

What Can Politics Academic Practice Learn From the Experience Politics Students Have of Expressing Their Political Views?

Thesis resubmitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Chester for the degree of *Doctor of Professional Studies in Teaching and Learning in Politics* by Meriel Patricia D'Artrey in November 2015

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What Can Politics Academic Practice Learn From the Experience Politics Students Have of Expressing Their Political Views?

Meriel Patricia D'Artrey

Abstract

The aim of the research is to identify implications for the practice of Politics academics from the experience their students have of expressing their political views. This exploratory study is set within the wider debate of power and performativity in the HE classroom. It is situated in a study of practice and perceptions in one Department at the University of Chester and conducted through a review of the literature and empirical qualitative research with both Politics students and Politics academics. The research found that while Politics students wish to express their political views, these may not be their actual political views. Politics students indicate that the Politics academic can affect their expression of political views. They prefer academics who express their own political views and they do not like politically neutral academics. They may wish to know an academic's political views in order to gain advantage for themselves. Knowing an academic's political views enables the student to avoid expressing political views which some Politics academics find offensive. The research highlights the part played by power and performativity in the expressing of the Politics student's political views and identifies some of the complexities arising from this. The practice outcomes provide guidance on how Politics academics can approach the issue of the Politics student's expression of political views. This single case study's value lies in these contributions to wider practice. Research is identified which will explore the findings further.

Summary of Portfolio

The origins of the research go back to my being a Politics student and experiencing my own and others' discomfort when expressing political views as well as witnessing students and academics encouraging certain views and inhibiting others. I felt that the academic practice I had experienced was restricting the expressing of political views and I became determined to do my best as an academic to enable the expressing of a range of political views by students. Recent developments had led me to reconsider my role as a Politics academic and in particular to question the assumptions which guide my practice. A debate was prompted in my Department in the light of an academic who was perceived to present one political view in the classroom to the exclusion of others. It was clear that there was uncertainty over how a Politics academic should approach expressing their political views in relation to the students expressing theirs. I was therefore drawn to the possibility of looking into this issue as a doctoral research project. Once it was known that I was conducting this research, a few students sought me out to explain that they can feel discomfited in the Politics classroom. Politics staff-student liaison meetings regularly highlight student concern over perceived academic bias. It was therefore clear that this was a relevant and topical issue with implications for academic practice. Although the origins of the research were personal, the implications for practice contribution are much wider.

My approach to the issue during my career has been political neutrality on the assumption that this would encourage students to express their political views. I believed that it was important that students were able, should they wish, to express their political views. This research has challenged those preconceptions which underpin my practice and that of some others in my Department. The findings have supported the assumption that Politics students wish to express their political views, but have introduced a differentiation between real views and those expressed. The findings have seemed to vindicate those academics who express their political views as long as they also present others and therefore avoid charges of perceived bias. They have also raised questions over why students might wish to know an academic's political views, indicating that these go further than those of issues of teaching and learning. The findings have provided a student perspective on the academic role in the students' expressing of political views. Insight has been provided into the student experience, suggesting their motivation to express their political views and know an academic's political views is more complex than envisaged and worthy of further exploration.

The analysis of the response of academics to the Politics student experience has indicated the potential for the academic to discourage views which they consider to be inappropriate in terms of possible offence caused, and the related implication of restricting certain political views and not others.

The initial reflective piece as part of the Personal and Professional Review (IS7508) captures my academic journey. The second submission for the same module was on the Context for the Teaching and Learning of Political Theory at the University of Chester in 2010/11 and the third was a Negotiated Learning Agreement. These assignments resulted in a paper delivered at the PSA Annual Conference in 2011. I successfully claimed 90 credits of APCL for IS7010 and IS7011 for the evidencing of keeping my skills up to date and the currency of my MSc from the London School of Economics. I also claimed a further 50 credits of APEL for the evidence and reflection on planning, implementation, delivery and evaluation of a new Single Honours Politics route at the University of Chester. The Practitioner Enquiry at Doctoral Level (IS8001) confirmed the practice justification of the proposed research and provided an outline of the project as a whole. Comments made in the feedback were pulled through to a subsequent amended proposal. The Minor Research Project (IS8002) was APEL'd by providing validation for my practice and profession, supported by evidence of publications and their impact. The thesis is being submitted as the Major Practitioner Research Project (IS8003).

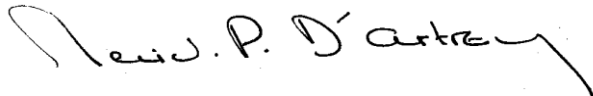
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Declaration

The material being presented for examination is my own work and has not been submitted for an award of this or another Higher Education Institution.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Neil P. D'Arney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

1. Introduction

While the origins of the research lie within a personal context drawn from my experience as a Politics undergraduate wishing to express my political views in the Politics classroom, the issues raised have wider scope and applicability. This research seeks to offer an appropriate rationale for my practice supported by data from students and academics. My practice hitherto has been driven by personal experience and observation which have indicated that all political views should have a place in the Politics classroom and that I should remain neutral in presenting political views. I have tried to encourage students to present their political views while, at the same time, not wishing to declare my own views. I had not until I conducted this research understood the irony of this, and I have now questioned my practice. As a result of this research, there is now the potential for my practice, as well as those of other Politics academics, to be influenced by data drawn from both students and academics in this single case study.

This has been a challenging subject to raise as despite attempts to remain neutral in my call for all views to be expressed, this research could be seen to out me as having sympathies at odds with those of some other academics. This criticism would not be fair. I am not challenging the rights of a particular political position. Rather, a student-centred perspective where I aim to align my practice to the needs of the students has driven the research. My concerns have been with the possible use of power in the classroom by the academic in facilitating or not certain student political views. The findings are likely to have wider relevance for other Politics academics who may have found themselves undergoing similar experiences to mine. The positive reaction which academic colleagues have had to my research indicates that others will welcome practice guidance.

This practice issue was an important one in the Department during a particularly challenging period a few years ago. The Department became divided when an academic was held to account for seeming to present only one political perspective. The issue is still debated in the Department. Some colleagues consider that they should be able to present their political views and others that academics should actively seek neutrality. The topic is regularly raised by students and there is systemic evidence of student representatives being concerned about some academics refusing to engage with political views which they do not support. Claims by Politics student representatives about perceived left wing bias have been addressed by internal quality assurance procedures, found to lack substance, and to reflect the views of only a minority of students. Nevertheless

Politics student concern about their ability to express their political views is relevant to effective teaching and learning practice and has been discussed in a number of Politics team meetings.

There is a lack of practice guidance over whether Politics academics should or should not express their own political views and on their role in facilitating (or not) the expressing of students' political views and clarification of this will be useful to practitioners if it is drawn from research among students and academics. Instead of practice being developed, as it has been in my case, from experience, it will be built on a sounder empirical basis. As this research is being conducted in order to make suggestions to academics on their practice, it is both the academic role and the relationship between the academic and the student which is being explored. Given that the assumption that a problem exists in the first place might be prompted by my own political views, values and experience, the appropriateness of these might need questioning (Wall, 2013). Underpinning my practice is the theory in use (Argyris and Schon, 1974) that it is preferable for students to be able to express their political views rather than not doing so, thereby ensuring that the teaching and the learning experience for Politics academics and their student(s) represents best and inclusive practice. Any indication that some political views are preferred could be troubling within a Politics Higher Education teaching and learning context where expectations might be for an open discussion encouraging a range of political perspectives. A second theory in use (Argyris and Schon, 1974) underpinning my practice is that it is preferable pedagogically for a Politics academic to present a range of political views in a neutral manner. Both these theories, embedded in personal experience, need to be held to account and informed by practice guidance developed from the research.

2. Research Development

There were a number of developmental stages as the research moved from the initial identification of an issue to a structured project situated in my Politics academic practice. Discussions were held with Politics students at the University of Chester during 2010/11 in order to identify useful areas of investigation and to focus the aim of the research. The result was the presenting of a paper to the Political Studies Association's (PSA) Annual Conference (D'Artrey, 2011). From the outset my intention had been to concentrate my research on the student experience. The aim had always been to conduct qualitative research and not quantitative, which would have been at odds with my research goals. The initial research proposal had been to investigate the experience of both Politics students and academics from the University of Chester and from other HEIs using focus groups and semi-structured interviews. This was the approach submitted as the final practitioner enquiry seeking approval to proceed to doctoral research. The research proposal was subsequently refocused and submitted for approval from my supervisory team in early 2012 with the key change being that I would be undertaking one to one interviews with Chester students only. This refocus is recorded in the Annual Review for 2011/12 and I was given the go-ahead to proceed on this basis. I argued that I remained persuaded that it was the student experience that I wished to concentrate on and that a better understanding of that experience would inform the practice of Politics academics. The rationale was that conducting research with students in the first instance could provide indicative data which could then be explored more widely. It was also clearly stated that the research was not seeking to be representative or generalisable but would have wider implications for practice.

The original research proposal had concentrated on the experience of students on a political theory module. Feedback from students, and from the delegates at the PSA Annual Conference in 2011, indicated that it would be difficult to separate political theory students from more generic Politics students. This resulted in the student participants from the empirical qualitative research being drawn from the wider Politics cohorts. Furthermore, a focus group which had been originally suggested was excluded given the potential for this to inhibit students who might not wish to talk openly to fellow students about their issues in expressing their political views. The initial research focus had been on analysing the experience of students as a specific critical event (Woods, 1993) at the moment of interaction, using Abratt's (1989, p.74) interface model. Investigation of the moment of interaction was not pursued in this research given the challenge of identifying one specific point at which political views are expressed.

A further development to the original research proposal was that the practice guidance needed the input of academics in order to be credible. The findings from the student research were therefore subsequently disseminated to Politics academics in order to achieve this and the guidance revised accordingly. This has resulted in a wider scope for the study by extending the data gathered to include academics as well as students.

3. Research Aim and Objectives

The research aim is:

To identify what Politics academic practice can learn from the experience which politics students have of expressing their political views

In order to identify tangible outcomes for practice, the research objectives which support the research aim are:

R.O.1. To analyse the experience of Politics students in one University Department in the expressing of their political views.

R.O.2. To analyse the response of Politics academics in one University Department to the Politics student experience of expressing their political views.

R.O.3. To determine teaching and learning implications for the practice of the Politics academic in relation to the Politics student expressing of political views.

R.O.4. To highlight knowledge and reflective outcomes and contributions for wider practice.

R.O.5. To describe opportunities for dissemination and for further research.

4. Issues Related to the Research

The justification for this DProf research comes from its practice-base and its claims for wider impact on academic practice. There are a number of sources comparing the practice research of the DProf to that of traditional PhDs (Scott, Brown, Lunt and Thorne, 2004, Newman, 2005, Wellington and Sikes, 2006, Taylor, 2008). Boud and Tennant (2006) see the DProf as challenging traditional academic practice and Maxwell (2003) suggests that all PhDs should be evaluated by their impact on practice. Bourner, Bowden and Laing (2001) call DProf students ‘researching professionals’. Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott and Trow (2007) illustrate the differences in approach in their Mode 1 and Mode 2 differentiation. Several authors focus on Mode 2 within the context of knowledge production related to practice doctoral research (Bruun, Langlais, Rask and Toppinen, 2005, Sparrow, 2009). Helsmley-Brown (2003) illustrates the tension when writing of education practitioners using research in the context of academic study rather than on the basis of whether the findings can be translated into procedures that work in classrooms. Clark and Kirkham (2009) write of epistemological concerns being particularly crucial for the credibility of the professional doctorate as against the PhD in developing ‘researching practitioners’ as opposed to ‘practicing researchers’.

This research claims to meet the criteria for a practice-based study as I can claim that I am “starting from what is not known (that is a perceived problem in professional practice)” (Bourner, Bowden and Laing, 2001, p.72). It can be argued to be ‘legitimate research’ as it came out of ‘what I do’ (Lave and Wenger, 2003) as a practicing Politics academic and as challenging the ‘tacit knowledge’ (Sternberg, 2000) of existing academic practice by offering guidance in relation to teaching and learning. This very process of engaging with the research legitimates the learning (Lave and Wenger, 2003). Schon (1983) has indicated that when someone reflects in action, he then becomes a researcher in the practice context, where there is no separation between thinking and doing. This study claims to fulfil the criteria which Argyris and Schon (1974) present for increasing professional effectiveness in an organisation of being an educator (therefore having a role in changing behaviour), investigating my own role, and contributing to an organisation’s success. These outcomes can be argued to have wider practice implications given that they have relevance for the teaching and learning practice of all Politics academics. Yet while this legitimates the research as worth pursuing in that it is challenging the status quo and creating new knowledge, gaining credibility for the findings from a traditional academic community may be problematic. It is clear that academics who have only known a traditional

PhD route may have concerns over the viability of a DProf, in spite of the suggestion that HE work-based qualifications hold the same status as any other HE qualification (Durrant, Rhodes and Young, 2009). Silverman (2009) notes the tendency for the university to teach that “great thinkers deal in theories... of history or causation” (p.35), and that this makes the task of observers of practice harder.

The academic researcher cannot avoid issues of power when investigating their own Politics HE practice. French and Raven (1959) suggest that an embedded researcher always works within their own power structures and Kincheloe and Berry (2004, p.7) identify links between ‘the body of individuals involved in doctoral research’ and ‘Foucauldian power’ (p. 8) where issues of power rather than an original contribution to knowledge are concerned and where discourse can become institutionalised (Foucault, 1980). Issues of power need reflecting on when a researcher who is also their tutor is asking students questions which may reflect on the practice of academics who are line managed by the same researcher. Academics turned student can anyway be regarded with suspicion by their academic colleagues (Scott et al, 2004, Wellington and Sikes, 2006). This is all the more the case where the research may be perceived as questioning their practice and given the researcher’s role as Head of Department. If I find my existing academic practice to be flawed, my theories in use (Argyris and Schon, 1974) will have been investigated and found wanting, requiring me to “admit the differences between what (I) teach and effective practice...” and that I have to “confront (myself) with the conflict of values implicit in these incongruities” (Argyris and Schon, 1974, p.195). There are therefore issues of credibility, integrity, ethics and professionalism linked to my role as an academic and as a manager in the undertaking of the research. Notwithstanding the challenges from the issues raised above, the embedding of the findings from qualitative data gained from both students and academics into my practice will enable the development of new teaching and learning approaches consistent with my role as a reflective practitioner. It will also have the potential to impact on the practice of other Politics academics more widely, and contribute to debates surrounding the Politics student expression of political views.

5. Literature Review

5.1 Changes in Higher Education and Impact on Academic Role

The literature review has as its starting point the context in which the Politics student's expressing of political views takes place. Goffman's (1960) argument for the relevance of the analytical context is used to justify exploring sources related to the context for the Politics HE classroom within which a number of debates are raised in relation to the academic as part of the wider HE context. According to Goffman (1990) technical, political, structural and cultural perspectives can be deployed to analyse social establishments. Goffman (1990) claims that these perspectives seek to identify a system of activity for the achievement of predefined objectives, clarify the relationships between the horizontal and vertical divisions, and highlight moral values which influence activity. In applying these perspectives to analysing the context for the expressing of political views, there is an assumption that there is agreement within HE over these predefined objectives, that the structural divisions and relationships are commonly understood, and that there is unanimity over a set of moral values. However, an analysis of sources on the HE context indicates this is not the case. The picture is one of constant change where objectives, structures and moral values are contested. There are debates over the changing academic role, over the purpose of HE and over the appropriateness of student-centred teaching and learning, which are likely to impact on the Politics student's experience of expressing their political views.

How the academic sees their role will affect how they relate to their students. It would be difficult to decouple the experience of the student in the HE classroom from the effect on that experience of an academic unclear of their role in relation to the student. The indication is that the changes taking place in the wider HE context are having an impact on the academic role and that academics are failing to challenge them. The suggestion is that by claiming that they are holding on to their traditional autonomy and elitism, the academic is out of step with developments such as mass education and quality assurance. If the role of the academic is contested, the part they play in the student expressing of political views in the classroom is likely to also be in dispute. Austin (2002) presents a picture of changing academic life, writing of both internal and external factors creating the need for significant adjustments by the academic. Maassen (2000) confirms that the influence of external actors has grown with respect to the internal affairs of individual HEIs, with their role becoming more prominent, emphasising the overlap between the external and the internal contexts. Maassen (2000) notes the resistance of academics to external stakeholders, and this suggests tension between internal and external contexts. These multiple

complex “inter-related forms and systems” have replaced the previously “discrete aspects of education” according to Middlehurst (2002, p.12). Tapsall (2001) writes of the unbundling of the academic’s role leading to “a challenging of institutional and individual conventions and tenets about where the teaching role begins and ends.” (p. 42). Clark, Hyde and Drennan (2011) note new perceptions of professional identities for academics. West (2006) suggests the role of the academic might be a combination of managerial and academic, rather than one or the other, though Kubler and Sayers (2010) differentiate between ‘academic’ and ‘professional’ roles in HE, reflecting the tension between the two. They see academic roles becoming both “less cohesive” and also more specialised. They draw on the literature to present a taxonomy which includes concepts of borderless, blended, and permeable to describe the changing academic role. Ryan (2004) acknowledges the difficult adjustments academics are making when their role becomes defined by commercial success rather than subject knowledge. Whitchurch (2006) writes of the “delicate social contract” between managers and the academic body and Deem, Hillyard and Reed (2007) of the need to rethink what academic enterprise is about, raising fears about the “current over-managed institutionalised mistrust” (p.190). Macdonald (2009, p.9) suggests that in HE the words ‘management’ and ‘academic’ are not comfortable bedfellows, and whilst it might be right to argue that academics should be more business-like, they still have the creation and transfer of knowledge and learning “at our core” recalling the ideals of Polanyi (1962) for self-governing researchers. Trowler (1998, p.141) indicates that despondency is a traditional and familiar academic state of mind, and questions “the bleak view of the decline of the donnish dominion which is so prevalent in the literature”. Unterhalter and Carpentier (2010) write about academics facing a “troubling nexus of problems as we try to meet our different aspirations” (p. 3).

The literature is consistent in reporting a context of change, and with academics trying to forge a new role for themselves. Their attempts to reconcile competing goals are likely to inform the role which they enact in the classroom and the relationship which they have with students, evidenced in their performativity (Goffman, 1990). There is an inherent tension apparent in the sources in relation to the role of the academic in this wider context of change, indicating that the role may also be shifting.

The academic role is affected by the growth in quality assurance and enhancement processes. Lillie (2003) suggests the standardisation of quality assurance processes has at least respected “the autonomy of institutions to order their own affairs” (p.104). Yet academics will recognise

Newton's "Goffmanesque view of how, in preparations for external assessment, team of academics are schooled..." (Newton, 2002, p.43). Weber (1991, p.228) notes that "the individual bureaucrat cannot squirm out of the apparatus in which he is harnessed....a single cog in an ever-moving mechanism which prescribes to him an essentially fixed route-march". Hazelkorn (2008) writes of academics as victims of league-table ranking, indicating a negative impact on the academic of the contextual changes. Academics are not blameless according to Doring who encourages academics to avoid becoming victims rather than agents of change (2002). Molesworth, Scullion and Nixon (2011) also point their finger at themselves and colleagues, academics who they see as having played a part in the marketisation of education. In spite of the changes, Brighouse (2010) suggests that academics continue to be part of a system which favours the advantaged, making the 'sub-elite' part of the 'elite'. McCaffery (2010) suggests that the HE sector is still tied to its elitist values and practices. Moten and Harney (1999) support this and argue that though academics are now part of the service sector, the lack of supervision and the 'lustre of authorial imprimatur' (p.157) give academics the mythical sense that they are still in control of their work environment. Bourdieu, Passeron and St Martin (1994) suggest that both academic and student perpetuate a system where neither is effectively communicating with the other: "They are the products of a traditional system which focuses on maximising security." (p.24). A related area of change within HE likely to affect the academic and the student experience is the growth in the number of students in the HE sector. Questions are asked in the literature over whether or not standards of teaching and learning can be maintained in the light of the 'massification' and 'quality revolution' in HE (Rodgers, Freeman, Williams and Kane, 2011). Whitworth (2009) uses the metaphor of obesity to illustrate the overload of information and the emphasis on quantity rather than quality. According to Schofer and Meyer (2005, p.898), there is a tendency on the behalf of those affected not to question it (HE's) worth "... the virtues of Higher Education have become taken for granted...it is more common for scholars to decry limited expansion... than to analyse why expansion has occurred". The increased accountability of academics and the market conditions brought about by the changes in HE are challenging the traditional role of the academy. Insecurity and instability are likely to influence the academic role within the classroom, and therefore the experience which the student has in that classroom.

This is likely to be the case when it comes to the academic understanding of their purpose in the classroom. This will affect how they relate to their students and how they express their own political views, as well as the part they play in the student expressing theirs.

5.2 Purpose of Higher Education

It is argued that the purpose which academics see HE as having will affect how they relate to their students and what forms of learning and teaching they adopt. It will also affect the expectations which students have for their experience as an undergraduate. The student has power in terms of being able to make economic choices about which degree to select on the basis of the outcomes of that degree and the experience which they can expect. The sources suggest tension between the purpose of HE as seeking a pursuit of knowledge, and HE as a commodity though sources in the UK and the US have different perspectives on the debate. On the one hand HE can be seen to meet social change agendas and on the other be contributory to employment, though these are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

The experience which students have of expressing political views will likely be informed by the academic's perception of the purpose of an HE education and the part played by the academic in its actualisation. For example if the academic considers an HE education as a conduit to employment, then they may consider expressing views as a relevant skill and therefore legitimating their expression. On the one hand there is the concept of 'Macdonaldisation' (Ritzer, 2004) of the sector, with knowledge as a commodity and on the other the pursuit of knowledge for its own end (Newman, 1955, Collini, 2012). A core debate in the literature on HE suggests a dichotomy between knowledge for its own sake, and knowledge as a commodity, both purposive and instrumental. Morley (2001, p.132) asks whether universities are complicit in ensuring that their students are constructed as future workers in order to meet the demands of modern capitalism, as opposed to 'fully rounded' citizens. Cobban (1990) points out that the link between education and outcome is not a new phenomenon, describing the medieval university as expected to meet the vocational needs of society, and therefore offering value for money. Smith and Webster (2002) argue the need for HEIs to maintain or enhance their "reputational capital" (p. 99) without which their value is reduced, therefore suggesting a link between education and economic value. The reality, as Rochford (2008) points out, is that the student is a client of the university, with an 'actuarial mentality' which assesses the 'economic choices'. The shift from learning for its own sake towards learning as utility is well-supported in the literature.

Lyotard (1993) suggests that “no one expects teaching ... to train more enlightened citizens...only professionals who perform better” (p.6). Yet Reich (2003) can still argue that the role of the educator is as a symbolic analyst who creates a career out of critical thinking and Widalsky (2010) points out that increasing knowledge is not a zero sum game. It is clear from the sources that the debate over the purpose of education is both longstanding and unresolved. This has relevance for the role of the educator in that it raises queries over their purpose. It also raises questions over why students might wish to express their political views and whether that expressing has any purpose for them or for the academic in terms of aligning with the aims of HE. How the academic sees the outcomes of their role may be key to whether or not they will encourage the expressing of political views by their students.

Nixon (2011) recommends an enlightenment role for the academic with education at the centre of both personal and societal well-being, which he sees as outweighing any possible economic benefit. Palmer, Zajonc with Scribner (2010) invoke a spiritual level to education, writing of education dealing with the ‘whole’ student and leading to transformative learning. Neary and Hagyard (2011) call for a radicalisation of the pedagogy, reconnecting both academics and students to “their own radical political history” (p. 209). Harland (2009) finds that the liberal agenda needs a self-critical academic community, and that the university in the neo-liberal world is finding this difficult to deliver. The values of HE institutions should include intellectual pluralism, open-mindedness and civility as part of the attempt to educate for democracy, according to Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich and Corngold (2007). Frueh, Blaney, Dunne, Gough, Leonard and Sharoni’s (2008) claim that the curriculum should be consistent with “ideas of a liberal education” carries an assumption of a common understanding of ‘liberal’ and lacks a critical approach in even making this assumption though Shulman (2007) makes the point that a liberal education should liberate and not indoctrinate. McMahon (2009, p.193) suggests that graduates in general contribute directly to the political sphere as a result of education: “They vote more frequently than those with a high school education or less and serve on juries and agencies” and therefore input directly into civic institutions and democracy, linking HE and the enactment of human rights. Taylor (2003) conducted research among undergraduates training as teachers, interested by about how their political views might translate into their future teaching careers. He sees the classroom experience as a conduit to something else (such as future civic engagement or their role as a teacher). A critical theory of education (Barnett, 1997) might indicate that the academic, and especially a politics academic, should be at the forefront of questions about the purpose of HE.

Yet Barnett (1997, p. 49) raises a concern that the university as a centre of critical life is “an endangered species”. It seems that the sector is disempowered in the face of government cuts which social science should arguably be challenging (ESRC, 2010). There has been a call for social science to be more influential on policy development with the suggestion that it is the “lack of social science and the evidence it provides (which) often leads to failed policies” (ESCR, 2010). If enabling students to express political views can be linked to the development of criticality or to their wider political engagement, then there would be a clear rationale for academics encouraging that expression by their students. Further, there will be a rationale for their expression if academics see as their purpose the engaging of students with the political sphere through enabling them to express their views and thereby improving their employability. Bacon and Sloam (2010) blame the link made in the UK between HE and the economy for the narrow view of democratic education where they claim that academics are more focused on employability. Pegg, Waldock, Hendy-Isaacs, and Lawton, (2012) suggest that the economic, political and environmental pressures on HEIs have put graduate employability ‘centre stage’ (p.4). The Higher Level Skills Agenda, and the expectations of students for evidence of employability going beyond the generic transferable skills of the graduate inform the development of HE, as universities rethink their role, given that increasingly funding is linked to the contribution to the workplace (CBI, 2009). According to Baldwin (2004) “whatever your personal view, our role as teachers in higher education is to help our students develop skills and abilities..... useful in the workplace after graduation”. (p.2). Harvey (2003) indeed stresses the ‘ability’ rather than ‘employment’ aspect of the term employability. The perspective which the academic has on the purpose of HE and on their part in developing their students for the outcomes of HE will affect their approach to the expressing of student political views. The expectations which the student has for their experience of HE and what they see as the outcomes of that experience, will affect how they perceive the expressing of political views.

5.3 Purpose of a Politics Degree

A possible rationale for Politics students either wishing to express their political views, or in the expression itself, can be found in sources relating to the purpose of a Politics degree, highlighting a link between employability as an outcome and activities undertaken within the Politics classroom. It is clear that engagement with the political sphere and the related implications for employment has long been part of a politics degree and that there is no inherent tension. Ashe (2012) suggests that Politics academics have a common vision where both knowledge for its own

sake and knowledge as purposive can be accommodated. There is evidence of links between the teaching and learning of Politics and political participation or engagement from research such as Hylligus (2005) and Denver and Hands (1990), often driven by the goal academics have in entering the profession in the first place of transformation through teaching (Lindholm, 2004). Gorham (2000) makes a link between this holistic aim of political participation and the more pragmatic one of employability by stressing the importance of the study of Politics in preparing students for the workforce “as (it) ... sustains and reproduces... the material foundation of the community” (p.98). Political theorists too have appreciated that their subject is part of the world of practice, and that the use of case studies, scenarios and action-learning is intrinsic to the discipline. According to Johnson (2008) the teaching of political thought should enable students to develop skills to deal with the challenges they face as members of political communities, and Oakeshott suggests that “political theory is itself a form of political activity.” (1962, p.331). Smith (2009, p.372) adds that “political theory is an activity because it changes our worlds, ourselves, and others”. Walsh (2002) suggests that while philosophy is a “solitary activity”, political theory is concerned with “embracing the world” (p.18). Brosig and Kas (2008) come from the perspective of providing practice-based guidance for linking theory and practice. Pagano (1999) sees that knowledge always has consequences, and that while reading Plato might be per se good, “knowledge of Plato has never made anyone good” (p.246), putting the responsibility on teaching and learning for enabling positive outcomes from the experience. He points out that authoritarian regimes rarely support subject disciplines which are critical and questioning, such as Politics.

Some Politics academics see their role as developing future political engagement in students as part of a wider democratic ideal. Placek (2012) sees links between HEIs impacting on political knowledge and participation, and the contribution to active democracy. Boyer (1967) suggests that studying Politics is not just to study government, but to develop citizens who can shape the public good. Westheimer and Kahne (1994) differentiate between education which champions participation and that which seeks the pursuit of justice. Gorry (2010) explains that the historical context leads to a different understanding of what is meant by citizenship in the US and the UK. The UK legacy of monarchy, in contrast to the US experience, results in differing discourses about citizenship. Curtis and Blair (2011) see the distinction between the US idea of service and the British preference for real-world activities without the addition of serving the community. Brookes (1965) notes what he calls the “balanced, sane outlook on political philosophy characteristic of the Anglo-American tradition” is particularly found in those who participate in

politics. There is no indication that employability is at odds with the Politics academic's role, though Craig indicates that “academics may need to compromise on their traditional autonomy and negotiate curricula that reflect the needs and values of their partners” (2009, p.10). Ashe (2012) finds that introducing students to issues relating to graduate employment does not threaten the demands of politics curricula. It is not surprising then that Politics teaching and learning sources look at ways of enabling students to experience the political world. This might indicate that expressing political views could be a useful enactment of this. Curtis and Rolfe (2011) suggest that the practical pedagogical advice they offer moves beyond convenience to an enhancement of the learning experience through political engagement. Indeed, the literature assumes an acceptance of the role of the educator in facilitating some form of political participation (Yaghi 2009). It is not clear what Politics students understand as the purpose of studying Politics and whether the expressing of political views is a key part of the actuality or the perception of being a Politics student. If it is, then it may need embedding in the approach to Politics teaching and learning taken by the academic.

The Politics academic will, in developing their teaching and learning, seek guidance from the QAA Benchmark statement in order to establish what the Politics student should expect. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) 2015 Politics and International Relations Benchmark (the Benchmark) indicates that students should be able to express their views while undertaking a Politics degree. The Benchmark (2015) also identifies the need for the creation of “an inclusive environment for learning which anticipates the varied requirements of learners and aims to ensure equal access to educational opportunities”. It might be argued, and the Benchmark (2015) refers to it, that the requirements for inclusivity and for all students to be able to gain the same experience which underpins the Quality Code (www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code) could indicate that expressing political views should be available to all students. The Benchmark (2015) emphasises the need for the Politics academic to develop teaching and learning methods which will encourage engagement and participation in the learning process while taking account of the different circumstances and needs of students, facilitating wider participation.

It can be suggested that the Benchmark (2015) supports the contention that facilitating the expressing of political views is key to the politics student experience and that Politics students should be able to mount a reasoned argument orally. The Benchmark (2015) makes it clear that

employers require politics graduates to be able to communicate ideas effectively to a varied audience. It stresses that ‘this ability to translate complex ideas to a wide audience is a particularly valued skill’. The literature relating to the engagement of the student with the real world is also supported by the importance given in the Benchmark to encouraging students to link the academic study of politics to questions of public concern and to relating the academic theory to policies in practice. The Benchmark (2015) mentions the importance of contact with political actors through visits, speakers, websites, capstone projects and experiential learning such as internships, placements or action research for organisations and community groups and underwrites the importance of Politics students developing skills and competencies for employment. One of these skills relates to oral communication. This suggests that expressing political views in the HE classroom can be argued to be core to the Politics student experience. Therefore the Politics student might reasonably expect expressing political views to be a part of the Politics degree experience and that the academic should ensure its facilitation.

5.4 Teaching and Learning in Politics

The credibility of teaching and learning research is seen in some sources as inferior to many traditional areas of research and there are tensions apparent in gaining recognition for teaching and learning scholarship. While the terminology related to ‘student-centred’ is deemed unclear, there is evidence of an increasing emphasis on the student experience and enhancement of that experience. A further cluster of research centres on issues related to teaching and learning in Politics. There is debate over whether Politics can be deemed a discipline though the Benchmark (2015) identifies a clear remit for a Politics degree and a Politics graduate. Many of the sources on Politics teaching and learning point towards the importance of engaging with the wider political sphere, and again this underpins the potential role for the Politics student expressing political views. That said, a few sources see the HE classroom as a space separate from the political sphere. The role of anonymity in participation in the classroom raises issues in relation to the expressing of political views, suggesting that it could play a part in facilitating their expressing by Politics students.

French and Bazalgette (1996) note that the gestation, speed of development and spread of the idea of learning in organisations have been remarkable. According to Niemi (2009) learning arenas have widened, moving from their formal settings to crossing boundaries. Mortiboys talks of “being inclusive in your teaching means minimising the risk of any aspect of the learning experience resulting in a learner or a group of learners being disadvantaged” (2010, p.111). Palmer writes of

the “carefully crafted relationships of student to teacher, student to student and teacher to student to subject” (2010, p.29). Book and Putnam (1992) write of the classroom as a learning community, where students are encouraged to ‘assert’ their point of view. These sources emphasise the importance of the student in the learning experience. However the taxonomy employed means that terminology related to student-centred teaching and learning in the generic and non-subject specific sources can sometimes be unclear, according to O’Neill and McMahon (2003). Savin-Baden, MacFarland and Savin-Baden (2008) identify a lack of commonly-understood discourses about teaching and learning. There is some scepticism of teaching and learning being a discrete area of study. However, this might depend on the HEI as Readings (1997) firmly situates the approach taken towards pedagogy in its institutional setting. Malcolm and Zukas (2007) use the term ‘poor relation’ for teaching and learning and point to the separation between the production of knowledge, which is the traditional role of the academic researcher, and teaching and learning. Indeed there was no recognised research category for teaching and learning in the Research Excellence Framework (Hefce, 2012). It is a relatively new area of study, following on from the Dearing Report recommending giving priority to teaching and learning strategies focusing on student learning (1997). According to Prosser (2008) the scholarship of teaching and learning in HE both as an idea and a practice is still in its early stages of development. If student-centred research is of lesser value than other forms of research, this may affect the impact and dissemination of this research.

Hutchings, Bjork and Babb’s (2002) annotated bibliography of the scholarship of teaching and learning provides a useful backdrop to these issues. Little, Locke, Parker and Richardson (2007) see an explicit tension between teaching excellence being judged as fit for purpose, and as meeting systematic criteria and standardised practices for measurement and judgement. They suggest that the ‘trick’ (Little et al, 2007) is to find a way of reconciling the two. If the expressing of political views in the classroom is found to have pedagogical implications beneficial to the student learner, then the practice guidance will be more likely to be adopted by student-centred academics. The additional challenge is to link teaching and learning practice outcomes to outcomes readily accepted by the wider academic research community and therefore more likely to be of interest to the wider academy. These outcomes also need to be recognised by institutional actors as having implications for quality teaching (Henard 2010) if they are to have credibility for practice. Yet there is evidence that academics might be indifferent or even suspicious of the student-centred changes which they are being asked to make (Cousins, 2010), suspecting that this will add to their

workload or even threaten their role. It might therefore be assumed that some scepticism towards student-centred research remains in the wider academy.

In 2002 there were discussions among academics about the viability of discipline-led research into subject-specific teaching and learning, in the face of opposition from subject-based researchers (Transcript of Roundtable, 2002). It is relevant given the relative newness of the sector of teaching and learning in Politics (2005 for the creation of the PSA's Specialist Group) that there are so many sources informing this research. This indicates that there is the opportunity to disseminate these research findings to an interested group within the academy. The HEA offers resources and potential routes for dissemination for Politics-specific teaching and learning research. Curtis (2012) suggests that support at subject level is at the heart of the work undertaken by the HEA and that he and his colleagues will "continue to deliver and develop the services which are most valued by those working in education" though the future of the Higher Education Academy's ability to support subject areas looks uncertain after the UK's funding councils decided to withdraw support from 2014/15 onwards (www.heacademy.ac.uk).

There has been a trend within the subject area towards student-centred Politics teaching and learning. Though Stammers, Dittmar and Henney (1999) find that even in the face of rising numbers, methods of teaching and learning rarely change, Alkadry and Miller in the same year (1999) capture students' stories in a way that puts the emphasis on the student not the teacher. In the face of the implications of wider access to HE, Politics academics have sought ways of enabling learning using a variety of new methods, engaging those of differing abilities. Examples include role-playing (Schapp, 2005), films and simulations (Simpson and Klausser, 2009) or assigned readings (Kassiola, 2007). The literature also evidences a widespread move into the use of IT in Politics teaching. This can be seen in the conference proceedings of the PSA Teaching and Learning Specialist Group. Methods increasingly include the use of online resources, multimedia learning, information literacy, diary room, film, simulations and podcasts (www.psa.ac.uk). The underlying theme continues to be the result of the use of the method, rather than the method itself. Gates (2009) writes of the embedding of "concrete political engagement" within the learning experience." (p. 1), suggesting an outcome beyond the learning experience itself. A few texts in the Politics teaching and learning sources address specific methods of teaching and learning decoupled from the wider outcomes (Deardorff, Hamann and Ishiyama, 2009). Others look at outcomes related to the transformation of Politics students whether through social engagement or employability and therefore linking the expressing of political views by

students to an outcome though there are also arguments supporting the study of Politics as of interest in its own right (Briggs, 2015). Nagel (1999) argues that the teaching and learning should be bipartisan (rather than non-partisan) to enable graduates to directly link their studies to the workplace. Yet Eulau (1977) sees the classroom as a space separate from the world of Politics “for the teacher in the classroom is taught to teach and not conduct political business.” (p. 69). He calls it a studio of disinterested scholarship, and this challenges the role of the external political context on the classroom experience, given the emphasis here on deliberate decoupling. The latter source is from 1977 since when the link between the Politics classroom and the wider Political sphere has become embedded into the curriculum. Nevertheless Bachrach and Bennett (1977) focus on the student in the classroom in terms of the importance of the students’ understanding that the classroom is not “just a sophisticated game with rules... that don’t apply in the real world” (p.48). They emphasise that the classroom environment should be linked to what goes on outside, but also provide a “quiet-tempered reflection”. Yet it might be inappropriate to write of an individual Politics student’s experience of expressing their political views as being identifiable as a result of the one variable that they are studying Politics. Indeed, there is debate over the “dissolution of disciplinary boundaries” (Hay, 2010, p.8). This has implications for the identification of the Politics student at the centre of this research. Disciplinary boundaries are the result of “history, vested interests, financing, entrepreneurial opportunity or of academic conditions” according to Gibbons et al (2007, p.148) and therefore might not reflect a coherent group. Grant (2010) suggests that Politics “resembles a subject or a field of inquiry rather than a discipline” (p.2). It might therefore be suggested that there can be no such thing as ‘the Politics student’ identified in the research if there is no discernible “discipline”. This would be of relevance to this research which is focused on the experience of the Politics student, and not students of other disciplines. That said, the Benchmark (2015) presents Politics as a discrete area of study and offers guidance for the curriculum, for teaching and learning and for outcomes which support the identification of the Politics student.

5.5 Power and the Academic

This research has arisen out of a concern that the academic might affect whether or not a student expresses their political views. An analysis of the role of the academic in the student expressing of political views therefore seems to be key. The sources indicate that power may have a role in students wishing to know an academic’s political views and why students may choose not to express their own political views. The possibility of preferred political views and partisan

marking is highlighted. The sources note bases of power which may relate to the academic and the student role. The part played by the student audience in affirming power is identified in the sources.

Power is a critical issue in the classroom, according to Richmond and McCroskey (1992). Their emphasis is on negotiated power, the assumption being that the academic only has power if the students grant it to them (Richmond and Roach, 1992). Hindess' (1996) second interpretation of power is also drawn from consent. This introduces the concept of power being something which can be transferred or indeed redacted. The implication is that the student can determine whether the academic has power. It can be argued that the context of student fees and the importance of student satisfaction mean that students wield considerable power over the academic. Goffman (1990) looks at the actions which various participants can require of others, the rewards and punishments which can be offered or enforced, and the social controls underlying these. He writes of power being clothed in display and that the power will have different effects dependent on their dramatisation. Through the examples of enlightenment, persuasion, exchange, manipulation, authority, threat, punishment or coercion, he makes clear that the individual with the power, who could be academic or student, must communicate what he wishes, what he will do to achieve his wishes, and what he will do if those wishes are not achieved. This introduces the concept of reward and sanction to the expressing of students' political views indicating a potential power dynamic. French and Raven (1959) define power as influence in terms of psychological change which would have a direct bearing on this research if the influence involves changing the political views of academics or students. Within the classroom, French and Raven's (1959) bases of power seem especially appropriate. They ask two pertinent questions. The first is "what determines the behaviour of the agent who exerts power?" (French and Raven 1959, p.150). This is only partly addressed in the sources if applied within the classroom in the context of expressing students' political views. It could be that effective practice guidance to help determine practice behaviour would provide clarity for the academic, the agent, in their role as directing the activity of another (Goffman, 1990). The second question is: "What determines the reactions of the recipient of this behaviour?" (French and Raven, 1959, p.150). Again, there is the potential for effective practice guidance for academics acting as a determinant for the student response. The implication is that there is a need to understand why the recipient (the student) might react in a certain way on receipt of the academic's behaviour. This might affect whether their reaction includes (or doesn't) the expressing of political views.

French and Raven (1959) develop their theory about the bases of power from the perspective of the receiver's experience of the power of another. This means that the basis of the legitimate power afforded to the academic by the student comes from the perception that the student has that the academic can prescribe their behaviour. This indicates an acceptance by the student of the authority of the academic. French and Raven (1958) identify certain variables as underlying legitimate power, and these include age, intelligence and physical characteristics. This indicates that if the academic acts and looks the part of the academic, the student is likely to confer on them legitimate power. In addition, the hierarchy of authority, according to French and Raven (1959), suggests that the academic is in a superior position to the student. French and Raven (1959) assert that legitimate power will be drawn in part from the basis of shared cultural values, originating from their institutional context, their qualifications and peer approval. Designation of legitimate power by a legitimating agent such as an HE Departmental Head appointing a new visiting lecturer would be an appropriate example. Students will grant legitimate power to that lecturer if they entrust that decision to the Departmental Head as representing the wider institution. However the basis of legitimate power may be changing as the academic role does. Academics are no longer just dealing with teaching and learning for example and it is not clear from the sources whether students afford academics the same legitimacy that previous generations might have done. Indeed the changing academic role is likely to create issues of identity for the academic.

The power held by the academic in relation to the student expressing political views might also be drawn from their perceived expert power (French and Raven 1959) if the academic is seen by the students as a specialist. It seems appropriate that the academic ought to be the expert and subject specialist. However, this expertise can have a narrow focus and the authors make it clear that straying outside it can undermine confidence in the receiver and reduce the expert power. This would seem to apply where an academic might be presenting political views but not be able to support them effectively, and therefore lose the confidence of their student audience. However Poggi (2001) claims that intellectuals only enter the public sphere once they have proven themselves, and that it is this competition for recognition that makes it easier for them to get an audience which is "largely passive, needing to have its opinion formed, its views formulated, its options laid out for it." (p.102). This indicates that the academic's expert power exists before the student audience becomes involved, and is self-standing. Poggi tempers this with the argument that audiences make and remake reputations (thereby affording the student audience the power to grant power) and that the hierarchical relationship between academic and student is

complicated by the organisational and financial aspect of the relationship. Therefore when applied to academia it can be seen that however eminent an academic may be, they are only as legitimate or expert as their students or the HE context allow them to be.

French and Raven's (1959) analysis of social power provides a perspective on the relationship between the academic and the student. Their reward power, which originates from the recipient's (the student) perception that the agent (academic) has the ability to enact rewards, and their coercive power where that reward becomes punishment, are particularly relevant to this thesis in terms of literature relating to assessment. Academics are markers of assessments, and therefore students when expressing political views might seek to reflect the political views they know (or believe they know) their tutors to hold. Bar and Zussman (2012) identify partisan marking linked to political allegiance which would support this assertion. Bar and Zussman (2012) find a link between the political views of academics and the marks they award, suggesting that democratic professors in the US tend towards the egalitarian while republicans give lower grades to black students relative to white. This suggests that understanding the issues relating to the expressing of political views in the classroom has implications for the marks awarded to students. Whether or not there is a direct link, the student perception that there might be could inform their expressing of political views. Yet students would need to know the academic political views if they were to manage this perceived situation to their advantage. Where French and Raven (1959) write of referent power, it may be difficult to differentiate between referent (where the student seeks to identify with the academic) and reward or coercive power. Referent power is not dependent on an outcome (such as assessment) and would be characterised simply as a student seeking to please an academic which could include mirroring their perceived views. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that students could make a link between an academic liking the student, and the student's perception of the use of power in assessments. Bachratz and Baratz (1972) write that without the threat of sanctions, whether a reward or a penalty, power gives way to influence. They also indicate that in latent power, sanctions may not need to be used even if they could be. Academics could therefore in so far as links with assessment go, be exercising latent rather than real power but the point may be the perception by the student of the academic role. Indeed, there may not need to be a threat of sanctions but a perception of a threat.

Lukes (2005) claims that power is capacity and not the enactment of that capacity, which he writes may never happen.

It seems that perceived power as much as actual power could affect the student's expressing of political views. Sorensen and Christophel (1992) stress the importance to influence of the student identifying with the academic and that if students perceive that an academic's values and attitudes are more similar than different to their own, there is greater probability of the academic influencing the student. Sorensen and Cristophel (1992) note that students in their research admit that they would have been more resistant to change if the academic had "gone on" (p 43) about his position on an issue (in this case homophily). This is important if identifying with the academic means identifying with their political views. Students might choose not to express their political views in the classroom in order to avoid criticism, or be vulnerable in terms of assessment. If this is the case, it would support the identification of an issue worth exploring in relation to the experience of students expressing political views. Henson and Denker (2009) conducted research in a communication studies class and looked at perceptions of political tolerance, finding a correlation between students' perceptions of the views of the academic or other students, and their silence. The study drew on Noelle-Neumann's work on the Spiral of Silence effect. Noelle-Neumann (1977) identifies the pressure to conform which drives public opinion given the preference for popularity and respect. In Henson and Denker (2009) participants are asked to gauge the political or ideological stance of the academic. The authors suggest that further research be conducted into a classroom where political discussion is at the core of the curriculum in order to establish a clearer link between student behaviours and perceptions of academic political views. Therefore the propensity for links between what students believe academic political views to be and their behaviour is once again mentioned, drawing in again the potential for sanctions or for rewards, as is the relevance to political discussion. There might be further implications. Parawesmaran (2007) suggests that academics are morally responsible for student dishonesty. Therefore students presenting political views that are not their own as a result of academic behaviour, might indicate new moral and ethical dilemmas requiring further research. This would also apply to academics presenting political views that are not their own as a result of student behaviour.

5.6 Influence and the Academic

The sources indicate that there is the potential for power in the selection, framing and narration of the curriculum. The part which ideology can play in this is also highlighted. The suggestion is that the academic can use persuasion or rhetoric to present a particular perspective and there is an implicit (and sometimes explicit) concern over the dominance of ideas. The importance of a student's literacy is seen as key. Finally, the context is deemed to affect a student's ability to engage critically as their earlier experiences will inform how they engage in HE.

Expert and legitimate power (French and Raven, 1959) seem to offer scope for influence on the selection and delivery of the Politics curriculum. While the Benchmark (2015) forms an underpinning, it indicates that there is considerable leeway offered locally for interpretation. Wesley White and Lowenthal point out that those in positions of power "have an exponentially greater ability to influence what a given discursive event means and the associated semiotic images participants take away from such an exchange" (2011, p. 289). It is clear that all teaching needs framing and that Politics teaching is no different. If the political views of the academic can influence not only how, but what they teach, and by extension what and how the student learns, this research needs to understand the role ideology plays in the expressing of political views. Muriga, Musingafi, and Chiwanza (2013) offer what they term a commonly held definition of ideology as a framework of thought which underpins our visions, missions, values, assumptions, purposes, and choices we make (p.88). Conversi (2012) notes that the concept of ideology can be stretched to include what she calls new discursive practices. She also stresses the importance of passion and dedication in ideology. It can therefore be argued that the term ideology is useful when looking at discourse within HE. While Alkadry and Miller (1999) suggest that there is an ideology and value free option of academics using students' stories in public administration teaching which are "about the free exchange of experience" (p.68) unlike the "priests, parents and sometimes teachers [who] sell products, titillate the senses or provide cheap emotions" (p.68), it is difficult to see how using student stories could be value free. The activity of teaching and learning Politics must necessarily, as with any discipline, involve selectivity, which indicates an ideological component to that choice, for example in the defining of political concepts. Baiman, Boushey and Saunders (2000) suggest that "even the concept of the economy is an arbitrary abstraction: it represents only certain aspects of social relations" (p. 5).

One of the concerns in the literature is into the construction of meaning. Gee (2011) raises the importance of understanding the role of reflexivity and reciprocity in terms of the language used and the context it takes place in. Freeman (2009) suggests that the narrative, such as that used in teaching, might elicit truths which actually require distance in order to come into being. There might be concern raised over the concept of ‘truth’ and whose ‘truth’. Finlayson (2006) identifies the crucial role in problem-setting played by the choice of rhetoric or discourse selected for framing the issue being taught. Norton (2010) challenges the use of the narrative as a driver to the understanding of the political past, suggesting that this results in the past being seen differently from each moment in the present. The academic uses a narrative as part of their teaching, according to Georgakopoulou and Goutsos (2004) “... cast in a particular perspective that fits into the narrative’s context of occurrence” (p.44). Lave and Wenger (2003) similarly see “the power to renegotiate the meaning of the past and future in constructing the meaning of present circumstances” (p.34). Gerstenfeld (2003) writes of the battle of narratives emerging in academia. Readings (1997) suggests that rhetoric has a role in framing pedagogy. He claims that teaching should be a dialogue with the question of meaning remaining open, with pedagogy a complex system of checks and measures and “network of obligation”, which would indicate that the academic should not have a role in deciding on meaning. Kincheloe and Berry (2004) write of a multiplicity of possible framings, calling the result a ‘bricolage’. Aristotle (1991) suggests that rhetoric is the art of finding the persuasive nature of the subject matter: “persuasiveness is persuasiveness for an individual and in some cases a proposition convinces through being itself persuasive.... and in others by the belief that it has been demonstrated from premises that are so” (p.76).

Sanders (2010) affirms that the practice of persuasion is not restricted to politicians, “we are constantly being exposed to persuasive messages from sources as varied as journalists, advertisers, friends, mothers and lecturers” (p.27). Bleich writes of the “Western view of education as a process through which young people acquire enlightenment or knowledge from older, authoritative people.”(1995, p.581) and French and Raven (1959) indicate that a change in an opinion may be enacted by a number of forces, including group opinion and the individual’s own needs but also by a third party (1959). Sorokos (2005) offers a polemic against the lecture as a dominant form of teaching which can legitimise an individual’s political and ideological views. He suggests that the lecture indicates “one person has the knowledge, an interpretation of the truth that should be passed onto others” (p.136). Van Dyke and Davis (1977) see the potential for course evaluation or an academic ombudsman as a way to enable students to communicate if

they are subject to teaching staff who are “ideologically dogmatic”. They claim that ideological pluralism is preferable. This shows concern for the student who might be vulnerable, and recognition that an issue exists. They accept that while truth and reason might be the objective of academics, ‘fanatics and dogmatists’ also claim to speak the truth.

These sources suggest a potential role for the academic influencing the student, and for the academic judging the appropriateness of political views expressed in the classroom. The suggestion is that teaching and learning is not value-free and that expert or legitimate power bases are not either. The prospect of academic influence over expressing views might make the need for the student to be media literate more acute as “in order to gain control over how the media affect us, we need to be able to recognize the full range of media effects and how they exercise their influence on us” (Potter, 2001, p.11). It can be argued that if students can differentiate between sources through critical engagement with agenda-setting and construction of meaning, then they would be able to draw their own conclusions rather than being influenced by the selection or framing of the teaching material. However there might be particular challenges in teaching the “Google generation” according to Thornton (2009) given that, in this contemporary context, critical engagement with ideas is less prevalent. This would suggest that current Politics students are likely to be more impressionable than previous cohorts. Barnett (1990) suggests that the role of ideology in the curriculum can be overcome through encouraging this criticality in students. Bates and Jenkins (2007 a and b) support criticality through critiquing other authors for over-simplifying complexities in trying to explain them to students, as a result limiting the potential student’s understanding of the concept, and of their related scope for reflecting on the concept. Subsequent articles then critique the original Bates and Jenkins article (Furlong and Marsh, 2007 and Hay, 2007). Gann (1995) challenges the textbook definitions of ideology as being too simplistic, and lacking a critical approach, to the extent that “there is a danger that everything becomes ideological” (p. 132). If Walsby’s (2009) suggestion that ideology is “intimately connected with the mental life of every human being... it then becomes possible to apply this knowledge in the sphere of education” is accepted, then it will follow that teaching is ideologically charged, which would support Barnett’s contention (1990) of an ideological strand implicit in HE, a ‘hidden’ curriculum which he believes academics are not aware of and which militates against independent learning. He argues that ideology has, but ought not to have, a role in the HE curriculum.

It is clear that there is a high level of academic autonomy over what occurs in the enclosed space of the classroom. While lecture notes and other material might be published online, there is no record of the interactions within the classroom. Annual peer-observation of teaching can be anticipated and constructed. Although Moutsios (2012) writes of the Bologna process leading to reduced academic autonomy in knowledge creation, it can be argued that the academic still reigns supreme in the classroom. This suggests Lipsky's (1980) street-level bureaucrat, about whom Bochel and Bochel (2004) identify "the ability to exercise discretion is a source of power" (p.44). If it can be argued that ideology is present in "our intentional or purposive behaviour in every field of activity" (Walford, 1977) then how it is manifested in the classroom will be key to research into the expressing of student political views. The potential is that the use by the academic of a particular rhetoric or discourse can affect the expressing of political views by students in the classroom or their approach to facilitating the students' expressing of views. Valenzano (2012) talks of academics "who silence students who wish to explore, express or advocate ideas that are contrary to the dominant liberal perspective" (p.2) and writes from the position of himself being 'fearful'. He claims that as a professor and, significantly, a student, he watches and listens as "faculty made snide remarks in their classes that gratuitously and irrelevantly denigrate conservative political figures and ideas" (p.4). Though coming from a non-Politics academic, this might indicate that for a Politics setting, where strong allegiances to political views could be expected, the situation might be more significant.

5.7 Academic Political Views

Given a possible link between a student expressing a particular political view, and an academic's resultant behaviour (such as in terms of partisan marking) the sources which address academic political views are potentially key given the inference that knowing an academic's views might be an advantage to the student. A number of sources look at whether or not an academic influences a student's political views, and conclude that they are only one of many influences. Other sources raise concern for academics who declare their political views, with UK and US sources indicating different origins for that concern. Further sources suggest that the academic should express their political views, while others indicate that students will be able to guess their views even if they are not made explicit. One argument for an academic to reveal their views is concerned with the development of their students' criticality.

Cotton (2006) sees it as implausible that an academic can teach a controversial issue without expressing their own political view even if they try to hide that view. Her research notes that students with strong counter-arguments could overrule the academic's proposed viewpoint. She argues this is problematic for the student if they assume a greater level of political agreement between themselves and the academic than exists. This could be important if correctly gauging the academic's political view is perceived to affect assessment. Students will therefore have an interest in knowing the political views of academics. Research by Kelly-Woessner and Woessner (2006) suggests that students are more critical of tutors who hold different political views to their own. Journell (2011) concludes that students prefer academics to present their personal opinion but in a measured way. Hess (2009) considers whether or not teachers in schools in the US should disclose their political views. She finds division on the issue from the teachers but a majority of students in favour. However, her research indicates that students failed to consistently identify a given teacher's views. She suggests the existence of a continuum of disclosure. If it can be argued that knowing the other's political views might be helpful in adjusting one's own views in order to manage the behaviour of others, the indication that students are often wrong in their gauging of a teacher's views is relevant. Her research also identifies two areas of perceived academic influence, that of 'ideological influence' (which she terms indoctrination) and that of 'pedagogical influence'. Valenzano (2012) highlights the former in the silencing of students who express views contrary to a perceived 'dominant perspective'. Gregory (2001) claims to have witnessed "teachers expressing deep prejudice against students who are temperamentally and intellectually unlike themselves." (p. 85). Each case is dependent on one party correctly gauging the political views of the other and it has been established that this can be a flawed process.

The political views of academics seem likely to have an effect on the expressing of political views of their students given the power base implicit in the relationship. Horowitz (2006) names and shames a number of US academics and draws parallels with Gramsci in his description of recruitment to faculty posts according to their political views, though he has been criticised by other academics for his methodology. Losco and Deollos (2007) find evidence which disputes his suggestion of political indoctrination of students by academics. Their survey indicates that departmental academic chairs in the US do not believe indoctrination to be widespread and they question the influence an academic has on the student. A survey by Hartlaub and Lancaster (2008) finds that Liberals and Democrats outnumber Conservatives and Republicans by four to one in political science departments in the US, in a study which cuts across both political parties

and ideologies. La Falce and Gomez (2007) find that there is a greater diversity of political views across both faculty and students than the existing literature suggests. They therefore challenge the idea that college professors are liberal, and that they force their views onto students. Hamilton and Hargens (1993) suggest that changing norms in society in the US mean that faculty could seem more liberal than they really are. However, the definition of 'liberal' might be contested, with the indication being that it might be situational and contextual. What the political views of academics are will be relevant to this research, if students seek to know their views in order to mirror them as in French and Raven's (1959) referent power for example, or wish to avoid or gain sanctions in relation to those views.

The academic may share their political views with their students though there is always the possibility of duplicity or dishonesty since their real views cannot be known. It appears that many Politics academics do reveal their political views to students (Woessner and Kelly-Woessner, 2009). Bachrach and Bennett (1977) put a strong case for the academic's role being to develop political commitment in the student, and that they should reveal their own political beliefs as part of this process. Whether academics see that their role should include expressing their political views may be informed by whether the context for expressing those views is deemed a safe one. Journell (2011) highlights the challenges to HE teaching post 9/11 where the discussion of politics can have uncomfortable and even dangerous consequences. These consequences can come from academics at odds with the political views of others. Smith, Mayer and Fritschler (2008) warn that debates about academic freedom to express views are discouraging of a genuine exchange of views given their politicisation. Brookes (1965) accepts that there might be substance to the criticism that he is against political activities at university which are contrary to his own views. He does, however, emphasise that "intimidation, open or subtle, whether of students or of faculty, should be resisted as the enemy of academic freedom" (p.86). One area of literature considers scenarios where either an academic, or a student's political views, has led to the issue moving out of the private sphere, into the public sphere and onto the media agenda (L'Etang, 2009 p.75). Examples are academics whose political stance causes a friction with their institution, which therefore becomes both a media story and involves actors from outside the immediate HE classroom. Sources in the US draw on the first amendment in support of such academics, though many of the cases are complex. Rammell (2007) in the UK puts the case for the preservation of academic liberty through shared values which excludes extremes, and touches on the 'trade-off' between liberty and security in the modern state. The case of Ward Churchill at the University of Colorado also includes charges of plagiarism (Jaschik, 2007). Subramian

Swamy who was dropped from delivering courses at Harvard (Lahiri, 2011) drew a distinction between unpopular and inappropriate views. The wider political context clearly has an effect. Chandler Davis was reinstated at the University of Michigan 57 years after being fired during the targeting of communists in the 1950s (Woodhouse, 2011). There are also examples of certain institutions, such as the Chicago School, known overtly for a particular intellectual approach (Monroe, 200 p.97). Examples from across the world of academics with a range of political views being ostracised from their institution can be identified in the sources. University of Warwick professor Thomas Docherty found himself suspended and later when acquitted facing a substantial legal bill after a colleague brought complaints against him (Morgan, 2014) though Palfreyman (2007) suggests that in the UK issues here are more likely to be related to threats to academic freedom from managerialism, from reforms to HE and from the repercussions of the Anti-Terrorist Act, than directly to political campaigns as witnessed in the US (Palfreyman, 2007). A Cambridge Economist, criticised for allegedly racist views by the students' union, writes that political correctness is totalitarian (Sherriff, 2012) and results in the liberal left working against themselves (www.pc.martinsewell.com). The situational nature of gauging the views of others is therefore highlighted as is tension between perceived extremism as against support for the freedom of expression. Most HE institutions have produced documentation which tries to reconcile the tension between freedom of speech and the potential for political views to be controversial, in particular where they become political action.

Perhaps those academics who speak out and find themselves in difficulty might conclude that presenting their political views to students is not without risk, regardless of the student experience. De-Shalit (2005) writes of the importance of the Politics academic being impartial in their role in terms of expressing their political views, but not neutral. He is writing as a practitioner seeking practice guidance on whether the academic should be open about their political views in the classroom, working as he does in a politically intense context. He argues the importance of impartiality which he defines as being open to the ideas of others. He also believes that academics have a role in presenting strongly held views as these are more likely to have an impact on the student by developing criticality and rationality. His arguments are based on reasoning, as might be expected from a political philosopher, rather than through linking his approach to the expressing of student political views. He sees his role as transforming the views of students through enabling criticality. Gardner (1998) argues for detachment on the part of the

Politics academic, while not lack of passion. In the same journal, West (1998) argues in support of advocacy, as long as certain guidelines (relating to the nature and the purpose of liberal advocacy) are upheld, and therefore condones the persuasive nature of advocated views, accepting a lack of balance as inevitable. The performativity role (Goffman, 1990) suggests that the political views expressed by the academic may have purpose related to gaining approval and this again underlines the role of the student in the interaction. Sources are mixed on the practice guidance over whether academics should express their political views (though of course no one can know if these are their real views). There seem to be dangers inherent in expressing political views, but also some indications that it may support student development and encourage criticality.

5.8 Performativity and the Academic

The literature on performativity provides insight into the academic role and the need for its validation from the student audience's appreciation of the academic performance. The nature of performativity within the role is seen where the academic is variously facilitator, gatekeeper, entertainer and medium. Sources consider means of enabling students to express their views through academic facilitation using teaching and learning methods and also how some teaching and learning approaches can have the effect of discouraging the expressing of political views.

Zander, Cohen and Stotland write of a role as a set of behaviours influenced by norms and expectations (1959, p.16). Berger and Luckman (1991) indicate that all institutionalised conduct involves roles, and that institutions are represented through the roles. This suggests that the academic role involves representation. Indeed Sorokos (2005) suggests the political science teacher faces the choice of imparting knowledge or providing entertainment, the latter of which he sees as driven by the demands of the 'modern' university. The concept of an academic as entertainer can be explored using Goffman's (1990) dramaturgical approach. While Goffman (1990) writes about any social situation where an individual appears before others, the terminology he uses seems particular apt for an HE classroom situation. He refers to the interaction, the performance, and the participant. His notion of an individual defining a situation and thus controlling the conduct of others seems especially pertinent to the expressing of political view by the academic, especially when he indicates (1990) that this representing is the individual's claim to what reality is. Goffman looks at the challenges facing the presentation of self and for the maintenance of a unified definition of the situation.

Goffman (1990) writes that social roles have an established front and, in referring to education, that teachers favour neither lower nor upper class groups as “both groups may make it difficult to maintain in the classroom the kind of definition of the situation which affirms the professional teacher role” (p.213). This idea of a preferred audience, one which will accept the representation of the academic as a reality, indicates the importance of the relationship between the academic and the student. It suggests that academics with certain political views might seek out students holding the same views in order to ensure a preferred audience. Goffman (1990) suggests that teachers tend to work as a team to maintain an impression of professionalism and authority. Goffman refers to a ‘thin party line’ for the maintenance of apparent unity in a team. Goffman (1990) also suggests that for a one-man teaching team, the definition of the situation can be adjusted to his own interests. This analysis raises a number of issues. One relates to the idea of power in the classroom as part of the academic’s definition of the situation. The other relates to the maintenance of a front by the academic(s). Finally, the idea that the individual academic can define the situation according to his own interests seems to recall the fragility of status (French and Raven, 1959) to the maintenance of expert power. It is one thing for the academic to be presenting a particular point of view; however the audience must accept this as reality in order for the academic to have any power. The academic regularly provides formal presentations to an audience of students. It is therefore unsurprising that performativity will be part of their role. Goffman suggests that any social establishment can be usefully studied from the perspective of impression management. It seems possible that the academic performance in the front region (Goffman, 1990) adheres to the situation he describes where agreement between performer and the audience (in this case the academic and the students) is emphasised and is termed ‘working consensus’. The role of the Politics academic as performer has a number of connotations. Corpus Ong makes a link to television entertainment: “with its soap operas, game shows and reality TV- is an integral part of society’s political culture” (Corpus Ong, 2008, p.393). Users and Gratifications theory suggests that audiences are formed on the basis of common needs which might include the need for information, the formation of personal identity, the achievement of social integration and interaction, and the desire for entertainment (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1973). This can be argued to be the case for a student audience in a Politics classroom and would underpin the suggestion that the classroom contains complex social interactions, which are beyond the remit of this DProf. The indication is that the academic is in a powerful position in terms of their ability to frame their subject.

It could be argued that the role of the Politics academic is to be a communication medium in that they act as gatekeeper to ideas which they are communicating. Windhal, Signitzer and Olson (2009) lament the fact that the term ‘media’ is so often used synonymously with mass media, “reflecting, perhaps, a communication society that too often forgets that human beings also take on the role of medium” (p.17). The equating of the role of the academic with the media suggests that media theories used to explain the management of public opinion such as agenda setting and construction of meaning, can be used to understand in-class communication, and the impact on the student’s experience of expressing their political views. A Politics academic with excellent subject knowledge but poor communication and entertainment skills could be judged less effective by the student than the colleague with better communication skills. A Politics academic with the better command of communication skills would also be in a position to facilitate (or not) the expressing of their own or their students’ political views.

5.9 Political Socialisation

Key to this research is establishing why Politics students might wish to or should express their political views. Whether or not they need to know their political views, or have fully developed them, in order to express them are important aspects of this exploration. Sources on political socialisation have not highlighted the academic as a particular influence. Other influences are background, race and gender. The manner in which ideology can play a part in the classroom interaction and therefore on the development of student political views is explored. There are indications that cognitive dissonance in the classroom may influence the forming of student political views. Just as the nature of the academic’s political view has relevance when exploring bases of power in relation to reference, sanction and coercion, so too it is argued does the student political view.

Some research has found that academics do not influence to any great extent students’ political views, which they suggest are typically made up by the age of 15, though these views are still affected by other students and by other external factors (Smith, Mayer and Fritschler, 2008, Woessner and Kelly-Woosner, 2009). Dey (1996) finds evidence that HE plays a role in shaping the political attitudes of students though Beaumont et al (2006) confirm that the ‘fear’ about the potential influence of staff “steering students into particular ideologies” is unfounded (p.16). Gordon and Taft (2012) see the role of the student peer group in socialising each other for political engagement as under-explored. Research by Pascarella, Salisbury, Martin and Blaich (2012) indicates that the liberalising effect they find happening to students who enter university initially

holding more conservative views, comes less from the influence of academics than from being exposed to students with diverse views at university. There are it seems a number of influences on the shaping of students' political views and the academic is not singled out as being a particular one. Boyer (1987) analyses the political orientation of students, parents and faculty when he makes links between the undergraduate experience and outcomes. Boyer's (1987) view is that students become more conservative as faculty becomes more liberal, though he concludes that "students still hold a wide spectrum of beliefs" (p.190). The 2011 HERI survey of American College Freshmen identifies a move towards more liberal views among students (Pryor, DeAngelo, Palucki, Blake, Hurtado and Tran, 2011). Research does indicate that students select certain disciplines on the basis of their ideological commitment and that many academics and students are to the left of centre (Nakhaie and Bryman, 2011). Lipset (1982) links intellectual creativity with critical social views, seeing a positive in the tendency towards a left of centre political perspective. One survey indicates a correlation across six European countries between students' ideology and subject choice, showing the political views of students in the social sciences (excluding law and economics) and arts and humanities leaning to the left (Ipsos Mori, 2010).

Some studies seek to find a link between social class and the political views of students. This was a particular issue during the student activism in the US in the 1960s and 1970s. Westby and Braungart (1966) while warning against generalisations, identify a correlation between left-leaning students coming from the upper middle class while right-leaning students are lower middle and working class. O'Connell and Sedlacek (1971) suggest that being at university might pressurise well-to-do students to move to the left of their parents. Bourdieu, Passeron and St Martin (1994) point out that social background is not just the first link in the causal chain but asserts its influence at each stage. In addition to class, the literature indicates that gender might be material in the expressing of political views. Morehouse Mendez (2010) looks at how gender affects how participants talk about Politics. They find that men and women both see women as less knowledgeable about Politics, regardless of their actual knowledge base. They also find that participants ask those they see as experts for political information, and they suggest that there is room for future research given that "acquisition of additional information or an increase in tolerance may be tempered by the social dynamics of the interaction" (p.278). Race is another variable indicated by the sources. A study by Masuoka finds links between student political opinion and self-identification with their multiracial origin (2008). The individual student's

experience in the Politics HE classroom could therefore be the result of a number of variables, and this would include the gender of the teaching staff (Dion, 2008) and the relations in the classroom (Burns and Knox, 2011). Any perceived prevailing political view within the classroom might lead to Walsby's (2009) fear of a group by those individuals not part of it. Indeed Klein and Stern (2009) write of the majoritarian group-think in academia, which can exist regardless of any underlying ideology. It can be assumed that eidodynamics (Walsby, 2009) seeking radical political transformation, would be drawn to studying Politics in the classroom as part of their agenda for social change. These individual eidodynamics, bound by their strong theoretical bonds, might be a formidable group. Cognitive dissonance may also have a part to play in the student expressing political views. Carkenord and Bullington (1993) deliberately introduce cognitive dissonance in a study of psychology students. Students seem to benefit from awareness of cognitive dissonance, but the researchers are not able to determine whether student attitudes or behaviour might change as a result. The work of Buckmaster and McKenzie among university students on the issue of Iraq and military intervention indicates that there is much to be discovered through further research into the part played by cognitive dissonance in the forming of political opinion (2009). These sources provide some indication of the political socialisation of students but do not tell us about the student experience of expressing their political views.

5.10 Students and Expressing their Political Views

Sources which address the student expressing of political views provide useful insight. The experiences which the student brings to the classroom are seen as having relevance. Students are seen to be less anxious about expressing views which are not political. A number of sources look at increasing the opportunity for students to practice politics as this provides an opportunity for them to express their political views. Information technology and new approaches to pedagogy offer further developments in facilitating the expressing of student political views.

Longo and Meyer (2006) conducted a review of the literature, identifying a need for more research to hear the voices of young people, set in the context of democratic participation. They write about listening to the political voice of students. Beavers (2005) participated in classes while on sabbatical, and listened in on student discussions, reminding herself that when she returned to teaching she should not "forget the student's perceptions of the classroom" (p.2). Longo, Drury and Battistoni (2006) seek lessons for educators from students about how to

maximise political engagement. While the findings don't look at the experience of the students of expressing their political views in class, the participants do acknowledge the importance of listening to one another, and to "respect different opinions and perspectives" (p.7). Kersh (2005) alludes to 'The View from the Classroom' in the title, but this is again from the perspective of the educator. A number of sources speculate on the student experience by inference. A study by Csajko and Lindaman (2011) finds that the study of political science through coursework (representing a critical activity) as well as the experience of acting as election monitors (representing a political activity) improves student understanding of the democratic purpose. They ask students about whether "when policy issues or problems are being discussed, I usually have something to say" (p.70). The findings suggest that political science students are more likely to report that they would have something to say (as opposed to students from other subjects). However, the research is not looking at the student experience of expressing political views but again at outcomes. Hildreth (2006) does look at the experience of students expressing political views in the context of 'coaching' young people. One question asked is "what was it like to be you in class?" with a possible probe in this hermeneutic-phenomenologically based qualitative research of "how did you experience yourself in a class that explicitly was trying to be democratic?" (p.15). They find evidence of reflection on self-development in terms of their individual selves as politically active, and of the expressing of political views as being part of the learning process, but the researcher does not ask, nor is any comment offered, about the experience of expressing political views in the classroom.

Niven (2011) conducted research into a first year political science module, looking at the epistemological basis for knowledge. He uses the analogy of crops which need nurturing in order to facilitate knowledge construction. He discovers that students don't find knowledge interesting per se, but will be more likely to if links can be made with their cultural heritage. He suggests that students don't separate the study of Politics from political activism and that there is for his students (in South Africa) a political struggle to learn. His research is situated in geographical and cultural terms, and given this, perhaps the role of activism in learning is more evident. Another indication of the situational nature of the classroom is where Gheorghita (2005) uses the memory of the 'communist terror' for the difficulty which some Romanian students have in expressing their views in class. She points out that her students are surprised to be asked for their opinion, and find accepting criticism difficult. She suggests that the role of the teacher is to provide an environment where "the golden pathway of expressing ideas is wide open" (p. 38).

This responsibility for helping students to develop a quality of openness to new ideas is seen as lying with academics in their roles as teachers (Colby et al, 2007). Gershtenson, Rainey and Rainey (2010) look at students engaged in a re-enactment of a Citizens' Assembly. They identify a tendency towards "extremization" and a decrease in consensus building during the exercise both in terms of ideology and partisanship. The authors suggest that this might be the result of deliberation and could be positive in that students are able to voice opinions and to appreciate that consensus is not always possible. While they are not looking at the experience of students engaged in this role-playing exercise but at outcomes, it is not hard to imagine that some students with more moderate views might feel discomfited by the views being presented and unwilling or unable to contradict them. Coffey, Miller and Feuerstein (2011) look at the outcomes of a class simulation, and find that pedagogical goals have been met, and that the experience is made more real for the students. Sponenberg (2012) finds that students feel less anxiety when writing in class about non-political and therefore less controversial matters, as they are worried they might 'say the wrong thing'. (p.546).

Gavrilis and El-Ghobashy (2009) explore the classroom experiences of students in an attempt to enable 'comparative thinking'. They accept that disagreement leads to 'lively debate' but they gauge this from outcomes linked to comparative thinking and not the student experience, though they write of harnessing students' 'curiosity' about the world. Gormley-Heenan and McCartan, (2009) assess the student experience in the context of piloting an audience response system as a teaching and learning method. They find greater levels of participation in class stemming from, among other findings, students being able to gauge where their views fit with those of others, and able to express their views privately, specifically "without fear of being singled out because their views differed from the majority" (p.10). Damron and Mott (2005) also identify the value of classroom voting technology in encouraging student engagement because "speaking up in class exposes students' views to public scrutiny and evaluation" (p.5). Hamann, Pollock and Wilson (2009) conduct a study into classroom discussions online, looking at whether studies on face to face interaction transfer to the online environment. They point out that some students "are quiet and hesitate to participate" in the real classroom (p.1). The study does not include the student experience, though this might be inferred from, for example, the nature and quantity of postings. This suggests that the public space of the classroom makes the expressing of political views harder for students than it might be in the private sphere, or conducted anonymously through methods such as audience response. Changes to the HE classroom resulting from information technology will likely affect the student experience. Barber, Donnelly and Rizvi

(2013) indicate that the new online delivery of programmes will challenge the traditional classroom within a decade. Boyle (1999) suggests that distance learning, designed with a view to democratic participation and civic engagement, could create a virtual polis, thereby linking the subject area with the wider political sphere. Inevitably the experience of students expressing their political views to academics or to peers in a virtual context would also change as would the role of academics.

There is some indication of the role which the academic plays in facilitating the context for the student expressing political views through pedagogical means. Omelicheva's (2007) study of the merits of academic debate in the classroom identifies the potential for "raised voices and personal attacks" and to promote conflict among those of different views. Her research looks at the student experience by analysing students' reflections on the debates. She advises that students "be instructed to defend their position in non-aggressive and non-humiliating ways" (p.12). Her findings suggest that the debate should be carefully managed by academics in order to encourage critical thinking and minimise any negative student experience. The indication is that the debating format can encourage students to reassess their own opinions and her conclusion is that properly planned and managed debates are to be encouraged. Taylor (www.academicintegrity.org), a Politics academic, asks students to respect other students by "not making fun of them or their ideas". One might assume that he has experienced concerning student to student behaviour in order to present the countermand. Marks (2008) seeks evidence from other disciplines such as sociology, economics and psychology to support his claim that the personal opinions of students are best left out of teaching and learning in Politics. His main argument relates to the pedagogical advantages of this, but he notes that "classroom discussions that draw on students' political preferences can alienate those members of the class who feel threatened by majority views" (p.15).

Some studies touch on the role of the academic in the student ability to express political views in the classroom by looking at their attempts to encourage the expressing of political views among students. Frueh, Blaney, Dunne, Gough, Leonard and Sharoni (2008) seek to find common ground among academics with very different approaches to teaching, but who share a wish to enable students to think, speak and act in the world of Politics. Yet they report their experience of students rather than the student experience suggesting that "students need to trust that we will maintain an atmosphere ... free of personal attacks" (p.462). This provides an indication of the academic role as facilitator, ensuring a safe context for students. Garcia (2005)

emphasises the need to respect different student views, in an atmosphere of co-operation and mutual respect. She says that “all views are acceptable as long as they can be justified” (p 134) and in her practice attempts to refrain from presenting her own as correct in the non-ideological curriculum mode of Barnett (1997). Hess (2004) offers some insight into the issues facing the Politics academic from the perspective of the school teacher of Politics. Her study identifies four ways in which the teaching of controversial issues is managed, through denial, privilege, avoidance and balance. She concludes that it would be understandable if teachers were to avoid controversy and consider whether “this form of education is worth the trouble” (p.4). The study concludes that the outcomes mean it is. Hess. (2009) later argues for the inclusion of controversial issues, defined as issues of public policy which cause considerable disagreement, in the curriculum to create “an atmosphere of intellectual and political freedom” (p.6). She also argues that this engenders political tolerance. Neither study is conducted in HE though the findings offer an insight which may be relevant.

5.11 Reflection on the Literature Review

The term ‘literature’ has been used rather than ‘practice’ literature, as all sources have been selected as relevant to practice. The guideline for the selection of sources is literature which informs the enquiry into the experience which Politics students have of expressing their political views. The review of the literature is intended to frame or structure the problem, to identify any previous research which informs the enquiry or offers signposts to the way forward, and provide possible interpretations of the problem in order to enable the development of practice guidance based on existing research. The review of the literature is also intended to enable the identification of research questions which come out of this interrogation of the literature (Bryman and Bell, 2011) and to meet the criteria for Cousins’ systematic empirical inquiry into meaning, understanding and insight (2009). The review of the literature was not finalised until the thesis was complete as it is an organic system that grows and changes as the study develops (Levy and Ellis, 2006). Boeije emphasises that research needs to be cyclical, suggesting that “if you have gained new insights, add them to the proposal and adjust the parts that are affected by the change” (2010, p.41).

Tranfield, Denyer and Smart (2003) have argued for greater methodological rigour in reviewing existing research and questioned traditional ‘narrative’ reviews suggesting that they can lack thoroughness. Indeed, they suggest that the systemic approach has introduced what they see as more objectivity and greater methodological rigour. Nevertheless, given that Hart (1998) indicates

that many different methods can be used in any way which seems appropriate to the analysis and on the basis that this research is inductive, the inductive approach posited by Klopper, Lubbe and Rugbeer (2008) has been adopted with the resulting matrix (Appendix One) forming the rationale behind the selection of sources. Klopper, Lubbe and Rugbeer argue that such a matrix can be used as scaffolding at the beginning of the research and indicate that it can be ordered in a number of ways. For the purposes of this research, the matrix has been arranged into key themes which have subsequently become the sub-headings of the literature review. This does not mean that the literature review can escape possible criticisms of potential bias and lack of transparency of reproducibility (Booth, Papaioannou and Sutton, 2012). Nevertheless this review of the literature does claim to synthesise and evaluate accumulated knowledge related to expressing political views by Politics students, highlighting different perspectives and seeking areas in need of investigation (McDonald, 2011).

It has been obvious from the review of the literature that no single source has been found to directly address the research aim of this study though many have shed light on issues of relevance to the expressing of Politics students' political views. As the aim of this thesis is to develop practice guidance for Politics academics, sources relating to the role which the academic has in the student expressing of political views have been useful. A number of sources were found which explore whether or not the Politics academic should express their political views, but little in relation to whether or not Politics students should do so. What is absent in the literature is material written from the Politics students' perspective as opposed to sources written about students from the perspective of the academic. Even where research has been constructed with a view to exploring the Politics student experience of expressing political views, the emphasis is on what the academic thinks the student experience is or should be. It is also problematic comparing data which is gathered in various ways with different aims, in different contexts. The lack of sources explicitly looking at the student experience of expressing political views indicates that this might be a sensitive area for research. Beaumont, Colby, Ehrlich and Torney-Purta (2006) suggest that "political bias has emerged as a sensitive topic on many campuses..." (p.265). The literature review has raised a number of possibilities related to the expressing of political views which will need further exploration. Their expression is supported by the Benchmark (2015) and by the sources highlighting the importance of political engagement both for the Politics undergraduate and the Politics graduate. It has been established that academic power and role are important elements of the student experience. The suggestion has been made that there may be a number of reasons for a Politics student to want to know an academic's political views. The student may

perceive that they will be favoured if their political views align with those of the academic which might lead to a reluctance to express views at odds with those of the academic. While the sources provide a range of perspectives on what the Politics student experience might be of expressing their political views and of potential influences on that experience, it is clear that an analysis of the literature alone will not enable the addressing of the research aim which seeks to develop practice guidance based on the student experience. This indicates that undertaking empirical research which captures the experience is a crucial contribution to determining that experience and once that is known, what the implications are for informing wider academic practice. French and Raven (1959) recommend that such empirical research is undertaken in order to test their preliminary theoretical distinctions about types of power. It is anticipated that capturing descriptions of the student experience in the form of qualitative data will identify further issues which need investigation and which have not been found in the sources. The literature indicates that the empirical research needs to critically engage with the possible motivations behind students expressing their political views and wishing to know an academic's political views. It will also be important to seek the academic perspective on any findings drawn from empirical research into the student experience. The literature is limited to academics observing the student experience. Being able to comment on new empirical data in order to frame the practice guidance will mean that the outcome will have increased credibility among practitioners.

6. Empirical Research

6.1 Research Orientation

This single case study set out to identify implications for the practice of Politics academics drawn from the experience which Politics students have of expressing their political views. There was therefore an initial requirement to find out from Politics students what their experience was. Gaining data relating to their experience suggested an epistemological approach supporting an interpretive analysis of qualitative empirical data. Phenomenography was identified as being appropriate in these circumstances. The selection of method was therefore determined by the findings from the on-going research (Cousins 2009). Svensson (1997) suggests that the explorative and interpretive character of the data collection and analysis of phenomenography is in direct contrast to the quantitative methodological tradition. According to him, phenomenography is an empirical research tradition, not dependent on any underlying philosophical assumptions. Prosser and Trigwell (1999) describe the epistemological approach of phenomenography as ‘constitutionalism’ (p.12) where meaning is constituted through an internal relationship between the individual and the world, and which assumes interdependency between individual and experience. Marton and Booth (1997) suggest that phenomenography is not a method but rather “a way of - an approach to - identifying, formulating and tackling certain sorts of research questions” (p.111) and a research approach “with a strong educational interest.” (p.135). Fazey and Marton (2002) write that “instead of describing an educational environment and the person’s mind separately, we are describing this environment as experienced by the learner” (p. 15). The aim of the qualitative empirical research is for the participants to describe expressing political views as they experience it and phenomenography is appropriate given its origins in the student experience of learning (Ashworth and Lucas, 2000) and the requirement for engagement in the student’s world. Core to the inductive and interpretive approach taken by the research is the active engagement of participants, resulting in a collaborative construction of practice knowledge, and the concept of ‘practice’ being inclusive of stakeholders.

It was anticipated that identifying students willing to talk openly about the subject might be problematic. Phenomenography offers the ability to work with a range of sample sizes. While a number of large phenomenographic studies have been carried out, there is also evidence of the value of smaller sample studies. Bowden and Walsh (2000) write of smaller samples being more pragmatic than larger. Smith, Gair, McGee, Valdez and Kirk (nd) suggest that while they are aware that some samples may be too small to make generalizable claims about intervention, they indicate

that for a more circumscribed phenomenon such as the one they were looking into, a smaller sample size is adequate. Examples of such exploratory studies include Joosa and Berhelsen (2006) and Lamas, Levy and Paraskakis (2008). The literature therefore supports an exploratory approach though it is acknowledged that the ability to identify meaning, to analyse categories of description, find a structure for them, and to clarify an outcome space (Richardson, 1999) is limited with fewer interviews. However even with a smaller sample there can be sufficient data to focus on the similarities and differences in the way the phenomenon appears to participants (Marton and Booth, 1997). The methodological literature suggests that there are different ways of approaching the construction of a phenomenographic study as it is a “discovery procedure which can be justified in terms of results but not in terms of any specific method” (Marton and Saljo, 1997, p.43). Indeed Marton and Saljo (1997) claim there is no uniform technique and Akerlind (2005) writes of accepted variation in the practice of phenomenography. Entwistle (1997) suggests a lack of precision in practice guidance for phenomenography, though offering a way to useful insights into teaching and learning if not theoretical purity. This indicates some scope for flexibility in its application though the literature on phenomenography indicates that interviews are the preferred method of gathering such data.

In order to fulfil the practice requirement of the research, it was important to gain input from practitioners. A further stage of qualitative research was conducted once the empirical research with students had been completed and analysed. This was in order to ensure that the practice guidance was informed by practitioners and not solely driven by the student experience as well as being fit for purpose. Therefore the initial findings and practice guidance were presented to a group of academics teaching Politics within the same Department as the student participants from the original empirical research. The potential and actual size of the group was limited by the number of academic staff in the Department teaching Politics. Finally, a research seminar was delivered to a wider range of colleagues in the same Department in order to seek further practitioner feedback.

6.2 Research Design

While Politics students on the University of Chester cohorts had been kept abreast of the developing research from its inception, the fieldwork only began once the need for empirical research had been legitimated through its absence in the literature. Qualitative research with Politics students was indicated from the inductive nature of the study and because it was the experience of students which would inform practice. Pilot interviews were conducted in July

2012 asking about the students' experience of expressing political views in the Politics HE teaching and learning context in an open-ended manner as follows: *Can you describe your experience of expressing political views in the Politics classroom at University?* The pilot interviews confirmed that this question was understood by the respondents. However, the pilot interviews identified the need to ask for examples in support of the description of experience and if the respondent failed to elaborate, to introduce prompts. These additional prompts were effective in the subsequent interviews; in some cases the respondent spoke with few prompts and in others there was a requirement to support the interaction through frequent prompting.

Once the study was at the fieldwork stage, nine Politics students (not including the pilot interview respondents) responded to a request sent to all cohorts for volunteers as research subjects. In order to respect respondent anonymity, it has not made clear in the analysis from which of the three years of Politics cohorts the participants come. This is because the cohorts are relatively small (twenty or so in the final year for example) and the participants might therefore be identifiable by their comments. Which cohort they come from might be significant. Final year students' responses might differ from those of first year students, as students will have developed various ways of dealing with such issues. The difference between a Level 4 and a Level 6 student might be significant. Therefore further research might seek to apply an alternative approach to selecting participants in order to compare across cohorts. The participants were self-selecting and they may have had a number of reasons for volunteering. The possibility of the researcher and the participants finding a common area of concern means that the students' self-identification might be relevant to interpreting any findings. Students who do not share the concerns implicit in the research aim might not have volunteered. Future research could test these assumptions. The requirement for the researcher to bracket their existing ideas in the interviews, as required in phenomenographic research, was not problematic given that the review of the literature had not provided guidance on the student experience. Politics academics participating in the research were also self-selecting, and the reasons for their doing so may be varied. Similarly, those academics attending the research seminar were self-selecting, though in this case the criterion was not solely Politics academics as this was one of a research seminar series and therefore interdisciplinary within the wider social sciences. That said all but one taught Politics students.

6.3 Data Collection and Data Analysis

Of the nine students who volunteered, eight were interviewed. The ninth failed to get back in touch until all the interviews had been completed and the data analysed, and it was felt therefore that the interview should not be carried out. The interviews were conducted over several weeks in late August and September 2012. The interviews were recorded using a data recorder, and the recordings saved. Each interview lasted up to an hour. During the analysis of the transcripts I was aware of the importance of having been present at the interview in order to interpret the results and put comments into context. I was also conscious of the relationship I had with the students. They made it clear that the fact that we could talk about the issues was evidence of the trust built within the cohort and with academics of whom I was one. I listened to the recording of each interview several times, in addition to being present at the actual interview, and read the transcripts many times over. The transcriptions were undertaken for me. I took this decision as I believed that having conducted the interviews and having replayed them meant that I could pick up on any nuances. However I had to correct the mistakes made by the transcriber in interpreting political terminology.

Phenomenography requires the ordering of the findings into ‘categories of description, commonalities and variations’. Marton and Saljo (1997) was a source for guidance on the analysis, and specifically on finding the qualitative variations in experience. The accepted procedure in a phenomenographic data analysis is to use an iterative process to investigate the relation between meaning and structure. Lamas and Paraskakis (2008, p.219) use this approach, which they acknowledge to be based on that of others. Joosa and Berthelsen (2006) indicate that in relating the experience of the individual students to each other’s I needn’t be too restricted in presenting the collective experience. In order to undertake the analysis I underwent training on NVivo and therefore could have used it for the analysis of the transcripts but I decided against it as I am more at ease with the manual method which involves creating themes out of initial readings, coding them, and organising the data under these codings. There was also the issue of the time it would take to become familiar with NVivo. Interpreting the data was an iterative process involving numerous large flip-chart paper pages, and creating a number of models from which to enable linkages between the themes. Although it was time consuming to ensure that all comments were captured and assigned to an appropriate category, the broad themes emerged early on, and little changed from the first draft. There was a remarkable commonality among the responses and as a result the coding process in this research was able

inductively to identify three themes, or categories of description, within which commonality and variations can be arranged. The analysis of the findings is therefore grouped around three categories which form the outcome space. Phenomenography's outcome space can (but need not) be a diagrammatic representation of the relationships between these categories (McCosker, Barnard and Gerber, 2004). Alsop and Tompsett (2006) indicate that outcome space suffers from procedural and methodological limitations in that it cannot deliver objectivity. Yet the empirical qualitative research in this DProf does not make any claims to objectivity and it is argued that on balance phenomenography provides a useful means of uncovering the type of data required for this study.

The findings from the empirical research were subsequently presented to some Politics academics. The rationale for conducting further research with Politics academics was to consider the perspective of those academics in the development of the practice guidance. Otherwise, student preference might be dictating academic practice. In addition, student preference might ignore issues which academics would wish to be considered. As a result, several research groups were held with, in total, ten Politics academics over the period from mid-December 2014 to mid-January 2015. The main findings and the initial practice guidance from the original empirical research were disseminated, and there was an opportunity for questions and answers. Participants were provided with consent and information and participation forms, and feedback sheets were handed out at the end of the session, and emailed so that they could be completed anonymously. The feedback sheets were structured according to the initial findings and practice guidance from the student research. The completed sheets could then be sealed in a pre-addressed envelope and dropped in a box which was left in the Department for this purpose. Participants could also put them into the internal mail. Six anonymous feedback sheets were returned. Finally a Departmental research seminar, one of a seminar series, was conducted in late January 2015 in front of eight colleagues as part of the dissemination of the research and the search for further input.

6.4 Ethical Issues

My role as researcher of my own practice is pivotal. Clark and Kirkham (2009) conclude that in all cases, the researcher's interpretations and assumptions inform and construct perceptions of reality. Their values and experiences will from the outset influence the choice of research framework, given that the "ideological narrative is implicitly omnipresent...." (Silberan- Keller,

2004). In addition my specific role raises ethical issues in relation to both the student and the practitioner research.

Student participants were encouraged to open up to the researcher in a manner which would not have happened had the specific relationships not been close and trusting. Ethical awareness therefore forms a key component of this research process given the part I play in the construction of meaning (King and Horrocks, 2010). The relationship which I have with student participants can be argued to provide a positive bias to the inquiry through the empathy and trust shared with the participants. At each stage I involved the student participants in planning the research through discussing what I was intending to do and how I would go about it. I adhered to all ethical guidance in relation to student participants, enabled student participants to agree transcriptions and discussed the findings of my analysis with them. I sought on-going negotiated consent as I tried to “understand and gain insights from the collected data” (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2010, p.199). Student participants were informed that they could use this experience in their CV and evidence the development of research skills as collaborative participants. Each student participant received an Information Sheet and Statement of Values (Appendix Four) which required me to self-question and identify my position as researcher (Cousins 2009, p.20). Each student signed a Project Consent Form (Appendix Five). Student participants became involved in the dissemination of the findings long before the formal submission of the thesis, and indeed one participant was overheard at an Open Day talking to a prospective student about their role in the study, and presenting it as a positive aspect of their undergraduate experience.

My role as both colleague and line-manager of the academic participants meant that as with the student qualitative research there were a number of ethical issues to be considered. I adhered to all the ethical expectations of such a project and obtained ethical consent. There was an indication of the trust existing between myself and participants that as many as ten came to the research groups and that six returned feedback sheets. Anonymity was respected throughout, and the academic participants received as had the student participants an Information Sheet and Statement of Values (Appendix Four) and a Project Consent Form (Appendix Five). The interest which academic colleagues showed in the research was encouraging, and they continue on occasion to refer to it.

As well as the ethical considerations relating specifically to the research methods, such as data collection and analysis, there are broader ethical issues linked to the obligations which the researcher has to society, to funders and employer, to colleagues and to the subjects of the research

(www.the-sra.org.uk). The PSA, the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR), and the Higher Education Academy (HEA), to which I belonged at the time the research was undertaken, have similar albeit differing professional and ethical codes of conduct. After consulting a number of ethical guides, the British Educational Research was deemed the most useful for this research. Its overriding remit is for all research to be conducted with an ethic of ‘respect for the person, knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research and academic freedom’ (www.bera.ac.uk). It also avoids being overly prescriptive by highlighting certain essential criteria and leaving others open to reasonable interpretation. The ethical requirements for data collection are listed under the main headings of ‘responsibilities to participants, responsibilities to sponsors of research, responsibilities to the communities of educational researchers and responsibilities to educational professionals, policy-makers and the general public’ (www.bera.ac.uk). There are certain ethical absolutes such as participant consent, anonymity and data storage. However, even these absolutes have been challenged though the implications of the Freedom of Information Act, and therefore I needed to evidence sensitivity and awareness of the complexity of the ethical issues raised. For example, I am conscious of the possible place of power in my research in the interviewer/participant relationship as “coercion results in decreased attraction ... and high resistance; reward power results in increased attraction and low resistance” (French and Raven, 1959, p.165). I embraced the complexities associated with ethical issues as part and parcel of the journey. Being aware of the issues and of our inability to resolve them all, leads to the “sensibility, taste and... rational judgement” which comes with that consciousness and, according to Eisner (1998, p.226) “condemning us to a “significant measure of freedom.” Having an open mind over apparent dictums of how research should be conducted is useful. Foote-Whyte for example finds that many of the academic rules are irrelevant in the field. He writes with an eye “beyond the academic world” (Foote-Whyte, 1993, p.354). I anticipated that reflexivity and constant willingness to question my actions would enable me to develop my ethical understanding during this process.

My knowledge of the subject area has created an empathy with the terrain of the research and therefore some familiarity with the data. The student participants were co-owners of the process. Being present at the student interviews meant that I could detect the narrative running under the actual words spoken, picking up on intonation and non-verbal language. I was also aware of the need to evidence empathy, for example in ensuring that any emotion from the interview was recognised in the transcript. The researcher was key to accessing the student participants and to encouraging them to talk about their experience of expressing their political views. This brings a

bias to the findings which can be legitimate as it provides a trusting relationship as part of which the student participants feel safe. I therefore play a binary role both as an objective researcher and also as part of the research. I felt that this justified my decision not to bring in a third party to conduct the interviews with students though there is an argument that doing so might have led to additional or at least different data. The introduction of an unknown third party could have affected the willingness of the student participants to take part in the research and might not have led to them opening up as they did in the interviews. The result is that at no time during the process or since have I been aware of any of the student participants having concerns over the outcome of their involvement. Listening to Politics students talk about their experience of expressing their political views is what differentiates this study from other relevant research identified in the practice review. I argue this would not have been feasible without my 'insider' status. Nevertheless, in order to reduce my influence, I considered in the early planning stages using quantitative methods to remove some of the bias I might bring. However, qualitative data was indicated by the research aim and objectives. In addition, the Politics cohorts are relatively small and therefore the scope for useful statistical information limited. It would have been at odds with the research approach of listening to the student experience and of arguing that my role is pivotal to the research methodology. Furthermore, quantitative research would not have provided such rich experiential data. Nevertheless, quantitative research may prove useful as part of a further research project exploring the initial findings.

This 'insider' status was put to a further test when I undertook follow-up research seeking feedback from academic practitioners. Ethical approval had already been given for this, and as appropriate, consent and participation forms were provided. Nevertheless, this was a Head of Department seeking input from colleagues and this may have influenced the findings, though in which way cannot be known. The research seminar which I conducted to disseminate the findings similarly presented a dichotomy. The research had been undertaken with students and subsequently with staff from the same Department and was now being communicated back to some of the same staff by a colleague. I have no reason to think that at any point any ethical guidelines were breached, but am aware of the implications of these ethical issues and that they may well affect the findings. Indeed, a member of the audience at the research seminar did query my role as Head of Department seeming to impart implications for practice, and wondering whether these were in fact directives though seemed reassured by my response. I feel that the ethical issues have been addressed transparently. While my role might have compromised the findings, the extent of this cannot be known, nor can any positive impact of my relationship with

the participants be measured. Clearly student or academic participants may have been telling me what they wanted me to hear (or thought I wanted to hear). Nevertheless, the findings have uncovered some data not apparent in the sources, and therefore indicating that it has been a worthwhile exercise. I could have brought in a third party to conduct the student interviews or academic discussion groups who did not know the participants. That this might have led to different data does not invalidate the findings as long as they are seen as exploratory and no claims made beyond this.

6.5 Limitations

There are a number of possible limitations to the validity of the research. Clearly the findings cannot be universalised and are from a single case study. The research was conducted within one Department in one university setting in which the researcher was one of the academics and indeed towards the end of the research project, Head of Department. The level of the cohorts from which the student participants were selected could not be declared on the basis of anonymity due to their size and the related potential for responses to be recognised. Student and academic participants were self-selecting and the size of the samples might raise some concerns, though the literature supports it. The research only looks at Politics students. It is possible that interviewing students from other subject areas from the University of Chester, or Politics students or students from other subject areas from other institutions might lead to different findings. The academics involved in the research were again from the same Department of the same University. These academics were self-selecting, and their involvement (or not) might have been related to my role as Head of Department. Conducting research among academics from other Departments in the University of Chester or from other institutions might throw further light on the findings. The research is interpretive, and a different interpretation of the findings could be made. Had quantitative research been undertaken among students and/or academics in the same Department or other Departments, in the same institution or others, the findings would have been different. It is an irony of this research that I was investigating both academic and student power while also needing to consider the ethical implications for power of my role in relation to students and colleague participants. I can't know what if any limitations my role puts on my findings. In addition, the manner in which the research problem is defined, the selection of literature sources and the identification of research method, all inform the research findings. These limitations indicate that a number of follow-up research projects need to be undertaken in order to explore the findings. However, given that there are findings which academic colleagues have confirmed

are both interesting and potentially important, it may be that I have unearthed some issues which might not have been found using alternative approaches. Despite these limitations, the scope of this exploratory study has been ambitious and has led to the gathering of data from both students and academics which will inform wider academic practice.

6.6 Conclusion

The research methodology is firmly embedded in a qualitative approach, with phenomenography selected for the main qualitative investigation once it became clear that there were no existing sources indicating the Politics student experience of expressing their political views and therefore able to inform practice guidance. The role of the researcher is pivotal to the methodological approach, choice of method, construction of the research and analysis of the findings. Ethical issues were addressed and managed throughout the research and limitations as well as strengths are acknowledged. Academic input has been sought in relation to the research findings and related practice guidance developed from the student empirical research and their feedback incorporated into the practice guidance.

7. The Politics Student Experience

7.1 Introduction

Once the transcripts from the Politics student interviews had been finalised, an inductive coding process was undertaken of working with the data to provide a coherent narrative of the participants' stories (Silverman, 2009). What became evident from this coding analysis was the consistency in responses, and the similarities in the way that participants described their experience. This emphasis on commonality over variation suggests that the findings will be reliable in terms of guidance for future research. Marton and Booth (1997) indicate that a key element of the phenomenographic approach is this relationship with commonalities and variations. The coding analysis involved drawing themes from the data inductively, and uncovered three themes into which the data could be categorised and analysed. The resulting three themes, or categories of description according to phenomenography (Marton, 1981) are distinct but overlapping: *'Key issues Identified by Students in the Expressing of Political Views'*, *'Power Relationships Between Academics and Students in the Expressing of Political Views'* and *'Variables to Optimise the Expressing of Political Views'*. There are a number of sub-themes beneath each overarching theme which further organise the data. The categories of description therefore depict the world as perceived by the Politics student participants and according to Marton (1981) denote forms of thought brought together to depict the perceived world. While these findings are only exploratory, Soon and Barnard (2001) suggest they can offer an empirical map of the qualitatively different ways of understanding phenomena and that they can be considered as research findings.

7.2 Category of Description One - Key issues Identified by Students in the Expressing of Political Views and Summary of themes of commonality and variation

- **Relationship of the wider context to the expressing of Political Views.**

It is not possible to ascertain the extent of the influence of the wider context on the expressing of political views. Participants indicate, as might be expected from Politics students, that current affairs affect their political in-class discussions and the expressing of their political views.

“I remember last year whenever something big used to happen in world events like when Gaddafi fell for example, we all used to talk about it for a couple of days and then we’d throw our own political views on it.” (D)

Indeed, it would seem absurd to suggest that Politics students might not be engaged with issues of relevance to the wider world. This link with the wider context might also be relevant to students interested in political matters who might be taking a different subject or to students whose discipline might have a link to political matters. However, the fact that the wider context might not be central to the subject being studied (or to varying degrees less central) would suggest that the experience of students from other disciplines of expressing their political views might be different from that of the Politics student. It seems likely that political views might matter less, both to students and to academics from other disciplines. The context has a bearing when the research looks at political socialisation as the contextual experiences of students can be seen to impact on the development of their political ideas.

- **Differentiation between their Political Views and those which they feel able to express**

Participants see a difference between political views which are expressed and might not be the student’s actual views, and their actual political views.

“I think there’s a certain accepted area of political views about what you say about certain issues. At the same time, your personal views you know, they might differ.” (C)

“I think even people who are quite outgoing in some sense might, depending on the nature of the debate, the argument, would be a bit wary in what they say, you know, keep some of their privately-held beliefs private.” (E)

This same differentiation between public and private views is seen when the participants describe the academic’s political views as they indicate that they cannot know the academic’s real views. This will be significant if the assumption that political views are real leads to others acting in a particular way. For example, students might mirror what they understand to be an academic’s views. Presenting views which are not their own may provide evidence of student resilience and pragmatism, where they have found a way of expressing political views but not their actual views. It also means that the term

‘political views’ used in the research aim needs clarification and perhaps separating out into actual views and those which are expressed. This differentiation means that both academics and students may have the difficulty of not knowing what are and are not a student’s own political views. There is no obvious way of ever knowing this. It is not clear that it matters, but it will if the behaviour of others depends on it. It might also be assumed that if students are admitting to expressing views which are not their own, the same might apply to the academic who could also be keeping their actual views hidden.

▪ **Political Socialisation**

Participants consider their political views to be in development and that expressing political views is a part of the journey towards clarification of their political position.

“But there’s the ideal that, especially among students, I think a youthful thing that there are people who are basically sort of ideologically sort of centre left, as an ideal.” (A)

Therefore the differentiation between actual and expressed political views might not be irrelevant. The students might not be certain what their actual political views are, whether expressed or not. For example, participants suggest that they have difficulty expressing their political views and don’t know where they stand at the moment:

“I don’t necessarily know because I’m not entirely sure what it is most of the time” (F)

Participants indicate that the experience of expressing political views, whether their own views or not, is a healthy part of finding out what their views are, and of being a Politics student. This suggests that not being able to express political views (real or not) might be problematic. Indeed, listening to different political views can encourage this development, and that might indicate teaching and learning methods which will support this, such as mock hustings and debates.

“And I think because I don’t really know where I stand at the moment. So it helps me gauge where I do stand you know, both ideologically and politically.” (B)

“It’s just that, for one thing it’s easier to listen if someone else’s have got a wildly different viewpoint. You might learn something. You might change your mind.” (D)

Participants mention that a student's previous experience would influence the political views they choose to express in the classroom and this is an indication of the role of the context on the classroom.

"I certainly think the experiences that people had and what they've done has a massive effect on what is expressed." (F)

"So it's down to everybody's particular background, the way they come out with stuff in class" (D)

- **Expressing Political Views as a skill**

Participants see the expressing of political views as essential to being a Politics student. It is not clear whether it matters if the views are the student's own or not (if that could be known) but rather the act of arguing which is seen as key. Whether it is actually the student's or the academic's view would be irrelevant to the skill developed if it were dependent on the nature of arguing, not what the argument was.

It is suggested that the expressing of political views as the ability to debate and to articulate is important to all degree subjects and all potential careers. This raises the question of the applicability of these findings across other disciplines. Some students see the role and purpose of their HE education as related to employability, and recognise the part played in this of arguing political views.

"I think even if you weren't doing Politics and you're going to get any job, you're going to have to learn to be able to just discuss and debate because no matter what job you're doing, you're going to have to have an ability to speak, you know, in some form or another" (E)

"If you don't have the ability to express your opinion in a given subject, you're not going to do very well in that subject" (G).

In a different subject area, political views might be marginal. Nevertheless, it is accepted that it cannot be determined whether the findings apply in other subject areas. It is also not clear what constitutes a political view and whether an opinion counts as a view. For a student of Politics, it could be suggested that the political views of Politics students and Politics academics are integral to a subject-related discussion, which they might not be

in a different subject. There is a perceived link between being a Politics student and being able (or willing) to express political views though not necessarily one's own:

"If you're not willing to debate a point and put a point forward, then there's not really much that you can be involved in, in Politics." (C)

"The stereotype I guess of the Politics student is to become an MP... and for those people being able to express political opinion in quite a strong way is clearly a useful skill." (F)

If this can be evidenced, it might indicate that Politics students not expressing their political views could be disadvantaged. Some Politics students suggest they have to use these skills to defend studying Politics:

"From the outset, I think a Politics student has to argue with other people that Politics is interesting." (C)

Expressing political views could be seen as a form of active engagement with the degree programme. It might also be that those expressing views had actually turned up to class, and that therefore the skills gained are linked to this rather than the expressing of views per se.

"And for those people (political students) being able to express a political opinion in quite a strong way is clearly a useful skill" (F)

However this is tempered by the suggestion that this should not be an expectation:

"They shouldn't be forced into having to speak about it, it's their political belief and if they don't feel comfortable sharing it, they don't have to" (G)

The indication that teaching and learning methods such as debates to encourage all views to be expressed should be encouraged needs to be informed by the potential for some students to find this difficult and therefore for the academic facilitator to be mindful of this.

- **Perceived Appropriateness of Political Views**

Participants agree that it might not be appropriate to say certain things in the classroom. This is in part to do with poorly argued views:

“To make such a really forward argument that’s probably based on no evidence at all would probably be inappropriate. (C)

The implication is that if the argument is good enough, it will survive on its own merit without necessarily being related to an owned opinion. Indeed, the well-argued public view might be preferable to an ill-thought through private one:

“An intellectual political view is something that you’ve summed up all the points, summed up all the arguments, and said, “This is the sensible argument.” Whereas if you were to dig deep down and say, “This is what I really feel,” you end up coming up with an argument that might not be appropriate and it might not be in any way right to express it in that arena”. (C)

However, participants infer other reasons for views not being perceived as appropriate, such as a classroom view of what should be expressed:

“There is a line and we should all understand where the line is” (G)

“I think some people might not be happy because the class as a whole will have a tendency to, towards what's acceptable to say and what's not politically.” (F)

“I think at times as though people will sometimes avoid fully expressing their views to go along, you know, especially if the majority of the class is a very clearly, you know, united in one belief”(E)

There some evidence of regret that not all views will be expressed

“It would be better if we could talk about it” [unspoken views] (A)

Other views seem to be perceived as unacceptable, and discounted:

“And they’ll just say you’re mad.”(A)

“And the views that come out from some people that you might say “how can you possibly think that?” (C)

The expression of the views is perhaps not the only issue; it can be assumed that these views are seen as unacceptable to hold. Hitler is mentioned as an example of the challenge set by the discussion of political ideas given the sensitivity of some issues. Supporting Hitler’s economic policies for example would be a view which one student felt ought to be able to be voiced, regardless of the obvious risk of doing so, and goes on to say:

“I think that’s [Hitler] a perfect example of a sort of topic that has come up and does come up where there is always that issue where people are going to be a bit wary expressing their private views, you know, publicly, because it’s such a sensitive subject.” (E)

One example is the immigration debate and the difficulty of putting forward arguments in favour of immigration control without being accused of being racist:

“I’ve certainly been called a racist before in a statement I’ve made in a lecture which is not very nice.” (H)

It would appear that some views are capable of causing offence to others and being perceived as discriminatory, whether or not that is the intention.

The research indicates that certain subjects might be perceived as inappropriate for the Politics classroom. Some participants suggest that political opinions on the tuition fees and on benefit cuts would be especially difficult to express if the argument is not in opposition to them.

“Students would be wary of putting forward arguments in support of higher tuition fees ... so would lecturers” (E)

“Because of the general view that it is bad ... but I’m saying that they’re necessary, you know ... it’s the majority of people never quite mention that. They always just, oh, it’s just evil.” (A)

There was also a view that students themselves might self-censor through judging the appropriateness of their views:

“There will be certain students who will be less confident with what they believe has value and so, less able to express it. Not because it has less value, just they believe it might” (F)

There is an indication that an effective argument can reduce the risk of their views being perceived as unacceptable and this would link to the idea of expressing views being a skill:

“If you can find the argument that, that works, then, that’s a great step in the right direction.” (A)

“But again, as long as you have arguments to back it up, people will accept what you say.” (D)

▪ **Perceived Inability to express Political Views**

Participants claim that they only present their personal views if they feel safe that most of the time their declared political views are to support an argument and not necessarily their own views, and that others would not know their actual views unless they disclosed them.

“It’s just that when we get too tetchy about things, we get to, ‘Oh, you can’t say that.’ And you’re [the student] saying, ‘No, you can say that’. You have the right to say that.” (A)

A differentiation is made between acceptability in the classroom and outside:

“... because people are more comfortable and willing to do so than they would outside the classroom environment and so on, where they might feel that their views, you know, be unsuitable, and therefore makes them feel uncomfortable, you know, in expressing them.” (E)

The research finds signs of political views which are perceived to be difficult to express. One participant uses the word ‘hidden’ about their unspoken views.

“Yeah, they're hidden. There have been some views which have surfaced occasionally which are particularly unpleasant to my mind but they're also very common. They're not ... none of these hidden views are anything that you won't find in the Daily Mail quite regularly.” (F)

Another participant intimates another student's views:

“I don't know whether you know, but we have a few active conservatives in the group... You can tell some people who kind of lean that way in a personal light.” (D)

One participant believes that as others in the cohort have stereotyped them as belonging to a particular political party, it doesn't matter whether they are or not, as their points are dismissed regardless of their validity. This participant mentions being labelled as 'right-wing militia', with their arguments being seen as unimportant, though they claim that the assertions are unjustified and that they are unfairly identified

“I know, in my experience, maybe, people have always said, ‘Oh, you're a Tory.’ ... I sort of get labelled in that sense.” (C)

This seems to indicate that some students do experience an issue in expressing their views in the classroom:

“I just want people to stop making jokes.” (A)

The word labelled is used by several participants to describe their experience in the classroom. Labelling can be linked to perceived party allegiance. One participant suggests that the negative scandals in the media in particular influence the political debate:

“I think it is probably easier to joke about the Tories because they are ... because of the whole Oxford and Eton stuff.” (A)

It seems from these responses that a particular student grouping, those believed to be linked to the Conservative Party, find themselves outside the perceived acceptable political view. The point is made that some political activities are criticised in discussion if they are enacted by the Coalition government when the same activity undertaken by Labour was not:

“People would criticise the current government for doing stuff that Labour did and you say, well, Labour did the same thing” (A)

Participants can see themselves as having their ideas written off from the outset. These participants believe that regardless of the validity of their argued case, it will be ignored, and therefore they will not express it:

“But the majority of times, I do notice that most ... that I do feel like my best option is probably to say as little as possible, which doesn't suit what I'm like though.” (A)

“But I think some people do get a bit anxious about, possibly, putting them forward. The reasons behind it, I think, maybe it's because they think that people possibly judge them for that” (C)

The inability to express views seems to be a perception of some participants but not others, possibly as they have not experienced it:

“But there's never been any problem with expressing your viewpoint” (D)

“You're allowed to express whatever political opinion you have as long as you're willing for it to be debated because everyone in our classroom here is going to challenge you on whatever you say.” (G)

There is an indication that the perception of another's views or of what is appropriate to be expressed, depends on your own views. This would link to the suggestion that views can cause offence to some and not to others. Similarly, participants see the political leaning of the cohort differently.

“Centre-left [is the] safe place to sit.” (C)

Whereas another in the same cohort has had a different experience:

“I think as a representative sample of the rest of UK, we are further to the right, than everybody else.” (D)

This indicates the situational nature of political views and of the perception of those views.

7.3. Category of Description Two - Power Relationships between Academics and Students in the Expressing of Political Views and Summary of themes of commonality and variation

▪ Declaring Academic Political Views

Participants raised the issue of an academic's political views in the context of their own expression of their views. Some participants suggest that academics are likely to find keeping their political views to themselves difficult indicating that students will, regardless, know an academic's views.

"Oh I think it's pretty much impossible for a lecturer or a teacher to be impartial." (D)

"I don't know if teachers are kind of expected to remain neutral. I guess you are, but it's probably not always easy to stay neutral." (H)

It is perceived that students will know if the academic is arguing against their own beliefs:

"There's one lecturer particularly, you can see that they don't necessarily believe the argument". (D)

An academic will hold back from their particular view so that students can put their views forward, which suggests that the student must know the academic's views in order to know this:

"But then, you know, just that they really try and make you think in a particular way and argue against them. " (C)

However participants clearly wish to know an academic's views. They suggest that academics do not always make their views clear, which indicates that students will not be able to detect an academic's views and that in some way this is perceived by the student as disadvantaging them:

"I think it frustrates you sometimes when people [academics] don't say what their standpoint is" (B)

Therefore regardless of whether they can know whether the views are the academic's or not, participants prefer academics to declare their views in order to enable students to develop their own views:

"If an academic's got a strong view, it's fine to put forward that view" (C)

"I think it's nice to see people passionate about where they stand as well because I think it like, spurs me on to feel passionately about a certain area really." (B)

It is pointed out that students cannot ask to express their views and not let academics do so as well:

"It would be hypocritical to say we can express our views as a student but you can't as an academic" (C)

The caveat from participants about academics expressing their own views is that they should not just present that one view but alternatives:

"... as long as the counterargument is put forward to represent those who may not agree with that perspective, then that sort of creates some air of balance that allows the students to come out and say, "Yeah, I agree with that side," or "I agree with that side." (E)

It is suggested that academics fail to present a range of political views in their teaching:

"I'm surprised really that there aren't more, there isn't more variety in politics classroom" (A)

While some agree that it is preferable for academics to express their own views above others, as long as others are presented, other participants realise that students can't know whether views expressed are the academic's own views or not:

"But I think because they didn't express their political views in the classroom, people thought the way the lecturer taught, meant that was their political view, but it wasn't. " (B)

Certain teaching styles imply a double bluff, again suggesting some insight into underlying views:

"I just take it as they come to play devil's advocate most of the time" (E)

“So you teach like that because you don’t want people to know what your political view is?”(B)

There is an awareness of a game being played out, with expressions such as double bluff and the use of devil’s advocate on more than one occasion. This has links to performativity.

“I can think of a particular lecturer who does that, who plays devil's advocate to whatever might be expressed. But it doesn't necessarily mean that's their own opinion though. That's different.” (F)

The risk of expressing one political view only is that some participants perceive a potential bias:

“I had one person and I know a person who agreed who said, how come we only ever learn about the left of the socialists and the left-wing? You know, like Marx and then Gramsci and so on” (A)

“In terms of what is actually said, I think tutors do guide it, there's no doubt about that...so, I think it can be problematic if lecturers solely express their own opinion above others.” (F)

The idea of an academic presenting one view at the expense of others reoccurs where one participant mentions the possibility that in some institutions an academic might try to force their views on students. If academics do this, it is a bad idea according to another. There has been experience of it in the recent past:

“Because I find lecturers in the past who would force their opinions upon the whole classroom, and I'm not necessarily very comfortable with that.” (H)

Differentiation is made between political views and declared allegiance or opposition to a political party:

“I don’t think I would feel comfortable in a classroom if an academic was to put forward ... like to push a certain set of ideals that were linked to a political party, for example. But if they were looking at ideas as a whole ... then that would be slightly different.”(C)

- **Implications of the Academic Declaring Political Views**

Academics can label students for their political views which suggests a link between an academic's political views and their perception of a student's political views:

"The lecturers do [label] others because of their views." (B)

Whereas a participant will choose not to express their political views in case they are at odds with the academic's:

"... I'd feel silly if a lecturer disagreed and then said all the reasons they disagreed." (B)

There is a link identified between a political view favoured by the academic and assessment in relation to a student including in an assignment views reflecting the academic's political views:

"If you do write this, then I'm going to love it." (H)

There is a reference to academics needing to be wary of what they say in certain circumstances, which suggests that academics will not always be free to express their own views, at least not without consequences.

"So they've got to be careful what they say ... much as they might have their own personal views ... they have to be very, even more careful about what they say and also how they manage the debate." (E)

"I do think that if you were to tell students your own view, then they may change their opinion of you." (H)

There were fewer comments made about students expressing political views in isolation, with most being in some way connected to the academic and their political views. One participant identifies a link between students expressing political views and better achievement in assessments:

“And they seem to, 9 out of 10, get better marks because of the way that they express. So maybe more needs to be done by both academics and students as well to encourage those that don’t participate to participate.” (C)

It is however impossible to know whether students achieve better marks as a result of expressing their political views, or would have anyway given other variables.

▪ **Academic as Facilitator of the Student Expressing of Political Views**

Appropriate teaching and learning methods adopted by the academic are seen as ways of ensuring the best environment for the student to express their political views. Key to the expressing of political views is the academic’s role as overseer of debate. There are some indicators as to effective teaching and learning methods for enabling the expressing of political views seen from the student’s perspective. The suggestion is that the teaching and learning methods selected by the academic affect the student experience of expressing political views. Participants have a tolerant view of the academic, generally accepting there are different approaches to teaching and learning, though preferring some over others. One participant emphasises that it is important that academics have different teaching styles to encourage the expressing of political views:

“I wouldn’t necessarily advocate that there would be one particular style that each lecturer should adhere to create the right environment for students.” (F)

Participants mention the importance of the academic maintaining a safe environment in order to facilitate the student’s ability to express political views:

“Lecturer regulates, resolves, restrains.” (E)

“... in the classroom there’s a very obvious lecturer-student role or relationship in terms of what’s expressed and how it’s expressed and the safety of that, there is an authority figure there which I guess could provide some sort of protection against, I don’t know.” (F)

In particular personal relationships are seen as important:

“I think that means students can feel even more comfortable because, you know, they’re not just a name on a piece of paper”. (E)

Participants see the role of facilitation as encouraging participation by those who might not normally participate and that both academic and student can play a part in this:

“So maybe more needs to be done by both academics and students as well to encourage those that don’t participate.” (C)

The academic role is also seen as managing inappropriate participation, in particular where some students monopolise the expressing of political views:

“There is a restraint in there (classroom), and it’s healthy restraint. It doesn’t impede on their, somebody’s ability to speak freely. But it does make sure it’s done.” (E)

“They can affect how much or how little is said just generally, whatever that is.” (F)

There is also an awareness of the need to set the boundaries to ensure that participants appreciate that their political views will be questioned:

“The academic has to make it clear that, to every student, whatever their political view is, is valid for them to have that political view and believe in it as long as they’re willing to have it questioned. (G)

However the academic role as facilitator is also seen by some participants in a different light, which focuses on the relationship between the student and academic and the potential impact on the student of their political ideas being challenged by someone they revere:

“You idolise them a little bit ... Because they are the people you learn from.” (B)

7.4. Category of Description Three - Variables to Optimise the Expressing of Political Views and Summary of themes of commonality and variation

▪ The Classroom Context

Participants indicate that certain variables such as the nature of the Politics class will encourage the expressing of political views. These participants consider that the Politics HE classroom is a good place to express political views:

“I think the classroom environment is a great place to do it” [express political views] (E)

“And in Politics, if you explain to someone, ‘Oh I disagree with that because of this,’ and same with me, they do it to me. And then if they give valid reasons, they’re all be like, ‘Ah’, ‘Hmm’, ‘Yeah’, ‘I’ve never thought of it like that before.’ It’s a nice atmosphere to be in.” (B)

However, other participants indicate that while theirs might be, the Politics classroom is not necessarily an appropriate place to express political views:

“But that could change even if one new person came into it” (D)

“Perhaps if that environment was less safe, physically less safe... and physically less affluent that would change the political ideas that might get expressed” (F)

This suggests the situational nature of the Politics classroom and that its appropriateness for expressing political views is dependent on a number of variables. There is a suggestion where Politics cohorts join others for jointly run modules, the resultant classroom will affect the Politics student’s ability to express political views:

“And I find it easier to be open in Politics classes than like Criminology. There are more debates that go on amongst the students in Politics” (B)

▪ Cohort Size

As the Politics cohorts at Chester are relatively small, participants indicate that this is an advantage for students in expressing political views:

“It’s a small enough group that everybody can have their say” (D)

“I think because its small, it makes it easier for everyone to express their opinion because you all know each other... it’s harder to coax opinions from a big lecture hall type thing” (G)

Participants do argue in support of a larger cohort as long as smaller groups within a larger cohort are created. This can work positively for the expressing of political views as long as the smaller group has its own identity:

“... when you’re in the larger cohort, once we get into smaller groups, they tend to get their viewpoint across more.” (D)

“But when we are on our own in smaller groups, we discuss the views more likely than in a bigger group”. (B)

Nevertheless others feel that larger teaching groups are counter-productive to the expressing of political views, especially where some hostility to opposing political views is evident:

“And everyone just stood up and pointed the, as we call it, the bony finger of socialism at us and just kind of sort of said you’re this and you’re that.” (A)

▪ **Student Characteristics**

The size of the cohort is not the only indicator for the student expressing of political views. It is also informed by student characteristics, one of which is the gender make up in the classroom:

“...The gender balance in the class would make a very obvious difference” (F)

Participants indicate that another characteristic is that shy students are seen as less able to express their political views than those who are more robust with their views:

“But I do think there’s always going to be people who are just generally shy anyway, who might be a bit too unwilling to speak out, you know”.(E)

“I think that’s more my personality than anything, that I’m not afraid to express my views” (C)

There is also an indication that more than one variable (in this case size of cohort and personality) might enable participation.

“Maybe there’s something about student personality and their ability to express views that is helped by the size of the cohort.” (F).

The confident student can present robust views:

“So, someone who is confident, outgoing, and open to ideas is going to be someone who is going to express their own political ideas quite quickly and easily in a classroom...” (G)

It seems that this may be as much to do with rousing opposition to their views as it is with the actual expressing of the views, and may not require much criticality:

“I think the more bold students will quite happily say something that would rock the boat because they enjoy a good debate, you know, and they like to, you know, get people fired up and stuff like that because they, and that’s the part of the fun of having the debate.” (E)

“And there’s some students in the class who are particularly confident, who are able to express quite strong opinions with very little validity behind them but do so in a strong enough way that they’re accepted.” (F)

However this is not seen as necessarily a good thing and there is a suggestion that the expressing of political views per se may not be positive:

“And then there’s other people that maybe put their views out a bit too much” (C)

It might also be the case that regardless of other variables, some students might never speak out:

“Because they think... they don’t want to.... Because if they think that you’ve taken an interest then they may be asked to take part” (C)

▪ **Relationships between Students**

Participants claim that they can feel safe in particular company to confide their political views, but this is outside the Politics classroom, or done in secret to a fellow student. Some participants are aware that the views expressed by some individuals in class are not their real ones because the student have trusted them enough to either tell them this, or have ‘given themselves away’.

The importance of relationships to make the classroom feel safe is stressed. Relationships should be entrenched from the outset at induction. Participants indicate that their own cohorts are confident groups who are friends and happy to discuss political views. Other comments include that they learn off each other, which links to political socialisation, that there is a nice atmosphere and they laugh at each other but with no animosity. Another suggests an iterative development in a student’s capacity to express political views as a result of the small size of cohort and resultant bonding:

“I think because it’s small, it makes it easier for everyone to express their opinion because you all know each other and you know each other’s habits and after not long, I think everyone was a lot less shy than they had been at first.” (G)

There is a link made between the mutual respect and the nature of the cohort:

“Because the makeup of the group hasn’t really changed much in the last two years, so we’re used to each other now.” (D)

This positive view of the cohorts reflects what are perceived as bonds between students and between students and academics.

“There’s a familiarity, a sort of respect for each other that allows people to feel more comfortable with what they say because they’re in an environment where everyone knows each other and stuff like that” (E)

7.5 Preliminary Findings

An analysis of the empirical qualitative research undertaken with politics students indicates that preliminary findings can be drawn from the three categories of description. While the research is an exploratory study of practice and perceptions in one University Department, these preliminary findings provide the basis for developing initial practice guidance.

The preliminary findings are:

- Politics students interviewed say they would like to be able to express their political views.
- Politics students interviewed say they will present political views in class which are not their own. They do this to avoid being labelled or their views seen as unacceptable though this is their perception or experience and does not indicate that this is happening.
- Politics students interviewed say they perceive a prevailing political view in the classroom though the indications from the findings is that they may not be correct in this perception. Participants from the same cohort perceived the prevailing political view differently.
- Politics students interviewed say that expressing political views (their own or not) is a key skill for a Politics student. They say it enables them to develop their political views.
- Politics students interviewed say that certain variables make it more likely that they will express their political views (their own or not).

These variables are:

Cohort Size and Relationships within the Cohort. Politics students interviewed talked of friendships and good relationships with peers and academics from the outset.

Student Characteristics. Politics students interviewed said that confident students could express political views. Shy students might not be able to present any political views (their own or not).

The Academic. Politics students interviewed preferred academics with strongly held political views as long as other views were included. They did not like academics being politically neutral. They said that students wish to know an academic's political views.

Teaching and Learning. Politics students interviewed said it was important the academic creates an environment in which all political views can be expressed. This was a responsibility of fellow students and not just academics. Teaching and Learning methods should be found which enable the expressing of political views as the students said that being able to express views is key to being a politics student.

7.5 Preliminary Practice Guidance

The initial implications for practice for Politics academics drawn from the research conducted with Politics students into their experience of expressing their political views, are that Politics academic should:

- Adapt teaching and learning to enable and encourage the expressing of students' political views.
- Be willing to express a range of political views in addition to own political views.
- Avoid neutrality for the sake of neutrality and be willing to express own political views.
- Act as facilitator to ensure all political views can be expressed.
- Emphasise benefits to students of engaging in expressing political views.
- Teach in small cohorts, or small groups within cohorts.
- Support bonding in the cohort between students and between students and academics from the outset and facilitate a supportive teaching and learning setting.

It is not possible from the data to determine which, if any, of these implications takes priority, or whether one or more in combination might have a different effect on the student expressing their political views. They can therefore only be an indication that there is a link with that experience. These practice indicators present a student perspective of the issue. Nevertheless they offer an insight into the student experience which will be an important consideration for academics and their managers and which has hitherto been absent from the literature. Politics academic input into the practice guidance will help to ensure their wider practice applicability.

These initial implications for practice drawn from the student research were therefore presented to Politics academics and the resulting reworked practice guidance has been informed by practitioners. Obtaining further data from Politics academics has increased the scope of the study. The findings of both the student and the academic research are discussed in the next chapter with the incorporation of the key themes from the literature review to enable a drafting of Politics academic guidance in relation to the expressing of Politics students' political views. If the practice guidance is implemented, this will meet the requirements of Prosser and Trigwell's (1999) claim that the student focus of this research will be justified if it leads to the academic seeking to understand the student's situation and adapt their teaching accordingly.

8. Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings from the qualitative empirical research conducted with Politics students. It also incorporates the findings from research undertaken with Politics academics and the key themes from the literature review. The limitations on the findings come from the single case study nature of the research.

The relationship of the wider context to the classroom experience reflects the finding from the literature review which identifies the link between the study of Politics and external political affairs and political socialisation. The qualitative empirical research with Politics students indicates that the wider context for the classroom, in particular political and policy issues and the background and past experiences of students, affects the expressing of political views in the classroom. While this might apply to all subject disciplines, in Politics the expressing of political views is core to the subject area and discussions are likely to be about Politics. It is probable that those attracted to the study of Politics will be so on the basis of some form of prior political interest or experience. The research indicates that political views will often be pre-formed, and this does therefore uphold the argument that prior experience is relevant to expressing political views in the classroom. The literature review identifies the changes to HE in terms of massification, quality assurance and the subsequent effect on the academic role, and while it is likely these will impact on the student experience, this cannot be evidenced from the research which did not provide any data on this beyond the role of the context in terms of political discussion or political socialisation. It may be that it is inevitable that the context has a bearing, but also impossible to gauge what that bearing might be from the findings. Academic practitioners did not raise the context as an issue, except in so far as funding might affect resources for teaching in small cohorts. Indeed, the practitioners affirmed the sense of autonomy held by practising academics in spite of contextual changes, which is also noted in the literature as being problematic for the academy and an illusion held by practitioners.

The finding which relates to some of the Politics students interviewed saying that they would like to be able to express their political views has a bearing on the purpose of this research. Had students indicated that they do not wish or need to express their political views, then this would affect the purpose of trying to find out about their experience of expressing their political views. Some of the participants present a number of reasons as to why they wish to express their political views, and these tie in with the findings from the literature which indicate that expressing views is core to being a Politics student. This is supported by the Benchmark (2015) which can be

interpreted to indicate that expressing views is part of the politics student experience and key to employability. Once it has been established that political views should be expressed and that students wish them to be, adapting teaching and learning to enable and encourage the expressing of students' political views and acting as facilitator to ensure all political views can be expressed, seems a reasonable practice requirement.

However, practitioners pointed out that expressing political views should not be a given. One reason provided is where students raise racist or discriminatory points in class:

“As a lecturer it would not be right to allow these views to remain unchallenged for the sake of making the student feel included... as they are likely to make other students feel excluded.”

(2)

The lack of critical thinking behind students' discriminatory political views was mentioned by both academics and students. Lack of criticality, both by academics and by students, was also highlighted in the literature review, though not in the context of students expressing discriminatory political views. Therefore practitioners have concerns that it may not always be appropriate for students to express their political views, regardless of the student wish, of the importance to a Politics degree that they do so, or their own objective as academics that students do so. This suggests that practitioners should be encouraged to facilitate the expressing of views only if those views are appropriate. This raises the concern found in the research that some political views may be perceived as inappropriate, and raises the issue of who is deciding that appropriateness. One academic suggests that political parties often engage in common sense notions without critical engagement and that this can be mirrored in the classroom. While the research has not been able to differentiate between political views and support for political parties, this does indicate the importance of the political context on student political views and their enactment in the classroom. The role of respect for others is one which practitioners rate highly, and this will be of no surprise given that social scientists are likely to both be aware of and function actively within a non-discriminatory framework:

“Peers and Academics can hear these views but should feel free/expect to critically engage with any that have the power to offend”. (2)

This last point raises the possibility that other students as well as the academic have the responsibility to challenge inappropriate ideas and that the academic is therefore not the only facilitator to the expressing of student political views. Indeed, expressing alternative political

views may be necessary in order to prevent other inappropriate views. The word 'respect' was mentioned a number of times by the practitioners:

"It is the responsibility...of students, particularly showing respect for others' point of view" (5)

Again, the concern may be raised as to which political views will be seen as appropriate and by whom, and who might be offended by particular political views:

"Such expression has to be mindful of respecting the views of others" (1)

Therefore the conclusion can perhaps be drawn here that political views can be expressed as long as they do not cause offence. The difficulty is that offence to an individual can be subjective and therefore it might be suggested that students could choose not to express views in case they offend others (academics or students). This is reflected in the student research. It can be assumed that any clearly illegal, racist and discriminatory views will be exempted but the problem will be that different observers will consider different political views offensive.

One practitioner suggested a second reason for arguing that students expressing political views should not be a given. This is to avoid forcing students to express a view, and ignore the potential impact of so doing:

" This raises potential ethical issues both in terms of pushing/forcing students to take a clear political stance and in terms of making some students feel less smart and/or prepared if/when they do not have any specific political views" (4)

The research found that some students choose to express views which are not their own, and that this would be a means of dealing with an academic encouraging the expressing of views which might in turn discomfit the student. It was also pointed out that some shy students might not express their views, but that this should not be taken to mean that they have no political views.

Notwithstanding the points above, practitioners had no issue in principle with encouraging students to express their political views:

"I will look for more opportunities in the future" (3)

However there are concerns raised over whether formalising a requirement to facilitate the expressing of political views by students is a good thing:

“Being able to express political views definitely represents an indispensable skill for all students and future citizens (not just politics students). However there are intrinsic risks in formalising the ability to express views, for example, in a module handbook.” (4)

The clear message from practitioners is that it should not be assumed that expressing political views should be actively encouraged. It would need to be made clear that views must be inclusive, and that students should be able not to express political views if they wish.

The analysis of the research found that some of the Politics students interviewed say they will present political views in class which are not their own. Some claim that they do this to avoid being labelled or their views seen as unacceptable though it should be noted that this is their perception or experience and does not indicate that this is happening. Nevertheless it has been established that academics are also concerned that students might feel discomfited while expressing their political views. It seems from the research that students may have found a solution to this issue. The research differentiates between publicly declared political views (which might be developed for example in a debate and not related to actual views, though they might be) and private views, which might never be aired (though they might be the same as public views) or if so, only in a safe context such as with another student who has declared their views. It might not be known whether any of these views is actually held. The differentiation between actual views and those which can be safely expressed (assuming that these are different) suggests that some students might have resolved the problem of unacceptable views by expressing views which are not their own. By so doing they gain the same skills they would if arguing their actual views, but without labelling or other identification. However, the very fact that they have to keep their views hidden might have both personal and wider societal implications such as concerns over freedom of expression. The literature does not identify this differentiation between actual views and those expressed, nor does it highlight the issue of students not being able to express their own views. However, the qualitative empirical research with Politics students suggests that students do sometimes feel that they need to express views which are not their own.

While the Benchmark (2015) makes it clear that developing effective oral argument is key to being a Politics students there is no suggestion that these views need to be actual views. It is also

not a given that the practice guidance drawn from the research with Politics students such as adapting teaching and learning to enable and encourage the expressing of students' political views or act as facilitator to ensure all political views can be expressed, would mean that actual political views were more likely to be expressed than not. Nor was it obvious whether or not that matters. This therefore suggests that the term 'political views' might require a clarification over whether the views are actual or expressed political views. There is a further point made which offers an additional definition for political views. A practitioner queries when a view might be 'political' or not, for example in the context of expressing an opinion. In one sense, all views have a political element. Therefore the question of what is a political view is also something which will need considering in any future research. It might also be suggested that were students to understand the level of concern expressed by academics over the potential for student political views to lack criticality and be offensive, they might be reluctant to express their political views. This reluctance is noted in the student empirical research and students do, it seems, choose on occasion not to express views, in anticipation of a hostile academic response. Anticipating that academic response would be important for the student, and would lead them to wish to know an academic's political views.

Some of the Politics students interviewed say they perceive a prevailing political view in the classroom though the indication from the findings is that they may not be correct in this perception as participants from the same cohort perceive the prevailing political view differently. This is something noted by the researcher but not included in the analysis as differentiation between cohorts is problematic due to cohort size and need for anonymity. This then has an impact on whether or not they feel able to express their political views. While there can clearly only ever be one actual prevailing view, this will not be the case with perceptions. The student research finds that some political views are not seen as acceptable in the classroom regardless of how well argued. Whereas students ask that academics be open about their views, some students consider it appropriate, and perhaps essential, to hide theirs. It may be that some students tell academics what they think the academics want to hear. Again the extent of this cannot be known. The academic practitioners only mentioned political views being unacceptable where they were offensive. It may be that certain views representing particular political parties are indeed also offensive to academics, as claimed in the student qualitative empirical research, but if that is the case this would need further exploration.

During the course of the research the perspective of students gleaned from the research has challenged the main driver for the thesis which is an assumption, drawn from the experience of the researcher, that students feel inhibited from expressing themselves openly. The original problem identified can now be seen to be too simplistic. While it may be the case that some participants do perceive themselves to be labelled for their views and may choose not express their actual views, it is possible that students are not innocent victims but rather very much co-partners in a power dynamic where their wish to know an academic's views may be as much about wanting to understand how to present their own views than to champion freedom of expression. The indication is that academic colleagues have not fully considered the potential complexities related to students wishing to know an academic's political views, or the implications of an academic knowing a student's political views, as this was not addressed by them. Nor did academics consider the possibility that students instead of feeling discomfited by being asked to express their political views, will simply express those they feel are most acceptable and not their actual views.

Some of the Politics students interviewed say that expressing political views (their own or not) is a key skill for a Politics student. They say it enables them to develop their political views. This is supported by the literature relating to political socialisation. The political views which the students bring to the classroom will in part be affected by their contextual experiences, and this reflects the suggestion in the literature review that political views might be formed prior to University, either wholly or in part. The participants indicate that the experience of expressing political views enables them to develop their political views, suggesting that their views are not yet fully formed and that the expressing of them is an important element in this development. The idea that political views are in development runs counter to some indications in the practice review that political views might be already formed by the time the student comes to University, though these sources accept that there would be some influences while an undergraduate. This is supported by the literature in that even though some sources indicate that minds are made up by 15, other variables for political socialisation indicate that other influences remain. Crucially, the academic is not seen as a main one.

The analysis of the literature and the Benchmark (2015) has identified employability as key to being a Politics student. Participants mirror this in indicating that expressing political views is an important skill for a future career. However, whether this view is their own or one gained from the experience of being an undergraduate during a time of emphasis on employability, cannot be determined from these findings. This agenda may be influenced by the link which students may

make between higher tuition fees and the urgency to gain appropriate employment, and by the performance indicators for graduate employability which increasingly inform the university league tables. This perspective provides support for the argument that Politics students ought to express political views in the classroom, and identifies the process of so doing as an essential skill. This links back to the Benchmark (2015) which indicates that a variety of teaching methods and learning approaches, including the encouragement of oral argument, allows students to develop a portfolio of experience, competencies and skills. In addition, the literature finds an increasing emphasis among Politics academics on teaching and learning methods engaging with the world of practice, thereby connecting the traditional role of students as involved in social action, with the employability agenda. A number of the sources in the literature emphasise the importance of skills for a graduate, and not just for Politics graduates. In this instance it is the act of developing and presenting an argument which is key and it will not matter whether the political views are the student's real views or not. Indeed one practitioner stressed that:

"I would say that the ability to communicate ideas is a key skill for any students within any discipline of the social sciences" (1)

This point was supported in the Departmental research seminar where one contributor had asked whether or not these findings would be relevant to other disciplines, as he thought they would be.

While it is likely to be an important component of any undergraduate education, perhaps for a Politics student the ability to articulate political views is especially key. This has implications for teaching and learning and for the design and delivery of the Politics curriculum, as it might be concluded that expressing political views (albeit not necessarily actual views) needs building in. Some practitioners considered that this was a useful point though of course the earlier caveat that not all political views will be acceptable remains:

"I will take greater care to make clear the value of political debate as a competency" (3)

"Emphasising the benefits may go some way to making people feel more at ease when expressing political views" (4)

Although the research was asking about the student experience of expressing political views, most participants linked this to the academic expressing of political views. This link was seen as being both in relation to encouraging (or discouraging) the expressing of student's political views, and in relation to what those views might be. The indication is that an academic's political views will affect the expressing of a student's political views. This suggests that Politics students would need to know an academic's political views in order to gauge what they should express.

Some of the student participants prefer academics with strongly held political views. They do not like academics being politically neutral and who 'sit on a fence'. They say that students want to know an academic's political views (they cannot know whether real or not). Some student participants want academics to avoid neutrality for the sake of neutrality. One practitioner is clear about the value of this and that they already practice it. However, they stress the importance of presenting strong political views, not necessarily their own, on the basis that the student can never know one way or the other:

"Whether the strong political views are your own or not, is unimportant (the students can guess forever whether they are yours or not!)" (2)

This indicates the importance of academics presenting clear views but not necessarily declaring them as the academic's own. If it is important that the student does know the academic's political views, and if they are not able to determine them, then students may make assumptions about the academic's political views and act accordingly, leading them to potentially declare political views which they do not hold. The students would not always know what the academic's real views are as of course they might simply be presenting a contrary argument or keeping their views private, as might students of their own political views. Some student participants seek to find out the academic's views and find it frustrating when they can't work it out, though they admit they can also get it wrong. That said, some student participants claim that they can tell an academic's political views (even going so far as to indicate awareness of a double bluff or a devil's advocate).

One practitioner has avoided neutrality as part of their practice:

"I am delighted to have confirmed my suspicion that I should avoid total neutrality. I am keen to defend political arguments in class so long as students are also encouraged to challenge and debate these views" (3)

Another is very clear about declaring their political views up-front:

“I have to make it clear from the outset where I stand on these issues... I encourage students to consider whether they agree or not with my take on scenarios” (1)

An alternative approach is where the academic prefers neutrality, at least at the outset:

“I personally prefer being neutral when teaching at the same time that I am open to express views in particular areas especially if students enquire about it directly.”(5)

Another practitioner shows some concern over an academic who presents one view above others:

“I think that any personal views expressed by academics must be balanced with their arguments. Having experienced an environment where this hasn’t happened, the bare expression of a certain point of view can stifle rather than stimulate political discussion” (4)

Student participants suggest that they prefer academics with strong views declared as long as other views are included as a counter-balance. Although some student participants have had some experience of an academic with strong views not presenting an alternative, others feel that academics are balanced in allowing different views to be articulated.

Practitioners do agree that offering a range of views is appropriate. They welcomed the opportunity offered by the research to present a range of political views and to make the fact that they were doing so clearer to students:

“I will be more explicit when introducing competing views during lectures” (3)

“The lecturer has a duty to put forward a range of contemporary and dominant views, otherwise teaching would be biased and not comprehensive” (1)

These different approaches taken by academics support the experience of the researcher that practice guidance is required and the value of this exploratory study for wider practice. Academic practitioners clearly have different perspectives over whether or not to express their own political views. This thesis is seeking to address a lack of practice guidance over whether or not academics should express their political views. Within one University Department it appears that there is a range of practice.

That some student participants prefer academics having clearly expressed views to being ‘on the fence’ is a finding which counters one of the initial premises of this research drawn from the experience of the researcher, that a range of views will be preferable to an academic presenting their own views. In fact it suggests that a Politics academic should present their political views as this is preferred by the student. Yet the reasons why a student prefers this needs exploring. There is not much information in the literature relating to why a student might wish to know an academic’s political views, though there are some indications. While it may be that students wish to hear a clearly argued political view, and that it is not the academic’s actual political view they wish to know (something they surely cannot be sure of though some claim otherwise), it has to be assumed that there may be reasons for students wanting to know an academic’s real views. The reason that students wish to know an academic’s real views might link back to the possible connection between a student’s perception of the academic’s politics and the student’s willingness to make their own views known. One practitioner suggests:

“This then allows for interconnections in the findings; for example, does knowledge of the views of the academic increase the confidence of the student?” (6)

Alternatively, it might be concluded that a wish to mirror an academic’s views might be in order to gain favours such as a better mark. Where a participant in the student qualitative empirical research experienced an academic indicating a preference for a particular view being expressed in an assessment to the exclusion of others, this participant saw this as indicating a preferred political viewpoint which mirrored the academic’s own views. If it is the case that the student can benefit from knowing the academic’s views, this would indicate that students might accommodate the political views of the academic, perhaps by shifting their own declared views towards those of the academic or mirroring the academic’s political views. The literature supports the indication of a link between political views and assessment.

Practitioners seem not to have concerns over students wishing to know their views, but do raise some related issues. One practitioner suggests that the reason that students dislike academic neutrality may be linked to the student’s reluctance to express their political views without knowing those of the academic, and thus provides an indication of an awareness by practitioners of the part played by the role and perception of political views:

“Most interesting for me is the shift in our thinking about neutrality that this research suggests. It appears that a perception of the views of the academic may put a student at greater ease in expressing a political view”. (4)

The literature review and the student qualitative empirical research found indications of possible issues relating to power and performativity. The practitioners evidence their concern over the potential for the part played by power:

“There would be a risk of making or trying to make one particular political position as the prevailing one, and that would not be fair, especially if students perceive it as a power tool with the possibility of the non-favourable to that position being penalised “(5)

Two theoretical frameworks identified in the literature review provide a possible insight into what may be lying beneath these issues and are reflected in both the student qualitative empirical research and in the feedback from practitioners. The first of these is French and Raven’s (1959) bases of social power applied to the Politics HE context. The second is Goffman’s (1990) dramaturgical approach applied to the role played by the Politics academic in the expressing of a Politics student’s political views. It might be suggested that a student wishing to know an academic’s political view could be indicative of referent power (French and Raven, 1959). A wish to know in relation to assessment (Bar and Zussman, 2012) would be indicative of reward and coercive power (French and Raven, 1959). The potential for some form of influence is noted by one practitioner but this is not explored further by them:

“I do not think that from a mere pedagogical point of view expressing one’s political opinions facilitate the learning process, it might even reinforce and enlarge the gap between the most outspoken students and the shy violets. Moreover, some Politics students might be induced to embrace the lecturer’s point of view.” (4)

There is some indication of the perceived superiority of the academic role and this perhaps points to a lack of reflexivity as to the impact of the academic’s views on the student ability to express their political views, and again reflects the literature on the academic retaining a sense of false autonomy in spite of changes:

“The academic’s intellectual freedom and independence should be sovereign, regardless of what students express in terms of individual preference.”(4)

Some of the student participants say it is important that the academic creates an environment in which all political views can be expressed though they do stress that this is a responsibility of fellow students and not just academics. This indicates that the academic should act as facilitator to ensure political views can be expressed. This makes an assumption that expressing political views is accepted as being a given. Academic practitioners are clear that this is not the case. Nevertheless, according to the Politics students the academic does have a facilitator role, even if the practitioners see the role as preventing offensive political views being expressed by critically engaging with those views. Therefore for the practitioner the role is partly preventative and partly facilitative whereas for the student it is wholly facilitative.

Some student participants mention the importance of the academic's role for setting the appropriate context for expressing political views through their selection of teaching and learning methods. The literature indicates that certain methods will encourage participation, and these include methods which enable anonymity. The literature also sees an increasing emphasis on student learning, supported by a greater understanding of student needs through a student-centred approach. The literature identifies a move towards methods encouraging linkage with the world of political practice and therefore enabling political engagement, the facilitation of social change, or employability. Some student participants agree that appropriate teaching and learning styles can encourage student involvement and potentially lead to greater engagement and expressing of views. The role of the Politics academic as enabling the expressing of political views through making the classroom as safe as possible and through facilitation in order to create balance and is a key finding in the student qualitative empirical research and is supported by practitioners:

"I feel it is imperative that the lecturer creates a safe environment for students to express their views." (1)

"I will continue to make every effort to encourage the whole range of views to be expressed." (3)

Practitioners suggested a range of methods to achieve this:

"Various ways to do this (allow a range of different challenges to ideas and perceptions)... Not relying on verbal communications ... but perhaps a collection of key points from each group written down..." (2)

“Group work, Post-Its, online voting etc.” (4)

Some of the student participants say that certain variables make it more likely that they will express their political views (their own or not). The student research claims that the Politics classroom will be a more appropriate place to express political views than some other context, such as a social setting where any political discussion might be inappropriate. The safe situated nature of the specific University of Chester classroom in a particular place and time is noted. Indeed, one new student can change the balance. This indicates that the experience of a particular student might not be comparable to that of another student in a different classroom, or that the experience differs depending on the specific classroom context. What the research is not able to deduce is the role of group dynamics in the expressing of political views, and whether the practice guidance also applies within a different group setting, either in a different subject area or even in a non-educational setting. Nor does the research offer any guidance on such areas as duplicity, dishonesty or cognitive dissonance, except in the context of students presenting views which are not (or might not be) their own. The research findings paint a picture of relationships which are valued, yet even so, some views are not being expressed, some views are not perceived as acceptable, and some respondents consider they are being labelled by those very academics and students with whom they claim to have a good relationship. From this we might infer that only in a good relationships can this form of labelling take place (because participants have dared to admit some views despite the risk of being labelled), that the labelling is a student perception as it does not appear to be recognised practitioners, or alternatively that the relationships are not as cosy as implied by respondents. This exploratory research is not in a position to address these questions.

Some of the student participants say that confident students are able to express political views, even ones which are their own. Shy students might not be able to present any political views (their own or not). Whether they are confident or shy is found to have a direct influence over the expressing of political views. Shy students might never express their political views, regardless of the other variables though this would not mean they have no views. Where a participant admits to shyness, they agree that they are disadvantaged in not feeling able to express their views. Confident students might always express political views, regardless of the recommendations or the legitimacy of the argument and indeed confidence even manages to override labelling by other students. On the other hand, confident students can decide not to risk expressing views, their own or not. Given that expressing views is seen as a skill, students not able or unwilling to

do so, might therefore suffer career-wise. Whether students should select a Politics degree in order to gain employability skills which might be better acquired through a different degree is a question which the findings raise but are not in a position to answer. The research does not provide further data about the student characteristics beyond issues of shyness and gender. One practitioner alludes to shyness in the context of student progression and this raises another area for future research in terms of comparing different year groups:

“Students in their first year usually lack this confidence and take time to know people and the new university environment.” (5)

Practitioners support the part played by variables such as teaching to small groups and in-cohort bonding in the expressing of political views by Politics students:

“These points seem perfectly understandable and uncontroversial - it is good however to have research that backs up what might have been expected.” (1)

“Friendship and good chemistry amongst students goes a long way to facilitating the expression of views.” (6)

However the indication from the student qualitative empirical research is that the academic should support bonding in the cohort not just between students but also with academics. While one practitioner claims this is:

“Gold standard - encourage reciprocal collegiality between all students sand their teachers to foster an environment of intellectual curiosity and respectful debate.” (3)

Another practitioner feels that bonding between students and academic can be contested:

“Be extremely productive in certain contexts ... or totally useless and impracticable (either because of the students’ or because of the academic’s personality traits) and in other contexts or under different conditions.” (4)

Again the academic perspective indicates that the original findings drawn from the student research are limited and depend on the context in which they are being discussed. The same point applies to the academic perspective on teaching and learning in small cohorts, something favoured by the student participants on the basis that the size of cohort enables bonding and close relationships although support for this was not identified in the literature. One practitioner indeed

supported larger group teaching and pointed out that larger groups can produce lively debates though perhaps failed to recognise that lively debates might actually work against encouraging the expressing of student political views. The majority of practitioners however do, echoing the student research, favour smaller groups for the purposes of students expressing their views.

“The ideal case. Funding and staffing constraints but pedagogically increased likelihood to bond and express views.” (2)

“It would make the discussion more intimate meaning that students may feel that the responses to their views will be regulated accordingly.” (6)

Though one practitioner claims that the same objectives of facilitating the expressing of student political views can be achieved even if class sizes remain the same:

“If not much can be done in order to change the class size, a lot can be done to create responsible and responsive learning contexts.” (4)

However, other practitioners are wary in larger groups of the Politics students being especially vocal with their views and taking over a debate to the detriment of others:

“In a mixed class it is often the politics students who are willing to express their views.... The juggle, for the lecturer, is to make sure that other students can and do contribute to discussions, otherwise the politics student takes over.” (1)

“It is important that lecturers are able to control group discussion so as to allow a range of different challenges to ideas and [perceptions as possible and student] personalities change the nature of group discussion.” (2).

In a cohort of several subjects, such as on option modules, it appears that the Politics students are more willing to express their views, and their voices can drown out those of others. The academic therefore has a role in ensuring that students can and do contribute. This raises a further issue for future research in comparing other cohorts with Politics students.

“Otherwise the Politics student takes over.” (A)

Finally, it is clear that there are a number of implications for practice arising from this research which warrant further discussion and investigation. The input of the academic practitioners has enabled the initial findings from the qualitative empirical research to be better contextualised, and has provided valuable indications for taking the research further. In particular, it is clear that advising practitioners of the importance of facilitating the expressing of all political views has to be tempered by the need to ensure that no offence is caused through enabling those views and that students are not forced to express their views. This should indeed be seen as academics encouraging the expression of ‘appropriate’ rather than all views. Yet concerns over possible offence being taken raise issues of who is deciding on the appropriateness of views. It also seems that practitioners may not have fully reflected on their role in enabling students to express their political views, and perhaps importantly on the potential for implications of power arising out of the student wishing to know their political views, and conversely them knowing a student’s political views. Nor do practitioners allude to the possibility of students not expressing their actual views. The outcomes in the form practice guidance drawn from the student research now need recasting to include the academic perspective which will determine that the practice guidance is fit for purpose and has wider practice implications. This will be set in the context of wider knowledge contributions and personal reflection.

9. Outcomes

9.1 Knowledge Outcomes

This exploratory study can offer practice guidance in relation to Politics students expressing their political views as a result of research undertaken among both Politics students and Politics academics. It has also raised some general issues about the relationship between the academic and the student and the potential for it to be underpinned by both power and performativity. While this research has looked specifically at power in relation to the expressing of student political views, there is no reason to assume the issues raised are limited to the HE Politics setting and they may apply to other educational contexts. The particularly interesting factor is not that educators are seeking to influence those over whom they have power (although that may be the case) but that knowledge about the other can affect how they in turn enact their role or behave. Politics students may wish to know an academic's political views in order to change their role or behaviour just as the same may apply to the academic wishing to know a student's political views in order to determine how and whether they declare their own.. This creates a potential context of referent power, coercion or sanctions which may underpin other educational sectors. It is also clear that power is not necessarily held by the educator, and that the balance may rest with the student who in turn can be the more powerful through affirming the academic's power.

The concept of expressing political views as a Politics student needs to be seen in the framework of the wider debate about whether particular political views are appropriate within contemporary legal and moral frameworks. This research has argued that Politics students wish to express their political views. However, practitioners pointed out that any offensive remarks would not be appropriate. This raises the issue of the situational nature of the expressing of views. While in principle causing offence is likely to be both legally, as well as morally, inappropriate, these can be subjective assessments and it may be easier to say nothing, or claim views that are not your actual views, than potentially (if unintentionally) cause offence. If this concern about causing offence were to discourage students or academics from expressing political views which might in fact not be offensive then it could be argued that the intention of protecting individuals from offence has overruled the ability of individuals to express their views. Indeed, this would lead to them professing something they might not agree with, in order not to cause offence. This seems like a thin line between acceptable and appropriate safeguarding and inappropriate harnessing of freedom of expression and perhaps especially interesting in a context where these issues might expect an airing such as within a Politics HE setting.

9.2 Practice Outcomes and Action plan

There are a number of recommendations for practice which can now be actioned by stakeholders.

The first three recommendations relate to the approach which the Politics academic can take to the expressing of political views by students. These recommendations should be subject to further discussion and not seen as a directive. Initially, they can be introduced as appropriate as a pilot into the Department of Social and Political Science at the University of Chester. They can form part of an internal debate conducted within teaching teams, such as the end of year Politics Team Planning, as well as contribute to the Departmental Learning and Teaching Strategy. They can be piloted to determine appropriateness for best practice and as a result of that, included in a range of indicators for student engagement such as the Politics Annual Monitoring Report and the Faculty Annual Review and in the Department's Revalidation narrative on ways forward in teaching and learning.

1. **The first recommendation is for Politics academics to adapt teaching and learning to enable and encourage the expressing of students' appropriate political views.**

The caveat which the research has identified needs to be that not all the views will be deemed appropriate, should not be discriminatory or offend, and should not be forced. If that principle is accepted by both the Politics academic (who needs to facilitate) and Politics student (who needs to comply) then this recommendation should be possible to implement. There may be a requirement to get input from the Learning and Teaching Institute (LTI) at the University and other resources such as the HEA and the Faculty Teaching Fellow into ways of achieving this effectively if the intention of the guidance is to enable all students to take part in in-class discussions, covering a range of political views, and to ensure we are adhering to best practice. Challenges include how to tackle issues such as enabling but not forcing shy students to contribute, and to stop robust students from monopolising the discussion. A concern occasionally voiced at Open Days by potential Politics applicants and parents is whether academics are tolerant of a range of political views. We can emphasise in our publicity that indeed we are (as long as effectively argued) and that through our teaching and learning we seek to enable all

students to have a voice as long as it is appropriate. There are therefore a number of actions which can be taken here by Politics academics in terms of facilitation and by Politics students in terms of engagement. The Department can contribute by providing appropriate support, information and resourcing. In terms of teaching and learning, the inclusion of activities such as debates, hustings, role play and political scenarios will highlight a diversity of political views and encourage students to explore and experience the range of political views as well as engage with the political context.

2. The second recommendation is for Politics academics to be willing to express a range of political views if they see this as appropriate.

It seems from the practitioner research that academics see this as a reasonable request and one generally already in place. As current practice there is no reason why this should not be stated as such. A leaflet describing a particular module and stating that the teaching and learning on the module will include a range of perspectives on the issue is likely to be seen as reasonable by Politics academics. There are no actions required here beyond ensuring that this is stated in both promotional and quality assurance information and bearing in mind the requirements under consumer legislation. Notwithstanding this, the guidance may be seen to encroach on academic autonomy and it must be appropriate for Politics academics to choose not to express a range of political views. The possibility of academics expressing views which are not their own remains.

3. The third recommendation is for Politics academics to avoid neutrality for the sake of neutrality and be willing to express their own political views if they see this as appropriate.

There are a number of reasons identified by the research for Politics academics choosing to maintain neutrality and to avoid expressing their political views, regardless of the research findings and practice guidance. For example, Politics academics may be concerned for their career in that their political views might not be accepted by colleagues or by students. There should be no requirement that the Politics academic express their own views but rather that they should feel able to if they so wish. It may be useful for them to know that their students are likely to be receptive. At the moment there appears to be a variety of practice in one Department. It can also be added that students will not know whether they are the Politics academic's actual political views or not. The research

indicates that whether or not Politics academics should express their political views is not purely a teaching and learning issue. Rather there are implications relating to power and to role. The reason why Politics students may wish to know an academic's political views have been highlighted. Therefore Politics academics can be guided by the findings, but also be made aware of the risks. It would be dangerous to indicate to students that Politics academics are being encouraged to express their political views, if it can be demonstrated that students wish to know the academic's views for reasons of perceived advantage to themselves.

The final two recommendations relate to teaching and learning approaches which can be adopted to deliver the outcome of enabling all Politics students to express their political views as long as those views are appropriate.

4. The fourth recommendation is for Politics academics to teach in small cohorts, or small groups within cohorts.

There was support for this from the academic practitioners, but concern over the resource implications. One way of achieving this aim which is less resource intensive is facilitating smaller group teaching and learning within large cohorts. The involvement of resources from the LTI and the HEA and the Faculty Teaching Fellow can assist colleagues in managing large groups while also enabling individual student engagement and ensuring we are adhering to best practice. We have indeed piloted a number of options over the last few years, to varying degrees of success. A direct implication of this research has been the introduction as a pilot, into the Department of Social and Political Science, of an additional optional half hour of teaching on top of a two hour lecture/workshop for 2015/6 on two Politics modules where students can choose to stay to discuss ideas further after the main lecture. It is felt that this may be more workable than seminars which are problematic to resource, and have led to poor levels of attendance in the past, while adhering to the concept that small is preferable. As budget-holder for the Department I will work with colleagues to evaluate this pilot. I will also work with colleagues on researching additional ways of achieving a sense of being in a small cohort while at the same time being taught within a larger group. While Politics numbers during the qualitative empirical research were small, the recent introduction of a new IR programme means that modules common to both Politics and IR are now attracting upwards of 80 students. This means that the small cohort effect reflected in the research is now likely to

have dissipated. We can let potential students at applicant and Open Days know that our teaching and learning strategy involves finding ways of enabling students to experience a ‘small group’ mentality even while being taught within larger cohorts, as our research suggests that doing so will enable them all if they wish to be able to express their political views. This can also be reflected in all our promotional material. Care does need to be taken that we are not promising something which we cannot deliver thereby falling foul of new consumer legislation.

5 The fifth recommendation is for Politics academics to support bonding in the cohort between students and between students and academics from the outset and to facilitate a supportive teaching and learning setting.

There was some concern raised by practitioners over the implication of this for the professionalism of the relationship between the academic and student, and whether having a relationship with a student is indeed what is required of the role. Nevertheless the research indicates that it is the accessibility of lecturers and their willingness to engage which is important. The Department puts the student experience at the centre of all it does, and in our Student Charter, for example, we identify how soon students can expect an academic to respond to an email (this is also to protect academics from a student’s unrealistic expectations), and the availability for drop-in hours and open doors. Bonding between students seems similarly already embedded in the Department’s approach to for example induction and as part of our retention strategy. In terms of resources and workload planning, the importance of student support (rather than just direct teaching hours) has been highlighted and provides an additional narrative for workload planning. In addition, resources can be found to extend the induction period (a finding which chimes with the findings from our retention strategy research). Input from resources such as the LTI, HEA and Faculty Teaching Fellow will ensure that we are adhering to best practice. This will form part of ongoing initiatives.

The following chart identifies the key actions to be taken for the next academic year 2015/2016 in the Department of Social and Political Science and provides an overview for other Politics Departments to adapt as relevant and appropriate.

Recommendation	Caveat	Outcomes	Stakeholders: Politics Academics	Stakeholders: Politics Students	Action for Politics Department
Politics Academics to adapt teaching and learning to enable and encourage the expressing of students’ appropriate political views.	Ensure issues of respect and discrimination are addressed and that it is not forced on students.	<p>Include examples of teaching and learning inclusivity in publicity material such as website, Applicant Days, Open Days etc.</p> <p>Need to be mindful of consumer legislation.</p>	<p>Seek guidance from LTI/HEA/PSA resources.</p> <p>Facilitate Teaching and Learning activities such as in-class debates, hustings, scenarios etc. to ensure a range of views are expressed.</p>	<p>Accept role in facilitation of other students expressing views</p> <p>Understand requirement for political views to be respectful</p>	<p>Resource staff development (workload and budget)</p> <p>Resource support, information and dissemination (workload and budget)</p> <p>Include in Learning and Teaching Strategy, Annual Monitoring Reports etc.</p> <p>Discuss best practice in teaching and learning at team meetings</p> <p>Discuss with Faculty Teaching Fellow.</p>

Recommendation	Caveat	Outcomes	Stakeholders: Politics Academics	Stakeholders: Politics Students	Action for Politics Department
Politics Academics to be willing to express a range of political views	Academics must decide for themselves what is appropriate	Include examples of teaching and learning approaches in publicity material including website, Applicant Days, Open Days etc. Be mindful of consumer legislation.	Teaching and Learning approaches to include a range of political perspectives	Accept right of academic to decide what political views to present and which not to. Be tolerant of all political views.	Avoid a prescriptive approach towards an academic's teaching and learning
Politics Academics to avoid neutrality for the sake of neutrality and be willing to express their own political views	Consider implications of divulging views for both academics and students	Academics may feel more confident in expressing their own political views if measures are in place to safeguard them	Express own views and avoid neutrality if wished	Accept role in making context safe for academic	Ensure context is safe for academic to express views. This means emphasising to students the importance of respect for the academic's political views.

Recommendation	Caveat	Outcomes	Stakeholders: Politics Academics	Stakeholders: Politics Students	Action for Politics Department
Teach in small cohorts, or small groups within cohorts	There are resource implications	Publicity material including website, Applicant Days, Open Days etc. Be mindful of consumer legislation	Argue benefits of small group teaching Seek input from LTI/HEA	Engage in learning in order to sustain argument for small groups	Support both operationally and with resources Pilot ways of achieving the small group experience using fewer resources Include in Learning and Teaching Strategy, Annual Monitoring Reports etc.
Politics Academics is to support bonding in the cohort between students and between students and academics from the outset and facilitate a supportive teaching and learning setting	Manage student expectations Manage professionalism of academic and student relationships and be respectful of boundaries	Publicity material including website, Applicant Days, Open Days etc. Be mindful of consumer legislation Departmental student charter and	Support bonding with students and between students Be clear about availability and willingness to support students	Engage in the relationship as a partner and respect boundaries with students and academics	Resource and encourage open door policy and availability to support students for all academics Resource and support induction activities and evaluate

Recommendation	Caveat	Outcomes	Stakeholders: Politics Academics	Stakeholders: Politics Students	Action for Politics Department
		Departmental philosophy to emphasise student support			success of strategy Include in Learning and Teaching Strategy and Annual Monitoring

9.3 Reflective Knowledge Outcomes

Bamber (2011) suggests that staff who have been pedagogically trained will reflect as a norm. I am now able to reflect on the outcomes of this research and how this will affect my practice. My original supposition that students face difficulties when expressing their political views has been challenged. The research has instead focused on the relationship between the academic and the student and in particular on each one's expression of political views as related to the other's in the context of power and on performativity. It has become clear that my initial assumption that Politics student may be unable or reluctant to express their political views was flawed, or at least too simplistic. Some Politics students are expressing views if they wish to, just not necessarily their own. It is not clear that matters. What I had not anticipated was that my research would indicate that students might have a reason for wishing to know an academic's political views which is linked to their expressing their own political views. They see the academic as a facilitator for their own expression of political views and that facilitation means the expressing of a range of political views by the academic, including their own. It is the expressing of the academic's own views that raises issues of the power dynamic between the academic and the student. The reasons for wishing to know these views are, the research indicates, complex. I had failed to understand the motivations which students may have for wishing to know an academic's political views. My assumption that an effective Politics academic provides a range of political views and keeps either their own views out of the equation has also been questioned by this research. It is clear that academics need to appreciate the importance of their own declaration

of political views in relation to their students' political views. This may create a challenge if they are also, as the research suggests, being asked to avoid neutrality.

This research has indicated the need for further investigation of practitioners' concern about students expressing political views which may cause offence. The operationalisation of this concern could lead to academics deeming certain views offensive if they don't align with their views. If that is the case, Politics students could well be unable or reluctant to express their political views in case an academic found them offensive. Students would need to know an academic's political views in order to gauge the Politics academic's reaction to their own. This would then affect whether or not they are able to express their political views, and they might well feel unable to. It appears that students will influence what political views a practitioner expresses through their role in validating the academic's position as an expert. This validation may depend on students gauging that an academic's views are similar to their own or may imply the students mirroring the perceived academic view. It appears that students try very hard to gauge views, and think that they can. Practitioners however do not think that is the case.

I can evidence from my experience as a Politics academic that the findings from this research about the student experience are likely to also apply to the academic. I find it important to know the political views of colleagues in order to avoid making statements which would cause them offence. This means that my own political views remain undeclared in situations where my views are not aligned with those of others. I have experienced feeling unable to freely express my views during many years of working within social science contexts. It has been easier to say nothing or to agree with arguments which I do not support, mirroring the public as opposed to the private expression of views established in the findings. I find myself in the same situation as I was in as a student.

I learned during the research that the some student participants are aware of the importance of their education and of developing skills, that they are content with the teaching and learning they have received and believe that academics do a good job. I also learned that the academic role in the Politics classroom is key for some students to providing a managed and safe context. I learned that enabling the students to build bonds early on, with each other and with academics, may be important and that this is more easily done in a small group, or by breaking into smaller groups. Ironically, as a manager dealing with scarce resources, I will find it difficult to implement the resource heavy practice guidelines linked to teaching in smaller groups but this research has provided me with a number of action points to take forward and pilots to get underway. I was

well supported by academic colleagues willing to participate in the research. I have also been gratified that colleagues have been discussing my findings and that the research has led to a wider debate in the Department about the issue of students and their expressing of political views. One practitioner commented:

“These findings highlight very interesting and important aspects which are worth discussing in order to enhance the students’ learning context and learning experience and their critical thinking training.” (4)

10. Dissemination, Impact and Further Research

Dissemination of this exploratory study based on practice and perceptions in one University Department will be undertaken through the network of Departmental Learning and Teaching Representatives and the Teaching Fellow in the Faculty of Social Science at the University of Chester who offer input into a number of fora where this research is likely to have relevance. The University's Annual Staff Conference presents the opportunity to disseminate to a university-wide mix of academic staff. The findings will be disseminated more widely among colleagues at the PSA's Teaching and Learning Politics Specialist Group, the PSA's online Teaching and Learning resources and the HEA's Annual Conference. Eventual outcomes will include a journal publication. Email discussions have taken place with the Associate Editor with special responsibility for articles about the teaching and learning of Politics for European Political Science. There are a number of potential journal articles which can be developed from the main findings of this research.

This research has impacted on student participants involved in the student qualitative empirical research in their role as the student co-researcher(s) and their understanding of their development as critical learners. As collaborative participants in the research, the research process will have developed critical thinking and evaluative skills in the students. Participants have already used this experience on their CV, as evidence of applied research skills. The academic practitioners who took part have also been collaborative participants in the process, and have gained some insights into the research as well as fulfilling a collegial role in supporting a colleague's research. Any concern that the findings might only be of interest to those who were already politically or pedagogically sympathetic to the issues raised or supportive of student centred research has been addressed by linking the areas of discussion to the wider debates about power and performativity.

There is further research which can be conducted in order to explore the findings, and for which funding will be sought from the University of Chester's fund for pedagogical research. Proposals for further research will consider differentiating between actual and expressed political views, and the meaning of the term 'political' views as distinct from 'opinion'. In further research it might be important to determine from which cohort student participants come and whether or not the findings are specific to Politics students, or apply to any discipline, through conducting research in other Departments in the University of Chester and in other HEIs with both Politics students and Politics academics. Given the common Benchmark, any

difference or similarity between Politics and International Relations students can be explored further. The fact that in the research the student and the academic participants are self-selecting could be relevant and the role played by the researcher may affect the findings. Therefore follow-up quantitative research with both students and academics could test the initial findings. Specifically it will be useful to determine the prevalence of Politics students wishing to know an academic's political views and their reasons for it. Whether Politics students or Politics academics perceive a link between student or academic political views and assessments is another area to be explored further. Finally to be investigated is where a student's political views are deemed offensive by an academic, though the student does not consider them to be and conversely where an academic's political views might be criticised by students for being offensive to them. This new information could provide data to underpin the indication that knowing the other's political views affects the expression of student and academic political views. Additional research can include looking at group dynamics, cognitive dissonance, duplicity and dishonesty which this study does not investigate beyond suggesting they may have a role in student or academic behaviours. The practice guidance resulting from this research will be applied during the 2015/2016 academic year in the form of a number of pilots in the Department of Social and Political Science and the outcomes from these pilots can form the basis of future practice guidance as well as new research.

11. Conclusion

The research aim of this exploratory study is to identify what Politics academic practice can learn from the experience which Politics students have of expressing their political views. As a result of empirical research undertaken with both Politics students and Politics academics and linked to the key findings from the literature, practice guidance has been proposed which can form the basis of further research. In order to achieve the research aim, the experience of Politics students in one University Department has been investigated. Politics academics from the same Department have responded to the initial practice guidance and the data from both students and academics has therefore informed the guidance for the practice of the Politics academic while also pointing to knowledge and reflective outcomes and contributions to wider practice. Finally, opportunities for dissemination and for further research have been described.

The single case study research has identified a number of exploratory findings which were not anticipated at the outset of the study. The finding that Politics students may express views which are not their own and that they prefer Politics academics to declare their own political views is underpinned by the suggestion that the reasons for this may be linked to the power dynamics in their interaction with the academic. In particular, students may wish to know an academic's political views in order to gain favour. The possibility that expressing political views may not be appropriate is informed by the concern of practitioners that certain political views may cause offence. This suggests selectivity in relation to the judgement over which political views may cause offence. The research has challenged the initial assumptions of the research that Politics students have difficulties expressing their political views and that Politics academics should remain neutral in their expressing of political views. This has led to a questioning of the practice of the researcher and other academic colleagues who have aimed for political neutrality. This has led the researcher to reconsider her practice, and to initiate practice-based pilots in the Department for 2015/2016 in order to establish how fit for purpose the practice guidance derived from this study is. At the same time, further research will test the findings and explore a number of the issues raised. Dissemination of this study will therefore incorporate any new findings both from the Departmental pilots and from further academic research and this will widen the scope of the study further. The thesis has therefore contributed new knowledge which has a potential impact on not just my practice, but more widely on the practice of other academic practitioners.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Matrix of Themes for Literature Review

Theme	Sources	Key Arguments
Theme: Changes in HE and impact on academic role		<i>Academics are seen as failing to challenge the changes, and in some ways choosing to ignore them and behaving as they have done in the past. The indication is that holding on to autonomy and elitism is out of step with develops such as mass education and quality assurance.</i>
	Maasen (2000) Austin (2002)	Changing role related to external pressures creates tensions
	Tapsall (2001) Middlehurst (2002)	Changing Identities
	Clarke Hyde and Drennan (2011)	Unbundling of role challenging traditional role
	West (2006) Kubler and Sayers (2010)	Managerial v professional-changing role
	Ryan (2004) McDonald (2009)	Knowledge v commerce/ management- changing role, and marketisation
	Whitchurch (2006)	New social Contract
	Deem, Hilliard and Reed (2007)	Rethink academic enterprise
	Trowler (1998) Unterhalter and Carpentier (2010)	Troubled and negative in face of change
	Polanyi (1962) Moutsios (2012)	Remain self-governing researchers and autonomous
	Rodgers, Freeman, Williams and Kane (2001) Newton (2002) Hazelkorn (2008) Whitworth (2009)	Massification and quality revolution

Theme	Sources	Key Arguments
	Moten and Harney (1990) Bourdieu, Passeron and St Martin (1994) Brighouse (2010) McCaffery (2010)	Continuing Elitism and false sense of autonomy
	Weber (1991) Newton (2002) Lillie (2003)	Standardisation of QA and impact of bureaucracy
	Hazelkorn (2008)	Effect of League tables
	Doring (2002) Schofer and Meyer (2005) Molesworth, Scullion and Nixon (2011)	<i>Academics as blameworthy and lack of criticality</i>
Theme: Purpose of HE		<i>It is argued that as well as the role which academics see themselves as holding, the purpose which they see HE as having will affect how they relate to their students and what forms of learning and teaching they adopt. The sources indicate some tension between HE as seeking a pursuit of knowledge, and HE as a commodity. In addition, the role played by HE in society is contested. On the one hand it can be seen to meet certain social agendas and on the other be contributory to employment, and these are not seen as necessarily mutually exclusive. The student has power in terms of being able to make economic choices. Sources in the UK and the US have different perspectives on the debate.</i>
	Newman (1955) Reich (2003) Widavsky (2010) Collini (2012)	Pursuit of knowledge
	Lyotard (1993) Ritzer (2004) Rochford (2008)	Commodity
	Boyer (1967) Lindholm (2004) Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich and Corngold (2007) Nixon (2011)	Social agenda for HE

Theme	Sources	Key Arguments
	Taylor (2003) MacMahon(2009)	HE and link with political engagement
	Pagano (1999)	Knowledge has consequences
	Morley (2001)	Universities meeting demands of capitalism
	Cobban (1990) Smith and Webster (2002)	Link between education and outcome
	Rochford (2008)	Student economic choices
	Westheimer and Kahne (1994) Palmer, Zajong and Scribner (2010) Placek (2012)	Education as transformative or contributing to democratic ideals
	Barnett (1997) Harland (2009) ESCR (2010)	Lack of criticality by academics
	Neary and Hagyard (2011)	Call for radicalisation of pedagogy
	Shulman (2007) Frueh, Blaney, Dunne, Leonard and Sharoni (2008)	Liberal ideas in HE
	CBI (2009) Pegg and Baldwin (2004) Curtis and Rolfe (2011) Pegg, Waldock, Hendy-Isaacs and Lawson (2012)	Employability key to HE
	Bacon and Sloam (2010) Gorry (2010)	Difference between US and UK
Theme: Purpose of a Politics Degree		<i>The same debate about the purpose of HE plays out in the sources specific to a Politics degree and again there does not seem to be any necessary tension. It is clear that engagement with the political sphere has long been part of a politics degree, and not least political theory. The QAA benchmark indicates that students should be able to express their views as part of their educational experience and their employability</i>
	Oakeshott (1962) Denver and Hands (1990) Walsh (2002) Hylligus (2005) Brosig and Kas (2008) Johnson (2008)	Engagement with the political sphere

Theme	Sources	Key Arguments
	Gorham, (2000) Craig (2009) Yaghi (2009) Curtis and Blair (2011) Ashe (2012)	Politics academic as encompassing both/ not at odds with employability
	QAA (2015)	Benchmark indicates support for the expressing of political views
Theme: Teaching and Learning in Politics		<i>The context for teaching and learning with the student at the centre is explored. While the terminology is deemed unclear, there is an increased emphasis on the learner, and this is seen as supporting the student-centred nature of this research. There are some issues over the credibility of teaching and learning research. There is some concern over whether Politics can be seemed a discipline, which given the emphasis on Politics in the research could be problematic. The benchmark supports the specifics which go towards making a Politics degree, and a Politics graduate. There are numerous sources on Politics teaching and learning. Many of these point towards the importance of engaging with the wider political sphere, and again this underpins the potential role for expressing political views. A view sources see the classroom as a separate space. The role of anonymity in participation in the classroom raises some issues in relation to the expressing of political views.</i>
	Book and Putman (1992) French and Bazalgette (1996) Niemi (2009)	Increased emphasis on student learning and student experience
	Palmer (2010)	Relationships
	O'Neill and McMahon (2003) Savin-Baden, MacFarland and Savin-Baden (2008)	Lack of clarity over meaning
	Malcolm and Zukas (2007)	Legitimacy of research area

Theme	Sources	Key Arguments
	Little, Locke, Parker and Richardson (2007) Cousins (2010)	Solution to bridging two areas of research
	Gibbons et al (2007) Grant (2010) Hay (2010) QAA (2015)	Politics as discipline
	Nagel (1999) Gates (2009)	Student-centred teaching and learning in Politics engaging with wider sphere
	Eulau (1977)	Classroom as separate from politics
	Damron and Mott (2005) Hamman Pollock and Wilson (2009) Gormley-Heenan and McCartan (2009)	Anonymity and participation
Theme: Power and the Academic		<i>The research has arisen out of a concern over whether power has an affect over whether or not a student is able to express their political views. The sources indicate that there may well be a power-related link as to why students may wish to know an academic's political views, or conversely choose not to express their own views. The possibility of favoured political views and favourable marking is highlighted. The bases of power which may relate to the academic and the student role are identified as is the role of the student audience in affirming power</i>
	Bar and Zussman (2012)	Link between political views and assessment
	Richmond and McCroskey (1992) Richmond and Roach (1992) Hindess (1996)	Negotiated power
	French and Raven (1959)	Bases of power
	Poggi (2001) Sorensen and Christophel (1992)	Role of audience
Theme: Academic and Influence		<i>The sources also indicated that power lies in the selection framing and narration of the curriculum. The part which ideology can play is also highlighted in the sources. There are a</i>

Theme	Sources	Key Arguments
		<i>number of references to how soon academic can present a particular perspective with the potential then to influence the student, such as using persuasion or rhetoric, with an implicit (and sometimes explicit) concern over the dominance of ideas. The importance of student's ability to be literate is key. Finally, the context is seen to affect a student's ability to engage critically as their experience will affect how they relate to the academic.</i>
	Barnett (1990) Alkadry and Miller (1999) Walsby (2009) Conversi (2012) Muriga, Musingafi and Chiwanza (2013)	Use of ideology/ideology free and role of ideology
	Baiman, Boushey and Saunders (2000) Bates and Jenkins (2007 a and b)	Teaching contested concepts
	Kincheloe and Berry (2004) Wesley, White and Lowenthal (2011)	Selection of curriculum, framings
	Gerstenfeld (2003) Georgakopolou and Goutsos (2004) Freeman (2009) Norton (2010)	Narrative
	Aristotle (1991) Readings (1997)	Rhetoric
	Sanders (2010)	Persuasion
	Potter (2001) Thornton (2011)	Media Literacy
	Bleich (1995)	Education as enlightenment
	Sorokos (2005) Valenzano (2012)	Lecture as dominant
	Georghita (2005) Dion (2008) Niven (2011)	Influences in class
Theme: Academic Political views		<i>Given a possible link between a student expressing a particular political view, and an academic's resultant behaviour (such as in terms of marking or in terms of power) the sources which address an academic</i>

Theme	Sources	Key Arguments
		<i>political views are potentially key to a student's ability to express their views. A number of sources look at whether or not an academic influences student's political views, and conclude that they are only one of many influences. A number of sources raise concern for the academic expressing their views. UK and US sources indicate different causes for academics to be concerned. Other sources suggest that the academic should do so, while others indicate that students will be able to guess their views even if they are not explicit. One strong argument for revealing views is concerned with the development of their students' criticality.</i>
	Loscos and Deollos (2007) La Falce and Gomez (2007)	Academics do not indoctrinate students
	Gregory (2001)	Academic prejudice
	Cotton (2006)	Students know academic's views
	Hess (2009) Journell (2011)	Arguments over academics expressing views
	Kelly-Woessner and Woessner (2009)	Students critical of academic views
	Lukes (2005)	Sanctions need not be real
	Bachratz and Baratz (1972)	Influence as power without sanctions
	Woessner and Kelly Woessner (2009)	Academics do reveal views
	Bachrach and Bennett (1977)	Academics should reveal views
	De Shalit (2005)	Revealing views and criticality
	West (1998)	Revealing views and advocacy
	Gardner (1998)	Detachment but passion
	L'Etang (2009)	Move into public sphere
	Brookes (1965)	Context of fear

Theme	Sources	Key Arguments
	Rammel (2007) Palfreyman (2007)	UK perspective
Theme: Performativity and the academic		<i>The role that the academic enacts has been a theme running throughout this literature review. The role in terms of performance is highlighted by the interaction between the academic and the student. Once again, the uncertainty of the role and the dependence for its validation on the student audience is emphasised. The role can be seen to adopt a variety of performance related variables including medium and entertainer. Sources consider means of enabling students to express their views through academic facilitation and also how certain approaches can have the opposite effect.</i>
	Goffman (1990)	Performativity
	French and Raven (1959)	Role of audience
	Corpus Ong (2008)	Entertainer
	Katz Blumler and Gurevitch (1973)	Users and Gratifications
	Windahl Signitzer and Olson (1973)	Media Theory
	Omelycheva (2007) Frueh, Blaney, Dunne, Gough, Leonard and Sharoni (2008) (2008) Coffey Miller and Feuersten (2011)	Enabling students to express their views
	Longo and Meyer (2006) Longo, Drury and Battistoni (2006)	Academic perspective
	Marks (2008)	Not specific to Politics
	Henson and Denker (2009)	Student self-silencing
Theme: Political Socialisation		<i>The rationalisation for why students might wish to or should express their political views is key to the research. How students form their views is a topic which occurs throughout the literature review, but specifically where sources are focusing on political</i>

Theme	Sources	Key Arguments
		<i>socialisation. Sources have not highlighted the academic as a particular influence. Others can be seen as background, race and gender. The manner in which ideology can play a part in the classroom interaction and therefore on the development of political ideas. There are indications that cognitive dissonance on the classroom might affect the forming of political views.</i>
	Boyer (1987) Dey (1996) Beaumont et al (2006) Masuoka (2008) Smith, Mayer and Fritschler (2008) Woessner and Kelly-Woessner (2009) Morehouse Mendez (2010) Gordon and Taft (2012) Pascarella, Salisbury, Martin and Blaich (2012)	Political socialisation of students
	Nakhaie and Bryman (2011)	Academics and students as left of centre
	Lipset (1982)	Intellectual creativity/ critical social views
	Bourdieu, Passeron and St Martin (1994) Westby and Braungart (1996) O'Connell and Sedlacek (1971)	Link to parental politics/ social background
	Dion (2008) Morehouse Mendez (2010)	Gender
	Masuoka (2008)	Race
	Klein and Stern (2009) Walsby (2009)	Ideology
	Carkernord and Bullington (1993) Buckmaster and McKenzie (2009)	Cognitive Dissonance
Theme: Students and Expressing their Political Views.		<i>Sources which address the student expressing of political views, while not focusing specifically on the research aim, do provide some useful insight. Again the experiences which the student brings to the classroom is seen as having relevance. Students are seen to be less anxious about expressing</i>

Theme	Sources	Key Arguments
		<i>views which are not political. A number of sources look at the practice of politics as providing an opportunity for expressing political views.</i>
	Beavers (2005) Longo and Meyer (2006) Longo, Drury and Battistoni (2006) Kersh (2007) Gavrilis and El-Ghobashy (2009)	Listening to student voices
	Csajko and Lindaman (2011)	Politics students and expressing views
	Hildreth (2006)	Reflection and self- development
	Nixen (2011)	Cultural context
	Gheorghita (2005)	Shared memories
	Colby et al (2007)	Openness to new ideas
	Gershtenson, Rainey and Rainey (2010) Coffey, Miller and Feuerstein (2011)	Political re-enactment and engagement
	Sponenberg (2012)	Less anxiety in non-political
	Damron and Mott (2005) Gormley-Heenan and McCartan (2009) Hamann, Pollock and Wilson (2009)	Online participation
	Garcia (2005) Omelicheva (2007) Frueh, Blaney, Dunne, Gough, Leonard and Sharoni (2008)	Pedagogy means to facilitation
	Marks (2008)	Evidence from other disciplines
	Hess (2004, 2009)	Politics school teacher perspective

Appendix Two: Sample Transcript from Student Participant

Speaker key: S1 Speaker One, S2 Speaker 2 Duration 26 minutes 54 seconds

Timecode	Speaker	Transcript
00:00:00	S1	So, okay. Well, thank you very much indeed. I'm going to present a research title to you, and I'm going to ask you to give me some idea of what it means to you. So it is expressing political views in the higher education classroom, the experience of Politics undergraduates.
00:00:24	S2	Well, to me that says, not only is it expressing personal political views; so, say, if you were following a certain party or you read a certain paper that had a political allegiance, you might, sort of, be drawn towards views, but it's also, sort of, views as a whole that aren't necessarily politically persuading. So, maybe a view that you don't necessarily agree with or a view of someone else from the past that is...you're putting forward. And, though...so its views from all different angles that sort of come together inside the classroom. I think that's what's unique about higher education, you get views that you don't always agree with, but at the same time held towards none. And you may end up using them to sort of aid your own work even if they're not views you necessarily take.
00:01:07	S1	Okay, delving a bit further into some of that, have you had any experience of expressing political views in the classroom, whether it's academics, whether it's other students? Have you observed anything that you think would be relevant to this study?
00:01:26	S2	Yeah, definitely we have debates constantly. And the views that come out sometimes are from people that you might say, "How can you possibly think that?" But then that's good because it allows you, then, to come back and give your own view which creates some sort of arguing within the classroom so that people can say, "I didn't think of that," or "Oh, that's a good point, actually. Why didn't I put that in my essay?" Or things like that. Whereas, sometimes, in lower education classrooms, you'll get, "Does anyone disagree with this point?" and everyone would just be quiet and say, "No, it's not worth the arguing." But within a...particularly within a Politics classroom, there's always debate and there's always people that are willing

		to say, “Well, have you thought of this? Have you thought of that?” And you know, it just makes for a good debate inside a classroom.
00:02:11	S1	Do you think that everybody would feel that way, that everyone would feel able to express their views?
00:02:11	S2	I don’t think everyone does. I think sometimes you do get that feeling of, you know, there’s certain people that you see that don’t contribute. And so you think to yourself, they’ve obviously got ideas because it’s impossible not to have ideas. But I think some people do get a bit anxious about, possibly, putting them forward. The reasons behind it, I think, maybe it’s because they think that people possibly judge them for what, the views that they put forward, rather than seeing them as constructive. And then there’s other people that maybe put their views out a bit too much and sort of say, “This is the right way of doing things, this is the wrong way of doing things.” Again, you can’t...there’s got to be a middle ground, which I think that you have.
00:02:57	S1	Do you think some people could feel that they were being labelled by expressing their views? I’m trying to get a feel for what the student experience might be of...you presented a positive, pedagogically sound perspective. I’m trying to get under that to see if there could be a scenario where somebody’s experience was different from yours.
00:03:25	S2	Oh, there definitely could be. I think if someone has grown up...maybe liking the ideas of a certain party, like...I know, in my experience, maybe, people have always said, “Oh, you’re a Tory.” And, you know, I’ve been judged for those kind of views. It’s not the fact that I’m loyal to the Conservative Party; it’s just the views that I take. And I also take views from the Labour Party; I also take views from the Liberal Democrat Party. But because most of my views about...are shared by the Conservative Party, I sort of get labelled in that sense. And that could easily happen to someone else as well. If you were in a sort of controversial debate and they put forward an argument that exists, but isn’t generally accepted, they could say, “That’s what that person thinks.” And that could be, lead to some sort of tension.

00:04:06	S1	Do you think, then, that somebody whose views are centre, right of centre, is likely, in Politics and higher education, to be...to find it harder to express their views than somebody whose position...? I'm using those labels, actually. You can dispute those labels.
00:04:26	S2	I think they could, they could potentially find it harder. Well, it depends what that person, I would say, is. I mean if you've got a personality that says, "I don't care and I'm going to put that view forward because that's the view I agree with," or "That's the view that's sensible to put forward." But I think there is sort of a centre left sort of feel that went, that's a safe sort of area to sit, to go, and wish we'd all just get along, and that kind of thing. But then, when someone out puts forward and says, "Well, actually, in order for this to happen, this bad thing must happen," then some people...you know, the room for judgement is definitely there for that person. It just might be right of the centre.
00:05:03	S1	Okay. What about the role of the academic in this?
00:05:07	S2	I think the academic plays a very important role in that they've got to not only strive to stay in the middle and put all the arguments together, but they've also got to not be judgemental ourselves. And even for an academic, it's impossible not to sometimes think, "That's a bit of a harsh view," or "Maybe I don't agree with that view," but in the sense that, as an academic, you've...especially in the classroom, you've got to sort of teach people to feel that way and to sort of put their views forward. It's important for them to stay as unbiased as they possibly can, but at the same time, expressing the view that they may or may not agree with to sort of give the idea of, like, synopticity to an argument.
00:05:46	S1	Without naming names, is that something that's easily achieved by the academic, do you think?
00:05:52	S2	I wouldn't say it's easily achieved, but I'd say it's maybe necessarily achieved. It's not easily achieved because, you sort of, you know, when certain theories come forward, the way that those theories are explained, right, they explain in a way that's biased. You know, because it's hard to, like, it's impossible to (inaudible) the agenda. So if you're expressing a view, the way you express it and who benefits and who doesn't benefit, the

		way you express those things, could lead to bias. But at the same time, as long as the counterargument is put forward to represent those who may not agree with that perspective, then that sort of creates some air of balance that allows the students to come out and say, “Yeah, I agree with that side,” or “I agree with that side.”
00:06:34	S1	That’s quite an idealistic view of the academic.
00:06:36	S2	Yeah, exactly.
00:06:39	S1	And you think that balance is where the academic should....What about academics – again, not naming any names – but academics with very, very strong political views? How would people whose views were different from their views or...?
00:06:53	S2	I think if you’ve got...if an academic’s got a strong view, then that’s...it’s fine to put forward that view, and maybe, let’s say that you agree with that view because you then...you spark debate from someone who doesn’t agree with it. And that creates some sort of...creates education for everybody because you’ve got two points bouncing off of each other. Whereas if you got a classroom of people that don’t necessarily want to put their views forward, then the academic probably has to judge to sort of to see what the ambience is, if you like, about the people and see whether it’s nec—if it’s...what’s the word...if it’s...can’t think of it...acceptable, if you like, to put forward such a strong view if no one’s going to argue about it, because then it could feel like, you know, you are pushing a view on to somebody. If that makes any sense at all.
00:07:43	S1	I mean, do you think some academics see pushing their views as being appropriate part of encouraging social change and...?
00:07:56	S2	I think...I think sometimes they do, and I think their pushing that certain view is necessary as long as there is something there to say but this isn’t...this isn’t the only way to do it. (Overlapping Conversation)
00:08:06	S1	So, in other words, it’s important for an academic to have those views so that you can learn from them or argue with them? Okay, that’s....

00:08:15	S2	Because like I say you can't be completely objective; it's impossible, so.
00:08:17	S1	That's very thoughtful. That's very thoughtful.
00:08:18	S2	So I have to say, for example, a lot of students willing to argue that point and for them to do that, feel comfortable doing that, creates the ideas bouncing off each other which allows both people to have their points and it allows them what else to learn.
00:08:30	S2	That's very thoughtful. Very eloquently put. I wonder whether everybody would be able to see things quite such a rounded way.
00:08:41	S2	Yeah, one of the....Maybe I'm looking too deeply into it; I'm too idealistically into it.
00:08:46	S1	No, I...it's your experience, it's your experience. I'm wondering about your experience with other students, then; possibly the Politics class but maybe other cohorts, because you experienced other groups. What about the dynamics there with expressing political views?
00:09:05	S2	I think the Politics cohort, especially this time around, has been excellent. You know, there's not really been anyone who's been afraid to put forward views even those that you might think that they're, you know, quiet at first, they've come out and they've said it and, you know. Especially when we put together another debate society, you know, mostly Politics cohort came together, and all banging their ideas off each other and it's really great. And we actually got in contact with the religious ethics students as well...theology and things like that. They all, they came along to one of our debates as well and they were really good. They expressed their own political views, and they put a religious slant on it which was really interesting to build towards the debate. But then when we had sort of the criminology students in, I felt, especially being friends with one of them, I felt that there was...they were a bit out of depth sometimes. Especially in some of the really deeper Politics, where we had, like when we're looking at philosophy and things like that, you know, I don't feel that it was comfortable to sort of, to bring up their political ideas because I think it was sometimes a level above....Not to say that Criminology is lower or anything, because it's certainly not, and I couldn't begin to understand some of the

		stuff that they go through. But, I think in that political arena, they were sometimes, [inaudible 00:10:07].
00:10:10	S1	Yes. So you could have been alienating this group of Politics students. Could...?
00:10:14	S2	Yeah, I mean it must have been a scary experience because I know...because I took a class that was built for criminologists, and it was me and, I think, one of the Politics students. And the way that sometimes they went...they certainly explain certain views like, "We all know this." And then, "Oh, I...I don't." So you have to ask (Overlapping Conversation)
00:10:29	S1	So you would have experienced...?
00:10:31	S2	Yeah, I experienced the exact same thing. I mean, I still put my views forward, but then...because they benefited from the Politics stance, but I think that's probably more my personality than anything, that I'm not afraid to sort of express my views. But then some people that might be a bit more timid and then put in an arena they're not comfortable with, it can lead to no views being expressed at all.
00:10:53	S1	A quite complex interaction.
00:10:53	S2	Yeah, I think so, yeah.
00:10:57	S1	So I think that you said that in part, because of your particular approach, you are seeing healthy, robust debate as being something positive, but also acknowledging that it may be that people who are not so inclined could find it harder to express their views.
00:11:19	S2	Yeah, exactly. Yeah.
00:11:21	S1	Do you think that matters?
00:11:22	S2	I think it does matter because it, you know, I don't think I'd have got the marks that I've got personally if I hadn't been in those debates because there were certainly views that I didn't think of that came up. And I know, well, I think a lot of people, when a debate starts, they sort of shy away. They just want to...zone out a bit, ...and they don't want to...because they think that

		<p>you've taken interest, then they may be asked to take part. It feels that...I mean you see it...I've seen it through high school and college. Similar things debated over, what's right and what's wrong in the Politics classes we've done there. And certain people stay put and stay out of the way, and there's a few that sort of will debate. And they seem to, 9 out of 10 get better marks because of the way that they express. So maybe more needs to be done by both academics and students as well to encourage those that don't participate to participate.</p>
00:12:08	S1	<p>Do you think it's Politics as a subject, or would other subjects, think about...you mentioned high school, and you mentioned Politics at university? Is it Politics, the subject, that's doing this or could it be any subject?</p>
00:12:23	S2	<p>I think it could potentially be a number of subjects. I mean, there's a lot of subjects where maybe debate isn't as open; whether, you know, there's certain facts, and those facts need to be learned, you know. But then in Politics where there's never an answer, or theology where there's never an answer or maybe in criminology, sociology...there's never really an answer to any of the questions. That debate can always and will always be present because there are so many different arguments, whereas if you were to look at, say mathematics, there's no arguing that two plus two does equal four. You know, there's no one else saying, no, it doesn't. So that debate might not exist the same, if you understand what I'm getting at.</p>
00:12:59	S1	<p>Is there a difference between intellectually argued political views and your own personal, deeply-held, value-based political views and is that difference in the classroom visible...?</p>
00:13:17	S2	<p>I think it definitely is, yeah, it definitely is. An intellectual political view is something that you've summed up all the points, summed up all the arguments, and said, "This is the sensible argument." Whereas if you were to dig deep down and say, "This is what I really feel," you end up coming up with an argument that might not be appropriate and it might not be in any way right to express it in that arena. Because of, you know, you see some of the views that are formed by the media around certain topics, and you hear</p>

		those views commonly but they're not intellectual views; they're just what's been read in the papers or....
00:13:51	S1	Okay, give me an example.
00:13:51	S2	I think the biggest example has got to be immigration. It's got to be the biggest example, because everyone sort of says that foreign people come over here....I've heard this, I've quoted this. It's, "They come over here, they take our jobs, and younger British people don't get the jobs." I'm thinking, but surely that's not a problem of immigration if they've come over legally, is it? You start to weigh up those intellectual points. They have to stop and think about the argument that they're making. Because I put forward an intellectual argument, whether I agree with their standpoint or not, I put forward that intellectual argument; it makes them stop and think a lot, then forms that to something much more agreeable, appropriate point to make. If there was a mass of evidence to say that in fact foreign people are coming over here and taking up numbers of jobs and leaving none for the British people, then maybe that would be an appropriate argument. As of yet, there's not really any sound evidence that puts that forward. It's just media slur.
00:14:42	S1	Well, what about if students had views that were somehow, you felt were not appropriate? Should they be voiced in a Politics classroom...?
00:14:55	S2	It's difficult, that one.
00:14:55	S1	...using that example that you gave me there?
00:14:57	S2	That's a difficult one. I mean, they should definitely be allowed. You know, we should be allowed to have...feel those feelings, but whether, I think a person has to judge themselves as to whether or not that would be a right argument to put forward. And, you know, it would reflect badly, it would go back to the judgement of a student. It would probably reflect badly on them, because obviously, you know, I don't think we've ever had a lecture or a seminar that's ever said this. That's pointing towards that sort of outlandish feeling; so they don't obviously weigh all the intellectual points. I think a university is an area where you need to sort of have some sort of knowledge, and you know you need to be able to weigh, or put a degree of

		argument, and to make such to make a really forward argument that's probably based on no evidence at all would probably be inappropriate, I think. I think a lot of academic and students would feel the same.
00:15:48	S1	Yes. Yes. What about if you know an academic's political perspective? Is it appropriate for them to have strong political views in the classroom?
00:16:05	S2	Erm...that's a difficult one. It might be, it might not be appropriate for to put forward in a classroom but it might be....
00:16:14	S1	I'm trying to get your experience. You can answer these things as you would.
00:16:15	S2	Yeah, that's fine. I don't think I'd feel comfortable in a classroom if an academic was to put forward...like, to push a certain set of ideals that were linked to a political party, for example. But if they were to, if they were looking at ideals as a whole and said, "This one has been, is, played a bigger part in society," then that would be slightly different at, I think. I mean there'd still be bias there, as long....
00:16:40	S1	Without mentioning names, have you experienced a range of different approaches from academics?
00:16:47	S2	I've experienced some academics that have gone through a whole range, you know, of experience, academics in the past that have actually, you know, sort of shut off certain aspects and gone, "This is the way that it was done. It's like this, like...." So there's other ways that, you know, there was other feelings and you've...maybe sometimes, you didn't feel comfortable expressing those kind of, saying, "Well, maybe you're wrong." You know....
00:17:10	S1	Carry on. I'm teasing that one out.
00:17:14	S2	You know, I think a lot of, a lot, especially when looking at the historical views, and the way that the things happened. There's no changing that; that's the way things happened. But there's...it's said sometimes now, I mean, of, "That was the right thing to do. That was the wrong thing to do," without taking a step back and saying, "Well, maybe that was the right thing

		to do for those people, or the right thing to do for these people.” You know. And you sort of felt, “Okay, well he said it, so that must be right,” or “She said it; that must be right.” And then in other classrooms, you get a feel where everyone is so comfortable to just put forward any view that they want, and it gets mashed together and then some people will say, “Have you thought about this,” and “Have you thought about that?” And we quiz each other and we certainly...it sparks thought, but sometimes you get a lecture where no thought is sparked. It’s just sort of putting forth, you know, “That’s it. That’s what happened, write it down. Get it on your exam,” kind of thing. (Overlapping Conversation)
00:18:07	S1	So would good teaching be the latter from your point of view ? a good teacher would provide a balance?
00:18:18	S2	I think so, but at the same time wouldn’t be also afraid to put forward because it would be hypocritical to say, “We can express our own views as a student, but you can’t as an academic.” But at the same time, like I said earlier, there has to be a place where the other arguments can be seen as well to allow that learning process. Otherwise, you’re just learning what...you’re like on one track and just learning without being able to divert and explore the paths that you could, that you could take towards...
00:18:43	S1	So do you think there is something potentially quite sensitive about political views, the personal side of political views that makes it different from views that you might have about other things or actually are they just a set of views that are the same as everything else?
00:19:00	S2	I think, I think a lot of the time, I think political is definitely nowadays different from just normal views. I think there’s a certain accepted area of political views about what you say about certain issues. At the same time, your personal views, you know, they might differ.
00:19:18	S1	Okay.
00:19:19	S2	You’re sort of saying, “I feel this because I feel that’s the way I should feel.” And if you were to dig deep down your personal views, I don’t know if there is...I think there is a difference.

00:19:28	S1	Is that the case in the classroom?
00:19:31	S2	I don't know because I don't really see many personal views in the classroom to be honest with you. It's mostly political views in there because, you know, I don't spend a lot of time with the students outside of the classroom. So their personal views on certain issues might not be that prevalent to....
00:19:46	S1	So you wouldn't know the gap between the two?
00:19:49	S2	No, I wouldn't know. I wouldn't know the party allegiance of most unless they told me. And that might differ there. That might change their personal views but it might not, they might come into the classroom and leave those party views at the door and say, "This is what needs to be done" and my personal view is this would be the right way to go, that kind of thing.
00:20:08	S1	Okay. Anything else in this area that you think is worth mentioning? You've been very helpful. You provided a range...
00:20:17	S2	I feel like I've just gone around these...saying if one of the....
00:20:19	S1	...provided a range of different thoughts. There is something very optimistic about your approach. You're positive about it. And I think I'm hearing you say that the balance within education is that kind of healthy element of discussion and debate. Could it be suggests, then, that somebody who wasn't happy with that level of robust debate, perhaps Politics isn't the right subject for them?
00:20:53	S2	I say Politics definitely isn't the right, I'd say it definitely isn't the right subject for them.
00:20:57	S1	Right.
00:20:58	S2	If you're not willing to debate a point and put a point forward, then there's not really much that you can be involved in, in Politics. And for my experience journalistically, I've had to push my view forward and drag people and say, "Well, this is, this is what I think and that's what I'm putting out there whether you agree with it or not." Because in journalism it's very different to academia and that's what I've noticed. Whereas if you're an

		academic, you still need to argue those points. You know, in academia, you've got to put the points forward. In general, you've got to push the points forward. In Politics in the Commons, they've got to push their own points forward; views of their constituents, their views of party....And those points bounce off each other. There's not really any area in this that you can be involved without being able, without having to argue a point or put forward a point, I think.
00:21:42	S1	So do you think there might be something about the nature of Politics students, and the nature of the Politics experience of Politics students which could be different from the experience of other student?
00:21:52	S2	From the outset, I think a Politics student has to argue with other people that Politics is interesting, because if they think, you know, when they say, "I'm interested in Politics," people will go, you know, "It's boring." And you go, "No, it isn't." And you, that starts debate straightaway. Every single person that said, "I studied Politics at university" go, "What are you doing that for?" And you go, "Well, this is why we put forward (Mumbling) interest, obviously...." I mean "Yeah." It's, like, you know, you've got to argue from day one that (Mumbling) in Politics, and if you shy away from that, there's not, you know....You won't, you won't progress. You'll just sort of take what thrown at you, be a passive receiver of all these political lessons and you won't be able to sit back and say, "Well, that's wrong, that's wrong," or "I don't agree with that, no, I prefer that." And then push....And then you've got to back up those arguments that you made.
00:22:33	S1	So could it almost be a positive for somebody who is finding it difficult to express their views to be in that situation? Because as a Politics student, that's kind of what you have to do.
00:22:47	S2	Yeah, yeah. I think so. I think it could help. Depends how open they are, to trying it and change because if they, if they're very closed and just want to say, "No, I just want to get on, I just want to get to my degree. I just want to get an easy ride and just try to do the best I can. But I can't, say, do any fighting for anything." Because I think even in the workplace or any job, you've got to, you've got to push your why you think you're good, for example. In the same way, you've got to push an idea why you think that's

		the right way to go. But at the same time, like I said earlier, accepting other views, that pluralistic sort of society that, in the classroom, that's sort of got to, that's got to exist and (Mumbling).
00:23:23	S1	Almost an employability skill.
00:23:25	S2	Hmm. Exactly, yeah.
00:23:25	S1	Almost being able to express your views becomes something that you could learn and have as an employability skill.
00:23:32	S2	Yeah, definitely. You even got, you know, you've got to justify your reasons as to why you've done certain things that you've done in your life, why have you taken certain directions, why you've chosen certain paths. You know, those have all got to be justified, and if you say, "Oh, really," you know, that's, that's not going to help you at all, is it? You need to have some sort of fire in your belly and sort of say, "Oh, this is, this my point. This is why I think its right. This is my point."
00:23:53	S1	It's really interesting. So actually, somebody's sitting there, thinking, "I don't think I can really express my views." Rather than say, "Poor them." You might say, "If you want to be a Politics student," (Overlapping Conversation) that's what you need to do." That's really interesting.
00:24:10	S2	I feel like I'm contradicting myself slightly because I've sort of said also, you've got to allow other people...it's a fine line, I think. You've got to allow the people to express their views, and then those views have got to be expressed with some force. Otherwise, they're not going to have any impact on those trying to learn from them, if that makes any sense at all. But it sounds all right in my head but everything comes out (Mumbling).
00:24:29	S1	I'm asking about your experience. You can't contradict yourself. You're telling me as it seems.
00:24:34	S2	Yeah, because we've had some really good debates and I think, you know, especially in some of the criminology sort of classrooms when I sort of have sparked a debate very few people that put their hands up, but with any Politics, everyone was about, everyone wants to jump in, everyone wants

		that chance to say, “No, you’re wrong,” and put their own view forward and then sort of, you know....At the same time, you’re saying someone’s wrong, they’re also learning from it.
00:24:56	S1	Yeah.
00:24:57	S2	It’s not malicious. It’s sort of....
00:24:59	S1	It’s not. There’s no, there’s no mocking.
00:25:01	S2	No, it’s not saying, “How can you possibly think that? You’re completely wrong,” or, you know. In a debate, you get carried away with it, don’t you? You sort of, whether you agree with your argument or not, but you’ve been given it as a task, you sort of think, “We’re going to win this one.” So you sort of think of all the arguments you possibly can. But then at the end of it, when everyone’s come out of that debate saying, “Look at all the notes I’ve got,” (Mumbling) for learning. So it’s really necessary.
00:25:23	S1	Okay. Thank you. I don’t know if you have anything more you want to say and say. You’ve covered a lot of ground.
00:25:30	S2	I think I’ve covered everything; I don’t think there’d be anything else in the classroom. It’s all about just learning off each other. I think it’s the key. It’s because if you’re too closed, they’re not, couldn’t, it could spread to other people that (Mumbling). So you don’t learn anything from anybody. Whereas if you’re all open and willing to push things, you learn, you learn off more than just the academic and it sometime, some cases, the academic learns off the students as well and say, “What if (Mumbling)?”
00:26:00	S1	Final thought, then: does it help being in a small cohort? Does that make a difference, do you think?
00:26:04	S2	I think it helps because...it helps that social area as well, which makes it even easier to sort of put forward a view. So if you’re a smaller cohort, then that...it normally takes place anyway because certain people, they overtime you know, they don’t like to turn up, and you get a core of people that are always there, they’re always interested. And those people are interested, are normally open to people’s views but at the same time, put their own forward

		<p>and then, you know, as long as you can get on with that core, you see, as well as being independent, you can learn a great deal. As if you turn, you're not really interested and you don't want to put your views forward and you just think, you know, "Student lifestyle's going to be great and going to get a lot of alcohol, I'm going to get...and then I get my degree at the end of it." That's not going to be the way for you to get good grades.</p>
00:26:51	S1	Thank you very much. Much appreciated.

Appendix Three: Sample Transcript from Practitioner Participant

what some of the students are saying:

Some of the Politics students interviewed say they would like to be able to express their political views in the HE teaching and learning context.

Some of the Politics Students interviewed say they will present political views in class which are not their own. They do this to avoid being labelled or their views seen as unacceptable. *(Note this is their perception or experience and does not indicate that this is happening).*

Some of the Politics Students interviewed say they perceive a prevailing political view in the classroom. *(Note the indications from the findings is that they may not be correct in this perception. Respondents from the same cohort perceived the prevailing political view differently.)*

Some of the Politics Students interviewed say that expressing political views (their own or not) is a key skill for a Politics student. They say it enables them to develop their political views.

Some of the Politics Students interviewed say that certain recommendations make it more likely that they will express their political views (their own or not)

These are:

- **Cohort Size and Relationships within the cohort.** Some of the Politics students interviewed talked of friendships and good relationships with peers and academics from the outset
- **Student Personality.** Some of the Politics Students interviewed said that confident students could express political views, even ones which were their own. Shy students might not be able to present any political views (their own or not)
- **The Academic:** Some of the Politics Students interviewed prefer academics with strongly held political views as long as other views are included. They do not like academics being politically neutral. They said that students want to know an academic's political views (they cannot know whether real or not).
- **Teaching and Learning:** Some of the Politics students interviewed said it was important the academic creates an environment in which all political views can be expressed. This was a responsibility of fellow students and not just academics. Methods should be found which enable the expressing of political views as the students said that being able to express views is key to being a politics student,

Response from Practitioner to the points above raised by the research:

In certain respects it is vital for students who wish to express their political views to feel like they are able to do so, nevertheless if their political views are discriminatory or controversial (e.g. if they support parties such as BNP or policies that serve to undermine disadvantaged groups of people) then they should also be expected to be challenged by their peers and lecturers alike. Certain disciplines have developed in such a way to challenge mainstream right-wing politics and such discipline's theories and outlooks will always be geared to critiquing such approaches.

It is important that lecturers are able to control group discussion so to allow a range of different challenges to ideas and perceptions as possible and student personalities change the nature of

group discussions. There are various ways to do this (e.g. by not relying on verbal communications to contribute to discussion but perhaps a collection of key points from each group written down on paper).

I would say that the ability to communicate ideas is a key skill for any student within any discipline of the social sciences and that of course this is important. Nevertheless, one has to expect a debate to arise if a student is expressing (for example) racist beliefs or supports policy that results in discrimination of those with protected characteristics. As a lecturer it would not be right to allow a student's racist (or otherwise discriminatory comment) remain unchallenged for the sake of making that student feel included (as they are likely to make other students in the class feel excluded and inferior due to such comments). An academic (and peers) could perhaps turn a debate such as the one imagined, into a debate on individualism versus socialism for example. It would be important to highlight the lack of critical thinking behind discriminatory attitudes which are easily identifiable within some students' political thoughts.

The Related Practice Guidance for Politics Academics Based on the Key Findings

Adapt teaching and learning to enable and encourage the expressing of students' political views

Response from Practitioner:

Yes, this is done within any (good) lecturer's teaching space. Nevertheless political views can easily expose prejudice and such views would have to be contested. Whether this is through asking questions which empowers other peers to contest ideas or by drawing attention to various theories which have contested claims. Also it is important to clarify the intention of a student's comment and ensure that the potential for offence is highlighted. The lecturer has to abide by the guidelines of the Equality Act and consider the benefit of the whole of their class in the expression of any political view.

Be willing to express a range of political views

Response from Practitioner

As above. BNP viewpoints are less academically verified than the views of other political parties. Many parties take on the broad common-sense notions of individual citizenship without critical engagement. We can hear these views but peers and academics should feel free to and expect to critically engage with political views that have the potential to offend and discriminate.

Avoid neutrality and express own political views

Response from Practitioner

I think avoiding neutrality always serves as a useful teaching tool. Whether the strong political views are your own or not, is unimportant (the students can guess forever whether these opinions are your authentic own or not)! The important point here is the useful pedagogical tool that avoiding neutrality brings with it. By setting up an argument either way will allow a student to engage in a topic in an impassioned manner, helping gather their own voices for/against a topic/policy and challenging their pre-conceived ideas on a given topic.

<p>Act as facilitator to ensure all student views can be expressed</p> <p>Response from Practitioner</p> <p>Again this is important and a key characteristic of a good lecturer but I believe that the lecturer should be very mindful of the potential to offend. Such offensive student views tends to come from individualised/personalised understandings of problems/society/phenomena. Perhaps help to frame and challenge students perspectives from this angle.</p>
<p>Emphasise benefits to students of engaging in expressing political views (such as key skill)</p> <p>Response from Practitioner</p> <p>This is important but from experience, if a student is shy or feels like their views will not be supported, they are still unlikely to speak up. Expressing any opinion is important to help develop oral communication skills but the environment and size needs to be right.</p>
<p>Teach in small cohorts, or small groups within cohorts</p> <p>Response from Practitioner</p> <p>The ideal case. Funding and staffing constraints work against this but pedagogically allows for a preferred learning experience and increased likelihood to bond and express their views.</p>
<p>Support bonding in the cohort between students and with academics from the outset and facilitate supportive teaching and learning setting</p> <p>Response from Practitioner</p> <p>Agreed</p>

Appendix Four: Sample Information Sheet and Statement of Values

RESEARCH PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET

Statement of values from Meriel D'Artrey: I am an ethical researcher with the interest of my students as paramount and with my objective as being the improvement of teaching and learning practice. I would not do anything which in any way might cause harm to my students.

You are being invited to take part in this research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Please feel free to contact me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. If you require this project information sheet and consent form in an alternative format, such as an electronic, please let me know:

Meriel D'Artrey m.dartrey@chester.ac.uk 01244 512031

What is the purpose of the study?

I am investigating the experience which Politics students have of expressing their political views in a teaching and learning context. It is important for academic staff and for students to understand as much as possible about the experience of students in the classroom so that we can learn from it, improve our practice and make changes if necessary.

Why have I been chosen to take part?

You have been chosen as you have made yourself known to me and indicated that you would like to take part and tell me about your experience.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is completely voluntary.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to take part in a research interview at a mutually agreed time and place, adhering to all ethical guidelines. The interview will be a minimum of one hour, but can take

as long as you wish. The interview will be recorded and then transcribed, and you will be able to comment on the transcription in case you have been misinterpreted.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

The only disadvantage to you is that your participation will require you give up some of your valuable time.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Your contribution is valuable as it will help to improve our understanding of the student experience. This will have an impact on both academic and student practice and the findings will be widely disseminated. Additionally participants may also find that taking part provides a structured opportunity to reflect on the subject; being co-participants will mean that you are actively engaging in a research project. Finally, it will help me to progress my research project.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Yes. The project is adhering to strict ethical guidelines and has been approved on this basis. Complete anonymity is assured.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

All research participants will receive a copy of the research findings once the project has been completed if they so wish. There will never be any reference which could be traced to an individual.

Adverse effects, risks or hazards for participants

None is envisaged because all data will be anonymised prior to any form of dissemination of results

Relationship between researcher and potential participants

I am conducting and analysing the research throughout, and I appreciate that as I am a member of the academic staff, you might have concerns. I believe that the fact that we have a relationship already is important and that as I am close to the subject matter means that my approach will be sensitive (I would never do anything which might cause harm to one of my

students). I believe that I bring a sympathetic stance towards my potential research informants and that this will aid the rapport during the data collection process.

Informed consent

All research informants receive this copy of this project information sheet and informed consent form (below) and taking part in the research interview assumes they have been read and agreed. Recordings and transcripts will be stored in line with good practice guidelines in the Data Protection Act 1998 and sections 93 to 99 of the University of Chester's Research Governance Handbook on data storage. All research data will be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet, will not be shared with a third party and will be destroyed using an industrial shredder after 10 years in order to allow time for further analysis by the original or other research teams subject to consent, and to support monitoring by regulatory and other authorities.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is funded as a doctoral project by the University of Chester and is conducted by Meriel D'Artrey.

Appendix Five:: Project Consent form

Title of Project: Expressing political views in the Higher Education classroom

Name of Researcher: Meriel D'Artrey

By taking part in this research you are confirming that:

- You have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have been offered the opportunity to ask questions.
- You have understood that participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any time
- You agree to take part in a research interview for the above study
- You agree to the findings being used for research dissemination purposes as long as they are not directly attributed to you