The following document contains the ‘front matter’ (the abstract and contents) of my PhD:

Taking Education Seriously: Developing Bourdieuan Social Theory in the Context of Teaching and Learning Medical Ethics in the UK Undergraduate Medical Degree. Queen’s University Belfast. 2011

Whilst the entire thesis is publically available in the library of Queen’s University Belfast I have chosen not to upload a complete copy to the web as, at the time of writing, I am working on various publications. However anyone who wishes to have a copy of the entire thesis or any of the chapters for personal use can obtain one from me on request.

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Taking Education Seriously:
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Submitted in accordance with the regulations for the Degree of PhD.

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**Abbreviations:**

AMA: American Medical Association  
ASME: Association of Medical Education (UK)  
BA: Bachelor of Arts  
BMA: British Medical Association  
BMJ: British Medical Journal  
BSc: Bachelor of Science  
DHSSNI: Department of Health and Social Services Northern Ireland  
FRCP: Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians  
GMC: General Medical Council  
GP: General Practitioner  
IME: Institute of Medical Ethics  
IRA: Irish Republican Army  
JASME: Junior Association of Medical Education  
JME: Journal of Medical Ethics  
LMG: London Medical Group  
MA: Master of Arts  
MSc: Master of Science  
NI: Northern Ireland  
PBL: Problem Based Learning  
PGCCE/HE: Postgraduate Certificate in Clinical Education/ in Higher Education  
QUB: Queen’s University Belfast  
QUBMS: Queen’s University Belfast Medical School  
RCGP: Royal College of General Practitioners  
SCM: Student Christian Movement  
SLT: Socio-Cultural Learning Theory  
SRHE: Society for Research into Higher Education  
SSC: Student Selected Components  
SSK: Social Studies of Knowledge  
SSM: Student Selected Modules  
SSME: Society for the Study of Medical Ethics  
UMS: Ulster Medical Society
Abstract:

This thesis attempts to develop a social theoretical perspective on professional reproduction in order that we can take education seriously. Social theories of professional reproduction tend to focus on socialisation as an informal process whilst largely ignoring the formal educational experiences of students. Through the development of the term ‘enculturation’ I demonstrate that formal education and informal socialisation can and should be considered as related phenomena. I make use of the formal medical ethics education that occurs during contemporary undergraduate medical education in the UK and ideas of the moral socialisation of medical students as the ground for the more detailed exegesis that occurs in chapters 3, 5 and 6. In chapter 1, I set out a Winchean position on the ‘doing of social theory’ and, based on the anthropological perspective of Jarrett Zigon, I give an account of ethics and morality that informs the remainder of the thesis. I also offer some reflections of the nature and origin of my view of medical ethics as an aspect on the field of medicine and medical education.

Through a consideration of sociological studies of medical education, and the Bourdieuan social theory many of them have adopted, I argue, in chapter 3, that if we are to accommodate the ‘ethical enculturation’ of medical students within a social theory of professional reproduction then we must develop a more cognitive perspective on habitus. To this end I make use of the psychological and educational idea of ‘thinking dispositions.’ In the subsequent chapter (4) I give a historical account of the development of ‘medical ethics’ within medical education. Against assumptions that modern medical ethics is in some way a phenomenon external to medicine I show that its advancement within the medical school is consistent with wider changes in medical education culminating in the GMC’s ‘Tomorrow’s Doctors’ (1993). I provide more detailed support for my view in the appendix where I present a ‘case study’ of the development of medical ethics education in the Belfast Medical School through a consideration of the career of W.G.Irwin, one of the first Professors of General Practice in the UK and Ireland.
In chapter 5 I discuss the idea of the reflective practitioner and reflective education both of which have a wide degree of currency in medical and professional education. Whilst learning from the lessons of research on reflection for the purposes of considering formal medical ethics education I narrow the grounds of my enquiry to metacognition. Drawing on recent anthropological research on apprenticeships and Socio-cultural Learning Theory (SLT) I make use of the idea of a cognitive apprenticeship to theorise formal medical ethics education as an aspect of medical education more generally.

In the final substantive chapter (6) I draw on Bourdieu’s perspective on language as a social, and socially reproduced, phenomena in order to consider what the cognitive apprenticeship view implies for any understanding of medical ethics education from within a Bourdieuan view of professional reproduction. I consider whether we can consider concepts, metacognitive abilities and thinking dispositions to be produced through enculturation. I answer in the affirmative with the exception of thinking dispositions suggesting that the more appropriate process for describing the (re)production of dispositions, including thinking dispositions, is socialisation.

In the concluding chapter (7) I discuss the implications of the substantive views developed for the anthropological perspective on ethics and morality that I initially adopted as well as for the teaching and learning of medical ethics and the self understanding of philosophical applied ethics.