. These are, the ephemeral nature of employment and the rise of the "portfolio" career, the transfer of responsibility for the development of employee's skills from the organisation to the state and the individual, the rise of the primacy of the "knowledge" economy and finally the emergence of the Business Academy in Higher Education. I will briefly contextualise these in turn but at this point, I must acknowledge that this is an arbitrary taxonomy that is keyed to my perception and is almost a personal historical interpretation that invests these phenomena with meaning that may be disconnected from other perceptions of the relative importance of these phenomena. I, therefore, warn that this is not intended to be a definitive or comprehensive historical account of this societal shift but an explanation of why I am doing what I am doing, namely attempting to make personal sense of a pedagogical culture that has arisen and come to dominate discourses around the training, skills, behaviours and attitudes required of young graduates entering the job market now as I did then.

"Jobs for Life" cannot now be found within the embrace of a single organisation (Dore, 1995). In fact, there is an embedded assumption amongst even the most high-profile corporations in the UK and other western industrialised nations that employees will move out of the corporate culture in order to pursue individual developmental needs and aims. This is often promoted as a good both for the corporation and the individual. Flexibility is inherent in the contemporary psychological contract between potential employees and the corporation and statements to this can be found in the public literature of numerous organisations. The subtext is one of the transitory nature of the relationship and the willingness of the individual to embrace the needs of the corporation and sublimate their own. Yet there is no rejoinder that this flexibility will ensure the stability of employment; the best that is on offer is personal career development. This movement of responsibility from the organisation to the individual has a consequence summarised by Creed and Hughes (2013).

> Unfortunately, choosing a career might be constrained by real or imagined barriers, such as believing you do not have the ability or stamina for a particular course, or determining that there are too few openings available after qualifying. Such constraints lead young people to adjust, or compromise on, their desired careers options, and accept ones that are less desirable to them... Less desirable options might include choosing a pathway that is less prestigious or interesting, or is more demanding or challenging, than desired.
>
> (Creed and Hughes, 2013 p.3)

In accepting the inevitability of flexibility and individual responsibility for "self-development" we have absolved the corporation or the organisation from its structural need to engage in long term development and planning we accept that organisations are free to hire and fire as the demands of the environment in which they operate see fit and that there is no moral or ethical requirement for them to consider the consequences of such actions not just on individuals but also (and perhaps less recognised) on the communities in which the individual is situated. Perhaps though there is a wider societal benefit to this shift, perhaps economies are better served by self-motivated constituents whose inherent insecurity creates a competitive environment on the supply side of the labour market that enhances the competitive responsiveness of the entire economy, and some commentators do in fact argue that we see this effect in the major popular conurbations such as London (Turok, 2004).

The second meme that appears to act as a philosophical justification for the increasing transience of work throughout the social demographic structure is that of the rise and the inevitability of our societal move from an economy based on heavy industry, manufacturing, mining and fishing to an economy based on the service industries. The rise of the "knowledge economy" was seen even in the early 1960s as an inescapable destiny (Powell & Snellman, 2004). As I progressed in my career it became apparent that I could leverage the academic skills of research, the acquisition of information and experience, the acuity to recognise key factors and the ability to

communicate with clarity within the context of my employment to create a significant personal profile within which my skills were valued. Within this environment where most of my peer group did not possess this training, this became an advantage in a period which saw the adoption of computer-mediated communication and its supplanting of traditional media as the core process that enabled the flow of business information. Although I did not have a computer science degree or even a technical qualification I could rapidly assimilate the techniques and normative standards of the new culture and recognise the fundamental impact this would have on the nature of work. It is moot whether the rise of digital communication and the embracing of the principles of the knowledge economy are causally linked but I can make the reasonable assumption that the two have a direct correlation. Through my personal experience, the very act of moving an artefact such as a repository of knowledge from traditional media into digital media added credibility to that information. Here I want to make a distinction between the enhanced flexibility that these digital processes offered and the meaning ascribed to the new form of information. In many circumstances, the former was misunderstood or could not be understood by those not initiated into the mysteries of computer technology whereas the latter form-of-the-thing was readily embraced and accepted as meaningful. I did not reflect on this at the time and it is only now that it is clear to me from a personal standpoint that I was in some small way instrumental in underpinning the assumptions that we were making about the efficacy of adopting the new normative rules of the knowledge economy. Olsen and Peters (2005) clearly articulate this ascription of validity to the notion of the knowledge economy and its new iteration as knowledge capitalism.

> The term 'knowledge capitalism' emerged only recently to describe the transition to the so-called 'knowledge economy', which we characterize in terms of the economics of abundance, the annihilation of distance, the de-territorialization of the state, and, investment in human capital (see Figure 2). As the business development and policy advocate Burton-Jones (1999, p. vi) puts it, 'knowledge is fast becoming the

> most important form of global capital—hence "knowledge capitalism".
>
> (Olsen & Peters, 2005, p. 331)

Olsen and Peters go on to allege that this embracing of knowledge as the new carrier of value and worth also gave rise to the re-evaluation on a global scale of the importance of Higher Education as the conduit for the creation, enhancement and transfer of this value. However and again on a personal level, I witnessed that removal of entire skillsets within the workplace as these flexible and evolving technologies supplanted old ways of doing things, this rapid adoption of computer-mediated communication across all levels of my working environment led to a new perception of the worth of the individual within the context I was working, those who embraced change and adopted new techniques prospered (as I did) and those that did not were simply removed. Underpinning what was often a brutal process was this narrative of the new, the digital and the new forms of knowledge it manifested. It is unclear to me whether this was used as a justification to increase the transience of the workplace or if it was a cause of it. What can be said is that the two phenomena of digital technology and the embrace of the transience created by adopting a knowledge-driven culture appeared to have evolved together.

The third meme, that of the transient nature of employment has had a personal and profound effect on my understanding of individual worth and how organisations perceive the value or otherwise of its employees. I must question whether my own acute experiences of the transient nature of employment with its attendant emotional resonance has an effect on my understanding of the impact that this has on wider society and whether others ascribe similar meaning to the contract of loyalty implied in full time, tenured employment. The current debates and commentaries, particularly in the UK over such phenomena as the "Gig Economy" and "Zero Hour Contracts" appear to confirm that stability and security remain valued aspects of employment as well as flexibility. Some quantitative studies confirm that transience in the workplace has increased over the last

five decades (Stroh & Brett, 1994). It appears that we have embraced the principles of transience and change as an inevitable consequence of rapid economic change and adaptation and that this process will continue with inevitability and that we as individuals are fundamentally responsible for equipping ourselves to meet the needs of our organisations rather than the organisation taking responsibility to equip itself to accommodate the challenges of change. On reflection, this is an odd thing that we have accepted, namely that it is the right of an organisation to re-mould itself, to adapt to new competitive stress not by investing in its constituent participants – its people – but to reserve the right to itself to simply find new participants with more appropriate skills or experience. My view inclines towards the responsibility of the organisation to ensure an appropriate fit of employees' skills and it must be recognised that there is a continuum of approach where some contemporary organisations meet this expectation and others patently do not (Thorne & Pellant, 2007). What has replaced the paternalistic relationship between employee and employer in respect of training needs is the wider narrative on the need for those who are active in the jobs market to embrace "lifelong learning", Anna Tuschling and Christoph Engemann (2006) have tracked this emerging shift from societal education to individual learning across the European Union.

> The beginnings of this transition are located in the 1970s, with a phase of build-up in the 1980s and a general visibility in the late 1990s, especially in the social-democratic regimes of the so-called 'Third Way' in Great Britain and Germany. The administrative initiatives brought forward by these ruling parties made rich use of a political rhetoric asserting a profound change in the distribution of responsibilities between state and individuals, calling for a stronger utilization of individual 'resources' for the good of the society. Especially in the realm of social welfare, new arrangements were sought where individual action is increasingly invoked to ideally foster both individual chances and collective good.
>
> (Tuschling & Engemann , 2006 pp. 452- 453)

For lifelong learning, we can read an abrogation of a large part of the responsibility for the training of employees that was once assumed by the employer. Again, structurally and in terms of the innate flexibility this builds into economic responsiveness this is not an entirely bad thing. For those who can respond to this call for individual responsibility the support structures such as grants, subsidised courses and career sabbaticals enable and enhance a more fulfilling and ultimately varied career often across a variety of sectors and organisations. On those less able to cope with the admonishment to develop the self can lead to higher stress and enhance the feeling of transience and insecurity (Field, 2000). From my perspective my ability to switch between careers, from Leisure to eCommerce, to Venture Capital and finally to Higher Education I can trace directly to my educational experiences at secondary and tertiary levels. Even at "A" level I was encouraged by both the curriculum and my teachers to develop a keen sense of questioning and this process continued seamlessly into tertiary education at undergraduate level. It would be nonsensical to attribute the entirety of my resilience and flexibility to education as these ecologies of challenge, questioning and testing were part of a different social settlement in which a greater degree of inequality in society and opportunity was acceptable. Higher education found its participants through a process of exclusion whereby each level of academic measure had its quota of achievement irrespective of the "objective" level of attainment. A binary system existed not just between Polytechnics and Universities, but also in England And Wales between secondary modern and grammar schools and the process of selection was for most was irrevocably set at the end of junior education by the 11 plus examination, few beyond this escaped their classification (Taylor, 1980). This poses a significant and personal question. If I accept this new settlement of individual responsibility of "lifelong" learning as a professional educator what am I consciously doing to engage the students for whom I responsible in this process? Should I simply accept that the overt messages embedded in our programmes with their admonishment to continue to train and to learn is a sufficient discharge of my professional responsibilities or should I attempt to encourage students to in a more detailed reflective discourse on the wider political, sociological

and psychological processes that this form of commitment involves? This is particularly problematic for Higher Education students for two reasons, first is the pragmatic argument that the investment in a degree in the context of the UK is already a significant commitment of time and money. There is a danger here that I could devalue their effort by pointing out that a business degree cannot constitute a final destination and further resources must be committed in an open-ended career spanning process. The second reason is one of critical acuity and resilience. Am I truly confident that at whatever stage in their academic process that any individual student has developed sufficient internal strength to look forward to more education plus the common demands of life such as work and other more personal social relationships? For some, the answer will be may be yes insomuch that I can judge resilience on the manifest evidence of the behaviours I observe and the statements I hear, but even here I cannot fully gauge the internal life-world of any individual student without a lengthy process of discursive exchange and even then the judgement would be one of an amateur rather than a professional. This is a real conundrum in higher education in the UK context as it is clear from recent research that the mental stress we place as a society on students in terms of the expectation of performance has been exacerbated by the "value" that a degree has acquired through the introduction of tuition fees that manifest the base monetary investment in achieving the qualification.

> Epidemiological studies have shown a relationship between debt and mental health difficulties and substance dependence in the general UK population. Previous research with British students has found that poor mental health is related to financial difficulties and level of debt, with greater financial concern predicting deterioration in mental health over time.
>
> (Richardson, Elliott and Roberts, 2015 p. 5)

As educators, we participate in a system that creates the debt and then we tell the students that even this will not be enough to ensure future success and prosperity as they will have to engage in lifelong learning. Responsibility for the consequences of this must lie within

the Business Academy as the final meme that has re-shaped the societal context of business has been the inexorable rise of the Business Academy and its eminence within the tertiary sector in the UK.

Returning to my career to encounter a Business School graduate in the echelons of the large multi-national corporation I worked for was a rarity. More commonplace were the professionals such as accountants, economists and lawyers that were recruited either directly from professions (Accountants and Lawyers) or well-established University faculties (Economists). There were a few graduates from more technical disciplines and a few from arts disciplines but these were a rarity and often thought to be odd for choosing a career in commerce. At the end of my career with this organisation, the reverse was true, almost every new management entrant was in possession of some form of degree and this change from almost zero percent graduate entry to one hundred percent graduate entry only took two decades and most of these were graduates with some form of Business degree. The rise of participation in the rising academic discipline of Business has moved rapidly from one of a few specialist business schools to faculties that often dominate their host institutions in terms of numbers of students and revenue through tuition fees (Williams, 2010). Within the context of the HE community in the UK, this has not been an entirely easy process as the academic legitimacy of this new (and large) interloper has been challenged (Masrani, Williams & McKiernan, 2011). However, as nearly one in seven of all undergraduate students in the UK are in Business Schools (HESA Statistics, 2017/18) we have a structural commitment to Business education which would be difficult to dismantle. Furthermore, the advance in legitimacy has been supported by two critically important professional bodies both of which have been instrumental in bolstering the validity and the political reach of the academy.

Both BAM (The British Academy of Management) and ABS (The Association of Business Schools) entered an embryonic UK field contextualized by a suspicion of the quality and applicability of management education and especially of its research component. Both institutions aimed to gain legitimacy from external stakeholders through active agency by lobbying, by creating formal and symbolic

structures and through the use of measurement systems in order to influence the prevailing belief systems and to alter decision making rules and regulations, e.g. those pertaining to research funding.

(Masrani, Williams & McKiernan, 2011, p. 396)

What was hitherto a technical discipline mainly rooted in further education has now almost totally transferred its education processes into the higher education sector. The justification for this can be directly related to the three other memes that have reshaped my understanding of the ecology of business.

The "knowledge" economy demands the deployment of higher-level skills and it seems to be a direct corollary of this assumption that higher-level skills should be delivered by the higher education sector. Thus Business education moves from the procedural and the focus on the task to the embedding of critical acuity and other "soft skills" such as organisational awareness and communication processes. Disciplines that had previously been academic cultures that stood alone, such as economics and accounting are moved into the domain of the business faculty and subsumed into multi-disciplinary programmes. New discourses on such phenomena as globalisation, technological change and enterprise culture become areas of study and included in the expanded curricula and new philosophical perspectives are added to improve the perceptual comprehension of those engaged in Project Management and Human resources management. The technical-commercial college that once trained typists, draughtsmen and engineers now educates analysts, consultants and executives. Some observers argue that it is uncertain that this has enhanced economic effectiveness but it is an inescapable fact that per capita wealth creation has accelerated over the last fifty years at a global level and even faster in those jurisdictions that have high levels of Business School graduates entering their economies so at the very least we can claim that this academisation of business has not had a negative effect. However, serious challenges have emerged to the pedagogic rationale that underpins the Business Schools position in Higher Education. In a trenchant critique of the current state of Business School pedagogy, Professor Martin Parker offers an alternate vision of how "management" could be taught.

> Organizing is all around us, and it is a topic of enquiry that clearly overlaps with other parts of the social sciences and humanities – sociology, anthropology, politics, history and so on. The School of Organizing wouldn't need its own building to stress its distinctiveness, because it would have to work with teachers and researchers who could show us variety and strangeness, rather than endless recitations of the supposedly similar. No form of organization would be off-limits, so we might imagine courses and research projects on the circus, families, queues, city-states, utopias, villages, sects, matriarchies, mobs, gangs, cities, clubs, segmentary lineage systems, pirates, the mafia, Occupy and the landing of Apollo 11 on the moon at 8:17 GMT in the evening of Sunday 20 July 1969.
>
> (Parker, 2016 p. 151)

Parker directly challenges the current nature of Business Pedagogy arguing for a wider more eclectic view of what management is claiming that it should be better termed as "organising" and speculating on which subject academic disciplines could or should contribute to the curriculum.

Evolution

Phaedrus written by Plato in 360 B.C.E opens with Socrates asking his interlocutor "My dear Phaedrus, whence come you, and whither are you going?" A question that is particularly relevant to this research journey. In the context of my starting understanding of Business Schools, this was framed as whether we are producing students with the right knowledge? With the follow on question, Is there enough epistemological overlap between universities, students and employers? The acronym PHAEDRUS was an encapsulation that summarised both the core intent of the research and the novelty of my approach to the research questions. However, by using a research process based on Gadamer's iteration of interpretive phenomenology and adapting this into my Existential Hermeneutic Phenomenology I created a new process of discursive exchange that

changed the intent and emphasis of the original research questions. The application of phenomenological principles changed the nature and positionality of the research. I had originally sought to deliver an operationalised version of Gadamer's "Fusion of Horizons" by deconstructing the stages in this process and had sought to uncover how the life experience of key stakeholders in the Business Academy could inform the evolution of pedagogical approaches used by Business Schools. The intent of this was to determine how we could make these approaches more congruous in terms of the fusion of the epistemological horizons of the respondents and thereby more congruous in the shape of desired and effective outcomes. I had hoped that the act of research and the act of fusion could establish a new semi-autonomous structure that could be used to enable an open-ended discursive exchange amongst the stakeholders I had identified. A hermeneutic circle that would never need to be closed. The research evolved though, in an unexpected manner. The critical juncture came when I applied the process of phenomenological interpretation to the outcomes of the initial research discussions. It became clear that any attempt to operationalise any phenomenologically based methodology was both contingent on time place and circumstance and that that the true contribution of my iteration of existential hermeneutic phenomenology was in its description of the process itself and an understanding of how this contributed to (amongst others) Djelic's and Parker's challenges to some of the assumptions of Business Pedagogy. In order to understand this journey fully, I will first place the wider iterations of Phenomenological enquiry in the context of business and business research pedagogy through the literature review. I will then recount my original understanding, interpretation and application of Gadamer's philosophy and other phenomenological influences in my chapters on methodology and methods. In the chapters on the research process and analysis, I describe in detail how the discursive process and the application of phenomenological principles changed this positionality. Finally, I conclude with a discussion on the actual results of the research and it's ethical and procedural implications for my practice and that of others.

Chapter 2

Business Pedagogy; a brief history

Evidence from the Literature

The range of literature written on the origins, nature and development of the pedagogy of the business academy is extensive both in scope and in chronological reach. I must be selective in the process of identifying what is relevant and to do so I will use the informing methodology of this study, namely by utilising a phenomenological approach to identify and analyse the appropriate literature from this canon of work. A phenomenological approach to reading the literature derives from the manner in which I give primacy to my life-world and my own lived experience of the pedagogy as it has, and does, manifest itself in my own direct experience. This is part of the journey, part of the unfolding horizon of my understanding of the nature of business pedagogy and its effect on my own practice and the views of others as I perceive them. This is an integral and living part of the journey that I described in Chapter one and my analytical observations on the unfolding of the literature cannot capture with purity my sense-making of the pedagogy as it manifests itself at any time in the past. My personal understanding has changed irrevocably as my personal horizon has merged with that of others. What I can do with honesty is to attempt to acknowledge the key influences on my views of the pedagogy of the business academy as-they-were at the specific moment in time that I became aware of them. I cannot fully replicate my original sense-making of them as phenomena at that time and can only offer a palimpsest of this awareness. In this, I acknowledge the contingency of an unfolding understanding.

To inform this phenomenological approach to a history of the Business Academy I am drawing in part from the writings of Saunders (1982) and Groenewald (2004) and in part from my own interpretation of Gadamer's hermeneutical methodology to construct a framework that will enable me to coherently organise and interpret these

influences. Furthermore, the description and commentary that Hart (1998,) gives on the features and nature of a literature review based on phenomenological principles was both instructive and useful in my process of framing the analysis and the criteria for the selection of literature. Adapting Hart's summation (1998 pp 103-105) on a phenomenological reading of literature I have an analytical process that I can apply to key points in the chronological unfolding of my understanding.

First, I must identify the underlying assumptions of the literature and then to reflect and recognise the consequences of this when I seek to understand the phenomenon of Business Pedagogy. Following this, I must disentangle and identify with as much clarity as possible these assumptions so that I can identify as far as is possible the essence of the pedagogy as-it-is and then reflect on the consequences of this on the influence of the development of pedagogical theory and practice in the context of business. To be clear, I am not attempting a chronologically accurate unpicking of the development of business pedagogy I am re-constructing as far as my current apprehension will allow, a reconstruction of the unfolding of my epistemological horizon and seeking to identify the moments of rapprochement that developed this. Here I am using the notion of rapprochement in the Gadamerian sense by seeking to identify the particular influences that significantly affected my emerging understanding of the pedagogy. As part of the phenomenological analytic, I will summarise at each key point in my chosen chronology my understanding of the foreknowledge or prejudice as it then stood within the academic discourse. This will also include my perception of rapprochement within the academy, how this impacted on the application and practice of pedagogy and finally the wider consequences of the pedagogy as a phenomenon in itself.

In outline, my selection of literature covers three key periods, all of which have direct personal relevance to my own life-world and experience. The first period I shall cover is that of the period up to 1992 before the "Major" reforms that ended the binary system of higher education within the United Kingdom. Up until this point, my perception of the Business Academy was largely determined by

understanding of the process as described by peers and colleagues that had attended Business Schools combined with my reading and comprehension of what was published in the non-academic media. The second period will overlap the first as I will attempt an account of the period during which business studies gained traction as an integral part of the Higher Education sector in the UK a period when faculties of Business and Management became embedded both as drivers of a significant expansion of students in HE in the UK and mainstays of institutional finance. Finally, I will map out the current "state of play" in the Business Academy. Each section of this literature review follows a structure that is determined by my phenomenological stance. I will describe my foreknowledge, my prejudicial understanding as it stood at the time. Then, I will examine the accounts of the practice of pedagogy that influenced and altered my understanding of the pedagogy of this period. From this, I will be able to identify how these influences altered the practice of pedagogy in the academy and finally I will attempt to analyse the consequence of how these developments in practice alter mine and other perceptions of business pedagogy as a phenomenon. In brief, each section will map foreknowledge, rapprochement, practice and consequence. It must be acknowledged that the further back in time that I track my foreknowledge the less reliable on a personal level this becomes as I am attempting to reconstruct personal epistemological horizons that have long since been altered as my own life-world experiences have evolved. With this caveat, I will start with the period prior to the 1992 Major reforms.

1945 – 1992 Business and Management as an emerging profession

Foreknowledge

As a graduate of London University with a joint honours degree in History and Politics, I had a limited view of the value and efficacy of business school education. The perception that I had of business education mainly drew from my perception of this being a technical skillset taught primarily in Further Education colleges, Technical colleges and Polytechnics. In truth, this was simply prejudice in the

colloquial sense of the word. An attitude that I took into my first steps into a career in business in late 1979. However, this view was not entirely mistaken. An article written by Stephen Black in 1971, *Thoughts on Management Education*, examined the social and cultural prejudices that influenced the structure and delivery of Management Education in the UK at that time. I have replicated below a table from that article summarising the educational background of managers within the UK at that time.

Sources of Management Education by Managerial Level

	Directors	Top Managers	All Managers
Universities	14.3%	21.1%	11.3%
Technical Colleges	35.8%	33.3%	18.0%
Consultants	14.3%	8.4%	2.7%
Internal	0	14.0%	43.8%

(Black, 1971 p.45)

It should be noted that 35.6% of the Directors of companies in the UK at that time had no form of tertiary education. What I could not anticipate though was that throughout the early 1980s the UK was to undergo a radical economic shift. Prior to the "Major" reforms observations of an American commentator Robert Locke clearly identified the social stratification that was enshrined by a division between the elite business schools of London and Manchester and their Polytechnic based counterparts.

> The social prejudices voiced within the academic community, on both sides of the binary line, are also directed at business schools: for, if they are attacked by university people in the older, established disciplines, they are also attacked by professors in the polytechnics.
>
> (Locke, 1989, p. 187)

Locke then goes on to quote Professor Newbigging of the Central London Polytechnic,

> The so-called classical or liberal education, (with its) call for