

Aspects of academic work: Interstices in the managerialist space? (0250)

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In this paper, I examine the academic role from within a framework that focuses on the tensions between structure and agency, with a strong emphasis on the realities of practice, and the positions adopted by academics within that space. I examine in particular the agentic responses that encapsulate an academic's position towards being a teacher and researcher, and the way they perceive their role as educators in higher education. I use the framework of 'educational ideologies' (Becker, 1993; Newman, 1852; Saunders, 2000; Schultz, 1963; Trowler, 1998) to theorise their approaches. In this framework I have identified *production* ideologies which refer to understandings of higher education from within a human capital theory perspective, with a focus on the direct link between higher education and the world of work (Saunders, 2000); *reproduction* ideologies which convey traditional conceptions of the virtue of education for its own sake, and an emphasis on transmitting the arcane of a discipline to reproduce the next generation of discipline experts; and *transformative* ideologies with an emphasis on social, personal or human transformation.

From within a complex and increasingly diverse context of work for academics I have identified six 'moments' or representations of academic practice – the 'managed academic', the 'novice academic', the 'academic and her students', the 'academic and the discipline', the 'academic as researcher', and the 'global academic'. In practice, roles are at the same time more differentiated (with academics allocated to specific, sometimes exclusive, functions) and with permeable facets, as academics are requested to work ubiquitously from ambiguous scripts: across teams, space, specialisms, and from within highly framed structures for planning, delivering, recording and evaluating their activities. In the conference presentation, I focus on the 'managed' academic and the academic as researcher.

I first examine the 'managed' academic, and the responses of academics to managerialism and the performativity regimes in operation in higher education. Work intensification and control through streamlining are the key aspects of this examination: the curriculum; the way feedback is given to students; the experience of students in seminars and lecture theatres; the way virtual learning environments (VLEs) are used; the way students and lecturers interact online; the way academics write research applications; and visualisation of work (planning, recording, accounting for). I show how academics navigate this complex agenda, some more easily than others. From the perspective of individual academics I show that they often choose to comply to the performativity agenda without necessarily 'buying into it'. Amongst the academics I have spoken to, those who sought to re-introduce 'authenticity' in their practice whilst complying with the requirements of regulation were prone to overwork and anxiety.

I then turn to aspects of the research dimension of the academic role, and suggest that, in a space where neoliberal policies have strongly framed the management of research in higher education, there exist forms of engagement with research that seek to challenge it. A significant body of research has shown the impact of performativity regimes on universities (Naidoo, 2003; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Lucas, 2006; Deem, 2003b; Deem *et al*, 2007). This has shown the impact of managerialism on academics' morale and identities. In this context universities have learnt to play to their own strengths and have deployed strategies to ruthlessly harness the research 'game' (Lucas, 2006; Marginson, 2007). This has occurred particularly in countries like Australia and the United Kingdom, where competitiveness regimes are at an 'advanced' stage of development, but also increasingly in mainland Europe as countries realise the consequences of losing their competitive edge (Caillé and Chaniel, 2009). In this context, I suggest that new forms of research are emerging that seek to focus on research as process and dialogue, and contribute to re-framing 'traditional' understandings of research.

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