**Context of our research**

We both work as lecturers and researchers at the same multi-faculty U.K. university. Until she retired in September 2020, Beaton taught on a cross-disciplinary HE PGCert in Higher Education, designed to support traditional early-career academics to develop as teachers and researchers. Hope was awarded in 2018 a SRHE Newer Researcher Award and is the academic lead for an Advance HE Fellowship Route. We are bringing together findings from these two separate pieces of research, and therefore much of the chapter will be in the third person as wearesynthesising our key findings.

Both these programmes attract an increasing number of blended professionals whose appointment reflects a national and global emphasis on graduates' workplace preparation and closer integration between universities and employers. Researching the experiences of blended professionals raised our awareness of these issues.

We each used different research methods to uncover perspectives and investigate the transition experiences of professional practitioners in English universities on substantial teaching and scholarship (non-research 'REF') contracts, who have current or recent industry/disciplinary expertise and made a mid-career transition to being academics (Locke & Bennion, 2009), reflecting changing HE workforce profiles internationally, (Teichler *et al*. 2013, Bosanquet *et al.*), 2016 and in the U.K., (Locke *et al.* 2016)

We draw on Whitchurch's framework and build upon the institutional case studies outlined in her latest monograph (2017), conducting semi-structured interviews to discover the effect of participation in different communities of practice on blended professionals' identity construction and how they saw the relationship between their practice and HE teaching.

Beaton used narrative analysis and Hope interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to analyse interview transcripts. Narrative analysis enables:

 '… rich descriptions of people's stories about significant issues… data serve as a source to ask: What experiences has this person had? What do these experiences mean to him or her?' (McAlpine, 2016, p., 35).

It privileges narrator agency and enables individuals' voices to emerge, to articulate the significance of context, the affective impact of experiences and their trajectories. It allows individual stories to be heard, complemented by an iterative process of coding to capture an accurate and complete picture of common themes.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) aims to "... capture the experiential and qualitative, and which could still dialogue with mainstream psychology..." (Smith et al. 2009: 4). IPA seeks to understand in detail how an individual experiences a phenomenon from a particular perspective within a specific context and is concerned with ways in which people make sense of their experience and attach meaning to life events (Smith et al., 2009). Inferences drawn from the data were in the context and culture within which the study was situated. The study drew on an IPA analysis of eight interviews conducted in three U.K. universities (Post/Pre 1992). It explored the perceptions of dual professionals, specifically: what aspects of professionalism are vital to them, how they express their professional identity and negotiate it in an academic context. IPA acknowledges that researcher engagement has an interpretative element and assumes an epistemological stance to access an individual's cognitive inner world. IPA explores how people ascribe meaning to their experiences in their interactions with the environment (Smith, Jarman & Osborn, 1999). IPA offered an account that embraced an attempt to both understand what it is to 'stand in the shoes of the participant … while honestly accepting that this position can never be completely achieved' (Smith & Eatough 2012:441).

While both authors used different methodologies and disciplinary fields to investigate the same phenomenon, findings were triangulated, and the conclusions were consistent across the studies.

**Figure 1: Respondents in both studies profile**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Institution type** | **Individual** | **Discipline** | **Practice experience (yrs)** | **Academic experience (yrs)** | **HE role** | **Currently in practice?** |
| Teaching and vocational | Ali | Music technology  | 10 | 5 | F.T. Senior Lecturer | Yes |
| Teaching and vocational | Arlo  | Social Work  | 11 | 4 | F.T., Senior Lecturer | Trustee for charities  |
| Teaching and vocational | Dan | Advertising and creative industries  | 16 | 8 | 0,6., Senior Lecturer | Part-time academic. Still developing a creative portfolio |
| Teaching and vocational | Elsie | Journalism | 8 | 3 | F.T., Lecturer | Still editing a magazine  |
| Teaching and vocational | Eva | Disability studies  | 7 | 7 | F.T., Senior Lecturer | Supporting the third sector. Students on placement |
| Teaching and vocational | Rich | Forensics  | 18 | 4 | 0.8 Senior Lecturer | Work as an expert for a variety of organisations |
| Teaching and vocational | Stu | Policing  | 20 | 8 | F.T.Senior Lecturer | Students on placement |
| Teaching and vocational | Zoe | Broadcast media  | 12 | 4 | 0.5 Lecturer | Students on placement. Work as videographer and editor 0.5 |
| Teaching and vocational | Peter | Social Work | 15 | 5 | F.T., Senior Lecturer | P.T. out of hours cover |
| Teaching and vocational | Frank | Music Tech. | 15 | 9 | FT, programme leader  | 'Peripherally' |
| Teaching and vocational | Alison | Clinical education | 9 | 1 | 0.6, Senior Lecturer | GP educator (0.2) and paramedic |
| Teaching and vocational | Liz | Nursing | 15 | 3 | 0.6 | HE placement link and healthcare trainer |
| Teaching and vocational | Alex | Media | 15 | 4 | 0.7  | Yes |
| Teaching and vocational | Sam | Digital Industries | 30 | 4 | 0.4 (across 3 HEIs) Senior Lecturer | Yes |
| Teaching and vocational | Maggie | Visual Arts | 15 | 12 | F.T. | 'Impossible … there's so much crap to do.' |
| Teaching and vocational | Sally | Business | 10 | 5 | None - freelance | 'I describe myself as a part-time academic and recovering civil servant.' |
| Teaching and vocational | Julie | Art & Design | 15 | 10 | F.T., Senior Lecturer | 'Not much design work at the moment; I'm too busy to fit it round my HE work'. |
| Teaching and research | Amy | Law | 25 | 4 | F.T., Lecturer | No |
| Teaching and research | Jim | Law | 20 | 9 | F.T. (since 2018), Lecturer | Yes |
| Teaching and research | Anna | Journalism | 5 | 2 | Lecturer | Yes |
| Specialist | Rebecca | Digital Design | 20 | 9 | 0.1 Lecturer | Yes |
| Specialist | Paul | Engineering & Digital Arts | 7 | 5 | 0.5, Course leader  | Yes |

**Access to professional development and career progression**)

Most U.K. universities expect probationary staff to engage in academic, professional development (APD) to support them in their work. There are also increasing central government requirements for institutions to provide evidence that staff have a teaching qualification or formal recognition of teaching competence. Criteria for inclusion are based on definitions used in the HESA data sets. Beaton's research identified particular issues – both APD participation and career progression - for blended professionals on fractional contracts:

*'I've been told I'm not eligible for promotion because I'm only here three days a week.' (Lecturer, Digital Industries)*

**Concepts of professionalism and professional identity (500 words)**

Many HE lecturers have had previous careers and professional experience in the field in which they become lecturers. The initial move to working in higher education is often based on the value placed by the higher education institution on their professional knowledge, experience and expertise, and their impact on the vocational currency of degrees and research outputs. The transition from one career to another is characterised by changes in work practices, operational structures and workplace cultures. A dual professional is an individual who can work autonomously is responsible for applying professional judgment. They conduct work that involves a highly complex set of skills, intellectual functioning and knowledge that is not easily acquired and not widely held. (Hoyle & John, 1995; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2011). These dual professionals are experts in their field yet novices in their new environment.

Early career academics' educational, cultural, and life experiences influence their approach to the nature of academic life and work (Fanghanel 2012; Teichler *et al*. 2013; Wohrer 2014). Institutions need to be creative in supporting these individuals as they simultaneously attempt to make sense of their HE educator's role, maintain legitimacy in their professional one, and address the challenges of reframing their identity. Numerous studies highlight the importance of professional identity in lecturer development (Bathmaker & Avis, 2005; Izadinia, 2012; Fejes & Köpsén, 2014; Köpsén, 2014; Sachs, 2005; Swennen, Jones & Volman, 2010; Trede, Macklin & Bridges, 2012; Wilkins et al., 2012). Unlike professionalism, which can describe a group's behaviour as perceived by those either in the group or outside the group, professional identity has been defined as self-image as a professional. It is closely related to the knowledge and skills one has, the work one does, and the work related to significant others (Robson, 1998). MacLure (1993:311) sees professional identity as a 'resource that people use to explain, justify and make sense of themselves in relation to others, and to the world at large'.

Schein (1978) defined professional identity as the relatively stable and enduring constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, motives and experiences. The core assumption of this constructivist approach is that professional identity becomes less malleable over time as people gain insight into their central and enduring preferences, talents and values.

Ibarra (1999) moves away from the certainty of self-definition and proposes a more malleable form of professional identity that is more closely related to the image. In his adaptation process model, he looks at three areas that influence the adaptation outcomes, namely situational and personal variables, adaptation repertoire and the adaptation tasks. He suggests that people adapt to new professional roles by experimenting within a repertoire of identities and selecting tasks to help them transition. The possible outcomes are also influenced by the individual's past experiences, self-concept, and motives, as well as the situational constraint. The concept of experimentation suggests that individuals go through a phase where their professional identity is uncertain and unstable. Ibarra (1999) looked at junior staff, and many of the people in this study moving into higher education have moved from senior posts with considerable status. Ibarra's concept of provisional selves recognises:

* the agency of the individual
* the interplay of individual situational factors within the process of professional adaption to a new working environment;

It does not recognise a role for pre-existing forms of professional identity or how specific reasons for change are maintained through the transition.

**Factors influencing dual professionals' identity and integration into the academy**

Our research focused on novice academics who had taken part in some form of academic, professional development. These academic fit some of the criteria developed by Whitchurch (2006), who defines them as 'hybrid workers' in higher education who work who straddle different boundaries.. Such individuals are often appointed based on experience/expertise in, for instance, academic literacy, programme design, educational technology and pedagogic research. They are likely to have, or to be acquiring, master's degrees and doctorates; and contribute to the literature on teaching and learning. They also represent an increasingly diverse workforce characterised by movement in and out of higher education, partnership working, and a blurring of boundaries between what are traditionally seen as academic and professional roles(Guild HE report,2018). To build on this, Beaton (first author) considered Ibarra's (1999) concept of provisional selves and factors from three overlapping perspectives, based on Wenger and Wenger-Traynor's conceptual framework of Communities of Practice.

**Figure 1. Potential Communities of Practice**

Communities of Practice (CoPs) have three main characteristics:

* A **shared domain of interest**
* They **help forge relationships which promote collective learning**
* These shared interests and interactions help **grow shared resources and strategies to tackle recurring problems.**

Two further dimensions flow from Community of Practice (CoP) theory, both of which are highly pertinent to blended professionals. Firstly, it postulates individual positioning within a CoP on a continuum between legitimate peripheral participant/novice and expert. How does this feel for blended professionals as novices in HE yet experts in practice? Secondly, the notion of trajectory concerns an individual's intentions concerning the nature and extent of participation in any, or multiple, CoP. Wenger generally postulates involvement in two CoPs, while Beaton's research investigates the extent and effect of blended professionals' involvement in all three.

**Inbound**: an individual decides to invest in their identity as a future new member of a group.

**Peripheral**: an individual opts for significant (to them, in terms of being committed) but limited (in terms of time) participation in a CoP.

**Boundary**: individuals aim to sustain their participation across different CoPs. While the balance of activity may vary over time, the intention is to remain engaged with two or more.

**Outbound**: the process of leaving a CoP, instigated either by a change in circumstances or by the individual, but 'seeing the world and oneself in different ways.' (Wenger in Javitz, 2010: 134).

**Analysis of interview data.**

Perceptions of APD depended heavily on individuals' trajectory. 2/14 of Beaton's interviewees envisaged an inbound trajectory into HE, developing as teachers and researchers in the discipline while maintaining sufficient practice presence to inform their teaching. They appreciated being in a cohort of other early-career staff:' *It made me feel I was part of the process of being ushered along*.' The majority envisaged a boundary trajectory; while some found common ground with other people from practice backgrounds: *'We tended to sit together and we had values and professional behaviours in common'*, in most cohorts, traditional early career academics predominated, underlining different perceptions of practice experts: *'I don't think the university really values anyone who is not committed to being a fulltime academic*.' By contrast, students do: *'A note, a handclap at the end of the lecture… you've made a difference*.'

Irrespective of trajectory, relationships were not sustained outside APD unless mechanisms, such as cross-disciplinary action learning sets, were deliberately built into APD provision. Even then, there was no evidence of longer-term relationships being forged. Highly significant relationships emerged with interdisciplinary colleagues and teams through,

* informal and formal mentoring
* a strong team ethos,
* acknowledgement of practice expertise
* use of professional networks to create opportunities for student placements or workplace-like activities in the curriculum

Blended professionals develop identity and legitimacy from their close interactions with their disciplinary colleagues and feedback from their students, who value them as a bridge between the HE and professional spheres. "*I'm not going to say to my practice colleagues: 'Look how clever I am as a university lecturer' because they would absolutely not appreciate that".* (Peter, Lecturer in Social Work).Blended professionals' legitimacy in their practice sphere was drawn from experience and expertise rather than their new role as a university educator.

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