Imagined futures and relational agency in nurses' writing transitions: A qualitative study across two writing group interventions in a higher education setting.



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Abstract

Nurses in academia face challenges in their writing development. The transition from a clinical setting presents difficulties in positioning oneself as a research writer leading to missed opportunities to disseminate outputs that potentially improve health care outcomes.

This study explores the transitions of individual nurse clinicians and teachers as they engage with a writing group intervention to write a Master's dissertation or a research article. Previous writing group studies have focused on participant outcomes such as productivity and not the developmental processes of becoming a writer. To offer an in-depth analysis of transitions and human development, I took a sociocultural and cultural-historical approach. Theories were drawn upon that emphasise how individuals experience uncertainty and use resources to make sense, and make meaning to reposition themselves and become active agents. 18 participants at a university in the Southeast of England joined one of two writing group interventions to work on academic research writing concepts in a cultural and social learning environment. I posed the following research questions:

- How and why do the participants appropriate the mediational tools from the writing interventions during the work of transition?
- How do the participants experience relational work and deal with contradictions to shape their academic research writing development?

I collected data through participant observation, samples of writing-in-development, and individual narratives spanning up to three years. I analysed the data through a conceptual framework that draws theoretically from a sociocultural understanding of developmental transitions and a cultural-historical perspective on relational agency.

What mattered about becoming a writer in a clinical or teaching role created demands, and the writing tasks caused uncertainties. The research revealed the psychological work of transition through the appropriation of psychological tools. When the hidden aspects of writing were exposed, it led to self-conception and writers' identity work. Novice writers needed to relinquish prior conceptions about writing. However, the transition became developmental when the participants engaged with where-to activities bringing them to the genre of the discipline and enabling concept development through a realisation of their contribution through writing. Becoming an active agent was contingent on supervisory support and cultivating and enacting know-who to align what mattered with others to develop common knowledge about disciplinary writing concepts. The findings revealed the potential to develop writers' identities to help them change the status quo towards an imagined future. However, the contingent issues point to critical areas of practice for writing development that requires nurturing.

The study contributes to the literature on writing group interventions through its original theoretical approach in bringing sociocultural and cultural-historical work together to investigate formative transitions.

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Contents

CHAPTER ONE: THESIS INTRODUCTION 1
1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 The challenges of transition from professional practice to academia 2
1.3 The historical context of a nurse writer 4
1.4 A personal transition to academia 7
1.5 A collaborative writing group project 8
1.6 Academic research writing group interventions in the health care disciplines 11
1.7 Definitions and disciplinary perspectives of transition 13
1.8 The setting of the study: two writing group interventions 15
1.9 Thesis Problem Statement 15
1.10 Thesis Aim 17
1.11 Thesis statement summary 19
1.12 Contributions of the current thesis study and intended audience 25

2 CHAPTER TWO: A META-NARRATIVE REVIEW OF WRITING GROUP INTERVENTIONS FOR THE HEALTH CARE DISCIPLINES 27
2.1 Introduction 27
2.2 The meta-narrative review process 30
2.2.1 Search strategy 31
2.2.2 Assessing the evidence-base 32
2.2.3 Data extraction 33
2.3 The conceptualisation of writing group interventions in higher education (HE) for the health care disciplines 34
2.3.1 Design and types of writing group interventions for the health care disciplines 36
2.3.2 The key themes from the studies included in the meta-narrative review 38
2.4 The research methodologies underpinning the reported studies 49
2.5 The writing pedagogies underpinning the reported studies 56
2.6 The theoretical perspectives underpinning the reported studies 63
2.7 The methodological, pedagogical, and theoretical implications of the meta-narrative review 67
2.7.1 Genre 68
2.7.2 The writing process in a socially elaborated task environment 72
2.7.3 Writers' identities 74
2.7.4 Theoretical implications of the review 76
2.8 Comparing the current meta-narrative review with published reviews of writing group interventions for the health care disciplines 77
2.9 Chapter summary 78

3 CHAPTER THREE: THE SEMIOTIC PRISM AND RELATIONAL AGENCY IN WRITERS' TRANSITIONS. 80
3.1 Introduction 80
3.1.1 Formative and summative transitions 80
3.2 A sociocultural theory of transitions 83
3.2.1 Developmental transitions and the model of the semiotic prism 86
3.2.2 Writing as a mediational tool 93
3.2.3 Vygotsky and his use of tools 94

3.2.4 Speech as a unit of analysis in writing group interventions 97
3.3 A cultural-historical theory perspective on relational work.....100
3.3.1 What matters 103
3.3.2 Relational expertise 108
3.3.3 Common knowledge.....109
3.3.4 Relational agency 111
3.4 Writing as a scientific concept in higher education.....113
3.5 Operationalising the study's research questions.....114

4 CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY FOR A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION ACROSS TWO WRITING GROUP INTERVENTIONS 117
4.1 Introduction 117
4.2 Decision-making process for the study's research design 117
4.2.1 Linking theory with research methodology.....120
4.3 Study setting 121
4.3.1 Writing group Intervention 1 124
4.3.2 Writing group Intervention 2 129
4.3.3 Participants and sampling strategy.....131
4.4 Data collection procedures 134
4.4.1 Participant observation 136
4.4.2 Individual interviews.....140
4.4.3 Collecting samples of participants' writing 142
4.4.4 Fieldnotes.....143
4.4.5 Archival records.....144
4.4.6 Triangulation of data 144
4.5 Making sense of the data.....148
4.5.1 Layer one-An analysis of observed participants' speech interactions ..150
4.5.2 Layer two-The analysis of participants' writing.....153
4.5.3 Layer three-Categorical thinking 156
4.5.4 Layer four- Narrative thinking.....157
4.5.5 Layer five-A theoretical interpretation.....161
4.5.6 The criticality of time in the analysis 169
4.6 Ethics, positionality and trustworthiness.....170
4.6.1 My dual relationships with the research participants 173
4.6.2 Positionality in the research study as a novice researcher, learning designer, facilitator and co-writer.....175
4.6.3 Trustworthiness.....178
4.7 Chapter summary.....181

5 CHAPTER FIVE: A WRITING GROUP INTERVENTION FOR MASTER'S DISSERTATION WRITERS: EMERGING ACADEMIC RESEARCH WRITING CONCEPTS AND RELATIONAL WORK 182
5.1 Introduction 182
5.2 Appropriating mediational tools for the work of transition in dissertation writing 184
5.2.1 The uncertainties of Master's dissertation writers 184
5.2.2 The peer-review of texts as a cognitive and social resource 188
5.2.3 Freewriting as a cognitive and social resource 194
5.2.4 The writer's voice as a cognitive and social resource.....198

5.2.5 The finite resources of Intervention 1 207
5.3 Emerging relational agency through knowing how to know who..... 209
5.3.1 Recognising know-who in the clinical context..... 211
5.3.2 Developing relational agency from the resources of Intervention 1..... 219
5.3.3 Developing know-who through the dissertation research project 227
5.4 The processes of dissertation writers' transitions..... 231
5.4.1 Identity repositioning for dissertation writers 231
5.4.2 knowledge change and skill acquisition for dissertation writers..... 233
5.4.3 Meaning-making for dissertation writers 237
5.5 Chapter summary..... 239

6 CHAPTER SIX: A WRITING GROUP INTERVENTION TO WRITE FOR PUBLICATION: HAVING AN IMAGINARY EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPING RELATIONAL EXPERTISE 242
6.1 Introduction 242
6.2 Appropriating mediational tools during the work of transition in an intervention aimed at writing for publication..... 243
6.2.1 The uncertainties of novice writers for peer-review publication..... 244
6.2.2 The semiotic potential of writing retreats 249
6.2.3 The semiotic potential of tasks and writing activities..... 255
6.2.4 The imaginary components of peer-reviewing..... 261
6.3 Emerging relational agency through writing for publication..... 271
6.3.1 Aligning actions and motives on a co-authored text..... 272
6.3.2 Developing relational agency in the journal peer- review process..... 278
6.3.3 Enacting relational agency through the writing process 287
6.4 The processes of transition when writing for publication..... 298
6.4.1 Identity repositioning when writing for publication 299
6.4.2 Knowledge change and skill acquisition when writing for publication 300
6.4.3 Meaning-making when writing for publication..... 303
6.5 Chapter summary..... 304

7 CHAPTER SEVEN: IMAGINED FUTURES AND RELATIONAL AGENCY- A DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY'S FINDINGS..... 307
7.1 Introduction 307
7.2 Appropriating mediational tools for self-hood..... 310
7.2.1 Exposure..... 311
7.2.2 Letting go of previous conceptions..... 315
7.2.3 The potential of an imaginary component..... 318
7.3 Relational agency as a critical transition 324
7.3.1 Developing know-who 325
7.3.2 Becoming a resourceful practitioner..... 330
7.3.3 Supervisory relationships 334
7.4 Imagined futures..... 339
7.5 Chapter summary..... 341

8 CHAPTER EIGHT: THESIS CONCLUSION 343
8.1 Introduction 343
8.2 Addressing the study research questions 344
8.3 The contributions of the current thesis study 352

8.4 Implications of the thesis study 357
8.4.1 Sustaining the knowledge from the current thesis study 357
8.4.2 Researching and developing the practices to enhance relational agency 360
8.4.3 Nurturing supervisory practices 360
8.5 Limitations and future research agenda 361
8.6 Final reflections 366

REFERENCES 369

APPENDICES 404

APPENDIX A. FURTHER INFORMATION TO SUPPLEMENT THE LITERATURE REVIEW (CHAPTER 2) 405
A. 1. Literature Review Protocol 406
A. 2. Critical appraisal of a qualitative study (Boquet et al. 2017). 410

APPENDIX B. ETHICAL APPROVALS 411
B. 1. CUREC & UREC Approvals 412
B. 2. Participant information and consent forms 414

APPENDIX C. FURTHER INFORMATION TO SUPPLEMENT THE METHODS CHAPTER (CHAPTER 4) 417
C. 1. Code book for intervention 1 417
C. 2. Interview schedules for Intervention 1 and Intervention 2 426
C. 3. Point-to-point activity 430

APPENDIX D 431
D.1. Intervention 1 dissertation writing workshop activities 431
D.2. Analysis of participant observation 444
Text recognition activity 2 (24/6/2015). Participants Zara, Miranda, Leah, Fran, Dana, Fiona 448

List of Tables

Table 2:1: Writing group activities, evaluation studies.....41

Table 2:2:Writing group activities in qualitative studies 44

Table 4:1 Learning activities Intervention 1.....128

Table 4:2 Participant information Intervention 1 131

Table 4:3 Participant information Intervention 2 133

Table 4:4 Relationship between research questions and methods.....135

Table 4:5 Participant observation points.....137

Table 4:6 Data set Intervention 1.....147

Table 4:7 Data set Intervention 2.....148

Table 4:8 Participants' observed speech interactions.....150

Table 4:9 Analysis of participants' writing.....154

Table 4:10 Categorical thinking 156

Table 4:11 Narrative thinking.....160

Table 4:12 Progressive focusing to refine research questions.....162

Table 4:13 Theoretical interpretations 167

List of Figures

Figure 2:1 Constructs examined in the evaluation studies included in the meta-narrative review..... 50

Figure. 2:2 Constructs examined in the qualitative studies included in the meta-narrative review..... 51

Figure. 2:3 Underlying pedagogies of the evaluation studies included in the meta-narrative review..... 56

Figure. 2:4 Underlying pedagogies of the qualitative studies included in the meta-narrative review..... 57

Figure. 2:5 Theoretical perspectives of all studies included in the meta-narrative review 63

Figure. 4:1 Labov's (1972) Narrative Model 159

Figure 5:1 Jessica writing to prompt 203

Figure 5:2 Miranda 2nd draft of literature review April 2015..... 217

Figure 5:3 Miranda final literature review draft September 2016 218

Figure 5:4 Zara draft and final paragraph on social media and breast feeding..... 222

Figure 5:5 Jessica paragraph revision during Intervention 1..... 226

Figure 5:6 Rose dissertation conclusion..... 230

Figure 6:1 Peer review of Jasmine's abstract 264

Figure 6:2 Helen draft for submission to Journal 2 January 2017.....284

Figure 6:3 Helen Journal 2 peer-review feedback, May 2017 285

Figure 6:4 Helen's revised draft for resubmission Journal 1, January 2018.....287

Figure 6:5 Jo 1st dissertation literature review draft January 2015.....291

Figure 6:6 Jo revised dissertation literature review September 2016.....293

Figure 6:7 Jo 1st draft abstract for proposed Journal, October 2016.....296

List of Appendices

Appendix A. Further information to supplement the literature review

Appendix B. Ethical approvals

Appendix C. Further information to supplement the methods chapter (Chapter Four)

Appendix D. Further information about intervention activities and analysis of participant observation

Chapter One: Thesis Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Nurses and other health care practitioners who transition from clinical roles to academia face many challenges in their writing development. This research is about the dialectical relationship between the desire and the opportunities to become a nurse academic research writer and the provoked uncertainties leading to transition. Nursing students, teachers, and clinicians undertake applied research and health service improvement projects with the potential for broader value and influence if disseminated. Not attending to the problem denies the potential to develop nurse writers' identities and the tools to propagate health care evidence already at their fingertips.

This thesis studies the formative development of nurse clinicians and teachers who participate in a higher education writing group intervention to work on a Master's dissertation or a journal article. For the study, I aimed to identify the tools, resources, and conditions to nurture academic research writing by examining the participants' psychological transition processes and how they became active agents in writing development. I chose a sociocultural and cultural-historical approach to analyse transitions and writing development in-depth. Previous studies have focused on the

outcomes of interventions for writing development and not the detailed processes of becoming a writer.

This chapter outlines the empirical and historical background to the study and the problem, including my history of becoming a nurse writer. I describe the study setting and define and discuss transition perspectives. I include an overall summary of how the thesis is structured, and I conclude the chapter by discussing the contributions I make and the audiences that will find the study relevant.

1.2 The challenges of transition from professional practice to academia

Writers and researchers draw attention to the difficulties health care practitioners encounter in transitioning from professional practice to academia. The transition is not just about moving from one place to another. It could concern change from a clinical role in a health care setting to becoming a disciplinary teacher or, as Wells and Edwards (2013) identify, students' learning trajectories when they move between higher education and workplace settings. The issues concern opportunities to develop academic identities, exacerbated by a lack of clear academic pathways and the differential aims of higher education institutions concerning teaching and research.

Historically, nursing and allied health professions have grown as academic disciplines because the educational preparation for entry to such professions occurs in higher education institutions. Such preparation happened in training schools attached to teaching hospitals in the past. However, unlike some other disciplines, there is no recognised academic pathway to becoming a nurse writer or researcher. Doctoral preparation, for example, is not the conventional trajectory from undergraduate nursing,

and there is evidence (Cashion et al., 2019) that declining numbers of nurses pursue a PhD for financial reasons and lack of apparent opportunities.

Most health care practitioners who transition to health care teaching roles in higher education have been academically prepared to Master's level. As argued by Clark, Alcala-Van Houten, & Perea-Ryan (2010), many Master's programmes are vocationally focused. Therefore, health care teachers may not become encultured into academic activities such as academic research writing as a critical skill that disseminates new knowledge and contributes to scholarship and evidence-based practice. Other complicating factors are the tensions between the higher education goals of research and the priorities of nursing faculty, where the focus is on preparing undergraduate students through a clinical skills-based agenda (Andrew et al., 2009). Furthermore, the individual nurse teacher may wish to hold on to prior clinical identities when dealing with predominantly skills-based teaching and to appear credible to students (Andrew et al., 2009; Smith and Boyd, 2012). Wood, Farmer and Goodall (2016) argue that the identity of health care practitioners as academic teachers can become and remain liminal when they do not make a complete transition to an academic identity resulting in unfulfilled potential.

Professionally qualified nurses pursue Master's level study to develop their clinical roles for a higher level of decision-making concerning the care of individuals and communities and implement evidence-based practice. In the United Kingdom (UK), the national health service (NHS) promotes academic clinical pathways for all levels of health care practitioners (National Institute of Health Research, n.d.). The aim for nurses is to promote them into clinical academic roles because there is evidence that such roles lead to improved health care outcomes (Henshall et al., 2021). However, as Henshall et

al. has identified, nurses have a slower transition to these roles than other health care professions. When they attempt to transition through Master's level study, academic research writing is a critical skill to fulfil potential.

Academic research writing is a primary activity within the HE setting and for those who move between higher education sites and clinical health care practice and contributes to evidence of scholarship through writing for peer-review publication, successful research grant applications and academic textbooks. Clark et al. (2010) argue that there is potential for the Master's level health care practitioner to be socialised into academically associated activities through writing development. Gourlay (2011) argues that the hidden nature of academic textual practices contrasts with health care practice, where acquiring skills is through observation and collaboration with others. Whilst there may be aspirations towards scholarly pursuits such as writing for peer-review publication, there is little opportunity to participate (Wood, Farmer, & Goodall, 2016). The conclusions drawn by Gourlay (2011) are that transitioning to academic research writing is confusing, and the individual feels inauthentic by not participating. Similarly, Murray, Stanley & Wright's (2014) systematic review of health care professionals' experiences of transition to academia found feelings of vulnerability and exclusion from higher education activities. Writing group interventions is a potential solution to acculturate health care practitioners to scholarship activities, so it is crucial to investigate how such interventions become meaningful through the transition and the conditions and practices that require nurturing.

1.3 The historical context of a nurse writer

We turn to history for the evidence of how nurses writing can improve health outcomes as illustrated through Florence Nightingale's international influence on nursing

development and practice. Florence Nightingale was born in 1820 into an upper-middle-class Unitarian family with high moral values for social justice (McDonald, 2008). Unusually for a Victorian woman, Nightingale received a classical education (home-schooled by her father) emphasising mathematics, which influenced her later approaches to statistical data collection. Nightingale was the first woman to become a member of the British Statistical Society (American Statistical Association, 2016). Nightingale was also a key figure in developing nursing as a professional discipline. Being a woman in Victorian times was an obstacle to an independent life, including employment. However, Nightingale's drive was a personal ethos, not expectation and convention.

Nightingale's career in nursing started through a commission to lead a group caring for the injured military during the Crimean War at The Scutari Barracks. However, Nightingale wrote prolifically before becoming a nurse. *'Suggestions for Thought* (McDonald, 2008) was an eclectic body of her unpublished writings: on theology; human liberty; women's rights; two versions of one novel; and a short thesis entitled 'Cassandra' about the boredom and triviality of upper class married women's lives. McDonald (2008) identifies the corpus as the intellectual and philosophical foundation for Nightingale's later works.

During Nightingale's leadership at The Scutari Hospital, she collected data associated with mortality and kept scrupulous written records. Her experiences during the Crimean war formed the backdrop for her research into how health care problems could be solved and mortality reduced. Nelson and Rafferty (2010) identified Nightingale as the first person to illustrate statistics through a pie chart when she demonstrated mortality reduction as an outcome of improved sanitation methods. Historical research that I have

carried out with colleagues (O'Connor et al., 2020) has shown that, in collaboration with William Farr, a renowned epidemiologist and medical statistician, she created a pie chart known as a polar area chart, a novel approach to presenting data at that time. The scientific collaboration enabled Nightingale to plot the numbers of deaths per month, with the area of each sector representing the number of deaths and subdivided by using colour based on the cause of mortality. On return from the Crimea, Nightingale continued to work on what was wrong with health care through her writing. Nightingale's seminal text *Notes on Nursing: What it is and What it is Not* (Nightingale, 2010) has influenced formal nurse education globally. Nightingale's corpus developed into letters, pamphlets, and health care reform reports, which became highly influential in the Victorian era. Her works are a constant source of historical analysis by scholars from various disciplines and tell us what we can learn about her life, whom she influenced, and what has resonance for the current day.

Nightingale communicated her values and ideas for the development of health care through letter writing. Her vast correspondence was in the form of letters to eminent and influential others: medical doctors; statisticians; engineers (McDonald, 2020); military medical officers in British colonies (Harper et al., 2014); the clergy; religious missionaries; and hospital architects (Butler, 2013). Nightingale's letters championed the necessary interventions to promote holistic nursing care, hospital administration and design, public health, and health promotion. In turn, Nightingale used her correspondents to collect relevant data and information from their contexts.

The specific health and social care topics across Nightingale's corpus were: hospital reforms (McDonald, 2020); new hospital design that was cost-effective and delivered good clinical outcomes (Butler, 2013); the physicality of travel writing (Gregory, 2018);

the value of education and employment for women (Arnone & Fitzsimons, 2015); the necessary differentiation between nursing and medical concepts; patient safety; environmental activism (Arnone & Fitzsimons, 2015); improving the health of indigenous populations in British colonies (Barber, 1999; Harper et al., 2014); research methodology including the design and validation of data collection instruments: and writing up through a peer-review process (McDonald, 2010). Her research topics established her reputation as a pioneer evidence-based practitioner and of critical cultural importance for the health care disciplines.

Of further importance to nursing was Nightingale's differentiation of nursing concepts. A reading of *Notes on Nursing: What it is and What it is Not,* showed a clear description of nursing as an art and a science. Nightingale conveyed a therapeutic notion of nursing that considered patients as people beyond a specific presenting illness or condition. A later seminal text on nursing was Carper's (1978) *Fundamental Patterns of Knowing in Nursing.* Carper identified four knowledge patterns within nursing to include empirics, aesthetics, personal knowledge, and ethics. Clements and Averill (2006) argue that Nightingale applied these knowledge concepts in her writing, which formed the early underpinnings of nursing practice, research, and education. However, as will be demonstrated in the following literature review chapter, the respective concepts present cultural challenges to nurses in the act of writing (Young, 2005). It appears Nightingale's legacy of writing could be maximised. However, writing group interventions show the potential to expose, examine, and develop such practices.

1.4 A personal transition to academia

After some years as a nurse, midwife and health visitor in the UK National Health Service (NHS), I joined a post-1992 university in 2002 as a senior lecturer in non-

medical prescribing, which was a continuing professional development (CPD) academically credited course for extant health care practitioners to become legal prescribers of medicines for patients in their care. Initially, I found the higher education (HE) context bewildering compared with my prior practice, as my transition involved moving from being an expert in specialist nursing to becoming a novice as an academic teacher.

Not only was I expected to become a teacher, but I was also expected to become an academic writer; however, the institution has a historical reputation regarding higher education pedagogies and widening participation to meet the needs of diverse learners, including their new teachers. A pursuit of scholarship was encouraged through innovative and reflective teaching practices based upon Boyer's (1998) principles. One powerful experience was participation in an institutionally organised writing retreat for cross-disciplinary colleagues. The writing retreat enabled me to become a published writer. When I reflected on how the transition to published author had come about, I identified that having protected time and space to write away from teaching commitments and the opportunity for social interaction with colleagues were the most impactful factors. I was the least experienced writer in the retreat, but the exposure to seeing others in the act of writing and the discussion surrounding each other's writing goals during the break times were encouraging for me and made writing enjoyable. The writing retreat came a few years into my higher education trajectory, and the challenges associated with access to participation in such activities are well-documented.

1.5 A collaborative writing group project

My participatory experiences in cross-disciplinary writing retreats prompted me to consider how bringing people together to write could be implemented in my disciplinary

teaching practice. Leading the non-medical prescribing degree programme was when my teaching journey started, and since then, my scope has evolved to post graduate level programmes in health care. My teaching practice included supervising Master's level dissertations written by learners who undertook their studies alongside professional practice as nurses or allied health professionals. Coinciding with my writing retreat experiences, I reflected with faculty-based colleagues on dissertation supervisees who produced work worthy of wider dissemination. Our judgements emerged from the potential of students' writing and their dissertation topics on timely areas of clinical health care. While pondering with my colleagues about avenues of dissemination for student work, the most obvious point was our lack of academic research writing experience. A potential solution was a collaborative writing group aimed at Master's dissertation students and their supervisors to repurpose completed dissertation texts into peer-review publications for disciplinary audiences.

In 2012, before starting this thesis study, I was awarded a university teaching fellowship to implement a faculty-based writing group for students and staff as a two-year developmental project. The project aims were three-fold: firstly, to facilitate Master's students' access to the publishing landscape through their collaborative work with staff; secondly, to increase staff confidence through their work with students; and thirdly, to expose academic research writing as a higher education practice. Faculty teaching staff were self-selected because I sent them an open invitation; the colleagues who joined identified dissertation supervisees inviting them to collaborate as writing dyads or triads. Overall, 11 participants (five members of staff and six students) engaged during the two-year project. Student participants had completed their academic programmes and had become Master's alumni and, importantly, represented the next generation of

health care academics. The texts worked upon were dissertations reconfigured as journal articles. Given my then novice status as a writing developer, it was necessary to utilise the resources allocated through the fellowship award to engage an appropriately skilled academic writing developer. The facilitator introduced writing activities based upon writing together, discussing writing processes, goal setting, and giving, receiving, and discussing feedback (Haas, 2014). The group established a pattern of one-day writing retreats every six months to work on texts and monthly meetings in between for peer feedback and progress updates.

I obtained local ethical approval for a small-scale evaluation, which I undertook in 2014 as the project ended. Each writing group participant attended an individual interview to reflect upon their overall experiences, and four participants (two alumni and two staff members) responded. The alumni respondents identified that access to practices associated with writing for publication had introduced the notion of audience and diverse writing approaches. One suggestion was introducing such academic writing skills at an earlier stage to influence students' approaches to writing a dissertation or questioning the relevance of a clinical health care practice topic. Thus, alumni perspectives opened writing development possibilities to a broader scope of learners than the project initially aimed. Alumni and teacher respondents identified experiences associated with forming personal and group relationships to develop a text: thinking widely about different forms of publishable writing; the writing process; turning a paper written for academic assessment into a publication manuscript; using the group as a resource and in turn, becoming a resource; and developing former supervisor-supervisee relationships into collegiate ones with reciprocal benefits. Emotionally, the individual writers perceived increased confidence in having something important to say.

On the other hand, one teacher disclosed that he did not enjoy academic writing at all. However, he saw writing development in others through working with a former student and engaging with the group. Peer-feedback processes practised within the group invoked positive feelings because the environment felt safe and non-threatening and instilled confidence when responding to subsequent journal reviewers' feedback. A shortcoming of the evaluation is that the findings represented a snapshot. The developmental processes described by the participants had not been explicitly captured or explored throughout the timeline of the project and consequently were not examined in depth. However, all respondents were unequivocal about a sustainable culture created within the writing group. The concrete outcomes were eight published papers and two alumni who pursued doctoral study.

1.6 Academic research writing group interventions in the health care disciplines

I will now summarise and compare knowledge about writing group interventions in similar disciplinary contexts. I provide a detailed analysis in the following literature review chapter. To date, studies have focused on participants' summative outcomes through local evaluations or qualitative studies. Irrespective of the methodology, productivity measured by publication outputs is the most widely reported outcome closely followed by cost-benefit analyses of implementing writing group interventions (Dwyer et al. 2015; Jackson, 2009). These perspectives are understandable given that scholarly output is a key performance indicator in higher education. However, productivity as a research focus overlooks writing development's temporal, cultural, and social nature. Johnson et al. (2017) stated that a sole focus on writing group

interventions as a means of production marginalises broader social and emotional discourses.

On the other hand, studies that met the criteria for inclusion in the review also reported writing group participants' social, cognitive, and affective outcomes such as active participation in collaborative writing practices, behaviour change, and identity shifts as writers. As shown in the following meta-narrative review chapter, such studies are valuable in identifying a broad set of outcome variables concerning affect, cognition, collaborative relationships to enhance transitional processes, and exploration of writing identities. However, such studies are cross-sectional, with outcome variables examined at one point. Furthermore, many of the studies included in the review were methodologically limited. Quantitative approaches reported small sample sizes, and the use of non-validated data collection instruments and qualitative approaches lacked rigour by using single methods. Few studies in the review stated an underpinning writing pedagogy to guide writing group interventions. A limited number of studies used theories of human development to explain participant outcomes and, where the theory was evident, there was more scope to examine the process of transition purposefully. Thus, participants' experiences of the process of change and transition over time when developing their textual practices in writing group settings remain unexplained and understated.

The next step in my research journey was to develop research for an in-depth and formative exploration of academic writing development in the nursing and allied health care disciplines. The research aimed to enable an insight into how individuals and groups developed their writing practices and overcame the difficulties associated with transition processes. It was imperative to examine writing group interventions

underpinned by evidence-based writing pedagogies that provide resources and access to higher education academic research writing practices. This study aimed to address the disciplinary gap and enhance the understanding of academic disciplinary research writing development. Before I explain the further advancement of writing development in the context as the basis for the thesis study, I will provide general definitions of transition and perspectives of transition as a concept in nursing and the possibilities for understanding the concept through sociocultural notions of transition.

1.7 Definitions and disciplinary perspectives of transition

The dictionary definition of 'transition' implies change, development, and transformation. The etymology of transition is from the Latin noun 'transitio' meaning 'to go across'. Current definitions of transition (WordReference.com Dictionary of English n.d.) include transition as a non-countable noun meaning movement, passage or change from one position or as a countable noun meaning a period during which change takes place or as an intransitive verb 'to transition'. Synonyms include shift, passage, flux, development, transformation, realignment, change, improvement, and optimisation. Transition as a research concept is prevalent in many disciplines such as life-span studies, psychology, early years and school education, career development, social change, demographics, mechanics, technology, management, economics, climate change and ecology. Transition as a research concept in writing development includes applied linguistics, second language writing, school and early years writing, workplace writing, PhD. writing, publishing, and gender studies.

Transition is a multi-dimensional but evolving central nursing concept, primarily inspired by nurse sociologist Afaf Meleis (2009). Meleis' work highlights the importance of human experience in an ever-changing social and economic world.

Transition as a nursing concept applies to nurses as educators, clinicians, and researchers inculcated through four domains: development, situation, health-illness, and organisation. The consequence of transitions for wellbeing is a central scholarship area for nursing. An assumption is that nursing intervenes at times of transition. From a nursing perspective, a transition involves the mastery of behaviours, sentiments, cues, and symbols associated with new roles and identities (Meleis, 2009). A transition includes the following dimensions: time, change, identity formation, transformation, roles, and capacities for learning as further influenced by the broader sociocultural context. Transitions are not single events; they disrupt current reality and impose a change by constructing a new reality. Once the transition is acknowledged, the possibility opens for groups or individuals to make sense of what has happened (Kralik, Visentin and van Loon, 2009). The implications for the nurse researcher are to examine transition at more than *one point in time*. From a research perspective, Kralik et al. (2009) suggest that the non-linear, temporal, and complex nature of transitions requires the researcher to consider longitudinal studies going beyond a single event or inquiring about a single response.

In Chapter Three, I outline a sociocultural (Crafter & Maunder, 2012; Zittoun, 2006, 2008, 2012) and cultural-historical approach (Edwards, 2005, 2011, 2017) to examining transitions. I draw on theories that emphasise how individuals experience uncertainty and use resources to make sense, make meaning, reposition, and become active agents in their writing development and a resource for others.

As argued by Crafter and Maunder, sociocultural transitions are rarely examined formatively. Chapter Two presents ample evidence to support this perspective concerning writing group interventions for health care academics in higher education

settings. The background and context of this thesis study suggest that the transition to academia for nurses and allied health professionals is associated with the development of potential trajectories, transitions, and the work of professional self-identity but presents tensions and contradictions. Transition as a central concept within my discipline of nurse education suggests facilitating others through writing group interventions and supports my contention that an investigation requires a longitudinal research focus over different points in time.

1.8 The setting of the study: two writing group interventions

The study setting was the health care faculty of a UK post-1992 university in the South East of England. In 2014, I was promoted within my academic role to inform the faculty's pedagogic direction because the writing group that I had led enhanced the student and staff experience. Thus, I had a remit to build upon the writing group intervention, which became the thesis study's inception. The writing group evaluation led me in two directions: firstly, a Master's dissertation writing group intervention; and secondly, a writing for publication group intervention for alumni who had completed a Master's dissertation or teaching staff aiming to write a manuscript for peer-review publication. The dissertation writing group intervention was instructor-led and intended to introduce academic research writing principles whilst exploring the academic writing conventions of a dissertation text.

1.9 Thesis Problem Statement

The problem space of the current thesis is the development of academic research writing for the health care disciplines, especially nurses. The issue for the individual health care writer is how they access opportunities for developing their writing and how they

come to use and appropriate the resources that may become available. A difficulty experienced in transitioning to academia from clinical contexts is positioning as an academic research writer creating feelings of inauthenticity, vulnerability, and exclusion (Gourlay, 2011; Murray et al., 2014).

However, nursing as a worldwide discipline has flourished to improve population health due to Florence Nightingale's legacy realised through her eclectic writing genres. An opposing force is a skills-based approach to writing development with influences from biomedicine, objectivist epistemologies, the passive voice, and citation-rich practices (Gardner & Rolfe, 2013; Mitchell, 2018; Ryan et al., 2014). Nevertheless, nursing students, teachers, and clinicians undertake applied research and health service improvement projects with the potential for broader value and influence if disseminated through academic research writing.

Individuals require entrance and access to relational work and activities for the necessary shifts to position themselves as disciplinary writers. The implications for the individual are developing the capacity for relational work to develop their writing and reposition themselves. Appropriate interventions need investigation because access to symbolic and cultural resources underpin the issue. At one level, such an investigation speaks to the discipline in academic settings, and, at a local level, it provides knowledge for the institution about developing scholarship practices to change the culture and process of transition. As shown through the following literature review chapter, undertaken with a systematic approach, there is evidence of writing group interventions in similar settings. However, the focus is on the outcomes for the writers and not the detailed formative process of becoming a writer. Furthermore, previous investigations have not considered any related issues that arise in the writers' social and professional

settings running alongside participation in a writing group. Knowledge of the formative transitions of writers and associated issues could enable a nurturing of the enhancing activities and practices.

Gere (1987) contends that focusing on improving writing means that writing groups are ultimately concerned with language development and fluency. Hence, writing groups align with a Vygotskian (1987) perspective where the source of language is social and emerges from development outside the individual. However, it appears as though no one has focused upon the *formative* process of transition for nursing and allied health disciplines when they engage with writing group interventions. This study sought to understand and richly describe how writing group interventions in a university setting for health care professionals reveals academic research writing development through formative transitions.

1.10 Thesis Aim

The first aim of the current study is to understand how access to cognitive and social resources provided through the writing group interventions related to formative transitions for individuals.

The second aim of the current study is to reveal how the participants developed their capacity for relational work to progress their writing and reposition themselves as resourceful practitioners through their participation in the interventions.

The aims of the study are operationalised through the respective research questions:

- RQ 1. How and why do the participants appropriate the mediational tools from the writing interventions during the work of transition?

- RQ 2. How do the participants experience relational work and deal with contradictions to shape their academic research writing development?

Chapter Three explores the theoretical interpretations of terms of reference used in the research questions such as mediational tool, transitions, relational work, and contradictions. The refinement of the research questions emerged from the literature review for the current thesis, which took a meta-narrative approach as reported in Chapter Two; followed by my considerations for a necessary theoretical framing as outlined in Chapter Three; and engaging with a progressive focusing (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009) as outlined in Chapter Four.

The research focuses on the writing group interventions outlined above and aims to contribute to disciplinary knowledge and enhance academic research writing development. It aimed to fill the gap in disciplinary knowledge about writing group interventions, as evidenced in the literature review chapter. The study design is a basic qualitative research design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) across two writing group interventions as the most appropriate approach for telling a rich and compelling story whilst addressing the research questions and study aims. Furthermore, the study design enabled me to study individuals' writing processes through observation, interviewing and documentary analysis (Wolcott, 2009). The study design underpinned by the theoretical framework made it possible to examine:

- The individual participants, considering their interpretations, uncertainties, intentions, transitions, emotions, motives, actions, activity, behaviour, and academic research writing development during the writing group interventions.

- Participants' experiences, considering how they dealt with the dialectical relationship between individual and institutional motives and what mattered about becoming an academic research writer.

1.11 Thesis statement summary

Chapter One: Thesis introduction

The introductory chapter argued for examining the transition to higher education academic research writing practices in the health care disciplines. The known cultural difficulties associated with transitioning from clinical to academic roles calls for interventions that deal with complexity. The thesis research proposed two writing group interventions: Intervention 1, an instructor-led Master's dissertation writing group; Intervention 2, a collaborative writing group for the Master's level professional writing a journal article. The research aimed to enhance an understanding of how two writing group interventions in a higher education context could lead to academic research writing development through formative transitions and articulated through the following research questions:

- RQ 1. How and why do the participants appropriate the mediational tools from the writing interventions during the work of transition?

- RQ 2. How do the participants experience relational work and deal with contradictions to shape their academic research writing development?

Chapter Two: A meta-narrative review of writing group interventions for the health care disciplines

Chapter Two examines the formative transitions of health care professionals in writing groups. A meta-narrative literature review approach involved a systematic search and critical appraisal of the empirical literature. Furthermore, I evaluated how writing development pedagogies had underpinned interventions, identifying which theories of human development elevated the findings. As an outcome, I identified gaps in the literature. An appropriate methodology, pedagogy, and theory will fill such gaps with: an in-depth and longitudinal investigation; attention to the writing process in a socially elaborated task environment; a detailed exploration of disciplinary genres in the development of writers' identities; and an application of theories of human development to consider the micro, meso and macro aspects of writing development. The value of my approach in this chapter is how it synthesises the extant literature on writing group interventions for the health care disciplines with appropriate writing pedagogies and raises areas to consider for the future and its potential application beyond the current thesis study.

Chapter Three: The semiotic prism and relational agency in writers' transitions.

Chapter Three focuses on two key concepts, developmental transitions (the semiotic prism) and relational agency. To analyse transitions and writing development in-depth, I chose a sociocultural and cultural-historical approach. Previous studies have focused on the outcomes of writing group interventions for writing development and not the detailed processes of becoming a writer. Zittoun's (2006, 2008, 2012) model of the semiotic prism provides a lens for examining developmental change based on the individual's sphere of experience over time and in specific places. Because this is a writing study, I integrate other relevant but complementary concepts with Zittoun's model, such as writing as a mediational tool (Smagorinsky, 2011), speech as a unit of

analysis (Mercer, 1995, 2000; Middleton, 2011) and writers' identities (Ivanič, 1998). The transition to becoming a writer involves working relationally with others. Writing groups aim to foster relational work, but the phenomenon is rarely examined.

Furthermore, writing development is shaped by meso and macro factors in the writer's environment, which may constrain or facilitate transitions. The question for the current thesis was how the relational nature of the writing groups and relevant issues arising in the participant's environment acted as the first stimulus for relational work. Edward's (2005, 2011, 2017) model of relational agency provides a lens to examine how the writers deal with the first stimulus by identifying what matters about becoming an academic research writer, identifying know-who, and becoming an active agent in one's writing development and a resource to others.

Chapter Four: Methodology for a qualitative investigation across two writing group interventions

Chapter Four concerns the research methodology for the study. I discuss my design - decision-making process for a basic qualitative approach (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). These are: addressing methodological gaps in the prior literature by taking the best view of the phenomenon, incorporating multiple methods to examine individuals' writing processes flexibly, and using the theoretical framework to interpret the processes of the participants' transitions. I explain the study setting, the pedagogy and design of the two writing group interventions and the participant sample. In addition, I discuss data collection procedures and ethical considerations, including my various roles as writing group convenor, co-writer and researcher.

Chapter Five: A writing group intervention for Master's dissertation writers: Emerging academic research writing concepts and relational work

Chapter Five is the first of two findings chapters. This chapter will present the psychological work of transition undertaken by individual participants as they tackled an unfamiliar writing task using the social and cognitive resources provided by Intervention 1, an instructor-led Master's dissertation writing group intervention. Furthermore, the chapter will show the potential for how the individual participants can develop the capacity to propel themselves forward as academic research writers by drawing on expertise and identifying their expertise to become a resource for others. This chapter will use the concept of the semiotic prism to explore the work of transition and the concept of relational agency to examine the development of the participants' relational work within and outside the intervention.

Chapter Six: A writing group intervention to write for publication: having an imaginary experience and developing relational expertise.

Chapter Six is about individuals who engaged with Intervention 2 to write a journal article. The chapter will examine the uncertainties of the participants who had recently undergone personal change as an outcome of postgraduate study or professional development activities. However, they intended to reconfigure a Master's dissertation or a professional text as journal articles for peer-review publication because the work carried personal and professional meaningfulness and had implications for clinical and teaching practices. I will examine their psychological work of transition by mobilising the interventions' cognitive and social resources as mediational tools.

I will identify what matters about the development of academic research writing to the individual participants in Intervention 2. I will consider issues that arose outside or as an outcome of Intervention 2, such as demands from sociocultural contexts that create contradictions and critical conflicts to develop academic research writing. I then will examine how the participants can overcome such issues through their distributed relational work and the extent to which they can become active agents in their writing development. Finally, I will explore the specific development of the individual's academic research writing, comprising their self-evaluation and my analysis through the lens of academic research writing concepts.

Chapter Seven: Imagined futures and relational agency- a discussion of the study's findings

Chapter Seven presents a synthesis and discussion of the findings across both writing group interventions. the chapter shows the analytic and interpretive processes I have undertaken to conceptualise the writing group interventions as imagined futures for novice writers when they have the resources to enact relational agency. I start the chapter with a general summary of the findings from both interventions before taking a in-depth analysis into the issues that require more attention. In synthesising the findings, I highlight the significant results from the study to consider the theoretical implications and what merits further attention for the writing development practices that need sustaining and nurturing.

Chapter Eight: Thesis conclusion

Chapter Eight concludes the thesis and presents the critical findings of the study concerning the research aims and research questions. The conclusion summarises the

conditions in writing group interventions where the hidden aspects of writing may be exposed, leading to self-conception and writers' identity work. Novice writers approaching academic research writing tasks or moving between them need to relinquish previous understanding of writing concepts. However, the transition becomes developmental when the individual engages with imaginary and where-to activities and tools that bring them to the genre of the discipline enabling academic research writing concept development and anticipation for the writer that they have an opportunity to contribute.

Grasping an understanding of academic research writing concept development in the context revealed the necessity for distributed relational work as a transition. The current research study showed the conditions for the enactment of an emergent relational agency and becoming a resourceful practitioner, which is contingent upon what matters about writing about a meaningful topic, supervisory support, recognising and enacting know-who and using the tools developed through the interventions and iteratively for themselves and others. The findings reveal the potential to develop writers' identities and help them change the status quo. Such potential is critical in the problem space of the current thesis study. However, the point here is a contingency, and some issues were out of the novice writers control, which points to areas of necessary practice and educational improvement. Relational agency has not been used as a lens for investigating writing group interventions previously but is gaining interest in the field as an attribute and mediational tool for research writing development. The chapter also discusses the contribution of the study, its limitations, and a future research agenda.

1.12 Contributions of the current thesis study and intended audience

I will discuss the research contributions in detail in Chapter Eight. They contribute in different ways. Theoretically, I established new links between sociocultural and cultural-historical theory to conceptualise formative transitions. Principally between Zittoun's work on developmental transitions and Edwards' work on relational agency.

I have made two empirical contributions. First, while the focus of the research is writing group interventions for the health care disciplines, specifically nurses, I have brought my findings and the voices of other scholars to the writing group discourse concerning writing identities, peer feedback and collaborative writing. My contribution broadens and deepens the extant literature on writing groups and positions my research with those who teach and research postgraduate writing.

My second empirical contribution is through the meta-narrative literature review that informed the study's methodological, pedagogical and theoretical direction and stood as an entity because it raises issues to consider about writing group intervention research relevant to researchers in the field. Furthermore, the steps that I have taken are easy to replicate, and as I explain in Chapter Eight, I have used the design as a mediational tool for writing development in the postgraduate curriculum.

Although the thesis focuses on formative transitions in writing group interventions, I hope to contribute to our understanding of how we nurture the conditions to develop nurses' academic research writing identities and give them the tools to develop and disseminate their practice and research activities. Thus, research findings are relevant to scholars interested in how health care groups learn and develop their writing and those interested in supporting nurses' writing development in higher education and

clinical settings to raise their awareness of conditions for developmental transitions. Scholars who investigate formative transitions will find the findings relevant to their work.

In addition, the findings and theoretical discussion of the research can offer postgraduate students to reflect on their writing development and how to deal with the contradictions they encounter. The findings and tools developed through the study can foster the enactment of relational agency for writers and address competing demands by considering how they might become active agents in their writing development and a resource for others.

2 Chapter Two: A meta-narrative review of writing group interventions for the health care disciplines

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the current thesis study based upon an academic challenge. The transition from clinical to academic contexts presents difficulties for health care practitioners in becoming academic research writers. The difficulties are well-documented (Andrew et al., 2009; Gourlay, 2011; Murray et al., 2014; Smith & Boyd, 2012) with suggestions for socially situated interventions such as writing groups to support dissertation writing, thesis writing, or writing for peer-review publication.

In this chapter, I report a meta-narrative approach to examine the current empirical evidence on writing group interventions for the health care disciplines. I systematically reviewed the research methodologies, writing development pedagogies, and underpinning theoretical frameworks within the current evidence-base. I synthesised the findings with relevant writing group pedagogies to highlight any concerns herein to inform the current thesis study's pedagogical, theoretical, and methodological direction.

It is essential to clarify what is meant by the term ‘writing group’. Aitchison and Guerin (2014) define a ‘writing group’ as an umbrella description referring to situations where more than two people collaborate about writing in a sustained way. The approach is profoundly social and embedded in practice. Both Gere (1987) and Pare (2014) argue that writing groups recreate the peer-review process associated with writing scholarship. This literature review focused on writing groups for the composition of

academic research writing, which, as suggested by Russell and Cortes (2012), is the scientific writing undertaken by students and academic teachers as distinct from the writing of professionals. In academic contexts, diverse writing genres such as essays, portfolios and reflective writing confront nurses and professionals allied to health. The current review and thesis study are concerned with writing composed for dissertation writing or research articles.

Previous published empirical reviews have examined the effectiveness of writing group approaches to increase productivity and publication outputs (Frantz & Amosun, 2011; McGrail, Rickard, & Jones, 2006) but provide a limited understanding of the process of learning and development in such contexts.

An enhanced understanding of appropriate approaches to explore writing group interventions could lead to studies into how writers develop cognitively, emotionally, and socially to nurture future writing practices. Furthermore, several authors have critiqued writing group intervention research because the contexts and processes are under-examined and under-theorised (Aitchison and Guerin 2014; Badenhorst et al. 2015). Kempenaar and Murray (2016) have recently reviewed writing group interventions in higher education and theorised the benefits. I agree with their perspective that higher education writing programmes need considering within the macro and mesostructures of their contexts. Whilst Kempenaar and Murray used an explicit criterion for selection, there was no attempt to appraise the reviewed studies critically. In this meta-narrative review, I draw attention to the critical importance of investigating writing interventions in a valid, reliable, and rigorous way. I used a structured and validated method for undertaking a review and revealed the gaps in the use of appropriate methodologies, theories, and pedagogies.

A meta-narrative review approach is a method of systematically undertaking a review of related literature. Greenhalgh et al. (2005); Wong et al. (2013); and Booth, Sutton, and Papaioannou (2016) identify that a meta-narrative review illuminates a problem by raising areas to consider rather than finding definitive answers. The current review rested on the assumption of writing groups as contexts where people may become enabled to develop scholarship practices, whilst recognising that writing development is a challenging and long-term cognitive, emotional, cultural, and social process (Vygotsky 1987; Bereiter and Scardamalia 1987; Murray 1997; Kellogg 2008; Smagorinsky 2011).

The empirical component of the review focused on the collective level of analysis to understand:

- The rigour, reliability, and validity of the current research methodologies used to examine writing group interventions in higher education contexts for nursing and allied health disciplines.

To achieve the objectives, I created sub-questions by following a meta-narrative review approach (Wong et al., 2013):

- How have writing group interventions in higher education (HE) been conceptualised for the health care disciplines?

- What types of research methodologies have been used to examine such writing group interventions?

- What range of writing pedagogies are used to underpin such interventions?

- Which theories have been used to explain transitions or participant development within such interventions?

- What are the implications for the practices and investigation of writing group interventions in the health care disciplines?

2.2 The meta-narrative review process

The review process took a systematic approach based on the following steps as recommended by Booth et al. (2016):

1. Defining the scope of the review.

2. Searching the literature.

3. Assessing the evidence base.

4. Synthesising and analysing the empirical studies alongside other sources such as pedagogical approaches to adult writing development and theories of human development.

As suggested by Wong et al. (2013), a meta-narrative review has the potential to generate many avenues for exploration. This meta-narrative review is limited to including empirical studies of writing group interventions for the health care disciplines.

I developed a protocol (Appendix A. 1.) to specify the criteria for included and excluded empirical studies, types of population, types of intervention or exposure, settings, relevant databases, websites, writing research peer-reviewed journals, sources of expert opinion, search terms, strings, and limitations.

2.2.1 Search strategy

Searches were limited to adults (over 18 years) and filtered to studies of adults published in English. Reference lists, subject-specific websites, and key journals (Appendix A.1.) were searched. The search strategy was carried out in collaboration with an education specialist librarian. Unpublished studies, editorials, opinion pieces, and discussion articles were excluded. Studies were reviewed for the following criteria:

1. Primary research or an evaluation study.
2. Empirical data on a writing group.
3. Interventions to support academic research writing in the health care disciplines for postgraduate students and faculty teaching staff.
4. Reporting to any extent on the social, cultural, psychological, or emotional development contributing to the academic research writing development of the participants in the study.

The search strategy produced 51 articles from the following databases:

- SCOPUS™.
- ERIC™.
- BEI™.
- ZETOC™.
- CINAHL™.
- EBHOST™.

- PsycINFO™.
- Web of Science™.

Duplicates and articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria were removed. Eight citations were found from searching reference lists and key journals, leaving 41 citations. Each abstract was read for relevance. A writing specialist colleague screened the abstracts independently to reduce bias whilst selecting only the most relevant articles. We excluded six papers at this stage for not meeting the protocol criteria through our consensus. We excluded four further papers at the next stage by reading each in full and reaching a consensus about the articles to be included in the review. Writing group interventions at the tertiary level for health care professions are also implemented in clinical contexts, so we did not exclude such studies if they otherwise met the inclusion criteria. A total of 30 articles met the inclusion criteria.

2.2.2 Assessing the evidence-base

The included studies were critically appraised with appropriate frameworks aligned with study designs to assess validity, applicability, transferability, and generalisability. Critical appraisal is the process where variations and similarities between study designs are captured and analysed for credibility and susceptibility to bias (Littell et al., 2008). Critical appraisal tools enable the research appraiser to undertake the appraisal process systematically. The University of South Australia (hutr, n.d.) has curated an online library of critical appraisal tools designed for educational research. An example of my application for this review may be found in (Appendix A. 2.).

2.2.3 Data extraction

The following bibliographic characteristics were extracted from the critically appraised articles: author, date; title, article; and journal title. To address the review questions, the following information was also extracted:

- Context.
- Disciplinary group.
- Type of writing group intervention.
- The rationale for the intervention.
- Educational activities as undertaken by participants during the intervention.
- Duration and frequency of the intervention.
- Underlying pedagogy.
- Methods of investigation.
- Data collection.
- Points of observation.
- Data analysis.
- Underlying theories of human development.
- Reliability/validity/trustworthiness.
- Themes (qualitative research).

The data synthesis was guided pragmatically by the review questions through categorising the concepts, notions, and ideas expressed in the selected studies. The data were further synthesised to represent how writing group interventions had been approached methodologically, theoretically, and underpinned with a writing pedagogy. Relevant literature was integrated from books and sources of expert opinion to position the analysed studies.

2.3 The conceptualisation of writing group interventions in higher education (HE) for the health care disciplines

Initial observations indicated two straightforward study design approaches. Firstly, evaluation studies (n=21) and qualitative designs (n=9). I discuss the differences between evaluation and research in a later section, including a more in-depth examination of the methodologies and methods of the selected studies. Including evaluation studies in the review is questionable because evaluation and research may possess differential origins, purposes, and focus (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). In keeping with the rationale for a meta-review approach, it is important to convey the culture and pedagogy of the discipline. An evaluation study appears to be the most common approach for investigating writing group interventions in the health care disciplines.

To address the first review question, I analysed the following: the contexts of the writing group interventions; geographical location; educational setting; demographic details of the participants; the rationale for the implementation of interventions within the selected studies, and how the interventions were designed including the activities undertaken by participants. Nursing was the most represented discipline in the 30 studies included. Ten of the studies described the participant sample as multidisciplinary including art, humanities and social sciences and vocational disciplines such as medicine, education, occupational therapy, social work, pharmacy, physiotherapy, public health, and speech and language therapy. Most writing group interventions were designed for academic faculty, including post-doctoral researchers and doctoral students. Three studies (Boquet et al., 2017; Fergie et al., 2011; Guerin et al., 2013) reported on a writing group intervention specifically for doctoral students. Two studies (Dysthe, 2012; Garside et al., 2015) included an intervention for Master's level students and faculty staff. Three

studies (Jackson, 2009; Stone et al., 2010; Wilson et al., 2013) included local clinical staff alongside faculty staff. Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 show the types of writing group interventions, but without exception, these were all conducted in real-time face-to-face environments. One intervention, Brandon et al. (2015), included an online component for peer-review of participants' manuscripts following writing group meetings. The reported writing group interventions were led by higher education institutions in the following countries: Australia, Canada, Norway, Scotland, South Africa, UK, and the USA. Low and middle-income countries were not represented at all, which may not be surprising given that writing group interventions have resource implications.

All studies included in the review stated their aims for a writing group intervention. Most evaluation studies supported writing skill development (Brandon et al., 2015; Cable et al., 2013; Falk et al., 2014; Houfek et al., 2010; Noone & Young, 2019; Paliadelis et al., 2015) to emphasise productivity (Bullion & Brower, 2017; Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; Fleming et al., 2017; Houfek et al., 2010; Ness et al., 2014; Noone & Young, 2019; Rickard et al., 2009; Sanderson et al., 2012; Tyndall et al., 2019; Weaver et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2013). Developing a community through peer or expert support was seen as necessary for both skill development and productivity (Bullion & Brower, 2017; Cable et al.;2013: Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; Noone & Young, 2019; Paliadelis et al., 2015). Some studies addressed the emotional aspects of writing such as fear, confidence, and motivation through writing skill development (Ansryan et al., 2019; Brandon et al., 2015; Houfek et al., 2010; Sanderson et al., 2012; Stone et al., 2010; Tyndall et al., 2019; Weaver et al., 2014). Comparatively, the rationale for qualitative studies also focused on writing skill development (Boquet et al., 2017; Dysthe, 2012; Garside et al., 2015; Murray & Newton, 2009), productivity (Dysthe,

2012; Guerin et al., 2013; Murray & Newton, 2009) and the importance of community and collaboration to promote writing skills and achieve outputs (Boquet et al., 2017; Dysthe, 2012; Fergie et al., 2011; Garside et al., 2015; Guerin et al., 2013; Johnson et al., 2017; Wittman et al., 2008).

In contrast with the evaluation studies, the qualitative research reports conveyed complex contexts requiring a writing intervention. For example, Boquet et al. (2017) investigated professional doctorate nursing students' needs for writing development because the students are immersed in non-academic workplace writing and encounter difficulties transitioning to a complex academic discourse community. Garside et al. (2015) examined collaborative writing between vocational faculty teachers (including health care), undergraduate and postgraduate learners.

The qualitative research reports were published in international higher education journals and appeared oriented towards a multidisciplinary approach for postgraduate writing development and writing for peer-review publication. Comparatively, most evaluation studies were published in practitioner journals and appeared orientated towards a disciplinary approach for novice writing towards peer-review publication.

2.3.1 Design and types of writing group interventions for the health care disciplines

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show the activities in the evaluated writing group interventions. The most common type of intervention was a writing retreat with a combination of structured activities, closely followed by writing groups and writing workshops. Some writing group interventions consisted of more than one approach: a writing retreat followed by a series of writing workshops or writing group meetings (see Tables 2.1

and 2.2). I have categorised the activities as reported into three principal areas which aligned with the rationale for the interventions:

1. Writing skill development.

2. Productivity.

3. Forming a community through collaborative practices.

Writing skill development appeared as predominantly 'expert'-led by published authors in the discipline, although some writing group interventions were peer-led, for example, when experienced writers were co-participants as reported by Guerin et al. (2013), Johnson et al. (2017) and Wittman et al. (2008). Writing skill development appeared inculcated with structured activities such as writing in the house style of specific disciplinary journals and identifying audience needs. Gere's (1987) historical analysis of the evolution of writing groups suggests a standard set of shared features in all contexts. These are temporality through immediate responses from peers and a physical reduction of the distance between reader and writer through a social dimension of writing. Writing groups convene voluntarily and involuntarily. A voluntary writing group assumes a willingness for the participants to give authority for personal writing to peers, whereas an involuntary writing group intervention assumes the authority of the instructor or teacher. Studies in the review alluded to, rather than identified, writing pedagogies or models, which I explore in a later section. Productivity type activities were characterised by:

- Clear leadership.
- Rules.

- Pre-selection for membership of a writing group intervention based upon productivity potential.
- Goal setting.
- Deadline setting.
- Reciprocal accountability.
- Dedicated writing time during the interventions.

Community forming and collaboration type activities were characterised by mentorship, which was expert-led including peer-review of participant drafts and five studies reported work on collaborative writing projects or potential outputs. An assumption appeared that a focus on structure, productivity, and community could ameliorate the emotional aspects of writing development such as fear and motivation. The writing retreat as a predominant intervention was unsurprising because of the potential for time and space away from other commitments to undertake writing development activities. The duration and timing of interventions varied between three days and two years, and the numbers of participants varied between five and forty-nine.

2.3.2 The key themes from the studies included in the meta-narrative review

The reported results and the subsequent claims for the success of the studies included in the review occupy four themes: productivity, collaboration, behaviour change, and identity shifts. I discuss each theme in the following sections. Haas's (2014) typology of writing groups describes ten success variables. These include purpose, membership, leadership, contact, time, frequency, length, duration, in-meeting and in-between meeting activities. Most studies reported evidence of these variables to some extent, and Ness et al. (2014) cited Haas's typology as a design consideration for their intervention.

Most studies included in the meta-narrative review, with some exceptions, reported on productivity outputs as the main findings and outcomes. Reports included the specific number of published outputs (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; Rickard et al., 2009; Houfek et al., 2010; Sanderson, Carter and Schuessler, 2012; Cable et al., 2013; Brandon et al., 2015; Garside et al., 2015; Paliadelis et al., 2015; Kramer and Libhaber, 2016; and Brower, 2017; Fleming et al., 2017; Noone and Young, 2019) In most cases, it was contended that the intervention had positively affected the number of participant publications. Brandon et al. (2015), Cable et al. (2013), Paliadelis et al. (2015), Rickard et al. (2009), and Sanderson et al. (2012) compared the number of participants' published outputs at baseline with the numbers at a point following the intervention. Fleming et al. (2017) compared the number of participants' published outputs with a matched cohort who had not participated in the intervention. Jackson (2009), Paliadelis et al. (2015), and Kramer and Libhaber (2016) undertook a cost-benefit analysis by comparing the resources required to implement and run a writing group intervention with the revenue generated by the institution from publication metrics. They concluded favourable benefits compared with the costs. A focus on productivity is unsurprising given the pressure to publish in health care disciplines, especially nursing, and the reward and recognition for higher education institutions through scholarly outputs.

As stated earlier, the main reason to implement writing group interventions that became apparent through the review was community building and collaborative practices. There was a differentiation between interventions that developed collaborative practices to stimulate productivity and those focused on creating a writing group as an authentic scholarly space. The latter were most relevant for this review because the interventions linked collaborative activities with supporting participants to make transitions. For

example, Falk et al. (2014) described a writing module during a professional doctorate programme where the students from health care disciplines worked collaboratively with senior academics to write real-world research funding applications. The student participants reported increased confidence and overcoming prior barriers to academic research writing, and the expert participants reported that engaging with and questioning learners expanded their thinking. Turner et al. (2014) described facilitated writing for publication group intervention for vocational teachers (including health care) from higher education in further education colleges in the UK. The study brought together multi-disciplinary teachers to write a collaborative text about research within their teaching practices as an entry point to writing in a higher education genre. The findings conveyed how the transition into academic roles makes individuals doubt their credibility. However, the collaborative venture helped deal with the fear of critique from going public with writing. Garside et al. (2015) described a writing for publication intervention aimed at dissertation supervisors from vocational disciplines with undergraduate and postgraduate supervisees. Supervisor and supervisee dyads received support to develop a collaboratively written output that contributed to the respective discipline. Joint working led to trust and peer support, and all parties found co-authorship mutually rewarding.

Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 summarise the studies included in the review, which shows a categorisation of the type of interventions and the activities that took place in each respective intervention. Table 2.1 shows the evaluation studies.

Table 2:1: Writing group activities, evaluation studies.

Author/s	**Type of intervention**	**Categorisation of activities**		
		Writing skill development	***Productivity***	***Community & collaboration***
Falk et al. (2014)	Writing module during a professional doctorate programme		Weekly meetings to identify writing goals	Identification of participants' roles. Identification of potential contribution from each collaborator
Brandon et al. (2015)	Writer's circle	Face-to-face meetings in clinical hours and exchange of texts online.		
Bullion & Brower (2017)	Writing retreat		Setting of participant goals, time to write drafts (day 1)	Peer-feedback (day 2)
Cable et al. (2013)	Writing retreat	Pre-retreat structured tasks		Peer mentorship
Dickson-swift et al. (2009)	Writing retreat	Expert writing advice	3 consecutive days of writing	Peer-feedback
Dwyer et al. (2015)	Writing retreat	Expert-led writing sessions, writing skills, argument, narrative, tailoring to audiences, responding to reviewers	Setting of goals using Vancouver protocol	
Fleming et al. (2017)	Writing group	Discussion of current scholarly activities with assessment of progress.	Motivation, reciprocal accountability.	Peer-feedback and mentorship

Houfek et al. (2010)	Writing group	Gray's methods, consultation, and brainstorming	Develop goals for writing outside meetings	Peer-feedback
Kramer & Libhaber (2016)	Writing retreat & writing group	Introductory workshop	Attend retreat with ready-prepared text	Peer-feedback
Kulage & Larson (2016)	Writing group	Expert support		Peer-feedback
Ness et al. (2014)	Writing group	Discussion of ideas for publication and outputs.	Agree deadlines and in-between meeting activities	Collaborative writing & peer-feedback
Noone & Young (2019)	Writing retreat	Structured discussions	Full days of writing	Peer-feedback
Paliadelis et al. (2015)	Writing retreat & writing group	Preparatory writing workshops led by senior academics, planning a paper, support to write 'well-crafted' papers	Participants selected by application after attendance at an initial workshop.	
Rickard et al. (2015)	Writing group & writing workshop	Expert-led 5-day workshop	Participant attendance contingent upon tangible project to write about, writing time	1-2-1 and peer-feedback
Sanderson et al. (2012)	Writing coach	Small group sessions to facilitate writing	Participant identification of one concrete writing for publication goal	1-2-1 and peer-feedback
Tyndall et al. (2019)	Writing group	Weekly facilitated writing meetings	Updates on writing projects, individual writing time, reporting of achievement of weekly goals	

Jackson (2009)	Writing retreat		Pre-retreat selection of novice writers with a goal & willingness to work with a mentor	Peer-feedback
Weaver et al. (2014)	Writing group		Facilitated goal setting, group commitment, regular writing, progress updates	Peer support, mentorship
Stone et al. (2009)	Writing group	Expert-led workshop on ideas from clinical practice for writing	Commitment to meet regularly	Peer-feedback
Ansryan et al. (2019)	Writing workshops	Accepted participants assigned a mentor and subject librarian	Pre-intervention, prospective participants submitted an abstract for consideration	Mentorship
Wilson et al. (2013)	Writing workshops	Introduction to manuscript formats, database searching.		Buddy pairs encouraged

Table 2.2 shows the qualitative studies, and as already stated, the activities taking place in interventions fall into the categories of writing skill development, productivity, building community, and developing collaboration.

Some writing group interventions that promoted collaborative practices were integral to Master's and Doctoral degrees programmes. Dysthe (2012) outlined an approach to implement 'multivoicedness' into the academic research writing experience for vocational Master's students. The strategy involved a dual focus on collaboration. Firstly, student colloquia where the participants aired their concerns and shared drafts in progress. Secondly, a supervisor and supervisee group where the supervisees

presented their drafts in progress for feedback. Dysthe suggested that the student colloquia acted as the first filter for emotions and exposed the usually hidden dissertation writing process. The supervisor and supervisee group inculcated mutual obligation and access to many voices enabling participation within an academic community

Table 2:2:Writing group activities in qualitative studies

Author	**Intervention**	**Categorisation of activities**		
		Writing skill development	***Productivity***	***Community & collaboration***
Boquet et al. (2017)	Writing support	Writing support implemented into two modules in a DNP		
Dysthe (2012)	Writing group	Weekly student colloquia, discussion on theory and method for dissertation writing	Leadership & rules	Supervisor and student discussion & feedback on drafts
Fergie et al. (2011)	Writing course	9 x 2-hour group sessions & activities, writing process		Mentorship
Garside et al. (2015)	Writing retreat and writing group	Expert-led panel discussion, guest editors	Student & supervisor pairs selected to participate on the criteria of a proposal that represented a contribution & commitment to the process, two-day writing retreat with writing time	Each dyad assigned a coach

Guerin et al. (2014)	Writing group	Facilitation to form a community likened to belonging to an authentic academic community		Participants took on the responsibility of running the group
MacLeod et al. (2012)	Writing retreat		Structured writing retreat	
Murray & Newton (2009)	Writing course	Expert-led facilitation to introduce range of writing skills	Introduction to long-term productive writing processes	
Johnson et al. (2017)	Writing group			Mutually supportive group of neighbours from same HEI meet to support academic and non-academic writing
Wittman et al. (2008)	Writing retreat			Dialogue prompted by sharing individual photographs to represent personal biases and assumptions

Boquet et al. (2017) addressed the difficulties experienced by doctoral nursing students as they transitioned to academic research writing by identifying collaborative models of support for academic disciplinary writing in one higher education institution. A two-year project was facilitated by a writing developer to co-design collaborative writing strategies with faculty and the student group. Boquet et al. suggested a shift between individual writing practices, community development in writing, and the integration of knowledge domains between all parties.

A further approach towards collaboration was peer-led writing groups. Guerin et al. (2013) facilitated a writing group intervention for public health doctoral students to

authenticate interdisciplinary collaboration whilst maintaining momentum and positivity about thesis writing. The participants reported improved writing skills, an increased understanding of academic culture, networking, giving and receiving feedback, and audience awareness. Johnson et al. (2017) described a neighbourhood writing group for a multi-disciplinary group of academics from the same institution and non-academic community members. The self-reported outcomes were the value of relationships to develop writing processes reciprocally. Similarly, Ness et al. (2014) described a peer group of nursing lecturers writing collaboratively about their teaching practices. The self-reported outcomes dealt with anxiety and confidence through the constructive challenge during the writing group process and mutual responsibility for development.

Few studies reported the cognitive changes associated with engaging in writing interventions. However, some studies emphasised the importance of behaviour change over time to influence writing practices, confidence, motivation, and skills. For example, Weaver et al.(2014) implemented a writing group intervention for vocational disciplines within one institution to demystify the publication process. They evaluated the extent to which participants: improved confidence in their ability to publish, improved knowledge about the critical stages of publishing, and improved their writing following the intervention. The findings suggested that participants' publishing goals had not changed, but they were more realistic about achieving them. Participants' spoken metaphors about writing practices implied increased confidence in achieving a publication. MacLeod et al. (2012) explored the persisting barriers to publication following a writing retreat for social work academic teachers and the strategies used to overcome the barriers and consequent changes in writing practices. The authors drew

upon containment theory to explain how participants' writing behaviours changed following the intervention. The findings suggested an emotional containment following the retreat. Participants had recognised that writing for publication provoked anxiety creating anti-task behaviour, ambivalence, or perfection-seeking. However, participation in the retreat had provided physical, social, and psychological support and created confidence. Organisational containment was perceived because the retreat focused on writing as crucial to the primary task of the participant's higher education employer.

Given that the higher education institution had supported attendance at the retreat, organisational containment was further enhanced. Epistemological containment was felt because participants could differentiate between their writing and teaching practices. The combination of immediacy and the visibility of other people's writing and peer-feedback during the retreat created a shift in self-perception about writing as a legitimate role. In a similar vein, Murray and Newton (2009) explored the experiences of physiotherapy practitioners who attended a higher education writing for publication course and their use of writing practices on return to the workplace. The participants' experiences of the course introduced strategies for regular writing leading to behaviour change around active clinical roles. Furthermore, some strategies were transferable to other writing trajectories, such as writing a job application. However, the workplace environment was not conducive to academic activity because management did not value writing time and space.

The least explicitly reported construct within the review was writing identity development. However, developing a writing identity is implicitly involved with active participation in a writing group intervention. Gere (1987) contends that a fundamental

shift occurs when writers conceptualise their audience because writing group activities deal with writers' problems, such as selecting words or reshaping a text to create meaning within a context of overarching audience awareness. For example, Fergie et al. (2011) implemented a writing module within a professional doctoral programme for speech and language therapists based on the need for a social space for postgraduate writing development. One of the salient findings was identity development, mainly as participants addressed intertextuality, awareness of their professional roles, and interaction with a broader research community. Wittman et al. (2008) purposefully implemented a peer writing retreat for faculty teachers within nursing, occupational therapy, and social work as a space for participants' exploration of their self-identity as teachers. Pre-existing collegial relationships helped the environment feel safe, allowing the participants to suspend usual roles. An emergent theme was self-transformation through the realisation that self-identity inhibited feelings of credibility as a researcher.

The empirical findings from this meta-narrative review suggest that writing group interventions are spaces for forming collaborative relationships that represent academic practices. Collaborative relationships enhance transitional processes, social and emotional development. Furthermore, writing group interventions are exploratory spaces for writing identities and provide new writing practices transferable to other contexts. However, it is impossible to make these assertions without considering the validity and trustworthiness of the findings. To further warrant the claims made by authors in this review about the process and outcomes of writing group interventions, it is crucial to analyse the pedagogical underpinnings and theoretical perspectives that have guided the studies. Thus, the following sections will include a critique of the

research processes, underlying pedagogies, and theoretical orientations as reported in the studies included in the literature review.

2.4 The research methodologies underpinning the reported studies

The studies represent two broad methodologies, evaluation studies and qualitative research. An evaluation study judges the worth, merit, value, efficacy, impact, and effectiveness, whereas research contributes and extends knowledge (Cohen et al., 2018). As contended by Cohen et al., evaluation concerns achieving intended outcomes or assessing how well something works, whereas qualitative research concerns understanding how and why something works. Unsurprisingly, the evaluation studies included in this review concerned the outcomes of writing group interventions, whereas the qualitative research studies emphasised how and why the processes of the interventions worked.

While the purposes and intentions of evaluation may differ from research, it is critical to conduct reliable and valid studies, leading to credible results transferable to similar contexts. As stated earlier, the method of collecting data for the evaluation studies included in the review was a survey questionnaire that included scale-based items. Nine studies included details of the survey but did not report validating or piloting the instrument. Validating an instrument provides information on the reliability of a measure for specific constructs. The constructs examined during the evaluation studies are within five broad categories: productivity, community development, emotional development, behaviour change and knowledge of writing processes (Fig. 2.1).

Most evaluators anticipated that a writing group intervention would affect behaviour change, and hence, where reported, the survey was administered at one point in time following the intervention, varying between one month and two years with two exceptions. Stone et al. (2010) and Weaver et al. (2014) administered pre and post-intervention survey questionnaires to compare differences in behaviour and attitudes towards writing development with writing for publication as an outcome. The shortcoming of the evaluation studies in the review was the sample size, varying from 5-49. The evaluation studies, which used scale-measure instruments, did not infer statistical significance. However, this is unsurprising given many small sample sizes and a lack of validated tools.

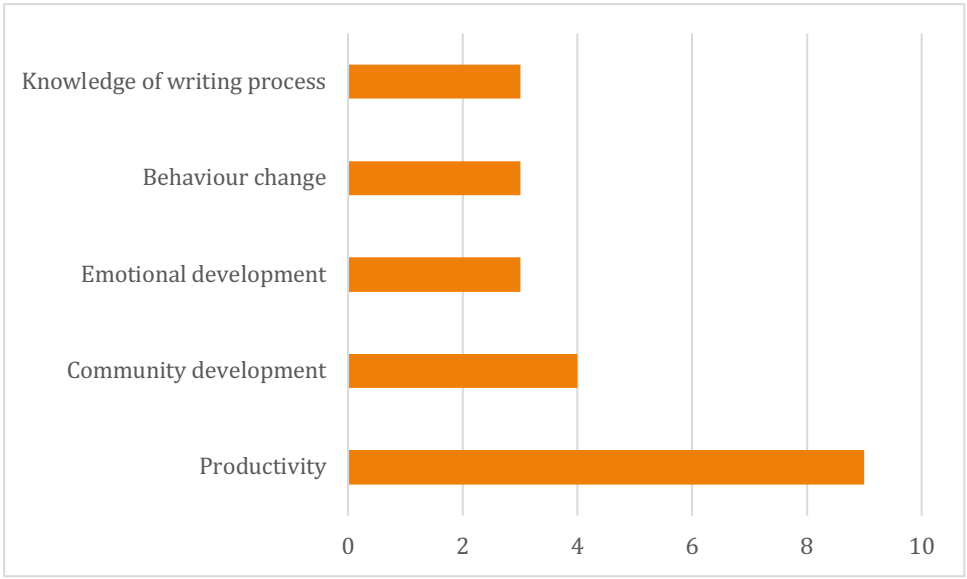


Figure 2:1 Constructs examined in the evaluation studies included in the meta-narrative review

An adaption of a survey tool such as the writing process questionnaire (Lonka, 2014) may address that gap. However, administering an instrument at a single point following an intervention does not address the longitudinal transition process unless combined

with other data collection forms. Not considering development over time highlights Vygotsky's (1987) argument that observing an end-product does not explain concept formation. Similarly, separating the person and their data from their context makes it difficult to determine how and when learning occurs.

Interestingly, the qualitative studies explored similar constructs to the evaluation studies (Fig 2.2) and focused on the value of the time and space of the learning environment, collaborative practices, and identity formation.

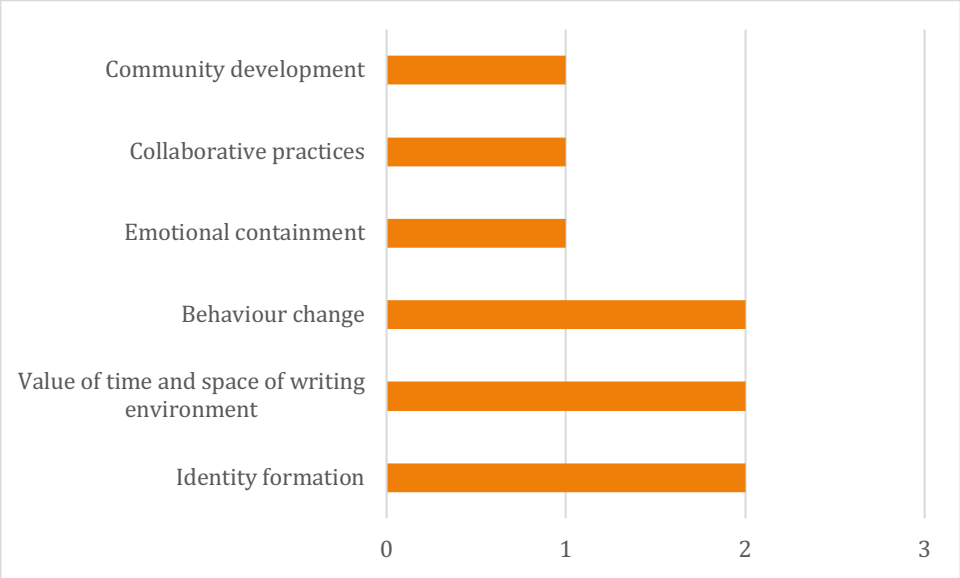


Figure. 2:2 Constructs examined in the qualitative studies included in the meta-narrative review

Approaches towards quality in qualitative research are equally important to consider. There is debate about critically appraising qualitative research (Morse, 2015; Ryan-Nicholls & Will, 2009). A longstanding perspective has been examining rigour in qualitative research through Lincoln and Guba's (1985) model of trustworthiness contrasting with reliability and validity in quantitative research. Lincoln and Guba's trustworthiness model consists of four criteria: credibility, which is confidence in the

truth of the findings; transferability, which shows that findings are applicable in other contexts; dependability, which shows that the findings are consistent and replicable; and confirmability, which shows the extent to which the participants and not researcher bias shape findings of a study, motivation or interest. Ryan-Nicholls and Will (2009) suggest that the basis of rigour is logic and scientific acceptance of predictions and theory explanations.

On the other hand, Morse (2015) argues that Lincoln and Guba's criteria for trustworthiness are historically unexamined given the growth of qualitative research approaches since 1985, and Morse explicitly argues for the need for validity in qualitative research. Morse (2015) suggests the following validity markers: thick and rich data description, adequate sampling for variability, and depth to provide a detailed understanding. Following Miles and Huberman (1994), discrepant cases and common findings are compared. Taking Morse's perspective, the validity of qualitative studies in the review is as follows. Concerning thick and rich data descriptions, Boquet et al. (2017) reported a baseline 'survey' determining the writing development needs of one group of doctoral nursing students and their evaluations following a writing module. However, Boquet et al. did not explain the relationship between the data. However, they claim claims that the participants had made writing development transitions. Garside et al. (2015) collected data at four-time points during a case study of a collaborative writing group intervention for dissertation supervisors and their supervisees. The data included an open-item pre-workshop questionnaire, documentation of participant goals during an initial writing workshop and focus group interviews at the intervention endpoint and six months following the intervention. The approach implied collecting a rich data set in keeping with a case study design approach (Yin, 2018). However, the

brief discussion of the results appeared to focus on outcomes such as value and productivity. The importance of building relationships through peer support was emphasised, but without reference to the complete data set, and the study missed out on developmental processes.

Whilst it appears as though many studies included detailed information about participant sampling and approaches towards data collection to convey variability and depth, the reported findings did not convey detailed approaches to data analysis. The Fergie et al. (2011) ethnographic study explored an academic research writing module on a doctoral speech therapy programme and reported data collection procedures at various points during the participants' writing processes. However, the link between the data collection and analysis did not indicate or explain an audit trail making it hard to understand how the three reported themes of space, identity, and peer-learning had emerged. Johnson et al. (2017) described a community writing group intervention over two years for a multidisciplinary academic and non-academic group in a diverse Australian city neighbourhood. A lengthy description of the cultural significance of the setting aimed to confront assumptions about where academic writing takes place. The participants developed a qualitative questionnaire using constructs from the literature and were self-administered at one point in time. A detailed description emerged from participants' quotes, including dimensions of the group process such as improvements in writing and the value of writing relationships. Such variables relate to transitioning; however, the data did not follow a temporal dimension. The authors did not explain a peer-review process towards data analysis, making it hard to appraise the level of truthfulness. An assumption might be that the collaborative writing process involves a peer-review process.

Guerin et al. (2013) described a writing group intervention for doctoral public health students to authenticate interdisciplinary collaboration whilst maintaining momentum and positivity about thesis writing. An underlying objective was to facilitate the transition to academia. Data were collected from participants' written reflections on two occasions during the group process. The importance of representing the diversity of the students' voices appeared vital, including an emphasis on contradictory experiences. The first author had implemented the group initially and subsequently stepped away to enable the group to be peer-led. Three themes emerged from the findings and are associated with transition processes: improved writing skills, improved understanding of academic culture, and developing peer-feedback processes. However, trustworthiness would be enhanced if the researchers had explained the temporal domains and richly described and identified the incidents where the changes occurred.

Only one study in the review presented data that captured the in-the-minute interactions that occur during the space of a writing intervention. Wittman et al. (2008) audio-recorded and transcribed participants' dialogues as they presented personal photographs to convey personal bias and assumptions about academic self-identity. Hence, the reader could link the presented data with the emergent themes of immersion, transformation, and dialogue. A shortcoming is that the data were collected at one point and therefore did not convey the longitudinal transition process.

The remaining studies in the review (Dysthe, 2012; Murray and Newton, 2009; MacLeod, Steckley and Murray, 2012) conducted qualitative interviews at one point in time following a writing group intervention. Dysthe (2012) focused on the impact of multivoicedness on Master's dissertation writers, which may call into question the appropriateness of an interview to capture reliable data. Observational data were

collected, but the analysis was not presented through the findings. MacLeod et al. (2012) and Murray and Newton (2009) were concerned with persistent behaviour change following writing group interventions. MacLeod et al. explored the experiences of holistic containment for participants during a writing retreat and how and why the intervention led to ongoing productivity and change. Murray and Newton used interviews to explore writing trajectories following a writing retreat. Both studies provide a helpful lens on what happens during writing retreats and how the activities can translate to practice. However, the approach taken to data collection assumed that participants experienced transition or transformation during the intervention without considering participant diversity and differential perspectives on the same event.

An overall conclusion about the quality of methodologies for the studies in the review is that writing development processes remain underexplored and under-examined because the evaluation studies focused on outcomes, especially productivity, and used non-validated data collection tools leading to unreliable results. Qualitative studies focused on the cultural, cognitive, and social aspects of writing development but collected data at summative points that under-investigated formative transitions. Furthermore, the relationship between data point collection and study results was unexplained or not richly described, which superficially deals with writing development.

Interestingly, no study in the review collected or analysed participants' writing during the process of an intervention. Prior (2004) argues that there is no one way to study writing processes but emphasises multiple data sources, including the text itself. Thus, participants' experiences of formative transitions when developing their writing practices in writing group settings remain underexplored and under-explained.

2.5 The writing pedagogies underpinning the reported studies

Many studies included in the review did not state an underpinning writing pedagogy to guide a respective writing group intervention. However, most of the studies cited influential work on writing development to guide the design of an intervention (Fig. 2.4 & Fig 2.5), especially the qualitative studies. These included writing process models, behaviour change approaches, developing capacities for research practices, *Writing Across the Curriculum* (WAC) and *Writing in the Disciplines* (WID), and *Academic Literacies* (AcLits). The noteworthy point is that none of the above approaches appeared to be perceived as mutually exclusive by the authors of the respective studies, and many drew upon more than one approach. I will now examine each approach to writing development in turn.

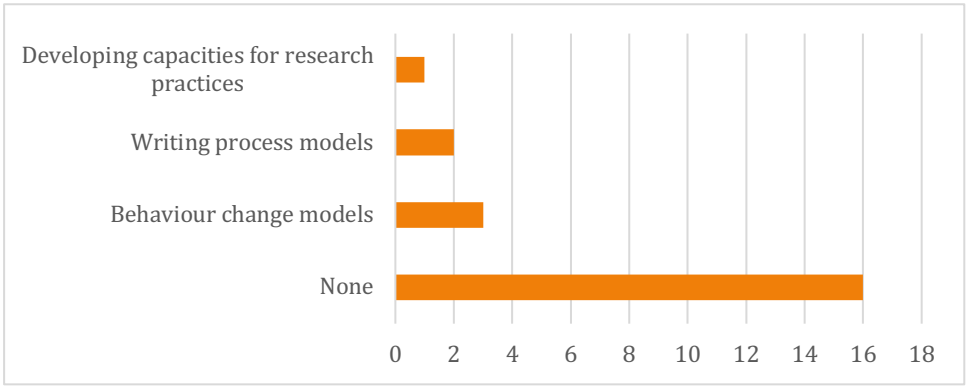


Figure. 2:3 Underlying pedagogies of the evaluation studies included in the meta-narrative review.



Figure. 2:4 Underlying pedagogies of the qualitative studies included in the meta-narrative review

Writing group pedagogies have historical underpinnings. Gere (1987) and Pare (2014) outline the history and development of writing groups in academic settings. Both authors suggest that shifts in English language education prompted by the 1966 Dartmouth seminar, which inspired the writing process and language across the curriculum approaches to writing development. Gere argues that writing groups may be considered marginal until this point in history. Gere suggests that the Dartmouth seminar events involved a confrontation between the US and British pedagogical approaches to writing development. However, the British approach valued learner response and process over product. The British approach found favour, and writing groups flourished in academic settings. Pare identifies that the origin of the word 'process' as applied to writing development emerged from US composition studies inspired by an interest in how writers went from a blank page to a complete text. Hence, the writing process has both a methodological and instructional value.

The stimulation of writing productivity and writing process models share an implicit relationship. Many studies included in this review cited Boice (1987, 1990), who developed higher education writing interventions for academic staff to stimulate writing productivity. Boice's strategy was a staged writing process including free and generative writing to develop the writer's voice whilst raising self-awareness of the process within a context of social interaction with others: exploring productivity; goal setting; giving and receiving feedback. Rowena Murray (Murray, 2006; 2012; Murray et al.2008; Murray & Newton, 2009; Murray, Steckley & MacLeod, 2012) and Silvia's (2007) work with Boice's strategies used practical activities aimed at behaviour change, productivity, flow, self-understanding, and transforming the individual's writing processes. Many studies included in this review cite Murray and Silva. The basis of writing process models (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Elbow, 1999; Flower & Hayes, 1981, 1997; Murray, 1997; Kellogg, 2008.) is the cognitive processes of writing where the central premise is to view composition as a goal-directed process underpinned by sub-goals which shift during the process based upon learning during the act of writing. Three primary processes are involved: the task environment (everything outside the writer's skin), the writer's long-term memory (knowledge of the topic and potential audiences) and writing processes as the writer is presented with a rhetorical problem to solve. Bereiter and Scarmadalia (1987) focused upon writing across the lifespan with the potential for two composition models: knowledge-telling and knowledge-transforming. The former is evident within immature writers through readily available knowledge through the goal planning processes described by Flower and Hayes (1981). The work of Murray (Murray,1997; Murray et al., 2009) was less behaviourist in its approach to the writing process. Murray describes three stages which are non-linear and represent interacting forces, which the writer is unable to differentiate during the

process; these are: rehearsing, drafting, and revising. As learners pass through the learning process, trying to bring the forces into balance leads to constant evaluation, hence the writer and the instructor need to approach meaning-making together. Sharing writing needs to be done orally enabling the reader to hear their voice, but writing involves self-exposure as the writer confronts themselves and their subjects.

Writing process models convey the cognitive complexity of writing development. Kellogg (2008) has extended Bereiter and Scarmadalia's (1987) model by comparing accomplished writing with expertise in other complex domains such as expert music practices. Kellogg concluded that macrostructure writing development takes two decades of human life, adding a further stage than described by Bereiter and Scarmadalia, which is knowledge-crafting. At this stage, the writer is juggling micro-processes of planning, structure generation, and reviewing alongside their ideas. Furthermore, comprehending what the text says and interpreting the imagined reader can create heavy cognitive demands to make such writing routine and spontaneous.

The empirical basis for writing process models is think-aloud protocols (also referred to as protocol-analysis) involving the collection and analysis of verbal data during a writing task. Smagorinsky (1989) undertook a systematic review of studies that compared participants solving the same problem aloud and solving the same problem in silence. Smagorinsky concluded no statistically significant differences between the problem-solving approaches. This literature review shows that writing process models continue to hold traction with practitioners and researchers who implement and investigate writing group interventions in higher education. For an extensive discussion, see Haas (2010).

Some authors consider the shortcomings of writing process models. Hyland (2008) and Smagorinsky's (2011) critique concerns an over-emphasis on psychological factors while overlooking how context affects writing development. Similarly, Gere (1987) critiques writing process models concerning writing group interventions because the product/process dichotomy does not address the social aspects of writing by assuming that writers work alone, and protocol analysis assumes writers' thoughts are self-generated.

Notions of the writing process alone did not influence the studies included in this meta-narrative review. Lee and Boud's (2003) work on writing group interventions is cited by some studies (Fig 2.3 and Fig 2.4). The motivation for Lee and Boud's work is a systematic focus on developing capacities for research practices and a need for developing new academic identities that emphasise the significant role of writing in the research process. Their underlying assumption is that productivity is only possible when the emotional dimensions of writing are made visible. Writing groups disrupt the notion of writing as a solitary activity because writing then enters a network of scholarly and peer review relationships, thus demystifying the process. Lee and Boud warrant their claims through implementing writing group interventions. Some studies included in the meta-narrative review cited Grant and Knowles (2000) and Grant (2006). Grant and Knowles' focus is on academic women as struggling writers. Following Lee and Boud, the assumption is that the structure and culture of universities need to change. Grant and Knowles assert the importance of facilitated writing interventions to enhance productivity and enjoyment of writing, provide access to the benefits and prestige of writing for publication, and secure the metaphorical space for writing as self-development. Such widely cited works convey what Gere (1987) described as the

benefits of writing groups in bringing readers and writers together. Writers share their problems and reshape the structure of their texts to create meaning within a context of overarching audience awareness. While Lee and Boud (2003) and Grant and Knowles (2000) do not provide explicit pedagogical models for writing development, inspiration is provided for the implementation of local writing group interventions. Inspiration is understandable where the aim is to change local cultures and enhance productivity. The work of Lee and Boud and Grant and Knowles have led to a perpetuation of practices; however, one shortcoming is less emphasis on a systematic examination of participant development in such contexts. Aitchison and Guerin (2014) argue that interpreting and exposing what goes on in such groups is profoundly essential.

Comprehensive models of writing development include *Writing Across the Curriculum* (WAC), *Writing in the disciplines* (WID), and the academic literacies model (AcLits). In this review, Boquet et al. (2017) cited WAC as a pedagogy for graduate writing. WAC's origins are composition and rhetoric studies developed by practitioners from the US HE sector since the 1970s. WAC means "*efforts to improve students' learning and writing"* (Russell et al., 2009, p. 395). Castelló and Donahue (2012) raise the profound and international influence of WAC, leading to a generation of discourse on theories and pedagogies for writing. A limitation of the Boquet et al. study is that it did not report how the pedagogy influenced their collaborative writing intervention. Fergie et al. (2011) cited WID to underpin their approach to graduate writing. Deane and O'Neill (2011) have outlined the development of WID as a discipline-integrated writing development model where all learners receive explicit instruction for cognitive development and acquisition of disciplinary knowledge. The writer is encouraged to explore and examine a repertoire of rhetorical and linguistic devices. AcLits originated

in the UK in the 1990s (Castelló & Donahue, 2012; Russell et al., 2009): firstly, influenced by polytechnic integration into the university system; secondly, widening participation for groups traditionally marginalised from HE; and thirdly, addressing the diversification of HE resulting from international students with English as a second language. AcLits focuses upon writing research and theory derived from language, literacy, and ethnographic studies. A characteristic of AcLits is a three strata academic literacies model (Lillis, 2003). Firstly, there is a study skills model to confront assumptions that learners can transfer language knowledge between contexts. Secondly, academic socialisation focuses upon learner acculturation into the genre and disciplinary discourse, contrasting with study skills by recognising the use of different disciplinary genres. Thirdly, academic literacies**,** concerned with meaning-making, foregrounding of identity, power, institution, and the constitution of situated knowledge complete the final stratum. The three strata are considered to overlap.

Similarities and differences between WAC and AcLits are influenced by the contexts in which they respectively emerged. Russell et al. (2009) note that both WAC and AcLits movements operate within different international HE systems and are influenced by a widening participation philosophy making HE more open regarding writing and literacy. WAC and AcLits involve confronting assumptions about student learning and disciplines and going beyond a deficit learning and linguistic needs analysis model. WAC attempts to exert social action by transforming the writing of diverse learners who traditionally do not access HE and enabling them to participate in relevant disciplines. Wingate (2011) argues that, although WAC, WID, and AcLits represent a recognition that parsing learning about academic writing from learning disciplinary knowledge is not possible, little empirical evidence of the effectiveness of either model exists.

Wingate's perspective says less about the value of the models and more about the quality of writing group intervention studies where historically developed writing pedagogies are not fully drawn upon, as shown in this literature review.

2.6 The theoretical perspectives underpinning the reported studies

The extent to which the studies included in the review took a theoretical direction or how a theory was drawn upon varied, thus supporting the notion stated at the outset of the chapter that writing group interventions are under-theorised. The most widely cited theories were Bandura's (1977) social learning theory and Lave and Wenger's (1991) communities of practice. Other cited theoretical perspectives included sociocultural dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981; Rommetveit, 1974), activity theory (Engeström, 2015), and transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000, 2009) (Fig 2-5).

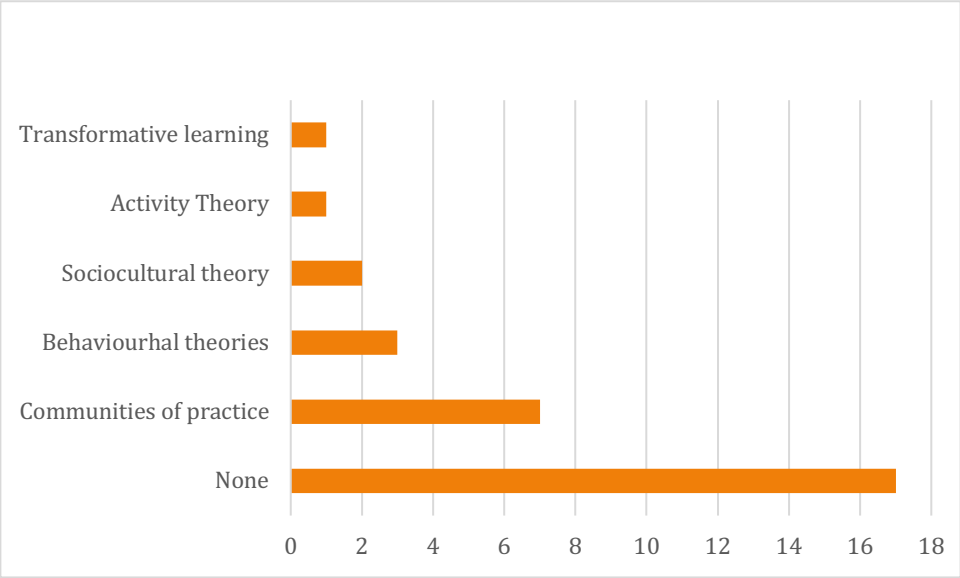


Figure. 2:5 Theoretical perspectives of all studies included in the meta-narrative review

Many studies included in the review focused on the relationship between behaviour change and writing outputs following a writing group intervention. Bandura's (1977)

social learning theory concerns self-regulatory capacities and environmental inducements through cognitive support. Through observing others, people can exercise some control over their behaviour leading to self-generated behaviour patterns. Bandura's perspective may provide an appropriate theory to explain such outcomes. Sanderson et al. (2012) used social learning theory: to guide the implementation of a writing group intervention theoretically; to identify and explain the facilitators' roles; to facilitate the relationship between the group process and behaviour change through reciprocity, and to examine the participants' interaction with the writing intervention. Stone et al. (2010) drew on social learning theory to a lesser extent than Sanderson et al. to explain participant motivation and the philosophy of the intervention. Whilst both studies contribute by providing some explanatory value, an assumption was conveyed that writing development is a staged linear process with a requirement for specific intervening variables without adequately explaining the participants' transitions given the complexities and longitudinal nature of writing development.

One study in the review considered adult learning theory. Wittman et al. (2008) used Mezirow's (1981, 2000, 2009) transformative learning to analyse their findings. Mezirow's work rests upon a notion of transformative learning as a process where problematic mindsets and meaning perspectives are transformed, becoming more inclusive for the learner. Mezirow presents transformative learning as a theory of adult learning development and identity transformation. The purpose of the Wittman et al. (2008) study was to confront personal biases about self-identity; hence, transformative learning may align with the authors' intentions. Mezirow's work comes across as focused on the individual but is critiqued by Illeris (2014) as principally cognitive and not encompassing context and interaction with the social and material world. Hence, as

an analytical lens, transformative learning may be limited in explaining the formative process of participant transition and development.

As stated at the outset of the current thesis study, the transition to academia poses difficulties for health care disciplines. Gourlay (2011) argues that the transition to academic textual practices is characterised by feelings of confusion and inauthenticity with no apparent community of practice to join. Guerin et al. (2013), Dwyer et al. (2015), and Garside et al. (2015) each drew upon Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of a 'community of practice'. A focus on community is unsurprising because one of the main rationales for the implementation of writing group interventions, as apparent in this literature review, was building a community through collaborative processes. The central notion behind Lave and Wenger's theory is learning as a situated activity and principally defined by legitimate peripheral participation. Learners gain access to participation in a community of practice where temporal mastery of skills and knowledge enables newcomers to move towards full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community. The perspective of situated learning is a theoretical orientation, which concerns relational knowledge and learning, a negotiated character of meaning, and access to learning activities, including the concerns and dilemmas of the people who engage with them. Lave and Wenger describe situated learning as a transitory concept and are explicit that legitimate peripheral participation is not pedagogy or a learning strategy but an analytic perspective on learning. Studies included in the literature review drew upon situated learning to varying extents. Guerin et al. (2013) and Garside et al. (2015) cited situated learning as the underpinning philosophy and conceptualisation of a writing group intervention, and Dwyer et al. (2015) drew upon situated learning to guide the design of the intervention, which may not be fully

representative of Lave and Wenger's intentions. None of the studies in the literature review drew upon situated learning to explain or analyse participant development or learning. A lack of attention to human development analysis suggests that situated learning as a human development theory in writing group interventions is underutilised. Whilst Crafter and Maunder (2012), on the one hand, critique situated learning for not going as far as other sociocultural theories to explain learner differences, they do contend, on the other hand, that situated learning is a valuable lens through which to explore formative transitions and identity shifts.

Surprisingly, sociocultural theory underpinned only one study included in this review. Dysthe (2012) drew on sociocultural theory through Bakhtin's (1986) work to explore the relationship between dialogue and learning in a writing group intervention. Bakhtin was a literary critic who viewed peer response as an essential component of writing development and the role of writing in society for writers to contribute to an ongoing dialogue. Dysthe used Bakhtin's theories to examine the assumptions and values behind the research questions she had posed, to influence the pedagogy of the intervention, and to explain the results where mutual obligation and access to many voices enables participation in an academic community. Dysthe's reported study provided the most fulsome theoretical perspective of all the studies included in the literature review by following the theory throughout each stage of the research process. In the following chapter, I will consider Bakhtin's (1981; 1986) work to contribute towards a theoretical framework for the current thesis study.

One study included in this review considered activity theory. Boquet et al. (2017) cited Engeström's activity theory (1987, 1999, 2015) but did not explain or explore activity theory concerning their intervention to any extent.

An overall analysis of the theoretical framing of the studies included in this meta-narrative review supports the notion of writing group interventions as under-theorised, given that only 12 of the reviewed 30 studies included a theoretical perspective to any extent.

2.7 The methodological, pedagogical, and theoretical implications of the meta-narrative review

The rationale for writing group interventions among the studies included in the review was to promote writing skill development, enhance productivity, and form communities through collaborative practices. The claims made by the researchers suggest that writing group interventions are spaces to form collaborative relationships that represent academic practices. Collaborative relationships enhance transitional processes, including social and emotional development. As already argued, any claims for the benefits of writing groups need enhancing with attention to rigorous research. The methodology chapter outlines my considerations to address current methodological limitations by exploring formative academic writing development through a qualitative approach using multiple methods in an in-depth and longitudinal exploration. The objectives are to provide insight into how individuals develop their writing knowledge and practices, overcome the difficulties associated with the transition to academic research writing, and address a current literature gap.

In the following section, I will consider the pedagogies of writing group interventions for the health care disciplines based on the outcomes of this literature review. I elaborate on the pedagogy in the methodology chapter, where I describe the two writing group interventions for the current thesis study. This literature review showed that few studies drew upon explicit pedagogies to underpin writing group interventions. Following

Bazerman (2011), writing involves minds in historical and social contexts, signs, technologies, and organisational systems. Bazerman suggests that writing studies will take one approach or another, but the best examples take an eclectic approach as pragmatically necessary. I argue in favour of teaching genre and intertextuality for the health care disciplines, a socially elaborated view of the writing process and the importance of building writers' identities for the health care disciplines based upon the explanatory insights which emerged from this literature review.

In the following sections, I also consider the requirements for an appropriate theoretical framework for disciplinary writing group interventions based on the outcomes of this review. For the current thesis study, I elaborate on the considerations in Chapter Three.

2.7.1 Genre

Many studies in the literature review raised the notion of genre without clarification. Writing skill development was inculcated with structured activities such as writing in the house style of specific disciplinary journals and identifying disciplinary audience needs. Hence, writing group interventions in the review implicitly encouraged participants to explore the genre to create appropriate disciplinary texts.

Florence Nightingale's work established nursing as a discipline, notably her writing, as introduced in the previous chapter. As was shown, Nightingale wrote in many genres to influence her audiences' minds and actions. I argue that Nightingale has left a legacy of influential writing. Nightingale identified conceptual knowledge in nursing, emphasising what was later differentiated by Carper (1978) as empirics, aesthetics, personal knowledge, and ethics. Subsequently, other theorists have added two other constructs: socio-political (White, 1995) and unknowing (Munhall, 1993). As argued

by Carper, the constructs emphasise the creativity of nursing. However, some factors mitigate against writing development to internalise and externalise the full range of disciplinary concepts within appropriate genres.

Given that nursing and allied health disciplines are new academic disciplines, an implicit approach to genre exploration may overlook tensions, lack of clarity, and genres in development. Some authors (Mitchell, 2018; Rolfe, 2009) have called for the disciplinary value of writing to be re-envisioned and enhanced for nursing. Nursing students become confronted with diverse writing genres such as care plans, portfolios, discharge summaries, argumentative essays, research proposals, and dissertations (Gimenez, 2008, 2012). Rolfe (2009), Gardner and Rolfe (2013), Ryan et al. (2014), and Mitchell (2018) perceive a skills-based approach to writing development with the genre influences coming from biomedicine, objectivist epistemologies, the passive voice, and citation-rich practices. This view is congruent with Bazerman's (1988) research on the influence of the scientific experimental article as a genre in academic research writing. Lum et al. (2018) suggest that the influences bring to bear on all health care learners and the crux of the tension for the learner is mastery of academic literacy and the distinct specialist language. Rolfe (2009), Gardner and Rolfe (2013) and Ryan et al. (2014) call for a re-envisioned notion of genre for nurse writers. Gardner and Rolfe provide examples of voice, argumentation, expressing different forms of writing within nursing, and evoking a dialogue with the reader. I argue that there is potential for writing group interventions to expose, examine, and develop such practices.

Genre as such is a contested term. Aitchison (2009) contends that genre is a slippery term. Barton (2007) outlined the terms of reference regarding written language and identified them as different genres, for example, a novel, poem, or an academic paper.

Barton also notes disagreements about how the term is used but states that genre becomes a critical point for studying literacy because of the different forms of writing and socially constructed conventions of writing. Similarly, Frow (2015) defines genre as a classification to frame formal features of texts, direct responses that strategically apply to a situation and facilitate sets of available knowledge.

There is a debate in the writing literature about whether genre is amenable to formal instruction. Russell (2009) contends that genre needs to be learned but cannot be instructed because genre goes beyond a set of formal features. Transparency is required for novices to understand how established writers use the tools of the genre, enabling a stage of genre recognition. On the other hand, WID (Deane and O'Neill, 2011; Wingate, 2011), as introduced in an earlier section, and systemic functional linguistic theory (SFL) (Christie, 1999, 2000, 2005, 2013; Christie & Martin, 2008) argue that genre can and should be explicitly taught. Given the health care discipline's need for access to scholarly conversations (as argued throughout the current thesis), disciplinary codes and knowledge structures require more explicitness for writers by providing tools to act on the world through texts.

SFL is a movement that emerged in Australia in the early 1980s as an educationalist's response to the unstructured approach to literacy teaching in Australian schools during the 1960s and 1970s. The SFL premise is that language is functional and contingent upon the purposes for which it came into being. Christie (1999) identifies three metafunctions of SFL, based on the work of Halliday (1996). These are: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Ideational is the writer's represented experiences and ideas constructed within the language. Interpersonal is the type of relationship between the

actors using the language. Textual pertains to how language becomes ordered to convey coherent messages.

The context of the culture influences text. The language's grammar constructs meaning, and learning a language is learning how to mean (Christie, 2013). Gere (1987) has highlighted Halliday's three metafunctions concerning writing groups and identifies the potential for writing group participants to develop metalanguage about writing. Within Gere's perspective, the linguistic transactions of writing groups foster development because writing groups primarily create language about language. The SFL model asserts that genre serves essential social goals. In their use of language, actors make register choices, dependent on the meaning they are trying to realise within different genres. Wingate (2011) argues for an embedded approach towards WID and contends shared perspectives with SFL because the epistemological nature and the rhetorical features become integrated with writing interventions. SFL and WID convey practical frameworks to expose and deconstruct the genre to writers, to ultimately and potentially participate within disciplines and communities. Based upon the assumption that genre is more than simple content acquisition, learning the genre of a person's community is part of culture and learning. The genre must be analysed and discussed in terms of meanings, structure, and language patterns. These notions require an introduction and consolidation to lead to mastery for the writer successively. Creativity comes as the writer becomes confident in developing other genres. Crucially, SFL enables participation within disciplinary communities and is especially important for the health care disciplines who are new to academia, and hence, disciplinary genres are evolving. From a research perspective, Wingate (2011) contends, there is a need for empirical evidence underpinned by WID.

2.7.2 The writing process in a socially elaborated task environment

Many studies included in the review implicitly drew upon the writing process. I outlined the tenets of writing process models in a previous section which included a critique of some of the limitations of writing process models to guide pedagogy for writing development. However, some authors have considered the benefits of exploring the writing process within a socially elaborated task environment (Kellogg, 2008; Smagorinsky, 2011) and influenced by Vygotsky's (1987, 1997a) perspectives on writing development. Smagorinsky (2011) argued that a Vygotskian view enhances the environment by considering writing as a tool. It is a tool that empowers people to find meaning by making their thoughts available which can be both well-formed and rudimentary. Such a view exposes two tensions based upon the mutually enhancing aspects of speech communication: the sign function of writing and how it represents meaning and the tool function of how writing acts on the world. Thus, signs and tools can be process and product. This perspective aligns with Bazerman's (2005; 2012) view of the importance of the exposure of the relationship between writing and thinking, specifically writing as a developmental process to refine thinking, argument, and concept development. In the following theory chapter, I will explore the Vygotskian view of writing development.

Master's dissertation writers were the least represented group in this meta-narrative literature review. Master's level learners frequently undertake study alongside ongoing professional practice. The literature review aligns with other authors (Badenhorst et al., 2015; Bair & Mader, 2013) who identified a dearth of pedagogic research that examines learning in such contexts (Badenhorst et al., 2015; Bair & Mader, 2013). Current knowledge suggests that Master's learners are diverse by first language, age, and study

modes, with such learner differences frequently supported through deficit notions (Badenhorst et al., 2015). Conceptual difficulties experienced by Master's learners include tensions with aligning professional purposes with academic objectives and academic writing not being perceived as relevant to the practitioner role (Bair & Mader, 2013). Contradictions surrounding the dissertation or final research project include a synthesis between theory and research (Bair & Mader, 2013) and unpreparedness for self-directed learning (Ashwin & Hirst, 2015). Kaufhold (2017) argues that students in applied disciplines are encouraged to select their topics, but diverse literacies connected with professional practices are given a scant allowance as extracurricular literacy activities connected with dissertation work.

A further gap in the literature review was a lack of reported studies on online writing group interventions. The writing group interventions were offered in an online environment and a face-to-face context in the current thesis study. The rationale was to provide access to the writing process in a socially elaborated environment for learners who were remote from the institution and studied part-time alongside professional practice. Deane and Guasch (2015) argue that collaborative online writing connects individual and shared thinking with facilitated and stimulated learning potential. Dysthe (2015) contends that online technology provides collaborative meaning-making opportunities and expands a space where teachers and learners engage with one another for concept development. Furthermore, Dysthe points to the lack of empirical research on web-based postgraduate students' writing to provide the necessary knowledge to support writing development at the postgraduate level and for the future of academic research writing.

2.7.3 Writers' identities

As discussed earlier, two studies included in the review referred to writers' identities. Fergie et al. (2011) and Wittman et al. (2008) addressed writer identity development to some extent. A writing pedagogy for the health care disciplines with the potential to elaborate practice and research is Ivanič's (1998, 2004) and Burgess and Ivanič's (2010) work. Their concerns were how writers developed their identities, focusing on mature adult learners, and secondly, a discourse perspective that concerns how language constructs identity during the writing process. Ivanič's 'discourse' concept foregrounds a concern with social issues in language study, sitting comfortably with Gere's (1987) notion of writing groups as spaces to bring writers and audiences together. Burgess and Ivanič (2010) outline a framework containing five facets of writers' identities:

1. The socially available possibilities for self-hood including resources and constraints.

2. The autobiographical self of the writer, addressing what the person brings to the act of writing whilst acknowledging the autobiographical self of the reader.

3. The discoursal self-addresses the self as inscribed in the text at the interface between the identity brought by the writer to the writing and her anticipation of how she will be read.

4. The authorial self demonstrates the strength of an asserted position, the extent of authorship stamped on the text, and the authoritativeness conveyed to the reader.

5. The perceived writer, the impression of the writer created by the reader in the act of reading a text.

Importantly for this thesis study, the framework offers a possibility to consider transition because each facet addresses the contexts that writers traverse, considering learner diversity, sociocultural contexts, meso level, and ontogenetic timescales. The concept of writers' identities relates to the notion of intertextuality, as demonstrated by one study included in the review. Fergie et al. (2011) developed practices oriented to how doctoral learners from a health care discipline positioned themselves in their developing texts. According to Bazerman (2004), intertextuality is the relationship each text has with surrounding texts. Ivanič (1998) argues that intertextuality is relevant to the writer's identity in two ways. Firstly, writers need to consider the highly valued convention of quoting from authoritative sources. Secondly, the practice of intertextuality requires the writer to echo and align themselves with other voices. Several authors (Badenhorst, 2018; Boote & Beile, 2005; Kamler & Thomson, 2008) note the intertextuality challenge for postgraduate writers and argue that related teaching practices are superficial.

Chen et al.'s (2016) systematic review revealed four critical challenges for postgraduate writers: linguistic, methodological, conceptual, and ontological. Linguistic challenges are associated with language use, including correct grammar and a register appropriate for the discipline. Methodological processes involve searching for specific and appropriate literature, while conceptual challenges involve the appraisal and synthesis of appropriately selected literature. Chen et al. argue that ontological identity plays a pivotal role in developing self-confidence as a writer. Ontological identity involves feeling part of the scholarly community by being critical. However, criticality is also integral to voice development which involves a dialectical interplay between prior constructed knowledge, new knowledge construction, and disseminating new

understandings to a disciplinary audience. This literature review underpins an argument presented in the current thesis about the challenges of externalising nursing concepts through academic research writing. Writers need to develop competence to construct and negotiate their meaning, and they need to learn and think as professional researchers. Chen et al. argue that it is crucial to consider where such development may occur. Hence, the development of intertextuality practices is essential for examining transitional processes and how writers' identities emerge when people engage with writing group interventions.

2.7.4 Theoretical implications of the review

The evidence presented in the literature review supported the notion of writing group interventions as under-theorised and identified by other authors (Aitchison & Guerin, 2014; Badenhorst et al., 2015) with more scope to draw upon extant social sciences theory to examine the transitional processes of writing development. Given the complexity of writing development alongside the challenges experienced by the health care disciplines when transitioning to academia, an appropriate theoretical framing for an empirical study on writing group interventions requires the following:

- A lens for longitudinal developmental transitions as experienced in writing group interventions.
- Consideration of the culture and the history of the discipline.
- An analytical lens for cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of writing development, including collaborative work and self-identifying as an academic writer.

Dysthe (2012) contended that writing instruction and student writing are deeply situated practices that cannot be understood apart from the macro and meso factors that shape them. In the following chapter, I will extend this argument by drawing on the sociocultural and cultural-historical theory fields. The rationale for my argument is that academic writing development orientates towards: the macro-level of higher education and health care organisations which health care discipline writers move between; the meso-level of culturally and historically influenced practices within academic and health care institutions; and thirdly, the micro-level of individual and collaborative activities, actions, and behaviour within the two respective writing group interventions which were the focus for the current thesis study. I acknowledge a body of writing development research out with writing group interventions drawing on the sociocultural and cultural-historical fields, which I will draw on in the current thesis study (e.g. Bazerman, 2012; Smagorinsky, 2011; Thompson, 2012; Thompson & Wittek, 2016; Wittek et al., 2017).

2.8 Comparing the current meta-narrative review with published reviews of writing group interventions for the health care disciplines

I will now briefly compare this literature review with other authors who have reviewed writing group interventions for the health care disciplines. McGrail et al. (2006) examined how writing group interventions impacted publication rates, publication quality and writing knowledge and skills whilst focusing on pre-and post-intervention outcomes. The review reported writers' becoming more 'skilful' without identifying the skills other than increased knowledge about how a scientific paper is structured and emotional outcomes such as overcoming writer's block. Oermann et al. (2015) undertook a secondary analysis of writing group workshops to improve nurses' writing

skills and described effective strategies in the reviewed studies. In common with the current literature review, each author noted a lack of rigorous methodologies to examine writing group interventions.

A review of writing group interventions by Kempenaar and Murray (2016) has led to a theoretical framework they recommend as a conceptual framework to further the understanding of writing practices and cultures in writing group interventions. They endeavour to bring about behavioural change in writers and institutional change at the macro level to support writing outputs. They concluded that the reviewed studies demonstrated positive outcomes from qualitative research and effectiveness from quantitative approaches. Given that the current literature review includes some of the same studies, I have exposed a gap in Kempenaar and Murray's review by taking a meticulous and systematic approach. I have addressed the gap by providing a rigorous and conscientious examination of the research methods used to explore participant development in writing group interventions in tandem with the pedagogical underpinnings and the use of underpinning theoretical frameworks. In doing so, I set the scene for the current thesis study, and I follow with a theoretical framework to conceptualise writing development within writing group interventions that consider the formative domains of writing in the subsequent theory chapter.

2.9 Chapter summary

This literature review took a meta-narrative approach and considered the following question "What is currently known about the transitional processes and development of nurses and allied health professionals when they engage with academic research writing group interventions in higher education contexts?" The implications of the review suggested the scope for enhancing current knowledge through rigorous research studies

that consider the discipline and cultural contexts. In the following chapter, I construct an appropriate theoretical framework for the current thesis study based on my practice experiences as outlined in the introductory chapter and the outcomes of this meta-narrative review.

This meta-narrative literature review chapter used a systematic approach to appraise and synthesise the empirical literature on writing group interventions in similar settings to the current thesis study. However, it appears as though no one has focused upon the *formative* process of transition for nursing and allied health disciplines when they engage with these activities. I outline my considerations for an appropriate theoretical framing in the following chapter

.

3 Chapter Three: The semiotic prism and relational agency in writers' transitions.

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I build the theoretical framework for the thesis and make some connections between a sociocultural theory of transitions(Crafter & Maunder, 2012) and cultural historical-theory. I also explore the semiotic prism (Zittoun, 2006, 2008, 2012), the formative transitions of health care writers in writing group interventions and the relationship between becoming an academic research writer and knowledge development, sense-making and meaning-making. However, the formative transitions of health care writers are contingent upon relational work. I explore how relational agency(Edwards, 2005, 2011, 2017) can further enhance our understanding of the capacity of health care writers to make transitions in their academic research writing development. The value of my approach can further our understanding of the dialectic of the health care writer in a writing group intervention and the practices they inhabit to become acknowledged disciplinary writers

3.1.1 Formative and summative transitions

A central term in the current thesis is the notion of transitions, a period in which change takes place for an individual. Transition implies movement and progression. Transitions are part of the life-course: for example, starting school, becoming an adolescent, leaving home, starting university, becoming a parent, and difficult transitions such as becoming seriously ill or experiencing trauma or bereavement. An

individual's experience of transitions includes both challenges and opportunities for learning but may require coming to terms with or periods of adjustment.

Some transitions are explicitly developmental, such as learning a new skill or becoming competent or expert in a specific human occupation or activity domain. Developmental transitions contain formative and summative phases. A formative transition happens across time and involves an incremental process, for example, the various aspects of motor skill development that children need before learning how to ride a bike. On the other hand, summative transitions represent an outcome following a period of development, for example, the child who successfully passes a cycling proficiency test. Developmental transitions may involve similar complexities as life-course transitions; for example, they may be challenging and recursive but rewarding too.

As a higher education teacher, the developmental transitions of learners and colleagues in health and social care are my concern. My educational research interest is writing development and understanding how and why nurses become academic research writers. In the current thesis study, my focus is on the Master's level professional nurse as an individual composing a dissertation to complete a degree or has completed a Master's degree and is writing the first paper for peer-review publication. Chapter Two outlined the developmental changes the Master's level professional needs to become an academic research writer and the known challenges. In summary, the developmental changes for the individual are to gain research knowledge and skills to undertake an independent research project. Further developmental changes are the need for individuals to understand the epistemic functions of writing; become aware of how writing can create a dialogue between the reader and the writer; develop a writer's voice; align with or counter the values or evidence of other authors; and understand how texts

operate to serve and maintain disciplinary communities including the appropriate genre (Castelló & Iñesta, 2012). Each developmental change, as listed above, may be seen as a formative transition towards becoming an academic research writer.

However, the formative transitions to become an academic research writer in health care go beyond skills and knowledge acquisition. As I have argued from the outset of the current thesis, academic research writing is a collaborative activity, and collaborating with others to become an academic research writer often feels hard to access. Furthermore, health care writers may wish to become active agents in their writing development given the critical topics they research and can potentially disseminate. One way of addressing such issues is to create a context where developing capabilities for relational work to develop academic research writing practices is possible. Developing the capacity for relational work is a crucial transition for the health care Master's level professional.

In Chapter Two, I reported a dearth of knowledge about how the Master's level writer makes the changes I outlined above. I have implemented writing groups for Master's level nurses to access resources for becoming academic research writers. As I showed in Chapter Two, few studies of writing group interventions examine the formative processes of health care professionals' transitions in becoming academic research writers. Most studies focus on outcomes alone. The critical quest for the current thesis was establishing a theoretical framework that could explain how and why individual nurse writers make transitions in their writing development through their experiences of participation in writing groups and the nature and process of such transitions. I argue that a sociocultural theory of transitions identifies the different processes and dimensions involved with a formative transition and provides a basis for studying the

phenomenon of interest. However, a cultural-historical approach offers further scope to understand transitions. A conceptual tool such as relational expertise (Edwards, 2005) may explain how and why health care practitioners develop the capacity to recognise and work with others to develop academic research writing whilst responding to the needs for skill and knowledge development and driving their practice forward.

In the following sections of the chapter, I will outline my understanding and application of a sociocultural theory of transitions and a cultural-historical interpretation of relational agency for the current thesis study.

3.2 A sociocultural theory of transitions

To elaborate my argument, I will outline Crafter and Maunder's (2012) assertion for using a sociocultural framework to examine transitions and the rationale for using such a framework in the current thesis study. Crafter and Maunder define formative transitions as the process of change for the individual and not the outcome:

> "If we adopt a sociocultural framework…it requires us to move beyond merely focusing on the functional changes that are taking place (i.e the outcomes) when a pupil or student is moving into a new educational environment or learning situation, to also taking into account some of the inner shifts that individuals are experiencing (i.e the process)." (Crafter & Maunder, 2012, p. 16).

A sociocultural framework considers how human development is culturally and socially situated and encompasses transitions, including changes to self-identity and dealing with uncertainty. Through the backdrop of Vygotsky's (1987) perspectives, humans develop through social and cultural interaction with their environment, including transitions across practices. Practices in this respect mean the things routinely done by people in institutions and contexts, including their socially organised activities. Given the complexity and processes of becoming an academic research writer, I identify the

value of adopting a sociocultural framework to examine the formative transitions of individuals who come together to work in writing groups.

As I have argued throughout the current thesis, few studies examine the formative process of transitions for nurses in becoming academic research writers. A sociocultural theory of transitions will help me identify the dimensions and processes that are compelling to capture, such as how and why individuals may reposition themselves. Crafter and Maunder (2012) emphasise that transitions are driven by: an individual's prior experiences; a struggle; the individual's ongoing intentions to cope with and adapt to different situations; the time that is needed for an individual to undertake change; and the individual's capacity to take advantage of the resources that become available including peer relationships. In turn, the person becomes shaped by the process. With application to the current thesis study, a sociocultural approach towards transitions offers the opportunity to explore how the participants position themselves due to their uncertainties about academic research writing and how they interpret their intentions for change. Besides, a sociocultural theory of transitions can examine how the participants navigate the known complexities of academic research writing development. A sociocultural approach will explain how the participants utilise the resources available through the writing group interventions to undertake change and the process and nature.

In constructing a sociocultural framework to enhance the directions of a study, a key consideration is how best to analyse the process of transitions for individuals. The following sections show how Zittoun's (2006, 2012) framework for developmental transitions is a crucial lens. Zittoun uses conceptual terms such as 'rupture,' 'uncertainty,' and the analytical model of the semiotic prism, which is interrelated with

the framework for developmental transitions that I will explain and define. Zittoun's concepts, model and framework place a fundamental importance on how individuals mobilise social and cognitive resources to undertake the work of transition and reposition themselves.

Other approaches to examine sociocultural transitions that I could have taken are Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of a community of practice or Beach's (1995, 2003) consequential transitions. I excluded Lave and Wenger's work, focusing on relations that share a community, a technology of practice and expertise. Newcomers learn from established expertise; however, the problem space of the thesis suggests there is no community of expertise for novices to join. Furthermore, Edwards (2005) argues that the community of practice metaphor does not account for mediation where new practices are concerned. This chapter will show the criticality of mediation in the current thesis study when examining formative transitions for an area of new local practice for writing development. Beach's (1999) typology of transitions based on Vygotsky's (1987) concept of mediation and Leontiev's (1981) concept of the social situation of development in activity settings concerns consequential transitions when the individual transfers from one setting to another. I excluded Beach's work from the current thesis study because the focus is not on individuals transferring from one setting to another.

In the following sections, I will explain how Zittoun's notions will be interpreted and applied in the current thesis study. Subsequently, I will elaborate on writing as a mediational tool and speech as a unit of analysis to contextualise developmental transitions in the context of a study focused on the development of academic research writing.

3.2.1 Developmental transitions and the model of the semiotic prism

The conceptualisation of a rupture halts an individual's action and stimulates their reflection. A rupture may be minor. For example, if my computer breaks before a deadline, I will reflect on my choices to buy a new one or borrow from a family member or friend. On the other hand, ruptures may be more catastrophic, for example, an international disaster. As contended by Gillespie and Zittoun (2010), in the circumstances of a rupture, an individual's taken-for-granted mode of action is no longer purposeful, and they may question their use of current resources and seek new ones.

A common rupture for novice writers is facing a writing task where the genre and implicit rules of the task are unfamiliar. In the current thesis study, academic research writing for a Master's dissertation or a peer-review journal article is novel for the writers. New writing tasks may be experienced as ruptures when the individual cannot readily identify the emotional, social or cognitive resources to deal with the change. Furthermore, an individual may bring longstanding uncertainty about the act of writing into the new task. Zittoun (2006, 2012) lays out the contention of rupture-irruption of uncertainty- transition, which assumes that ruptures lead to uncertainty; however, the person can undertake a transition leading to new stability. To reach new security, the individual will mobilise available cognitive and social resources for psychological work. Zittoun argues that the origin of a rupture is less important than how the rupture affects the individual's sphere of ongoing experiences. The sphere of experiences includes the uncertainties that an individual feels about the rupture. As Zittoun contends, uncertainties may be felt at various levels of generality and will affect the individual's action. Uncertainties are cognitive and emotional experiences, and the work

of transition is the psychological work undertaken by the individual in response to uncertainty.

I find the link made by Zittoun (2008) between a theoretical framework for developmental transitions and the model of the semiotic prism relevant for the current thesis study. The theoretical framework for developmental transitions is as follows. Firstly, Zittoun (2008) indicates that learning through transitions indicates a relocation or repositioning of the person in their social world leading to possibilities, constraints or even losses with implications for self-identity. The participants' work in the current thesis study on the development of their academic research writing carries each of these respective probabilities. Secondly, Zittoun explains that a person's repositioning requires expert knowledge and skills that arguably align with the participants' developmental needs in the current thesis study. By developing new knowledge and skills in a social context such as a writing group intervention, the person may become validated by other group members and interconnect their identity with new knowledge. Thirdly, Zittoun addresses the person's capacity to make sense through their relocations with others and learn through language and mediation, which helps them elaborate the emotions caused by uncertainty and repositioning.

Zittoun offers a model for analysing a person's process of transitions through the notion of the semiotic prism. The triad of person, other and object transforms into the metaphor of the semiotic prism comprising four poles: Firstly, the person; secondly, an other (real or imaginary, specific or general); thirdly, a symbolic object (which has a socially shared meaning), and fourthly the personal sense of that object for the person. Vygotsky's (1987) concepts of internalisation and externalisation and their relationship with higher psychological concept development underpin Zittoun's semiotic prism

model. Internalisation is an outcome of a developmental process mediated externally at an interpersonal level by using signs and tools. The individual becomes transformed as the interpersonal process leads to an intrapersonal level. The semiotic prism model represents a psychological change enabled by the dynamics that articulate interpersonal and intrapersonal processes. The model considers the temporal nature of psychological change. The interpersonal dynamics in the model represent a person's trajectory going from person to other and then from person to object. The intrapersonal processes link the person to sense-of-object. The notion is that the person may adopt different positions on the semiotic prism oscillating through time. The psychological work of transition that the person undertakes involves action along the axis of any or each of the four poles and considers that they will need time to reflect on their actions and potential change.

The model of the semiotic prism has the potential to capture the significant dimensions of the process of transitions for individuals who engage with writing group interventions. With application to the current thesis study, the symbolic object may be the current writing task confronting the individual. By joining a writing group intervention, the person may become enabled to make sense of the object, reflect on its meaning, and communicate that meaning to others. The model represents the three dimensions of transitional processes. Firstly, identity positioning relates to the person-other axis and helps understand how novice writers may position and reposition themselves concerning real or imagined others with their writing identities. Secondly, knowing relates to the person-object axis and helps to explain how novice writers may develop their knowledge about academic research writing. Thirdly, sense-making relates to the person-sense of the object axis and helps to understand how writers contextualise and unpack the implicit rules of academic research writing. Fourthly, the

other-object axis relates to the socially shared meaning of the object and helps to understand how novice writers in a writing group intervention setting may develop a mutual understanding of the object. Fifthly the other-objects sense relates to acknowledgement which is how the person receives individual legitimacy from others for feeling or thinking the way they do. The semiotic prism model may help examine how novice writers share their uncertainties and new understandings of writing development.

A key feature of the model of the semiotic prism is that social and cognitive resources enter the semiotic prism of the individual and brings about the potential transitional processes as described above. The concern of the current thesis is to examine how the social and cognitive resources from the writing group interventions allow the participants to deal with their uncertainties and become academic research writers. Social and cognitive resources are the sociocultural objects or other people that have meaning to the person undergoing uncertainty because they find them useful, relevant, and intentional. Social and cognitive resources may be eclectic, and Zittoun (2006, 2012) argues that such resources have a cultural 'aboutness' and align with the human capacity to use semiotic means. Using the term semiotic, Zittoun draws upon Vygotsky's (1981) notion of a sign. Vygotsky described a sign as a means for social purposes to influence others. Signs become introduced into mental functioning by external means and result in a developmental process that involves massive disruption and restructuring. Semiotic mediation exposes the development of a non-deterministic account of how mediators act upon the individual and enables the individual to act upon the world considering social, cultural, and historical factors. Semiotics indicates sign systems, and examples include systems such as writing and mnemotechnic techniques.

Meanings are attached to sign systems which show codes and rules. With application to academic research writing, sign systems are the disciplinary genres and conventions that experienced writers follow and novice writers are expected to adopt. Zittoun refers to the capacity of semiotic means for extending human intelligence and memory, also known as semiotic mediation. Semiotic mediation is "the process through which the social and the individual mutually shape each other" (Daniels, 2015, p. 34). Examples of semiotic mediation for novice academic research writers are the social and cognitive resources that underpin the activities in writing groups, such as mutual peer-reviewing of texts, including the interactions associated with the activity. Writers will work in the here-and-now of the activity 'to enter into another sphere of the experience' (Zittoun, 2006, p. 35) which may enable inner shifts. Furthermore, the individual may appropriate objects from the activity to continue to work through their uncertainties and reposition themselves as writers beyond their participation in the activity.

In drawing on Zittoun's work for the current thesis, I will borrow the concepts of the semiotic prism and developmental transitions because the concepts, models and framework offer the researcher 'The opportunity to study substantial, observable development' (Zittoun, 2012, p. 2). As I have argued throughout the current thesis, few studies examine the formative process of transitions for nurses in becoming academic research writers. A further key reason for drawing on Zittoun's work is that the frameworks to understand meaning-making are at the micro-level of the individual and consider the diversity of individuals. Whilst Zittoun is not a writing researcher, the ideas can align with what Smagorinsky (2011) identifies as the importance of capturing the social, cognitive, and affective aspects of writing development.

The model of the semiotic prism constantly focuses on an individual in a particular situation, including the diversity of their experiences, emotions, and understandings. An experience may become meaningful when mediated by a sign and a reciprocal meaning for imagined or real others. A writing group intervention has the potential to enter the semiotic prism of the individual participant when they confront their knowledge, understanding and feelings about writing development and when compared with others. Notably, the semiotic prism as a concept acknowledges development over time, for example, the experience given to a person at time 1 and the meaning it achieves for them at time 2. In the current thesis study, I will observe the individual participants (of the writing group interventions) development at different time points and their respective reflections on their development. Respective time points are relevant for Intervention 1, aimed at dissertation writers where participants work on a finite timeline. In the writing group intervention (Intervention 2) for individuals writing research articles, participation is less linear in that participants 'drop-in' as appropriate to their other commitments and writing for publication does not adhere to a fixed timeline.

Importantly for the participants in Intervention 2, they seek time and space away from the reality of their lives to focus on writing. A cultural experience (Zittoun, 2006; Zittoun et al., 2003) is a component of the semiotic prism (Zittoun, 2006, 2008, 2012). A cultural experience offers the individual a sphere of experience that is qualitatively different from everyday experiences and gives access to an imaginary experience distinct from the everyday here-and-now. The critical point about a cultural experience is that the influences can prevail beyond the imaginary and influence inner shifts and how people conduct themselves socially. I will examine the extent to which the writing group intervention for individuals writing research articles is a cultural experience and

the relationship between a cultural experience and the transition process as an academic research writer. The semiotic prism model is relevant to examining individuals' experiences in the here-and-now of the activities of each writing group intervention, the resources that participants find meaningful as semiotic mediators, and the participants' semiotic alliances with real or imagined others.

The transition processes become developmental when the person can reflect upon their use of resources or identify what part the resources have played in the transition and make meaning from their experiences, which has implications for the person's repositioning. Zittoun's focus on a person's repositioning is a central theme in her work. One of her fundamental research interests has been how young people transition their self-identity using symbolic resources. In Chapter 2, I outlined how several authors (Boote & Beile, 2005; Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Chen et al., 2016; Ivanič, 1998, 2004; Kamler & Thomson, 2008) bring attention to the self-identity challenges experienced by novice writers. The work of transition to become an academic research writer is self-identity work, and Zittoun's analytical framework offers a purposeful lens for examining the work.

To summarise, Zittoun's notions offer the possibility of examining the meaning of health care writers' writing development by identifying the individual participant's uncertainties and how uncertainties will affect their ongoing experiences, including their intentions as writers. Zittoun's work has the potential to explain how the participants will use the cognitive and social resources offered by the interventions in diverse ways to work through their self-identity as writers, consciously reflect on their struggles and undertake the psychological work of transition. The psychological work

of transition refers to an individual's formative development under any given axis of their semiotic prism.

However, there are some limitations to Zittoun's work concerning the current thesis study. It is vital to nuance what is meant by a social and cognitive resource in writing groups and their relationship with formative writing development, given that Zittoun is not a writing researcher. The following section will outline the nature of social and cognitive resources in writing group interventions and their potential as mediational tools for writing development.

3.2.2 Writing as a mediational tool

In the following section, I will build on Zittoun's work on developmental transitions by explaining how the concept of writing as a tool and sign will enhance an understanding of academic research writing development for the current thesis study. To elaborate my explanation, I will describe Vygotsky's theory of tools and how post-Vygotskian writing researchers have extended Vygotsky's theory. I will then explain the relations between mediational tools and the cognitive and social resources available in writing groups. Finally, I will consider how appropriating mediational tools for writing development may be explored through an individual's reflections.

Writing groups are spaces where social and cognitive resources may become available to help individuals develop as academic research writers. For the researcher to understand how people may become enabled to make formative transitions from using such resources, it is necessary to consider the semiotic and mediational potential of the resources. An important consideration for the current thesis study was to examine how individuals may appropriate the resources in writing group interventions as signs and

tools. In guiding researchers who wish to use a sociocultural lens to investigate such complexity, Smagorinsky (2011) suggests that the approach considers Vygotsky's notion of writing as a sign and tool.

3.2.3 Vygotsky and his use of tools

The concept of tools is key to understanding Vygotsky's (1987, 1994, 1998) construct of mediation and how people develop through social and cultural interaction with their environment. The term 'tools' ordinarily applies to physical objects for work – hammers, spades, needles, and a writer's tool would be their pen. However, Vygotsky's (1987, 1994, 1998) concept of psychological tools (such as language, signs, symbols or texts) is key to his views on human development mediated by activity and social and cultural connections. Furthermore, Vygotsky's ideas about tools and language relate to writing development. Vygotsky distinguished between using a resource to act upon the mind of self or other (sign) from acting upon the world (psychological tool). In the previous section, I explained the concept of a sign from a Vygotskian perspective.

From Vygotsky's (1987, 1997a) perspective, writing is a sign and a psychological tool and involves complex cognitive processes. Writing as a sign acts on the writer's mental processes and potentially their development. Writing as a psychological tool enables the writer to work on the world through text. The concept of writing as a sign and psychological tool was part of Vygotsky's project on human higher concept development. Vygotsky (1987) viewed the development of writing as mastery of a scientific concept in preference to mastery of technical skill and described as the development of written speech.

A post-Vygotskian perspective is Smagorinsky's (2008, 2011) notion of writing as a mediational tool. Smagorinsky interprets Vygotsky's work on a sign and psychological tool as two interdependent facets of:

> "Speech-based thinking and communication: the importance of the sign function of speech- the form it takes to represent meaning- and the tool function that considers how speech is used to act on the world (Smagorinsky, 2011, p. 171)

Smagorinsky's ideas put equal emphasis on signs and tools as mediators. The sign potential of written speech to create meaning and the tool potential of written speech to act on the world. Smagorinsky's notion of writing as a mediational tool encompasses the complementary aspects of writing as a sign and a psychological tool. Smagorinsky refers to 'appropriation' in preference to 'using' a mediational tool. As contended by Gillespie and Zittoun (2010), words such as 'appropriation' emphasise the creative action of the resource as a mediational tool. Appropriation does not restrict the resource to the point of use, and there may be feedback into the resource where it becomes further adapted by the individual.

The issue for health care practitioners who are making a transition to become academic research writers is how they will come to appropriate new mediational tools for writing. In the current thesis study, the cognitive and social resources available in the writing group interventions offer potential mediational means. The cognitive and social resources are the instructional approaches and activities that aim for the developmental changes the Master's level professional needs to become an academic research writer (Chapter Four, section 4.3). In summary, the resource-based activities include freewriting, writing and presentation of abstracts, peer-reviewing of texts, generative writing strategies and approaches to help develop the writer's voice, such as

metadiscourse. The social resources are the peer and instructor interactions around the activities and any other talk related to academic research writing.

A writer could appropriate mediational tools at one level to structure a sentence or a paragraph or at another level to revise and rewrite a text for positioning towards an intended audience. In turn, mediational tools can become lenses through which the researcher can examine how learners' transition in their understanding towards becoming academic research writers. Gillespie and Zittoun (2010) offer additional nuance, which applies to the current thesis study regarding the distinction between reflective and non-reflective use of a mediational tool. They argue that the reflective use forms a different psychological relation to the task. I might, for example, draft and structure a paragraph or a section of my thesis after receiving instruction about positioning my authorial voice. I may then discard the draft text without any further thought. My actions would be an example of non-reflective use of the resource or, as Gillespie and Zittoun suggest, termination of the mediation.

Conversely, I may appropriate the draft text as a resource to review and rewrite different sections of my thesis in light of my new understanding. In this situation, I would be in a reflective phase of my use of a mediational tool which Gillespie and Zittoun describe as the juncture between stepping out and re-organising the task (thesis writing). I would have appropriated my text as a mediational tool to develop my focus on thesis writing. Reflecting on the use of a resource is a crucial concept to analyse the academic research writing development of the participants in the current thesis study concerning their appropriation of mediational tools.

In this section, I have outlined the origins and the concept of writing as a mediational tool. I have also outlined the research potential to understand how the participants in the current thesis study will appropriate cognitive and social resources as mediational tools for their writing development. The ideas that I have presented in this section will enable me to analyse the formative development of the writers who engage with the writing interventions. There is an opportunity to explain how the writers may appropriate resources as mediational tools to act on themselves and others. Notably, the notion of the reflective use of a mediational tool aligns with Zittoun's (2006, 2012) ideas on the semiotic prism as outlined in the previous section. Given that I will be observing the participants' interactions, it is essential to consider speech as a unit of analysis which I will outline in the following section.

3.2.4 Speech as a unit of analysis in writing group interventions

This section will outline my considerations of how speech as a unit of analysis aligns with the theoretical framework for the current thesis. As outlined in a previous section, interactions during activities and spoken communication during writing groups are significant social and cognitive resources. To conceptualise speech as a mediational tool in writing group interventions, I will elaborate on the Vygotskian notion of the dialectic and the Bakhtinian notion of the dialogic.

As contended by Gere (1987), writing groups focus on improving writing concerned with language development and hence improving writing is aligned with a Vygotskian perspective where the source of language is outside the individual. According to Gere (1987), the Vygotskian focus on the dialectic puts peer response at the centre of writing development because language is integral to thinking and knowing. Voices heard in writing groups contribute to what individuals internalise and later use in written

language because 'language about language' (Gere, 1987, p. 84) becomes part of the interpsychological process.

Gere argues that Vygotsky's (1997a) work mutually compliments Bakhtin's (1981) ideas as a conceptual perspective on peer response in writing groups where the exchange contributes to a continuing dialogue between individual writers and society. By bringing Vygotsky's views on the dialectic together with Bakhtin's notion of the dialogic, Gere suggests it is possible to conceptualise what writers do when they come together in writing groups and talk about writing through peer activities. The dialectic concept means development driven by internal contradictions. In contrast, the concept of dialogue relates to meaning in context:

> 'Meaning-making activities that are mediated through language, words, signs, symbols or concepts' (Linell, 2009, p. 4)

Bakhtin's notion (1981;1986) of the dialogic focuses on speech genres and the complexity of the spoken utterance. Wertsch (1991) suggests that Bakhtin's ideas of utterance, voice and social languages enhance Vygotsky's contentions 'about the mediation of human activity by signs' (Wertsch, 1991: p.17). Wertsch identifies three ideas shared by both scholars: firstly, semiotic mediation; secondly, an assumption that aspects of human mental functions align with the process of communication at a fundamental level; and thirdly, a shared belief that to understand human functions, it is necessary to employ developmental genetic analysis underpinned by communicative processes. Daniels (2016) further develops Wertsch's perspective by pointing to Bakhtin's emphasis on dialogue and ventriloquism, which enables an understanding of the process by which the voices of others are appropriated. Daniels shows a point of departure between Vygotsky and Bakhtin in that Bakhtin relates to the difference of the

other, which reveals differences and contradictions within an understanding which generates development. Bakhtin's difference of the other is distinct from Vygotsky's ideas on many voices, which focus on making meaning from multiple voices.

In simpler terms, during speech communication, individuals will bring in the perceptions of others who influence them but are not present. Conceptually, the perceptions of others become the voices of others. Bakhtin's perspective emphasises that the voices of others will occupy different viewpoints. When an individual brings different viewpoints to speech communication, it may create contradictions in understanding but conversely an opportunity for development. Furthermore, academic communities are replete with voices. An essential aspect of becoming an academic research writer is joining the disciplinary community with one's voice and dealing with others. When faced with a novel writing task, the individual may experience internal contradictions arising from past and present voices. In the context of the current thesis study, past and present voices may include supervisors, peers and teachers who have a stake or an interest in an individual's writing. The critical point here is that individuals in writing groups will bring the voices of others to the communicative action and participate with the voices of others present in the writing group to make meaning. Notably, the communicative action in writing groups is a social resource and potentially a mediational tool.

To achieve the aims of the current study, I will observe the individual participants development at different time points through their interactions with other participants during the writing group interventions. Wertsch's (1991) (Wertsch & Kazak, 2011) and Daniels' (2016) perspectives on Vygotsky and Bakhtin's theoretical contributions sit comfortably with Middleton (1996, 2011) and Mercer (1995, 2000, 2013), who

emphasise language as a social and cultural resource, and how language use creates collective knowledge and understanding constructed through context and continuity. Middleton offers a 'd-analysis' model for communication analysis (2011), which identifies collective and distributed knowledge by drawing attention to participants 'reflexivity and emergent findings. Middleton's analytical tools offer ways to consider how writers develop at a micro level over time by their joint knowledge creation through language with others. In the context of the theoretical framework for the study, speech as a unit of analysis conceptualised through the ideas presented in this section is complementary with Zittoun's (2006, 2012) notion of the semiotic prism as outlined earlier by providing nuance to real or imagined others where a semiotic alliance may exist.

3.3 A cultural-historical theory perspective on relational work

In the following sections, I will argue how relational work shapes the development of the individual academic research writer and shapes their practices and developing the capacity for relational work is a component of the process of transitions. I will explain what matters, relational expertise, common knowledge and relational agency as essential concepts for the thesis, what they will offer and how they relate to a theory of transitions. To do this, I will draw on Edwards' (2005, 2011, 2017) concepts for relational work, Hedegaard's (2012) planes of analysis model, and Sannino and Engeström's (2017) work on double stimulation.

As I showed in chapter two, a key reason for the implementation of writing groups is to offer peer or expert support for writing skill development and productivity (Boquet et al., 2017; Bullion & Brower, 2017; Cable et al., 2013; Dickson-Swift et al., 2009;

Dysthe, 2012; Fergie et al., 2011; Garside et al., 2015; Guerin et al., 2013; Johnson et al., 2017; Johnson et al., 2007; Noone & Young, 2019; Wittman et al., 2008). Such an emphasis on collaboration suggests that writing group interventions acknowledge and address the relational nature of academic research writing. However, as I argued in Chapter Two, the collaborative nature of writing group interventions is underexplored and under-theorised. Furthermore, participating in a writing group is only one aspect of the relational work needed to complete academic research writing tasks. Other relations include supervisors, peers, critical friends, and scholarly journal peer-reviewers. For individuals from nursing and health care disciplines, relational work on writing may also involve clinical practice colleagues and experts. One study (Dysthe, 2012) included in the literature review for the current thesis study acknowledged and addressed the relational work undertaken in a writing group by Master's dissertation students alongside the relational work that they individually undertook with their supervisors. Dysthe concluded that writing instruction and academic research writing are deeply situated practices that concern the macro and meso factors that shape them. I agree with Dysthe's view based on my prior experiences in the setting for the current thesis study.

Returning to the fundamental concept for the current thesis, formative transitions, Crafter and Maunder argue that a sociocultural notion of transitions "presuppose a negotiation between the individual and the social contexts they inhabit" (Crafter & Maunder, 2012, p. 11). Crafter and Maunder imply that negotiation involves participation. The shortcoming of such a view is that it plays down the agency of individuals in negotiating their transitions. By negotiation, I mean how individual writers may work with others to understand how to go about and respond to academic research writing tasks. Furthermore, the writer who belongs to a writing group is

situated within their respective sociocultural context, meaning that issues outside the writing group will bring to bear on the process of negotiating their transitions. Matters to be dealt with may include contradictory constraints arising from relations with others, disciplinary expectations and knowing how to enter communities that foster academic research writing practices. On the other hand, the work of transition triggered by participating in a writing group intervention and the writers' constantly evolving semiotic prisms may lead to modifications about how the writers wish to participate in their respective sociocultural context. The transition includes becoming an active agent in their development and a resource for the writing development of others.

I argue that Edwards' work (2005, 2010, 2016, 2017) offers the possibility to analyse how the individual participants will learn how to work relationally with others and propel themselves forward as academic research writers. Edwards' conceptual ideas emerge from the cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) tradition and focus on relational work in practice settings and how people work together across boundaries on complex problems.

Post-Vygotskian traditions occupy diverse perspectives. However, by bringing traditions together, there may be mutual elaborations. Daniels (2001, 2008) suggests sociocultural theory and cultural-historical traditions put different emphasis on mediation. As Wertsch (1985, 1991) espoused in sociocultural theory, activity is present but foregrounded by mediation. For example, the first part of this chapter showed how Zittoun's notion of developmental transitions concerns the relationship between mediation and the individual. Edwards' (2005) perspective is that cultural-historical theory is not restrictive of the analysis to purely an individual and is a current and still developing outcome of two related but different strands of work, sociocultural

psychology and activity theory. Edwards' focus concerns understanding how the collective shapes the individual through appropriating mediational tools. As Hjørland (2009) argues, it is pragmatic to hold competing concepts together to explain and unpack practices. The argument has currency for exploring and explaining the problem space of this study. In the following sections, I will explain the main concepts from Edwards' work that I will be drawing on for the current thesis.

3.3.1 What matters

This section shows why what matters (Edwards, 2005, 2016, 2017) and Hedegaard's (2012) planes of analysis are essential components of the cultural-historical analytical approach for the current thesis study. The conceptual underpinnings of Edwards' work are the appropriation of mediational tools from a Vygotskian (1987, 1994, 1998) perspective, as outlined earlier. One aspect is how people use and refashion new conceptual tools to work on the practices that they inhabit. Edwards' stance is that actors arrive at practices already created by others, work deliberately in and on them, and in turn enhance them. Edwards' definition of practice is as follows:

> "Knowledge-laden imbued with cultural values, and emotionally freighted by the motives of those who already act in them" (Edwards, 2010, p. 5)

Edwards' interpretation emphasises the motives and values that people carry forward into their actions in practices. The participants will access new conceptual tools to work on their academic research writing in the current thesis study. According to Edwards' premise, what matters to the participants will influence how they use and refashion the conceptual tools.

The cultural-historical approach of 'what matters' derives from Leontiev's (1981) observation of the dialectic of the person in activity and society leading to an object

motive and the object of activity. Edwards has further developed Leontiev's notion by considering that actors expand the object of activity to reshape it through 'what matters,' as a concept that replaces object motive. People collectively work on the object of activity and what matters becomes a shared understanding in a specific practice. For example, individuals may reshape their trajectories as an object of activity through working with others in writing group interventions. Writing development is cognitively, socially, and emotionally complex. By working collectively on what matters, the writers may expand the object of activity to reveal the complexity.

However, people do not bracket themselves once they join a writing group intervention. They bring the motives and values that link with their societal practices, activities, and actions (Edwards, 2017), influencing what matters. Edwards recommends that researchers in the tradition identify the potential for misalignment with what society demands in interplay with what matters. The critical issue for the researcher is to reveal those differences to analyse how individuals negotiate them. Edwards recommends using Hedegaard's (2012) planes of analysis framework to examine the dialectic between what matters to individuals and the societal and cultural demands of the setting and the relationships within that context.

Motives exist within institutional practices, and the actor confronts these through the activity settings of their everyday lives. Vygotsky's (1971, 1994) notion of crises in the social situation of development means that motives can be initiated by entering a new practice or acquiring new skills. Hedegaard's seminal work focuses on conceptualising children's development through their activities and the demands arising from institutions. Hedegaard's interpretation of an activity setting is as follows:

> "Activity settings are recurrent structures of traditions for activities that take place in an institutional practice." (Hedegaard, 2011: p.18)

The notion of activity settings works equally well with application to adult learning and development. Hedegaard conceptualises the model on three planes:

- The formal societal plane, reflecting traditions that have evolved historically and have been made official by the laws and conditions for the existence of an institution; this also reflects value positions.
- The general institutional plane reflecting the informal conventional demands and traditions that influence persons' practices and shared activity settings in a specific institution, such as lessons or meetings.
- The perspective of an individual reflecting the actions that they may take in an activity that may or may not lead to learning.

I have applied the framework to anticipate potential misalignment for participants in the current thesis study who are Master's level professionals writing a dissertation or a research paper for publication. Their potential activity settings are the societal context of health care, the institutional settings of higher education, related professional bodies, clinical health care settings, and the person's perspectives. Motives arise from the cultural traditions of such activity settings. The concept of activity settings is structured by the person and the conventions constraining institutional practices.

The formal societal plane: The dialectic between what matters to individuals and the motives that exist at the societal level confronts Master's dissertation writers in health care. At the formal societal plane, the implementation of evidence-based practice by health care professionals is an internationally recognised commitment and responsibility. The Master's level health care professional has a crucial role in driving,

influencing, or improving health through evidence-based practice. Professional bodies and health care policy directives create demands for health care professionals to become more scholarly to improve health outcomes by researching and disseminating through writing about clinical health practice.

Evidence-based practice is also a cultural tool for nurses and other health care practitioners and mediates actions and activities, including the publication of research. The gatekeepers for evidence-based practice dissemination are the editorial boards of peer-review journals. When novice writers join a writing group intervention, they are most likely unaware of peer-review journals' cultural standing, process, and dynamics.

The institutional level: The participants' institutional contexts are health care organisations and higher education institutes. Choosing a topic to explore in a Master's dissertation is frequently based upon a clinical problem that matters locally with the potential to generate evidence for practice. The implications for the learner are designing a specific, original, and manageable project and undertaking initial information and literacy work.

The UK NHS (National Institute of Health Research, n.d.) has a current objective to facilitate the development of clinical academic careers and has clinical governance accountability to ensure that evidence is disseminated and implemented into practice because of the potential to improve health care outcomes. The Master's dissertation research undertaken by participants in the context of the current thesis study is service improvement projects relevant for the NHS and its service users. Some participants from the current thesis study practice within clinical settings in other international contexts. However, similar demands and practice needs exist.

Master's dissertation writers also interplay with the higher education institute. Universities create cultural traditions for student research, including dissertation supervision, ethical approval, and standards for assessment. Supervisory relationships for the dissertation writer represent a new departure in teaching and learning relations. The demand for writing in a new genre, including dissertations or peer-review publication, applies to all writers in the study.

The Master's level professional working as an academic teacher may perceive demands to become published writers to gain legitimacy in their higher education identities. Personal values may extend to a co-production writing role with learners and alumni. However, institutional motives may preference teaching activities compared with academic research writing activities.

The level of the individual: The motives that individuals bring to the activity of academic research writing and the demands included in the activity identify what matters to the writers. What matters to the participants of the current thesis study is writing a dissertation or getting a research paper published. Others who work with the participants on the texts will bring different motivations and perspectives contingent upon their expertise for the action and activities. What matters to either party may cause misalignments.

My application of the planes of analysis framework as above was at the outset of the study. Edwards'(2017) application is a precursor to analyse the potential learning that occurs when professionals from different disciplines work on complex problems at the sites of intersecting practices. My focus in the current thesis study is different because the individuals are from the same profession. On the other hand, I agree with Edwards

that the model helps focus the research without ignoring that individuals' activities are in practices that constrain or enable actions. I will return to the model at different points of the analysis to examine how the participants negotiate their transitions as writers while dealing with the demands from their activity settings and developing their capacity for relational work to deal with what matters**.**

The three concepts of relational expertise, common knowledge, and relational agency (Edwards, 2005, 2011, 2017) are tools to examine effective development and enactment of collaboration. What matters is at the heart of such constructs.

The problem space of the current thesis is the development of academic research writing for the health care disciplines. As suggested at the outset of the thesis, one of the difficulties nurses experience in transitioning to academia from clinical contexts is positioning themselves as academic research writers. Part of the issue is knowing how to work with others collaboratively to develop writing practices. A key aim of writing group interventions is the development of collaboration, but there remains a need to understand the capacity of actors to work with others. In the current thesis, Edwards' conceptual lenses can reveal new ways of working in the problem space that is informative.

3.3.2 Relational expertise

Relational expertise is the capacity to work relationally with others to deal with complex problems. From a cultural-historical perspective, expertise is not individualistic or stable. Expertise is collective and a more multi-sited, mobile construct that crosses boundaries and involves negotiation (Engeström, 2018). Relational expertise is a related but unique form of expertise where one needs to become self-aware while recognising

and respecting the expertise of potential collaborators. The construct of knowing how to know who(Edwards, 2011) is a fundamental step towards relational expertise and is the capacity to recognise different expertise while making one's expertise explicit. The processes involve a recognition of the standpoints and motives of those who inhabit other practices while aligning mutual motives to interpret and respond to problems. It also involves a joint alignment of what matters. Knowing-how-to know who, shortened to know-who are the capacities that novice academic writers need to develop towards effective collaborations for their writing development.

The potential for collaboration may not be evident to novice writers. A primary collaborative relationship for participants in the current thesis study is between dissertation supervisors and supervisees. The writing group interventions allow participants to collaborate with a broader group of peers and raise awareness of the benefits of fostering other writing relationships in clinical and academic settings. Some participants in the current thesis study will collaborate on the composition of texts, and these relationships are critical to nurture and examine. The writing group interventions also can support the writers to develop their expertise to become a resource for others. I argue that developing know-who is a crucial transition for the participants in the current thesis study and may extend beyond an immediate writing task.

3.3.3 Common knowledge

I will now outline the concept of common knowledge, which, as contended by Edwards (2016, 2017), makes up the core of what matters in each professional discipline. According to Edwards, common knowledge is a lens to understand the links made through relational expertise. Common knowledge mediates responsive collaborations on complex problems. Here Edwards likens common knowledge to the Vygotskian

(1981) second stimulus. The problem that prompts collaborative work is the first stimulus. Vygotsky (1987) developed the dual-experimental or double stimulation method for observing the process of concept formation. The researcher initiates a task at the outset of the experiment, and the means for solving the task are gradually introduced so that the experimenter can observe the transformation of the means through mastery of the task and thus:

> "Discover the inner structure and development of higher psychological processes." (Daniels, 2008, p. 46)

The researcher attempts to observe higher concept formation through the following steps as described by Vygotsky (1987):

- Working out of concepts.
- Concepts transferred to a new object.
- Use of the concept in free association.
- Application of the concept.

Edwards' application suggests that the second stimulus derives from the resources and tools available to respond to the problem and interpret it over time through a shared understanding of what matters for respective collaborators. In the current thesis study, the immediate concern for the participants in developing their academic research writing is conceptual knowledge about how to write a dissertation or a journal research article. However, given the demands and motives from respective activity settings, other problems can come to the fore that require collaborative and mediated action. There is potential in writing group interventions for participants to reveal their issues while working on their academic research writing concept development and build common

knowledge to interpret and respond. My role as a researcher is to observe and analyse such developments.

3.3.4 Relational agency

The third concept is relational agency (Edwards, 2016, 2017) which involves careful listening to and understanding each other's motives leading to an expansion of the problem, which may include work on a collection of difficulties and carefully measured and specialist responses working in apposition.

The notion of agency is essential for the current thesis as an aspect of the writers' transitions. Edwards (2015) suggests the difficulties that underlie a definition of agency, given that terms of reference regarding agency may share similarities yet possess distinct conceptual differences. Edwards preferences a perspective cited from Taylor (1977) that associates agency with responsibility and self-evaluation. Edwards'(2005) concept of relational agency considers that actors reciprocally align thoughts and actions to interpret problems that arise in practice and respond to such interpretations. Edwards suggests that the context of modern work across institutional boundaries and settings requires robust forms of agency for purposeful collaborations. For the current thesis, the development of relational agency is about learning how to respond purposefully and make decisions.

The writing group interventions aim to promote collaboration and extend the participants' writing practices as the object of activity is expanded through relational work. However, collaboration is not a given. The individual's agency in the dialectic will have a contingency for the success of the collaboration. I am interested in exploring how either of the interventions might operate as a first stimulus for developing the

participant's agency. In other words, how the interventions can present the participants with critical conflicts about what matters and examining their agentic actions in response. Sannino and Engeström (2017) argue that relational agency is mobilised through formative interventions and can play a crucial role in disclosing the dynamics. A conflict of motives can stimulate volitional action and agency. I anticipate that participants' experiences of contradictions concerning their writing development will emerge. When Engeström and Sannino (2010) refer to contradictions, they explicitly mean that contradictions can drive learning as the object of activity is identified and becomes a motive or what matters, and how what matters may influence how learners wish to participate in activity settings. Relational agency provides a lens to examine how the participants deal with the first stimulus by identifying what matters about becoming an academic research writer and how the resources of others are recognised and drawn upon.

Sannino and Engeström suggest that the concepts remind the researcher of Leontiev's (1981) principles on object activity, the shared object towards which directs the action. They argue that relationality is an essential quality of the object. Therefore, the pursuit of an object is both an individual and a collective relational journey. Given the known longitudinal nature of academic research writing development and that writers will pursue different objects during their trajectories, understanding the participants' relational journeys can reveal how and why the interventions in the current thesis study can enhance relational agency.

Edwards' overarching concept is relational expertise, but clearly, each of the three concepts discussed in this section relates to individuals' learning and development. Vygotsky's (1981) notion of higher concept development underpins Edwards'

perspectives. Because the current thesis study concerns academic research writing development, it is essential to consider how developing relational expertise, common knowledge, and relational agency might shape the writing produced by the participants. A notion that aligns with the theoretical framework is Bazerman's (2005, 2012) writing as a scientific concept in higher education.

3.4 Writing as a scientific concept in higher education

In Chapter Two, I introduced Bazerman's view on the importance of exposing the relationship between writing and thinking, specifically writing as a developmental process to refine thinking, argumentation, and concept development. Disciplinary concepts, he claims, have congruence with Vygotsky's higher psychological processes and the internalisation of scientific concepts, which challenges students' use of spontaneous concepts as they struggle to come to terms with the concepts of a discipline. A crucial consideration for writing group interventions that aim to enhance academic research writing is, as Bazerman contends, to provoke creative thought within learner writing:

> "to help students internalise disciplinary concepts and externalise disciplined thoughts." (Bazerman, 2012: p.270)

Bazerman's hypothesis on writing development concerns the relationship between semiotic mediation and concept development. The writing group interventions in the current thesis aim to offer new conceptual tools to the participants for their writing development. In working collaboratively with others and expanding the object of activity, I anticipate that the participants will internalise the disciplinary concepts they write about and externalise disciplinary knowledge for an intended audience. Bazerman argues that writing development concerns affective and cognitive changes but is

challenging. In the following chapter, I will explain my use of Bazerman's conceptual tools to analyse the participants writing. However, I will also consider how the participants become conscious of their academic research writing concept development.

I have argued how relational work can shape the development of individual academic research writers, shape their practices, and develop their capacity for relational work during transitions. I have explained cultural-historical theory's importance in examining such shifts in the current thesis study. The following and concluding section of the chapter will articulate how I will operationalise a sociocultural theory of transitions and a cultural-historical approach to address the study's research questions.

3.5 Operationalising the study's research questions

Three research questions guide the exploration:

RQ 1. How and why do the participants appropriate the mediational tools from the writing intervention appropriated during the work of transition?

RQ 2. How do the participants experience relational work and deal with contradictions to shape their academic research writing development?

The first research question calls for a sociocultural approach to explain how the participants utilise the resources available through the writing group interventions to undertake change and the process and nature of that change. To examine the dimensions and the temporal nature of the participants' transitions, I will draw on Zittoun's (2006, 2012) notion of the semiotic prism complemented by a sociocultural approach to speech as a unit of analysis (Mercer, 1995, 2000; Middleton, 1996, 2011) and the appropriation of writing as a mediational tool(Gillespie & Zittoun, 2010; Smagorinsky, 2011).

Addressing the second research question calls for a dialectical approach to collecting and analysing the data (Edwards, 2005, 2011, 2017; Hedegaard, 2012; Sannino, 2015; Sannino & Engeström, 2017). Cultural-historical theory can reveal how and what matters in becoming an academic research writer for the health care disciplines and how the participants' respective activity settings influence development. Knowing how to build relations with others to work collaboratively on academic research writing tasks can be a critical transition that enables individuals to interpret and respond to contradictions and develop their agency as writers.

To consider the formative processes of the participants' transitions, I will bring the findings derived from research questions one and two and hold them against the concepts of sociocultural theory and cultural-historical theory. The approach will enable me to reach conclusions about the individual participant's formative transitions in their academic research writing development.

The commonality between Zittoun and Edwards is their focus on how individuals use tools to act on the world. Zittoun's (2006) concept of developmental transitions includes identity repositioning, knowledge change, skill acquisition, and meaning-making. Both scholars draw upon Cole's (1996) conceptualisation of Wartofsky's (1973) three-level hierarchy of artefacts to help understand tool-mediated activity. Regarding the third level, the tools promote learner autonomy to change their practices toward an imagined future.

Earlier I explained the link between repositioning and writing as identity work. The person undergoing the transition may find that repositioning leads to acknowledgement by others. Edwards' ideas explicitly concern the capacity for individuals to reposition

themselves through their capability to develop know-who. Becoming an academic research writer involves specific knowledge and skill development. Edwards' notion of common knowledge enables the researcher to understand how the collective creates resources as second stimuli and how individuals use their agency to develop their conceptual knowledge about academic research writing. Zittoun and Edwards emphasise the criticality of relations through semiotic alliances (Zittoun, 2006, 2012) and developing relational expertise (Edwards, 2005, 2011, 2017). Critically for the writer, drawing on the resources of others has the potential to provide safety and continuity. On the other hand, the writer also can become a resourceful practitioner for others.

In the following chapter, I will outline the research design for the current thesis study and explain how the theoretical framework outlined in this chapter links with the methodological approach.

4 Chapter Four: Methodology for a qualitative investigation across two writing group interventions

4.1 Introduction

The problem space of the current thesis is developing academic research writing for the health care disciplines, focusing on nurses and health care professionals who transition to academia from clinical contexts. I implemented two writing group interventions in a higher education context to explore formative human development when the participants faced a new writing task and were given access to cognitive and social resources.

This chapter will explain the selected methodological design for investigating the interventions, my decision-making processes and justifies my commitment to taking a qualitative approach as the most appropriate way to address the study's research aims and questions. After explaining the study design, I will introduce the setting for the two writing group interventions and the sampling decisions, a description of data collection processes, and data analyses decisions and processes. Finally, I will outline the considerations for trustworthiness, positionality and ethics.

4.2 Decision-making process for the study's research design

An immersion in the empirical, pedagogical and theoretical literature, my prior experiences of implementing writing group interventions in the setting, and addressing

the study's aims and research questions influenced my decision-making processes for the research design

The first aim of the current study was to understand how access to cognitive and social resources provided through the writing group interventions related to formative transitions for individuals.

The second aim of the current study was to reveal how the participants developed their capacity for relational work to progress their writing and reposition themselves as resourceful practitioners through their participation in the interventions.

The aims of the study were operationalised through the respective research questions:

- RQ 1. How and why do the participants appropriate the mediational tools from the writing interventions during the work of transition?

- RQ 2. How do the participants experience relational work and deal with contradictions to shape their academic research writing development?

I have systematically reviewed the empirical literature to date on writing group interventions in higher education settings for the health care disciplines (Chapter Two). I concluded some methodological limitations: prior studies lack trustworthiness due to a paucity of a detailed description; lack of participant observation during writing group interactions and activities which overlooks the social aspect of writing development; little attention to writers' temporal shifts, which is an omission given longitudinal nature of writing development; and have not undertaken documentary analysis such as sampling participants writing. Through engaging with the literature on writing development, I understood that there are many ways to study writing processes (Prior,

2004). As a novice to writing development research, I was open to the advice from Bazerman (2013) that the most meaningful approaches are necessarily eclectic, which implies flexibility in the design. As explained in Chapter One, I had already implemented writing group interventions in the setting. I was aware of the diversity of individuals who engaged with writing development and appreciated that it was necessary to consider multiple realities on the phenomenon.

My experiences and appraisal of prior research placed me at the coign of vantage in Wolcott's (2009) metaphorical tree of qualitative research to take the broadest perspective and combine strategies through a basic qualitative approach. Wolcott's perspective concerns the researcher placing themselves on the metaphorical tree to get the best view for the information required. The focus of my study concerned the process of transitions and required a rich picture of individuals' experiences, interpretations and writing. I was placed further down the metaphorical tree, meaning the best view for the phenomenon. Being further down the tree enables the researcher to combine strategies as needed and is not dependent on one single design, which on the one hand, could offer a unique perspective but, on the other hand, could lead to limitations. A further design decision consideration was a reflection on the research questions.

The research aim and questions orientation were towards a basic qualitative approach (. Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). My rationale is as follows. The overall research aim sought to understand how individuals who engaged with the writing interventions made sense and made meaning of their experiences of writing development through a detailed description. The research questions concerned the participants' interpretations and use of resources and their relationships in the context of the interventions. I conducted the study in a natural setting, with a concern for individuals' experiences in creating the

social world and an emphasis on explaining the unique and the particular with the researcher as a primary instrument. The epistemological basis was interpretative by examining the world through participants' meaning-making. My next consideration was the place of theory in the basic qualitative research design.

4.2.1 Linking theory with research methodology

A further and critical conclusion from my literature review (Chapter Two) is that prior studies have not explained the formative transitions of participants who engage with writing group interventions in similar settings to the current thesis study. Only one study (Dysthe, 2012) in the literature review drew upon situated learning to explain or analyse participant development or learning. The notion of a formative transition is central to the current thesis. Reaching a more nuanced understanding will nurture the practices that enhance the transition processes for academic research writing development. In Chapter Three, I proposed a theoretical framework to address the gap in the field based upon a sociocultural theory of transitions and a cultural-historical theory of relational agency.

The place of theory in qualitative research appears to lack a clear consensus. I found Anfara and Mertz's (2006, 2015), Merriam's (2009) and Miles and Huberman's (1994) views particularly helpful in thinking through how the theoretical framework for the thesis could enhance the methodology. They argue that theory goes beyond the paradigmatic approach and can potentially frame any or each part of a study. Anfara and Mertz refer to this as a 'more than' approach, which excludes the notion of paradigms and enables more than one lens or perspective to bring to bear on a research study.

In the current thesis study, a sociocultural theory of transitions and a cultural-historical theory of relational agency framed the study by helping to interpret the data systematically and rigorously, refine focus, and integrate the data analyses, demonstrate an inductive-deductive approach and show the decision trail. I will explain in more detail in the data analyses sections of this chapter.

The strategies that I adopted enabled me to focus on the writing development of individuals as the unit of analysis, as their development unfolded over time to encompass the uncertainties that a new writing task presented alongside the demands which mattered and challenged them. Furthermore, I understood how the resources from the writing interventions entered the participants' semiotic prisms, exposed the dialectics of becoming an academic research writer, and provided tools to act on the world. I will explain the strategies in more detail in the data collection and analyses sections.

In summary, two writing group interventions were implemented in the health care faculty of a UK post-1992 university in the Southeast of England and investigated through a basic qualitative approach. Data were collected from May 2015 until April 2018 from 14 participants. The period took account of the individual participants' writing tasks, either a Master's dissertation or a journal article and their formative transitions as writers through the process.

4.3 Study setting

This section outlines the study setting and the pedagogy design for the two writing group interventions.

The study setting was a health and life sciences faculty in a post-1992 higher education institution (HEI) in the Southeast of England. Historically, the institution has developed an international reputation for teaching excellence and values inclusive practices. Accordingly, internal reward and recognition schemes celebrate innovative teaching practices, especially those that involve staff-student partnerships in the co-production of knowledge (Healey & Jenkins, 2006). My passion for academic research writing stems from my professional development and values as a teacher in the setting. My interest has been in developing teaching sessions that aim to transform writing experiences. In 2012, an internal university teaching fellowship award enabled me to implement collaborative academic research writing between teachers and their Master's dissertation supervisees. The aim was to repurpose dissertation texts into manuscripts for peer-review publication. Whilst there is an institutional emphasis on teaching excellence, there are few opportunities for novice teachers in the health care faculty to develop their academic research writing. Most teachers who transition from clinical practice have been educated to Master's level and do not become published authors in their discipline. Hence, my collaborative writing group intervention offered a novel opportunity for staff and learners.

The setting prepares learners for professional practice in nursing and the allied health disciplines. Extant health and social care practitioners from local, national and international health care organisations access continuing professional development (CPD) programmes at the postgraduate level. Historically, Master's level learners return to formal education after a break and select the HEI's part-time and online study opportunities to fit in with other life responsibilities such as employment and family commitments. Part-time and online study leads to a diverse student body regarding age,

geographical location and prior career profiles. The demographic profiles of Master's students are typically diverse, as outlined in Chapter Two(Ashwin & Hirst, 2015; Bair & Mader, 2013; Kaufhold, 2017).

The primary student assessment mode is written assignments. Each Master's level programme culminates in a dissertation module. Dissertation writing calls for different skills than prior written assignments, largely reflective writing or clinical case studies. The students are subjected to the challenges of academic research writing as outlined in Chapter Two. The dissertation module spans a calendar year, and the final written product is a 15,000-20,000-word document. Learners select their dissertation topic and are strongly encouraged to relate it to their clinical health care practice context and undertake a project that may lead or aspire to health service improvements. The intended learning objective is:

- To design and conduct a small research project of the student's own, relevant to their professional practice and is central to the learning outcomes of their specific Master's programme.

The implicitly anticipated structure for the dissertation text is the introduction, methods, results, analysis, and discussion (IMRAD) format as described by Hyland (2005). During the dissertation module, the fundamental teaching and learning relationships are supervisor-supervisee dyads focused on subject knowledge and research. Dissertation supervision constitutes a critical textual relationship between learners and the institution. Completed dissertation texts from the supervisor-supervisee process were the artefacts that participants repurposed for peer-review publications during the collaborative writing group that I implemented and described in the introductory

chapter. The small-scale evaluation which I undertook found that Master's alumni participants identified additional benefits from structured support for academic research writing had it been offered at an earlier stage of their trajectory. The finding is unsurprising given that academic research writing development is an area of need for learners at all levels in higher education (Lillis & Turner, 2001; Murray, 2012; Murray, Steckley, & MacLeod, 2012; Russell, 2013). Notably, the finding led to the design of new academic research writing intervention that marked the inception of the current thesis study.

4.3.1 Writing group Intervention 1

The first intervention designed for the current thesis offered instruction for dissertation writing previously unavailable in the context, with the exceptions of a drop-in academic skill support service operating on the main university campus during regular office hours (creating limits for part-time and online learners) and extra study support sessions in English as academic practice (EAP) for international students. Learners used these services as remedial measures for their writing development.

The intervention designs were underpinned by: my experience as a teacher in the setting, what I had learned from the earlier collaborative writing group intervention, and from working with a writing developer with a specialist research interest in the psychological wellbeing of PhD writers. My colleague had developed resources for writing development during post-doctoral research at an international university writing institute and embedded them into the intervention designs. Our initial consideration was creating a cultural and social learning environment where participants could work on and develop academic writing concepts. Creating social spaces for postgraduate writing development is highlighted within the literature (Cuthbert & Spark, 2008;

Dysthe, 2012; Dysthe, Samara & Westrheim., 2006; Fergie et al., 2011; Kamler & Thomson, 2008; Lee & Boud, 2003), including the potential to offer such interventions in online environments to open up access and maximise the opportunities for social interactions (Deane & Guasch, 2015; Dysthe, 2015).

For Intervention 1, we considered the temporal aspect of writing development and created a sequence of writing group workshops spanning the dissertation year. To make the environment accessible to all, including part-time and distance learners, we offered the intervention within a traditional university classroom or a real-time web-based classroom (Adobe Connect™). My knowledge and practice as an online teacher are influenced by the work of Salmon (2011), who emphasises the importance of online socialisation before learners can take on cognitive tasks associated with learning. I designed a virtual learning environment (VLE) with forums and resources, which I moderated before Intervention 1, to promote learner confidence and mastery of digital skills to participate in an online environment. My teaching values promote life-long adult learning underpinned by digital technology (Eynon & Helsper, 2011; Waite et al., 2013)to support adult learners to feel included and enabled to participate. There is a culture of lecture capture in the institution, which means that teaching and learning events are audio-visually recorded and made available to learners as a resource. I followed such an approach for Intervention 1. I drew upon my knowledge and experience as a higher education teacher with the pedagogic notion of constructive alignment (Biggs & Tang, 2011). The term 'constructive' refers to the idea that learners construct meaning through relevant learning activities. 'Alignment' refers to a learning environment that aligns teaching and learning activities to the intended learning objectives of a subject.

The intended learning objectives were to introduce academic writing principles whilst clarifying and examining academic writing conventions for a dissertation text. The qualitative transitions required of learners were developing competent academic research writing. The institutional motive was supporting learners to achieve the intended learning outcomes as described in a previous paragraph. As the researcher/instructor of academic writing, my motive was enhancing the notion of the Vygotskian principle of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where instruction runs ahead of development (Vygotsky, 1997a; Barrs, 2017; Smagorinsky, 2018). My personal and teaching experience of writing development accords with Vygotsky's concerns (1994, 1998) around the spasmodic and long-term nature of writing development involving transitions. The pedagogical implications of the literature review (section 2.7) informed the design of Intervention 1. The considerations for pedagogy and assumptions played out as follows:

- Writing as a process is divided into stages leading to a product, and that composition needs to be explicitly taught (Murray, 1997).

- It is possible to discover and develop the writing process within a socially elaborated task environment (Kellogg, 2008;. Murray, 1997; Smagorinsky, 2011).

- The writer can refine thinking, argument and concept development when the relationship between writing and thinking is exposed. (Bazerman, 2005;2012).

- The provision of mediational means enables a writer to compose a dissertation text (Wertsch, 2007).

- It is critical to review the use of discourse mechanisms in text composition so that writers may enter into a dialogue with other writers and evoke intended responses with the reader of that text; (Bazerman & Prior, 2004; Hyland, 2009) and meets a recognised writing development need in the discipline (Gardner & Rolfe, 2013; Rolfe, 2009; Ryan et al., 2014);

- Making the codes that underpin the curriculum and knowledge structures more explicit for health care learners provides them with tools to act upon the world within their dissertation texts, which encompasses both UK writing in the disciplines (WID) (Deane & O'Neill, 2011; Wingate, 2011) and systematic functional linguistics (SFL) (Christie & Martin, 2008; Christie, 2013) approaches;

- Writing development is enhanced by reviewing the academic moves made by writers within dissertation texts (Booth, Colomb, Williams, & Fitzgerald, 2016; Swales, 2012).

As stated earlier, I designed and implemented a series of four workshops spanning the academic year in collaboration with the academic writing developer colleague. Each workshop was topic-focused and aligned with the learning objectives and assumptions as above:

1) The structure and process of dissertation writing.

2) Resources to help the voice of dissertation writers emerge.

3) Resources for writers to involve the reader.

4) Intertextuality and dissemination of writing.

The initial workshops (May 2015 and June 2015) piloted the learning activities and repeated them in September 2015 and January 2016, with two further writing workshops taking place in April 2016 and May 2016, respectively. This time period considered the differential starting and finishing times of learners who undertook the dissertation module. Each current Master's dissertation learner in the faculty received an invitation to join Intervention 1. Table 4.1 shows the instruction and learning activities for each workshop.

Table 4:1 Learning activities Intervention 1

Date	Title of workshop	Instruction	Learning activities
May 2015 (repeated November 2015)	Structure and process of dissertation writing.	Organisation of dissertation structure; Micro structure, sentence, paragraph, and section construction; Theory of the writing process.	1). Dissertation organisation in pairs; 2) Text recognition of example literature review chapters for micro and macro structure. 3) 15 minutes free writing.
June 2015	Resources to engage your audience .	Overview of the methodology chapter. Disciplinary journal analysis	Text recognition of example of two methodology chapters for structure and argument. Share your journal analysis.
February 2016	Resources to help your voice emerge.	1)Determining audience; 2)Engagement markers; use of personal pronoun, aside comments, appealing to shared knowledge, directive phrases or sentences, asking questions of the reader.	1) Writing to prompt; 2) Activities 2-5 examples of paragraph texts and group discussion on how the writers had used the mechanisms introduced during the activities.
April 2016	Intertextuality .	Use of discourse mechanisms; direct citations, indirect integrated citations, citations of an evaluative kind, making claims and use of hedges and boosters.	Activities 1-6 examples of paragraph texts and group discussion on how the writers had used the mechanisms introduced within the examples.

4.3.2 Writing group Intervention 2

The following considerations underpinned the specific design of Intervention 2: firstly, my personal experience of participation within writing groups, including the earlier collaborative writing group; secondly, the literature on writing group interventions; and thirdly, the objectives of the participants. Haas (2014) describes a writing group typology where the aims are to make the research writing process more enjoyable (less painful) for the writer and make the research writing product more enjoyable (less painful) for the reader. Making decisions about membership, leadership, time, place, frequency, activities, and activities outside the writing group is necessary. One of the lessons I learned from the initial collaborative writing group intervention was that using an online environment had not worked due to technical difficulties experienced by the participants. Furthermore, participants expressed a strong preference for face-to-face meetings. As my confidence grew as a writing group facilitator, I opened the membership to all teachers in the faculty. The teachers could either develop their writing or write collaboratively with a learner or alumna. I sent an open invitation was sent to all colleagues in September 2015. An initial meeting convened in October 2015 established participant objectives and collective decisions about how the intervention could work and the related learning activities, allowing for flexibility as the group process emerged.

The agreed group objectives were transforming current texts into outputs for peer-review publication and participating in an epistemic and scholarly community. My objective was to create a setting to explore and develop writing for publication in the discipline.

My writing developer colleague led and facilitated Intervention 2. The following considerations and assumptions underpinned the pedagogy:

- To promote peer learning and community building (Aitchison & Guerin, 2014).
- To build scholarship identities within Intervention 2 (Ivanič, 1998; Kamler & Thomson, 2008; Lee & Boud, 2003).

The group identified a schedule of monthly meetings for 90 minutes of discussion and peer-review activities, and one-day writing retreats twice during the academic year as a space to work on developing texts. In-between activities involved collaboration on appropriate texts and preparation of abstracts for peer-review within the group. Specific activities within the group involved the following:

- How to select and target appropriate journals.
- The benefits of exploring different text types suitable for publication including editorials, opinion pieces, book reviews, literature reviews, and primary research reports.
- How to give and receive peer review feedback on texts in development.
- How to deal with and respond to journal reviewers' feedback and rejected manuscripts.

Intervention 2 ran from September 2015, and participants ended their membership when their manuscript was submitted for publication or re-submitted following the journal peer-review process.

4.3.3 Participants and sampling strategy

Potential research participants were the individuals who engaged with the writing group interventions as described in the previous section. I did not assume that engaging with the interventions meant participation in the research study, and I respected that individuals should not feel coerced. I did not approach potential research participants directly. I arranged for a faculty administrator with no co-existing relationships to send an invitation to participate in research to all participants who had joined the writing group interventions.

Table 4:2 Participant information Intervention 1

Name	Clinical Background	Writing task
Miranda	Practice development nurse	Master's dissertation
Leah	Practice development nurse	Master's dissertation
Fiona	Rehabilitation specialist	Master's dissertation
Zara	Public health	Master's dissertation
Rose	Clinical research nurse	Master's dissertation
Jessica	Palliative care nurse	Master's dissertation
Fran	Palliative care nurse	Master's dissertation
Grace	Clinical research nurse	Master's dissertation
Dana	Health service management	Master's dissertation

Nine individuals participated in the Intervention 1 research. Each was a Master's level learner working on an individual dissertation research project. Eight participants studied

part-time at a distance, and one, participant Zara studied full-time on an on-campus Master's programme. Zara was the only participant from a non-professional background but was aspiring to a future career in public health as an outcome of Master's level study. The Intervention 1 participants were diverse in terms of geographical context and clinical background. They shared commonalities in their reasons for participating, principally dealing with the dissertation writing task and accessing relevant resources and social interactions with peers. I have outlined their relevant characteristics in Table 4.2. To protect their identity, I invited each to choose an alias.

Nine individuals participated in the Intervention 2 research. Eight participants were Master's graduate-level professional nurses, and one participant, Elspeth, studied a pre-registration nursing programme to become a qualified adult nurse. Two participants, Helen and Jasmine, were alumni and had recently graduated from a Master's programme. Jo, Cathy and Gemma were nursing or midwifery teachers in the university setting who joined to work on their individual projects. Three nurse teachers from the university setting, Jane, Zoe and Beth had joined Intervention 2 to work collaboratively alumni. However, only one dyad Jane and Elspeth participated in the research to work collaboratively on Elspeth's writing project. What mattered to the Intervention 2 participants was to become published authors to disseminate recent Master's level research or other professional project work through the publication process. Except for Jane, none of them had previously written for peer-review publication. I have outlined the characteristics of the Intervention 2 participants in Table 4.3.

A striking feature was that all participants identified as female. While some health care disciplines, especially nursing, have a female gender bias, some male students and staff

engaged with the intervention and were eligible research participants but chose not to. Gender bias is a potential study limitation and is a feature of reported writing group intervention research (Grant, 2006; Grant & Knowles, 2000).

Table 4:3 Participant information Intervention 2

Name	**Professional background**	**Writing task**
Helen	Practice development nurse	Reconfiguring Master's dissertation to journal article
Jasmine	Practice development nurse	Reconfiguring Master's dissertation to journal article
Cathy	Senior lecturer in community nursing	Reconfiguring professional portfolio to journal article
Elspeth	Postgraduate pre-registration nursing student	Reconfiguring independent study work to journal article
Jane	Senior lecturer in adult nursing	Writing collaboratively with Elspeth
Jo	Senior lecturer in children's nursing	Reconfiguring Master's dissertation to journal article
Zoe	Senior lecturer in Occupational therapy	Writing collaboratively with two alumni
Beth	Senior lecturer in Occupational therapy	Writing collaboratively with two alumni
Gemma	Lecturer in midwifery	Reconfiguring teaching and learning project to a journal article

Each research participant possessed first-hand experience of events in line with Rubin and Rubin's (2012) approach for quality in research design. Furthermore, research participants had complementary experiences, represented different viewpoints, or formed relationships with others concerned with their writing development within and outside the interventions. Diversity is a maximum variation sample in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012; Cohen, Morrison, Bell & Manion., 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and it was critical to capture the diversity through the data collection processes.

One challenge was the potential to generate substantial amounts of data. To turn the challenge into an opportunity, I set boundaries determining what would be studied within the setting and in a manageable period. Accordingly, I constructed a sampling strategy to address the research questions theoretically, pragmatically, and temporally, which I outline in the following sections

4.4 Data collection procedures

My data collection considerations explicitly related to the research problem, conceptual framework, and research questions. I aimed to collect data that would tell a rich and compelling story of participant transitions and development, thus enabling the thesis study to contribute to knowledge and understanding of academic research writing in the discipline. The following sections outline my choice of methods and the consistency between these choices and the research design and questions. Table 4.4 shows the relationship between research questions and data collection methods.

Table 4:4 Relationship between research questions and methods

Research questions	**Intervention**	**Data collection methods**				
How and why do the participants appropriate the mediational tools from the writing interventions during the work of transition?	1,2	Participant observation	Interviews: gathering writer's narratives and retrospective accounts	Samples of writing		Field notes
How do the participants experience relational work and deal with contradictions to shape their academic research writing development?	1,2	Participant observation	Interviews: gathering writer's narratives and retrospective accounts	Samples of writing	Field notes	Archival records

My considerations for the current thesis study emphasised the importance of studying participants' writing processes during engagement with a writing group intervention. Both interventions introduced the participants to new mediational means for writing development. I contemplated Bazerman and Prior's (2004) perspectives on data collection for writing research, who argue that understanding writing is necessary to explore the practices people engage with to produce texts. Data collection considerations include how writing practices gain meaning and function as dynamic elements of specific cultural settings. Bazerman and Prior's conceptions of writing are of composition as a process and an activity that encompasses the complexity of reading, writing, feeling, thinking, speaking, listening, observing and acting. Prior (2004)

recommends that the study of writing processes involves getting at participants' inner thoughts, perceptions, feelings, motives, and relevant exchanges. Prior argues for using qualitative methods that focus on the history and resources to produce the text. Such methods extend beyond looking at the text alone.

Reflecting on Bazerman and Prior's position and the affordances of a general qualitative study design, the following five research methods were employed:

1. Participant observation.
2. Individual interviews.
3. Collecting samples of participants' writing.
4. Archival records.
5. Fieldnotes.

4.4.1 Participant observation

The literature review showed that writing development processes remain underexplored and under-examined because previous studies focus on outcomes and collect data at summative points, which under-investigated formative transitions. Therefore, participant observation was a necessary data collection method for the current thesis study. Participant observation is a principal data collection strategy in the social sciences. In theory, the researcher as an observer is immersed within the respective social setting to observe the participant's behaviour for a prolonged period (Bryman, 2012). Participant observation is the systematic observation of people, events, behaviours, and settings with an opportunity to gather live data from social situations (Cohen et al., 2018). Bryman (2012) has categorised participant observation as

structured or unstructured. The researcher systematically identifies who, how, when, and what to observe in the structured approach. The researcher's decisions create 'rules' for the participant observation. In the current thesis study, the rules became determined by the research questions, as shown in Table 4.4.

Furthermore, only the interactions of the participants who had agreed to participate in the research were recorded and analysed. Table 4.5 shows the participant observation points.

Table 4:5 Participant observation points

Intervention	**Dates and times of participant observation**					
Intervention 1	May 2015 3 hours	June 2015 3 hours	Nov 2015 3 hours	Feb 2016 3 hours	Apr 2016 3 hours	May 2016 3 hours
Intervention 2	Nov 2015 1.5 hours	Feb 2016 1.5 hours	June 2016 1.5 hours	July 2016 1.5 hours	Nov 2016 1.5 hours	

Cohen et al. (2018) and Bryman (2012) argue that the observer needs to identify how they participate in the social setting. As an employee of the university, I represented institutional objectives for writing development and enhanced through the aims of the interventions I had implemented. Cohen et al. and Bryman suggest that bias may affect the consistency of observations. To mitigate against bias, I took a structured and systematic approach towards participant observation underpinned by theoretical considerations to maintain consistency throughout the data collection process. I strengthened my approach by reflecting after each observation with my educational developer colleagues that worked alongside me during both interventions. We

compared our perceptions of participant activity, development, and the interactions that had taken place. I audio-visually recorded my observations of the interaction between participants and facilitators when they collaborated on writing activities and tasks.

The timeline for Intervention 1 was May 2015- May 2016, and delivery took place in an online synchronous web-based classroom, Adobe Connect™, due to some learners' remote, part-time, and distance status, and face-to-face in a campus-based classroom. The digital tools available in a web-based classroom provided opportunities to gather detailed participant and facilitator interactions as data. For example, every individual, group discussion, or interaction via a text chat channel became added data. The educational developer colleague working alongside me during Intervention 1 considered the web-based group more socially interactive than the traditional face-to-face classroom group. We both reflected on why this may have happened. An assumption might be that face-to-face learning environments offer more opportunities for communication than online ones, for example, gestures and non-verbal cues, in which case the assumption was not valid. My colleague concluded that cues from our joint performance as instructors became more practised because we delivered the face-to-face workshop first and then immediately went online to repeat the delivery. My insider position in the context provided me with a priori knowledge that the online group had previously interacted in an online synchronous learning environment. As a group of distance learners, they were comfortable and competent at communicating in the environment. The crucial point is that the data from participant observation during the online workshop was both detailed and nuanced, providing rich sources of evidence about the social interactions that had occurred. Hewson (2016) reports findings from several empirical studies where online participant samples can generate high quality

and generalisable data compared with similar offline participant samples. However, because none of the participants from the face-to-face workshops chose to participate in the research, it was not possible to make such a comparison.

I supported the online facilitation of the interventions through my experience as an online teacher, and, as stated previously, participants were supported where necessary to develop online participatory skills. I planned some activities differently to consider the advantages and disadvantages of an online environment. For example, I was mindful that extralinguistic clues may be missing (Hewson, 2016). Through my pedagogic experience, I have learned that effective teaching and learning interactions in an online environment are contingent upon participant hardware, especially microphones and web-cam functions, software updates, bandwidth, and world time zones. For example, one participant could not enable her microphone during one of the observations and had to type her responses to the group through the text chat channel. Hewson (2016) suggests that typing enables less time for reflection than the spoken word in the immediacy of an online synchronous environment.

I offered Intervention 2 in a web-based classroom, but the participants preferred to meet face-to-face in a university teaching space with opportunities for remote participants to join online simultaneously. The timeline for Intervention 2 was November 2015-November 2016. Some meetings took place as day-long writing retreats (December 2015 and May 2016), during which participant observation would not have been purposeful because the retreats were quiet spaces for writing. However, I took fieldnotes to capture participant motives, goals, and feelings about the retreat events. On the other hand, during the interim meetings (22/11/2015, 18/2/2016, 15/6/2016, 8/7/2016 and 11/11/2016), the participants shared their texts for peer-review feedback

and provided an update of progress, and these were highly interactive events that I observed and audio-visually recorded. On reflection, participant observation provided an abundant opportunity to capture data to examine and analyse the relationship between speech and mediated action. I report the analyses in the two chapters of findings.

4.4.2 Individual interviews

The aim of conducting research interviews in this thesis study was to align with the research design, and the objectives were to gather data that were not possible from other methods such as:

- Getting at participants' intentions.
- Understanding the motives behind participants' actions.
- Gathering participants' retrospective accounts of their engagement with the writing group interventions and process of transitions.
- Exploring the extent of individuals' perceived writing development.
- Dealing with cognitive and affective challenges.

Table 4.4 shows the relationship between the interviews and the research questions

The literature review showed that interviews are an established data collection method for writing research in the higher education context. Cohen et al. (2018) contend that the interview as a research method contributes to the centrality of human action in educational research to produce knowledge. However, the research interview is not an ordinary conversation; it is a co-construction between the interviewer and the

interviewee. As argued by Leander and Prior (2004), Greene (2007), and Baxter and Jack (2008), interviews are dependent on participants' memories. Interviews complement other data, such as examples of the participant's writing, writing histories, and relationships or activities to plot the interviewee's writing processes. Using Rubin and Rubin's (2012) responsive interviewing model and Leander and Prior's perspectives, I designed interview schedules that focused upon the sequence of events within and outside both interventions and over the timelines of individual participation. I piloted the interviews in November 2015 with a participant from each respective intervention. Some questions were subsequently adapted where it was challenging to elicit a participant response (Appendix C.2.).

I planned the interviews to be complemented by samples of participants' writing over their respective timelines. Initially, I requested the participants to choose an example for exploration during the interview. However, some participants did not produce a sample. On reflection, I identified cues that I could have followed and explored more deeply had a sample been available. Therefore, I changed my approach. Before each interview, I invited participants to forward the writing they considered to demonstrate personal development.

Consequently, I reviewed the writing before the interviews and planned question prompts concerning development points and the relationship with actions and activities over time. However, the approach required sensitive handling because the interaction inevitably exposed and scrutinised participants' writing. For participants from Intervention 2, I devised an activity undertaken during the interviews and prompted further reflection on personal writing development over time (Appendix C.3.) based on Porter et al. (2008).

The interviews offered opportunities to explore participant histories and motives for joining the writing group interventions. Invariably, this involved exploring the demands of developing academic research writing and comparing such experiences with prior writing experiences. Each interview lasted between 30-60 minutes, was audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and returned to the participants to check for accuracy and representation of their perspectives. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in a private room on University premises or in a synchronous online environment using Skype™. I gave the participants a choice of either mode, given that some were located remotely from the campus. James and Busher (2009) outline the advantages and disadvantages of online interviewing compared with face-to-face. The obvious difference is the lack of visual cues in the online environment. However, as contended by James and Busher, interviews must occur in an environment where participants feel comfortable disclosing their experiences. Each of the participants who chose an online interview had previously used Skype™ as a mode of communication with teaching staff and other students as part of their University experiences.

4.4.3 Collecting samples of participants' writing

I have already outlined an integrated approach for data collection from research interviews and participant observation. To further complement these methods, samples of participants' writing were collected and organised (Prior, 2004). The process involved collecting and organising texts to provide a complete view of the context yet acknowledging that it was neither pragmatic nor purposeful to track everything. As described earlier in participant interviews, I followed Prior's method by comparing an initial text with a final draft and eliciting the individual writer's accounts. In theory, this

method could trace participant histories and address the specific research questions, as seen in Table 4.4.

I invited the participants from both interventions to share before and after samples of writing and writing undertaken during the interventions' writing activities. As elaborated earlier, I used participants' samples of writing as prompts during the interviews and a discrete data set for the analysis phase, as explained later in this chapter. During Intervention 2, each participant presented an extended abstract for peer-review feedback. Each participant, in turn, received written peer feedback. The abstracts and the feedback texts were collected and used as prompts during the interviews. I invited the participants to elicit the changes made to the ongoing development of their writing in response to peer feedback with further comparison to the final text submitted to a disciplinary peer-review journal. Subsequently, I compared the interview and text data with my observations of the peer feedback activities.

4.4.4 Fieldnotes

After each interview and participant observation, I made field notes over the interventions' timelines. Keeping field notes helped me to reflect upon the interviews. I noted some participants' animations before switching on the audio-recording device or switching it off. For example, one participant expressed anger and frustration at being requested to make significant changes to her writing by a journal editor before consideration for publication. The participant preferred to vent her feelings before the interview formally started. Capturing data of this nature proved critical in getting at the participants' affective experiences. When organising the data and preparing for the analysis, I found that field notes had captured some participants' emotional concerns that were evident during the observations or interviews. Keeping field notes was also a

good contingency resource when unanticipated events happened, such as a corrupted audio file of a participant interview.

4.4.5 Archival records

Collecting archival records helped me understand participants' writing development experiences in the context and provided a background for the data analysis phase.

During Intervention 2, social interactions concerning writing development happened outside the direct activities associated with the intervention. Social interactions included email communication:

- Between participants who were collaborating on texts.
- Formal peer review feedback from disciplinary journals
- Between participants and me reflecting upon incidents and updates on developing texts.

Capturing email social interactions as research data complemented the methods as outlined previously by constructing a chain of evidence regarding the histories, events, activities, and participants' writing development. During the interviews, archival data was an additional prompt to explore writers' retrospective accounts and temporal development. Table 4.4 shows the relationship between the research questions and archival data.

4.4.6 Triangulation of data

I considered the importance of integrating the complementary data collection methods to promote rigour. Data triangulation is derived from navigation and considers a vessel's

location from three reference points (Yardley, 2008). Patton (2015) suggests that the metaphorical notion suggests strong geometry and approaches to quality in qualitative research. With application to research, triangulation is:

> "The use of more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomenon so that findings may be cross-checked" (Bryman, 2012: p.717)

Each data collection method selected for the current thesis study had limitations as a standalone approach. Greene (2007) argues that all research methods have intrinsic limitations and biases, whilst Patton (2015) suggests that no single method solves the challenge of rival explanations. In the research design literature, triangulation of data is a concept to be considered throughout the research process in the following ways:

- Method triangulation (Greene, 2007) assumes that methods need to be independent in the research process so that they do not influence each other yet assess the same construct at the same point in time.

- The sensitivity of data to context (Yardley, 2008) considers the researcher's effect on research participants and the importance of careful planning of the analytic strategy.

- Four kinds of analytic triangulation exist: firstly, triangulation of qualitative resources (Patton, 2015); secondly, triangulation of mixed methods resources such as qualitative and quantitative data (Greene, 2007; Patton, 2015); thirdly, analyst triangulation, for example, comparison of researchers' coding (Patton, 2015); and fourthly, theoretical triangulation, which involves more than one theoretical perspective as a lens on the data (Yardley, 2008).

- The review of data and analysis (reflexive triangulation) includes respondent validation of the data (Yardley, 2008).

I aimed to address the research questions through the data collection methods, and I found triangulation helped in the following ways. I reflected on the qualitative research design and aimed to gather different perspectives on reality shaped by participant experiences in the context, the setting, the culture, and the interventions' activities. The implications were data collection to capture differential motives, goals, and relationships between the participants. At the data collection stages, I compared the observations with the interviews and noted participants' utterances in private about activities or incidents compared with their observed utterances. I sought convergent data to offer rival explanations. To enhance the approach, I created timelines and observation points as explained previously and reported and depicted in the two chapters of findings. Furthermore, the process of triangulation adds validity and rigour to research findings (Cohen et al., 2018). As the literature review showed, rigorous research approaches regarding writing group interventions are needed.

The data collection procedures yielded abundant participant data. I used NVivo for MAC software (version 11.4.3) to create a database and repository. The use of NVivo is associated with grounded theory research. However, I focused on using the software to arrange the data in sequential order to readily retrieve it for data analysis, ensure that I had addressed the research questions, and, importantly, ensure temporal coverage in sequential order.

Table 4.6 and 4.7 show the complete data sets for both interventions. 'Non-applicable' is to indicate that the participant had either completed or not started the dissertation

module at that time point. The blank cells in both tables show missing data because one participant did not submit personal writing as data.

Table 4:6 Data set Intervention 1

Name	Zara	Leah	Miranda	Rose	Jessica	Fiona	Grace	Dana	Fran
Interview and date	Nov 2015	Nov 2015	Nov 2015	June 2016	June 2016	Dec 2015	Dec 2015	Dec 2015	Dec 2015
Participant observation date and duration									
May 2015 3 hours	x	x	x	N/A	N/A			x	x
June 2015 3 hours	x	x	x	N/A		x	x	x	x
Nov 2015 3 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	x	x	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Feb 2016 3hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	x	x	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
April 2016 3 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	x	x	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
May 2016 3 hours	N/A	N/A	N/A	x	x	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sequential examples of writing	X	x	x	x	x				x

Table 4:7 Data set Intervention 2

Name	Jane	Elspeth	Cathy	Jo	Helen	Jasmine	Gemma	Zoe	Beth
Interview and date	March 2016	June 2016	July 2016	Nov 2016	Nov 2016	Nov 2017	Nov 2017	July 2016	June 2016
Participant observation date and duration									
Nov 2015 1.5 hours	x	x	x		x		x	x	x
Feb 2016 1.5 hours	x	x	x	x	x		x		
June 2016 1.5 hours	x	x	x		x	x			
July 2016		x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Nov 2016 1.5 hours	x	x	x	x	x	x			
Sequential examples of writing	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		

4.5 Making sense of the data

The data analysis procedures aimed to analyse the data systematically and portray the formative transitions in the writing development of the individuals who engaged with the interventions. This section explains how I planned and operationalised the theoretical framework to apply concepts to the data. The aim is to justify the argument underpinning the theoretical framing and how I came to the conclusions presented in the Findings Chapters.

I followed and adopted a holistic approach for data analysis and interpretation to build a comprehensive picture of formative writing development through the study's evidence (Liang Li et al., 2016; Wolcott, 2009). I observed Wolcott's guidance by making the purpose of analysis and interpretation as explicit as possible. Here analysis involves adhering to standard procedures for dealing with data sets, whereas interpretation concerns the human effort at sense-making, such as intuition, emotion, experience, and theory. Running alongside both approaches, I reflectively engaged with the data from the study's outset. I annotated my fieldnotes with thoughts, hunches, and ideas to inform and enrich the analyses.

I maintained an in-depth record of the processes and ensured rigour by making the analysis systematic and standardised. I followed procedures as recommended in the literature, which I will explain in the following sections. The main steps involved five layers: an analysis of observed participants' speech interactions; the analysis of participants' writing, narrative thinking; categorical thinking; and finally, a theoretical interpretation (Table 4.13). I engaged with Srivastava and Hopwood's (2009) iterative framework for qualitative data analysis at each layer. For layers one to four, I posed the following questions from Srivastava and Hopwood's framework:

- What are the data telling me?
- What is it that I want to know?

For layer four, I posed the additional question from the framework:

- What is the dialectical relationship between what the data are telling me and what I want to know?

4.5.1 Layer one-An analysis of observed participants' speech interactions

Table 4.8 summarises the first step I took to analyse a data set: the observed participants' speech interactions. I initially read through the transcripts of the participant speech interactions during their engagement with activities in both interventions. Each episode was read several times for familiarisation. Leander and Prior (2004) suggest the importance of analysing the relationship between talk and writing. Their perspective reflects that writing is planned, initiated and developed through talk.

Writing as a situated activity means that actors engage with events rarely described as writing but are pivotal to a text's inscription. Thus, for writing to be fully represented, it needs to be examined with other semiotic resources, including talk.

Table 4:8 Participants' observed speech interactions

Rationale (What do I want to know?)	How does collective knowledge emerge during the communicative action? When does collective knowledge develop during the communicative action? What viewpoints emerge during the communicative action?
Process	Read each transcript from the observed communicative action in chronological order. Use of Middleton's 'D'-analysis for participants' development of collective knowledge.
Data analysed	The observed activities during the interventions identified by the participants as most meaningful for their writing development

Emergent issues (What are the data telling me)	The participants' development and appropriation of metaphors to describe features of academic research writing. The participants' development of exploratory and cumulative talk to discover and summarise aspects of academic research writing. Wariness about the self-positioning of one's authorial voice. Expectations of the formal structure of journal articles. Anticipating the needs of disciplinary audiences.

In answering the questions "what is that I want to know" and "what are the data telling me," I used Middleton's (2011) analytic protocol for communicative action. Middleton's protocol aims to identify the emergence of collective and distributed knowledge within the context of professional learning. Middleton's protocol is termed D-analysis and described as below:

- ***Deixis*** points to a particular issue that draws attention to a distinction that participants develop to make a difference;

- ***Definition and delineation*** refer to how the elaboration of an issue as others take it up. Definition and delineation concern the warrants and qualification to identify further distinctions that are sequenced in terms of past, present and future practice and expansive elaborations of problems within the practice;

- ***Deliberation*** refers to a working consensus that emerges to evoke both specific and general marking distinctiveness of past, present or future practices;

- ***Departure*** identifies qualitative shifts in positions concerning emergent distinctions;

- ***Development*** is when participants identify new ways of working.

Table 4.8 shows examples of emergent collective knowledge. The participants developed metaphorical speech to describe features of academic research writing that surfaced over the time they engaged with the Intervention 1 peer review activities. An illustration is “Jumping around”, a term nominated by participants to describe a sample of unstructured writing (deixis). The dialogue became extended to define a “lack of signposting” for a text that jumped around and 'deliberated' to a lack of progression or direction in dissertation writing. The participants created 'departure' by linking the direction of the text (signposting) with the writer's cognitive processes, and their 'development' became an understanding of how feedback for the writer had improved the signposting when compared with a subsequent example of writing. The 'd-analysis' provided evidence to explain how the Intervention 1 participants developed a shared understanding of a metaphor as a sign to structure their writing to guide the reader. Appendix D.2 shows the full analysis for Intervention 1.

In either of the interventions, it was possible to identify that some individuals led the communicative action differently. For example, some participants, such as Helen and Jo, posed questions to their peers that led to explicit explanations contingent on the situation. The analysis helped understand how individuals began and subsequently developed their academic research writing. The initial 'd-analysis' of observed participants' speech interactions was fruitful for further inquiry. Srivastava and

Hopwood's iterative framework helped focus and further refine the research questions as subsequently explained.

4.5.2 Layer two-The analysis of participants' writing

Table 4.9 summarises the iterative steps I took to analyse the participants writing. There are many ways to analyse writing contingent upon the respective research questions. In answering the questions "what is that I want to know" and "what are the data telling me," I used two critical approaches. Firstly, I evaluated participants' reflective accounts (Leander & Prior, 2004) of their writing development, and secondly, I looked for patterns in the participant's evolving writing regarding the design concepts of the writing activities (Geisler, 2018).

During the interviews, participants reflected on critical events and meaningful activities for their writing development while engaging with the interventions. In conjunction with their writing samples, the participants' reflections indicated an increased consciousness of the cognitive aspects of writing to express written thoughts to act on themselves. Participants such as Rose, Jessica, Helen and Jo drew upon their self-authored drafts as mediational tools for their writing development. Their approaches suggested an evolving capacity to self-evaluate their writing processes and development.

However, novel academic research writing concepts introduced through the interventions often presented difficulties. Intertextuality, for example, whilst maintaining the writer's voice, was a skill that participants found challenging. Bazerman (2004) defines intertextuality as ″the relation each text has to the texts surrounding″ (p.84) and describes an explicit and implicit relationship between a text or utterance to

prior, current, or tentative future acts. Intertextual moves available to the writer include drawing upon the source of another writer's text as authoritative or manipulating the source to create a new text.

Table 4:9 Analysis of participants' writing

Rationale	Evaluate participants' reflective accounts of their writing development regarding samples of writing. Look for patterns concerning design concepts of the writing activities.
Process	Read samples of writing and coded extracts related to the research questions, noting similarities, differences, and surprises. Comparing samples of individual's writing from an initiating to a final text
Data analysed	All samples of participants writing
Emergent issues	Expression of written thoughts, using self-generated texts as a mediational tool, self-evaluation of writing processes, self-positioning alongside the disciplinary literature, development of metadiscourse, development of macro and microstructures of writing, awareness of the effect of writing on others

A practical approach to the analysis of samples of writing in such circumstances, as suggested by Geisler (2018), is to use the design concepts of the activities as a coding framework, which I undertook. The process involves a line-by-line analysis of the text to assign cognitive and reference codes. I set up a priori codes for the following:

- Number of citations per text.

- The proportion of direct citations.
- The proportion of integrated citations.
- The proportion of non-integrated citations.
- The extent to which the writer evaluated any citation.

Following Bazerman (2013), I also scrutinised the content taken from the cited source, what it represented to the writer based upon their written words, and what was abstracted and evaluated from the citation by the writer; in other words, how the writer presented an evaluation of a resource concerning their thinking.

The data told me that direct quotes were less visible than other citation types and possibly attributed to the fact that, within the context, writers are encouraged to paraphrase authors' words as far as possible to avoid plagiarism. The proportion of integrated citations and evaluative comments increased between initial and final drafts suggesting that the participants had emerging confidence about asserting their voices. The proportion of non-integrated citations remained similar between earlier and later drafts for each participant.

Through the analysis, I wanted to know the extent to which participants formulated and used concepts and accumulated them into their writing practices. Srivastava and Hopwood's framework helped me link the data with the overall research questions. In part, the research questions focused on how the interventions enabled the participants to appropriate writing as a sign and tool. However, the data from the writing analysis required convergence with thematic and narrative analysis to refine and fully address the research questions.

4.5.3 Layer three-Categorical thinking

Table 4.10 summarises the initial approach to thematic analysis of the individual interview data. Firstly, I familiarised myself with the interview data. To generate initial codes and address the questions "what are the data telling me?" and "what is it that I want to know?" I used Saldaña's (2016) approach to first-level coding. The procedure is an inductive or data-driven method of coding that considers the elemental dimensions of participant data and involves a line-by-line analysis of transcripts and the labelling of codes. Once I had finished level one of the process, I used Miles, and Huberman's (1994) and Miles et al. (2014) approaches to second-level coding, which involves a comparison of the similarities and differences between codes based on categories or themes, causes or explanations, and relationships among people. Second-level coding involves scrutiny, and I deliberated a great deal about which codes belonged together within categories.

Table 4:10 Categorical thinking

Rationale	Pattern coding to determine recurrent and differential categories, explanations and relationships concerning the research questions. Become familiar with the interview data.
Process	Read the interview transcripts and undertake coding procedures.
Data analysed with this approach	Each interview transcripts
Emergent codes	Expectations of interventions, uncertainties, significant activities, significant tools, actions in response to tools, emotions, tactics, values, relationships

Table 4.10 shows the overarching codes that emerged. The codes were relevant to all participants but contained different dimensions for individuals. For example, the code

"values" concerned the participants' values about developing their academic research writing but was also contingent on other factors outside the interventions. I found that coding identified important variables that merited further inquiry and explanations through a deductive approach which I explain in the section on theoretical coding.

I used NVivo for MAC software (version 11.4.3) upgraded to NVivo for Windows software (version 12.1.55) to undertake the first-level coding, and the outputs may be seen in the codebook that I generated (Appendix C. 2.) to show the codes, their definitions, and a record of my decision-making.

4.5.4 Layer four- Narrative thinking

I found that initial attempts to analyse the interview data thematically did not present the rich and varied picture of the participants' experience as told from their perspectives. Furthermore, coding fragmented the data, meaning that a synthesis was required to understand the formative transitions made by the participants and address the research questions.

Both Clandinin (2007) and Kim (2016) place narrative analysis at the meso level of inquiry; the focus is on what the actor does in the world and what the world does to them. Freeman (2017) argues for narrative thinking because humans have unique stories to tell which mediate between the particular and the general, thus revealing much about a personal understanding of experiences and the historical, social, discursive, linguistic, and cultural materials that give shape to human interpretations. My rationale for using narrative analysis was to portray the participants' experiences as refracted through their prisms and conveyed through the interview data. For the current thesis study, a

narrative analysis allowed an examination of the dialectical interplay between the meso and micro levels of analysis and aligned with the theoretical framing for the study.

Many approaches towards narrative analysis exist, ranging from overall research study design to, alternatively, scrutinising units of analysis for human meaning-making in context (Freeman, 2017) as in the current thesis study. Initially, the researcher must plot the data to lead to a narrative meaning which, according to Polkinghorne (1988), aims towards:

> "a cognitive process that organises human experiences into temporally meaningful episodes" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 1).

To address the question, "what are the data telling me?"- I selected a framework based on Labov's (1972) structural analysis model, which initially examined the black English vernacular spoken by youths in Harlem to understand the rules of their discourse and ritual insults. Labov's work was an attempt to challenge deficit theory concerning the language of black children as inadequate for learning and logical thinking. I chose the model because it is frequently used within a narrative analysis to recapture the action and meaning of personal experience during interviews and ordinary conversations. According to Riessman (2008), Labov's model (Fig. 4.1) is an appropriate approach for interpreting spoken narratives and enables voices and topics in qualitative research, otherwise missed.

Narrative element	Description
Abstract	A summary of the story and its points.
Orientation	Provides a context, time, place and character to orientate the reader.
Complicating action	The event, sequence or plot usually with a crisis or a turning point .
Evaluation	The narrator steps back from the action to comment on meaning making and communicate emotions.
Resolution	Result, resolution of the story or conflict.
Coda	Ending the story and bringing it back to the present.

Figure. 4:1 Labov's (1972) Narrative Model

Each interview transcription was read and compared with the audio recordings for consistency and accuracy and read several times. I used Labov's model to identify the narrative sequences. The sequences evolved through participants' conscious reflections on their experiences and history of academic research writing development, the interplay with other social environments, and how participants made meaning and developed a sense of engagement with the writing interventions (Table 4.11). According to Riessman (2008), evaluative statements are the most crucial aspect of a narrative because they reveal narrators' attitudes by emphasising the relative importance of some narrative units compared with others. Evaluative statements are critical for interpretation because they provide clues to understand the meaning that tellers give to their experience. I found a high occurrence of evaluative statements in participants' narratives as they attempted to make sense of their engagement with the intervention.

Table 4:11 Narrative thinking

Rationale	Portray the participants' experiences as refracted through their individual prisms To reveal the potential of individual participant's ruptures and uncertainties
Process	Read each participants' interview data Identify narrative sequences relating to participants' histories and events Structuring of individual's storylines
Data analysed with this approach	Each interview transcript
Emergent issues	An opening to explore participant's temporal experiences in-depth Participant's affective, personal, and social histories including engagement with the intervention writing activities and subsequent actions

The model revealed the ruptures experienced by participants as they developed their academic research writing. Following Riessman (2008), constructs that appeared the same on the surface for each participant were different. Participants' reflections about their temporal experiences were inculcated differentially between them as either reframing, sustaining, or constraining. The Labov model helped explore temporal experiences in-depth and make comparisons between participants. I reconstructed the data into stories. By constructing narratives based on the data, what the data were telling me' it became possible to recognise the challenges created, the competencies demanded through the activity settings of undertaking a Master's dissertation or writing a journal article.

As reported in the following section, the narrative analysis was an entry point for combining the other three layers of data analyses to create a more theory-driven interpretation.

4.5.5 Layer five-A theoretical interpretation

The purpose of layer five is a theoretical interpretation to approach the data systematically and rigorously, refine focus and integrate the data analyses, demonstrate an inductive-deductive approach, and show the decision trail. Principally, the theoretical interpretation enabled me to bring the analyses together in a meaningful way, revisit and refine the research questions aiming for a more fine-grained interpretation.

Before the theoretical interpretations, I created a matrix (Miles & Huberman, 1994) for each participant. The matrix included time points, and for each individual, I compared and reduced the respective analyses. During the theoretical interpretations, I continued to engage with Srivastava and Hopwood's (2009) notion of progressive focusing, and precisely:

- What is the dialectical relationship between what the data are telling me and what I want to know?

The question helped me review the evidence from the analysed data in addressing the research questions and refine the research questions where necessary (Table 4.12). Refining the research questions meant there were times when I had to approach the data from a conceptual or theoretical viewpoint that I had not previously considered. Importantly the progressive framework enabled me to consider the theoretical tools I had selected to further my analysis and what theory told me about the data. I will now outline my theoretical interpretations concerning each research question.

Table 4:12 Progressive focusing to refine research questions

Initial research questions	**Refined research questions through progressive focusing**
Why and how does the experience of participation in collaborative writing activities lead to transitions for emerging writers' development?	How and why do the participants appropriate the mediational tools from the writing interventions during the work of transition?
How and when do participants become conscious of transformations in their texts? Why and how do participants overcome contradictions to develop their academic research writing?	How do the participants experience relational work and deal with contradictions to shape their academic research writing development?

R Q 1. How and why do the participants appropriate the mediational tools from the writing interventions during the work of transition?

My assumptions that underpinned the theoretical framing followed the post-Vygotskian (Smagorinsky, 2011; Wertsch, 1991) perspective where the unit of analysis to study the development of human consciousness is "volitional, goal-directed, tool-mediated action in social, cultural, and historical context" (Smagorinsky, 2011, p. 290). The initial research question aimed to understand how the writing groups' socially mediated activities and tools became resources for the individual participants to work through their transitions. I reviewed and recategorised the observed and thematic data by following Smagorinsky (2008) to conceptualise significant categories to look at the tools that have mediated a participant's thinking, the setting in which the tools have been used and gained meaning, and how they are used to achieve intentions. The categories of tools, goals and setting were a framework through which I developed more nuanced

interpretations to account for the participants as individuals and their situated thinking. I re-categorised the thematic codes, writing analyses and observational analyses as follows:

- Participants' uncertainties.
- Participants' intentions.
- Setting.
- Points of observation.
- Observation of participants during socially mediated activities and tool use.
- Participants' reflections on events and processes.
- Tools appropriated by individuals and in what circumstances.
- Changes noted from self-evaluation or evidenced in samples of writing.

To fully address the variables in the research question, I reconsidered the analysed narratives by using Zittoun's (2006, 2012) notions of developmental transitions and the semiotic prism. Zittoun's perspectives help the researcher to understand critical moments in people's self-identity and how they use socially available resources to undertake the work of transition in diverse ways. The psychological work of transition that the person undertakes involves action along the axis of any or each of the four poles of the semiotic prism and considers that they will need time to reflect on their actions and potential change. The perspective of the work of transition enabled me to undertake a more fine-grained interpretation across all of the analyses. Consequently, I refined the

research question (Table 4.12) to identify the diverse ways in which mediational tools entered the individual's semiotic prisms to enable transition work.

I identified critical turning points and ruptures in participants writing development based upon the conscious reflections that emerged from their narratives. To varying degrees, participants identified how they appropriated mediational tools from the interventions in response to critical turning points. The participants reflected on their positioning and re-positioning and how they made meaningful cognitive, behavioural, social and affective changes in their writing development. I also considered any symbolic resources that participants identified as necessary for their writing development, such as Leah's use of pen for freewriting and Elspeth's notebook for capturing her written thoughts. I was careful not to assume that the mediational tools were meaningful for the participants or used to achieve their writing intentions. In some instances, the participants were keen to point out that the interventions were not the only factor influencing their writing development. For Jasmine, English was a second language, and she engaged with English as academic practice (EAP) classes. Some dissertation writers felt that the implementation of the intervention came too late to maximise the resources fully, and essential areas of academic research writing were unaddressed. Miranda suggested the inclusion of writing for ethical approval of a research proposal.

The dialectical relationship between what the data told me and what I wanted to know drew my attention to the criticality of an imaginary experience within Intervention 2. The participants as individuals appeared to explore the semiotic potential of Intervention 2 as time and space away from everyday lives. Participating in peer-review activities appeared to give individuals the opportunity to play at mastery, leading to

work on coming to terms with reconfiguring writing as journal articles, prompted reflection and actions beyond the intervention, and influenced inner shifts.

An assumption of a sociocultural theory of transitions goes further than one moment of change (Crafter & Maunder, 2012; Zittoun, 2006). From a theoretical perspective, the data told me that it was possible to identify the constantly moving spatial-temporal structure of the semiotic prism for individuals.

The dialectical relationship between what the data told me and what I wanted to know brought three critical issues into focus. Firstly, some participants reported that social and other resources outside the interventions were necessary for their transition work or that the mediational resources introduced were untimely. Secondly, relationships formed through the interventions and other relationships related to individuals' dissertation projects appeared essential for the transition process. Thirdly, and unsurprisingly, issues arising from respective settings had implications for how participants saw themselves as academic research writers and influenced their desires to become published authors.

R.Q 2. How do the participants experience relational work and deal with contradictions to shape their academic research writing development?

As outlined in Chapter Three, the theoretical framework for the thesis draws on concepts from Edwards' work (2005, 2011, 2017) on relational agency, relational expertise and common knowledge. The first iteration of the research questions did not reflect these concepts. Bearing these thoughts and what the data told me, I revised the research questions to include 'relational work'. I combined the construct alongside the variables from the original research questions (Table 1.7) so that a theoretical

interpretation focused on the relationship between the variables. However, I removed the construct of 'transformation'. Whilst an essential aspect of Edwards' work on relational agency concerns disclosing the dynamics of transformation, the data told me more about the nuances of transition, which is the overarching concept underpinning the current thesis and the concept that I progressively focused on through the theoretical interpretation.

To fully address the variables in the research question (RQ 2), I aimed to build on the findings of the micro-level analysis (RQ 1) by examining how the individual participants recognised and responded to the demands for the new writing task. As stated above, it was clear that relational work mattered to the participants, and the interventions appeared to bring the relational aspects of what mattered into the open. Using Edwards' concepts in conjunction with other cultural-historical activity theory CHAT constructs (Hedegaard, 2011; Leontiev, 1981; Sannino & Engeström, 2017) made it possible to ask dialectical and interpretive questions about the data (Table 4.13).

Given the problem space of the current thesis and the participants were working on their transitions as academic research writers alongside clinical and teaching roles, it was unsurprising that the individuals' intentions were in dialectical interplay with societal and institutional demands. However, using the CHAT framework helped me identify where the contradictions arose, differential perspectives on the object of activity, and how and when the collective shaped the development of the individual. The CHAT framework also revealed where relational agency was elaborated.

The interventions provided the participants with novel social and cognitive resources for their academic research writing development as second stimuli and mediational

tools. However, the resources also prompted a conflict of choices and motives, questioning the potential of the interventions as formative interventions to mobilise relational agency. As already stated, the resourceful use of the expertise of others came into the participant's consciousness. A critical learning point was how relational expertise shapes writing development. However, further learning and development concerned recognising know-who or knowing who could help and negotiating distributed expertise. None of the participants regarded themselves as experts in academic research writing, but some individuals developed their capacities to be resources for others. Notably, during the peer-review activities and in Intervention 2, individuals required assistance to respond to the formal peer-review process, and others became enabled to offer mutual assistance.

Table 4:13 Theoretical interpretations

Rationale	**To interpret the data with the emergent themes from the analyses of observed, writing, categorical and narrative data with theoretical tools**
Process	Two refined research questions to code the data An in-depth interpretation
Data analysed with this approach	Observed participants speech interactions Samples of participants writing Interview data Other documentation, i.e. email exchange between participants and other collaborators
Questions asked of the data	**Emergent themes**
Participants' uncertainties? *Participants' intentions?*	Peer-review of texts as a cognitive and social tool Freewriting as a cognitive and social tool

Setting? *Points of observation?* *Observation of participants during socially mediated activities and tool use.?* *Participants' reflections on events and processes?* *Tools appropriated by individuals and in what circumstances?* *Changes noted from self-evaluation or evidenced in samples of writing?*	The finite resources of Intervention 1 The semiotic potential of writing retreats The semiotic potential of tasks and writing activities The imaginary components of peer-review
Societal demands? *Institutional demands?* *Personal demands?*	
What matters?	
Establishing relations with others to collaborate on the object of activity?	Recognising know-who in the clinical context Aligning actions and motives on a co-authored text
Use of others' expertise to expand the object of activity?	Developing relational agency from the resources of the intervention Developing know-who through the dissertation process Developing relational agency through the peer-review process Enacting relational agency through the writing process

As I will show in the two chapters of findings, bringing the theoretical interpretations together from the two research questions made it possible to identify the processes of individuals' transitions. I explain the empirical and theoretical basis for the

interpretations for each research question in more depth during the two Findings Chapters.

I present the findings narratively and temporally. The theoretical interpretations helped to weave the narrative together (Wolcott, 2009) and focus on the individual as a unit of analysis. I bring in collective data such as the analysis of observed participants' speech interactions where necessary to illustrate the development of individuals. In the findings I present the in-depth experiences of individuals. The narrative data that is presented represent the typical themes that emerged from the analysis and interpretation where all participants' data was considered.

A final layer of interpretation was bringing the findings from both interventions together and synthesising the issues that merited further attention through the conceptual framework and reported in the discussion chapter. The steps that I took enabled me to conceptualise writing group interventions as imagined futures for nurse writers with the potential to enact relational agency.

4.5.6 The criticality of time in the analysis

Writing development is longitudinal and complex. Given that the current thesis study focuses on transitions in academic research writing development, it was critical to consider time in the analysis. I took a pragmatic and theoretical approach.

My pragmatic considerations were as follows. From a temporal perspective, the timeline for Intervention 1 spanned the institutionally determined one-year dissertation, and the endpoint was the submission of the dissertation text for academic assessment.

The anticipated timeline for Intervention 2 was composing a manuscript for publication, and the endpoint was the outcome of submitting it to a disciplinary peer-reviewed journal. I determined the points of observation of the activities and events, which took place as follows:

- I documented the beginning and endpoints for each participant (timeline) and their engagement points with either intervention and when the research interview took place;

- I noted the individual's ongoing engagement with the activities during each intervention, including their collaboration and dialogue. I observed and noted examples of academic research writing concept development in either intervention.

As outlined in Chapter Three, the notion of the semiotic prism is an essential component of the theoretical framing and for capturing critical moments in participants' transitions and acknowledging development over time. Observing the participants at more than one point in time made it possible to analyse and interpret the sense and meaning of respective experiences for individuals as time unfolded and how they adopted different positions on the semiotic prism. Table 4.13 outlines how the theoretical interpretations enabled me to identify emergent themes in the data and create the framework for reporting the findings.

4.6 Ethics, positionality and trustworthiness

All research involving human participants requires an ethical review. Ethics also concerns research governance in a quality assured context; for example, that the

research is original, not plagiarised, builds an argument for the justification of the study and is beneficial to society.

The current thesis research study included human participants, and was approved by The University of Oxford, Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) (Appendix B.1.), and complied with participant consent, confidentiality, and data storage guidelines. The research was underpinned by professional principles (BERA, 2018). Also, I gained approval from the University Research Committee (UREC) to recruit participants from the University Faculty of Health and Life Sciences as the data collection site. I informed participants that UREC was aware of the study.

Pseudonyms are used throughout to protect participant identity, and I gave the participants the option to select a personal pseudonym. However, the nature of qualitative research, which is contextual and uses participant quotes to provide evidence of research findings, risks identification of participants. In the current thesis research project, I used participant writing as data and given the personalised nature of these texts, there is an increased risk of identification. I discussed potential identification issues with the participants and agreed to share all transcripts and research reports before submitting the thesis or disseminating potential research papers. Sharing the thesis findings with the participants also concerned their perspectives on how I had represented their viewpoints and narratives. Each participant claimed to have enjoyed reading my analysis of their writing development. Some participants felt that minor details included in the draft analysis could have compromised their anonymity, and, where appropriate, compromising details have been removed or modified. One participant selected a pseudonym that she considered to be culturally neutral to protect her identity. An issue is that not everyone who participated in the interventions

participated in the research. In Intervention 2, some participants worked collaboratively on texts. One participant who had reflected on the feedback given by her writing partner during the data collection phase but had not participated in the research identified that it may have been possible to identify her partner. A solution suggested by the participant was to offer her former writing partner an opportunity to read the analysis, but her former partner declined. As discussed later in the chapter, none of the classroom-based Intervention 1 participants chose to participate in the research, whereas all the online participants gave their consent. Consequently, I only collected data from the online participants without compromising the classroom-based participants because both modes ran separately, which is a limitation of the current thesis study.

I considered the ethics of running an online intervention. Eynon, Fry & Schroeder (2016) argue for new ethics for new settings as reflected in the most recent BERA (2018) guidelines. Eynon et al. stress sensitivity to the context concerning confidentiality, which carries implications for research in online environments. The online classroom required a secure sign-in and was only accessible to participants who had registered for the workshops. Online artefacts generated by the teaching activities during the research, such as audio-visual recordings, which had a dual purpose as a teaching resource and research artefact, were only accessible to the participants through a secure password-protected virtual learning environment. The resources were not available to anyone outside the interventions. The content of emails used as research participant data was transferred to a word document that was immediately encrypted. All audio-visual files and transcripts of participant interviews were also encrypted. The electronic data will be stored indefinitely, and the hard copy will be destroyed five years following the project endpoint.

4.6.1 My dual relationships with the research participants

A salient point for my research practice was my dual relationship with the participants as facilitator and researcher of the interventions. Creswell and Poth (2018) contend that ethical issues in qualitative research need addressing at each study phase, including data collection and analysis.

In the context of this research, it was crucial to acknowledge my relationship with the participants because the focus of inquiry was an area of my teaching practice. Hellawell (2006) defines the insider as an individual who has a priori intimate knowledge of the community and its members, whereas the outsider is an individual who does not. Taking both definitions, I possessed insider status as I had detailed knowledge of the context and a priori knowledge of the participants within both writing group interventions because of their relationships with me as a learner, alumna, or colleague. Other authors (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Hellawell, 2006; Mercer, 2007; Merriam et al., 2001) focusing on the insider-outsider construct refer to a continuum rather than a fixed notion of one or the other. As suggested by Mercer, definitions of both might influence our perception of the construct as dichotomous, defining "insiderness" or "outsiderness" (Mercer, 2007: p.3).

Conversely, valuing the insider-outsider construct on a continuum, one is more likely to appreciate strengths and weaknesses in different contexts. On the continuum, I was an insider in the context because I was a teacher. However, researching the interventions that I had implemented granted access to potential participants and their data. Merriam et al. (2001) state that power is not given within any research setting but instead negotiated. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) assert that insider research presents a risk that participants might not fully describe their individual experience as they may assume

that the researcher is already aware of this or, as Yin (2014) suggests, the participant might tell the researcher what they think the researcher wants to hear.

The insider researcher's personal experience of the context might cloud objectivity which has implications for data analysis as the researcher may emphasise shared factors and de-emphasise discrepant factors. On the other hand, Dwyer and Buckle argue that the benefit of being a group member is the potential for a level of trust and openness that might be closed to outsiders; furthermore, being an outsider does not grant immunity to the personal perspective. Mercer (2007) suggests that the benefits of being an insider researcher are the potential to build rapport with participants, leading to more candour. Hellawell (2006) argues that ideally, the researcher should be both inside and outside the participants' perceptions and recommends honesty and a deep interest in participants' experiences and commitment to accurately sharing and representing the experience. The insider-outside position includes both an empathetic approach and a reflexive and rigorous stance towards data collection. Accordingly, I took two approaches in the study. Firstly, I was reflective and sensitive to the notion of a continuum throughout the study. Secondly, I developed an awareness of the shifting positions between myself as a researcher and each participant over their participation timeline. During Intervention 1, I held the position of 'instructor', and the participants were learners. Thus, I was an insider as the instructor, but an outsider to some extent as I was not a learner and I represented the institution. During Intervention 2, the boundaries were more blurred because the setting involved working with my peers. Hence, there was a danger of assuming that power had an equal distribution compared with an instructor-led intervention. Merriam et al. state that power relations exist in all social settings. I led the writing development of others, including colleagues. Given

the importance of writing in the context at all levels, this could be perceived as a powerful position.

In this context, others know me for having teaching and research interest in writing development. An assumption might be that participants who joined the interventions viewed me as a credible resource to support their writing development. I found that the issue of positionality came up during the research interviews without any prompting. Participants openly talked about my position as a writing instructor compared to their perceived novice status or differential stages of writing development. I acknowledge that, as the researcher, I interacted differently with each participant at various times according to their learning needs. Positionality was a factor in some of my data collection decisions. For example, during Intervention 1, I did not conduct participant interviews until the learners had completed their dissertation module. The disadvantage was that learners' accounts were retrospective, which may have put the accuracy of their recall of events at risk. However, I was collecting participants' accounts when I was no longer their instructor with clarity about my position as a researcher of the writing intervention.

4.6.2 Positionality in the research study as a novice researcher, learning designer, facilitator and co-writer

In the following section, I reflect on the different roles that I took during interventions and the potential implications for the conceptualisation of the research design.

In the current thesis study, I held differential positions as a novice social science researcher, intervention designer, facilitator, and co-writer with some participants (Helen and Jasmine). Furthermore, in the higher education context of the study, my

position was a teacher in nursing and education. I ensured that my various positions did not compromise the study's rigour, as explained below.

My interest in writing development has arisen because I have witnessed many colleagues and learners who do not get an opportunity to fulfil their potential as academic research writers. I have felt vulnerable in the same respect. From my perspective, there is a danger of overemphasising the positive aspects of writing interventions. However, I am equally aware of the cognitive difficulties that writing presents and may be exacerbated by writing group interventions. My epistemological position derives from my world of educational research, and practice involves facilitating critical activities and conversations to explore and expand academic research writing. I view knowledge as socially and culturally created.

Throughout the research process, I reflected on how my interests in, and knowledge about, writing development influenced my analysis. I considered whether my data strengthened or invalidated my assumptions about writing development and engaged in regular discussions with my supervisors about my evolving perspectives. For example, I was surprised by how the participants persevered in trying new approaches to their writing. While their resilience did not challenge my assumptions, it did cause me to wonder how the introduced ideas would fit into formal curriculum areas following the research to sustain some of the meaningful practices reported by the participants.

A tension existed between developing activities that promoted writing development and were researchable meant learning about both. I overcame the tension through initial work with expert writing developers and constantly taking the advice of my doctoral supervisors.

In my novice researcher role, I have pursued my selected methodological approach and employed the research methods competently and conscientiously to represent the interactions and my relationship with the writer participants. The work is my formative development as a researcher.

I have entered a continuing learning journey that has involved significant challenges and disquieting along the way. I have found sociocultural theory and CHAT ideas synchronously enticing and demanding as theoretical frameworks. I found engaging with and understanding the ideas involved learning new variables and research conceptualisations. The process involves internalising the definitions and applications of sociocultural and CHAT concepts while appreciating different interpretations in the field before reaching a point where I could adopt and implement them to analyse my study. However, my research trajectory has involved a great deal of trial, error, repetition and revisiting of concepts whilst returning to the data. Embracing, reasoning, explaining, and analysing with sociocultural and CHAT concepts has transported me, sometimes quite plainly, down the wrong path. One false destination for what I was trying to achieve in the research was selecting the unit of analysis from a third-generation activity theory perspective. A micro-level analysis of the individual writers through a general qualitative approach was most appropriate for addressing the research questions and contributing to understanding health care writer development in writing groups.

My position as a co-writer involved working closely with two participants, Helen and Jasmine. I encouraged negotiation with each of them respectively. They both had clear writing intentions to become published authors, which they outlined to me at the outset of their dissertation projects, and they required extra support to achieve their writing

aims and were cognizant of my interest in academic research writing development. I regarded them as peers and encouraged them and other participants to develop their relational expertise. While I became a published author before the thesis, I am still relatively novice. Working as a co-author provided an opportunity to learn more about the formative steps of the publishing process and sustain the learning to work collaboratively with colleagues and future learners.

I have outlined my insider status in an earlier section, and to add to the perspective, Smagorinsky (2008) identifies that the facets of a setting with relevance to the research are tricky to sort out, and what matters in a context may not be evident to the outsider researcher. On the other hand, there is a risk of making assumptions about what matters for granted as an insider. As an experienced teacher, I know the research setting exceptionally well. An advantage was that I had access to a purposeful sample within ethical boundaries. I also know the disciplinary debates, tensions, policy, and historical culture.

I took an overall approach to minimise the tensions between my roles by weaving trustworthiness into the study. The following section will explain my considerations for rigour and how I enacted my reflections on my orientation throughout the research process.

4.6.3 Trustworthiness

In the literature review (Chapter Two), I critiqued the work of other qualitative researchers who investigated writing group interventions because their research lacked rigour in several areas against Morse's (2015) criteria for validity in qualitative research. A critical objective of the current thesis study is to address the gap in taking a

trustworthy approach. I was also mindful of how my different positions in the study had implications for the validity of the data. In this section, I will reflect on the steps that I have taken to be a reliable instrument.

In keeping with a qualitative case study design, I have triangulated the data, which enabled the viewing of the same events from more than one prism perspective, and I have also achieved theoretical triangulation, which involves using more than one theoretical perspective as a lens on the data (Yardley, 2008). Triangulation also involves independent peer-review of the data, which requires lateral thinking during a doctoral study. To address the issue, I regularly reflected on my data considerations with a Master's student in education who was independent of the current thesis study. I also drew on the expertise of my supervisors as peer-reviewers of the data.

In this chapter, I have outlined the verification procedures, which involved returning transcripts from observations and interviews to the participants and subsequently their analysed data as represented in the two chapters of findings that follow. I also shared my final write-ups of the findings with them.

Trustworthiness in qualitative research involves adequate engagement in data collection. The data that I collected, analysed, and converged has enabled me to provide rich and compelling narratives of participants' formative writing development, evidenced in the two Findings Chapters. Data collection considerations are explicitly related to the research problem, theoretical framework, research questions, and general qualitative study design. Wolcott (2009) recommends that analysis is an iterative process with data collection and goes beyond looking for patterns in the data to concern how the researcher comes to understand the data. Understanding comes through writing

up through the data collection process. I engaged with this practice from the initial stages of data collection, sharing my rudimentary written thoughts with peers who have expertise in the field, and solicited their feedback graciously.

To get at transitional processes, I needed to use methods that could yield rich descriptions of cognitive, emotional, and social transitions within writing development. The introductory chapter states that the non-linear, temporal, and complex nature of transitions requires the researcher to consider longitudinal studies to go beyond a single event or an inquiry about a single response (Meleis, 2009). I have endeavoured to convey the consistency of the data with rich descriptions of the analysed data in the two Findings Chapters.

A potential threat to the rigour of the thesis study was my position as a part-time doctoral student in that it could have been easy to lose the thread when responding to competing demands. However, I have endeavoured to turn the threat into an opportunity by regularly attending to an aspect of the thesis work daily. The longitudinal nature of the study fitted my schedule because I could spend prolonged time engaging with the participants and the study setting. The temporal nature of the fieldwork afforded me time to carefully organise the many sources of participant data.

Since the study's outset, I created a portfolio to record and document data collection and analysis decisions with my constant writing. The approach has led to an audit trail of the research study, which has enabled me to reflect objectively and clearly articulate my ideas to others during supervision, key milestones, and research conferences.

As shown in the current thesis, the participants who engaged with the research were a diverse sample of health care practitioners and health care academics at various stages

of their academic research writing trajectories. Except for gender, the participants were a maximum variation sample, meaning that the audience for my thesis study can view individuals' narratives to determine the transferability of the findings to their contexts.

4.7 Chapter summary

This chapter explained the rationale for selecting a basic qualitative approach (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) as the most appropriate research design to investigate the interventions for a number of reasons. Firstly, to address a methodological gap in the literature on writing interventions that have not provided a detailed description of participants development. Secondly, to get the best view on individuals as a unit of analysis and incorporate an eclectic approach to collecting a rich data set of human development in a writing study. Thirdly, to address the research questions and study aims focused on how individuals make sense and make meaning of their experiences in writing group interventions and capture their interpretations, use of resources and relations in the context of the interventions. Fourthly, to link the sociocultural and cultural-historical theoretical framework directed at formative transitions with the analytic processes for the research design. I have introduced the study's setting, the sampling decisions, data collection and analyses process and considerations for trustworthiness, positionality and ethics. The following chapter will present the Intervention 1 findings.

5 Chapter Five: A writing group intervention for Master's dissertation writers: Emerging academic research writing concepts and relational work

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I outlined the design of a writing group intervention (Intervention 1) for Master's dissertation writers that aimed to create a cultural and social learning environment where participants could work on and develop academic research writing concepts. This chapter presents the work of transition undertaken by individual participants as they tackled an unfamiliar writing task using the social and cognitive resources provided by Intervention 1. Furthermore, the chapter shows how the individual participants appeared to develop the capacity to propel themselves forward as academic research writers by drawing on expertise within and beyond the intervention. This chapter will use the concept of the semiotic prism (Zittoun 2006, 2008, 2012) to explore the work of transition and the concept of relational agency (Edwards 2005, 2011, 2017) to examine the development of the participants' relational work within and outside the intervention.

In chapter two, I identified a dearth of previous research on the formative transitions of health care writers when they engage with writing group interventions. Furthermore, even fewer studies focus on developing Master's level writers. In chapter three, I presented and constructed a theoretical framework to operationalise the current thesis

study with these ideas in mind. A summary of my argument is as follows. A sociocultural theory of transitions (Crafter & Maunder, 2012; Zittoun, 2006, 2008, 2012) offers the possibility to examine how individuals take advantage of the resources that become available through a writing group intervention to deal with uncertainties and undertake change, and the process and nature of that change. Academic research writing is a collaborative activity to further the discipline but is hard for novice individuals to access. A fundamental transition for the individual health care Master's level professional is developing relational work capabilities for academic research writing. The lenses of relational agency (Edwards, 2005, 2011, 2017; Hedegaard, 2012; Sannino, 2015; Sannino & Engeström, 2017) provide a framework to investigate how a writing group intervention promotes relational work and propels the participants forward as disciplinary writers.

This chapter aims to address two key research questions, and the research questions are as follows:

RQ 1. How and why do the participants appropriate the mediational tools from the writing interventions during the work of transition?

RQ 2. How do the participants experience relational work and deal with contradictions to shape their academic research writing development?

This chapter is structured as follows: In section 5.2, I present the findings concerning RQ 1. I explicitly focus on the formative micro-development of individuals; In section 5.3, I present the findings relating to RQ 2. I explicitly focus on how the collective shape the development of the individual, and section 5.4 synthesises the findings of RQ 1 and

RQ 2 to consider the processes of dissertation writers' transitions regarding identity repositioning, knowledge change and skill acquisition and meaning-making.

5.2 Appropriating mediational tools for the work of transition in dissertation writing

5.2.1 The uncertainties of Master's dissertation writers

To address the research question:

How and why do the participants appropriate the mediational tools from the writing interventions during the work of transition?

I first identify the uncertainties experienced by the participants who engaged with Intervention 1 in writing a Master's dissertation. I then examine how and why mediational tools were appropriated from Intervention 1 to deal with uncertainties during the transition. The findings provide evidence of the formative development of academic research writing at the micro-level of the individual, which I will explain in the following sections.

The Master's dissertation writers in the current thesis study experienced uncertainty when faced with their first experiences of the genre of academic research writing. Intervention 1 aimed to reconfigure the spatial-temporal process of dissertation writing in the context by offering new cognitive and social resources. In Chapter Four (Section 4.3), I outlined the pedagogical design of Intervention 1 and Appendix D1 contains a complete description of the related learning activities. In reporting the findings, I focus on the learning activities that the individual participants asserted were the most meaningful in dealing with their uncertainties and prompted their transition work.

Each participant who engaged with Intervention 1 studied on a Master's programme in health care alongside their professional employment in a clinical context. Most participants studied part-time, and some were also online distance learners. The dissertation was the ultimate writing task for their study programme (see Chapter Four, section 4.3 for a description of the participant sample). The participants appeared to be highly engaged learners who had successfully tackled previous writing tasks but had experienced a rupture in their self-identities as 'good students' when faced with the dissertation writing task. Their taken-for-granted mode of dealing with written assignments did not apply to Master's dissertation writing. Miranda described her situation as:

> "I felt lost, especially when I was looking at the previous dissertations, which I had access to. And was like how, how was I supposed to do this? I felt lost."

There were specific elements of academic research writing that appeared to cause uncertainty. For example, Zara found it hard to locate and utilise an appropriate academic register:

> "Because you are writing for so much, for so long, for example, my topic was breastfeeding. Repeating the same word over -and -over again. It adds an extra challenge to normal academic writing."

Moreover, Leah struggled to understand how much detail to provide for the reader:

> "I was always too wordy. And so, I got quite good as time went on during the Master's, and I just got better at using my words. So, writing for a dissertation, you can be more expansive. And I found that a struggle after training myself to write concisely!"

Other areas included self-positioning in the text as experienced by Rose:

> "I am trying to make it clear what my view is as well, which I do not think I am very good at."

Jessica found that being confronted with the dissertation writing task exacerbated a long-standing frustration with writing in the discipline:

> "At the undergraduate level, you are told, you must quote all the authors, they say to wait until the third year, your undergraduate dissertation, you will be able to express yourself, and you cannot. And then you get to Master's level, and they are like well, no, you still cannot express yourself. So, I do. I find that quite frustrating."

An awareness of the finite nature of the dissertation writing task exacerbated uncertainties, as identified by Fiona.

> "Don't think you've got a year, and that's plenty of time, because it's not, especially if you're working full time. It's completely doable, but you do have to be organised."

There appeared to be a critical need for access to new resources to support the participant's writing development and provide social knowledge to understand the nature of the dissertation writing task. For example, Leah found Intervention 1 to mitigate for remoteness:

> "Apart from talking to your supervisor, which you had limited access, and reading other people's dissertations and reading books on dissertation writing, there was not, this was the only way that you could interact with other people on more than a one-to-one and see how they were all feeling about things as well, and what they thought they should include."

In the following sections, I will use Zittoun's (2006, 2008, 2012) model of the semiotic prism to examine how the participants as individuals made sense, made meaning and repositioned themselves through their sphere of experiences in Intervention 1. To complement the approach and because speech is a critical cognitive and social resource for academic research writing development, I used sociocultural frameworks (Mercer,

1995, 2000, 2013; Middleton, 1996, 2011) as explained in Chapter Three to examine how the participants made meaning from the voices of others and jointly created knowledge about dissertation writing. I paid close attention to the most meaningful resources reported by individuals and how they appropriated the resources as mediational tools (Gillespie & Zittoun, 2010; Smagorinsky, 2011) to work through their uncertainties and intentions to undertake the work of transition.

As explained in Chapter Three, Zittoun's (2006) conceptualisation of a rupture-transition halts an individual's action and stimulates reflection with a temporal dimension. Accordingly, I collected participant data at different time points (observation of interactions, samples of writing, and interviews). I use the respective time-points to present the findings concerning the respective research question for Intervention 1.

Time 1, for example, is an analysis of what I observed about individuals as they interacted with others during Intervention 1 or the writing that individuals composed during Intervention 1. Time 2 is the individual's reflections on being given a new participatory experience at time 1 and the meaning it had acquired for them at Time 2, including their reflections, feelings, understanding of the resources and relations with others. Time 2 is also the individual's reflections on how and why they appropriated the resources from the interventions as mediational tools for their work of transition. I gained Participants' reflections at Time 2 through the interviews I conducted.

I present the findings as four deductive themes based on the data as interpreted through the theoretical framework. Through the themes, I provide an analysis of the formative development of the writers. Three of the themes relate directly to the respective

activities that the participants engaged with and the associated cognitive and social resources appropriated as mediational tools for writing development. First, *the peer-review of texts as a cognitive and social resource*, second, *freewriting as a cognitive and social resource* and third, *the writer's voice as a cognitive and social resource.* The fourth theme is *the finite resources of Intervention 1* and recognises that whilst the participants accessed resources not commonly available for academic research writing development, there were also limitations with implications for some writer's development.

5.2.2 The peer-review of texts as a cognitive and social resource

Activities, where the participants were given access to examples of student dissertation writing and provided instruction about peer-reviewing the paper, appeared a purposeful social and cognitive resource for developing participants' writing.

Alongside my writing developer colleagues, we designed "text-recognition" activities. The activities aimed to expose the writing processes to the participants through the shifts that authors make when they revise and rewrite their texts (Smagorinsky, 2011). The participants reviewed successive drafts of writing-in-progress from former Master's dissertation student's work. The peer-review activities drew upon prior instruction. The participants had received preparation on writing conventions, for example, macro structures (moves, nature of claims) and microstructures (positionality, voice, intertextuality).

To examine the theme, I will draw on the experiences of Miranda, Zara and Leah, who took a divergent approach to how they appropriated the social and cognitive resources

from the "text-recognition" activities as mediational tools for their writing development.

I start with an extract from the participant observation analysis that I undertook, where Miranda, Leah and Zara, alongside their peers, were reviewing a draft (Time 1). I then proceed to their reflections about their participation and further development of their academic research writing (Time 2).

The participants engaged with the "text-recognition" activities on more than one occasion. (The complete analysis of their communicative action during the activities may be found in Appendix D 2). An overall finding of the communicative analyses of the "text-recognition" activities at Time 1 showed that the participants developed and appropriated metaphors to describe features of academic research writing at various stages of development. Examples included 'signposting', 'flow,' and 'balance'.

The participant conversation that I present here focused on the structure of the first draft of an author's methods section from a dissertation. In drawing on the draft text as a resource, the discussion centred around the possible options for restructuring the text and the author's clarity of expression:

> *Leah*: I cannot do this sort of backwards reflection thing; it freaks me out. The chapter was quite clearly labelled as to what the sections were. So that was, made it easier to understand what the person was trying to say.
>
> *Fiona*: It 'flowed' quite well and was relatively concise.
>
> *Miranda*: The language used was quite understandable and clear.
>
> *Zara:* Well, broken down and easy to 'move back and forth,' find points of interest.

> *Miranda:* I thought there was a lack of 'signposting.' I did not see an introduction or the conclusion.

Issues such as 'flow,' 'conciseness,' and 'clarity' emerged as the participants described the features of the draft text. Collective and metaphorical definitions appeared to arise from participants' feelings about how the writer had the potential capacity to 'move' the reader around a text that 'flowed.' 'Moves' was taken up as a term to echo both similar and differential viewpoints. Deliberation centred on the consequences of 'flow' in making the writer's thoughts easy to understand, for example, justification and clarity of research choices and decisions.

To gain an insight into how the collective became meaningful for the experiences of individuals, I consider the participants' reflections on the actions during the events. I start with Miranda's interpretations of her experiences.

Miranda's reflected at Time 2 about how and what she had learned at Time 1:

> "Because it gave you an indication of how long each chapter should be. It also pointed out what is good and what needed to be improved, by showing us chapters done by previous students."

Miranda appeared to have appropriated her learning from the activity as a sign to make sense of what the institution regarded as 'good' writing. In Miranda's interpretation of the activity, the semiotic alliance between the imagined successful dissertation writer and the institution were implicitly 'pointed out.' Zittoun (2012) contends that the sphere of experiences that locates individuals also contains rules that enable and constrain their actions. Given that Miranda's uncertainties concerned 'feeling lost' about how she should go about the dissertation writing task, this was potentially a meaningful experience for her in guiding her towards the expected conventions. Engaging with the

activity also showed the constraints of the writing task, such as word limits. Miranda also identified that her experiences at Time 1 exposed the voices and thought processes of others:

> "Hearing other students talk about their experiences, you get a feel of where you fit in the group. If you're behind, you can find your place. I felt quite good, I wasn't behind, and I understood what they were saying. And hearing other students talk about their experiences boosts you."

Here, Miranda appeared to feel acknowledged in her cognitive understanding of appropriate academic research writing through the shared experiences of peers with whom she had a semiotic alliance. Zittoun (2006) argues that the pole of an individual and others' views on a given object creates sense and meaning. The pole of others constitutes the social and cultural dimension of the prism. The voices of peers became a sign for Miranda to position her understanding and level of development concerning dissertation writing. In her reflections on Time 1, Miranda also returned to the metaphorical definition of 'signposting' that she used during the 'text recognition' activities:

> "I remember learning from this about signposting. I remember marking on some of the required signposting that needed to be done."

Miranda recollected that 'signposting' was a shared understanding between peers about improving the macrostructure of a dissertation. At Time 2, she identified how she appropriated 'signposting' as a mediational tool for her writing:

> "Signposting helped me become more self-aware and reflective about my writing. And made my writing more efficient and productive in the long run. It provided me with skills for owning sentences, like checking for clarity and comprehension."

'Signposting' appeared to enable Miranda to self-regulate her writing habits and focus on the clarity of the text as a product. Given that Miranda was aware of the time constraints to undertake the dissertation, her thoughts and actions, which focused on productivity and editing in her writing processes was not surprising

I now turn to Zara, who reflected at Time 2 about what she had learned from the "text-recognition" 'activities at Time 1:

> "That activity stuck with me because I saw the differences between the first and the second drafts. In the second draft, I saw how much the feedback had transformed it completely to what it was to become."

Here Zara refers to the review of the changes that one author had made to their dissertation writing when moving from a first to a second draft. Zara made sense of the author's changes as a response to dissertation supervisor feedback. Zara then saw the potential semiotic alliance that she had with her supervisor concerning the development of her academic research writing and the meaningfulness of the supervisor-supervisee relationship. Furthermore, she made sense and meaning of feedback as a resource to transform an evolving dissertation text:

> "I remembered that during my writing process, I was always reluctant to send my writing to my supervisor because I would think it wasn't good enough. But after that exercise, I knew that if I sent it to her, she would give me feedback, and I could transform my work. So, it supported me."

Zara modified her actions by engaging her supervisor on early drafts of her work and repositioning herself in the supervisory relationship. Through participating in the activity, Zara made sense of "text-recognition" as a sign to review her writing and identify areas for improvement:

> "The paragraphs were not flowing, and the chapters weren't linking from one to another, which is important when you are reading the full document."

In contrast with Miranda and Zara, Leah found it hard to recollect the "text-recognition" activities except:

> "It gave me insight into what might be considered better quality writing. Over the last few months, I had written, rewritten, and rewritten when I was trying to have a bit more flow to the dissertation. Whether it came off or not, I don't know."

Leah's retrospection on Time 1 suggests a non-reflective use of a mediational tool because she did not appear to appropriate the resource for the work of transition fully. As shown above, Leah had participated actively in the "text-recognition" discussion on previous occasions (see Appendix D 2). The conversational analysis as shown above suggests that Miranda and Zara appeared to contribute through cumulative talk (Mercer, 2000). Cumulative talk is where the speakers reciprocally build on the dialogue, add their information, and uncritically support each other to construct knowledge and reach a shared understanding. Cumulative talk may have validated their emergent insights. Leah's contributions were contrary at times to the shared understanding of her peers (see Appendix D 2). A contrary view that remained unelaborated may have constrained her knowledge development related to the person-object axis in the semiotic prism. Furthermore, her thoughts may not have felt acknowledged, making it difficult for her to make sense of and meaning of her experiences.

The object with shared meaning for Miranda, Leah and Zara was a Master's dissertation text. Through their participation in Intervention 1, the dissertation text became a symbolic object with socially shared meaning. The "text-recognition" activities drew on drafts of dissertation texts in progress. The processes that I have reported show how

Miranda, Zara, and Leah tried to make sense of and meaning of the drafts as the authors had revised the writing towards becoming the symbolic object. Zittoun (2008) contends that the individual needs to distance the object to name it, signify it and communicate about it. The findings showed that 'signposting' became significant for Miranda through meaning-making with others at Time 1. She articulated how she had used 'signposting' as a tool for the work of transition between Time 1 and Time 2 to become more productive in her writing processes and revise and edit her text. Similarly, Zara articulated how she had noted at Time 1 that a text had 'become transformed' through feedback, so part of Zara's transition work was an adaptation of her relationship with her supervisor. Leah could remember that participating in the activity had enabled her understanding of better academic research writing.

5.2.3 Freewriting as a cognitive and social resource

Freewriting has been a long-established approach (Elbow, 1998) to prevent writer's block, avoid procrastination, promote self-regulation, and generate text. Writers come together in a group or on their own and write continuously for a specific period. In a group, the writers may share their objectives for what they intend to accomplish in the set period. Freewriting was an activity included in Intervention 1 to prompt the work of transition because freewriting in a social group can create a socially shared meaning of the object, a writer's text in progress. Without exception, none of the participants had participated in freewriting before they participated in Intervention 1. Each participant asserted that they appropriated freewriting subsequently to mediate their writing processes.

To explore the theme 'freewriting as a cognitive and social resource', I will focus on Zara and Leah, who claimed to have found freewriting especially meaningful. I deal with each of their experiences and interpretations of freewriting during Intervention 1 (Time 1) and their continued respective uses of freewriting to develop their academic research writing (Time 2).

As stated earlier in this chapter, one of Zara's key uncertainties was self-expression in academic research writing. Zara identified that freewriting activities had helped her to feel less constrained to formulate and compose appropriate academic words for use in her writing:

> "It was really great for me because I always tried to look for a source about what I am writing. But because I knew some of that already, it was good just to write down what I know and then back it up with research. And in that way, it reduces plagiarism."

Zara's assertion suggests that freewriting as an activity helped her to confront her disciplinary knowledge, and at the same time, begin to position herself alongside the authors she was bringing into the text. In the semiotic prism of the individual, other authors are the real or imagined others where there is a semiotic alliance on a disciplinary topic. After being introduced to the freewriting activities during Intervention 1, Zara co-created a writing group with her peers where they practised freewriting:

> "Three of us on my course, who also came to the workshop (Intervention 1). 45 minutes you're going to write, and 15 minutes you are going to talk. And we increased the time as the deadline came. It was quite helpful going through each other's work. We read each other's writing the best we could. I noticed they were getting good at giving feedback, and I was also good at giving them feedback. Because I knew if something didn't sound right."

At Time 2, Zara had appropriated freewriting as a mediational tool. Through a combination of text and talk, Zara made sense of how engaging with evolving texts acted upon the reader. Zara's actions with her peers built upon her sense-making of the power of feedback to transform texts:

> "I knew if I didn't have those people around me, it would have been way harder because sometimes you just need to talk about it. Just get through things together, even if it's just a sentence you can't quite find a word for."

As outlined earlier in the thesis, voices heard in writing groups confers to words that appear in texts (Gere, 1987). Forming a writing group with peers was essential for Zara, who had previously struggled with self-expression in academic research writing. Zittoun (2008) contends that relocation and identity formation in transitions concern the person-other axis, including an individual's relationship with others regarding the symbolic object. Zara had created change through her configuration of a peer-led writing group and her relations with other dissertation writers.

As stated earlier, Leah's sphere of experiences of being a dissertation writer included the context of being a distance learning student and a feeling of isolation and remoteness from other interlocutors. A further issue for Leah was that over the timeline of her experience of being a distance learning student, she had felt less competent at written communication than others during asynchronous online discussions:

> "Communicating via the forums, I've always really struggled with that. Although I try to make myself participate, I always felt, looking at some of the other participants in the forums, they're much better at it than I ever was. I always felt artificial. Because when you're doing it distance, and you don't get to see people, face-to-face. I do feel a little bit isolated sometimes."

Potentially, Leah's work of transition as an academic research writer was constrained. Using Zittoun's (2006) semiotic levels of uncertainty to examine Leah's constraints,

she felt isolated in the here-and-now level of composing a Master's dissertation as a distance learning student. Leah assigned meaning to this uncertainty as not seeing and hearing others so that she could understand how they made meaning of the same experience. At the next level, Leah categorised herself and her self-conduct within the setting of an online learning environment as 'artificial' and not as competent as others. However, at the meta-level of general orientation, Leah found a way to resolve this and appeared to make a transition through the real-time and non-verbal composites of face-to-face dialogue. The critical activity during Intervention 1 that bridged the gap and engaged Leah was freewriting:

> "That was brilliant. And it's such a simple concept, the idea that you set yourself a target, you socialise, you say hi, and then you just go quiet for 20 minutes, half an hour, whatever the timeframe is, and then you just write. It's like word vomit, and it's amazingly productive half an hour, and even if it meant that most of that got discarded, at least you've started. Because there's nothing worse than a blank page."

Leah's reflections concern her experiences at Time 1, where like Zara, Leah felt more productive in her writing processes and made meaning through the social dimension of freewriting.

At time 2, Leah appropriated freewriting as a mediational tool to deal with productivity and self-regulation, which she had initially struggled with:

> "It's something that I've shared with people that I work with, and it's something that I did on my own after that. I set aside a couple of hours in the evening to do some work. I usually had a plan for the week if I had like a target in mind like finish the section on the methodology."

It appears that through re-creating the activity, Leah created a semiotic alliance with others in her setting, which may have felt meaningful for her isolation as a writer. In

addition, Leah appeared to be able to take distance from freewriting as a mediational tool, name it, signify it and communicate about it:

> "I'd get a cup of tea. I don't do it on the computer. I do it with pen and paper. I much prefer that when I'm just…Spieling, I find it easier than typing. Because when I'm typing, I keep going back to correct it and look at the grammar, you get all these alerts coming up. If I do it on paper, that doesn't distract me."

Leah had appropriated the activity and adapted freewriting with the use of symbolic resources to act upon her intentions such as 'a cup of tea' which culturally may have social connotations, and a pen, and a piece of paper as she did not wish to be distracted in her flow of writing by the grammar and spelling alerts of the word processor. It appears that the re-creation of the activity with the use of these artefacts provided a capacity for Leah to change her writing practices and therefore reposition herself as a productive writer. Compared to Zara, who also re-created the same activity, there appeared to be fewer social resources or other interlocuters available to Leah within the context of being a part-time distance learner student. Nevertheless, Leah appeared to appropriate freewriting to contain the underpinning feelings of isolation with symbolic resources. Her conduct in this respect moved forward with her writing processes to undertake the work of transition along the person-sense and person-meaning axes of the semiotic prism.

5.2.4 The writer's voice as a cognitive and social resource

Activities that focused on developing the writer's voice in academic research writing appeared meaningful for some participants. During Intervention 1, resources to enable the writer's voice aimed to: firstly, position the dissertation writer's voice alongside the voices of other authors that they brought into their texts from the disciplinary literature

(Hyland, 2009); and secondly, to project the dissertation writer's voice to an anticipated audience (Murray, 2017). As explained earlier in the thesis (Chapter Two), positioning the authorial voice and associated practices such as intertextuality are challenging transitions for postgraduate writers. Activities for developing the authorial voice aim to build the writer's identities (Ivanič, 1998; Nelson & Castelló, 2012) and align with Zittoun's (2006, 2008) model of the semiotic prism for transitions along the person-other axis, which concerns identity positioning.

To illustrate the theme, "the writer's voice as a cognitive and social resource," I will examine Rose and Jessica's experiences, who nominated the activities to develop an authorial voice as the critical resources for their writing development. They respectively pinpointed two key activities, "writing to prompt" and the use of metadiscourse mechanisms. "Writing to prompt" is a variation on free writing where the writer writes in free response to a set of questions about their current writing task or project. The aim is that the writer focuses on building an argument or positioning themselves alongside authors' work that they share values with.

Rose and Jessica's intentions became focused on self-repositioning through their texts as they constantly engaged with the intervention and the activities they found most exciting and relevant. However, Rose's uncertainties arose through being introduced to the notion of a writer's voice during the Intervention 1 activities:

> "The important thing to me was the voice. It was something I'd not thought about before. Whilst when I read back, I can see I probably did it in places. I am trying to make it clear what my view is as well, which I don't think I'm very good at."

Jessica, on the other hand, had longstanding uncertainty about expressing herself in writing as a nurse, and the intervention offered the potential to alleviate her frustration:

> *"*In the workshops (Intervention 1), it was good to see all these more casual, more modern ways of writing, more engaging, more interesting, more engaging, and more interesting. I even think it's more professional to write like that. And I enjoyed that. So, it stimulated my interest."

Before proceeding to Rose and Jessica's reflections at Time 2, I will present an extract from the participant observation analysis during a conversation between Rose, Jessica, and Fiona. The peer discussion took place during an activity where they reviewed and deliberated about the authorial voice in two draft dissertations:

> *Fiona*: I find it difficult to document my own 'opinion' in dissertation writing as everything must be 'evidence-based.'
>
> *Rose*: Both writers anticipate an 'alternative view 'that will follow with other citations.
>
> *Fiona*: Citations support the writers' claims as 'well-documented' and is an indicator of the quality of care
>
> *Jessica*: Is it ok to use the words 'well-documented'? Sometimes I use words like 'widely discussed in nursing literature' followed by two or three citations. But apparently, I shouldn't use multiple citations.
>
> *Fiona*: I've also been told this. I'm not sure, but it makes me wary about using terms such as 'well-documented' and 'widely discussed.'

They each grappled at Time 1 with the notion of positioning their voices within a text. During the discussion, a shared frame of reference was the cultural norm of "the evidence-base", which they nominated as a critical issue for dissertation writing. The evidence-base in health care may make the writer feel that written claims need to be supported by validated empirical research and can inhibit an authorial voice. In the reviewed draft writing, the authors used phrases such as "well-documented" to signify "evidence" supporting claims known as booster mechanisms. The use of booster

mechanisms conflicted with Rose, Jessica, and Fiona's prior understanding of academic research writing and became the point of definition and delineation. There appeared to be a dialectic of participant thought and word as implied through Fiona and her peer's intersubjectivity about having been discouraged from such literacy practices by disciplinary supervisors. An emergent distinction was current wariness about exposing personal 'opinions' within a dissertation text.

At Time 1, Rose and Jessica had expressed a socially shared meaning of wariness about exerting authorial voices. However, at the same time, they wanted to adopt a different position which became a possibility through their engagement with the resources aimed at developing the authorial voice. Rose reflected at Time 2 on her experiences of the 'writing to prompt' activity (Time 1):

> "So, it made me think, without the papers there, it made me think right, what do you know, what have you read and what do you actually know, and it made me think a bit harder about that."

Without reference to "papers" which signify the evidence-base, Rose confronted her disciplinary knowledge about her research topic without inhibition which relates to the person-object axis of the semiotic prism. Rose also appropriated "writing to prompt" as a mediational tool to express her written thoughts and make sense of a potential novel contribution from her dissertation research:

> "And I got, looking at my contribution, I think I remember thinking oh yeah, this is really worthwhile."

Rose diligently saved each version of the texts that she composed during Intervention 1. The object, her dissertation, had become an evolving text. She asserted that through joining Intervention 1, she started her writing processes for the dissertation much earlier

than she had imagined. Rose's proposed plan was to appropriate the text from the 'writing to prompt' activity (from Time 1), at a later point of her writing processes to draft a dissertation introduction and focus her thinking:

> "I agree with what I've written, and I will use it because the outcome of the whole research is saying the same sort of thing. I will just look at it and think about it and reword it. I would read a bit more around it as well."

Rose's evolving text had become a mediating tool for her psychological planning to reframe her dissertation work. Rose's approach to writing processes conveys Prior's (2004) and Castelló and Iñesta's (2012) notion of texts as artefacts-in-activity. The text is a mediating means to prompt further development of the writer and aligns with the person-meaning axis of the semiotic prism. As Zittoun (2006) suggests, the person-meaning axis implies an ongoing intra-psychological dialogue and is a crucial aspect of the work of transition.

Jessica asserted that each activity she had engaged with during Intervention 1 had value and felt timely. She reflected at Time 2 on her thoughts and feelings about her participation in 'writing to prompt' (Time 1):

> *"*God, just, just how good it was. Because no one had asked me those questions, I hadn't asked myself those questions. I was just immersed in a sea of research. I'd found my studies, I'd identified my 14 studies, I'd carried out the literature research, I knew what I wanted to do, but I hadn't got to the point of expressing and being specific about what my aims were."

Participating in the writing to prompt activity helped Jessica consider the position of her dissertation research project in the disciplinary literature. Like Rose, Jessica retained the writing that she composed during the activity to guide other areas of the composition process. She regarded the text as a "good starting off point". When I interviewed Jessica,

her dissertation writing was still in progress, and she outlined her constant use of the text (Fig. 5.1) that she had composed during Intervention 1 (Time 1):

> "I've used it as a basis to help me formulate my abstract and introductory chapter, which isn't finalized, but I keep it, in a quite prominent place and refer back to it…And my aims have changed, it's not repeating it verbatim, but the concepts that are there have really helped me. And, I got to my findings chapter and started a mind mapping process, because I just had so many themes and subthemes, concepts, and it was all over the place, and it helped me to just go back and look at that and remind myself of what…The purpose was."

During the first workshop (4.2.2016), I wrote the following in response to the suggested prompts:

My research question is (50 words):

My research question is about exploring how compassionate care is provided by nurses in todays changing climate of healthcare. I'm interested in the facilitators, both individual and orgnaisational of compassionate care. To do this I've carried out a critical literature review focusing on research generated by nurses themselves talking about how they deliver compassionate care.

Researchers who have looked at this subject are: Varied. There are 14 studies in my review. Only 1 of these studies is based in palliative care which is surprising. Others have focused on nursing students, lecturers, other specialities and particular situations such as FWR. However, there are some very strong common themes such as relationships: nurse/patient and nurse/nurse and interconnectedness. Some researchers have a more practical focus and others a more conceptual approach to compassionate care.

They argue that (25 words for each). Some researchers have found that compassion is a finite phenomenon, but more researchers and thus participants discuss compassion as a source of strength and connection to their patients is fulfilling and sustaining.

Debate centres on the issue of (25 words) The research I looking at is more qualitative and phenomenological; exploring the issue rather than presenting arguments. There doesn't seem to be much debate. However, the tension between the ideals of compassionate care and the reality of practice is a very common theme.

In thematic analysis the debate is inherent in establishing commonalities and themes

There is still work to be done on (25 words) Identifying practical ways to sustain and provide compassionate care. Summarising core concepts in an easily grasped way.

My research is closest to that of x in that (50 words) . Conceptually, my work appears to be closest to those authors who discuss compassion in terms of compassionate presence rather than "acts of kindness". I would describe compassion as a dimension which pervades all nursing interactions rather than a series of tasks or deeds to be performed, e.g smiling, politeness, doing the "little things". However, these things are related to compassion inasmuch as they arise naturally from true compassion, rather than demonstrate compassion in and of themselves. Forcing compassionate behaviour may contribute to burnout.

Figure 5:1 Jessica writing to prompt

Jessica appropriated the text composed at Time 1 as a mediational tool to reflect on the development of her dissertation research. Within her semiotic prism, she was undertaking the work of transition along the meaning-object axis by being true to the original purpose of her research, and at the same time, making sense of the aims and conceptual basis of her dissertation work. Jessica's assertions suggested her engagement with an ongoing intra-psychological dialogue through her writing.

Learning how to use metadiscourse mechanisms during subsequent points of Intervention 1 became meaningful to Rose as she continued developing her authorial voice. Rose reflected at Time 2 on her understanding and application of directive comments and phrases:

> "And then these directive comments, so I've shown people about my research and how it fits in with the literature. It was the last session (referring to text written during Intervention 1, Time 1) that I've really sort of tried to introduce in the things like the directive sentences, and then, is it the asides?"

Directive phrases and comments are linguistic devices where the writer invites the imagined reader to consider an action or an issue from a particular point of view. Rose identified that directive phrases and comments were new knowledge for her, and she needed time to come to terms with their use in her writing. She made further sense of metadiscourse through proof-reading a dissertation for a disciplinary peer outside the intervention:

> "I've been reading my colleague's dissertation, a Master's, and I've really noticed where she's done that. It helped me to think, right, well, where am I going to do it? How can I change it around? Because when I read my writing in comparison, it doesn't really look like my view, my opinions. So, I have changed things around."

At her initial position (Time 1), Rose became aware of metadiscourse in the here-and-now of the intervention. At Time 2, she took a distance from the object to understand how to appropriate the authorial voice. In the work of transition, Rose's review of a colleague's dissertation relates to the person-other axis of the semiotic prism because Rose came to see how a disciplinary colleague had used metadiscourse in a meaningful way. Rose made an inner shift when her colleague's authorial voice became apparent, and she appropriated her colleague's dissertation as a mediational tool to contemplate how she could assert her voice.

Engaging with the metadiscourse activities also became meaningful for Jessica:

> "And then I found it good to discuss different approaches, like posing statements as questions to the reader and engaging the reader. I found that useful."

Jessica appeared to appropriate metadiscourse as a mediational tool to consider the potential signs in a text to engage the reader. In the conversation at Time 1 (above), Jessica and her peers had a wariness about the authorial voice. On the other hand, as introduced and discussed in Intervention 1, metadiscourse legitimises Jessica's contention that nurse academic research writing could become more enjoyable for the writer and more engaging for the reader.

Jessica enjoyed trying out her authorial voice in her evolving text, and this may have felt liberating after feeling so constrained through writing in the discipline. As contended by Castelló and Iñesta (2012) and Wittek that when learners write texts for assessment, they 'try out'(Wittek, 2016, p. 11) possible lives by using discursive resources. More broadly, Zittoun argues that transitions for the individual involve exploration, try-and-fail and acting "as-if"(Zittoun, 2006, p. 62) one is qualified to have

the experience of being treated as qualified. In the context of the current thesis, being competent means becoming an academic research writer. An illustration of acting "as-if" was when Jessica sent drafts of her evolving text to her dissertation supervisor for feedback:

> "With my supervisor, there was a slight difference in ideas of what was acceptable academic writing and what was not. I would submit some writing, and she would say, in fact, the very thing that I'd changed in the writing workshop. She would line in red and say, oh no, I'm not sure about this, and this. And she said, well, actually, I quite like it because it makes the reading of it better, and you're engaging the reader, but I wouldn't want that to damage the soundness of your academic writing. So don't pose questions to the reader and stick on the safe side of things."

Jessica took her supervisor's advice and 'stayed safe.' However, the text still had meaningfulness for Jessica. Changing the writing using metadiscourse mechanisms and revising the text in response to supervisor feedback became a mediational tool. Jessica had attempted to assert her authorial voice. Jessica's actions gave an insight into how writing acted on the mind of the reader. Jessica's uncertainties concerned self-expression in her academic research writing. There was a risk that Jessica's work of transition could have become constrained. However, the evolving text as an object had meaningfulness for Jessica. Her supervisor's feedback became a tool for Jessica's intra-psychological work to continue to develop her writing. She began to think differently about writing and sustain writing as a mediational tool to deal with long-standing uncertainties regarding self-expression:

> "Because it's this whole, organic process. It's not a linear thing. It's not like, you know, I learnt this, then I learnt this, then I learnt this. You're constantly changing and evolving, and then that feeds into that changing and evolving, and then you go back and change writing and then that makes you think about something else in a different way."

Jessica raised her consciousness of writing development as non-linear and part of a holistic process.

Rose and Jessica's initial uncertainties had centred around the place of the authorial voice, and the resources that aimed to facilitate the development of their authorial voices focused their intentions. From an initial wariness, the work of transition had led to an adapted sense of the place of the authorial voice in academic research writing for a Master's dissertation. The changes that they made addressed their key uncertainties. The processes and the dynamics leading to their reconfigurations arose from the resources they appropriated as mediational tools to manage their intentions, and consequently, they saw the place of the authorial voice differently. They could identify which resources had significance for them, how they appropriated the resources, and how they attempted to communicate the meaning and meaningfulness of the resources to others. For Rose, the other came into her consciousness through her colleague's evolving text, and for Jessica, the other was her dissertation supervisor.

5.2.5 The finite resources of Intervention 1

The participants as Master's dissertation writers had a fixed timeline to develop their academic research writing. Developmental transitions are contingent upon the principle of time and space, which become embedded in sociocultural contexts (Zittoun, 2012), and this may include working to deadlines. Some participants asserted that whilst Intervention 1 had offered them novel resources for their writing development, there were limitations in fully maximising the offering. Miranda appeared very eager to draw attention to the timeliness of Intervention 1:

> "I don't know if I'm jumping to another question. It should have, for me, been done at the beginning when we first started the dissertation. I think it was done a bit too late."

Similarly, Leah felt that Intervention 1 was untimely:

> *"*It would have been nice if there'd been something sooner for me. So that's the advantage for students coming along now, that these types of things are available for them. You know, the pain has been shed, other people's dissertation suffering, you know they're going to get the benefit of other people's experience."

An issue was the implementation of Intervention 1 when Miranda and Leah were midway through the dissertation year. They were both conscious of meeting the dissertation hand-in deadline. Their status as part-time distance learners deepened their temporal awareness, meaning that the process of dissertation writing was constrained. Time constraints may explain why Miranda appropriated "sign-posting" as a mediational tool to self-regulate her writing processes rather than using resources in an exploratory way, such as Rose and Jessica. Miranda asserted that Intervention 1 had felt 'like verification' of her knowledge and understanding of academic research writing. Leah was possibly constrained to take the sufficient distance from the object as represented through the "text-recognition" activities to reach what Zittoun (2008) identifies as person-sense of the object, which has implications for knowledge development. At an earlier stage of the process, and before Intervention 1, Miranda had sought out cognitive and social resources for writing development within her sociocultural context, which I will subsequently explore in later sections of this chapter.

Zara worked along the same time trajectory as Miranda and Leah but as a full-time student. She did express uncertainties about managing time to complete the dissertation. In contrast with Miranda and Leah, she appeared less constrained in her

capacity to mobilise cognitive and social resources from Intervention 1. Rose and Jessica had the opportunity to engage with Intervention 1 at an earlier stage of their dissertation trajectory than Miranda, Zara, or Leah. It would appear that they had scope in the spatial-temporal process of dissertation writing to work towards reframing themselves as writers.

As shown through the findings regarding the research question, academic research writing development involved relational work to some extent for each participant. I will pick these issues up in the following sections of the chapter to examine how relational agency also played an essential part in their transitions as academic research writers.

5.3 Emerging relational agency through knowing how to know who

To address the specific research question:

How do the participants experience relational work and deal with contradictions to shape their academic research writing development?

I identify what mattered about the development of academic research writing to the individual participants in Intervention 1. I consider issues that arose outside or as an outcome of Intervention 1, such as demands from sociocultural contexts that created contradictions and critical conflicts for the development of academic research writing. I then examine how the participants overcame issues through their distributed relational work and the extent to which they became active agents in their writing development. Finally, I examine the specific development of the individual's academic research

writing comprising their self-evaluation and my analysis through academic research writing concepts such as intertextuality.

I took a dialectical approach to collect and analyse the data (Edwards, 2005, 2011, 2017; Hedegaard, 2012; Sannino, 2015; Sannino & Engeström, 2017) to focus on the participants' motives, contradictions, interpretations and actions. In the following sections, I focus on what mattered to the individual participants, what tensions existed, and when the expertise of others was recognised, and which aspects of distributed double stimulation mobilised the relational agency at the individual level as they propelled themselves forward as dissertation writers.

Each participant who engaged with Intervention 1 studied on a Master's programme of health care and was concerned with developing their academic research writing to complete a Master's dissertation. The participants appeared to choose respective dissertation topics concerning problems or issues in the clinical context that were important to investigate and could potentially make a difference to local health care.

The issue for Master's dissertation writers is that they move between clinical and academic activity settings to accomplish their work. Their object of activity is the composition of a Master's dissertation text whilst dealing with the motives from their differential activity settings and learning new skills. Motives from differential activity settings can enable or contradict the development of academic research writing that is necessary for a Master's dissertation. As was shown earlier in the chapter, the participants have finite personal resources for the work, especially time and personal expertise, to undertake a research project.

The findings emerged from the data that I collected at different time points and drew attention to the links between the actions and activities of the writers and their respective activity settings. The Master's dissertation in health creates a variety of novel demands for the writer. One key issue for the participants in the current thesis study is choosing topics relevant to health care in their local contexts. Trying to conduct a small-scale project that is original and meaningful calls for initial tasks in scoping and appraising the literature and undertaking the ethical approval process to collect data. The implications are that the dissertation writer is confronted with demands for work on the object of activity whilst developing new skills and competencies within time-limited circumstances, which may create contradictions. Knowing how to build relations with others to work collaboratively on the involved tasks can be a critical transition. Three themes show how relational agency emerged for the writers in this respect. Firstly, *recognising know-who in the clinical context*, secondly, *developing relational agency from the resources of Intervention 1,* and thirdly *creating know-who through the dissertation research project.*

5.3.1 Recognising know-who in the clinical context

The dissertation topics that the participants chose emerged from clinical problems that mattered locally and could generate evidence for practice, meaning that the outcomes of the individual dissertation project may influence local policy and practices. There may be values about exploring a dissertation topic that feels meaningful to the writer, service users, and colleagues at the individual level. To explain how some participants built collaborative relationships for academic research writing development in clinical contexts where their dissertation research projects mattered, I will present Miranda and

Fiona's experiences. I consider how their relational agency emerged and the implications for their academic research writing development.

Miranda identified that choosing a dissertation topic that mattered locally had kept her motivation going:

> "It's very important for students to choose a topic that interests them, and that's what kept me going. Because I was interested, it was just introduced in my country, so there weren't many studies. It motivates you to go on because it's something new, and it can be useful."

Fiona also shared Miranda's values about undertaking a dissertation research project that felt significant and could contribute to health care:

> "It's a lovely project, but if we can't link it, it to something useful, for the wider professionals, that then it's less useful in the long-term."

In trying to align their dissertation projects with health care values, they respectively developed the capacity to negotiate with others in their immediate contexts to support the development of their projects. They recognised colleagues who had relevant expertise to help them to work on the object of activity:

> *Miranda*. "A colleague is a midwife and an assistant lecturer in University of X and guided me through the different steps of doing a literature review so that it is more like a systematic review."

Fiona drew upon the expertise of two interprofessional colleagues:

> "The physio colleague looked at my work when I was formulating a question, they gave me a lot of the input, and then the occupational therapy colleague helped a lot with my analysis. We discussed what points were coming out of my data and how to articulate which themes. They didn't look at my data, but they looked at my summary sheets, and from my subheadings, they asked probing questions about 'did this come up at all, or has this not?' That was helpful to make me analyse. There was a whole subtheme that I hadn't thought of, that they'd mentioned that was missing

> from my data, and I hadn't realised that it was missing. One of them towards the end was incredibly helpful to support me to rethink my writing."

Miranda and Fiona appeared open to the interpretations of others on their work in progress. The expertise of colleagues offered Miranda and Fiona resources as potential second stimuli to take control of the object of activity and undertake agentive actions. Miranda's reflection concerns writing the literature review component of the dissertation, which demands the development of critical literacy skills. Fiona's reflection concerns her actions and responses to colleagues' interpretations of her writing over time, including formulating a research question, data analysis, and rewriting and revising.

Miranda and Fiona appeared to be developing the capacity for know-who in response to the competing demands of their dissertation writing. On the other hand, it is unclear how their respective colleagues aligned their motives or interests with Miranda or Fiona's dissertation work. However, Miranda and Fiona were potentially developing their respective capacities for future collaborations. As outlined earlier (Chapter Three), a focus on clinical academic careers has implications for the Master's level professional in health care. The expectations are that practitioners will engage in activities that involve working across the organisational boundaries between clinical and academic institutions, which were skills being practised by Miranda and Fiona as they developed their academic research writing by collaborating with others.

When I interviewed Miranda and Fiona, they identified issues aside from choosing a dissertation topic that prompted developing know-who in the clinical context. The issues may be conceptualised as a first stimulus that presented contradictions. For Miranda, the issues were feeling lost when initially confronted

with the dissertation task, especially writing the literature review and general uncertainty about how much help to ask from a disciplinary supervisor:

> "The literature review was different from what I did in my degree course. When I got access to the dissertations from the University, I found that very difficult. I felt lost; how was I supposed to do this? Yes, I felt lost. I couldn't ask my supervisor as much as I wanted because I didn't want to waste the time allocated."

As explained earlier, Miranda had felt that Intervention 1 was implemented too late in her writing processes for her to take full advantage of the resources that became available, including the insight that the intervention had given to the place of supervisory relationships. Fiona, who engaged with Intervention 1 when she had already undertaken considerable work on her dissertation, shared a similar perspective:

> "It was quite late in the day before I realised that they were going on and what they were. I think things would have gone a bit more smoothly had I listened to them or participated in them maybe a few months earlier, so I'd know what I was doing."

Intervention 1 had created a critical conflict between raising awareness of resources that had the potential to mediate Miranda and Fiona's actions on the tasks they were working on, in dialectical interplay with finite resources, especially time. Despite Miranda and Fiona's misgivings about the timing of Intervention 1, they both engaged with Intervention 1 to develop their academic research writing. As explained earlier, Miranda asserted that she had used the mediational means from the intervention to self-regulate her writing processes by revising and editing her text. Fiona gained insight into the institutional expectations of dissertation writing. However, Miranda also described a moment of realisation during Intervention 1 that mediated her thoughts to consider the critical role of a literature review in a Master's dissertation and the implications for the writing process:

> "I do not think you should write the actual chapters in order, and that occurred to me during the writing workshops (Intervention 1). I would now start with the literature review because if there are any gaps in the literature, you can point them out. My first draft was very different to what I finished off with. I was happy at the end because I rearranged everything again. Now it's more like a systematic review."

A systematic review in health care synthesises the best evidence on a clinical topic for consumers, such as policymakers and professionals, to guide evidence-based decision-making in clinical practice. In contrast, the literature review in a dissertation text identifies gaps in current knowledge for the research writer to use as a basis for further investigation. However, as Miranda alluded, the composition of a literature review for a dissertation can be undertaken and presented systematically.

It appears that Miranda responded to contradictions through distributed expertise between her clinical context and Intervention 1. Consequently, she volitionally worked on her understanding of the writing processes for the dissertation literature review as an object of activity. There are processes particular to health care that guide the systematic literature review process. However, conceptually the writer is developing their understanding and application of intertextuality. As outlined earlier in the thesis, intertextuality is one of the most challenging tasks for postgraduate writers and perhaps unsurprisingly, reaching a conceptual and practical understanding prompted relational work for Miranda.

I undertook an intertextual analysis to examine Miranda's intertextual development. Miranda provided two draft samples of her writing-in-progress (April 2015, 2nd draft) and the final version (September 2015 5th draft) (see Fig. 5.2 and Fig. 5.3). An intertextual analysis of the first sample (Fig. 5.2) evokes a perspective in the reader that the operating room (OR) was a potentially dangerous place with implications for patient

safety. The cited (all underlined) literature supports Miranda's view. The text contained little evidence of an evaluation of the argument that underpinned the perspective or alternative points of view.

Comparatively, the second text (Fig. 5.3) evoked a sense of complexity through an evaluation and synthesis of the background literature. The final paragraph shown in Fig 5.2, which was descriptive, became the introductory paragraph in the revised text shown in Fig 5.3. In the revised text, Miranda presented an argument (shown in italics) for her research topic within an international context where the issues for patient safety were related to policy directive compliance.

Miranda appeared to become enabled to externalise her disciplined thoughts by developing her literature review chapter and pointing out gaps in current disciplinary knowledge about her topic to an imagined audience, thereby justifying the importance of her study (Fig.5.3).

1.1 Background to the study- Draft 2 April 2015

From a surgical data review of 56 out of 192 WHO member states, it resulted that approximately 234 million surgeries are performed worldwide per year (Weiser et al 2008). Despite the benefits associated with surgical procedures, calculations have shown that over seven million people around the world will suffer complications or injuries after undergoing surgery and consequently an additional one million will die (World Health Organization 2014). Several studies have claimed that the operating room (OR) is one of the most intricate and costly workplaces in a hospital (Matern and Koneczny 2007, Christian et al 2006), hence, the need to pay particular attention to and minimise the number of adverse events occurring. In fact, a systematic review of the literature has shown that adverse events most commonly occur within the OR (41%) and 58.4% of these adverse events are associated with surgical providers (de Vries et al 2008). From their study consisting of 421 procedurally related communication events in the OR over a 3-month period, Lingard et al (2004) have noted that communication failures occurred in approximately 30% of team exchanges. In spite of the evidence that attributes adverse events to surgical specialities, it has been found that a large proportion of these adverse events are preventable (Zegers et al 2011, Baker et al 2004).

Even though surgical interventions have improved throughout the years, the complexity of newer and more successful surgical treatment options have also increased the possibility for errors. Apart from the physical and emotional consequences related to morbidity and mortality, such unintentional complications following surgery can cause an additional financial burden on the healthcare system (Pham et al 2012, Reason 2005) as well as the surgical patient (Regenbogen 2014). Thus, tools have been devised to help minimise the preventable risks associated with surgery (Zegers et al 2011). Such an example is the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist (Weiser et al 2010, Haynes et al 2009).

Figure 5:2 Miranda 2nd draft of literature review April 2015

1.2 Background – Draft 5 final September 2015

Data from a surgical data review of 56 out of 192 WHO member states, showed that approximately 234 million surgeries are performed worldwide per year (Weiser et al. 2008). *Despite the benefits associated with surgical procedures, calculations suggest that over seven million people around the world suffer complications after undergoing surgery, of which one million will die* (World Health Organization 2014). *The physical and emotional consequences related to morbidity and mortality, as well as the additional financial burden for both the healthcare system and surgical patient* (Regenbogen 2014, Pham et al. 2012, Reason 2005) [
*make the operating room (OR) one of the most intricate and costly workplaces within a hospit*al (Matern and Koneczny 2007, Christian et al. 2006). [

Even though surgical interventions have improved throughout the years, it has been evidenced by de Vries et al. (2008) that adverse events most commonly occur within the OR. The complexity of newer and more successful surgical treatment options may actually increase the possibility for errors. *Yet, in their systematic review, de Vries et al. found that 58.4% of adverse events within the OR were associated with surgical providers.* Lingard et al. (2004) supported this finding as they had found in their study consisting of 421 procedurally related communication events in the OR that communication failures occurred in approximately 30% of team exchanges.[

*In spite of the evidence that attributes adverse events to surgical specialties, it has been found that a large proportion of these events could be prevente*d (Wacker and Staender 2014, Baker et al. 2004). I fact, tools have been devised to help minimise the preventable risks associated with surgery (Zegers et al. 2011), such as the WHO SSC (Weiser et al. 2010, Haynes et al. 2009). However, regardless of its implementation, adverse events are still frequently found in the OR (Wacker and Staender 2014).[*Globally, compliance with the WHO SSC varies considerably and this inconsistency may be a possible reason why adverse events still occur to a large extent (Biffl et al. 2015, Pickering et al. 2013, Levy et al. 2012). Therefore, the factors that influence the use of the WHO SSC remain a major concern when considering patient safety within the OR.*[

Figure 5:3 Miranda final literature review draft September 2016

Fiona gave a less detailed account than Miranda in eliciting how Intervention 1 had mobilised her actions alongside developing know-who in the clinical context. However, she was able to identify that she had underplayed the necessity for explanation in a methodology chapter before she participated in Intervention 1:

> "I found the methods and the methodology quite tricky, on how much detail to go into and how to phrase it which made me relook and realise that methodology section for my work was incredibly short, compared to the

> other projects that we looked at. In fairness, mine stayed relatively short, but I doubled it to explain my rationale."

Fiona's assertion about the development of her academic writing suggests that through developing the capacity for working with distributed expertise between the clinical context and Intervention 1, she became enabled to see different aspects of the object of activity that she acted on.

5.3.2 Developing relational agency from the resources of Intervention 1

What mattered to individual participants about developing their academic research writing for dissertation writing came to the fore through their participation in Intervention 1, and for some, this included how to accomplish know-who. In developing their academic research writing, some participants extended their capacity for know-who. In contrast, others focused on sustaining current relationships but made them purposeful. To explain how participants grew or maintained their capacity for know-who through their continued engagement with Intervention 1, I will present Zara and Jessica's experiences. I examine their actions and how this helped them agentically shape the development of their academic research writing development.

As explained earlier, Zara asserted that Intervention 1 had given her the mediational means to understand how collective work enabled the academic research writing of individuals to become transformed. Consequently, Zara had engaged with her dissertation supervisor earlier in her writing processes than she had anticipated. Intervention 1 had helped Zara to recognise the expertise of her supervisor and when and where it was appropriate to ask for help:

> "I gave my supervisor each chapter twice. So once and the full document. And the ones that I was struggling with, she was able to devote extra time, the methods, and the methodology chapter."

Zara also set up a writing group with peers to continue to use the mediational means from Intervention 1. She described how working with peers made it possible to address initial struggles about self-expression in an appropriate academic register.

Zara's agency continued to emerge as she discovered novel aspects of the object of activity. Unlike other participants, Zara studied full-time and did not hold a clinical role running alongside her studies. However, she was aspiring towards a public health career and was committed to pursuing a dissertation topic that was meaningful to others in health care. Zara was also motivated by her cultural background; she had originated from a sub-Saharan African country where public skills are in demand to improve population health. She objectified what mattered to her on the dissertation writing task to align the development of her writing with the standard of writing that she had become familiar with in academic journals. However, this involved a conceptual shift prompted by an activity that she engaged with during Intervention 1:

> "We were asked to bring a journal that we may be thinking about publishing in, and the criteria, and how that might be suitable for our work. But looking at a journal and thinking beyond the dissertation does help you focus on clinical relevance, which I think is obviously important for your dissertation and your mark, but clinical relevance is even more important for publishing in a journal."

Zara appeared to distinguish between writing for publication and assessment purposes and what needs foregrounding in either genre. Zara contended the importance of clinical relevance in both. While Zara's differentiation did not present her with an immediate conflict of motives, it helped her consider how the object of activity, her dissertation writing, could be shaped towards the genre of research articles. Zara's

immediate actions and the response was to continue to work relationally with others who shared her values about the clinical relevance of research:

> "I was working with two to three other people doing public and environmental health. We were all writing a dissertation. It was helpful to see their point of view on something, to read it, just to get another understanding even if we don't agree."

Zara's actions suggest that she dealt with dissertation writing challenges by building on sustained and distributed double stimulation. She was developing her capacity for know-who and was open to others as a source of learning and repositioning whilst developing her volition to determine how to create the direction of her writing. Zara came to self-evaluate her development by comparing the structures of writing in academic journals with the evolving structures of her writing:

> "My paragraphs had been much longer. I realised most academic writing is not supposed to. If you are reading academic papers, the point is always in the beginning sentence and that way you can then decide if that paragraph is useful to you."

Here, Zara refers to a first draft, shown in Fig. 5.4. An intertextual analysis is as follows. The purpose of the paragraph was not entirely clear, and the use of indirect, non-integrated citations made it challenging to discern Zara's authorial voice. Zara compared the first draft paragraph with a second revised draft, also shown in Fig.5.3 (her dissertation topic concerned how social media portrays and influences health behaviours associated with breastfeeding):

> "So recent studies have explored the content of health areas on Twitter, which was the point of the paragraph, and then I gave an example. And then I had a closing sentence in the first paragraph to link it to the next one, which was about health promotion."

Draft April 2015
The combination of accessibility and diversity of health areas discussed on Twitter has led researchers to study the public's views on a range of health areas (Henzell et al 2014; Sullivan et al 2012; Heaivillin et al 2011; Scanfeld et al 2010).Recent studies have explored the content of health areas on Twitter. One study conducted an analysis of concussion-related tweets. The study found that the majority of users shared news stories, followed by those who shared personal stories relating to concussions and interestingly, 13% of the posts were providing advice about concussions (Sullivan et al; 2011). Another study on dental pain also found that users predominantly shared their stories or were seeking advice (Heavilin et al; 2011). Henzell et al (2013) carried out a similar study on orthodontic related posts on Twitter, identifying four themes within the twitter posts.

Final *September 2015*
Recent studies have explored the content of health areas on Twitter. One study conducted an analysis of concussion-related tweets (Sullivan et al., 2012). Other health topics explored on twitter include antibiotics use (Scanfeld et al., 2010), the H1N1 flu epidemic (Chew and Eysenbach, 2010) parents perception of their child's oral health (Mullen et al., 2015) cancer screening (Lyles et al., 2013), and epilepsy (McNeil et al., 2012). *These studies had one reoccurring theme, which was that Twitter provided insight into the health topics people discussed about and many highlighted Twitters capacity for health promotion* (Mullen et al., 2015, Heaivilin et al., 2011, Sullivan et al., 2012).

Figure 5:4 Zara draft and final paragraph on social media and breast feeding

Comparatively, the revised version (September 2015, Fig. 5.4) evoked two clear ideas in the reader: firstly, the extent of public use of social media for health-related information; secondly, how social media relates to health promotion (shown in italics Fig. 5.4). Citations were included but were summarised rather than listed and linked with the paragraph topic sentence by an evaluative comment. The evaluative comment included citations (shown in italics in Fig. 5.4). There remained further scope for Zara to assert an authorial voice. On the other hand, Zara appeared to have self-regulated her writing processes by revising and editing her text to approach academic research writing in the genre of disciplinary journals.

When I interviewed Zara, she had submitted her dissertation and was awaiting the final marks but was focused on ongoing activities to continue to develop her academic research writing:

> "I'm designing an infographic poster, which I said I was going to do to disseminate my research when I applied for ethics. I'll try and get it displayed at the university. I'm working that way to refresh my dissertation to start the writing process for publication."

Zara's proposals for the future suggested that the object of activity, her dissertation, acted as a second stimulus for her to go beyond the immediate task. Zara's actions appeared to embody a potential that exceeded her original intentions for participation in Intervention 1 through her commitment to relational work.

I now turn to Jessica. Earlier I explained Jessica's uncertainties concerning self-expression in academic research writing. Jessica asserted that Intervention 1 had provided her with the mediational means to exert her authorial voice and develop her conceptual understanding of academic research writing. Jessica's relational work to develop her writing appeared confined to the activities with peers during Intervention 1 and interactions with her dissertation supervisor, who seemed to view the object of activity differently to Jessica. A conflict of motives was triggered when Jessica shared a draft of her dissertation writing with her supervisor and where she had used the resources from Intervention 1 to develop her authorial voice:

> "With my supervisor, there was a slight difference in ideas of what was acceptable academic and what was not."

Jessica's supervisor discouraged the approach, but Jessica nevertheless saw the possibility to regard supervisor feedback as another mediational tool for writing development.

The key responsibility of a dissertation supervisor is to facilitate the supervisee to meet the learning objectives of the Master's dissertation. The object of activity for a Master's dissertation supervisor is to get the student successfully through the dissertation module at the appropriate academic level. Whilst Master's dissertation supervision represents a departure for the learner in that the supervisee negotiates the support they need, there is nevertheless a power differential between supervisor and supervisee given that the supervisor assesses the student's work. It is possible to see why aligning motives or what matters might lead to contradictions for the supervisee.

Jessica had longstanding frustration with writing in the discipline owing to her perception of 'unwritten rules' which were then in interplay with novel resources from Intervention 1, which appeared to convey writing differently from Jessica's prior understanding:

> "I really struggle with academic writing because I find it difficult to be fluid and just express, what's found out there, because it appears to me, maybe I overthink it, but very strict guidelines and restrictions on how you must present it."

Jessica appeared to experience a conflict of stimuli between the resources from Intervention 1 and her supervisor's advice about what constitutes appropriate academic research writing. The issue was how Jessica could continue to feel less frustrated and feel enabled to work on what mattered to her: freedom to express herself as a nurse academic research writer in interplay with dealing with her supervisor's view of the object of activity. Nevertheless, Jessica respected her supervisor's expertise.

Jessica continued to engage with Intervention 1 and asserted that the resources supported her to continue to exert control on her writing processes yet sustain an

ongoing relationship with her supervisor to integrate their feedback purposefully. She also came to see academic research writing differently:

> "But the discussion itself with my supervisor has improved my writing and caused me to be aware of how I am framing things. Because it's this whole, organic process, it's not a linear thing, it's not like, you know, I learnt this then I learnt this, then I learnt this. You're constantly changing and evolving, and then that feeds into that changing and evolving, and then you go back and change writing and then that makes you think about something else in a different way."

It appears Jessica constantly revised her interpretations of the changing object. She tracked her writing development through her drafts and kept records of her changes using the mediating means from Intervention 1. When I interviewed Jessica, she brought drafts of rewriting that she had undertaken during the intervention workshops. For example, Fig. 5.5 shows how she had revised a paragraph for clarity and concision by combining two sentences that said the same thing in the first paragraph into a single briefer statement in the revised paragraph.

Jessica's reflections on the revisions concerned what mattered about internalising written thoughts about her field of study, compassionate care. Jessica overcame the conflicts that she had experienced to accomplish what mattered by focusing her behaviour on constant analysis and re-analysis of her writing processes:

> "It is important to understand that wasn't perceived as being good academic writing. But again, it caused me to revisit it and reanalyse it, and that's all good."

And a paragraph I reworked in the latest workshop (19.5.2016):

"In a recent concept analysis, Boeck defines authentic presence as the ability to be in the moment with the patient. (Boeck 2014). An additional dimension was explored in a meta-synthesis of the concept of presence which concluded that presence is an interpersonal process (Finfgeld-Connett, 2006). This finding of presence as having at least 2 dimensions (being and the interpersonal process) was echoed in a 2009 concept analysis which described presence as being with and attending to the other. The analysis went on to summarise contemporary literature as also including the connection between patient and nurse as part of the holistic concept of presence Thus at least 2 of the sub-themes of presence developed from the core studies; attention and connection apparently echo the wider literature on nursing presence."

Changed to:

Presence has been described in one recent concept analysis as the ability to be in the moment with the patient (Boeck 2014) as well as an interpersonal process (Finfgeld-Connett, 2006). Both these dimensions were also described in another literature review which also found that the connection between patient and nurse was a commonly described aspect of presence (Hessel 2009). Thus at least 2 of the sub-themes of presence developed from the core studies; attention and connection apparently echo the wider literature on nursing presence.

Figure 5:5 Jessica paragraph revision during Intervention 1

By exerting control and analysing her writing processes, she reflected that she had reached new understandings, which were further reinforced by seeing how some disciplinary authors positioned themselves and employed intertextuality in their writing. Jessica had entered Intervention 1 with an underlying frustration that was mitigated:

> "My definition of quality has changed. It now seems a bit limited to me to just be listing other people's opinions. I can now see more nuances and subtleties concerned with academic writing. I find that to be more professional and advanced than when it's just broadly stating facts, however, however good they may be. If I look at my writing before the

> workshop started (Intervention 1) and now, I do have more skills, and I can express myself a bit better, so I don't feel as frustrated."

However, unlike some other participants, Jessica deliberately chose not to extend relational work on academic research writing with peers in the university or the clinical context:

> "I am saturated with it; I'm not going to inflict it on anybody else! I can't imagine someone else would find it interesting to look through the critical literature reviews of 14 different studies. Currently, I just want to get through this."

It would appear as though the second stimuli made available through Intervention 1 may have provided Jessica with the means to stay focused on sustaining the activity that she was most concerned with within the temporal and spatial context of undertaking a Master's dissertation.

5.3.3 Developing know-who through the dissertation research project

Developing the capacity for know-who in academic research writing presents a tension for the Master's level professional because, as argued from the outset of the current thesis, the opportunities for collaboration are not easily accessible. For the Master's dissertation writer, the possibilities may be mobilised within clinical practice contexts, as explained through Miranda and Fiona's experiences. Alternatively, the opportunity may arise through what a dissertation supervisor may have the capacity to offer. To explore one participant's novel encounters, I will examine Rose's experiences. I will draw attention to how Rose worked collaboratively on other genres of academic research writing alongside her dissertation and how she worked with distributed expertise to develop as an academic research writer.

Rose had a novel experience compared with other participants in Intervention 1. Rose's supervisor invited her to collaborate in a funded research study on managing long-term health conditions through emergent technology. Rose had an opportunity to lead a discrete area of the research project for her Master's dissertation research. For Rose, the health care aspect related to her specialist area of nursing practice:

> "The topic was important, for my professional development, but also to get the message out then to other people, that was what motivated me to do it. It is not always easy for people with Type 1 diabetes to cope with self-management. They come across barriers that healthcare professionals don't know. Things like time, lack of support."

It appears that Rose was motivated by a sense of her nursing expertise. She pondered about what could be achieved through her dissertation research for service users by drawing on the expertise of others. As was explained earlier, Rose appropriated the mediational resources from Intervention 1 to understand how she could develop her authorial voice. A component of her transition work in this respect was to identify her contribution to the research. However, Rose was a novice regarding health technology and developing knowledge in this domain was a new demand.

A further demand came through collaboration on the project because it meant that Rose needed to work relationally with her supervisor and other members of the interprofessional research team, such as computer scientists. The tensions arose through collaborative activities such as writing conference abstracts and co-authored research articles, which were dissemination activities required by the research funder. Rose was encouraged by her supervisor and the wider project team to lead a conference abstract alongside her dissertation writing. Rose was presented with a contradiction because, on the one hand:

> "Because you were doing it in a group, and because you were doing it to help somebody else as well, it wasn't just you. I found that it's motivating."

And on the other hand:

> "I wasn't sure whether I should have been looking at how the users self-managed, or whether it should have just been around the technology. I found it hard just to write an abstract in the first place, so it took me a few goes. It leaves you feeling wide open!"

Rose's change in her practice as an academic research writer concerned externalising her expertise to others and the co-development of written knowledge. However, Rose's key object of activity was the continued development of her dissertation writing. Although she found multi-tasking challenging, the interactions with her interprofessional colleagues for writing a conference abstract became a second stimulus for her dissertation writing:

> "Because X doesn't work in healthcare, I found their feedback useful. They just look at things from a different angle—the visualisations and the IT side of it that I hadn't quite worded properly or understood. I think the feedback was good. They understood what I was trying to do. There were bits of it they questioned. So, when I went through my dissertation again, I felt I needed to include more about how the users self-monitor and what they want, and how the visualisations and the IT side of it fit. It's made more sense of it."

By working with a computer scientist, Rose had access to new mediational means from a discipline related to but outside healthcare. Through writing and presenting an abstract, Rose gained insight into what mattered to others from a disciplinary technology perspective and service users. Rose worked to align these viewpoints with what mattered to her. Rose interpreted the feedback and revised her dissertation writing as part of the process. Rose also expanded and re-interpreted the object of activity, her dissertation, by developing new conceptual tools for her writing. Rose's reflections

suggest her growing capacity to understand how mobilising distributed expertise may enhance academic research writing.

Here I have principally examined Rose's progression as an academic research writer and how creating know-who through the dissertation project contributed to her development. Her experiences of being encouraged to work relationally and her agentic actions had potential benefits for others, too, because an expanded understanding of the problem framed the overall research project where Rose had contributed. Figure 5.6. shows an extract of Rose's final dissertation conclusion where she articulated the relational work involved in her project, the potential beneficiaries, her contribution, and how the work had influenced further research.

6 Conclusion

This study has shown that mobile technology can support adults in their self-management of T1DM through facilitating their decision making, saving time and enabling them to share their data with their HCP easily.

Four main characteristics for visualizations and suggested concepts for new mobile technologies to facilitate self-management have been identified.

In conclusion, this study has explored the opinions and views of adults with T1DM in how mobile technology can facilitate self-management of their condition and has demonstrated how this information can inform the design of a mobile application. Whilst the principal findings of this study corroborate current knowledge, this work provides a significant difference in that it explores the thoughts and beliefs of people with T1DM in how mobile technology can aid their self-management. These aspects have been incorporated in developing new technology to facilitate self-management of T1DM (Brown et al., 2017).

Figure 5:6 Rose dissertation conclusion

5.4 The processes of dissertation writers' transitions

In the following sections, I summarise and synthesise the findings from the two previous research questions and come to overall conclusions about the processes of the participants' transitions. To do this, I will reflect on the findings by holding them against the concepts of developmental transitions and relational agency. I use Zittoun's (2006) concept of developmental transitions to frame the synthesis, which includes identity repositioning, knowledge change, skill acquisition, and meaning-making. However, the concepts of relational agency (Edwards, 2011, 2017; Sannino & Engeström, 2017) provide extra insights when integrated into the synthesis and compared against the findings.

5.4.1 Identity repositioning for dissertation writers

Zittoun's focus on the micro-level development of the individual explicitly focuses on transitions, however, Edwards' focuses on repositioning of individuals in their relations with others. The findings from the current thesis study reported in this chapter and analysed using Edwards' relational concepts showed that repositioning of individuals came across strongly through their emerging relational agency for writing development.

The problem that frames the current thesis concerns academic research writing for the health care disciplines. The issue for the individual health care writer is how they access opportunities for developing their writing and how they come to use and appropriate the resources that may become available. The implications are that they recognise the expertise of others whilst recognising their own and can be agentic in negotiating their transitions as academic research writers. However, before individuals can reposition themselves towards relational work, they need to understand their current position.

Zittoun's concepts (2006) emphasises repositioning through mediational means and their use to identify where the individual might belong. The commonality between Zittoun and Edwards is their focus on how individuals use tools in their actions on the world and refashion them in the dialectic between person and practice (Vygotsky, 1987, 1994). During the intervention activities, the participants appeared to appropriate tools to define and compare their knowledge and understanding of academic research writing with others. For some, the self-evaluation and self-positioning enabled them to see the value of relational work for their continuity as 'good' Master's students.

The processes of repositioning appeared emergent for most individuals but to varying degrees. Through Zara's work of repositioning and definition, she had become a peer writing convenor. Taking on a new role took her to a position of mediating the development of others. Zara had created a group that she belonged to and acknowledged her as a writer. Rose and Jessica repositioned their authorial voices through the appropriation of mediational tools from Intervention 1.

Further repositioning for Rose came through her dissertation research alongside interprofessional colleagues. Through the mediating means of jointly writing a conference abstract, her expertise became acknowledged. Miranda and Fiona repositioned themselves alongside clinical colleagues as emerging research writers. Evidence of repositioning was less clear for Leah, but she had redefined her productivity as a writer.

5.4.2 knowledge change and skill acquisition for dissertation writers

The participants who engaged with Intervention 1 were novice academic research write. However, knowledge change and skill acquisition in academic research writing appeared to emerge as they dealt with contradictions through the appropriation of mediational tools from Intervention 1 and distributed expertise through relational work.

The interpretation of the dissertation writing task created three key contradictions for the participants: firstly, new conceptual demands for dissertation writing, secondly, how to work relationally with disciplinary supervisors, and thirdly, how to recognise and develop know-who as an academic research writer. The contradictions were in the context of the temporal demands for accomplishing the dissertation text, and Intervention 1 appeared to bring the critical contradictions to the fore. The question is to what extent Intervention 1 acted as a formative intervention (Sannino, 2015; Sannino & Engeström, 2017; Sannino & Laitinen, 2015) and how it became a second stimulus for the participant's relational agency as they continued to shape their academic research writing.

Intervention 1 created critical conflicts and critical choices for academic research writing development which varied between individuals. As argued by Sannino et al., the key defining point about a formative intervention is that the experimenter or researcher cannot predict the outcome, but the individuals who engage with the intervention create auxiliary motives. Miranda and Fiona asserted that Intervention 1 offered tools that came too late in their dissertation writing trajectory, creating a critical conflict between the imagined and the possible. Jessica stated that Intervention 1 provided tools to help her overcome frustrations with writing in the discipline, creating

a critical conflict between developing her dissertation writing and her supervisor's expectations. On the other hand, Intervention 1 created new possibilities for Zara and Rose to extend their academic research writing practices beyond the dissertation. Sannino and Laitinen (2015) have repeated Vygotsky's (1981, 1997b) waiting experiments and found that how individual participants deal with a conflict of stimuli in formative interventions is through the perceived external support which defines their ongoing behaviour. As the findings showed, Miranda and Fiona dealt with the conflicts through the distributed research expertise of their clinical colleagues. Zara created auxiliary motives as her knowledge of the possible emerged, and she changed her immediate environment by collaborating peers and her supervisor on different aspects of the dissertation writing task. The same could be said for Rose, although of course she created auxiliary motives through the choices offered by her supervisor.

For Jessica, Intervention 1 became the external source of support to overcome conflicts and tensions that she experienced through her relationships with her supervisor. She changed her immediate environment of frustration with academic research writing by developing an auxiliary motive to focus on the micro-level of her writing processes. The micro-level focus became a second stimulus associated with the activity of dissertation writing. Jessica exerted closure and further exposure to frustration by deliberately limiting any additional relational work beyond her supervisor.

The specific knowledge about academic research writing that the participants developed was procedural (Zittoun, 2006) and conceptual (Bazerman, 2012). Procedural knowledge was associated with the appropriation of mediational tools from Intervention 1. For example, Miranda managed time constraints and prevented distractions through

structuring her writing with the mediational tools developed from the text recognition activities. "Signposting" was a self-regulated strategy to manage her writing processes. Similarly, Leah and Zara appropriated freewriting to enhance their writing productivity. As suggested by Zittoun (2006), procedural regulation is intentional and focused on a goal. The development of conceptual knowledge became evident through the writing samples that participants composed during the Intervention 1 activities and appropriated to work on their interpsychological processes. For example, Rose became able to identify her potential contribution and subsequently brought new resources to the discussion through the relational work with computer science colleagues. Other participants did not appear to develop a conceptual knowledge to such an extent as Rose.

Nevertheless, Zara, Fiona, Miranda, and Jessica could each articulate how they achieved a working understanding of the concepts associated with their Master's dissertation research either through the appropriation of mediational tools from Intervention 1 or through their relational work. Concept development in academic research writing is an important finding, given that each of them was undertaking dissertation work that was both novel and important to health care. An overall analysis of the participants' intertextual development is shown in Chapter Four (Section 4.5). As Bazerman (2012) states, it is difficult for the writer to articulate or identify how internalised concepts become externalised in academic research writing. However, each participant attempted to externalise their written thoughts to others. For example, some participants, Rose and Jessica, were developing an awareness of how their writing affected and acted upon others.

The participant's agency came through a strong sense of what mattered to them and how the contradictions acted as a first stimulus and helped them align their actions with other peoples' strengths. The principal actions by the participants were through negotiating different interpretations of the tasks whilst developing their knowledge that different collaborators bring diverse expertise. The participants worked out whose expertise counted to deal with the various demands of dissertation writing. By being open to the interpretations, they expanded their learning and adapted to the changing object of activity. For some, this included the discovery of novel aspects of the object. Consequently, some participants developed 'where-to' or tertiary tools (Cole, 1996) based upon their dissertation writing. For example, Miranda's literature review, Zara's infographic poster and Rose's conference abstract were tools that acted on them as individuals but had the potential to act externally on others and represented an imagined future beyond submitting a dissertation for assessment.

The less clear area about the participants' emerging agency is to what extent they became a resource for joint action in academic research writing. Zara developed an awareness of the importance of becoming a resource for others through creating a peer-led writing group. Rose was propelled into a position where she needed to align what mattered to her with what mattered to interprofessional researchers for the success of an overall research project on technology and a long-term health condition. It is tricky for Master's students to accomplish know-how to the same extent as Rose because they are in power relations with dissertation supervisors and others with more research expertise. Master's dissertation supervisors hold powerful positions concerning the supervisees academic research writing development even in a teaching-intensive

university where research activity is not an immediate priority. The problem space of the current thesis study is the development of academic research writing for the health care disciplines and appeared to matter for some dissertation supervisors. A more profound commitment to developing academic research writing may mean that a supervisor acknowledges the supervisees expertise whilst encouraging them to build relations with distributed expertise for academic research writing and relevant clinical research. The advantage is that the supervisee can become a resource for joint action and, importantly, not remain untapped.

The research project's success that Rose became involved with was contingent upon her clinical expertise and developing her academic research writing. She discovered this when she shared her completed dissertation with her computer science colleagues. The text became a resource for developing further research activities and represented the common knowledge underpinning their collaborative work.

5.4.3 Meaning-making for dissertation writers

The participants were characterised by two issues when they entered Intervention 1. Firstly, their uncertainties and secondly, what mattered to them about the clinical topics they were investigating. Zittoun (2006) argues that symbolic resources or mediational tools enter the semiotic prism at the micro-level and link emotions and experiences with the potential for emotional elaboration and meaning construction. The uncertainties disclosed by participants included feeling lost, isolated, frustrated and inhibition of self-expression in writing. The participants reflected at Time 2 about the respective ways in which the appropriation of mediational tools helped them to mediate their feelings as individuals.

The findings show the social and cognitive shifts made by individuals in developing their academic research writing. I have reported my observations of their interactions during the interventions, focusing on speech as mediated action. Implicitly the participants were sharing and exchanging their experiences of academic research writing. The participants reflected on the interactions, and inherent in their reflections is how empathy entered their semiotic prisms. For example, Miranda described feeling 'boosted', and Jessica described 'enjoyment.' The participants who extended their relational work beyond Intervention 1 or supervisory relationships such as Zara and Rose described the support they received from others. The implications are that participants developed trust in their respective relationships, which helped them navigate the dissertation writing task and create meta-rules for their conduct linked with what mattered to them. As argued by Zittoun (2006), when faced with uncertainty, there is a two-step process. Firstly, the human psychological need to ensure self-continuity and secondly, the use of resources for uncertainties associated with past and current events to pre-present potential futures. Forms of security and safety are needed to face the future.

Principally, the participants as individuals acted for the short-term in getting the task done. For example, Fiona described herself in 'lockdown' until she received her dissertation marks before contemplating how to write a research article based on her dissertation work. Miranda and Leah expressed the constraints of time and timely access to the resources in Intervention 1. Nevertheless, most participants were future-faced concerning their dissertation work in their intentions to disseminate the findings to

benefit clinical practice, with participants such as Zara and Rose acting in these respects. According to Zittoun: ‘

> "Development is seen as enabled if future orientations mediate conduct in a sufficiently consistent way, not if projects or goals are attained' (Zittoun, 2006, p. 180).

The results presented in this chapter provide evidence that the participant's relations with the social and cognitive resources of Intervention 1 enabled them to deal with uncertainties and undertake the work of transition in diverse ways but was contingent upon developing know-who beyond the intervention.

5.5 Chapter summary

The problem that frames the current thesis is about improving academic research writing for the health care disciplines. This chapter reported the findings of a writing group intervention that aimed to create a cultural and social learning environment where participants could work on and develop academic research writing concepts for a Master's dissertation in health care. The participants' uncertainties on entering the intervention were unsurprising because they faced an unfamiliar writing task. On the other hand, individuals carried respective uncertainties about their academic research writing development. The use of Zittoun's (2006, 2008, 2012) model of the semiotic prism enabled an understanding of how the social and cognitive resources offered by the intervention entered the semiotic prism of the individuals for the work of transition. Individual participants made sense and made meaning of the resources in divergent ways related to their uncertainties and the limits of what they could fully maximise in the spatial-temporal process of dissertation writing, including the timing of the intervention itself.

By taking a dialectical approach to collecting and analysing the data (Edwards, 2005, 2011, 2017; Hedegaard, 2012; Sannino, 2015; Sannino & Engeström, 2017) it revealed how and what mattered about undertaking a Master's dissertation in health care to the participants within their clinical contexts. Knowing how to build relations with others to work collaboratively on the tasks involved in dissertation writing was a critical transition.

Identify repositioning materialised for each individual through their emerging relational agency for writing development. The participants appropriated tools from the Intervention and distributed expertise to define and compare their knowledge and understanding of academic research writing. For some, the self-evaluation and self-positioning appeared to enable them to them to see the value of relational work for their continuity as 'good' Master's students. In the Discussion Chapter I draw out further issues regarding the participants' writer identities. Individuals appeared to articulate how they achieved a working understanding of the concepts associated with their Master's dissertation research writing either through the appropriation of mediational tools from Intervention 1 or through their distributed work. Some participants became a valuable resource for others in academic research writing. Concept development and developing relational expertise in academic writing is an important finding given the problem space of the current thesis and that each individual was undertaking dissertation work that was both novel and important to health care. By participating in the intervention, the individuals reflected on their emotional enablement through developing relationships built on trust. Emotional enablement allowed individuals to take appropriate action to complete the dissertation writing task in the short term. Some

participants were future-faced concerning their writing development beyond the dissertation.

In the following chapter, I pose the same questions with the constant use of the theoretical framework to examine a writing group intervention for the Master's level professional to write for publication. Writing for publication is the potential next stage of development and transition for participants such as the ones featured in this findings chapter.

6 Chapter Six: A writing group intervention to write for publication: having an imaginary experience and developing relational expertise

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter Four, I outlined the design of a writing group intervention (Intervention 2) as a setting for the Master's level professional to explore and develop disciplinary writing aimed for peer-review publication. This chapter presents the work of transition undertaken by individual participants as they tackled a novel writing task by using the social and cognitive resources provided by Intervention 2 to focus on becoming published authors. Furthermore, the chapter shows how the individual participants developed the capacity to propel themselves forward as academic research writers by developing relational expertise. This chapter will use the concept of cultural experience in the semiotic prism to explore the work of transition and the notion of relational work to examine the writer's development.

In the previous chapter, I summarised the argument regarding the lack of empirical research that focuses on the formative transitions of health care writers who engage with writing group interventions. I also summarised the theoretical framework that I have constructed based on a sociocultural theory of transitions (Crafter & Maunder, 2012; Zittoun, 2006, 2008, 2012) and relational agency (Edwards, 2005, 2011, 2017; Hedegaard, 2012; Sannino, 2015; Sannino & Engeström, 2017) to operationalise the

current thesis study by examining the nature and processes of transitions for academic research writing.

This chapter aims to address two key research questions to explain the nature and processes of the writers' transitions. The research questions are as follows:

RQ 1. How and why are mediational tools from the writing intervention appropriated during the work of transition?

RQ 2. How do the participants experience relational work and deal with contradictions to shape their academic research writing development?

The chapter is structured as follows: Section 6.2 presents the findings in respect to the first research question with an explicit focus on the formative micro-development of individuals through a cultural experience; section 6.3 presents the findings concerning the second research question with an explicit focus on how the collective shapes the development of the individual; and section 6.4 summarises and synthesises the findings to consider the processes of dissertation writers' transitions regarding identity repositioning, knowledge change and skill acquisition and meaning-making.

6.2 Appropriating mediational tools during the work of transition in an intervention aimed at writing for publication

To address the research question:

How and why are the mediational tools from the writing intervention appropriated in the work of transition?

I first identify the uncertainties experienced by the participants who aimed to write a journal article for peer-review publication. A description of the participant sample may be found in Chapter Four (Section 4.3). I then examine how and why their experiences of Intervention 2 led to the appropriation of mediational tools for the work of transition. The findings, presented under three themes, show how and why individuals made sense and made meaning about the processes of writing for publication from the cognitive and social resources provided by the Intervention 2 intervention as they repositioned and propelled themselves forward as nurse writers.

The individuals who engaged with Intervention 2 had recently undergone personal change as an outcome of postgraduate study or professional development activities. They had respective intentions to reconfigure a Master's dissertation or a professional text as journal articles for peer-review publication. The primary writing tasks that the participants had completed carried personal and professional meaningfulness because their research and developmental projects had implications for clinical and teaching practices. However, writing for publication based on the finished work carried uncertainties that I outline in the following section

6.2.1 The uncertainties of novice writers for peer-review publication

Commonly shared uncertainties were grounded in not having previously published and little knowledge about reconfiguring writing submitted for academic assessment into potential publications. Furthermore, writing for publication was not a designated activity for the participants' current clinical or teaching roles. The implications for the individuals' transitions were: determining the requirements for the new task/object (knowledge and skills); the need to approach writing processes differently from writing

for assessment (sense-making); and positioning themselves as disciplinary writers (repositioning and relocation). Uncertainties manifested themselves differently for individuals.

Jo, a nursing lecturer, described achieving "more" in a Master's dissertation than she had anticipated. She had found new freedom to write as a nurse and had researched a novel topic with significant findings for the education of children's cancer care nurses. In achieving "more," Jo had experienced a rupture transition in the affective dimensions of meaning-making concerning herself as a nurse writer. However, she still had uncertainties. Jo felt implicit pressure in her academic role to publish and yet did not feel that she was allowed to spend time on writing:

> "I always wanted to write. But I didn't have the confidence to think I had anything to say. Having that piece of work that I'd done for my Masters made me feel like I could share that because it was something new. I felt quite insecure that I hadn't got anything published. In PDRs (personal developmental reviews), it was made clear that I needed to develop, which I knew about myself anyway. The thing that I found frustrating about being in this environment is that it's just so busy, and there's just no time, and I want to do more writing, but I just feel like I have to prioritise the students and courses that we're running."

Cathy was a community nursing lecturer and had developed an interest in higher education teaching pedagogies whilst developing her professional trajectory. She had recently completed the UKPSF (United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework, Advance HE):

> "One of the things that I linked to my fellowship pathway is evidence of scholarly activity. And I wanted to demonstrate that I'm adding to the wider understanding of what I do. And so, as part of my portfolio, I prioritised the development of this work as a draft."

Cathy wanted to make sense of how her contribution to teaching practice, which she had propagated locally, could be developed as a journal article. Undertaking the UKPSF was an activity that raised her awareness of the potential of practitioner work to influence higher education policies and where she wanted to position herself. Cathy planned to use the evidence of learning from her UKPSF portfolio as the basis for a journal article. Like Jo, Cathy felt pressure to write for publication. However, she feared the exposure of presenting her writing to an audience:

> "There's an enormous amount of pressure when you're a lecturer here to publish, and I felt that I'd been here for two years, I ought to crack on… You think everybody else knows what they're doing, and it exposes you. I needed some support to know what to do."

During her dissertation writing, Helen, a clinical practice development nurse, had developed a sustained and systematic way of managing her academic work alongside other competing demands such as employment and family responsibilities. As an alumni, she found that she had less time for writing and that the writing processes for authoring a journal article were more challenging than she had previously imagined. Furthermore, her health care service employer was equivocal about her potential publication, which made her feel unsupported in trying to develop and disseminate her Master's research:

> "It doesn't feel like they're supporting me. I feel morally obliged to publish because they have funded me to do the masters. If I either decided to do this or not, it wouldn't matter to them. They wouldn't follow it up. Also, when I mention it to people, they glaze over, say, well, it's my thing to do."

Jasmine had also taken up a new role since graduating. She had moved from a clinical practice nurse development role in a teaching hospital to a research assistant post in a

university nursing faculty. In her new role, and compared with Helen, it was an expectation from Jasmine's employer that she would write for publication:

> "They asked me if I would like to join the team, due to my masters and this role is a research assistant, I will do some research and, I am lecturing. Our professor asked us last week to publish more often."

Jasmine also had uncertainties about her academic English and recognised that she needed to overcome her concerns to become a published author.

Unlike the other participants, Elspeth was a pre-registration nursing student, which means she was undertaking her professional education to become a nurse. During her studies, she had presented her dissertation work at a student conference. Elspeth joined Intervention 2 to be supported to write for publication by her supervisor, Jane. Through presenting at a conference and being invited to join Intervention 2, Elspeth found that peers and tutors had identified her as a writer, which caused discomfort:

> "I never thought anyone would say 'oh, I like how you write.' Never in my entire life would I think anyone would say that to me because I've never been comfortable writing."

Jane was a lecturer in nursing. Alongside her professional role, she was undertaking doctoral studies that piqued her interest in academic research writing. The part that Jane intended to play in Intervention 2 was to support Elspeth through writing collaboratively; however, she also aimed to build her self-confidence as a writer:

> "I do write a lot. I'm never happy with the level of my writing. I am always concerned about it. Never quite sure how to get it up to the next level."

The participants' uncertainties had arisen from a change in the sphere of their experiences through writing as a component of their learning and professional development. While colleagues and former dissertation supervisors had validated their

emerging writing achievements, it did not fit how the individuals positioned themselves. Zittoun (2012) clarifies that change in one sphere has implications for change in another domain but can be both stabilising and destabilising. Furthermore, some individuals were experiencing more than one change simultaneously, which added to their uncertainties.

Intervention 2 represented space and time away from other demands to focus on becoming published authors, and each participant recognised this possibility. In the following sections, I use Zittoun's (Zittoun, 2006; Zittoun et al., 2003) notion of a cultural experience as a component of the semiotic prism (Zittoun, 2006, 2008, 2012) to examine the participant's formative transitions in writing for publication. The participants were engaging with a process outside the sphere of their everyday experiences. There was scope in the data to explore how a cultural experience played out in their transitions and how it prevailed beyond the imaginary and influenced inner shifts. I also paid close attention to the resources from Intervention 2 that were most meaningful to individuals and how they appropriated the resources as mediational tools (Gillespie & Zittoun, 2010; Smagorinsky, 2011) to work through their uncertainties and intentions to undertake the work of transition. Accordingly, I collected participants' reflective accounts of their experiences through interviews and email exchanges, and I also observed the participants' interactions during the Intervention 2 activities. The findings are both temporal and narrative. To complement the analytical approach and because speech is a critical cognitive and social resource for academic research writing development, I used sociocultural frameworks (Mercer, 1995, 2000, 2013; Middleton, 1996, 2011) as outlined in Chapter Three (3.2.4), to examine how the participants made

meaning from the voices of others and jointly created knowledge about the writing for the publication process.

Three themes emerged from the analysis, *the semiotic potential of writing retreats, the semiotic potential of tasks and writing activities* and *the imaginary components of peer-reviewing.* The themes relate directly to the activities, cognitive and social resources that the participants appropriated and found most meaningful in becoming a potential published author. The findings are presented under each theme and further interpreted through the conception of a cultural experience (Zittoun, 2006; Zittoun et al., 2003).

6.2.2 The semiotic potential of writing retreats

Intervention 2 encouraged the individual participants to identify what they wanted to achieve through their writing. Intervention 2 was facilitated by the expertise of my writing developer colleagues (see Chapter Four, section 4.3). The intention was to offer the participants access to cognitive and social resources to enable writing for publication. Nevertheless, there appeared to be a process that individuals needed to go through to determine the semiotic potential of what Intervention 2 afforded as a new sphere of experience before they appropriated the available resources. A key example was access to writing retreats. A writing retreat offers space and protected time to writers and the potential for reconfiguration. This section will report how Helen and Jasmine's initial encounters with the Intervention 2 writing retreats enabled them to foreground the shift from dissertation writing to writing for publication. I will also report how Elspeth developed a symbolic resource to unlink her prior conception of herself as a writer with her present and future-orientated writing development following her participation in a writing retreat.

Helen's initial participation in Intervention 2 was through two successive one-day writing retreats (see Chapter Four, 4.3):

> "On both of those days, although I may have changed direction between times, I feel like I achieved a lot. Because it allowed me to take myself away from my professional work and personal life, it put me into a space where I could concentrate on that one thing. Without any other distractions."

Helen was at the boundary between the demands of her everyday life and the possibility to become a published author. She needed to work out how the writing retreat as a resource could become meaningful for her writing intentions. Helen had recently completed her Master's dissertation as a part-time distance learning student. Participating in a writing retreat alongside alumni and former tutors in a face-to-face context represented a new departure for Helen's writing interactions. Her previous approach to accessing learning resources was through online resources. However, Helen perceived the semiotic potential of face-to-face interactions as more purposeful for mediating her development:

> "I think the problem with being at home for the writing group (Intervention 2) is that you can't hear what everybody's saying. And then, of course, it becomes disjointed, and you don't feel like contributing because you think I may have missed something…So you feel slightly on the outside."

Jasmine had also recently completed her Master's dissertation as a part-time distance learning student; as a Master's student, Jasmine's engagement was completely online because she lived outside the UK. However, Jasmine purposefully travelled from Europe to initially engage with Intervention 2 and participate in the writing retreats. She evaluated how important it felt to meet her writing peers in context:

> "I felt that there were people in there with very different experience in writing and that everyone was very open and honest about their work, and also in giving feedback to colleagues. To meet those people in person,

> because before I saw them on my screen here at home, and listen to them, so there's another experience. And see how this group is getting together in their normal context."

Like Helen, Jasmine viewed Intervention 2 as distinct from the sphere of experiences of her everyday life. Jasmine interpreted what she saw and heard at an initial point of her participation in Intervention 2. Jasmine observed how the Intervention 2 participants made socially shared meaning of their writing through their varying levels of experience as writers. As an alum, Jasmine felt the need to belong differently to move her writing development forward. Her reflections represent the potential to work along the other-object axis of the semiotic prism through making meaning of her writing by drawing on the skills and perspectives of others. Furthermore, there was potential to reposition her former relations with academic colleagues.

Elspeth's prior experiences differed from Helen or Jasmine's because she was a full-time pre-registration nursing student. However, participating in the writing retreats was novel compared to the formal aspects of her educational experiences. Like Jasmine, she realised the benefits of making socially shared meaning of writing:

> "It was having the opportunity to get feedback on the same day from people and then being able to make changes that day as well. The feedback was about to make a clearer order."

As the participants understood the semiotic potential of Intervention 2, they became enabled to appropriate the social and cognitive resources to extend their writing development. Individuals were reconfiguring their former writing to create a new object. During a writing retreat, Helen deliberated the possibilities and constraints of the new object:

> "During the first writing retreat. I started down the road of moving from my dissertation to put something together for the journal article. I was struggling to fit it all into one article and reducing it to the word count."

Helen found that it was necessary to come to terms with the fact that there were no explicit rules about writing for publication. In composing a Master's dissertation, Helen had been aware of the expected writing conventions and had achieved a good final mark:

> "I think it's difficult to make that transition from writing from academic to writing for a journal article. It's a different purpose. Whatever you're writing for, there are guidelines. Where the purpose of the journal article is different."

As a successful postgraduate student, Helen had developed knowledge of academic research writing and made sense of the Master's dissertation text. However, to reach her intention of becoming a published author meant letting go of some aspects of prior learning, which was unsettling. The social context of Intervention 2 gave Helen the space to confront the process, which involved a sense of loss. Helen had noted that in her initial attempts to reframe the text from the dissertation to a journal article, it appeared as though she had lost her authorial voice. In reconfiguring the text, Helen needed to address all three dimensions of the semiotic prism: firstly, the person-other axis to assert one's identity through the authorial voice; secondly, knowledge about possible publication genre types, the person-object; and thirdly making sense of how to reframe the text for a specific disciplinary journal, which concerns the person-sense of the object axis. Nelson and Castelló (2012) argue that voice is not in the language of the text but by inference based on the textual cues provided by the writer to the reader. The writer needs to make choices about the metadiscourse they use based on their intentions. For novice writers in this situation, they may feel constrained in making

metadiscourse choices. Accordingly, Helen identified that it felt easier to project her voice in the Master's dissertation because it felt authentic to do so:

> "Because I was bringing my, I was bringing my professional experience into the work."

In anticipating the unknown audience for a journal research article, writing about one's own professional experience may have felt colloquial. Part of Helen's transition process was to find a meaningful way to assert her authority in the reframed text whilst finding a voice that had authenticity for the new audience. Helen had thought about where she wanted her writing to be published, representing work along her other-object axis. Her dissertation research work concerned an issue that she had explored about health care students' experiences on clinical placements. She had selected a specialist health care practitioner journal as a potential publishing outlet. Her judgement concerned a journal that would have the most impact on those who could make a difference because she perceived a shared semiotic alliance with the target audience:

> "I would like the takeaway message to be that there are lots of different factors that influence the students' experience of placements, but that belongingness is key to all of it."

The transitional process of reframing her dissertation writing for the practitioner journal was considerable. As reported later in the chapter, Helen engaged with peer-feedback activities to mediate the development of her voice. However, the transition work involved drawing on other resources in her activity settings which I will examine later in this chapter. However, the social support offered by Intervention 2 gave Helen some equilibrium to stay on track with her intentions:

> "I am building relations every time I see them, and it's nice to see them. If that wasn't there, I possibly would have given up at this point."

Every word that Jasmine had written in her Master's dissertation text carried personal meaningfulness. Like Helen, Jasmine found that reframing the text for a disciplinary audience meant making decisions about what she could lose from the originating text:

> "Doing my dissertation, during the process you think every word is very important, and to come down on some words is very hard, because how to say a broad context into very few words. You have to come down into a funnel, a few words."

The funnelling down described by Jasmine is not an easy task in anticipation of a disciplinary audience's needs. Ultimately, the writer will have adopted different positions on each axis of their semiotic prism to convey sense-making, knowledge, and positioning. From her initial engagement with the writing retreats and the work therein to reframe her writing, Jasmine reached a point when she felt ready to present her text to her peers in Intervention 2. Preparing an abstract was a mediating tool for her to find a meaningful way to articulate her research and make the essential findings visible to others. In anticipation of the presentation, Jasmine was ambivalent:

> "I was a little excited about how they will react to me, how my English will be and how they will give me feedback on my abstract."

In a subsequent section, I will report how the giving and receiving of peer feedback on Jasmine's abstract as an activity with a strong imaginary component became meaningful to Jasmine and her peers.

Elspeth was working on two writing tasks. Firstly, she had been commissioned to write a series of student columns by a published nursing journal and secondly, to write collaboratively with Jane, her supervisor, to reconfigure an independent study project into a journal article. Elspeth's fundamental uncertainty stemmed from not identifying as a writer even though she was positioned so by others. Through working alongside

other writers in a writing retreat, she came to understand that the relationship that she had developed between herself and her writing as an object was not unusual:

> "I do a lot of thinking before I sit down to write. And I'm aware of that. Whereas before I used to think you just sit and write and now, I know you have to do a lot of thinking before…you can write."

The space and time to think and write prompted Elspeth to extend her writing practices beyond the retreat by using a notebook as a symbolic resource:

> "So, I try and record it more now, my thoughts in a notebook. If I see something that makes me think, I'll write it in there, and then I can use that in my column. For example, I, I was reading about 'E.G,' because I was named after her. And she was a nurse. And very political. I was interested in her history and her nursing identity. And I wrote some notes on that which I used as an idea for a column."

Zittoun (2006) argues that a symbolic resource can promote development through the capacity to extend an imaginary experience. Elspeth was working towards the position others had given her as a writer, which caused discomfort. At another level, using a notebook enabled her to organise her thought processes and unlink herself from the notion that her writing did not have meaning for others.

Helen, Jasmine, and Elspeth's initial encounters with Intervention 2 were through their participation in writing retreats. Time and space away from every day were meaningful and enabled them to confront their prior and current feelings and their understanding of academic research writing. The material support provided through the retreats helped them to extend and develop their writing practices.

6.2.3 The semiotic potential of tasks and writing activities

Engaging in the Intervention 2 writing retreats were not the only activities that the participants found meaningful for elaborating their writing development. Tasks such as

identifying objectives and activities such as freewriting are commonly associated with writing group interventions. Some participants realised the potential of such tasks and activities for self-regulation, belongingness and helping to understand the writing process. Like the writing retreats, there appeared to be a process that participants went through to work out the semiotic potential of the tasks and activities before appropriating them for the work of transition. Here I will present Jo and Cathy's processes and experiences as they worked out the meaningfulness of the Intervention 2 tasks and activities before appropriating the tools to work on their writing.

My facilitator-colleague invited the participants to identify objectives before their participation. Jo described feeling nervous about the prospect of Joining Intervention 2. However, specifying objectives helped Jo to focus on her intentions and overcome her apprehension: -

> "That was the most helpful thing because if I think if I hadn't done that, I wouldn't have known where to start."

Jo's response email response to the facilitator in advance of her participation is below:

> "My plan is to come to the session with some information about the writing requirements for some relevant journals. My supervisor and I then need to plan how we can divide my dissertation up into different aspects, and then ideally. I would have liked to at least make a start at writing an introduction."

Jo appropriated the prompt from the facilitator as a sign to explore the possibilities for the new text in development. Firstly, she anticipated how her writing could be reframed for a disciplinary journal and represents the person-object axis of the semiotic prism. Secondly, Jo anticipated how she needed to appropriate the time and space in the Intervention 2 to work with her former dissertation supervisor, who had already given

Jo legitimacy about her writing and represents potential work along the other-object axis.

Cathy was ambivalent about joining Intervention 2 because she feared exposure of her writing to others. However, by engaging with Intervention 2, she came to understand that others also felt apprehensive about their position as academic research writers:

> "The fact that people go to the writing group means that people are unconfident in some way, doesn't it? But there is that feeling that somebody knows more than you. But then you see everyone else is frightened and nervous too."

Zittoun (2006) suggests that the possibilities for a cultural experience that is away from the here-and-now of the shared reality can engage with real emotions. In Cathy's sphere of everyday experiences, she positioned herself as a highly competent teacher, which may constrain emotions. However, she saw the potential in Intervention 2, where emotions might become elaborated. As will be shown through Cathy's individual experiences, she oscillated between developing knowledge and skills about her writing and dealing with her fear of exposure.

Jo found that engaging with peers in Intervention 2 led to a reciprocal acknowledgement of the institutional constraints on having time to focus on writing in the sphere of everyday experiences:

> "I think that everybody else at the writing group seemed to feel the same. It was only chance that you had to get something down."

However, having time and space in Intervention 2 also caused Jo frustration when she compared it with the culture of the typical working environment:

> "We have to prioritise the students and courses we are running...it feels a bit decadent to take time out to do writing when I could be sorting out emails..."

Zittoun (2006) contends that a cultural experience should lead to change beyond the sphere of the imaginary experience. Jo found that the processes that she went through during freewriting activities in Intervention 2 helped her to identify freewriting as a developmental activity that she could appropriate in her everyday setting:

> "The most valuable thing I've learnt about my writing, this concept of just sit there and write, in the first meeting I wrote a draft abstract, and in the second meeting I wrote a substantial chunk of introduction."

For Jo, it helped her to determine how she could prioritise her writing alongside other work responsibilities:

> "Just having that hour and a half just to say this is my time, and this is part of my job. I've now started counting it, as my staff development time, so that I protect it."

Jo repositioned writing as a legitimate activity, which enabled her to adopt a different temporal position in her everyday role.

In contrast, Cathy's uncertainties appeared to interplay with her engagement in Intervention 2, where she was ambivalent about the value of some of the resources. Cathy's proposed aim was to write an opinion piece for a community nursing journal based on her submitted work for a UKPSF portfolio. Cathy identified that she aimed to start a conversation about a teaching issue that she was dealing with, and at the same time, contribute to an evidence base in a less formal way than a research paper. Cathy tried to make sense of the genre of 'an opinion piece. From Cathy's perspective, the meaning of academic writing was as follows:

> "Something that has a heavy theoretical underpinning, that you can justify why you're saying what you're saying. I do not feel credible saying some things without an evidence base. I don't have as many references in my article as I would have if I were submitting for assessment."

The academic opinion piece shows who, in some cases, can be perceived by the academic disciplinary community as an expert or leader in their field. From the perspective of Cathy's semiotic prism, the work of transition represented identity positioning on the person-other axis because she perceived the need to feel legitimate in offering her professional opinion to a broader disciplinary audience than her immediate context. An elaboration of emotions appeared necessary to transition from a successful Master's graduate professional to a disciplinary published author. Cathy appeared to confront her feelings through appropriating the resources in Intervention 2. For example, she described her experiences of participation in a freewriting activity as 'the most helpful and least helpful.'

Freewriting is a potential mediating tool to develop writing processes as outlined previously in the thesis. For Cathy, freewriting felt averse to the way in which she had previously managed the nexus between reading and writing:

> "What I found unhelpful about freewriting, it was all about me and my view and my opinion, which is good for developing your own inner voice, but then I had to scramble to find the evidence base afterwards, and I found that really challenging. But what it did do is it developed my inner confidence in my own perspective, which is uncomfortable. That is the point of me now in my career, writing my own perspective, and it is uncomfortable to do that for the first time. So, it was really unhelpful in the fact that it made it harder for me then to restructure that into an academic piece of work."

Cathy's conflict about developing her inner voice was exposed when she appropriated freewriting as a mediational tool. On the one hand, forming an inner voice was necessary for identity repositioning (person-other axis), but on the other hand, it had

implications for exposing her perspective to others through writing which caused discomfort. For novice opinion piece writers such as Cathy, they need to adapt their former approaches to writing to achieve their intentions and consider how they will show to a disciplinary audience where they belong. Cathy's unease was about not having enough citations in her evolving text and can be related to the person-object axis of the semiotic prism because of the emphasis in the health care disciplines on evidence-based practice. Cathy needed to develop knowledge about the genre of an opinion piece, which may not contain citations and required her adaptation to a different genre of academic writing.

Jo and Cathy were higher education teachers where writing for publication was not part of their everyday roles. In joining Intervention 2, they encountered cultural elements such as undefined rules concerning writing as a legitimate practice. Cathy was also trying to determine the genre rules of the opinion piece. Objective setting for writing and freewriting was a new event for Jo. However, her actions mediated knowledge of incorporating and sustaining writing as a process away from the intervention.

Consequently, Jo began to reposition herself as a writer. Freewriting was a new event for Cathy, too and shaped her experiences to develop her authorial voice. However, she continued to work along the person-object axis of the semiotic prism to determine the personal meaningfulness of the opinion piece and anticipate its meaning for a disciplinary audience**.**

6.2.4 The imaginary components of peer-reviewing

The peer feedback activities in Intervention 2 engaged the participants in the roles of reviewer and reviewee. Without exception, the participants identified the critical importance of peer feedback as a mediational tool that prevailed beyond Intervention 2 and influenced their inner shifts.

This section will explore how peer feedback activities with a strong imaginary component became meaningful to the Intervention 2 participants and influenced their conduct as emerging writers aiming for publication. To examine the theme, *The imaginary components of peer-reviewing,* I will draw on the individual experiences of Jo and Jasmine as an example to show how they appropriated the social and cognitive resources from the peer review activities as mediational tools for their writing development.

I start with an extract from the participant observation analysis that I undertook, where Jasmine presented an abstract of her proposed journal article to her peers, including Jo. I then proceed to Jasmine and Jo's individual reflections about their participation and further development of their academic research writing.

Each participant was invited to present a 500-word abstract of their draft journal articles to their peers and facilitators. Expert academic peer-feedback originated in emerging scientific communities to regulate, censor, and protect reputation (Starke-Meyerring & Pare, 2011). Peer review is an established activity in writing group interventions to simulate features of good practice in scholarly reviewing (Aitchison, 2014). My facilitator colleagues instructed the Intervention 2 participants to give constructive and

purposeful peer feedback. The participants were guided on receiving feedback and how to use the feedback to revise manuscript drafts.

During peer review activities, writers take on imagined roles as reviewer or reviewee, projected towards mastery in becoming a published author or a peer-reviewer for a disciplinary journal. Importantly for novice writers, peer-review activities in a writing group simulate the actual process their writing goes through when they submit it for publication and are potential imaginary or as-if experiences.

In intervention 2, the peer-reviewing activities were when the participants as reviewees externalised their writing to others. The activities built on the psychological work of transition undertaken by the participants in coming to terms with their evolving texts as potential journal articles (person-object, person-sense) as explored through the previous two reported themes.

Jasmine was reframing her Master's dissertation for a proposed publication in an international clinical nursing journal. The following peer-feedback activity (September 2016) took place when Jasmine presented an initial draft abstract for her proposed manuscript to her Intervention 2 peers:

> Jo: Sounds like an interesting topic but just from reading that, I am not clear what the findings are. Perhaps you could say what you found in two sentences?
>
> Jane: Sounds interesting, but I felt these were theoretical descriptions about the process rather than a real-life story. What would capture the reader to decide to read your paper?
>
> Cathy: I wondered about how this would transfer to the UK? Does that role exist in the UK? Is it more about the process rather than labelling the role because I got a bit confused?

> Gemma: It is reassuring that what I think, everyone else thinks as well. Because when I read it, I thought, 'what is it that this case manager does? what does the role look like?' So, I found it reassuring that other people thought this too. Because when the patient comes into the hospital, what does the case manager do? Once I know that, I can go back and fill the bits in.
>
> Helen: I think this would be transferable here because I certainly know there are nurse discharge planners in my hospital. The answer to 5b (abstract framework) does not give me enough information to know what was discovered. I would want to know more about what these experiences were to fully engage with the paper.
>
> Jasmine: The processes were that we needed to get patients out of the hospital much faster, and we had to reorganise the role. The role was implemented in 2004 to be responsible for all admissions and discharge planning on the ward, which has been very complex.
>
> Cathy: I think this is interesting, and it sounds as though it could be transferable here. Do you have that background in the paper?
>
> Jane: I think you have several papers here. You could submit some work to a journal on patient safety and another paper to a health services management journal.

The resources that individual participants contributed to the peer review activity reflected their experiences and knowledge about academic research writing that they brought to bear on Jasmine's abstract as an object and how they each made sense of the text as a potential reader (Fig.6.1). Jo, as a respondent, nominated that she would anticipate a transparent section in Jasmine's paper that reported the findings. Jo's response reflected the need to conform to the anticipated structure of a journal article which are the implicit rules that govern the structure and genre of writing for publication. Jane offered a dynamic perspective, reflecting her broader expertise as a doctoral student that research writing can be about theory and practice and highlighting a narrative's potential to hook the audience into the text. Jo and Jane made legitimate suggestions on how Jasmine might reposition herself in the text to anticipate disciplinary audiences.

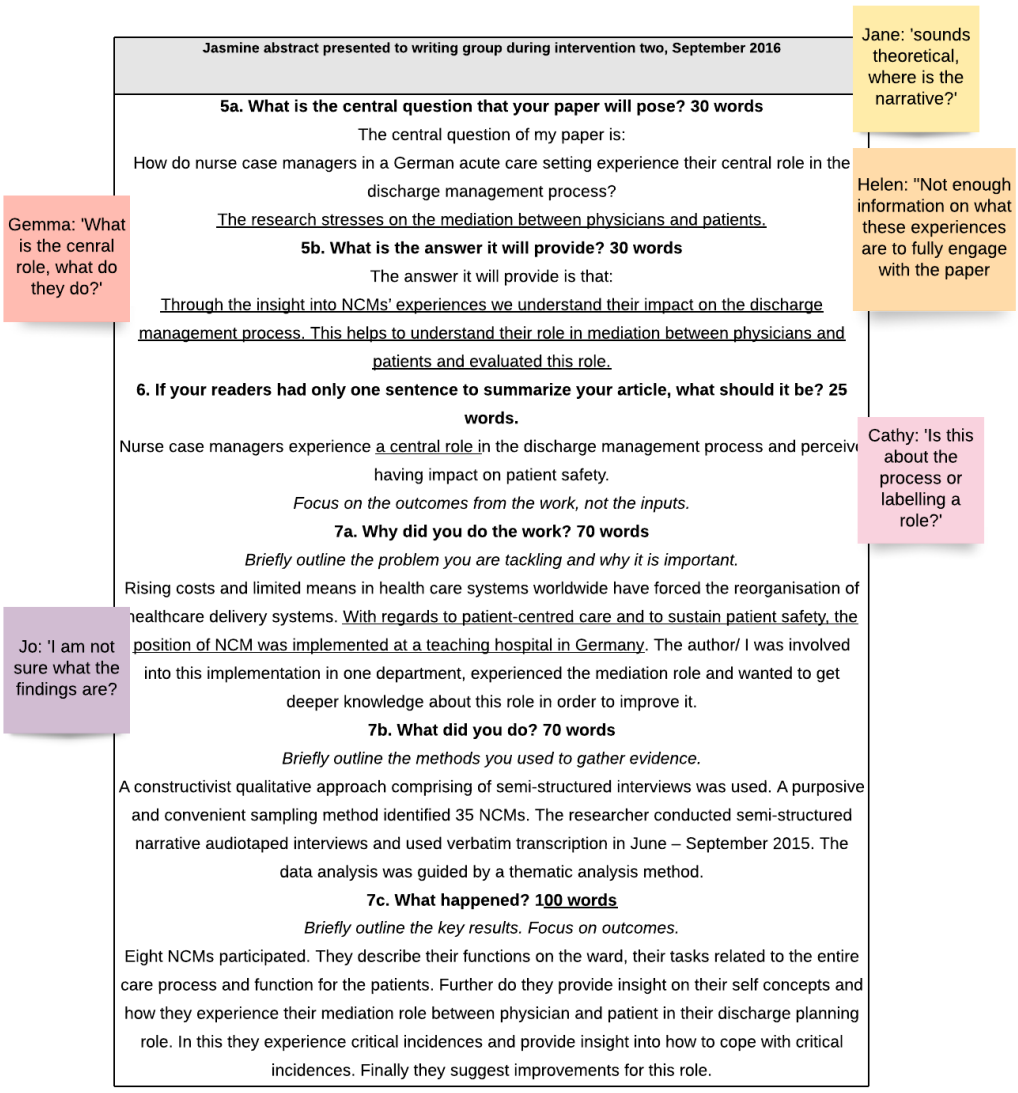


Figure 6:1 Peer review of Jasmine's abstract

The nominated deliberated and developed issue focused on the nurse role that Jasmine wrote about, to specify the history and context so that the reader may engage with the paper to decide how transferable the study's findings may be to other contexts. Jasmine responded by explaining the history, social and economic drivers that had led to a new nursing role, which she had evaluated through the research. By externalising her

knowledge through dialogue with her peers, they could make a more explicit connection with her academic research writing.

As I stated at the outset of this section, when the participants reflected on their respective roles of reviewer or reviewee in activities such as the one above, they asserted the value of developing their academic research writing. The scenario showed each of the five elements that Zittoun (2006) identifies with the notion of a cultural experience. Firstly, the participants were socioculturally positioned towards the experience. The socially located object, Jasmine's abstract, is a text that they could consume as a disciplinary reader or potentially produce their version as a disciplinary writer. Secondly, Jasmine's story framed the cultural experience as she attempted to tell it through the text and then retold it through speech when some elements were not clear. Jasmine's narrative meant that her peers could take a step back from their own potential stories to internalise Jasmine's. Given the struggle individuals experienced in coming to terms with their texts as potential journal articles (person-object) for a disciplinary audience (other-object), Jasmine's story was a potential mediating tool for framing their own story. Thirdly, each of them participated in an imaginary experience; Jasmine as the would-be author and her peers as would-be reviewers, which suspended their everyday roles as teachers or clinicians and offered an imagined relocation through the skills and knowledge they gained about writing for publication through the experience. Fourthly, as individuals, they could reflect on the experience and what it meant, and fifthly they could use the resources as mediational tools for their writing intentions, which I explain below.

I start with Jasmine's perspective as the reviewee:

> "I had to clarify more things, for example, our European context, and then I assumed that my colleagues didn't know about our work here. They gave me valuable feedback that it's very transferable to other hospitals. My abstract was not very clear."

Jasmine had developed a semiotic alliance with peers in Intervention 2 and was acknowledged as an academic writer through engaging with the peer-review feedback process (other-objects sense). Jasmine could then see that the message in her text had potential meaning to others through its transferability. Jasmine continued to work on her evolving text by using peer feedback as a mediating tool and could identify the further shifts she needed to make to repurpose her dissertation as a journal article. Firstly, she refined her goals about her intended audience (the imaginary other):

> "For people who make decisions in nursing management, and nursing science, persons who can change practice, or they could give me feedback, so maybe I can learn from their experience and change our practice."

Secondly, she clarified key terms and concepts so that the writing was easily discoverable by a disciplinary audience (sense-making):

> It must be catchier so that people are interested in it. It starts with a title and then with the keywords."

In going from a position of uncertainty over her written English, Jasmine had gained knowledge and skills from the cultural experience of peer-review activities in Intervention 2 to improve the authenticity of her writing aimed at the imagined other. In doing so, she repositioned herself as a potential disciplinary author.

I now turn to Jo in her role as peer-reviewer. Jo found the Intervention 2 peer-review and feedback activities relevant and valuable for her individual writing development

but felt that it was initially challenging to give feedback to others. In the scenario above, Jo offered what Mercer (2000) describes as exploratory talk, which emerges when the speaker makes their reasons and explanations explicit concerning the context. Jo's contribution was to offer Jasmine and her peers some thoughts on the necessity to report the findings of a study. In doing so, she shared her knowledge of the implicit rules that govern the structure and genre of disciplinary academic research writing (person-object). The communicative action that took place during the respective peer-review activity also became a mediating tool for Jo's writing:

> "We talked about words in the title so that when people are searching for your work, it's kind of obvious what it's about - And I think that probably influenced … the choice of the title for my paper."

Jo reflected on the knowledge she had gained through her participation in the peer-review activities about the communicative function of academic research writing. It helped her select a title for her evolving text to make her work discoverable (sense-making). Becoming a peer-reviewer also helped Jo to consider the authenticity of her writing:

> "Sometimes I read something, and if I didn't understand it, I would always assume that that's me being not very clever. But then to realise that might be because somebody's written it in a way that's not clear. And one of the abstracts that were presented, I just thought, 'I don't, I don't understand what this is about, and I don't get it.' And I think I'd always thought that the flaw with my writing was that it was too overly simple, and then actually realising that's not necessarily a bad thing."

Through the cultural experience of reviewing an unclearly written abstract, Jo reflected on the simplicity of her writing and made sense of its accessibility for others to understand (other-object's sense). In going from being a 'nervous person' at the outset of her participation and trying to determine if she belonged in Intervention 2, Jo

repositioned herself by becoming a social and cognitive resource for others. Jo had noted how her peers responded to her:

> "Because it's probably good if anybody can read it and know what it is about. And I think when I did say that I didn't understand that abstract, quite a few people kind of breathed a sigh of relief and nodded. And I think there was a collective 'oh, it's not just, it's not just me that doesn't understand."

By externalising her thoughts to others on unclear writing, Jo was acknowledged by her peers (other-objects sense) and given legitimacy for her perspective on academic research writing.

Zittoun (2006) contends that a cultural experience's influences can prevail beyond the imaginary by creating inners shifts and how people conduct themselves socially. In the preceding sections, I have paid particular attention to how the individuals navigated Intervention 2 as an opportunity to leave the time and space of here-and-now responsibilities and embark on the work of transition towards becoming published disciplinary authors. The implications for the individuals' transitions were: determining the requirements for the new task/object (knowledge and skills); the need to approach writing processes differently from writing for assessment (sense-making); and positioning themselves as disciplinary writers (repositioning and relocation). I will now summarise how Helen, Jo, Cathy, Jasmine and Elspeth appropriated the tools from Intervention 2 as feedforward properties for their writing development.

Helen appeared to experience here-and-now discomfort in the transition from dissertation writing to writing for publication, where she spent considerable time determining the requirements for the new writing task. She felt 'aggrieved' about demands on her time that took her away from writing and aggrieved towards a clinical

practice employer who appeared equivocal about her writing development. Helen had to determine new ways to conduct herself to achieve her intentions of seeing her development through to become a published author. Intervention 2 provided a new sphere of experience to conduct her writing processes, such as the time and space to make sense of her writing aimed at a specific practitioner journal and let go of some of her previous conceptions and understanding of academic research writing. Her meta-rule became the feedforward possibility of disseminating her work. However, Helen still had work repositioning herself towards a disciplinary audience and explored later in the chapter.

Jo had initially felt insecure about not having a publication and nervous about writing and participating in a writing group. However, she had assigned herself as an emerging nurse academic research writer. She perceived that she had something of value to be shared, which her supervisor had acknowledged. Intervention 2 offered a new sphere of experiences. The space and time away from the humdrum activities of her teaching role to engage with Intervention 2 activities provided Jo with mediational resources that she appropriated in other settings to reframe her dissertation writing. As I will show later in the chapter, Jo could draw on different social and cognitive resources from her broader activity settings. However, it appeared that Jo was able to work on each of the three dimensions of transitional processes through her participation in Intervention 2. Firstly, along the person-object axis, she learned how to manage her time in other settings so that writing felt like a legitimate activity. Secondly, relating to the person-sense of the object axis, Jo made sense of her writing through peer-reviewing the writing of others. Thirdly, relating to the other-object axis, she became a resource for others.

Cathy feared exposure in the formative feedback process of her journal article and in the final product, where she would share her opinions with the disciplinary audience. Cathy's engagement with Intervention 2 appeared ambivalent. However, through the sphere of her experiences and participating in the activities, she concluded that she was at a point in her career when she could contribute more widely. Her conclusions relate to the person-sense of the object axis of the semiotic prism. Intervention 2 allowed Cathy to work along the other-object axis too. She could write the opinion piece that others had told her was necessary, which gave her legitimacy as a potential author. The meta-rule for herself was that others were dealing with similar uncertainties, so she could too.

Jasmine had some here-and-now discomfort in taking on a new role in her setting, where writing for publication was an expectation. Some of her discomforts came from her perception of her academic English. New forms of conduct were required, such as being prepared to expose her writing to others so that she could improve it. Jasmine found Intervention 2 to be a new sphere of experience. The time and space of a writing retreat enabled Jasmine to extend her understanding of academic research writing and adapt her conduct to feel ready to expose her writing-in-progress to peers for their feedback. In doing so, she worked along the other-object axis of her semiotic prism to make the message of her writing clearer and relevant to an international disciplinary audience.

Elspeth was uncomfortable with others' perceptions of her as a disciplinary writer. Participating in writing retreats revealed to her that the relationship between writing and thinking that she had already adapted could reduce uncertainty. Using a notebook as a

symbolic resource, she distanced her prior self-conception as a writer, enabling her to sustain and develop her position. Part of Elspeth's projected writing development was to write collaboratively with Jane. Subsequently, in the chapter, I will explore the development of this relationship.

6.3 Emerging relational agency through writing for publication

To address the specific research question:

How do nurse writers experience relational work and deal with contradictions to shape their academic research writing development?

I identify what mattered about the development of academic research writing to the individual participants in Intervention 2. I consider issues that arose outside or as an outcome of Intervention 2, such as demands from sociocultural contexts that created contradictions and critical conflicts for the development of academic research writing. I then examine how the participants overcame such issues through their distributed relational work and the extent to which they became active agents in their writing development. Finally, I explore the specific development of the individual's academic research writing, comprising their self-evaluation and my analysis through the lens of academic research writing concepts (Bazerman, 2012).

I took a dialectical approach to collecting and analysing the data (Edwards, 2005, 2011, 2017; Hedegaard, 2012; Sannino, 2015; Sannino & Engeström, 2017) to focus on participants' motives, contradictions, interpretations and draw attention to the links between the actions and activities of the writers and their societal conditions. I collected

the data through semi-structured interviews, email correspondence and samples of the participants writing. Through the analysis, I aimed to identify how individuals recognised and responded to the demands for writing in dialectical interplay with their respective activity settings. Furthermore, I sought to determine where the tensions existed, where relational agency was required, what mattered to individuals, and how they negotiated with their collaborators. The themes that emerged from the analysis were *aligning actions and motives on a co-authored text, developing relational agency through the journal peer-review process,* and *enacting relational agency through the writing process.* The findings are temporal and narrative and reported under the respective themes.

6.3.1 Aligning actions and motives on a co-authored text

Supervisory relations played a vital role in the writers' development in the current thesis study. The problem space is academic research writing development for the health care disciplines, and dissertation supervisors are a potential gateway to opportunities for novice writers to write for publication. As explained at the outset of the thesis, supervisors in the context also worked on their trajectories as writers. Part of their development included the capacity to support novice writers to disseminate their research beyond a dissertation. An objective of Intervention 2 was to support such development. This section explores Jane and Elspeth's collaborative writing experiences and their interpretations of co-authoring a journal article based on Elspeth's independent study work. I examine the challenges for their relational work and the emergence of their agency as writers.

Jane was a mid-career adult nursing teacher. She joined Intervention 2 to write collaboratively with supervisees to reconfigure their academic work as journal research articles. As a teacher, Jane was becoming a resource for novice writers by creating access and opportunities that were developmental and extraordinary to the formal curriculum:

> "Having a good relationship with the student you intend to work with, I think, is critical. So, to write with them, they must have good work to present too. One student got an 'A' in her dissertation. So that was the motivation. I said to her, 'why don't you publish it? And you could come to the group (Intervention 2) to do this with, to help."

In Jane's progression as a doctoral student, she had developed knowledge and skills in academic research writing and recognised that she could offer support to neophyte co-authors. Jane was also working more broadly on the problem space of the current thesis by trying to create conditions for transitions in writing development. Jane had identified potential supervisees to write with, based on the quality of their writing and its potential for further dissemination. A frustration for Jane was that potential student co-authors had become side-tracked with other personal and work priorities before completing their proposed projects. Aligning actions and motives when working on co-authored texts was a source of tension for Jane, who attempted to encourage students such as Elspeth to reconfigure high-quality student work:

> "And the second student I worked with was Elspeth because I was quite determined that I should continue writing. This was her independent study module assignment. I had marked it and said to her at the time, 'you need to publish that.' I had stopped working with the other student, so I said, 'well, why not come to the writing group (Intervention 2)?' And we started on the journey to make it publishable."

Jane had recognised Elspeth's emerging expertise in her student research work. Elspeth had participated in an Erasmus exchange to Spain, and her independent study project

was about the impact of austerity measures in health care which is a crucial topic of interest to nurses in all contexts. What also mattered to Jane was to improve her writing in the process of collaborating with Elspeth:

> "I do write a lot. I am never happy with the level of my writing. Always concerned about it. Never quite sure how to get it up to the next level."

Elspeth welcomed the opportunity to join Intervention 2:

> "I thought it would be a nice way of working together. But I did not really know what I was getting into."

Elspeth was committed to developing her writing to communicate health care issues that impacted hard-to-reach groups or marginalised individuals. However, she was adapting to her position and competence as a writer. It mattered to be understood by others through her writing:

> "I'm not clever with words. Like you know a journalist or people writing an opinion piece, I would love to be that clever with words. Using lots of metaphors and bringing people on a journey. I just try and make it clear. And I want it to be understood by the most amount of people."

Alongside the potential to write with Jane, Elspeth was commissioned to write monthly student columns for a published nursing journal and consequently entered Intervention 2 with two possible projects. Elspeth identified genre differences between the two writing tasks, and this presented her with a critical conflict about what to prioritise. She considered that the reconfiguration of the independent study text as a potential journal article was a more 'serious' genre of writing, whereas writing a student column felt accessible:

> "There are conflicting ideas in writing and publishing. The idea is that you should only publish in high-quality journals, and that is what you need to focus on, versus making things democratic, making things accessible. I think there are two sides. Academically speaking, there is a reason why high-quality writing and high-quality journals are important. However, for nurses to feel that they are part of that arena where you have got something to say, you can practice saying it through a student column or a blog."

While Elspeth had initial trepidation about writing a student column, she viewed the possibility of writing in the genre to enhance her confidence as a writer and fit with her values about the accessibility of academic writing. Joining Intervention 2 exposed Elspeth to the relational expertise of others and the importance of know-who to develop her writing, including academic teachers and learners who were also developing their academic research writing:

> "It was writing the columns and being able to talk through the points I wanted to make, having the opportunity to get feedback on the same day from people, and then being able to make changes that day as well. The feedback was about to make a clearer order."

Elspeth also developed confidence in her expertise for others:

> "And learning from other people's writing about the various stages of a paper. It was nice to be able to contribute to that as well. Being able to see what other people put in their writing. It helped me to think about what I was writing at other points."

Elspeth maintained her focus on writing student columns, and by developing know-who in Intervention 2, she took control of her writing processes. Planning and composing student columns became second stimuli for demystifying the writing process:

> "In the group (Intervention 2), we talked about opinion writing. By doing more opinion pieces or writing about what I believe, I think it has taken away that mystique and the pressure of the quality of the writing having to be perfect. It is not to detract from people who are clever writers. It is just that you can write, even if it is not perfect."

As Elspeth set about writing student columns, Jane suggested a postponement of their joint writing project:

> "Elspeth got a little bit side-tracked by writing a student column for Journal X. Elspeth had written one, and they had commissioned her for six further ones. I said to her, 'You will not manage to do both, so you need to do one or the other. So, let us park the independent study.' For the first couple of columns, I was quite heavily involved with editing them. After that, Elspeth got the hang of what she needed to do, and I have not been party to them."

Subsequently, Jane and Elspeth reverted to the original intention to write up the independent study assignment for publication through their joint authorship:

> "So, then we reverted to working on Elspeth's independent study paper about exchange and austerity measures in Spain. We did work that up and submit it."

Jane and Elspeth's collaborative processes appeared to work through the mutual setting of objectives to develop the text. However, for Elspeth, there were areas of uncertainty about her expertise for the task, for example, the notion of taking a lead role in a collaborative writing relationship:

> "We always set each other objectives. Jane was very clear that this was a collaborative piece, but the onus was on me. At first, I had not fully understood that. I thought we would all just be writing it together. However, then when it was clear, I was like, 'ah, OK, I will get on it."

Secondly, Elspeth found it challenging to deal with the division of labour:

> "And we would go through it together. And then I would work on it again. It was scary, and I did not understand that the onus was on me initially. I did not understand the division of labour. Thus, I did have a crisis of confidence. It took me a while to get that final…manuscript."

Jane also had frustrations about their relational work:

> "The paper didn't get accepted, with quite some harsh comments. I was never convinced about the journal Elspeth chose. And I did say that at the time, I said, 'well we'll see, and if it's a no, we'll try elsewhere. Elspeth has

> now started her PhD and started working as a staff nurse. She was quite clear to me; we met a few weeks ago that her PhD supervisor has told her she cannot afford to spend time doing other things. So, we're not going to pursue it. So, it's, unfortunately, lost work."

The object of activity was both of their longer-term writing trajectories, and from Jane's perspective, this included their respective writing development and creating new ways of working that Jane could take forward with future supervisees as collaborators. On the other hand, what mattered to Elspeth became objectified into writing student columns. The supervisor-supervisee relationship is vertical in the formal academic context; however, Jane attempted to create horizontal writing relations. Elspeth may not have been conscious that working collaboratively on the text was also about Jane's development as a co-author and teacher and that Jane was trying to develop Elspeth's capacity as a writer without encouraging dependency. Jane reflected:

> "I think the difficulties with it know how much effort I need to put into it. Is this 50/50? Or is this me just giving the writer some pointers? How much involvement should the staff member have? But I did feel like co-author (about one-third), and we reached an agreement on the structure, topics, and paragraphs."

In their collaborative work, it did not appear possible for Jane and Elspeth to fully expand the object of activity. There seemed to be more potential to make explicit the values and motives of potential relational work so that what mattered for each of them could be aligned and recognise their long-term goals. Specifically, there was more potential for them to negotiate where the responsibility lay about leading the direction of the text in development. There was a lack of clarity concerning the division of labour. Elspeth was unsure that she had the expertise to lead on the development of a manuscript in a genre that felt 'serious.' She could not mobilise the resources to take on the role leading to a crisis in confidence, and she did not know how to ask for support. Jane

questioned the target journal of choice, implying that her expertise had been underplayed. "The lost work" with no further possibilities to re-interpret the task by responding to the journal peer-review feedback process was an additional complication.

Jane had experienced a critical conflict in her relational work with Elspeth. Her moral values concerned new ways of working, yet such relational work did not seem entirely possible through working collaboratively with supervisees at this point. Whilst there were frustrations for Jane, she identified that by participating in Intervention 2, she gained knowledge and skills of the peer-reviewing process and possibilities for action when she was invited to formally peer-review a journal article. Furthermore, Jane had given Elspeth access to Intervention 2, and Jane was able to exert agency in her intentions to promote the development of academic research writing because she was a resource for Elspeth's progress as a writer. Authoring student columns acted as a second stimulus for Elspeth's writing development, enabling her to take control of her writing processes, and the publications were a factor in determining her further pathway as a PhD student.

6.3.2 Developing relational agency in the journal peer- review process

As novice writers, most participants were unaware of formal peer-review processes for publication in respective disciplinary journals. Each participant either jointly or independently submitted a manuscript, and without exception, irrespective of the outcome (acceptance or rejection), there was peer-reviewer feedback to be addressed, which was often contradictory and confusing. The individual writers found that they needed to seek the collaborative expertise of others to develop the capacity for responding to peer reviews and to revise their writing accordingly. To illustrate the

theme, I will present Helen's experiences and interpretations of submitting and resubmitting a manuscript that became a primary contradiction for her writing development.

As explained earlier, Helen worked on a journal article about her dissertation research on health care students' experiences of 'belongingness' in clinical placements. Three key issues mattered to Helen. Firstly, 'doing the dissertation work justice':

> "So that the work is fully represented, and that I'm not leaving out the information I think is important to the health care workplace. You want it to matter."

Secondly, she wanted to become a role model to others:

> "I want to get published. In terms of my development and career development. I'm looking after students regularly and see students coming through who are doing their degree and doing their masters. If I can get published, then I'd be a role model."

Thirdly, she aspired to research practices in the clinical context:

> "In a recent PDN (practice development nurse) meeting, the question was asked 'who was involved in doing research?' And I was the only one with my hand up, the only one in the whole hospital. And I think that is quite telling about the organisation and what's going on. There's a huge gap."

Helen's apparent aspirations were about personal development and influencing organisational change through becoming a published author. What mattered to Helen "in doing the work justice" was to publish her work in a practitioner journal. Her object of activity was to disseminate the findings of her small-scale study to clinically based mentors, which she described as "people at her level in healthcare organisations" who had the potential to influence the experiences of healthcare students on clinical placements:

> "I would like the takeaway message to be that there are lots of different factors that influence the students' experience of placements, but that belongingness is key to all of it."

Disciplinary journals represent motives to develop the standing of the discipline by sharing and disseminating new knowledge and demonstrating disciplinary values whilst serving the needs of the community of journal readers. For vocational disciplines, the community may be clinicians or academics or both. The central tension that arose for Helen about writing for publication was that the rules appeared less explicit than writing for academic assessment. The challenge became compounded because the aims and scope of the practitioner journal evolved over the timeline that Helen submitted and resubmitted her work. When Helen first targeted the journal, they did not regularly publish research articles. The emphasis was on opinion pieces and news items. I will now examine how Helen dealt with the interplay between what mattered to her and the journal peer-review process to shape her writing.

As explained earlier, Helen had experienced a sense of loss when reconfiguring the dissertation to a journal article, including her authorial voice's disappearance. When Helen planned the proposed journal article, she prepared an abstract for her Intervention 2 peers. Through the peer-feedback process, it became clear to Helen that she had omitted the central concept of belongingness that she had used in her dissertation research:

> "When I was doing the presentation, I did not include belongingness. It was in my notes in preparation to answer questions. I felt sorry I was losing things; it did not look like I thought it should look. But that helped me in terms of making sure that is what a reader would… be looking for."

A challenge for the participants was to distil a 20,000-word dissertation into a word limited journal article whilst understanding what aspects of a dissertation made sense

and meaning for a respective journal readership. As an outcome of peer feedback and reviewing the journal's instruction for authors, Helen decided:

> "I wasn't doing my work justice, and that's when I made the decision, I've just got to bite the bullet on this and write two articles. I will do justice to the word count and get the message across by separating the work, in terms of the student and the mentor experiences."

Helen's object of activity was to do her dissertation research 'justice' in the publication process. The peer feedback and what mattered to Helen influenced her decision to draft a two-part paper for potential publication that emphasised the findings of her study. Helen submitted two manuscripts to her selected journal in September 2016. In November 2016, Helen received peer review feedback concerning major revisions, which presented conflicts. Helen shared her dilemmas with her Intervention 2 peers. Her first concern was the consistency between the feedback and the journal's guidelines for authors:

> "I had read the author's guide quite rigorously. I had written three and a half thousand words, which I thought had complied with the guidelines. They said it was too long and that it needed to be under 3,000 words which doesn't correspond with the author's guide."

Helen's second concern was the feedback on the rigour of the research:

> "They say that the research sample is too small."

Helen's third concern was about the peer-reviewers recommendations for rewriting the manuscripts before resubmission:

> "They want a literature review and a research paper. I had divided the results into two parts. Part one was about the student's experiences, and part two was about the role of the mentor. To me, it felt like it fitted in quite nicely, and it felt more natural to write. I didn't do a literature review for my dissertation. I'd done primary research."

Helen's frustrations were evident. She had attempted to comply with authors' guidelines; however, the peer-reviewers feedback had exposed the conflicts between her understanding of academic research writing for a Master's dissertation compared with writing for publication. For example, the research findings needed to be enhanced by positioning them alongside a literature review to show that the author knows their field to be presented rigorously for a prospective journal audience. On the other hand, she contested some of the critique given that the source of the feedback came from a practitioner journal. The formal peer-review feedback was in dialectical interplay with how passionately Helen felt about her research topic as objectified in the transactional relationship she had developed with her text.

Helen presented the peer-reviewers feedback to the Intervention 2 co-participants because she needed their help to deal with the conflicts. A recognition of the need for help concerned Helen's capacity to develop know-who. As shown earlier, through informal peer-review activities, the Intervention 2 participants had developed joint knowledge about academic research writing, which may be conceptualised as common knowledge. Specifically, they determined the requirements for a new writing task, a journal article, and the need to approach the writing processes differently from writing for academic assessment. More broadly, they had developed a respectful knowledge of what mattered to one another as objectified into their respective journal articles and had sight of a shared long-term goal about their trajectories as academic research writers.

Helen's critical problem space was to revise the writing significantly for a practitioner journal that did not feature research studies or withdraw her manuscript and resubmit to

a more academically orientated journal. Helen's peers were a resource to inform her decision-making:

> "I was glad that everybody read the feedback because then I wasn't misrepresenting it in any way. I think I certainly felt it was very supportive, and within the group advice, it had a consensus to move to a different journal. I knew academically that it wasn't the best journal to go to. Because I thought from a practice point of view, this will be the best place. Now I'm faced with this decision again, about reworking it for a different journal. However, I still want to get it published. It is this strange thing of fighting your way."

Helen had contested the journal's critique of her writing. However, at the same time, she wanted to learn from the review. She required the interpretation of her peers on the potential to take action and expand the object of activity. Journal peer-review feedback is non-negotiable, compliance is necessary if the writer wants to get their work published, but peer-review feedback is also a form of distributed intelligence/expertise in the publication process systems. As I will now explain, Helen could propel herself forward using the feedback as mediational means because her Intervention 2 peers had given her help.

Helen withdrew her manuscript from Journal 1 (November 2016) and selected an international higher education journal for nursing. The literature review section of the revised text for submission to Journal 2 is shown in Fig. 6.2.

Helen did not take the formal peer reviewer's advice to create a discrete literature review text. However, she took on board that her study may not be rich enough in terms of scope and findings to justify two empirical papers, so she consolidated it with some minor changes to the literature review section. Helen's two new moves at the opening

and closing sentences of the literature review section highlighted a gap in the current literature and, therefore, where Helen's study could contribute.

Alas, there was a further disappointment to come for Helen. Her manuscript was rejected by journal 2 (Fig.6.3) but the rejection came with feedback for re-submission elsewhere.

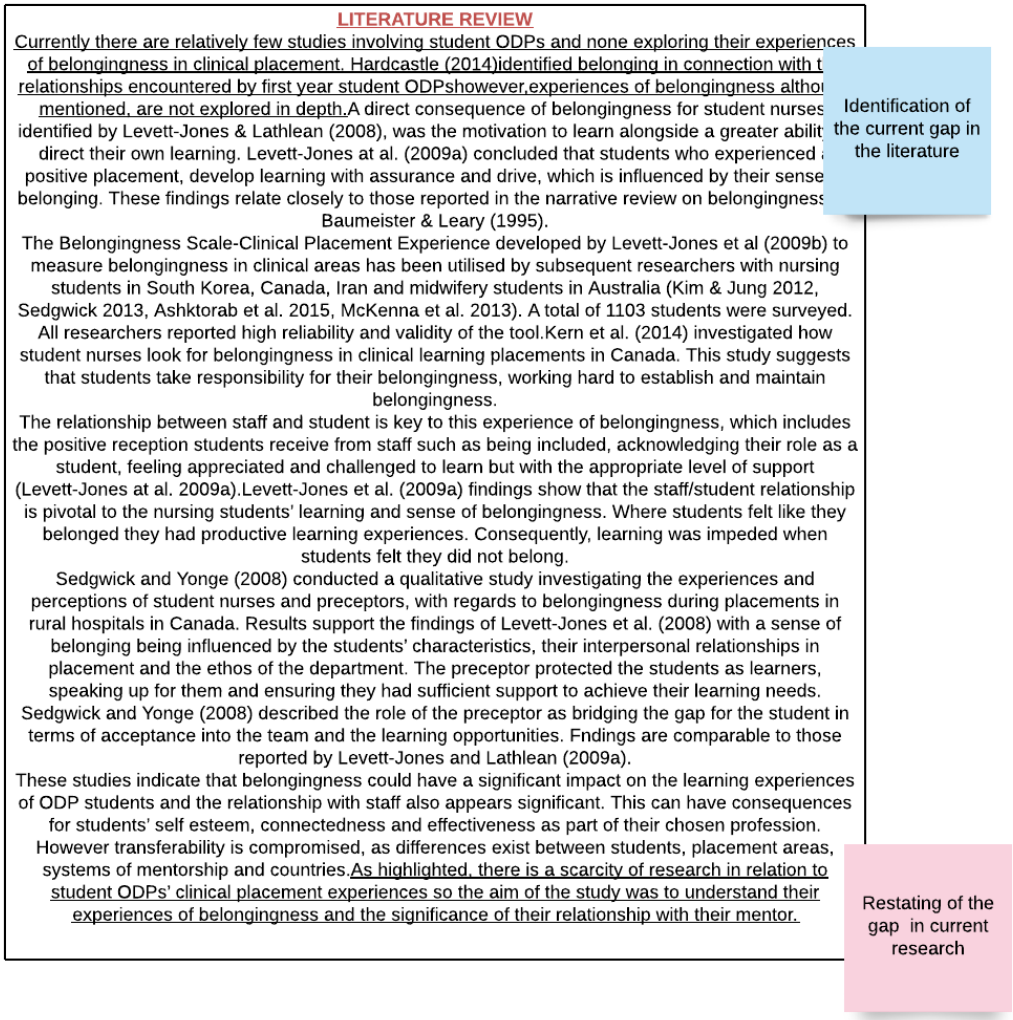


Figure 6:2 Helen draft for submission to Journal 2 January 2017

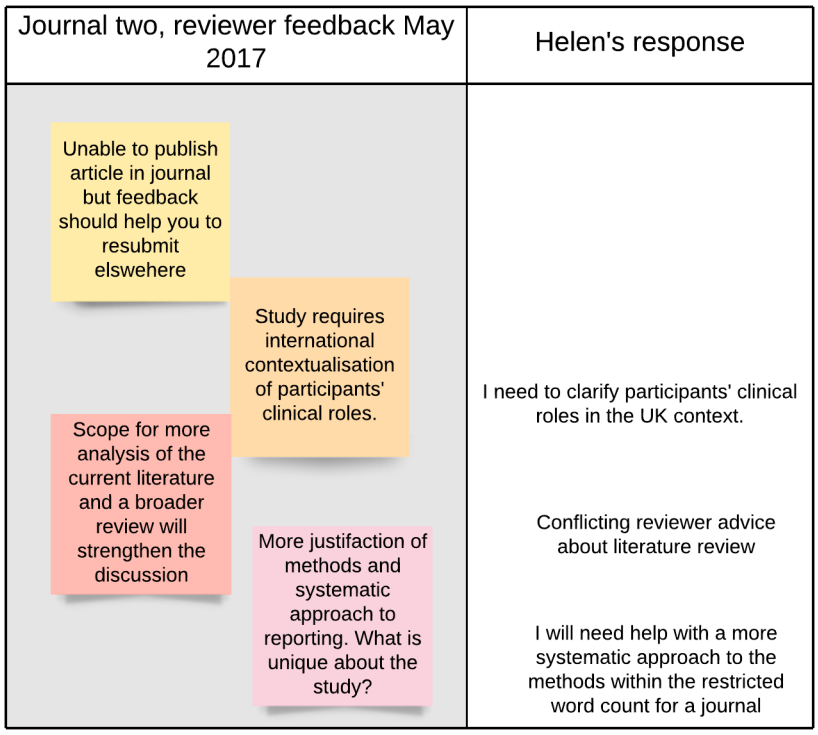


Figure 6:3 Helen Journal 2 peer-review feedback, May 2017

The formal reviewer feedback from Journal 2 is shown in Fig. 6.3 with suggestions to contextualise participants' clinical roles, provide an up-to-date and critical literature review, and systematically explain the selected methods, reported results, and novel contributions. Helen decided to resubmit to her original target journal (Journal 1), which finally accepted her paper for publication:

> "I can hardly believe it after so long. The journal for the first submission (and rejected/requested the lit review) was transferred to X Publishing when I submitted the second time. The journal had significantly improved in terms of the quality of articles with much more research-based papers. I do believe that this made a difference and why it was accepted as primary research the second time."

Before the final resubmission, Helen had developed more confidence in interpreting the formal peer-reviewer's feedback as a mediating tool to work on the object of activity

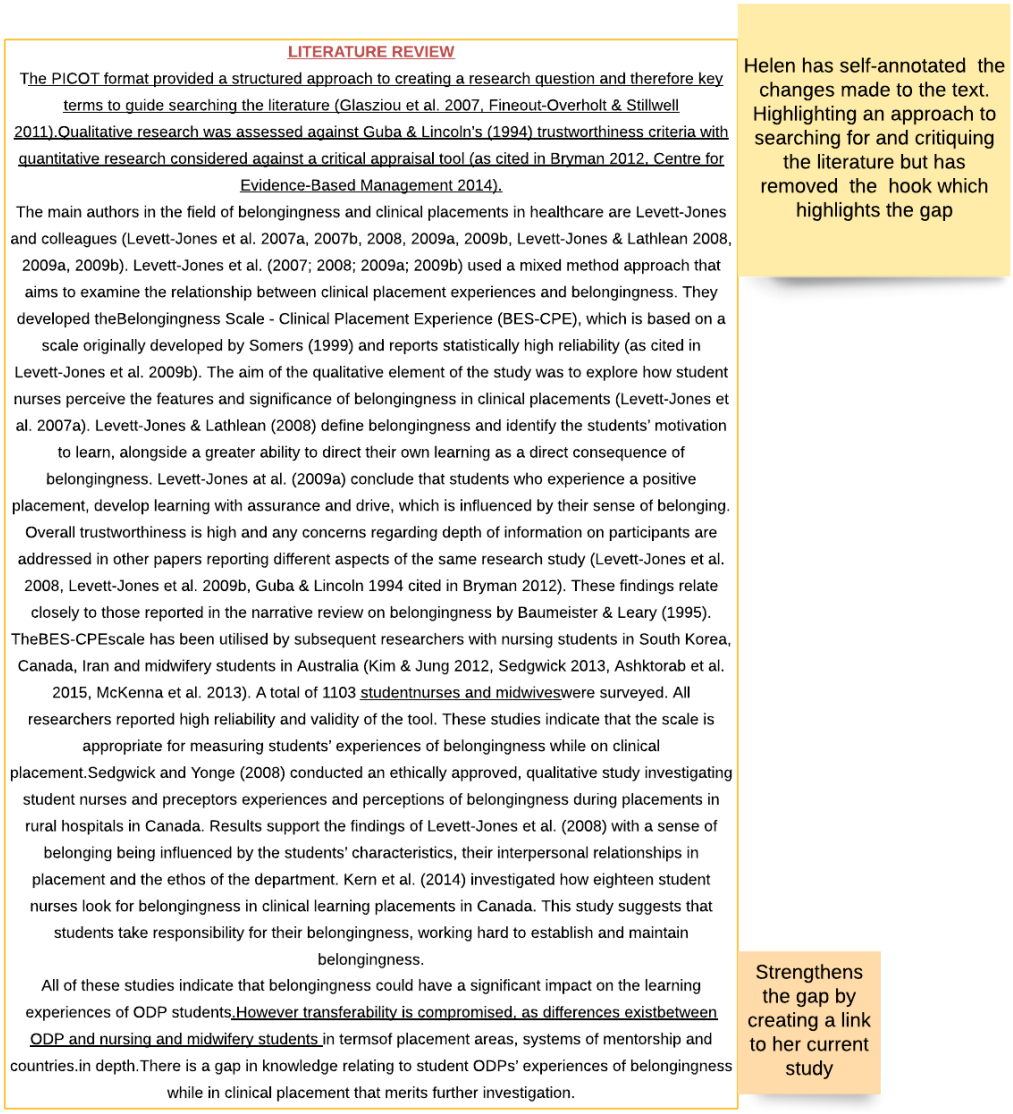
and self-evaluated and annotated the changes that she made in preparation for resubmission to Journal 1. Fig. 6.11 show the beginnings of Helen's inner editorial decisions and volitional intertextual tracing. Helen highlighted her responses, including the steps she had taken to search and critique literature, and, in the closing paragraph, she attempted to link the gap in the literature and the contribution of her current study. The revisions were more detailed than previously undertaken in response to formal the peer-reviewer's feedback.

Helen had also learned about the standing of respective peer-review journals and how their values will shift over time to reflect what matters to a disciplinary community, and this may make it challenging to find a set of rules to follow. In evaluating her writing development, Helen identified that the primary enabler was listening to and trusting the feedback source even if one disagreed with it and working through the feedback by using the resources of others to produce an answer:

> "There is no doubt the writing group (Intervention 2) has helped develop that, and I suppose the fact that I am still doing it, it is a fact I am still practising my writing."

Helen was learning about how to become a resourceful practitioner for her writing development. The problem space emerged from the complexity of dealing with formal peer-review feedback. By revealing the complexity of the problem to peers, they understood Helen's dilemma. The second stimuli came from the common knowledge developed with peers who shared motives to get published and constructing similar narratives. Helen took control and used the formal reviewer's feedback as a tool to rework the text (as a set of rules) and made a calibrated response to work with the problem. By the time Helen's text was subsequently rejected by Journal 2, she had

developed a set of conceptual tools to work with peer reviewer's feedback and reconfigure the task for successful resubmission and acceptance.



LITERATURE REVIEW

The PICOT format provided a structured approach to creating a research question and therefore key terms to guide searching the literature (Glasziou et al. 2007, Fineout-Overholt & Stillwell 2011).Qualitative research was assessed against Guba & Lincoln's (1994) trustworthiness criteria with quantitative research considered against a critical appraisal tool (as cited in Bryman 2012, Centre for Evidence-Based Management 2014).

The main authors in the field of belongingness and clinical placements in healthcare are Levett-Jones and colleagues (Levett-Jones et al. 2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, Levett-Jones & Lathlean 2008, 2009a, 2009b). Levett-Jones et al. (2007; 2008; 2009a; 2009b) used a mixed method approach that aims to examine the relationship between clinical placement experiences and belongingness. They developed theBelongingness Scale - Clinical Placement Experience (BES-CPE), which is based on a scale originally developed by Somers (1999) and reports statistically high reliability (as cited in Levett-Jones et al. 2009b). The aim of the qualitative element of the study was to explore how student nurses perceive the features and significance of belongingness in clinical placements (Levett-Jones et al. 2007a). Levett-Jones & Lathlean (2008) define belongingness and identify the students' motivation to learn, alongside a greater ability to direct their own learning as a direct consequence of belongingness. Levett-Jones at al. (2009a) conclude that students who experience a positive placement, develop learning with assurance and drive, which is influenced by their sense of belonging. Overall trustworthiness is high and any concerns regarding depth of information on participants are addressed in other papers reporting different aspects of the same research study (Levett-Jones et al. 2008, Levett-Jones et al. 2009b, Guba & Lincoln 1994 cited in Bryman 2012). These findings relate closely to those reported in the narrative review on belongingness by Baumeister & Leary (1995). TheBES-CPEscale has been utilised by subsequent researchers with nursing students in South Korea, Canada, Iran and midwifery students in Australia (Kim & Jung 2012, Sedgwick 2013, Ashktorab et al. 2015, McKenna et al. 2013). A total of 1103 studentnurses and midwiveswere surveyed. All researchers reported high reliability and validity of the tool. These studies indicate that the scale is appropriate for measuring students' experiences of belongingness while on clinical placement.Sedgwick and Yonge (2008) conducted an ethically approved, qualitative study investigating student nurses and preceptors experiences and perceptions of belongingness during placements in rural hospitals in Canada. Results support the findings of Levett-Jones et al. (2008) with a sense of belonging being influenced by the students' characteristics, their interpersonal relationships in placement and the ethos of the department. Kern et al. (2014) investigated how eighteen student nurses look for belongingness in clinical learning placements in Canada. This study suggests that students take responsibility for their belongingness, working hard to establish and maintain belongingness.

All of these studies indicate that belongingness could have a significant impact on the learning experiences of ODP students,However transferability is compromised, as differences existbetween ODP and nursing and midwifery students in termsof placement areas, systems of mentorship and countries.in depth.There is a gap in knowledge relating to student ODPs' experiences of belongingness while in clinical placement that merits further investigation.

Helen has self-annotated the changes made to the text. Highlighting an approach to searching for and critiquing the literature but has removed the hook which highlights the gap

Strengthens the gap by creating a link to her current study

Figure 6:4 Helen's revised draft for resubmission Journal 1, January 2018

6.3.3 Enacting relational agency through the writing process

The problem space of the current thesis is the challenges that face nurses and other health care professionals in becoming academic research writers. The experiences of

the Intervention 2 participants showed how difficult it was to overcome the constraints implicitly imposed by institutions even when participants had carried out meaningful small-scale research projects. The situation was particularly challenging for the higher teachers where academic research writing is not part of their expected roles. Relational agency was required to overcome the contradictions. To show how relational agency was enacted through the writing process, I present the findings from an analysis of Jo's academic research writing. The analysis is derived from an initiating text, a research method essay, to a final published journal article. I start with Jo's reflections on her history of writing in the discipline, which also presented contradictions for her writing development and highlighted the compelling way Jo broke away from previous constraints.

Jo, a children's nursing lecturer, had recently completed her Master's dissertation and described the experience of writing about a topic that mattered:

> "I had felt from the beginning of my Master's dissertation that if it was going to be of any value, it needed to be shared. The whole point of it was nothing had been researched around the topic, so it seemed a waste of everybody's time not to share the findings."

Jo described newfound freedom in nurse writing when undertaking a Master's dissertation. She contrasted her feelings with prior academic writing tasks, which she described as challenging and formidable:

> "I got dreadful marks in my nursing degree, and that knocked me because I did not understand how I could do well."

Jo's evaluation of her position as a nurse writer emerged from her earlier experiences as an undergraduate music student where the writing felt enjoyable and creative:

> "I enjoyed writing my dissertations and assignments for that degree, and I feel like this is the first point in nursing where I have been able to engage with the way I used to write."

Jo's confidence as a nurse writer emerged in part from her Master's dissertation supervisor's recognition of her clinical expertise, and also Jo's capacity for further development from the outset of the dissertation process:

> "I had a good supervisor. She was very encouraging and said, 'you have to do this.' Before I handed the dissertation in, she said, 'this is part of your dissemination plan. You have to write this up for publication."

The object of activity was Jo's progression as a writer through to published author, which mattered to her and her supervisor. They both worked in the problem space of the current thesis study and were trying to address the problem by propelling Jo to a future-orientated position. However, what mattered was in dialectical interplay with Jo's position as a children's nursing lecturer, where the institution did not prioritise writing, yet becoming an academic research writer was implicitly expected. Even though Jo had completed the dissertation work, a critical conflict remained about where her priorities belonged, which Jo described as 'political.' As shown earlier, Jo and other participants found the time and space of Intervention 2 to be meaningful. Jo appropriated the mediational resources from the intervention to develop self-regulation strategies, including time management. However, Jo's holistic development as an academic research writer concerned how she enacted relational agency drawn from distributed expertise and evidenced in her texts.

Before starting her dissertation, Jo had completed a research methods module where she had written a 3,000-word essay. On reflection of her overall writing processes, Jo identified the literature review chapter as a starting point for her dissertation by using

the research methods essay as a basis. Jo described a stage of careful planning of the chapter by creating a skeleton structure with specific sections. She had assumed that it would be possible to cut and paste from the essay to the dissertation. However, in practice, composing the literature review became an iterative and longitudinal process and the most challenging aspect of the dissertation to write because detailed and iterative work was required:

> "The reason I think I found it hard was because as part of the research methods essay, I had a little section of a literature review, and so I had assumed 'oh, it will be easy because I will just be able to copy that and put that in'. However, then I realised that it that was not enough. There was so much more detail needed and to explore the literature in much more depth."

Jo retrospectively self-evaluated the first draft of her literature review (November 2016) chapter as lacking a flow through her use of short paragraphs, and she noted that the text conveyed the ideas of cited authors and little of her own. In the closing section of the chapter, Jo's literary moves summarised the literature review findings and pointed out the relationship between the literature and the aims of her dissertation study. Jo engaged with her supervisor for feedback on the draft. Fig. 6.5 shows the closing section of Jo's first draft literature review annotated with her supervisor's feedback comments. Jo's supervisor suggested that she could be more forthright about the potential contribution of her dissertation research.

Further suggestions were to state the significance of the conceptual themes from the literature review and justify the research methods. Jo's supervisor recommended that Jo justify her research questions more strongly and present them alongside the research aims and objectives to show how they developed through the literature review process.

Surface level features of the text were noted, such as single-sentence paragraphs that disrupted the reader's writing flow.

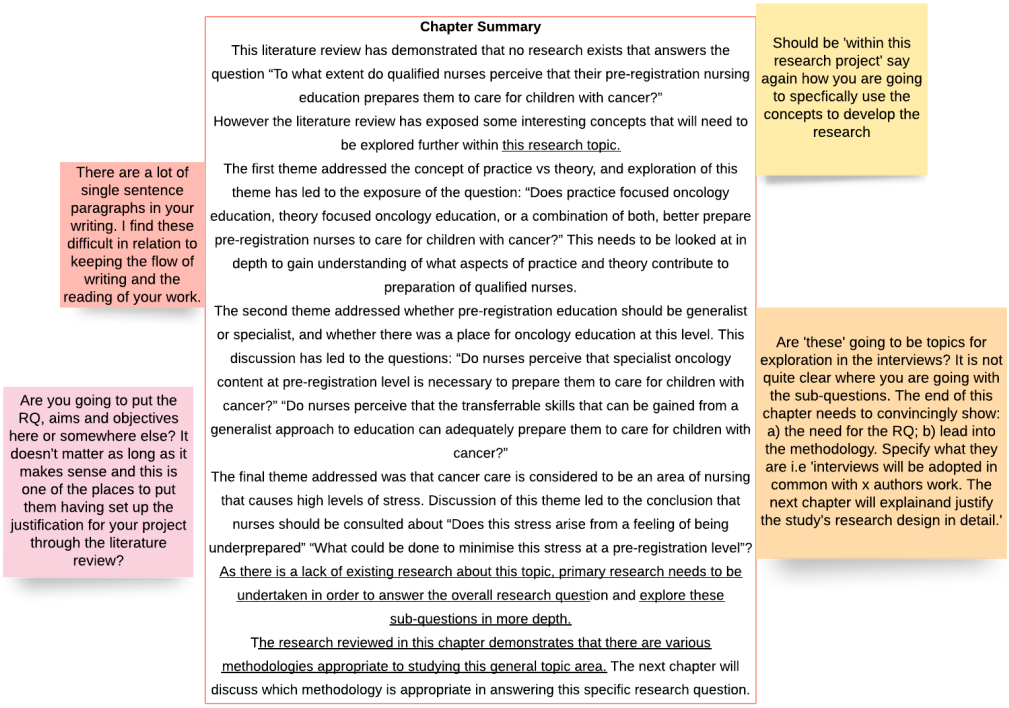


Figure 6:5 Jo 1st dissertation literature review draft January 2015

Jo had received detailed feedback on her writing in progress. The feedback focused on developing research concepts in the text and aligned with Bazerman's (2012) recommendation that teachers need to nurture and develop disciplinary concepts in students' writing. Furthermore, Jo was encouraged to position herself in the relevant literature and bring new thoughts to the discussion. Jo made a calibrated response to the feedback:

> "I had a list and ticked off all the easy bits that my supervisor had said. Things like the single-sentence paragraph writing. Some of the bigger bits I just left and came back to later in the process."

Jo was experiencing newly emerging and challenging aspects of the dissertation writing process as her supervisor helped her expand the object of activity.

Jo developed auxiliary motives to take control of the process. "The easy bits" were dealt with first whilst Jo took time to work through the conceptual and intertextual issues raised by her supervisor:

> "And I think that was quite helpful because when I started my dissertation (September 2015), I had a very clear idea that I wanted to have my literature review done by Christmas. As I went through, I realised it was not going to work like that, and that, as well as being the first bit, also ended up being the last bit. I just needed to be more patient, and that is something I found out about myself, that I cannot just finish things. What I liked about doing the dissertation was that I had a year to keep thinking about things and mulling things over, and it was not like an essay when you have got six weeks to do it."

Jo spent nine months composing her dissertation. Fig. 6.6 shows the closing section of the final version of the literature review chapter. In response to supervisory feedback, three clear transitions emerged within Jo's writing. Firstly, there were linguistic changes because Jo used booster discourse mechanisms (Hyland, 2009) to present her contribution to the reader. Secondly, Jo had made significant revisions to the concluding subsections, influenced by her supervisor's call to be more explicit about the relationship between the findings of the literature review and Jo's intended research methods. Thirdly, it was possible to trace the intertextual relationship between Jo and her supervisor because she used her supervisor's words in the text itself. Jo's actions show how she had drawn upon supervisory feedback as a second stimulus by using it as a tool to interpret the task and work on it whilst also taking control.



Summary

This literature review has demonstrated that no existing research answers the question "**To what extent do qualified nurses perceive that their pre-registration nursing education prepares them to care for children with cancer?**". However it has shown that there are particular concepts within relevant literature which relate to the topic area. Further exploration of these will enable the overall research question to be examined.

The first theme addressed the concept of practice versus theory, and exploration of this theme has led to the formation of the question: "Does practice focused oncology education, theory focused oncology education, or a combination of both, better prepare pre-registration nurses to care for children with cancer?" This needs to be looked at in depth to gain understanding of what aspects of practice and theory contribute to preparation of qualified nurses.

The second theme discussed whether pre-registration education should be generalist or specialist, and whether there was a place for oncology education at this level. This discussion has led to the questions: "Do nurses perceive that specialist oncology content at pre-registration level is necessary to prepare them to care for children with cancer?" and "Do nurses perceive that the transferrable skills that can be gained from a generalist approach to education can adequately prepare them to care for children with cancer?".

The final theme explored the significant levels of stress within cancer care nursing. Discussion of this theme led to the conclusion that it would be valuable to ask nurses: "Does this stress arise from a feeling of being underprepared?" and "What could be done to minimise this stress at a pre-registration level?".

As there is a lack of existing research about this topic, primary research needs to be undertaken in order to answer the overall research question and these sub-questions. The research reviewed in this chapter demonstrates that there are various methodologies appropriate to studying this general topic area. In order to explore the perceptions of nurses in depth a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews will be adopted, in common with the work of Coyne and Needham (2012), Sanford et al (2011) and Tomlinson (2004). The quantitative approaches used by Lockhart et al (2013), Purnell et al (2004), Savopoulou (2001) and Vioral (2011) would not allow such depth. The sub-questions raised from the literature will be used to inform the interview questions.

Thus the aims and objectives for this study will be as follows:

Aim:

To explore the impact of practice and theoretical content within pre-registration nursing education on a qualified nurse's perception of their own competence when caring for children with cancer.

Objectives:

·To explore the extent to which nurses perceive that the theoretical and / or practice content of their pre-registration nursing course prepares them to care for children with cancer.

·To explore what nurses believe to be the specific aspects of knowledge, skills and attitude that qualified nurses should possess in order to competently care for children with cancer.

·To consider the findings of the study in relation to the existing curriculum and its future development within the children's nursing pre-registration programme at my HEI.

·To disseminate findings of this study to other HEIs.

·To learn how to undertake a small-scale qualitative study.

The next chapter will provide a detailed discussion about the appropriateness of adopting a qualitative methodological approach and will explain and justify the specific methods adopted in the study.

Figure 6:6 Jo revised dissertation literature review September 2016

As explained earlier, Jo felt that her dissertation research would be meaningless if she did not share it more widely. Jo described her rewriting processes from the dissertation towards publication. She progressed quickly by working collaboratively with her supervisor in the dyadic practices they established during the dissertation writing

process. However, an essential aspect of Jo's agentic development as an academic research writer was how she expanded her capacity for know-who and drew upon the distributed expertise of others.

As explained earlier (6.2.4), through the peer-reviewing activities in Intervention 2, Jo made sense of her writing and became a resource for others. Here I will focus on the specific actions she took on her text arising from activities she engaged with by meeting the journal requirements and the formal peer-review process. Jo described a challenging editing process to meet the word limits of the journal:

> "I had assumed at the outset that it would be much easier than it was because I thought I would just copy and paste bits. And then obviously because you are trying to cut it down so much, almost you just cannot do that, you end up losing so much of it. I spent much time rereading my dissertation, trying to work out what, what I was trying to say, and then what the most valuable bits were, and which participant quotes gave more weight to it than anything else."

Jo shared similar fears to Helen, as described earlier in this chapter, about losing the meaningfulness of her writing when projected towards a disciplinary audience. However, like Helen, there was a realisation that the writing process is iterative and ongoing. Jo found that through looking outwards and considering the standpoints of her peers in Intervention 2, she also identified concepts associated with her research that she had not previously considered:

> "I used the word 'readiness', which I did not use once in my dissertation. I do not know why I never thought to use it in my original piece of work. The word popped into my head when I was rereading a participant quote, and it seemed more succinct than the other words that I had been using. In one of the writing groups (Intervention 2) I came to, somebody presented their abstract. One of the things we talked about was the words in the title so that when people are searching for your work, it is obvious what it is about. That also influenced the choice of the title."

Jo described extensive rewriting and revision to reconfigure the dissertation text to a journal manuscript. The draft manuscript's intertextual tracing (Fig. 6.7) showed a changed title using the word ‘readiness’, and Jo created keywords for the abstract. The changes linked with the relational work undertaken with Intervention 2 peers, including making sense of the concepts in her work and actions to make her work discoverable by a disciplinary audience.

The influence of supervisory feedback from the initiating draft dissertation text was evident through the occasional use of her supervisor’s original words, and Jo maintained the alignment between the literature review, aim, objectives and methods as advised. Two significant changes emerged: firstly, questions posed as hedges in the dissertation text became concise booster statements; secondly, the framing of the aim and objectives in the draft’s closing section became part of the methods section. However, the short paragraphs noted in the initiating text remained.

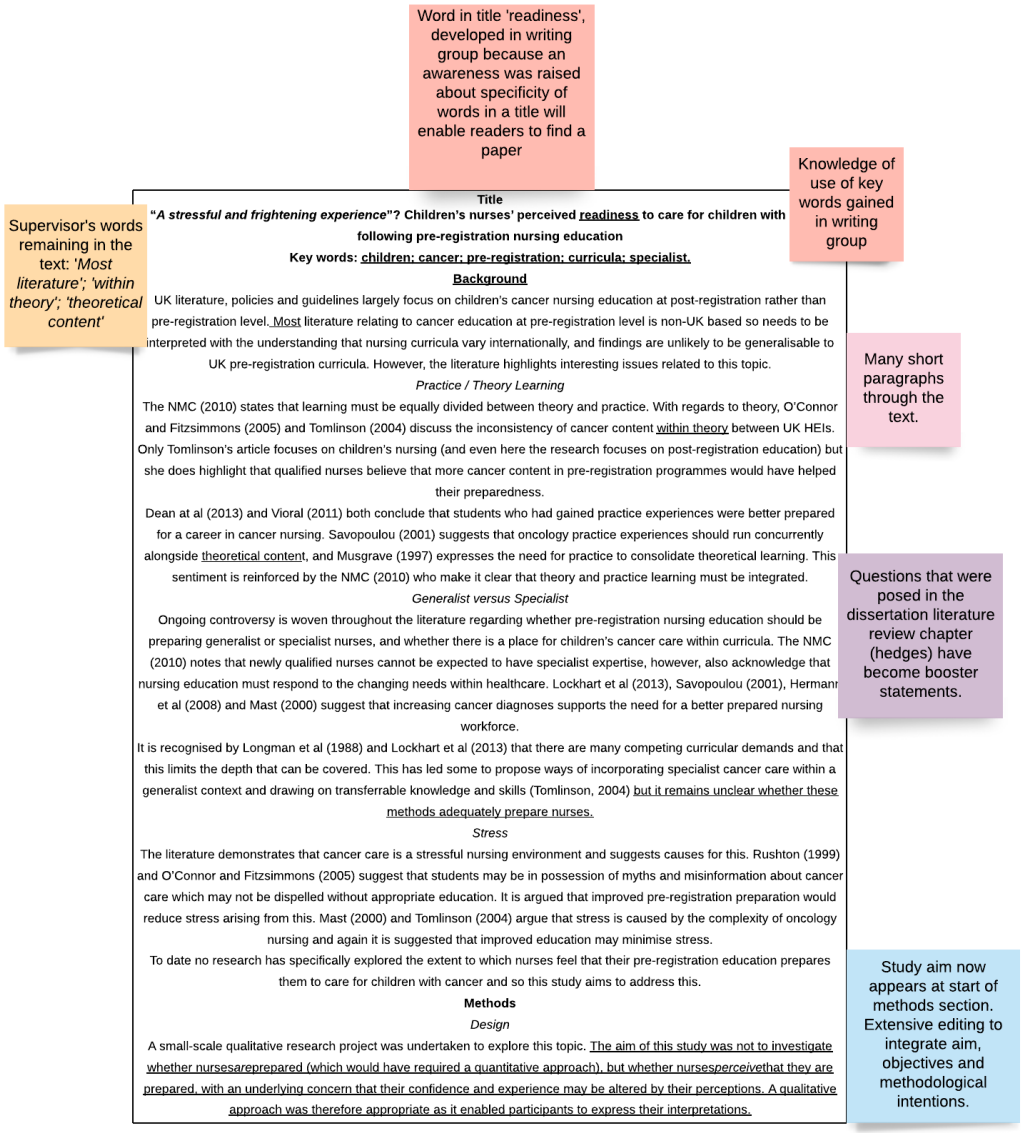


Figure 6:7 Jo 1st draft abstract for proposed Journal, October 2016

Jo felt ready to submit her manuscript to the selected journal at this point in the writing process. She described the steps that she further took to develop the text in response to journal reviewer feedback. Firstly, she made further amendments to the article title:

> "My original title was nursing education, and I was told to change this to nurse education. Furthermore, children's cancer nursing, I had used that phrase, and the editor said it is better to say nursing children with cancer because it makes it more person-centred, which I had never had occurred to me, but it makes absolute sense."

Secondly, she re-positioned other authors in the text:

> "Some paragraphs started with author's names, and she said, 'it is better not to do that because it sounds more authoritative if you start with what they say and finish with who said it'… and part of me was 'I should have known that that seems quite a basic thing to have done."

One area of the formal peer-reviewer's feedback that Jo found challenging to deal with was to provide more up-to-date empirical research in the literature review section. The point of Jo's contribution through her work is that she had researched a little-known area where and topic, so there was no current empirical research to include:

> "One of the reviewers had said that a lot of the literature was dated. That was difficult because there just isn't any. That was the whole point of the article. There was a massive gap. That is when I contacted my supervisor and said, 'I do not know how to do this' She said, you need to respond and helped me to write a response."

Jo's overall editorial decisions showed her commitment to work on the object of activity. Her development was sparked by a passion for a Master's dissertation research topic of novel value to children's cancer care and underpinned by relations with a supervisor who was propelling her forward. Jo's qualitative and conceptual development as a writer was evident in the series of texts from an initiating research method essay through to published manuscript.

Jo grew as a writer through the concepts that she internalised by engaging with distributed expertise and activities concerning her supervisor, Intervention 2 peers and peer-reviewers. Jo's thought processes focused on a central idea for her research:

"readiness." Whilst the concept "popped" into her mind spontaneously, she realised two things. Firstly, she discovered that the term had been used many years ago in the literature on children's nursing, and secondly, by externalising "readiness" in her journal article enabled her to enter a conversation in the discipline, which featured on social media following the publication of her writing:

> "I ended up publishing in a journal, which is more interesting for academics than clinicians. Interestingly, when it was published online, and I shared it on Facebook and Twitter, nurses who work clinically were interested in it, and I had not expected anybody to be that interested. It felt like there was a point to it, and it was not so niche."

Words that emerged in Jo's writing had their origins in the words of her supervisor or peer-reviewers. Bazerman (2012) contends that words appearing in learners' writing arise in prior formulations from those in authority. Jo did not feel challenged by feedback. However, her further growth as a writer involved enhancing her authority in the text.

The agentic changes evident in Jo's writing came about because of her capacity to recognise and accomplish know-who. Despite the constraints of a teaching-focused role, Jo demonstrated a growing ability to work across different forms of expertise and recognise different points of view. Jo was open to others as a source of learning and repositioning her writing as a changing object. As shown earlier in the chapter, Jo became a resource for others in their writing development.

6.4 The processes of transition when writing for publication

In the following sections, I summarise and synthesise the findings from the previous two research questions explored in the chapter to make overall conclusions about the

processes of the participants' transitions. I use Zittoun's (2006) concept of three interdependent transition processes to frame the synthesis, including identity repositioning, knowledge change, and skill acquisition and meaning-making. The concepts of relational agency (Edwards, 2011, 2017; Sannino & Engeström, 2017) and writing as an academic concept (Bazerman, 2012) elaborate the insights.

6.4.1 Identity repositioning when writing for publication

Each participant had potential as a would-be published author. By choosing to participate in writing for publication group intervention, there was potential to modify their social locations. The participants formed new relations with other participants leading to a reciprocal acknowledgement of their status as writers. There was a real and potential repositioning of former and current relations. Helen, Jasmine, and Elspeth's status had moved from learner to peer. The pressure felt by Jo and Cathy to become published authors implied the potential for repositioning amongst their HEI colleagues. Jane attempted to reposition herself with potential student co-authors such as Elspeth. Importantly, when participants became aware of being acknowledged by others as writers, it modified how they defined themselves, inscribing new positions into their narratives. Their writing identities were developing through their imaginary experiences and subsequent appropriation of resources from Intervention 2, leading to the external acknowledgement of their status as writers. For example, Elspeth's published student columns, Jo's publication trending on social media, Helen's journal article finally being accepted for publication in her target journal, and Jane's invitation to become a journal peer-reviewer.

However, repositioning as writers involved several processes before any of them could achieve external acknowledgement. Helen and Jasmine found that they needed to readjust how they engaged in their new peer status and feel part of the context. Learning how to become a resourceful practitioner and developing the capacity for relational agency explicitly concerns the repositioning of individuals through their collective work (Edwards, 2005, 2011, 2017). These were necessary transition processes for the participants and a key finding that I will elaborate on in the following section.

6.4.2 Knowledge change and skill acquisition when writing for publication

Except for Jane, each of the participants in Intervention 2 had not previously written for peer-review publication. However, knowledge change and skill acquisition appeared to emerge as they confronted their uncertainties by appropriating the mediational tools from Intervention 2 during the work of transition. Their learning appeared to be a longitudinal process as they dealt with contradictions that emerged, including unanticipated ones, by expanding their respective capacities for relational work.

Three fundamental contradictions faced the participants in their transition processes to become published authors despite writing about research or topics they had felt passionately. Firstly, there was a lack of dedicated time for writing in their current roles, creating a temporal demand. The demand created frustration for Jo and Cathy, who were employed in academic teaching roles and perceived an institutional pressure to get published. Secondly, once the individual participants initiated their writing for publication journey, they faced the unanticipated difficulty of reconfiguring prior writing into journal articles. Thirdly, once they were on their respective journeys, they faced challenges in responding to formal peer review feedback.

Intervention 2 provided mediational resources which enabled the participants to interpret and respond to these contradictions. In section 6.2.4, I presented my analysis of how the participants acted as peer-reviewers for Jasmine's abstract, which I conceptualised through Zittoun's (2006) notion of an imaginary experience where the participants engage with an "as-if" activity. Zittoun refers to post-hoc integration, where the individual determines the knowledge from an imaginary activity relevant to real life. It appeared that their collective work on the problem space of Jasmine's abstract, albeit in imaginary roles, had developed their capacities for relational expertise and know-who(Edwards, 2005). While their respective self-perceptions may not have been as experts in academic research, each participant offered differential perspectives to interpret the problem and create common knowledge. At the same time, they took away new tools to act back on the problem through developing their own writing. The development of relational expertise became a key aspect of everyone's learning. As I will argue later in the current thesis the processes which enable novice writers such as these to develop relational expertise requires nurturing.

Relationships based on former supervisor-supervisee roles were key in helping some participants overcome the contradictions as outlined above. As argued previously in the current thesis, supervisors are potentially influential in providing access to resources that may enhance academic research writing development. Edwards (2011) affirms that for experts to enact know-who, they can negotiate in the conceptual space to develop and enhance individual learning and bring about systematic change. Whilst Jane, for example, did not identify as an expert, she did offer resources to supervisees such as Elspeth and was attempting to change local practices. Jo's narrative affirmed that she

was given support and resources from her former supervisor throughout her writing processes. Supervisors such as Jane joined Intervention 2 to develop their relational expertise for writing development. Supervisors' developmental needs were not apparent to supervisees meaning that what mattered to both parties was not always fully aligned. I will argue later in the current thesis the importance of nurturing supervisors such as Jane. The issue for the future is to pay attention and recognise new ways of working to take forward, given that Jane was working in the problem space of the current thesis by offering access to practices to develop academic research writing.

Former supervisees as Intervention 2 participants received resources and expertise, which gave them choices about their actions. As with Intervention 1, the question is to what extent Intervention 2 was a formative intervention. Elspeth, for example, was confronted with a critical choice between prioritising her single-authored student column or a collaborative paper with Jane. Elspeth's priorities concerned her student column writing, and the external support received from Intervention 2 defined her behaviour to move forward with her intentions. In contrast, Jo aligned the support she received from distributed expertise to define her behaviour.

The specific knowledge about academic research writing that the participants developed was procedural (Zittoun, 2006) and conceptual (Bazerman, 2012). Procedural knowledge was associated with the self-regulation strategies through appropriating the mediational tools from Intervention 2. The conceptual knowledge was evident through the participants' reflections on the reconfiguration of the task and examples of their writing. The former dissertation writers, Helen, Jasmine, and Jo underestimated what was required to move from a Master's dissertation text to a potential journal article.

Each of the writers had a strong sense of what mattered to them, but they had to let go of some of their prior learning about academic research writing and determine which words could be lost when reconfiguring the new text. Jasmine described the process as a 'funnelling down.' They had to determine the concepts that would be meaningful for a disciplinary journal audience (Bazerman, 2012). The process of refining or defining concepts emerged from the communicative action in Intervention 2 in interplay with the formal journal peer-review process. For Helen, this was "belongingness," for Jo, it was 'readiness', and for Jasmine, it was a specific practice development nursing role.

6.4.3 Meaning-making when writing for publication

Two issues characterised the participants in Intervention 2 during their initial engagement. Firstly, their uncertainties and secondly, what mattered to them about getting published. The uncertainties disclosed by participants included lack of confidence, lack of support to write and fear about exposing their writing to others.

The findings show the social and cognitive shifts made by individuals in developing their academic research writing. The participants appeared to need a period of discovery and adjustment before mediational tools could enter their semiotic prisms (Zittoun, 2006) at the micro-level and link emotions and experiences with potential for emotional elaboration. However, this was far from a straightforward process. Cathy, for example, oscillated between uncertainty about her validity to write an opinion piece and, at the same time, the importance of asserting her authenticity as a higher education teacher to a broader community. At times, Cathy diffracted her uncertainties onto the mediational tools, such as describing freewriting as the best and worst activity she had encountered in Intervention 2. Cathy eventually did come to terms with her writing as an opinion

piece. However, she identified the overall process as likened to a "grief cycle" by letting go of previous notions about writing. Relational work did not always work well for Cathy because she felt exposed to "too many voices." However, she did exert closure by submitting her paper for publication.

The participants developed trust in their respective relationships, which helped them navigate the publication process and create meta-rules for their conduct linked with what mattered to them. Zittoun (2006) identifies that the two-step process that links uncertainty with past and present events to pre-present potential futures requires using resources to meet the human psychological need to ensure self-continuity. Each participant respectively confronted their past writing selves, which characterised their uncertainties. Even though writing for publication proved to be more challenging than anyone had anticipated learning how to draw on mediational resources, the resources of others and become a resource for others propelled them forward as writers.

6.5 Chapter summary

The problem that frames the current thesis study concerns improving and developing academic research writing for the health care disciplines. This chapter reported the findings of a writing group intervention that aimed to create a setting for Master's level professionals to explore and develop disciplinary writing aimed at peer-review publication. The participants' uncertainties on entering the intervention were grounded in not having published previously and consequently little knowledge about the writing for publication processes. Furthermore, writing for publication was not a designated activity for the participants' current clinical or teaching roles.

Intervention 2 represented space and time away from other demands to focus on becoming published authors, and each participant recognised this possibility. Zittoun's (2006, 2008, 2012) notion of a cultural experience in the semiotic prism revealed how imaginary experiences created by the cultural and social resources of Intervention 2, such as giving and receiving peer feedback, led to repositioning that prevailed beyond the intervention influencing inner shifts and the work of transition. I will elaborate on the development of the writers' identities in Chapter Eight.

However, the uncertainties experienced by the participants led to contradictions which became emphasised once they embarked on their writing processes. Firstly, the temporal demands of having insufficient time for writing within their professional roles, the unanticipated challenges of reconfiguring writing for journal articles and thirdly, responding to the formal journal peer-review process.

By taking a dialectical approach to collecting and analysing the data (Edwards, 2005, 2011, 2017; Hedegaard, 2012; Sannino, 2015; Sannino & Engeström, 2017), the analysis revealed that the participant's learning was a longitudinal and individual process to deal with the contradictions through expanding their respective capacities for relational work. The development of relational expertise became an essential aspect of learning through appropriating the mediational tools from Intervention 2. Whilst the participants respective self-perceptions may not have been as experts in academic research writing; each individual offered differential perspectives to interpret problems associated with writing for publication and created common knowledge. The respective participants took away new tools to act back on the problem through developing their writing.

A further aspect of relational work that was expanded was through former supervisor-supervisee roles on collaborative writing projects. Aligning motives between dyads was sometimes challenging. However, the findings revealed the potential for nurturing supervisory roles to sustain new tools and ways to develop academic research writing. Similarly, the processes which enable novice writers such as the participants in the current thesis study to develop relational expertise requires nurturing.

7 Chapter Seven: Imagined futures and relational agency- a discussion of the study's findings

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a synthesis and discussion of the findings across both writing group interventions. In synthesising the findings, I highlight the significant results from the study to consider the theoretical implications and what merits further attention for the writing development practices that need sustaining and nurturing.

Furthermore, the chapter shows the analytic and interpretive processes I have undertaken to conceptualise the writing group interventions as imagined futures for novice writers when they have the resources to enact relational agency. I start the chapter with a general summary of the findings from both interventions before taking an in-depth analysis into the issues that require more attention. The issues concern, exposure, letting go of previous conceptions, the potential for an imaginary experience, developing know-who, becoming a resourceful practitioner and supervisory relationships. The deeper analysis and interpretation are presented in two sections relating to the study's respective research questions. Finally, I consider an overall conclusion of imagined futures and emerging relational agency by bringing the analyses and interpretations together.

The problem space of the current thesis is the development of academic research writing for the health care disciplines. The issue for the individual health care writer is how they access opportunities for developing their writing and how they come to use and

appropriate the resources that may become available. A difficulty experienced in transitioning to academia from clinical settings is positioning as academic research writers creating feelings of inauthenticity, vulnerability, and exclusion (Gourlay, 2011; Murray et al., 2014).

The key findings show how the cognitive and social resources appropriated through writing group interventions and the development of an imagined future and relational agency in the work of transition led to academic research writing concept development. The findings open the possibility of moving beyond a notion of deficit for the disciplinary writers and considering future possibilities.

In Chapter Two, I outlined the known general conceptual difficulties for the Master's level writer and summarised as follows: the understanding of intertextuality practices (Badenhorst 2018, Boote & Beile, 2005, Kamler and Thomson, 2008); linguistic, methodological, conceptual and ontological issues (Chen et al. 2016); internalising scientific concepts and externalising disciplinary thoughts and known to be especially difficult for the health care disciplines owing to objectivist epistemologies, the passive voice and citation rich practices (Gardner & Rolfe, 2013, Mitchell, 2018, Ryan et al., 2014). Individuals require entrance and access to relational work and activities for the necessary shifts to position themselves as disciplinary writer.

The participants' autobiographical selves (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Ivanič, 1998, 2004) and histories became apparent through the findings. Explicitly, the past constraints of writing in the discipline. Few prior opportunities to work developmentally on writing compounded the feelings of constraint. A further critical issue concerned the confrontation with the new writing genres of a Master's dissertation text or a journal

article. The participants brought strong moral values to the task based on what mattered about the clinical relevance of their dissertation topics or journal articles. However, what mattered led to demands and contradictions for writing development. All participants needed to recognise and develop know-who to expand the object of activity. The Intervention 2 participants who worked on journal articles experienced a lack of dedicated time for writing in their current roles, and responding to formal peer-review feedback caused conflicts.

The interventions led to the breaking away from some of the constraints, contradictions and difficulties. Over time participants became enabled to articulate a working understanding of the concepts associated with academic research writing to varying extents. They came to see several aspects and functions of text types, the refinement of disciplinary concepts associated with their work and the criticality of their disciplinary contribution to the field through writing, enabling them to strive to externalise disciplinary concepts and argumentation. The findings showed the significant place of relational work as a transition. The participants collectively developed common knowledge about academic research writing, which influenced individual development. The interventions prompted relational expertise to work with supervisors to varying extents, other peers, interprofessional researchers and clinical colleagues to expand the object of activity. Through the development of their relational agency, some participants dealt with the formal peer-review process or became a resource for others' writing development.

In their transitions, the participants addressed what Chen (2016) identifies as conceptual challenges by appraising and synthesising appropriately selected literature and ontological identity, developing self-confidence through new knowledge construction

and disseminating new understandings to a disciplinary audience. The writer feels as though they are part of the scholarly community. As Chen argues, adopting an ontological identity involves a dialectical interplay between prior and current understandings. However, in adopting their ontological identities, the participants travelled on developmental journeys which were highly emotional and relational. Each individual started from a place of uncertainty which required substantial changes.

A dearth of writing group intervention studies to date has undertaken a detailed analysis of the formative process of transition to become an academic research writer. It is critical to unpack the transitional processes to inform future research directions and appropriate writing pedagogies for the health care disciplines. Notably, there is a need to develop health care writers' identities and give them the tools to disseminate health care evidence that is already at their fingertips through dissertation and project work. As Bazerman (2012) argues, it is essential to consider how novice writers bring concepts into their writing.

7.2 Appropriating mediational tools for self-hood

In the following section, I will discuss the findings from both interventions concerning the following research question:

> How and why do the participants appropriate the mediational tools from the writing interventions during the work of transition?

Here I will focus on the participants' work of transition concerning their engagement with the writing group interventions. The prospect of possibilities came from the appropriation of mediational tools that provided opportunities for self-hood (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Ivanič, 1998). The learning design for the interventions had explicitly

considered the teaching of composition (Murray, 1997), exploring the development of the writing process and within a socially elaborated task environment (Kellogg, 2008; Smagorinsky, 2011), metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005), use of an authorial voice (Nelson & Castelló, 2012) and how to give and receive peer review on texts in development. The facilitation approach concerned placing the opportunity for discovery in the writers' hands (Murray, 1997). The social and cognitive resources identified by the participants as most meaningful for ongoing development appeared to enter their semiotic prisms (Zittoun, 2006, 2008, 2012) because they represented cultural elements associated with academic research writing. The resources appeared to address individuals' uncertainties about their current writing and appropriated as mediational tools for writing development concerning sense-making and meaning-making.

Three interrelated processes emerged in the transitions made by the participants when they engaged with the interventions. Firstly, exposure, letting go of previous conceptions, and thirdly, the potential of imaginary components. The aspects of the findings call for closer attention because they provide an insight into the possibilities, constraints or losses for learning through transitions with implications for self-identity (Zittoun, 2006) and show the substantial changes that the participants needed to make in their conceptual understanding of academic research writing.

7.2.1 Exposure

Putting discovery in the novice writers' hands has implications for exposure because not only might the writer be required to reveal themselves, they also become exposed to new ideas, which might be challenging. The participants from both interventions appeared to express ambivalence because engaging with the activities they claimed to have enjoyed the most, at another level, involved exposure of thoughts, ideas and

writing in various stages of development to others, which invariably involved risk and vulnerability. The prospect of exposure started before the participants had joined either intervention. Leah and Miranda, for example, asserted their need to be exposed to others' thoughts and feelings about writing a dissertation because respectively Leah felt isolated, and Miranda felt lost. On the other hand, Jo was an otherwise confident university teacher who felt nervous about joining Intervention 2, and, like some other participants, she needed to work out the potential semiotic possibilities before exposing herself to others. Uncertainties about the respective writing tasks, either a dissertation or a journal article, preceded the anticipatory moments. The anticipation conveyed the dilemmas individuals appeared to feel in trying to work out where they belonged as a writer, which is challenging given the usually hidden nature of writing.

The activities in the interventions mediated the participants to confront their writing in development and review that of others. Leander and Prior (2004) argue that placing writing as an activity in situated practices challenges the notion of writing as a private activity. The texts involved student drafts of dissertation chapters at various stages, self-authored draft abstracts of proposed journal articles, all of the interactions around these, including giving and receiving spoken and written peer feedback. The participants undertook freewriting which prompted them to express written thoughts, often messy and incomplete. My writing development colleagues and I deliberately did not offer the participants samples of published writing or completed dissertations. The rationale was to expose the draft authors' transitions by focusing on the processes used to produce those texts (Smagorinsky, 2011). For some, the drafts in progress represented their current stage of development. The interactions around the activities are where the participants appeared to expose their current knowledge, thoughts and feelings to others.

Cathy, an Intervention 2 participant, was most vociferous about self-exposure. However, it was at the point of hearing others' feelings about self-confidence in writing that validated her nervousness. She then knew she was not alone and that other people needed to 'sort it' too. Miranda, an Intervention 1 participant, drew on the interactions to self-evaluate her level of understanding compared with others. Her self-perception aligned with her peers cognitively and socially. She described feeling "boosted".

Following Zittoun (2006), these moments of exposure represent the fourth level of semiotic mediation, meaning that they have feedforward properties for the individual. In the circumstances of a writing group intervention, the individual can generalise their feelings and move forward with the tools to work on their writing development. For example, in Miranda's case, where she described feeling lost prior to the intervention, she could potentially look to a higher level of semiotic mediation and make rules for self-conduct concerning her writing. Her reflections suggest she subsequently appropriated the mediational tools to manage her feelings and writing processes.

Further points of exposure involved the concepts of writing development presented to the participants, which may have conflicted with prior understanding of writing, or what they perceive as cultural norms in the discipline, for example, strategies for exerting the authorial voice. Two Intervention 1 participants, Rose and Jessica, appeared to find meaning from the authorial voice activities. Rose had never considered the authorial voice prior to the intervention but recognised a need for self-development. Rose and Jessica appropriated the tools to develop their writing differently. A further understanding was elaborated for Rose when she reviewed a workplace peer's draft dissertation noting her colleague's authorial voice exposure

Jessica's supervisor admonished her when she tried to reveal her authorial voice in her draft dissertation, which conflicted with her learning during the interventions and ran the risk of reinforcing Jessica's longstanding frustration with self-expression in nurse writing. However, as explained in the findings, Jessica's response was to consider her supervisor's feedback as a mediational possibility and not definitive. A critical component of the psychological work of transition undertaken by Rose and Jessica was along the person-meaning axis of the semiotic prism(Zittoun, 2006, 2012). Developing the personal meaningfulness of the exposure of an authorial voice helped them elaborate their understanding and confront the development of their voices.

In intervention 2, I captured Jasmine's anticipatory reflections before presenting her proposed journal abstract to others and Jo's nervousness about the prospect of giving feedback to others. Jasmine's concern was about her academic English. Their perspectives convey the dialectical relationship between the socially available possibilities for selfhood and the prospects of being read. (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010). Many participants felt ambivalent about taking on the peer-reviewer role, which, as I discuss in a later section, concerned Jo's relational agency and becoming a resource to others.

Writing groups reduce the fear of exposure associated with going public with writing (Turner et al., 2014), and many studies assert the development of writer's confidence as an outcome (MacLeod et al., 2012; Ness et al., 2014; Weaver et al., 2014) but in very general ways. To date, nobody appears to have considered the expository elements of writing groups and how facilitators and writers might manage them as an opportunity for discovery in the writing process. The findings from the current thesis study offer a detailed account of the expository experiences of novice writers when they engage with

writing group interventions. The knowledge has implications for the facilitation of such interventions. Whilst the participants initially felt vulnerable about the exposure involved with the activities, the mediational tools engaged the participants and appeared to enable them to self-evaluate their developmental needs (for example, the activities concerning the place of the authorial voice), and deal with the uncertainties that exposing one's thoughts and writing creates. The participants appeared to become enabled to self-evaluate their developmental needs and mediate the tools to deal with uncertainty and work on their writing processes. The findings reflect those of Lonka et al. (2019), who, in a different context have examined the relationship between self-conception and doctoral students' writing profiles and found that individuals' epistemic beliefs were associated with success in writing. The dynamics of well-being and engagement with academic research writing improved when the participants in Lonka's study reflected on and discussed their conceptions of writing with others in an appropriate learning environment.

The current thesis study draws attention to the conditions in writing group interventions where the participants can access opportunities to reveal their concerns about writing and at the same time enable discovery about the writing process. Such an approach takes away some of the private nature of writing and may provide opportunities for self-hood, and is a critical consideration for designing writing group interventions in the discipline.

7.2.2 Letting go of previous conceptions

Letting go of previous conceptions concerned three main issues: firstly, making new sense about writing in the discipline, secondly, leaving prior notions behind and thirdly, losing key concepts when reconfiguring a former text into a journal article. The issues surfaced most when participants had shared their writing in development with others.

Participants became conscious of being read when they received a sign that they engaged readers' thought processes (Bazerman, 2012) through their draft writing. The primary source of feedback was from peers. However, as individuals progressed with the writing tasks in Intervention 2, they received formal journal peer review feedback. Here I will focus on the dynamics of peer feedback. The most notable point for individuals like Jasmine, who reconfigured a prior dissertation text into a journal article, was letting go of previous conceptions and understandings about academic research writing. Jasmine described the undertaking as "funneling down", which occurred to her when preparing an abstract for presentation to peers.

The rewriting decisions for reconfiguring the new texts (participants who were developing dissertations or project work into journal articles) meant relinquishing content and ideas, but the issue concerned identifying what could be lost. Some participants, such as Helen and Jo, found that they lost critical elements along the way. For Helen, initially, it was her authorial voice, and both she and Jo had omitted the key concepts underpinning their research when drafting and presenting their journal article abstracts to peers. Daniels (2001) highlights the Vygotskian perspective of the paradox of learning, which challenges how we can transfer learning from one social setting to another. However, the mediational processes of peer feedback allowed the participants to realise that meaningful disciplinary ideas required development or were missing. They needed to consider re-introducing omitted concepts or refining their ideas. Being read meant acknowledgement as a writer, which may feel either validating or uncomfortable.

In making sense of peer feedback, the participants could emerge or refine their disciplinary concepts in their writing. The respective disciplinary concepts included

readiness, belongingness, compassionate care, patient safety, specialist nursing roles and values-based recruitment. The observation of Jasmine receiving feedback from her peers (section 6.2.4) showed how her disciplinary peers approached her abstract as the potential audience and their respective needs for clinical and health information that were obscured or missing. Given that peer-reviewers were from the same disciplinary background, there was an intersubjectivity regarding identifiable health care concepts.

Contributing to health care through academic research writing became possible for the participants. Linell's (2009) concept of the double-dialogic concerns dialogue at the interpersonal level with those present and other situated interactions that transcend the current situation. The interactions carry consequences for the future and have feedforward properties. Whilst there was intersubjectivity between participants on easily identifiable general nursing and health care concepts, each writer appeared to find and occupy a unique space for a small-scale project, and they appeared to feel enabled to bring new resources to the discussion (Bazerman, 2012) developed through their exploratory talk (Mercer, 2000). The interactions appeared to help participants progress towards externalising disciplinary concepts.

As a general principle, effective feedback in higher education drives learning (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) and improves the self-conceptions of writers (Lonka et al., 2019). However, it can also be a source of dissatisfaction for learners (O'Donovan et al., 2021). Peer review and feedback are central in writing group interventions but are under-explored (Aitchison, 2009; 2014; Gere, 1987; Lee & Boud, 2003). Researchers who have investigated the social and cognitive impact of peer feedback in writing groups have found that writers will incorporate the knowledge gained through receiving oral and written feedback at the sentence level and for the sequencing of information

(Aitchison, 2014) and to strengthen argumentation (Dysthe, 2012; Dysthe et al., 2006). However, the findings from the current study go beyond looking at one variable alone. Each individual in the current study started from a place of uncertainty which required considerable change.

The current theses study aligns with writing research undertaken in different contexts. For example, Wittek et al. (2017) explored the experiences of initial teacher education (ITE) students on a four-year undergraduate programme where the learners consistently collaborated on peer feedback activities. Over time, the learners uncovered how to write with and understand disciplinary concepts and mastered the disciplinary genre. Similarly, Thompson and Wittek (2016) explored secondary school student writing development through collaborative talk. Thompson and Wittek's findings showed how different types of talk, for example, exploratory or disputional talk (Mercer, 2000), enabled the learner to take a stance and develop conceptual understanding.

The current thesis study adds to the body of evidence concerning peer feedback for writing and concept development. The current research also reveals the relationship between peer feedback and letting go of previous conceptions when reconfiguring a text produced for Master's degree studies to a journal article.

7.2.3 The potential of an imaginary component

The analysis and discussion offer a detailed account of how individuals dealt with exposure and let go of previous notions of academic research writing, which facilitated an understanding of academic research writing concepts and potential for repositioning as a disciplinary author. I will now discuss how exposure and letting go of previous

notions participated in the participants' transitions and related to the potential of an imaginary component.

As explained in Chapter Three, learning through transitions indicates a relocation or repositioning of the person in their social world leading to possibilities, constraints or even losses with implications for self-identity (Zittoun, 2006, 2008). Through the participant observation during the activities, it was possible to understand how the cognitive and social resources offered by the interventions created the possibilities for self-hood (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Ivanič, 1998, 2004). I refer to the peer-review and voice activities in Intervention 1 (section 5.2.2) and the peer-review activities in Intervention 2 (section 6.2.4). The participants identified these activities as crucial tools for their writing development and required exposure and letting go of previous conceptions.

Notably, through the activities and mediating the resources, the participants presented their identities to others, and in doing so, they appeared to gain acknowledgement and mutual empathy. However, engaging with the interventions revealed their needs for further transition work to the participants. For example, exposing writing at early stages of development to supervisors, peers and disciplinary experts outside the interventions, including journal peer-reviewers. I will discuss the significance of distributed relational work later.

I previously argued that during the peer-review activities in Intervention 2, the dynamics of an imaginary experience (Zittoun, 2006) appeared and played a core role with feedforward properties. The imaginary experience concerns "Exploration of past, future and other possible worlds."(Zittoun, 2006, p. 55), following Vygotsky (1971). Looking

across the data from both interventions, the activities that appeared to be associated with exposure and letting go of previous conceptions gave "as-if" potential and opportunities to try on different identities and imagine future possibilities. Zittoun's conceptualisation of an imaginary experience concerns semiotic units carrying meaning. They are part of a finite support system that enables us to extend our intelligence, take us to a new sphere of experiences from here and now, and where standard rules do not apply.

Zittoun's conceptualisation of developmental transitions, as I argued in Chapter Three, elaborates the literature on writers' identities (Clark & Ivanič, 1997), and the findings from the current thesis study suggest that my assertion can be supported. The imaginary experience, which provides access to resources for self-representation, appeared to enable the participants to encounter their identities in the text by coming to terms with the discoursal self. When Miranda engaged with the peer-review activities in Intervention 1, she encountered examples of what she described as the successful dissertation student. Her reflections suggested that she could link her past self as a successful writer of academic essays with her future dissertation writing. During the Intervention 2 peer-review activities, when the participants articulated their disciplinary concepts, they did so, "as-if in another position" (Zittoun, 2006, p. 62). They needed to decontextualise the writing concepts from the previous writing task and found it more complex than they imagined. The dialogue during peer review activities acted as a tool to produce the new texts bringing the participants to the speech genre (Bakhtin, 1986; Wertsch, 1991) of disciplinary journals and clarification of disciplinary concepts. The participants had an opportunity to confront how to portray themselves in writing, identify with an epistemic community and predict a relationship with the imagined

audience to contribute to the discipline by engaging in discourse on timely health care problems.

Individuals needed to step back from the here-and-now of the interventions to reflect on their learning, which is the post-hoc elaboration (Zittoun, 2006) component of an imaginary experience. Through their post-hoc reflections based on the narratives, the participants appeared to see the benefits of exposing their understanding and writing, letting go of previous knowledge about academic research writing, articulating their authorial voices and intentions. They self-evaluated their learning. Miranda, Zara, Rose, Jessica, Helen Jo and Jasmine explicitly pointed to features of their texts that they had worked on through appropriating the tools from the activities with an imaginary component. Jo modified the title of her journal article, and Jasmine revised and rewrote her journal article abstract and included keywords so that a disciplinary audience could discover her work through a database search engine. Rose and Jessica enhanced the presence of their authorial voices in their dissertation texts. The Intervention 2 participants, such as Helen and Jo, indicated the importance of having time and space away from their everyday lives to focus on writing. The work builds on Nelson & Castelló (2012) and Wittek's (2016) observations of how learners try on identities when composing their writing, and Knowles and Grant's (2014) imaginary potential of writing retreats to provide peace and remoteness while removing external demands to change sustainable personal writing practices.

However, the temporal dimension of formative transitions and writing development also presented constraints for some participants who felt that Intervention 1 was offered too late for their trajectory because they worked to a required deadline and appeared to have less opportunity to develop their academic research writing concepts.

The process of transition engages with meaning-making. Zittoun (2006) argues that emotional elaboration is inseparable from an individual's use of mediational tools and experiences. Overcoming fear of exposure and letting go of previous conceptions implies the possibility of elaborating emotions. Whilst the participants experienced initial trepidation, words such as 'feeling boosted' and 'enjoyable' appeared to emerge from their narratives, as suggested by the interview data. Furthermore, as shown through the observational data and the narratives, the participants shared professional values and expressed passion about topics they wanted to disseminate through writing. Smagorinsky (2011)identifies a meta-experience associated with writing and argues that when the writer enjoys their experiences, it makes the writing task manageable and the writer feels capable, and it becomes easier to form concepts. Smagorinsky's perspective aligns with the Vygotskian (1971) view about the interdependency between cognitive and affective experiences. The person needs to assemble themselves following an experience and concerns the post-hoc elaboration and the time taken to construct meaning (Zittoun, 2006). Cathy, for example, oscillated between the benefits of the resources and further uncertainties they presented, likening her experiences to a grief cycle illustrating the intimate nature between affective and cognitive experiences. She found exposure especially challenging and needed to work through unlinking past conceptions of writing with the current task of writing an opinion piece and appeared to confront her discoursal self. The issue was that an opinion piece is contingent on the writer revealing their voice, and Cathy took time to come to terms with it.

The current study moves our understanding of developing academic research writing concepts for nurse writers who engage with writing group interventions. I have identified the conditions in the context that appeared to nurture academic research

writing concept development. I considered individuals' psychological, emotional, social, and cognitive needs when facing an unfamiliar writing task. Furthermore, through a rich data set and paying attention to the participants' development over time, I have identified the activities that appeared to enable the participants to overcome uncertainties in their writing identities by repositioning themselves, acquiring conceptual knowledge and skills and experiencing an emotional elaboration and importantly, the process of their transitions as writers. The most significant challenge appeared to be exposure and letting go of previous conceptions about writing. Activities that provide an imaginary experience and, in particular, peer-review appeared to enable sense-making and meaning-making of academic research writing concepts for a disciplinary audience while developing the writer's discoursal identity. Opportunities to share concerns about writing and at the same time enable discovery about the writing process appeared to create a potential for self-hood and preceded the peer-review opportunities. Notably, I have captured the participants' reflections on how they appropriate the tools from the interventions to deal with uncertainties. I have noted the potential of an imaginary experience to frame learning. These aspects, which concerned the writers' transitions, have been related to changes in their texts. Some aspects of the participants' transitions are those that otherwise would remain hidden, such as working through exposure and are the practices that require nurturing. The following section will elaborate on the apparent further relational work concerning the participants' transitions.

I have discussed my use of Zittoun's (2008, 2012; Zittoun et al. 2003)work on the semiotic prism and developmental transitions, which pays attention to self-identity ruptures that require personal change. The focus is on the unique individual connected

with a social world who can reposition themselves using symbolic resources, learn, and experience an emotional elaboration to resolve the rupture. While Zittoun is not a writing development researcher, her ideas have helped me attend to emotional issues concerning novice writers' transitions and undertake a fine-grain analysis of individual development over time. The analysis positions me to foreground teaching areas to pay attention to, such as cultivating imaginary experiences. I borrowed concepts from Zittoun's work. The cultural resources that I focused on were the mediational tools developed for the interventions and appropriated by the participants. In the central sphere of Zittoun's work, the resources are cultural elements loaded with meaning for individuals, such as movies, art, and novels. An alternative approach to the facilitation of the interventions could have been to work with individuals and cultural elements from their life experiences to support their writing development and an area of practice that I would like to explore in the future.

7.3 Relational agency as a critical transition

In the following section, I discuss the findings concerning the following research question:

How do the participants experience relational work and deal with contradictions to shape their academic research writing development?

The participants in the current study were diverse and did not fit with traditional notions of either university students or academic researchers because they moved between academic and clinical contexts or were university teachers without designated research roles. Overall, their desires to reposition themselves as writers principally stemmed from what mattered. Learning distributed between the university and clinical settings

creates opportunities for what Clark and Ivanič (1997) identify as self-hood. However, the sociocultural contexts create contradictions because, on the one hand, there were opportunities to develop small scale projects for Master's dissertation work but, on the other hand, little resources to disseminate the work through writing. The participants needed to respond to what mattered and develop their writing, representing competing demands. In the previous sections, I have discussed how the interventions offered social and cognitive resources for their writing development and how individuals appropriated them as mediational tools to deal with uncertainties and meet their intentions. However, the findings showed that they needed to learn how to work relationally beyond the intervention to develop their writing fully and confirms the findings of Wittek et al. (2017) that collaborative writing is a distributed activity.

Relational work was a critical transition. The interventions appeared to raise awareness of the benefits of collaborating on texts, but other factors were that every participant in Intervention 1 worked with a dissertation supervisor, and some participants in Intervention 2 worked collaboratively on texts with former supervisors. The following sections will draw attention to how working with tools and new practices provided relational opportunities for the participants' transitions. The issues concern, developing know-who, becoming a resourceful practitioner and I will also discuss the crucial role of supervisors and former supervisors in pro-active and relational work.

7.3.1 Developing know-who

The interventions appeared to prompt the development of know-how to build common knowledge as a resource for negotiation. In this context, negotiation meant how individual participants as writers worked with others to understand how to go about and respond to academic research writing tasks. Edwards (2017) contends that negotiation

is critical for enacting relational agency. However, this may be daunting for novice writers where power differentials are concerned. A significant transition is recognising the relevant expertise of others whilst recognising one's own. The implications are a new conceptual demand to develop know-who (Edwards, 2005, 2011)

In the current thesis study, developing know-who was often as simple as knowing who, how and when to ask for help but also concerned a raised awareness of other's expertise and who can help expand the object of activity. As argued by Edwards, know-who is "a high form of expertise" (Edwards, 2011, p. 28), but at the same time, novices need to build the capacity, and a first step is the recognition of others as resources and alignment with their responses. A critical turning point was becoming more open to others as a source of learning and repositioning. Participants' shifts included working with clinical colleagues to help interpret the dissertation task, working with peers outside the interventions to build on writing activities, and working progressively with peers inside the interventions.

Helen provides a typical example of a participant who developed know-who concerning academic research writing and used relational expertise as a second stimulus to propel herself forward as an academic research writer. What mattered to Helen was writing a journal article based on her dissertation work which she identified could impact clinical practice. What mattered was also closely aligned with Helen's autobiographical self (Ivanič, 1998) and concerned moving forward as research-active and a role model to others in her clinical practice. Like other participants, Helen assumed that reconfiguring the text would be straightforward. The transition involved understanding how to convey research in an academic journal article genre (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Swales, 2004) compared with the normative functions of writing for a university assignment.

The issues for Helen were the loss of her authorial voice and dealing with formal peer-review feedback.

In a previous section, I discussed how informal peer-review mediated concept development. Here Helen was entering a different dialogue. The dialogic function of academic research writing presents difficulties for novice authors because they need to know how to position themselves (Bakhtin, 1986; Dysthe, 1996). Helen made a distinct choice to hide her practitioner's voice in the re-configured text, but this meant that she then found it hard to establish a place of authority. Her authority became further diminished through the formal peer-review process when requested to provide a distinct literature review section to enhance the empirical findings. A literature review in a journal article signals authority because it shows that the writer knows the field (Nihalani & Mayrath, 2008) and the intertextual moves that the writer has made to position themselves in the field (Castelló & Iñesta, 2012). A further contradiction was that the niche practitioner journal Helen targeted also transformed its epistemic function to publish research-focused articles and asserted higher standards for rigour than the articles she had accessed as a guide. A conflict of choices faced Helen when dealing with the contradictions. However, Helen perceived external support from peers in Intervention 2 to deal with the journal reviewer feedback (Sannino & Laitinen, 2015) to define her ongoing behaviour.

Helen strived to read her words within her conceptual system whilst entering an alien conceptual system (Bakhtin, 1981; Dysthe, 1996). Her struggle created new elements and understandings, but this was achieved collectively with peers in Intervention 2 in interplay with the nature of the feedback as a mediational tool. Over time, she made calibrated responses to formal peer-review feedback through working with her peers.

Also, her peers shared the struggle to create new understandings to help Helen and benefit their writing. As peers, they worked progressively to develop their expertise by jointly peer-reviewing their texts and expanding the object of activity.

The common knowledge that emerged through their relational expertise concerned the following:

- How to determine requirements for an unfamiliar writing task
- Revised interpretations of writing as a changing object
- Needing to approach writing processes differently contingent upon the task
- Respectful knowledge about what mattered to others
- Shared longer-term goals about writing trajectories

As shown in the findings chapter (Section 6.3.2), Helen found her voice through the process. In the final manuscript accepted for publication, Helen appeared to outline her contribution to the field. Helen self-evaluated how her writing had developed through her narrative but recognised that she could not have accomplished this without collaborating with peers and other distributed expertise.

In the current thesis study, I have departed from previous conceptualisations of community and collaboration in writing group interventions that have predominantly concerned communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Edwards'(2005, 2011, 2017) approach to relational work and collaboration has let me pay attention to how novice writers developed collective expertise to respond to problems and create common knowledge for individual writing development As argued by Edwards(2011),

expertise is an ability to align one's actions with other people's strengths and needs to negotiate progressive responses to deal with unpredictable objects of activity. Helen tried to align her needs with the journal community and her peers, who also aimed to publish. Helen and her peers developed common knowledge by working collaboratively on sustained double stimulation and dealing with formal reviewer feedback built on their peer-reviewing practices. They appeared to align their joint strengths and gain knowledge on the genre of journal articles, engaging with epistemic communities and positioning themselves with authority. Jane, for example, a peer collaborator, developed the confidence to become a peer-reviewer for an international nursing journal through the knowledge she gained.

Here, I have provided a novel example of how it might be possible to develop expertise for novice writers. Even though small scale, the present study raises the possibilities for other researchers who aim to build the capacities of postgraduate writers.

Like other aspects of academic research writing, dealing with formal peer-review is essentially a hidden practice. None of the writing group intervention studies included in the literature review (Chapter Two) referred to supporting writers through the process. Furthermore, Aitchison (2014) has identified a gap in the literature about the interplay between informal peer-review and the formal peer-review process in writing group interventions. The current study's findings offer an insight into how the capacity to respond to formal peer-review emerged through the development of common knowledge leading to a more richly informed practice for the participants.

7.3.2 Becoming a resourceful practitioner

The study aimed to understand how the participants repositioned themselves and became resourceful practitioners. The research also aimed to understand how the participants achieved their intentions while overcoming contradictions. In the findings' chapters, a theme was an emerging relational agency for participants from both interventions but to varying extents and in diverse ways. Here I discuss the findings from Rose and Jo's narratives to consider what they can tell us about the emergence of relational agency across the time of their participation in the study.

Rose participated in Intervention 1 and wrote her dissertation on health care and technology, and Jo participated in Intervention 2 to reconfigure her Master's dissertation on children's cancer care to a journal article. In Chapter Three, I outlined Edwards' definition of relational agency. Relational agency involves careful listening and understanding of each other's motives leading to an expansion of the problem, including work on a collection of difficulties and carefully measured and specialist responses working in apposition (Edwards, 2016, 2017). Edwards draws on agency interpretations from Taylor (1977, 1991) concerning responsibility and self-evaluation. Goal-setting is adaptive and in the light of experience. An emphasis on moral goals concerns personal wellbeing and that of others. With relevance to the current study, the participants expressed professional values in health care to write about and disseminate their knowledge on timely topics, and some participants appeared to become resourceful to others who endeavored to do the same.

Rose and Jo expanded the problem space by initially responding to their supervisors' prompts to develop their writing beyond the dissertation requirements, which acted as

the first stimulus. The primary source of the second stimulus was the common knowledge evolving during the interventions and identified in an earlier section.

The common knowledge was constituted and reconstituted (Edwards, 2017), enabling them to work on a collection of difficulties known to confront novice writers at Master's level (Castelló & Iñesta, 2012), such as the concurrent development of writing and research concepts. At the same time, Rose was developing an authorial voice she also needed to determine priorities when her supervisor invited her to collaborate on an interprofessional research project which ultimately became her dissertation work. While Jo was composing her journal article, she realised how her emerging expertise became a resource for herself and others through a peer-reviewing role. Rose and Jo's interactions with others appeared to act as "why" and "where to" tools (Cole, 1999; Edwards & Daniels, 2012), also known as tertiary artifacts that present prospects for imagined worlds. Collaborative work was future-orientated. In co-authoring an abstract with computer scientists, Rose shared her specialist nursing role concepts to examine why developing technology would benefit service users, leading to an appropriate course of action (where-to). Based on observations and Jo's narrative, she used exploratory talk (Mercer, 2000) to make her reasons and explanations explicit when expressing her thoughts on why and how others' writing could be improved (where-to). Rose and Jo could also bring the where-to knowledge to re-interpret their dissertation or journal article writing. As a university teacher, Jo also brought the where-to knowledge about writing development to her classroom by using her emergent knowledge of academic research writing concepts to enhance her teaching practices. Their work with others expanded what mattered to enable adaptive, responsive practices (Edwards 2012).

These shifts demonstrate Rose and Jo's enactment of relational agency and their capacity to exert such agency in response to the initial prompting of their respective supervisors and their resourcefulness to use the tools developed through the interventions and further iterations for themselves and others. Developing their capacities to exert relational agency responded to changes in their social situations of development over time (Edwards, 2017) because of their desire to write about meaningful topics and work collaboratively with others on academic research writing practices. Rose and Jo's enactment of relational agency closely aligned with their writers' identities. There were possibilities for self-hood in their sociocultural contexts (Ivanič, 1998), however as identified by Ivanič, possibilities for self-hood can be constraining. Jo, for example, had felt frustrated because having found her voice in nurse academic research writing, she did not feel as though the writing was a legitimate aspect of her education teaching role. Hence there was a conflict between her autobiographical identity and institutionally supported ones, which Jo described as political. Rose worked in a clinical research role that involved supporting others with their biomedical research. An opportunity for self-hood was the possibility to develop her individual research profile. Proactive dissertation supervisors and engaging with the interventions propelled Jo and Rose forwards. In becoming an active agent, Jo changed the status quo, and in becoming a resourceful practitioner, she redefined the possibilities for other writers to do the same.

Edwards concept of relational agency appears previously unused to examine writers' transitions in writing group interventions. In the current thesis study, relational agency as a lens has helped me pay close attention to the conditions where individuals can be supported to become academic research writers and then support others to solve

complex and evolving problems. To transition, novice writers need tools and support to develop know-who and develop their writing through distributed relational expertise. Where this is possible, novice writers can enact relational agency to become a resource for others. Jo and Rose responded to the conditions to propel themselves forward as resourceful practitioners.

There is a caveat, of course. The participants who worked beyond the expectations of the writing task had experienced pro-active relations with their supervisors, which I will discuss in a later section. However, the current thesis study suggests that it is unnecessary to be an expert for relational work in developing academic research writing. While small-scale and preliminary, the findings offer new insight into the relational and collaborative work fostered through two writing group interventions and the relational work undertaken by the writers. Given the current thesis's problem space where writing development opportunities are not readily accessible, developing resourceful practitioners is an issue for future practice and research.

It appears as though the notion of relational agency is gaining interest in the writing literature. Castelló et al. (2021) recently reported a study on post-doctoral trajectories and networking concerning their writing development. Castelló et al. have conceptualised what they identify as propelling characteristics for post-doctoral writers. The characteristics include being agentive in building and maintaining networks and partnerships and- promoting writers' reflections on their writing development with the strategic management of their writing practices in different contexts described as a relational agency but not conceptualised through cultural-historical theory Writers may have different needs at stages of researcher development. However, as the current study shows, Edwards' theoretical concept of relational agency has provided a valuable tool

and insight into the enactment of relational agency for the masters-level writer and will hopefully encourage further investigations in the field.

7.3.3 Supervisory relationships

Academic supervisors or former supervisors appeared to play a critical role in supervisees or alumni writing development. There are two aspects to consider. Firstly, every participant in Intervention 1 worked with a supervisor to develop their Master's dissertation project. For the supervisee, the relationship represented a departure in teacher-learner relations. Secondly, some supervisors or former supervisors joined Intervention 2 to co-author with alumni or a current supervisee such as Jane's work with Elspeth. A pedagogic objective for Intervention 2 was to support co-authorial relationships. The project's inception that prefaced the current thesis study concerned supervisors co-authoring with supervisees. A general issue is that supervisors at all levels (Dysthe, 2002; Kamler, 2008; Wisker, 2012; Wisker & Claesson, 2013) do not necessarily have the knowledge, skills or resources to support student dissertation writing or develop co-authoring relations. The issue for the supervisee is that they need to negotiate the necessary support. Unsurprisingly, negotiating with supervisors came to the fore of the participants' consciousness in Intervention 1.

Zara asserted that she engaged at an earlier stage of her writing processes when she became conscious during Intervention 1 of the potential of supervisor feedback to improve her writing. The early engagement proved a valuable strategy because they had regular and ongoing interactions about Zara's writing development. Jessica practiced with metadiscourse in the dissertation drafts that she shared with her supervisor. However, this led to conflict because Jessica's supervisor contradicted her new ideas about writing. Jessica needed to stay on track with her intentions and accomplished this

by using her supervisor's feedback as a mediational tool. Zara and Jessica learned about what mattered to individual supervisors. However, Jessica's experiences suggest that her knowledge about metadiscourse had run ahead of her supervisor's.

Nevertheless, the findings showed how emerging self-confidence in Zara and Jessica's writing processes and practices enabled them to assert their positions and negotiate what they wanted to accomplish through these relationships. The findings align with Dysthe's (2012; 2006) work on implementing student colloquia concurrent with dissertation supervision in a vocational Master's programme. In Dysthe's study, the supervisees felt purposeful in working with supervisor feedback to improve writing through sharing fears and concerns with peers. Similarly, Aitchison (2014) has found that doctoral writers who engage with writing group interventions become aware of the multiple influences on their texts and learn how to calibrate their responses to supervisors and others based on how they judge the reviewer's authority.

I now turn to co-authorial relationships. In work undertaken by supervisors and supervisees as co-authors, the issues in play were the participants as individual writers, supervisee-supervisor relations and writing development. The findings showed Jane's enthusiasm for co-authorship with students. However, successive attempts had become thwarted because potential co-authors became side-tracked with other commitments. Working alongside Elspeth, Jane provided access to her expertise for authoring a student opinion piece and encouraged Elspeth to engage with Intervention 2. A frustration arose in not reconfiguring an independent study text jointly to the publication stage. Their relational work confronted areas of uncertainty that were not made explicit. Jane was unsure of her input on the joint text, and Elspeth did not understand how to take the lead.

My experiences in co-authoring with Jasmine and Helen differed in some ways from Jane's. My co-authorship occurred when Jasmine and Helen were alumni. However, I had been their respective dissertation supervisor. At the outset of the dissertation process, they were clear about aiming for publication, the topic and where they might like to publish. What mattered to them was communicating to the discipline through writing and working on their professional identities. My input was required differently by both of them. Helen required moral support to keep her going through the many iterations of formal peer-review feedback, and I learned through this process. I initially spotted the loss of Helen's voice in her reconfiguring text. As her supervisor, I had become familiar with her writing, and we agreed that a solution was to continue engaging with her peers in Intervention 2 through the work explained in a previous section. Jasmine aimed to publish in an international nursing journal, and the data analysis that she initially undertook for her dissertation was not to the depth of the journal requirements, so I assisted her in this respect. While our joint work did not appear to encounter the division of labour issues experienced by Jane and Elspeth, like Jane, my writing development needs remained implicit to my co-authors.

Two other participants Zoe and Beth joined the interventions to co-author with alumni. The alumni did not participate in the research. What mattered to Jane, Zoe, Beth and me mutually as colleagues, teachers, and supervisors were developing student writing whilst working on our writing practices, learning about the publication process, and developing a sustainable approach for co-authorship. However, there was more scope to make the object of activity explicit, share our motives with our co-authors and, more broadly, our experiences and the processes with others. Professional identity work for supervisors may have been easy to overlook. As health care professionals our

autobiographical selves (Ivanič, 1998) are concerned with the care, and the well-being of others and there is a possibility that self-disclosure can present a conflict with such values.

A limitation of the current study was that although supervisors and supervisees participated in dyads in Intervention 2, only Jane and Elspeth as a complete pair consented to participate in the research, making it challenging to understand the issues from all perspectives. A critical factor for those research participants who appeared to enact relational agency most strongly, such as Rose and Jo, was their self-reported pro-active supervisory relations. Kamler (2008) has identified the value for the doctoral learner's professional identity when supported to write for publication. The learner gains the capacity to speak to the discipline, and the framing of academic research writing as a collaborative activity enables the novice to deal with the publication process, including rejection. Kamler's assertions reflect the findings of the current thesis study, especially Helen's experiences. Kamler notes disciplinary differences in co-authorship strategies. Writing and researching in a team is a given in the natural sciences but comparatively less likely in education and health care. Kamler argues that the realisation of benefits comes through publishing early in the doctoral trajectory and offering co-authorship in the formative stages. Dysthe (2002) has explored co-authorship between masters' supervisors and students in Norwegian higher education. Dysthe has identified three models, teaching, partnership, and apprenticeship. The partnership model aspires to be symmetrical, the dissertation is a joint project, and the dyadic relationship is contractual, involves dialogic feedback, which is open to negotiation.

Based on the participants' narratives in the current thesis study, an approach to forward-looking co-authorship had the following characteristics (as evidenced by supervisee interview data and some writing samples) and shared features with Dysthe's partnership model. The supervisors engaged supervisees at an early point in their writing processes because they recognised the potential for the supervisee to disseminate the writing beyond a dissertation. They invited the supervisees to engage with local research activities, including the writing group interventions and relations with other researchers concerning a dissertation topic. The supervisees received regular feedback on draft dissertation writing. Supervisors collaborated with a supervisee beyond the dissertation in an informal working relationship and supported reconfiguring a text as a journal article through feedback on drafts and providing support to respond to the formal peer-review process. Each supervisee who co-authored with their supervisors asserted they would not have imagined a publication without such support and detailed their loyalty and commitment to the co-authorial relationship.

The issue raised by the current study is the contingency on individual supervisor commitment. There was scope to expand an understanding of what mattered to supervisors who propelled supervisees or alumni forward and their negotiating strategies to build and sustain practices and is a limitation of the study. Supervisors such as Jane aimed for horizontal relations, which requires nurturing. Sharing the knowledge developed by supervisors through co-authorship was a resource that had powerful mediational potential. Otherwise, there is a danger of keeping practice implicit, and it becomes arbitrary about which students or novice writers receives the opportunity for co-authorship, meaning that potential remains untapped. However, based on the participants' narratives, some knowledge about purposeful supervisor strategies

towards co-authorship has emerged. Those purposeful strategies need exposing, nurturing and fostering because they appeared to propel writers such as Jo, Rose and Helen forward.

A limitation of the current thesis study was a shortfall into the insights of disciplinary supervisors' negotiations of co-authorial relations. Despite this, there was consistency with previous studies and evidence from individual participants' narratives about the supervisory strategies propelling writers forward. More work is required here, and in The Conclusion Chapter, I explain the strategies that I have implemented locally to nurture supervisory practices.

7.4 Imagined futures

I have discussed my use of Edwards'(2005, 2011, 2016, 2017) three concepts, relational expertise, common knowledge and relational agency. Edwards suggests that they are valuable but straightforward concepts that enable the researcher to make sense of and explain what happens in complex fields. An enticing view of Edwards work is her reference to the three concepts as "gardening tools" (Edwards, 2012, p. 23) for actors to build, nurture and sustain expertise. Edwards' work has helped me identify the conditions for novice writers to recognise and negotiate know-who and become resourceful practitioners and which practices need further development and sustaining. As the current study shows, there is more to know and accomplish in the problem space. I also argue that there is potential for refinement and further use of the concepts in my disciplinary field for writing and research development, which I will outline in The Conclusion chapter.

The complementary ideas of Edwards and Zittoun that focus on identity and repositioning have been critical in the current thesis study, where the central idea is formative transitions. The participants appeared to possess strong desires for professional re-positioning. The dialectical interplay between what mattered in a clinical or teaching role, becoming a writer and a current writing task presented ruptures in self-identities and required the work of transition. Joining a writing group intervention exposed identity issues such as understandings, feelings, desires and disciplinary writing concepts. Zittoun's potential for repositioning centres on the imaginary and acknowledgement by others. The semiotic resources offered the potential for repositioning when the participants could imagine the future possibilities. The imaginary, which provides access to resources for self-representation, enabled the participants to encounter their identities in the text by coming to terms with the discoursal self (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). Furthermore, the participants appeared to confront how to portray themselves in writing, identify with an epistemic community and predict a relationship with the imagined audience to contribute to the discipline by engaging in discourse on a timely problem.

I have drawn attention to peer-review activities as an opportunity for academic research writing concept development. I used the lens of an imaginary experience and have offered empirical grounds for analysing Jo's role as a peer-reviewer in the same activity through Edwards' lenses of relational activity. In the current thesis study, I have found that Edwards' and Zittoun's work comes into conversation through their aligned perspectives on Cole's (1996) interpretation of Wartofsky's (1973) third-level hierarchy of artefacts to understand tool-mediated behaviour. These are tools that can be used autonomously and can change practice. Zittoun and Edwards' perspective on forward-

facing repositioning aimed at imagined futures is through tools, especially where-to tools, as shown through Rose and Jo's actions and activities. Furthermore, the where-to tools developed by some participants meant that they possibly went further than their original intentions, for example, Rose's conference abstract and Zara's infographic poster. An imagined future is a positive way to conceptualise writing group interventions where the activities are forward-facing and take attention away from the notion of deficit, which Badenhorst et al. (2015) identify is often associated with providing interventions for postgraduate writers. Instead, the potential for resourcefulness has been shown.

7.5 Chapter summary

The data showed that becoming acknowledged as a novice writer creates a repositioning and consciousness of the need for distributed relational work. The activities that appeared to participate in the participants' transitions for an awareness of the need for distributed relational work or know-who writing were those with an imaginary component. The data has suggested that once the participants understood how people could work relationally on texts, they took steps to reposition themselves, which enabled possibilities for self-hood (Ivanič, 2004) through how others' expertise might align with one's own. To enable novice writers to transition to relational work, they need tools and support to develop know-who. The conditions concerning relational work showed the potential for novice writers to develop collective expertise to respond to problems and create common knowledge for individual writing development

An enactment of relational agency for novice writers and becoming a resourceful practitioner was contingent on what matters, supervisory support and using the tools developed through the interventions iterated for themselves and others with the potential

to develop writers' identities further and change the status quo. The research identifies the conditions that require nurturing. Furthermore, the current research may be relevant to postgraduate writing more broadly. Developing writers' disciplinary identities and relational expertise concerns critical research skills, as highlighted by Castelló's et al. (2021), call for developing relational agency for postdoctoral researchers.

Using CHAT has enabled the identification of the conditions which other researchers can explore. The lenses came into conversation with sociocultural theory, emphasising feedforward activities and where-to tools creating the notion of imagined futures for novice writers. I will present my final reflections on the current thesis study in the following chapter.

8 Chapter Eight: Thesis conclusion

8.1 Introduction

The current research study grew out of an interest in how nurses become writers and how psychological tools can mediate their transition to academic research writing. Provoked by my transition experiences, I implemented two writing group interventions in a higher education setting to explore formative human development when the participants faced a new writing task and were given access to cognitive and social resources. I have made a case that nursing students, teachers, and clinicians undertake applied research and health service improvement projects with the potential for broader value and influence if disseminated through academic research writing. While many scholars have engaged with sociocultural theory and cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) to examine formative writing development (e.g. Bazerman, 2012; Russell, 2009; Thompson, 2013; Wittek, 2012), writing group intervention research in the discipline has principally focused on outcomes and not drawn on extant social science theory to explore human development. It was possible to empirically explore the participants' psychological transition processes and how they potentially became active agents and a resource for others in writing development by taking a sociocultural and cultural-historical perspective.

In this chapter, I will conclude the current thesis study. I provide summary answers to the research questions, explain the contributions of the study, implications, limitations and my future research agenda.

8.2 Addressing the study research questions

The first aim of the current study was to understand how access to cognitive and social resources provided through writing group interventions related to formative transitions for individuals.

I implemented two writing group interventions in a higher education setting for nurses and other health care professionals transitioning to academia from clinical settings. Intervention 1 was to support masters dissertation writing, and intervention 2 was to support alumni or academic teachers to write journal articles based on a dissertation or other project work.

Participant observation, interviews and samples of participants writing were the primary sources of data collection. Participant observation was essential to conceive the participants' issues and concerns about writing and how they used the cognitive and social resources as mediational tools to create collective knowledge about academic research writing during the interventions. The semi-structured interviews aimed to understand how the participants reflected on their engagement with the interventions, how and why they appropriated the tools for their individual writing development and what mattered to them about becoming an academic research writer. During the interviews, the participants self-evaluated their writing development, pointing to specific features in their texts and also reflected on their relational work with others. I considered the samples of participant writing in the light of the activities that individuals identified as most meaningful, the mediational tools they appropriated and features of the text that the participants had become conscious of and its impact on others and how and why they made related changes.

To make sense of the data collected, I used four main methodological approaches: an analytic protocol for communicative action(Middleton, 2011), an analysis of writing based on participants' reflective accounts (Prior, 2004), patterns of evolving writing concerning the design concepts (Geisler, 2018), coding, organising the data in narratives that considered the saliency and timelines of events, and a theoretical interpretation from the dialectics between empirical data and theory.

Transitions from a sociocultural perspective consider why and how individuals reposition themselves, the time needed for an individual to undertake change, and their capacity to take advantage of the available resources, including peer relationships and how the person becomes shaped by the process(Crafter & Maunder, 2012). In the context of the current study, the available resources were novel for the participants and they were experiencing uncertainty when faced with an unfamiliar writing task but anticipated the need to reposition themselves as academic research writers. I now summarise the core findings from the first research question:

- How and why did the participants appropriate the mediational tools from the writing interventions during the work of transition?

Each individual in the current thesis study started from a place of uncertainty which required substantial change. The design for the writing interventions in the context of the current study put a range of mediational tools into play, which allowed the learners to review writing at various stages of the writing process, articulate their understandings and exposed academic research writing concepts such as the authorial voice which may have conflicted with prior understandings about writing in the discipline. The actions and activities involved self-exposure. Writing group interventions have been associated

with allaying fears about externalising writing and building confidence (Ness et al., 2014; Weaver et al., 2014) but in a very general way without exploring human development.

The findings from the current thesis study show the conditions in writing group interventions where the hidden aspects of writing may be exposed. Participants can access opportunities to reveal their fears and inhibitions about academic research writing in their discipline and at the same time enable discovery about the writing process so that they can experience opportunities for self-hood (Ivanič, 1998, 2004) through self-evaluation and the potential for repositioning. Many aspects of writing remain hidden to novices

A critical challenge was letting go of previous conceptions about academic research writing for participants who reconfigured previous texts as journal articles because they needed to decontextualise writing concepts from the previous task. However, engaging in peer-review activities where the participants played the imaginary role of reviewer or reviewee(Zittoun, 2006) brought participants to the genre of disciplinary journals and clarification of disciplinary concepts from their peers. They had an opportunity to anticipate a disciplinary contribution. Peer review is a central activity in writing group interventions but is under-investigated (Aitchison, 2009, 2014; Lee & Boud, 2003). There is evidence in other settings of the relationship between dialogic peer review activities and the development of academic research writing concepts. Wittek et al. (2017) found that student teachers uncovered how to write with and understand disciplinary concepts and mastered the disciplinary genre over time, but the most important element was peer response and sharing of drafts.

Similarly, Thompson and Wittek (2016) explored secondary school student writing development through collaborative talk. Thompson and Wittek's findings showed how different types of talk, for example, exploratory or disputional talk (Mercer, 2000), enabled the learner to take a stance and develop conceptual understanding.

In the current thesis study, the psychological work of transition explored through a sociocultural(Zittoun, 2006, 2008, 2012) perspective showed how the participants repositioned themselves as potential disciplinary writers through the appropriation of mediational tools but in diverse ways contingent on initial uncertainties and the finite nature of respective writing tasks. The participants appeared able to reposition themselves because of the mediational tools and activities associated with imaginary and feedforward properties, acknowledging the participants as writers with something valid to say to their discipline, which could be reflected and worked upon in the reality of everyday lives. Contributing to health care is realised through creating evidence for clinical practice disseminated through writing. When participants can envision their offering through peer feedback, it has a feedforward property. In the current thesis study, peer feedback created a semiotic alliance between the participants meaning they acknowledged each other as writers.

Further contributory factors towards the participants' academic concept development and potential for repositioning appeared to be how the interventions exposed some of the hidden practices associated with academic research writing and an emotional elaboration associated with enjoyment (Smagorinsky, 2011), leading to the prospect of an imagined future. Given the known linguistic, methodological, conceptual and ontological issues (Chen et al.2016); facing the Master's level writer and lack of access to opportunities and resources for health care writers (Gourlay, 2011; Murray et al.,

2014) transitions, these are critical findings because they show the conditions that mitigate the difficulties. However, the psychological work of transition revealed the necessity for distributed relational work as a further transition. The current thesis study provides evidence of the social and cognitive resources where novice writers can make sense and make meaning of academic research writing concepts whilst developing their discoursal identity.

The detailed sociocultural approach offers a framework for other researchers. The findings are relevant to inform the design considerations of higher education interventions to elevate academic research writing concept development for the health care disciplines. The findings inform the discipline about the potential for developing writers' identities to externalise disciplinary knowledge and the resources that create the conditions for the transition to becoming a writer. There is a requirement to put a range of mediational tools into play that exposes the writing process, provide opportunities for self-conception through sharing concerns, opportunities for peer-feedback to let go of previous opportunities and grasp how to write with and externalise disciplinarily concepts, and try on different writing identities to provide imagined future possibilities.

The second aim of the current study was to reveal how the participants developed their capacity for relational work to progress their writing and reposition themselves as a resourceful practitioner through their participation in the interventions

The analysis of repositioning of individuals from a cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) (Edwards, 2005, 2011, 2017) perspective offered the possibility to understand how novice writers will learn how to work relationally with others and propel

themselves forward as academic research writers. The assumption that CHAT was an appropriate lens is that collaborating with others to become an academic research writer often feels hard to access for nurses and health care professionals(Gourlay, 2011; Murray et al., 2014). Furthermore, health care writers may wish to become active agents in their writing development given the critical topics they research and can potentially disseminate. As the findings showed, the participants became conscious of the necessity for distributed expertise and relational work, which became a developmental transition. Edwards' conceptual ideas emerge from the CHAT tradition and focus on relational work in practice settings and how people work together across boundaries on complex problems. In the current study, it was necessary to understand how the novice writer negotiated and worked with others to go about and respond to academic research writing tasks. I now summarise the core findings from the second research question:

- How do the participants experience relational work and deal with contradictions to shape their academic research writing development?

The participants in the current study were diverse and did not fit with a traditional notion of a university student or academic research staff because they moved between academic and clinical contexts or were university teachers without designated research roles. However, they had strong moral values to work on what mattered and develop their writing. Participating in the Interventions appeared to raise the consciousness of the need to work with distributed relational expertise on their writing to overcome contradictions. Distributed relational expertise meant different things for individuals, for example, working with clinical colleagues, increased awareness of the role of disciplinary supervisors, setting up a peer-writing group, taking opportunities to work with other researchers or working more intensely with others during the interventions.

Working with distributed relational expertise on writing development is not new(Daniels, 2015; Wittek et al., 2017). Wittek et al. showed that initial teacher education (ITE) students learned their disciplinary genre and writing practices through distributed work on writing practices. In the context of the problem space for the current thesis study, where nurses and other health care professionals find it hard to access the opportunities to work collaboratively on writing development, cultivating what Edwards identified as know-who appeared as a critical transition. Novice writers need tools and support to develop know-who, and the current study revealed the conditions where this might be possible. A critical turning point was becoming more open to others as a source of learning and repositioning, which appeared to arise through the mediational tools with feedforward or where-to properties as indicated earlier because it appeared to enable an understanding of recognising others as a resource and the possibility to align what matters with what matters to others.

By analysing the participants' development of know-who, the findings create insight into how novice writers developed collective expertise to respond to problems and created common knowledge for individual writing development. An example is Helen, who needed to develop her authorial voice yet understand how to position her former dissertation work as a journal article in a practitioner journal and respond to formal reviewers feedback. The relational work became possible through Helen aligning what mattered with her peers in Intervention 2, who also aimed to publish to respond to demands of the journal community. They worked collaboratively to build on sustained double stimulation and created common knowledge about dealing with and responding to writing tasks.

The current research study showed the conditions for the enactment of an emergent relational agency and becoming a resourceful practitioner, which is contingent upon what matters about writing about a meaningful topic, supervisory support and using the tools developed through the interventions and iteratively for themselves and others and has potential to develop writers' identities and help them change the status quo. The conditions should enable the writer to identify their expertise as a resource for others. Given the problem space of the current thesis study where writing development opportunities are not easily accessible, developing resourceful practitioners is necessary.

However, the point here is a contingency, and some issues were out of the novice writer's control, which points to areas of necessary practice improvement such as developing supervisory roles. Relational agency has not been used as a lens for investigating writing group interventions previously but is gaining interest in the field as an attribute and mediational tool for research writing development (Castelló et al., 2021). With the potential to enhance pedagogical approaches to writing development such as *Academic Literacies* (AcLits) (Badenhorst et al., 2015; Lillis, 2003), relational agency helps move away from writing interventions as spaces to meet deficits, and notably, in the context's problem space, it shows potential for writers to become resourceful for themselves and others. Using CHAT has enabled the identification of the conditions which other researchers can explore. The lenses came into conversation with sociocultural theory, emphasising feedforward activities and where-to tools creating the notion of imagined futures for novice writers.

8.3 The contributions of the current thesis study

I am making three contributions: firstly, a theoretical contribution, a novel alignment between Zittoun's(2006, 2008, 2012) work on developmental transitions and Edwards' (2005, 2011, 2017)work on relational expertise, common knowledge and relational agency; secondly, an empirical contribution to writing group intervention research by bringing my findings and the voices of other scholars to the discourse; thirdly, an empirical contribution through the study's literature review which is a meta-narrative review that raises a problem and other areas to consider for research.

My endeavour to align Zittoun's (2006, 2008, 2008) developmental transitions with Edwards' (2005, 2011, 2017) tools of relational expertise, common knowledge and relation agency is valid for several reasons. Their shared values derive from Vygotsky (1987, 1994) through signs and tools to act on the world in a dialectic of person and practice. While Zittoun and Edwards do not appear to cite one another, they both position themselves alongside Hedegaard (2011, 2012) through the notion of transitions concerning children in activity settings and what researchers can learn about new forms of conduct in response to the demands experienced by children. Zittoun (2014) views the cultural-historical approach as an essential lens to approach learning as a dynamic and situated process where individuals might transform their environment, which speaks to Edwards' notion of individuals to develop their capacities to enact relational agency. A particular strength of their aligned interests or where they appear to come into a conversation is their focus on repositioning for individuals and the place of tertiary artefacts (Cole, 1996; Daniels, 2015; Wartofsky, 1973) with implications for the future.

Nuanced differences between their work are mutually enriching. Zittoun offers the non-normative transition, subjectively experienced as a rupture by the individual and allows the researcher to focus on the person's experience within their socially and culturally situated life while examining the individual's psychological processes and use of symbolic resources and considers temporality.

In contrast, Edwards' focuses on revealing relational work and what one does as a practitioner through the use of tools and the resources of others. However, it is a purposeful contrast because one can explore the meaning of relational practitioner work and semiotic alliances for an individual and how they reposition themselves., which is essential when understanding individual transitions in professional-academic contexts that cause uncertainty. Sociocultural transitions concern negotiation on the part of the individual (Crafter & Maunder, 2012) but do not appear to foreground negotiation very strongly, whereas Edwards' relational agency does. Trust is equally important for relational work and not foregrounded in relational agency. However, Zittoun, in her focus on the emotional elaboration concerned with a transition, emphasises the importance of trusting relationships to acknowledge the individual's repositioning. Edwards' ideas are enticing to many in the educational field, and Edwards (2017) actively encourages researchers to test the relational concepts by holding them against potential competing concepts. As a novice researcher holding Zittoun's and Edwards' concepts held together resulted in an invaluable analytical tool to approach empirical data, helping me to understand how the individual's psychological work of transition foregrounded their capacity to reposition themselves concerning others and begin a journey towards becoming an active agent and a resource for others through forward-facing tools and activities.

Furthermore, the concepts helped me consider some of the macro, and meso factors that shape writing instruction and academic research writing in the context, which, as observed by Dysthe (2012), is essential for our understanding of academic research writing development. My application in the current thesis study is academic research writing development, but I envisage using the ideas in other contexts. In terms of practical implications, the situations where individuals work on complex problems involving others' trajectories whilst repositioning themselves are essential in health care. In my health care teacher role, I prepare learners for these far from straightforward situations and the conceptual framework I have created will be used to develop teaching resources. Therefore, I will be bringing the theoretical framework from the current thesis forward to contribute in various ways.

The mutually enhancing similarities and differences between Zittoun and Edwards are an excellent example of Daniels' (2008) contention that researchers who will draw on more than one tradition in the post-Vygotskian field to enhance the strengths and mitigate limitations of either approach.

In comparing the current thesis study with the extant literature on writing group interventions, it is essential to remember that my aims differed from the studies included in the literature review (Chapter Two) because I attempted to fill the hitherto unexplored gap. That are the formative transitions nurses and healthcare professionals make when they engage with writing group interventions. To date, most studies on writing group interventions have focused on outcomes. Smith and Prior (2020) argued that human development is notoriously difficult to get at. I mitigated this difficulty through the study's conceptual framework. However, I looked at uncertainties and contradictions, not outcomes.

Nevertheless, the issues from the current thesis share common themes with previous work on writing group interventions. In particular, identity, confidence, peer-review, and community and collaboration. I have brought new voices to the discourse through my findings and other scholars' research.

The participants' emerging writing identities were a theme that ran through the work. In investigating the participant's experiences, I have drawn on seminal work concerning writers' identities (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Ivanič, 1998, 2004) and the development of an authorial voice (Nelson & Castelló, 2012).In considering the professional identities of the diverse participants, their desires for repositioning and the challenges they faced, I brought the findings of the study and Zittoun's (2006, 2008, 2012) and Edwards' (2005, 2011, 2017) perspectives to the investigation and discussion. My contribution is through identifying the activities that appeared to enable the participants to overcome uncertainties in their writing identities by repositioning themselves and experiencing an emotional elaboration and their transitions to relational work. Importantly, by focusing on the psychological work of transitions, I have identified issues that remained hidden or not elaborated in previous research on writing group interventions, for example, the covert aspects of the writing process, articulating uncertainties, the participants' appropriation of mediational tools and the potential for an imaginary experience.

The detailed account of participants experiences as they unfolded and explained through the sociocultural and cultural-historical moves our understanding about the interdependency between cognitive and affective experiences (Vygotsky 1971) in the context of developing academic research writing concepts for nurse writers who engage with writing group interventions. Peer review is a central activity in writing group

interventions (Aitchison, 2009, 2014; Lee & Boud, 2003) but under-explored and under-theorised. The findings from the current thesis study showed the potential relationship between peer-review activities and disciplinary concept formation. The findings augment the evidence from other settings, such as portfolio writing for initial teacher education (Wittek et al., 2017) and writing for secondary school students(Thompson & Wittek, 2016). My findings support the Wittek et al. contention that the response and sharing of drafts are the most compelling part of the writing process for understanding disciplinary writing concepts and the knowledge of the discipline.

I departed from the conventional approach to examining community and collaboration in writing group interventions that primarily take a community of practice approach (Dwyer et al., 2015; Dysthe, 2012; Garside et al., 2015; Guerin et al., 2013; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Instead, I drew upon Edwards' relational expertise, common knowledge and relational agency. My contribution has drawn attention to the potential conditions for nurse writers to develop know-who so that they can identify how to align their expertise with others to collaborate on texts. I have revealed the complexity that nurse writers need to respond to and the potential conditions and the contingent issues outside their control, such as supervisory relations. My contribution here is to raise awareness for further discourse and research. I have provided a novel example of the potential for novice writers to develop expertise. Even though small scale, the present study raises the possibilities for other researchers and practitioners who aim to build the capacities of postgraduate writers.

The literature review chapter of the current thesis followed a meta-narrative review approach (Greenhalgh et al. 2005; Wong et al. 2013; Booth, Sutton, and Papaioannou

2016) that illuminates a problem through raising areas to consider as opposed to finding definitive answers. The literature review has informed the direction of the current research study by identifying empirical, theoretical and pedagogical issues for writing group interventions for the health care disciplines. However, the literature review is an entity and can inform other researchers as a published journal article or potentially extend the review for future work to compare or encompass related issues from different disciplinary fields. Furthermore, I explain in the following section how I have used my approach to composing the literature review for the current thesis as a mediational tool for my teaching practice.

8.4 Implications of the thesis study

The implications of the current thesis study concern me as a teacher and a developing researcher and other researchers and teachers who share my interests or experience in the problem space that I have outlined and explored.

The issues arising from the current thesis study concern sustaining the knowledge gained in the conditions that nurture academic research writing development and developing practices that can enhance relational agency.

8.4.1 Sustaining the knowledge from the current thesis study

To make academic research writing development transitions, novice writers in the discipline require mediational tools for discovery in their writing processes, exposure for self-conception, and opportunities for peer feedback to let go of previous conceptions and grasp how to write with disciplinary concepts. Furthermore, they need to try different writing identities which provide imagined future possibilities and identify the potential of their disciplinary expertise for themselves and others.

The research presents a conundrum because writing group interventions are marginal to mainstream university education (Aitchison, 2014; Grant & Knowles, 2000). They are contingent on the commitment of individuals with minimal resources. On the one hand, it is possible to make recommendations for practices in writing group interventions, but as Badenhorst et al. (2015) argue, the issue with ad hoc interventions is that they do not sustain and embed writing pedagogies that offer long-term development, making meaningful learning peripheral. On the other hand, in the sector indeed in the United Kingdom (UK), writing development is not routinely included in the postgraduate curriculum.

While I remain committed to writing group interventions, what I have learned has caused me to wonder what other changes I could make in the setting where I work as a principal lecturer for the student experience. I have used the knowledge from the current thesis research and the resources to design, develop and deliver two postgraduate modules on respective professional doctorate programmes. A professional doctorate combines professional practice with a research degree. The learner is not on a trajectory to an academic research career but will transform their knowledge and professional practices concerning social science or clinical research concepts and undertake an applied research project that comprises the thesis. The students share many of the characteristics of the participants from the current thesis study. They need to transition from expert professional practice to practitioner-researcher, creating uncertainty for their identities. The first module I designed forms part of the second-year programme on a professional doctorate in education and concerns academic research writing.

I have implemented principles that involve composing a draft literature review for an educational journal, a where-to activity, and core activities involving peer-review on successive drafts and collaborative writing. I use my approach to composing a literature review for the current thesis as a template while encouraging the learners to explore the many ways to undertake a literature review. The output for the learner is an object-in-activity (Prior, 2008) for their continued writing development on their thesis. However, it is also an opportunity to publish and participate in the disciplinary discourse.

The second module I designed is for a professional doctorate in nursing and is a first-year module based on the Researcher Development Framework (Vitae, 2010). The framework has four domains. The student self-evaluates their current development level and plans activities to comprise an initial research plan against the domains, and academic research writing needs are a recurrent theme. The importance of discovery and peer-review in the writing process has informed some activity designs. The activities include the following: an analysis of the moves of academic journals (Swales, 2004); self-positioning in the text, including the nature of claims (Hyland, 2005); positioning of the authorial voice and citation strategies. Writing analysis is invariably new knowledge for the learners but is a segue into peer-reviewing writing drafts.

The curriculum developments that I have made are an entry point to nurturing the conditions that I observed in the current thesis study for academic research writing development and provides opportunities for the learners to participate in the activities where disciplinary concepts in academic contexts operate (Wittek et al., 2017).

8.4.2 Researching and developing the practices to enhance relational agency

A further implication of the current thesis study is the potential for further refinement and use of the conceptual tools, particularly how the discipline can create the conditions for enacting relational agency. Henshall et al. (2021) reviewed the interventions aimed at clinical academic pathway development for nurses in the UK. As explained earlier, clinical academic roles are central to improving patient care outcomes, and partnership working is critical. Henshall et al. undertook the review because nurses lag behind other health care professionals in making transitions to the roles.

An apparent issue is nurses not having the resources to write research funding applications to develop and sustain their positions. Leadership issues are identified as the reason for slow uptake. Looking at the studies included in the review and the Henshall et al. conclusions, it appears that the interventions to date have been fragmented and top-down. I argue that there is scope for work in what Edwards (2012) identifies as the middle layer of interactions between the individual and collective. It would be interesting to know how the nurses aspiring to these roles view their trajectories and the uncertainties that they experience. It is an example of an area to develop resourceful practitioners and an area for research involving an appropriate intervention.

8.4.3 Nurturing supervisory practices

Dissertation supervisors appeared to play an essential role in the setting of the current thesis study. Based on some participants' self-reports, those who appeared to enact relational agency most strongly had experienced pro-active and co-authorial relationships with their supervisors. Supervisory relations present complexity. In the current thesis study setting, there is an academic skill mix of those who take on

supervisory roles. Some teachers are not doctorly prepared or research-active. Based on the literature presented in the discussion (Dysthe, 2002; Kamler, 2008; Wisker, 2012; Wisker & Claesson, 2013), supervisors at any level do not necessarily have the knowledge, skills or resources to support student academic research writing or develop co-authoring relations. The issue might be more to do with transparent negotiation about what either part wants to achieve through the relationship.

I have tried to resolve some of these issues in the setting by opening a discussion. While I had invited colleagues to join Intervention 2 to co-author with supervisees, I had never considered extending an invitation to Intervention 1 to work alongside supervisees on dissertation writing. After completing the current thesis study, I changed my approach and invited colleagues to co-facilitate Master's dissertation writing interventions. The outcome was that a psychology colleague collaborated alongside three nursing lecturers (including Jo), and we co-facilitated dissertation writing interventions for nursing and psychology students. A different strategy that I have is using the teaching resources from the interventions as mediational tools for staff development workshops. The core change that the strategies have created is opening a dialogue between colleagues and learners about supporting academic research writing. However, in the health care disciplines, if we want to work pro-actively in the problem space of the current thesis, then professional supervisory development requires more attention.

8.5 Limitations and future research agenda

It is necessary to interpret the findings tentatively because of the small-scale nature of the study and may not apply in different contexts. From the participants' perspectives, their engagement with the interventions finished once they had submitted their dissertation or published their journal manuscript. In terms of a person's lifetime writing

trajectory (Bazerman, 2013; Kellogg, 2008), the period of the current thesis study was relatively minor. Given the observed processes of transitions and the endeavours undertaken by the participants, an exciting discovery might have been how the interventions had opened different transitions and is a limitation of the current study.

However, the findings provide a detailed insight into the individual experiences of postgraduate writers who belong to a disciplinary group where there is a need to develop their writing identities and give them the tools to disseminate health care evidence. Whilst small-scale, Bazerman (2013) argues that in-depth writing studies on the individual as the unit of analysis indicating complexity and revealing respective experiences and development even if highly contextualised contributes to knowledge for a larger body of evidence on writer's development at different life stages. There is a dearth of studies on the formative processes of writers' development when they engage with writing group interventions.

In the central sphere of Zittoun's (2006, 2008, 2012) work, symbolic resources are the cultural elements loaded with meaning for individuals, such as movies, art, and novels. These are the resources that individuals use to help them work through transitions, involve an imaginary component and help the person organise their psychological processes for defining new identities, new skills and bestow meaning to their experiences. An alternative approach to the facilitation of the interventions could have been to work with individuals and cultural elements from their life experiences to support their writing development. A consideration is how individuals may use writing to express themselves differently to deal with uncertainties and ruptures.

There are examples of creative writing outputs in nursing, but only a few studies (Coleman & Willis, 2015; Jack, 2015; Young, 2005), have used creative writing strategies as an educational intervention for the health care disciplines. In part, the strategies promote the development of participants' writing, but they have been principally drawn upon to develop professional values such as empathy, which is entirely understandable. As outlined in the literature review (Chapter Two), disciplinary knowledge in nursing (Carper, 1978; White, 1995) emphasises empirics, aesthetics, personal knowledge, ethics and unknowing and is referred to as ways of knowing in nursing. As argued by Carper, the constructs emphasise the creativity of nursing.

If we assume that ways of knowing in nursing are the appropriate conceptual knowledge base, then creative writing strategies may show potential to enhance Carper's notion of aesthetics. The perspectives make it possible to think of creative patterns of discovery, acknowledge empathy as a critical nursing skill and recognise the need for nurses to understand alternative modes of perceiving reality, especially from a patient perspective. It is unknown how aesthetics impact disciplinary writing development. However, there may be potential to enhance the writing development approaches that I have taken in the current thesis study with creative writing strategies as an additional resource for writing in the discipline. It is a delicate balance because, on the one hand, the approaches that I have taken bring the writers into play with disciplinary concepts in the academy but on the other hand, as the current thesis study has shown, it is essential for nurse writers to identify their expertise to develop their writing identities and become conscious of that expertise as a resource for others.

I undertook the study as a single doctoral researcher with finite resources. Given the emphasis in the current thesis study on developing resourceful practitioners' capacity, rather than assuming limitation, I reflect on how I have developed as a resourceful practitioner through the process to mitigate the limitations. I recognised the resources of others. Firstly, my doctoral supervisors enlightened my neophyte understanding of the sociocultural and cultural-historical field and the literature on writing. Secondly, I had to ensure that appropriate pedagogies informed the interventions for novice writers. I drew on my academic networks and local educational developers in the institution where I am employed to design and deliver the interventions.

As my confidence in the field of sociocultural and cultural-historical theory has emerged, aside from my research work on the thesis study, I became a co-investigator on an EU Horizon 2020 Research project http://www.pepper.eu.com/ on the development of an artificial intelligence system to support the decision-making of adults with a long-term condition, Type 1 diabetes. I led a qualitative study alongside a clinical feasibility study and collaborated with interprofessional co-researchers. We aimed to determine how the participants engaged with and trusted the system in the context of their everyday lives. Had I not been immersed in the theoretical literature for the current thesis, I would have been unaware of Russian perspectives (Mezzich et al., 2013) on person-centred approaches to psychological development for people with long-term health conditions. A body of Russian work has been developed based upon Vygotsky's (1998) cultural-historical theory of the social situation of development alongside a theoretical model of person-centred diagnosis. I linked this with the sociocultural notion of trust (Marková et al., 2008). While working within the constraints of a clinical feasibility trial, the theoretical ideas have provided rich lenses for my colleagues and

me to investigate how participants have engaged with and learned from the decision-making system and present our findings to an international audience (Waite et al. 2020).

Some limitations of my research processes impacted the recruitment and data completeness. Like many researchers in writing group interventions, I played the role of convenor and researcher (outlined in Chapter Four). I offered the writing interventions to colleagues and students in the higher education institution because writing development is part of my pedagogic role. There was no requirement for participation in the investigation. In intervention 2, I found it challenging to recruit complete supervisor-supervisee dyads meaning that there was limited evidence of co-authorial experiences. As the findings showed, supervisor roles played a critical role in access to opportunities for writing development. There was scope to expand an understanding of what mattered to supervisors who propelled supervisees or alumni forward, and their negotiating strategies to build and sustain practices and was a limitation of the study. On the other hand, the research participants as supervisees gave detailed accounts of their experiences of relational work, including supervisor-supervisee relations, and it was possible to identify some supervisor practices that were developmental for the supervisee's writing.

Having completed the thesis study, I now have threads to follow for my conceptual and methodological interests in human development in educational and health care settings. However, further work is needed because the overall problem which framed the current thesis study continues. Earlier, I outlined my recommendations for nurturing and sustaining the practices analysed in the current thesis study. Concerns about the sustainability of academic nursing will remain unless more support is provided (Murray et al. 2014, Andrew et al. 2009). As argued throughout the thesis study, making the

necessary transitions is troublesome. An outcome of my thesis work has influenced a collaborative research fund proposal for a two-phase study with colleagues in my institution and a nurse academic colleague from a research-intensive university. We aim to develop an intervention to support the development of research activity undertaken by nursing faculty staff on both research and teaching contracts in universities across the UK. Phase 1 will involve data gathering using qualitative interviews and a survey instrument, and Phase 2 will concern intervention development, implementation and evaluation. The theoretical framework for the current thesis study informs the proposal. The theoretical perspective will enable insights into how nurses position themselves in academic environments, the transition between teaching and research activities, and the social, cultural, and historical factors that mediate these experiences at a micro and meso level in interplay with research engagement and activity.

8.6 Final reflections

Being immersed in the participants' writing development brought my writing processes into view during the thesis journey. I have learned a great deal from them. I feel Leah's pain when confronted with a blank screen, and I need to take Jo's advice about being patient with myself. I have experienced many ruptures and uncertainties. A critical transition that is still in progress is writing with a social scientist's voice. I can identify with the self-regulatory practices that participants described during the interviews. I have made earnest and recursive attempts to write at a doctoral level whilst developing new conceptual knowledge. Externalising those concepts has been challenging. I identify with the participants because I have learned that it is necessary to draw upon the resources of others and means exposing one's writing to others.

An inspiration is Helen Sword's (2016) work on the real-life practices of writing. Sword's advice is that regular writing practices should always have a social and aesthetic goal. The social goals that I set have expanded over the doctorate because I have shared 'work-in-progress' with a broader group of people. I include family members from three different generations, work colleagues, my college adviser, and, latterly, I have participated in online writing groups. I have also shared the two chapters of my thesis findings (chapters 5 and 6) with the research participants. As a colleague consistently reminds me, one cannot be both producer and consumer of one's text. However, in common with the participants in this thesis study, I have had to develop a capacity to let others consume my text.

As for Sword's idea of having an aesthetic goal, mine is reading a broad genre of literary novels for pleasure. I identify novels as a symbolic resource because they have kept me going through the transitions involved in the doctoral journey and remind me of the processes writers go through to research their stories and make their writing enjoyable for others. Reading for pleasure throws up the possibility that there are no definitive ways to write a text. I have particularly enjoyed writing and developing the participants' stories. They became characters where I explored their writing histories, emotions, and interactions. It was important to tell their stories truthfully and in-depth, given their eagerness to participate in the study. Their moral values and endeavours to develop their writing for dissemination to improve health care practice were humbling.

Throughout the thesis process, I have drawn on my supervisors' theoretical and research expertise, and I have taken their advice to shape the study and enhance the quality of the research. I have found the processes of transfer of status and confirmation of status to be especially beneficial in providing critical and constructive peer feedback on the

credibility of the research in progress. I have used the feedback to create a more precise argument throughout the thesis, justify and explain my methodological approach, and give voice to the participants through my writing.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Further information to supplement the literature review (chapter 2)

Appendix B: Ethical approvals

Appendix C: Further information to supplement the methods chapter (chapter 4)

Appendix D: Further information to supplement 'formative transitions and transformation in a Master's dissertation writing group intervention (chapter 5)

Appendix A. Further information to supplement the literature review (chapter 2)

- Literature review protocol
- Example of critical appraisal

A. 1. Literature Review Protocol

Focus of the review:

- The rigour, reliability, and validity of the current research methodologies used to examine writing group interventions in higher education contexts for nursing and allied health disciplines.

To achieve the objectives, the sub-questions followed a meta-narrative review approach (Wong et al., 2013):

- How have writing group interventions in higher education (HE) been conceptualised for the health care disciplines?
- What types of research methodologies have been used to examine such writing group interventions?
- What range of writing pedagogies are used to underpin such interventions?
- Which theories have been used to explain transitions or participant development within such interventions?
- What are the implications for the practices and investigation of writing group interventions in the health care disciplines?

Criteria for inclusion and exclusion of studies

Inclusion: qualitative, quantitative (quasi-experimental, non-experimental), and mixed methods

Exclusion: Undergraduate writing, non-research writing, more than ten years old- date limits may exclude key pivotal works, dilemma because methodological quality may be outdated.

Types of populations

Adult learners from health and social care disciplines (nursing, midwifery, health visiting, medicine, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, public health, pharmacy, social work) undertaking a Master's dissertation or doctoral thesis or a higher education teacher.

Types of interventions or exposure socially constructed and facilitated writing group interventions aimed at the development of academic research writing. Very often other frames of reference also used i.e writing retreats, writing conferences, writers' groups, task force, boot camp, writing courses, writing consultations…

Setting/ Context

International, higher education

Search strategy

Databases:

- **SCOPUS**
- **ERIC**
- **BEI**
- **ZETOC**
- **CINAHL**
- **EBHOST**

- **PsycINFO**

Websites:

WAC clearing house www.https://wac.colostate.edu/

Society for research into higher education (SRHE)

Journals:

- Written communication
- JOWR (Journal of Writing Research)
- Studies in higher education
- HERDSA

Table 1. Search Strings, (Synonyms, combinations, wildcards and brackets), snowball sampling of reference lists of papers meeting the criteria and pearl searching – say how many

	Search ID#	**Search Terms**
☐	S11 + S1	Postgrad* writ* develop*
☐	S10 + S1	Master* AND dissertation*
☐	S9 + S1	Writ* AND intervention*
☐	S8 + S1	Writ* AND process*

☐	S7 + S1	Academic AND identit*
☐	S6 + S1	Collaborative AND Writ*
☐	S5+ S1	Faculty AND writ*
☐	S4+ S1	Research AND stor*
☐	S3 + S1	Composition AND stud*
☐	S2 + S1	(Graduate research writ*)
☐	S1	Academic research writ* development* OR literac*AND writ* group* OR writ* retreat* OR writ* conference* OR writ*mentor* Academic research writing development AND writing groups OR writing retreats OR Academic literacies

A. 2. Critical appraisal of a qualitative study (Boquet et al. 2017).

Study Purpose Was the purpose and/or research question stated clearly? **Yes** No	Outline the purpose of the study and/or research question. **Aim** Researching for models for graduate support writing across and within disciplines- collaboration on graduate writing support **Objective**
Literature Was relevant background literature reviewed? **Yes** No	Describe the justification of the need for this study. Was it clear and compelling? The structure of this paper was very hard to follow University systems do not consider that graduates still might have a lot to learn about writing. DNP students face complexity because they are already immersed in workplace and professional genres and move back into a complex academic discourse community that requires advanced academic genres, drawing on Bazerman, Engestrom etc the negotiation between and across workplace and academic genres. Writing center input, not enough, most WAC programmes aimed at UGs.
My review questions were? To what extent have previous studies on higher education writing group interventions for the healthcare disciplines explored the process of transition towards academic research writing development?	How does the study apply to your practice/and or to your review questions? Is it worth continuing this review? . In that it was related to writing development, yes but otherwise hard to tell. It probably was not worth continuing
Study Design	Was the design appropriate for the study questions? (i.e, rationale) Ongoing evaluation, action research
What was the intervention? ***Length, duration and intensity***	Graduate assistant employed in writing center to work with graduate students and take a lead on the identification writing expectations at graduate level, collaboration between university writing

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Appendix B. Ethical Approvals

B. 1. CUREC & UREC Approvals

Dear Marion,

Sorry for the delay, thought I had done this.

CUREC APPROVAL

Formative interventions for collaborative academic research writing

As a member of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee I am happy to approve this revised proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Liam

Dr Liam Francis Gearon

Associate Professor

Department of Education

and

Senior Research Fellow

Harris Manchester College

University of Oxford

Conjoint Professor, School of Humanities and Social Science, Newcastle University, Australia

UREC Approval

Marion Waite

Principal Lecturer Student Experience

Department of Clinical Health Care

Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

Oxford Brookes University

Jack Straws Lane

Marston Road Site

19 October 2015

Dear Marion

Study title: Formative interventions, for collaborative academic research writing

Thank you for sending through details of the above study which has been approved by the University of Oxford CUREC.

On behalf of the Oxford Brookes University Research Ethics Committee I am pleased to confirm Chair's Approval for you to recruit potential participants from the University, on the basis that the recruitment advertisement/poster etc. makes it clear that the study has been seen by Oxford Brookes UREC.

Therefore, please would you include the following statement in any recruitment advertisement for Brookes students and/or staff:

'Oxford Brookes University has knowledge of this study and has permitted recruitment at the University. In the event of any questions about the study, please contact the researchers in the first instance. Should you need to contact anyone at Oxford Brookes about this further, please email ethics@brookes.ac.uk'.

Should the recruitment, methodology or data storage change from your original plans, or should any study participants experience adverse physical, psychological, social, legal or economic effects from the research, please inform me with full details as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Quinton

Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee

cc Louise Wood, UREC Administrator

B. 2. Participant information and consent forms

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Formative interventions, for collaborative academic research writing.

Research Study Information

Dear participant

This letter provides information on the research study taking place between June 2015 -September 2017. I am a doctoral research student at Oxford University, supervised by Dr. Ian Thompson and Professor Harry Daniels. In the research project, Formative interventions, for collaborative academic research writing, the aim is to understand how participants learn from such activities and how it helps them to develop and transform their individual research writing.

The purpose of the study is to explore learning in relation to the activities that take place during two academic research, writing interventions that are already being implemented within the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences at Oxford Brookes University. The interventions are Master's dissertation writing workshops and a collaborative writing group for learners and teachers aimed at peer-review publication. You have been invited to participate within the research because you are have or are already participating in one or both of these interventions. The objective of the study is to improve student academic research writing skills and to support staff development of academic research writing.

The research study will involve the following activities:

- Researcher facilitation of writing activities as a component of the intervention.
- Audio- visual recordings of these activities.
- Semi-structured Interviews with individual participants from both intervention groups
- Analysis of individual writing outputs, which will be used as a point of reference during the semi-structured interviews.

The results of the research may be published in academic publications or presented at academic conferences. The identity of teachers, students and the school will be kept anonymous in any research publications or presentations and all information will be kept strictly confidential, stored on a password protected computer and will only be viewed by me and my two supervisors.

You are under absolutely no obligation to take part in this study and if you do agree to participate then you are free to withdraw at any time. There are no known risks to participating in the study and choosing to participate will not affect assessment of your work within your programme of study. The main beneficiaries of the research will be ongoing students and teaching staff that have chosen to participate within the writing interventions. There is also the possible benefit of being provided opportunities to reflect on the development of your academic research writing.

Should you have any further questions about this research, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor Dr Ian Thompson, ian.thompson@education.ox.ac.uk, Department of Education, 15 Norham Gardens, Oxford, UK OX2 6PY. Should you have any comments or concerns about this study at any time, and you are not satisfied with the answers we have given you, you can contact the Chair of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee, Dr Nigel Fancourt, 15 Norham Gardens, Oxford, UK OX2 6PY, nigel.fancourt@education.ox.ac.uk.

Oxford Brookes University has knowledge of this study and has permitted recruitment at the University. In the event of any questions about the study, please contact the researchers in the first instance. Should you need to contact anyone at Oxford Brookes about this further, please email ethics@brookes.ac.uk

If you need more information about what is involved, please contact me. Thank you for your time and attention.

Yours sincerely,

Marion Waite

Participant consent form

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Formative interventions, for collaborative academic research writing

The purpose of the study is to explore learning in relation to the activities that take place during two academic research, writing interventions that are already being implemented within the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences at Oxford Brookes University. The aim is to understand how participants learn from such activities and how it helps them to develop and transform their individual research writing.

This is a study undertaken by doctoral research student Marion Waite and supervised by Dr. Ian Thompson and Professor Harry Daniels from the Department of Education, University of Oxford.

1. I have read and understood the information about this study. I have considered all the risks involved with this research. I have had an opportunity to ask questions, and any questions have been answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without consequence and without having to give a reason. If I decide to withdraw, I will write to Marion Waite at marion.waite@education.ox.ac.uk.

3. I understand who will have access to identifying information provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.

4. I understand that confidentiality of information is subject to normal legal requirements.

5. I am aware of who to contact should I have questions or concerns during or following my participation in this study.

6. I understand that this project has been reviewed by and received ethical clearance through the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

I agree to participate in this study

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher: Marion Waite

Appendix C. Further information to supplement the methods chapter (chapter 4)

C. 1. Code book for intervention 1

Nodes\\Coding frame

Code Names	Code book intervention 1 Description
Crises points and tactics	the process of working through these crises
(CON)writing differentially from prior genre experiences	Trying to work out how writing of dissertation compared with previous experiences
(EMO) feeling lost and isolated	feeling lost and confused within the writing process and isolated
(EMO)Difficulties with expressing myself academically	The difficulties that participants note about expressing their thoughts in writing
(EMO)Disruptions to writing	identification of events during the process of writing the dissertation that disrupted or distracted from the action of writing
(EMO)nerves around writing a dissertation	Where participants refer to the anxiety that writing a dissertation cause

Code Names	Code book intervention 1 Description
(TAC) to interact with others to see how they were thinking and feeling	where participants identified that they wanted to know how other people were feeling
(TAC)strategies for overcoming difficulties	personal strategies for overcoming difficulties and challenges associated with the writing process
(VAL) Hearing others talk about their writing experiences	The emotional aspects of hearing other participants talk about their experiences and comparing with your own
(VAL) personal objective motives	where participants explicitly identify their own objectives that motivated their writing and enabled them to work on themselves and their texts
Explicit mediation	Concrete examples highlighted by participants within their own writing where they had used or further developed the tools to achieve there academic research writing goals (first stimulus)
(EVAL)Allowing you to appraise someone else's work	Where participants used the strategy of comparing work as used in the intervention again

Code Names	Code book intervention 1 Description
(NAR) Writing and thinking differently	Raising of consciousness that academic research writing is a non-linear process, and can restructure thinking
(VAL) Becoming the interlocuter with other people's texts	Where participants note the use of discourse mechanisms as they understand them from the intervention in other people's texts.
(VAL) Creating a social context for ongoing writing development	When participants re-constructed the social activities in the writing groups.
(VAL) mind mapping process	when participants refer to an artefact that they created in the intervention, which was further used to develop writing and thinking processes
(VAL)Disseminating my research	When participants referred to future development of their writing (prolepsis)
Most important experience of tool use in time and space of interventions	

Code Names	Code book intervention 1 Description
(ACT) Access to examples of writing at formative stages	Referring to the text-recognition activity
(ACT) Receiving concrete instructions about texts	Code anything that was perceived as instructions about the specification of the text.
(ACT)Freewriting	when the participants referred to the freewriting activities during the intervention
(ACT)Signposting	When participants referred to being introduced or were instructed about signposting
(ACT)Thinking about the structure of the dissertation	When participants referred to the intervention prompting them to think about the structure of the dissertation
(ACT)Thinking about your own personal writing processes	When participants referred to how the intervention prompted them to think about their own writing processes.
(ACT)writing to prompt	participant reflections on the writing to prompt activity

Code Names	Code book intervention 1 Description
(VAL)access to teachers with varied writing expertise	Where participants identified the importance of having access to writing facilitators with varying perspectives
(VAL)discussing writing	when the participants refer to the relationship between dialogue during the intervention and the development of their writing
(VAL)Expectations of the tools	Expectations of how the tools in the interventions would operate
(VAL)The important thing to me was the voice	Where participants referred to finding their own voice in their writing
(VAL)Thinking beyond the dissertation	When participants suggested that the activities prompted them to think about dissemination beyond the dissertation
(VAL)Timeliness of intervention	timing of intervention in relation to writing development
Turning points	When participants noted that things had changed

Code Names	Code book intervention 1 Description
Why and how the tools from the interventions became meaningful to the	
(ACT) a running theme in the writing	Where participants referred to how they became aware of having to be coherent within their texts
(ACT)Getting skills for owning sentences + paragraph structure	Where participants identified a change in their own writing skills, writing a sentence, writing a paragraph, writing (structural skills)
(ACT)improving my English	Where L2 participants found meaning in the activities that raised conciousness about Language improvements
(ACT)posing questions of the reader	when the participants refer to their imagined audience
(ACT)Revamping those areas of my own dissertation	Where participants suggested that the activities and the tools helped them to subsequently edit and revise their own writing
(ACT)watching the recordings	where participants referred to accessing the recordings to watch and listen again

Code Names	Code book intervention 1 Description
(ACT)writing in the correct tense	Where participants demonstrate consciousness of writing in the correct tense
(TAC)freewriting on my own	where participants claimed that they subsequently used the freewriting activities introduced during the workshop as a strategy within their personal writing processes
(VAL)Becoming self-aware and reflective about my writing	When participants self-reflected about their own writing in relation to tools in the workshop
(VAL)Connecting with my supervisor	The extent to which participation in the intervention impacted on the relationship with supervisors
(VAL)doing justice to the overall work	when participants identify how consciousness about writing processes enhances the rsearch that they have been doing
(VAL)Getting to the point of expressing myself and being specific about my aims	When participants talk about the extent of the impact of the activity on their own writing development

Code Names	Code book intervention 1 Description
(VAL)Not because of the writing group	When participants refer to their writing development and state that the development was not a process of the intervention
(VAL)Surprised at how much I do know	When participants noted that the activities prompted them to become concious of what they knew about their topics

C. 2. Interview schedules for Intervention 1 and Intervention 2

Semi-structured interview schedule Intervention 1

1. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I am going to ask you some questions about participation during the Master's dissertation writing workshop and the development of your own dissertation writing. Please take your time to answer the questions and ask for clarification about anything, which you are unsure of.

2. During the dissertation workshop you participated in a group activity where two texts written by the same author at different time points were comparEd. Can you tell me about your experience of the activity?
3. Can you recall the issues that the group raised about the writing within the two texts?
4. Can you tell me about the consensus that the group reached about these issues?
5. How did participation in this activity influence the development of your own dissertation writing? Can you show me an example?
6. Where there any areas of surprise or contradictions to your prior knowledge of how a dissertation chapter is written and constructed?
7. Following the workshop were there any areas of your understanding about dissertation writing that remained unresolved? If so can you tell me about these?
8. Are there any other strategies that you have used to support the development of your dissertation writing?
9. Is there anything else which you wish to tell me about?
(The group consensus at the time was: prompt if necessary, with a summary or with an extract from the audio-visual recording

- Text 1 was somewhat unstructured
- Text 2 was more structured and there was a group description of 'sign-posting'
- Although the group could define an issue about structure there was still areas of surprise about the construction of the 'better' text

Semi-structured interview schedules Intervention 2

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I am going to ask you some questions about participation during the collaborative writing group and development of your proposed journal article. Please take your time to answer the questions and ask for clarification about anything, which you are unsure of.

1. During a collaborative writing group meeting you presented an extended abstract of your proposed journal article for feedback. Can you tell me about your experiences of the activity?
2. Can you recall the feedback that the group gave you about issues within your text?
3. Can you recall any consensus that the group reached with you about your writing?
4. How did your participation within this activity help you to develop your abstract into a manuscript for the proposed journal?
5. Were there any surprises or contradictions to your prior understanding of how a journal article is written and constructed, before joining the group?
6. Following this writing group meeting were there any areas of your understanding about writing for publication that remained unresolved? If so can you tell me about these?
7. Are there any other strategies that you have used to support the development of your writing?
8. Is there anything else which you wish to tell me about?

(The group consensus at the time was: prompt if necessary, with a summary or with an extract from the audio-visual recording

Issue is distilling dissertation into a journal article

If a systematic review exists already (i.e a Cochrane Review), then hard for individual student work to compete with this

- What is the difference between dissertation literature review and a formal systematic review?
- What is the difference between dissertation literature review that fulfils an assignment brief compared to a journal call for a literature review
- Being clear about the difference between the writing and anything else that could be described as a literature review
- Show synthesis & emergence of themes within writing
- Critique of previous studies on the topic, being clear for standards or criteria for methodological flaw in other work 'not adding anything new"
- Giving a title to reflect the work that the writing represents
- Weaving an argument throughout the writing by highlighting what this writing adds.)

Revised interview schedules:

Intervention 1:

Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in the interview. I'm going to ask you some questions about your participation during the Master's dissertation writing workshops, and how that relates to the development of your own dissertation writing.
There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Take your time to answer them, ask for clarification if you are not sure about anything.

1. When it was announced that dissertation writing workshops were to be offered, what was your understanding of the purpose of them?
2. Can you tell me about any of the activities that you participated in during the workshops, or any tools or strategies that were introduced to you during the workshops, that helped you develop your writing and in what way?
3. During the workshops in one activity we asked you to identify, common barriers to writing a dissertation and what advice you would give if you met yourself starting out on your dissertation today? If you can remember that activity would you like to tell me about your experiences?
4. During the workshop we also gave, there was an activity where you had to look at two pieces of writing, 'before and after'. Can you tell me about your experience of that activity?
5. Can you remember a consensus that the group reached about the differences between the two pieces of writing?
6. Did the exercise have an impact on your own writing in any way? Can you show me an example?
7. Before coming to the workshop, were there any surprises or contradictions to your previous understanding of how a dissertation chapter is written and constructed?
8. After participating in the workshops was there anything left unresolved in your understanding?
9. Are there any further strategies or tools that you have used to support the development of your writing, that had not been introduced to you by the university or the writing workshops?
10. Can you describe the main relationships involved with your dissertation writing and what roles they played?
11. Is there anything else which you wish to tell me about?

Revised interview schedules.

Intervention 2

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in the interview. I am going to ask you some questions about the development of your writing and your experiences of participation in the writing group? The interview will involve a discussion of the samples of your writing that you have already sent me and then I have a quite simple and short activity for you to complete. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Please take your time to answer them, ask for clarification if you are not sure about anything.

1. Can you tell me what motivated you to develop your writing into a journal article?
2. You have sent me sample x of your writing. Can you remember the processes that you went through to get to this stage?
3. How do you feel about this sample now, as a piece of writing?
4. You joined the writing group in x…Can you tell me about your experiences of writing in that sort of context?
5. During a collaborative writing group meeting you presented an extended abstract of your proposed journal article for feedback. Can you tell me about your experiences of the activity?
6. Can you recall any consensus that the group reached with you about your writing?
7. How did your participation within this activity help you to develop your abstract into a manuscript for the proposed journal?
8. Can you tell me about your experiences of journal reviewer feedback?
9. To what extent did the feedback help you to develop your writing?
10. I have a piece of paper. If you can imagine the piece of paper as a trajectory of your writing, with the worst piece of writing you could possibly do on 'X' axis and the best piece of writing you could possibly do on 'Y' axis, where would you plot your worst and best?
11. Were there any surprises or contradictions to your prior understanding of how a journal article is written and constructed, before joining the group?
12. Following participation in writing group meetings, were there any areas of your understanding about writing for publication that remained unresolved? If so, can you tell me about these?
13. Are there any other strategies that you have used to support the development of your writing?
14. Is there anything else which you wish to tell me about?

C. 3. Point-to-point activity

Look at this piece of paper, and you imagine the worst writing that you could ever possibly do. Where would you plot it? Now imagine the best writing you have ever done or could possibly do? Where would you plot it? How did you get from your worst to your best?

Appendix D

D.1. Intervention 1 dissertation writing workshop activities

Intervention 1 Activities

Marion Waite, Principal Lecturer Student Experience
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May 2015- June 2016



Text-recognition activities

- Identify what constitutes "good" dissertation writing
- Plan regular writing habits
- Needs analysis for further areas of support for dissertation writing

Introductions

Whiteboard activity!

Jot down 3 adjectives to describe your feelings about dissertation writing

Thesis organisation Poll

Identify the main elements of a dissertation in one of the fields you are researching

e.g. abstract, articulation of research question, methodology, conclusions, list of references

If you can allocate rough word counts to each main section or chapter, Enter all of this into the Poll!

organisation

- Declaration
- Abstract
- Abbreviations
- Table of Contents, list of tables, list of figures
- Introduction
- Literature review
- Methods
- Results/Findings
- Discussions
- Conclusions (future work, applications)
- References
- Appendices

Recognition Activity

Take 10 minutes to read both!



Two introduction chapters

Text 1
https://docs.google.com/a/brookes.ac.uk/document/d/1cX4DZk_sEitrAqs5dgdtP3dREWQEJxWRngLONQ756_E/edit?usp=sharing

Text 2
https://docs.google.com/a/brookes.ac.uk/document/d/1k0xuubhvYU6nNVReMcbWXpVPLruj52lKgSL73w4GGwc/edit?usp=sharing

Analysis- Text-recognition

Text chat & use microphones to discuss

Text 1:
Identify **one** strength and **one** weakness
Text 1 & 2:
Compare the structure of **both**
Text 1 & 2:
Where is the research question positioned in both?

Dissertation Workshop 2

Involving your readers in your texts

Marion Waite, Principal Lecturer for the Student Experience.
Maria Cerrato Lara
Postdoctoral Researcher - OCSLD

Academic discourse mechanism activities

Learning objectives for workshop 2

At the end of the session you will be able to identify the following voice markers in written texts:

- First person
- Aside comments
- Appealing to share knowledge
- Direct phrases or sentences
- Rhetorical questions

In light of the activities, you will then be able to revise and enhance your texts with the use of voice markers

Activity 1 (10 mins)

In pairs, identify at least four people who may be interested in reading your dissertation and why?

WHAT ARE ENGAGEMENT MARKERS?

Mechanisms explicitly directed to the readers

to focus their attention/ to include them in the discourse of the text being written

ENGAGEMENT MARKERS' MAIN FUNCTION

essential for the author:

to engage and connect with the reader

When writing this type of texts, we must [not only] position ourselves in relation to the material we are discussing [but also] and find a satisfactory way of expressing our own claims and arguments (Cadman, 1997)

The use of engagement markers by senior/experts writers

Writers can predict the readers' reactions to certain claims and, for instance, **anticipate** possible **objections,** or comprehension **difficulties**, which then allows them

1) to use certain resources to guide the interpretation of the text and
2) proactively respond to any possible negative reactions

Discourse Mechanisms	Function	Examples
1) The first person plural	the use of reader pronouns, thus called because its goal is **to include the reader in the reasoning presented in the text**	instead of saying: "*If this question is analyzed it can be considered as...*" would say: *"If we analyze this question we can consider it as...".*

Example of first person plural: Healthcare

First person singular for health care dissertations?

This is closely linked to knowing self and the assumption that before we can help others we need to have insight into how we function as a person. The competence of nurses,....

McCORMACK B. & McCANCE T.V. (2006) Journal of Advanced Nursing 56(5),472–479.

Psychology, APA, no first person

Activity 2 (10 minutes)

Look at the the example of dissertation writing. Underline the words that helped you to identify an effective use of voice markers:

Discourse Mechanisms	Function	Examples
2) Aside comments	**to briefly interrupt the argument and provide an insight of what has been said** to ensure the reader's understanding	Instead of saying: *"Wong and Lemar (1982) suggest that anxiety modifies the perception of efficacy and therefore measure the level of anxiety"* would say..., *"Wong and Lemar (1982) indicate that anxiety modifies the perception of efficacy (understood as job performance) and therefore measure the level of anxiety..."*.

Example of an aside comment:

However, whether this demonstrates competence or not and whether performance is required in order to demonstrate competence – meaning that competence merely represents the potential to perform – also lacks consensus (Eraut 1998).

WATSON R R., STIMPSON A., TOPPING A. & POROCK D. (2002) Journal of Advanced Nursing 39(5), 421–431.

Activity 3 (5 minutes)

Look at the example of student dissertation writing. Where can you identify aside comments?

Discourse Mechanisms	Function	Examples
3) Appealing to shared knowledge	**to make the reader recognize a claim as familiar or accepted, but it is also useful to construct a certain solidarity with the reader**	Modifying the following sentence: *"This disorder is considered...."* by: *"It is commonly agreed that this disorder is..."*

Discourse Mechanisms	Function	Examples
4) Directive phrases or sentences	**to invite the reader to consider an action or an issue from a particular point of view**	Include the use of imperatives (e.g., *"Take the following as an example."*), forms that imply obligation addressed to the audience (e.g. *"We should consider that..."*) and predicative adjectives expressing the writer's judgments regarding importance or necessity of a certain claim (e.g. *"It is important to understand that..."*). An example of its use would involve changing the sentence *"This situation has an impact on...."* into *"Let us consider more specifically how this situation affects..."*.

Example of appealing to share knowledge:

It is well-documented that research reviews are considered research of research and therefore should meet the same standards as primary research in methodological rigour (Ganong 1987, Cooper 1998).

WHITTEMORE R. & KNAFL K. (2005) Journal of Advanced Nursing 52(5), 546–553.

Example of a directive sentence:

(...) the provision of physical care by a nurse who is professionally competent and the value placed on this by patients (McCance 2003) should not be underestimated as an important care process

McCORMACK B. & McCANCE T.V. (2006) Journal of Advanced Nursing 56(5), 472–479.

Activity 4 (5 minutes)

Look at the example of student dissertation writing. Where has the writer used directive sentences?

Discourse Mechanisms	Function	Examples
5) Questions ***engagement resource par excellence***	**to invite the reader to share our point of view**	instead of: *"The negative effects can be identified mainly by..."* we can say: *"How can we identify the negative effects? The most widely used method would be..."*

Example of a question as an engagement marker:

(...) is methodological quality a viable reason for the discrepant finding?

WHITTEMORE R. & KNAFL K. (2005) Journal of Advanced Nursing 52(5), 546–553.

Activity (30 min), Revising your own texts to include voice markers

Your turn: Review a section of your own writing. Using the examples of voice markers introduced in the session, revise your text in light of this.

INTERTEXTUALITY

(citations & references)

What do we mean?

Participating with our own voice in the **dialogues** that are established within a disciplinary community, **contributing, discussing, synthesizing, paraphrasing or reformulating** what other authors have written in the past

Metaphor of the party

This is not a common conversation, but has **specific rules and resources** that we must learn to adequately use depending on the discourse community in which it occurs **so that our voice is taken into consideration**

Types of citation	Definition	Examples
1) Direct citations	imply **transmitting other authors' ideas literally**	"*Culture shapes the mind, which provides us the toolbox through which we not only construct our worlds but also our conceptions about ourselves and about our capabilities*' (Bruner 1999, p. 12)".

Example of a direct citation:

McCormack (2004, p. 35) illustrates the links between these processes, stating that 'knowing what is important forms a foundation for decision-making that adopts a 'negotiated' approach between practitioner and patient'.

McCORMACK B. & McCANCE T.V. (2006) Journal of Advanced Nursing 56(5),472–479.

Types of citation	Definition	Examples
2A) Indirect integrated citations	**although an author's literal wording is not included, much relevance is granted** to his/her voice in the text itself, given that our voice remains in the background, focusing on the paraphrasing of other contributions	*"Tharp (2002) considers that schools need a reform with the following objectives: excellence, equity, inclusion and academic harmony"*

Example of an indirect integrated citation:

Fawcett (1995) distinguishes between conceptual models and mid-range theories, in that mid-range theories articulate one or more relatively concrete and specific concepts that are derived from a conceptual model.

McCORMACK B. & McCANCE T.V. (2006) Journal of Advanced Nursing 56(5),472–479.

Types of citation	Definition	Examples
2B) Indirect non-integrated citations	we move further away from the cited author's literal wording, because **the author is included in brackets** and the ideas or information referred become an inseparable part of our own discourse, that is, our text comes to reflect the cited author's voice	*"However, although the psychologist makes the patient participant in the analysis of the situation, the understanding may be difficult precisely because both participants do not share the understanding regarding the basic rules of the therapeutic relationship (Yagun, 2001)."* In this case, the citation refers to a particular meaning of the concept (therapeutic relationship) and indicates the readers how they should interpret it.

Example of indirect non-integrated citation:

Through the analysis of 14 case studies of nurse–patient relationships, a conceptual framework for person-centred practice was developed based on an understanding of autonomy as 'authentic consciousness' (McCormack 2003).

McCORMACK B. & McCANCE T.V. (2006) Journal of Advanced Nursing 56(5),472–479.

Types of citation	Definition	Examples
3) Indirect citations of evaluative kind	**Our degree of closeness or distance, agreement or disagreement regarding the cited author's ideas**, so evaluative comments	**indirect non-integrated citation** *"Some authors have developed interesting proposals in primary and secondary education relating self-regulation training and formative assessment (Allal, 2000; Sanmarti, 1993)."* ***Indirect integrated citation*** *"Allal's (2000) interesting work shows that the learning of self-regulation is possible through formative assessment practices".*

Example of indirect non-integrated citation of evaluative kind:

Patient satisfaction reflects the evaluation a patient places on their care experience and is well-documented in the literature as an indicator of quality care (Edwards & Staniszewska, 2000, Edwards et al. 2004).

McCORMACK B. & McCANCE T.V. (2006) Journal of Advanced Nursing 56(5),472–479.

Example of indirect integrated citation of evaluative kind

Interestingly, McQueen (2004) highlights the concept of emotional intelligence, described by Goleman (1998) as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills (elements of which are reflected in the prerequisites), and its potential impact on levels of emotional engagement with patients.

McCORMACK B. & McCANCE T.V. (2006) Journal of Advanced Nursing 56(5),472–479.

Types of citation	Definition	Examples
	We can use different verbs to refer to other author's work. **Our verb choice also shows varying degrees of involvement** with their ideas.	We should pay attention to whether we say that a given author *"explains," "defines", "provides", "clarifies", "suggests", "pretends"* or others, according to our communicative intention in each case.

Example to highlight the verb choice in a citation:

Recent research into person-centredness (...) determine the cultural and contextual challenges to implementing a person-centred approach (Binnie & Titchen 1999). Evidence from Binnie and Titchen's research suggested (...). In addition, it may increase patient satisfaction (...). However, Binnie and Titchen (1999) did not test these assertions and were therefore unable to provide evidence of the suggested relationships.

McCORMACK B. & McCANCE T.V. (2006) Journal of Advanced Nursing 56(5),472–479.

Writing to prompt and abstract activities

1: generating ideas and planning

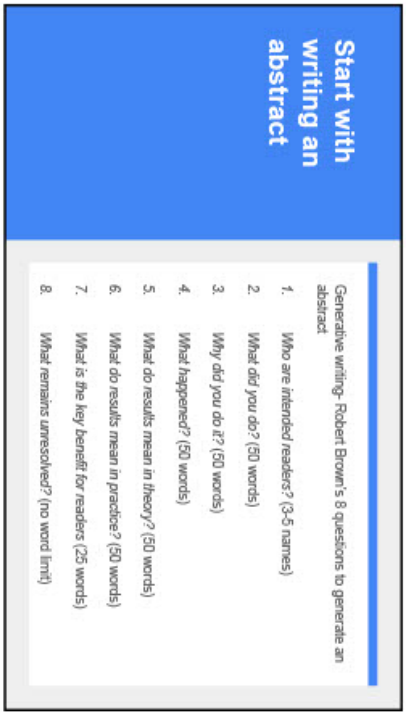
2: drafting (in rough) and seeking feedback

3: revising, based upon feedback

4: editing and completion

Writing to prompt

- *This research reveals that.....*
- *This is a contribution in the sense that.....*
- *This is a contribution to the extent that.....*


Start with writing an abstract
Generative writing- Robert Brown's 8 questions to generate an abstract
1. Who are intended readers? (3-5 names)
2. What did you do? (50 words)
3. Why did you do it? (50 words)
4. What happened? (50 words)
5. What do results mean in theory? (50 words)
6. What do results mean in practice? (50 words)
7. What is the key benefit for readers (25 words)
8. What remains unresolved? (no word limit)

D.2. Analysis of participant observation

D.2.1 Participant observation

In Chapter Four, I outlined the approach taken towards participant observation. I intended to portray the development of collective and distributed knowledge. To achieve this, I sought data that represented a relationship between the communicative action within the interventions and the common knowledge that emerged between the participants. A logical step was to critically analyse the incidents where participants had recalled key activities and associated tools that influenced writing development, namely the text recognition tasks and the related opportunity to think together.

Drawing upon the sociocultural framework that underpins the thesis (see Chapter Three) I used the theoretical lenses of Middleton (1996, 1998, 2011) and Mercer (1995, 2000) because these offered a way to analyse the language used to create collective knowledge in the context. These notions made a comfortable fit with areas of the conceptual framework drawn upon during the narrative and thematic analyses. For example, the Vygotskian notion of language as a cultural tool for developing and sharing, semiotic mediation through social means, the ZPD and prolepsis. Furthermore, Bakhtin's (1981) notion of multivoicedness and heteroglossia helped to understand the characteristics of participants' utterances and how the context was refracted, enhanced or diminished through the participants' experiences.

During the analysis, I specifically drew upon Middleton's (1996, 1998, 2011) analytic protocol 'd-analysis' as outlined in Chapter Four and illustrated in Table D 2 1. In brief, my rationale for using this protocol was to ground the framework in research where

communicative action was the unit of analysis based upon an assumption that the sequential organisation of thought helps identify collective and distributive knowledge.

Table D 2 1 Middleton's D analysis

	Middleon's "D-analysis" (!996;1997;2011)
Deisis	*Pointing to a particular issue that draws attention to a distinction that is developed to make a difference.*
Definition and delination	*How the issue is elaborated as others uptake in terms of the following warrants, qualification that identifies further distinctions, orderabilities in terms of past, present and future practice, expansive elaborations of problems within practice.*
Deliberation	*Identification of a working consensus that emerges to evoke both specific and general marking.*
Departure	*Identification of shifts , qualitatively different positions in terms of different distinctions.*
Development	*Identify when participants specify new ways of working.*

As was evident within the narrative and thematic analyses, the structure and process of writing the master's dissertation text was the most immediate and shared goal amongst the participants. The related tasks, such as the development of intertextuality, were recalled as vital within their experiences of writing development. Hence, the analysis of these activities is presented in the following sections. The critical incidents that are analysed took place in a synchronous online classroom.

Text recognition activity 1 (13/5/2015), Participants, Zara, Miranda, Leah, Fran, Dana, Grace.

The central stimulus for the task were drafts from one dissertation text written at different points in time. Two extracts represented the first draft of an introductory chapter (*Text 1*) that the writer had shared with their supervisor for feedback and the final version of the chapter (*Text 2*) submitted for assessment within the dissertation as a whole. My intention behind the activity was to introduce the two texts as

psychological tools that demonstrated that writing was a process that could become transformed over time with a contingency to revise and edit the text in response to feedback. Participants were instructed to spend 10 minutes reading *Text 1* and silently identify any strengths or weaknesses they considered about the writing. Subsequently, a discussion was facilitated to enable each participant to elicit their interpretations of *Text 1* (Table D 2 2.).

An interesting reflection on the early part of the discussion is that the participants explicitly identified the notion of "signposting" as an essential issue within the development of writing due to engaging with *Text 1,* which appeared to "jump around". Middleton (2011) suggests that identification of a sequence where warrants appear to emerge should make it possible to identify how participants extend their dialogue. Evidence from this sequence showed the beginning of a shared understanding of the concept of "signposting" as a sign for structuring academic research writing and guiding the reader.

Table D 2 2 Text-recognition activities

May 2015	Delixsis.	Definition and delination.	Deliberation.	Departure.	Development.
Text 1 Recognition	***"Jumping around"*** of the text was nominated as an issue.	"***Lack of signposting***" in the text was elaborated because of "***jumping around".***	The consequence of lack of signposting was identified as***" lack of direction***" and ***"progression***" of the text	***"Jumping around*** "associated with "***thinking"*** and "***writing"***.	Use of signposting could demonstrate logical progression in participants personal writing, development is linked to feedback.
Text 2 Recognition	***"Signposting*** "was now a given. However, the "***length"*** and "***purpose"*** of a chapter cchapter in the dissertation text were nominated as issues.	***"Organisation"*** and "***elements"*** of presentation of the text presented contradictions, e.g. "***positioning"*** of the research question		Facilitator 2 developed notion of "***signposting "***by introducing driving test metaphor.	Warrant for signposting in personal writing.
June 2015					
Text 3 recognition	***"Flow," "conciseness"*** and "***clear"*** language of the text nominated as issues and ***"argument"***	***Moves"*** (easy to move back and forth) were taken up as terms that echoed previous interlocutors	Qualification of consequences of flow, made it easier to understand what the writer was "***trying to say*** "and the writer of the text not offering an "***alternative point of view*** "or "***exemplars"*** to back claims.		
Text 4 recognition		***"Argument*** "and "***signposting"*** were both now givens and a warrant for reviewing the writing in the text.	A consensus reached about the differences between text 1 and text 2. This evoked specific distinction about a dissertation. ***"Elements"***, and ***"positioning"*** were givens.	***"Balance"*** appeared as a term and the ***'talk'*** of the text was referred to and further elaborated as the "***level of analysis within the talk."***	***"Decisions"*** and "***choice***s" as terms synthesise the lack of "***argument"*** and "***evidence.***

The interpyschological functions that appeared to be in development were an identified need to improve personal writing (self-regulation) and a notion of the text as a relationship between the writer and the reader. In the first sequence of discussions, it was clear to see how the group discussion on "signposting" continued to review the text at a later stage of development (*Text 2)*. The second text conveyed a clearer structure

to the participants than the first and revealed additional features of a text, which surprised the participants. For example, an introductory chapter would include a descriptive overview of the whole of a dissertation and where the stated aims and research questions should be positioned. The term "signposting" appeared to have emerged as a material sign, but the learners may not have shared the same understanding as to the facilitators. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) refer to growing intersubjectivity between the facilitator and the learner within phase 1 of the ZPD. The overall goal of the task needs to be broken down into subordinate goals by the teacher. The learners could not conceptualise *Text 2* as a component of a whole dissertation text. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) describe the beginning of the transit from other regulation to self-regulation when learners begin to use language exchanges, which engenders assistance. The expertise of facilitator 2 (table 1) enabled her to explicitly confirm the conventions of dissertation writing in response to the language exchanges around the concept of "signposting".

Text recognition activity 2 (24/6/2015). Participants Zara, Miranda, Leah, Fran, Dana, Fiona.

The following workshop took place one month later (24/6/2015) using a similar central stimulus. The text recognition activity was repeated, but the texts were examples of a methodology chapter at two stages of development. (Text 3 & text 4)

Middleton (2011) points out that D-analysis enables the analysis of data to further stages. During this sequence, 'signposting' was a given for most participants and during the exchange of words, a variety of ideas emerged about the features of *Text 3.* (Table D 2 2). It was interesting to note that one participant (Fiona) who had not attended the

first workshop was initially unsure about contributing to the discussion. "Moves" within writing were identified as issues by all the interlocutors, and in addition that the writer did not offer alternative perspectives or evidence to substantiate their claims. Several participants identified missing information that would be anticipated in the text, which I had edited out so that the task would be manageable within the available time. The direction of the participants on the social plane identified the importance of presenting an argument within the text. The participants appeared to recognise the complex ways academic research writing needs to communicate with the reader. In this sequence, "argument" and "signposting" were given as distinct warrants or text features. One participant's actions suggested how *Text 4* could be manipulated to improve the positioning of information.

Collectively, a consensus was reached about the differences between *Text 3* and *Text 4,* with other metaphorical conceptions emerging about features within the text such as "balance" and "flow". Mercer(2000) suggests that metaphor is a linguistic means to shape common knowledge and acts as a frame of reference about how thoughts are shared by and shaped by the context. As evident in the interview data and thematic analysis, some participants carried these metaphors forward into their future utterances about writing development.

Mercer(2000) refers to exploratory talk where exploratory thoughts, reasons and explanations become explicit as contingent on the situation and likened to an intermental zone within the ZPD. There was evidence that each participant engaged with exploratory thought at some level and this came across most strongly during the first critical incident where participants posed questions to each other about the anticipated structure of the dissertation text. Mercer also refers to cumulative talk,

where participants build upon each other's contributions. It was interesting to note the following. Some participants posed more exploratory thoughts than others, especially Leah. The use of metaphor became very easily integrated into the cumulative talk. Some participants, especially Zara and Miranda, made utterances that contained cumulative and exploratory thought. For example, Miranda frequently expressed an utterance that commenced with a summary of cumulative talk leading to exploratory talk, took the communicative action off in a new direction, and widened the intermental zone. Thus, it became easy to understand why and how common knowledge had the potential to be created, shared, and distributed. Therefore, the intermental zone represented a here and now the context of development.

The notion of prolepsis underpins Mercer's (1995, 2000) and Middleton's (1996, 1998, 2011) work. The past was brought into the dialogue through assumed and shared frames of reference such as "identifying a gap in the literature", "the literature review", and "the research question". The past also illustrates Bakhtin's (1981; 1986) contentions that we borrow or rent meaning and meanings from others in specific situated actions and within sociocultural traditions. The present was represented within the intermental zone through the intersubjectivity of the participants. From a Bakhtinian perspective, this was at times through the exploratory talk where questions from some sought alterity and commonality with others over the anticipated structure of a dissertation text. As noted by Linell (2009), this type of participation involves struggling with others and accommodating diverse contributions. From a Vygotskian perspective, mutuality and reciprocity came through the cumulative talk. Some participants (Grace, Zara,) made utterances that projected how they would take away their learning about the structure

of the dissertation text and change their writing in specific ways, thus, representing the future.

The interviews showed different perspectives on the experiences of participation in text recognition activities. Of note was that during the interview with Leah, she could not clearly remember the activities or integration or development of the related tools into her writing processes. Examining the transcripts from the observations shows evidence that Leah made many contributions during the communicative action, including exploratory talk. Middleton (1997) points to the consequences of the extent to which a person remembers or not because what is remembered in conversational action becomes the context for what will be recalled on future occasions. Leah appeared to work in the intermental zone with others in the here and now of the learning activities. In other words, she learned with others in the microgenesis of the ZPD through single situated interactions (Linell, 2009). Ontogenetic development may have required more sustained relationships within the environment. An exploration of Leah's social situation of development within the narrative analysis suggested a lack of access to semiotic resources within her respective activity settings that bore a relationship with writing development.

Intertextuality activity 19/5/2016, Participants: Jasmine, Rose & Jessica

I planned following workshop activities to build upon the microstructure of the master's dissertation text by introducing the concept of intertextuality (Bazerman & Prior, 2004) and metadiscourse mechanisms (Hyland, 2005). Firstly, each of these concepts were explained. Secondly, participants were shown instances of how and where these mechanisms were used in a variety of examples of academic research writing. Learner

activities were to review extracts of writing for instances of these mechanisms and subsequently consider their use by revising sections of their texts in development. As explored during the narrative and thematic analyses, positioning participants' voices within their texts was challenging.

Table D 2 2 3 Intertextuality

May 2016	Deisis	Definition and delination.	Deliberation.	Departure.	Development.
Intertextuality	***"Difficulty in documenting my own opinion because everything has to be evidence-based"*** was nominated as an issue.	***Well-documented*** was a term noted in the text and is elaborated as meaning that 'they' (the author) agrees with this opinion.	This is identified as problematic in practice because stating "***Widely discussed in nursing literature followed by 3 or more citations."*** is discouraged by supervisors. Only the single most up-to-date citation should be used.	An emergent distinction is Feeling more confident about putting opinions and using citations. However, wary about the use of such as "well-documented and widely-discussed."Consensus is that academic writing is not easy.	

During the communicative action focused upon intertextuality (Table D 2 3), the participants struggled with their voices concerning others within a text, as evidenced through exploratory talk. The past came into the dialogue through shared frames of disciplinary reference such as cultural norms of the evidence-base. For example, a recognition that the author of the text had used the phrase "well-documented" as a written utterance to signify evidence in support of a written assertion emerged as definition and delineation. There appeared to be a dialectic of participant thought related to supervisory experiences.

The interpyschological function that appeared to be in development was an awareness that authors position themselves within their academic research writing concerning other texts. "An opinion" appeared to have emerged as a material sign.

However the group discussion did not progress because the intersubjectivity of 'an opinion' was not developed. The direction of the social plane did not progress beyond departure. Integration of metadiscourse mechanisms to their future texts was treated with wariness. There was some evidence of working within an intermental zone in that there was recognition of use of these mechanisms in the writing of others. However, this appeared counter to self-regulatory beliefs about such development in their writing. Thus, mastery of this cultural tool was potentially not yet possible at this point in participant writing development. As evidenced within the narrative and thematic analyses, this was an area of writing development that participants such as Rose worked on overtime.

Interestingly the dialogic interactions addressed as Wertsch (1991) identifies as many others. Many others included supervisors and anticipatory audiences regarding the discipline. The interactions conceptualised Bakhtin's (1981) notion of the super addressee and how an audience might interpret the author's voice within the writing. A further conceptualisation is through Linell's (2009) notion of double-dialogicality, where there is a dialogue between the situation and traditions and not just between the present parties but has conclusions for the future. Furthermore, intersubjectivity does not reside within collective minds but the inter worlds connecting individual minds. In this situation, the intersubjectivity included alterity regarding the place of the author's voice within a text. The fact that the dialogue did not progress beyond departure also demonstrates Linell's point that dialogue is unfinishable as the interlocuters reached a consensus that academic research writing is not easy.