



**‘Careering Off’ on the Road to Independent Young
Adulthoods: Can Positive Educational Psychology Help?**

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Psychology
at the
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by

Peter Farnbank

Department of Neuroscience, Psychology and Behaviour
College of Life Sciences
University of Leicester

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Declaration

I confirm that this thesis is my original work. This portfolio is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Psychology. No part of it has been submitted for any other degree or academic qualification.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Farnbank', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peter Farnbank

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‘Careering Off’ on the Road to Independent Young Adulthoods: Can Positive Educational Psychology Help?

Thesis Abstract

Part A: Literature Review

From Education to Adult Economic Wellbeing: A New Role for Educational Psychologists?

Young people entering work from full-time education face many challenges. A broad survey of literature across several disciplines identified the impact of the rapidly changing job-markets and employability in times of economic uncertainty, complicated further by public policy and legislation. The review discusses a possible new role for educational psychologists (EPs) applying positive psychology in this context.

Part B: Research Report

Achieving “Economic Well-Being” in a World of Rapid Change: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the Continuing Career Journeys of Five Young Persons from First Career-Dreams

The lived-experiences and meaning-making of five mainstream young-persons (22-25) on their continuing career-journeys were explored – and their voices captured – using IPA. Findings identified systemic issues in education and public policy purporting to prepare young people adequately for the job-market. Positive new aspirations of the young people were also identified, and their links to contemporary career theories were posited.

Part C: Evaluation Study

“A Step Further”: An Evaluative Study of Campus-Specific Initiatives Offered by the University of Leicester’s Career Development Service

Hypotheses were proposed regarding the relationships between personality and job/career-related activities. A questionnaire explored students’ engagement of the services of the University of Leicester Career Development Service and a mixed method design was used to answer questions from empirical and service-development perspectives. Recommendations were made for developing practice, and further research.

Part D: Critical Appraisal

‘Careering Off’ on the Road to Independent Young Adulthoods: Can Positive Educational Psychology Help? – Reflective Critique

The researcher’s experience, critical reflections and learning development were discussed in detail from the perspectives of a practitioner, researcher and person. Reflections on the outcomes of the two studies were also discussed, as well as the impact of the thesis on the author, in terms of grounding conceptualisations of his own life-span development in career, learning and aspirations.

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Part A : Literature Review

From Education to Adult Economic Wellbeing: A New Role for Educational Psychologists?

Target Journal: *Educational and Child Psychology*, British Psychological Society.

Abbreviations

AEP	Association of Educational Psychologists
BPS	British Psychological Society
CFA-2014	Children and Families Act 2014
CLD	Career learning and development
CYP/CYPs	Child or and young person / Children and young people
CoP-2014	Code of Practice in Special Educational Needs and Disability 2014
DfE	Department for Education (2010* onwards)
DfES	Department for Education and Skills (2001-2007*)
DoH	Department of Health
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools Families (2007-2010*)
ECM	Every Child Matters
EP	Educational Psychologist
FE	Further education
GBC/GBR	Graduate basis for registration as a chartered psychologist
HCPC	Health and Care Professions Council
HE	Higher education
HEI	Higher education institution
NEET	(Young person) not in education, employment or training
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PGCE	Post-graduate Certificate in Education
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SEND	Special educational needs and disability
YP/YPs	Young person / young people/persons

* Same Government Department, different names given by the dates.

Abstract

This literature review surveys a broad range of literature from youth- and career studies, legislation, positive psychology and educational psychology. It discusses issues surrounding young-people making the transition from fulltime education to work/career and economic-independence in circumstances underpinned by economic and social uncertainties. The impact of public policy and issues of employability are discussed, as are pertinent developments in career theory. Given that educational psychologists (EPs) apply psychology in education, the role of EPs in supporting young-people at such life-transitions is discussed. This would entail EPs having to widen their practice and research towards this new arena, currently outside expectations of their role.

1. Background to the Review

Career learning and development (CLD) is a term used by Barnes, Bassot and Chant (2011) to propose a school-curriculum based framework whereby UK pupils 16-19 years old can learn about careers, hence to be better informed about career decisions (see also Law, 1996).

A ten-year longitudinal biographical study (Henderson, Holland, McGrellis, Sharpe and Thomson, 2007) of the transitions of 100 young-people towards adult-independence, including education-to-work, goes substantially beyond education-parameters and explores challenges facing young-people at this life-junction in six contrasting UK localities-and-regions. It explains the effects of public policy intermeshing with the differential impacts on young-people of local cultures (from affluent leafy-suburbs to deprived housing estates), socio-economics etc. Cultural differences between regions in the UK impact upon the young-people's understanding and positionings of themselves collectively/socially and individually. Issues of self-esteem, life-and-work aspirations, cultural expectations, mobility etc were raised, as young-people navigate the arduous paths into independent adulthood in today's climate of social and economic uncertainties.

These books immediately identify two things of potential academic/research interest: (a) that youth-to-adult transitions occur in immensely complex social context, and (b) given that until 2014 the EP's role was situated in the birth-to-16 age-range, there would be a gap in the EP-corpus.

This literature review will focus on:-

1. What are the issues facing young-people making transitions from full-time education to work/career and adult-independence in contemporary turbulent job-markets?
2. How have young-people's education-to-work transitions and career-journeys been affected in the real world by public policy and legislation ostensibly aimed to help them?
3. What is contemporary employability; how could what employers want and what employees need be reconciled?
4. Is there a role for the Educational Psychologist to help young-people (under-25s) make successful education-to-career and/or career-to-career transitions?

2. Introduction

This review will first survey research on issues facing contemporary young-people as they move towards adult-independence in the current era of social and economic uncertainties. This will lead into a discussion of public policy and legislation regarding social and economic wellbeing for young-people, and their real effects. Inevitably the question of contemporary employability is raised, and how its demands may be addressed by innovative approaches. Finally a role for the EP in this new arena will be explored.

3. Review: Position and Method

Review of literature in a single corpus was considered inadequate to interrogate the multifarious issues facing young-people in social context at this life-juncture; it was necessary to explore a broad spectrum of literature. Consistent with the assertion by Wellington, Hunt, Bathmaker, McCulloch and Sikes (2005) that a professional doctorate (e.g. PsyD) would be more profession/practice-orientated than an academia-orientated PhD, literature was sourced from research in career/vocation studies, youth-studies, and positive-, coaching- and educational psychologies. 'Grey literature' (see Farrell, 2018a/2018b) was also sought; from public policy publications, conferences, online forums (eg EPNet), websites etc. Pertinent legislation was deemed essential, as legislation inevitably changes the landscape of education at all levels (see Bridgstock,

2009; DCSF, 2009; DfE 2013a, 2015; DfES, 2003, 2011; House of Lords, 2016; Leach, 2017; Scott, Connell, Thomson & Willison 2017; Tymon, 2013; Watts, 2013).

An ‘integrative literature review’ (Broome, 1993; Torraco, 2005, 2016; Whittemore & Knafl, 2005) was therefore chosen. Broome (1993) explains integrative reviews as “the broadest type of research review methods” (p.547) wherein researchers can explore research and grey literature for a broader understanding of the topic. Congruent with the author’s position as what Bournier, Bowden and Laing (2000) call a “researching professional” (p.219), this review seeks to create “a new model, conceptual framework, or other unique conception informed by the author’s intimate knowledge of the topic” (Torraco, 2005, p.362).

The new knowledge/perspective will be the concept of education-to-career transition in the mainstream, as literature searches show this to be hitherto unexplored by educational psychology. Torraco (2005, 2016) also recommends that the literature analysis “should pose provocative questions (or propositions) that give direction for future research”.

Literature searches were conducted via electronic databases, including publication news-feeds (e.g. BPS Research Digest, alerts from Journal of Youth Studies and ScienceDirect), and by hand, e.g. pursuing references cited in publications.

4. Synthesis

4.1 Education-to-Work Transitions in Social Context

4.1.1 Issues: Transitional challenges in the context of social change

Young-people today live in extremely challenging times (Di Blasi, Tosto, Arfia, Cavani & Giordano, 2016; Kehily, 2007; Leach, 2017; Nota & Rossier, 2015; Rae, 2008; Robb, 2007; Thomson, 2007). Henderson et al. (2007) conducted a ten-year longitudinal study of 100 young people as they moved from their teens through to their 30s in six different localities: from Northern Ireland to deprived housing estate to leafy suburb, each with its social- and economic identities, and the challenges they pose for young people journeying towards adult independence. This large-scale study investigated the lives of the young-people in terms of work, independence/dependence, sexuality, identity, mobility, wellbeing etc.

The study also illustrates the disparate career-journeys of the young-people. Some found difficulty in getting jobs after easy passages through university; others left compulsory schooling and drifted through a series of jobs, and still others returned to education after a few years working in order to gain better careers. Not dissimilarly, Selingo (2016) identifies three kinds of education-to-career young-people: “sprinters”, “wanderers” and “stragglers” (pp.1-28), i.e. respectively, those who from college/university:- (a) make a fast start to a career from which they develop enhanced careers, (b) meander their way through a series of disparate jobs, and (c) are lost along a career-path and take much longer.

Henderson et al.’s (2007) study discusses how young-people’s frustration and disaffection have negative impact on their sense of self and career aspirations. Chapter 7, “Wellbeing”, warns how growing up in an increasingly uncertain social world induces psychological “ill-being” (p.85) on young-people. Today is a very different world of uncertainty against earlier pre-1970s natural progressions in the labour-market (Selingo, 2016; Simmons, Russell & Thomson, 2013).

Henderson et al. (2007) and Thomson (2007) quoting Pollock (1997) explain that locality-situated socioeconomic inequalities and cultural diversities highlight issues about making decisions at critical temporal transition-points (Kehily, 2007). Henderson et al. (2007) also highlight the inevitability of extended dependence of some young-people unable to secure viable work or careers.

4.1.2 Issues: Work and career in the context of today’s “economic storm”

“Economic storm” is Rae’s (2008, p.749) term for the economic chaos precipitated by the 2008 credit-crunch and its effects on job-markets (see also Vuolo, Staff & Mortimer, 2012). Employment, work and career are non-interchangeable; there are variations that can range from voluntary work through to boundaryless or self-created (protean) careers (see Baruch, 2004a, Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Chudzikowski 2012; Inkson, 2006; Miller & McWhirter, 2006). Since the 1970s, changes in global economics and demographics linear models of career have become less certain (Rae, 2008; Leach, 2015, 2017), and “multidirectional” (Baruch, 2004b, p.58). Studies into that pressuring contemporary world of the young-person (e.g. Kehily 2007; Leach, 2015, 2017; Robb, 2007; Smith, Christoffersen, Davidson & Snell Herzog, 2011; Thomson, 2007) generally concur that “yo-yo” transitions (Thomson, 2007, p.221)

have replaced the traditional “one-stop” transitions, and are more complex and unpredictable. Walther (2009) sees yo-yo transitions as twists-and-turns in young-people’s journeys towards adult-independence, characterised by prolonged education/training and job-searches, reversions due to frustrated plans, unemployment, breakups etc, and fragmented transitions due to lifestyle changes (See also Nota & Rossier, 2015). Henderson et al. (2007) find some of their participants had “left school at 16 and yo-yo’d in and out of work, training and/or employment” (p.3), while some others found difficulty in getting jobs after graduating. Still others returned to education after a working a few years (see also Borrett, 2018).

A phenomenological study by Leach (2017), investigating the lived experiences of eight graduates in the children-and-young people sector, of whom he was their undergraduate personal tutor three years before, finds that shifting public policy, funding cuts and enforced jobs re-adjustments in a world of economic and social uncertainties frustrate the former high career-aspirations of these professionals, producing de-motivation and disaffection. He explains how “the political and potentially hazardous realities of employment [...] and career enactment in this new age of economic uncertainty” (p.193) place challenges on graduates in terms of the elusiveness of career fulfilment in the context of the current austerity (since 2010). The experiences of employees in the public sector, where career progressions are supposedly more structured and linear, produce disaffection and the “psychological contract breach” (p.181). Leach explains that a psychological contract is established through employer-employee relationships, but this is breached when promises of career progression are stalled, and unexpected economy-driven job-demands are imposed upon employees. Rather like other researchers (e.g. Henderson et al., 2007) Leach finds graduates with high career hopes ending up in jobs not fulfilling their career ambitions.

Leach (2017) goes further to assert that the breach is tantamount to “cruel optimism” (p.181), which is engendered from earlier stages, thus implicating school/education systems and career-guidance services. Similarly, research commissioned by the House of Lords (2016) highlights the failure of schools to prepare young-people adequately for the workplace. In Leach’s view (2017) austerity has impacted severely on the ability of young-people to stay in secure career-paths even in the public sector. Public funding cuts are implicated as impacting on effective career-

preparation for young-people (Roberts 2013; Watts 2013), regarding what Watts (2013) calls broken promises and “false dawn”(p.443) for young-people making education-to-work transitions.

It is thus apparent that public policy in the current ‘economic storm’ is not working for such young-people. Next, the effects of public policy emanating from goodwill educational legislation are discussed.

4.1.3 Public Policy Aims: Outcomes for young-people

Legislation impacts on education (see pertinent Education Acts 1996, 2002, 2005, 2008, DfE, 2011; DfES 2003a; also Barnes et al., 2011; Bassot, Barnes & Chant, 2014; DfE, 2013b), which includes higher education institutions (HEIs) (Bridgstock, 2009; DfE, 2013c; DfES, 2003b; Tymon 2013). Statutory duties for all children-workforce professionals were stipulated early on by “Every Child Matters” (2003) (DfES, 2003a), which instilled a duty of care to ensure “five key outcomes [that] really matter for children and young-people’s well-being: “being healthy”, “staying safe”, “enjoying and achieving”, “making a positive contribution”, and “economic well-being” (p.13-14).

The document continues:

Achieving these outcomes has benefits for children, families, and society as a whole. Children gain through improved health, wellbeing and prosperity now and in the future. (p.14).

Barnes et al. (2011) posit that the ‘outcomes’ go well with CLD (see Table A1.)

Table A1: CLD and well-being outcomes for children and young people

Well-being outcomes	Link to CLD
Be safe	Sound decision-making skills help young people to make choices that will keep them safe, whether those decisions are to do with their behaviour, relationships or activities in the workplace.
Be healthy	Similarly, the element of decision-making in CLD enables young people to make informed choices about diet, drugs, exercise and occupational health.
Enjoy and achieve	This outcome clearly has focus on young people's learning and attainment in school, but it is also the key to career well-being. Good CLD provision motivates and inspires young people, builds their confidence and enables them to choose opportunities wisely.
Make a positive contribution	This refers to the way that people interact with each other in their organisations and communities, 'Career' is fundamentally about how individuals attend not only to their personal well-being but contribute to the well-being of others through the work they do.
Achieve economic well-being	Preparing to manage and sustain one's own economic livelihood is perhaps the most obvious link with CLD. It is composed of two parts: functioning well and being happy.

(Barnes, Bassot & Chant (2011, p.39)

Essentially the driving principles behind ECM were social justice and social mobility (see Knowles, 2009). Social justice is about a fair and equitable society and social mobility is about people moving towards better circumstances. Bell (1997) explains that the equitability-principles of social justice should enable physical and psychological security for all society's members. The same message of 'fairness for all' is reinforced by Knowles (2009), adding that it is the driving principle behind current British public services policy and practice. She conceptualises the ECM outcomes as hierarchically progressive, explaining chapter-by-chapter how each outcome can be achieved. In her final chapter she explains that the long-term goal of children achieving their own economic well-being starts early for ultimately achieving secure livelihoods. However, as discussed, the reality is quite different (see e.g. Henderson et al., 2007; Leach 2017; Nota & Rossier, 2015, Selingo, 2016).

Ultimately ECM demised, but its principles re-surfaced in the broader Children and Families Act (2014). The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015), which forms part of it, states that:

all children and young people are entitled to an appropriate education, one that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential.

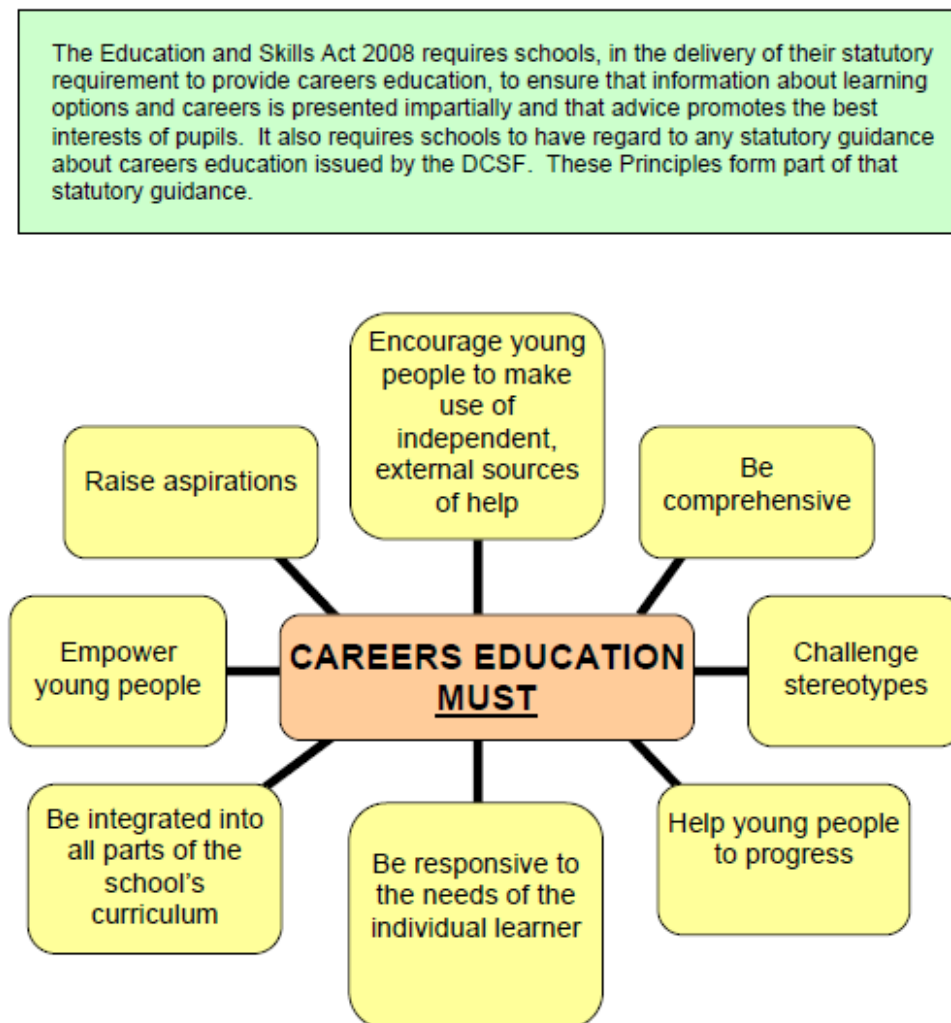
This should enable them to:

- achieve their best
- become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and
- make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training. (p.92)

Despite the SEND context, the statement uses the inclusive “all children and young people” and looks reminiscent of the ECM outcomes.

Relating to the last bullet-point, an earlier Statutory Guidance (DCSF, 2009) stipulated that schools must provide impartial careers education for under-19s (see Figure A2).

Figure A1: Principles of Impartial Careers Education, from “Statutory Guidance: Impartial Careers Education”



Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) (2009, p. 6)

4.1.4 Public Policy Effects: Education-to-Work Transitions

Notwithstanding their noble intentions, the social-justice and mobility initiatives in effect marginalise groups that are less vulnerable to impoverishment. Research identifies these groups as “the missing middle” (Roberts, 2011, p.31), “the over-looked middle” (Spours, Stanton, Vesey & West, 2012, p.1) and “the forgotten middle” (Schoon & Lyons-Amos, 2016, p.18). The concept of these ‘middle’ youth-groups is

complex and beyond the scope of this review. Suffice that a generic identity could be a teenage-group, e.g. between high-achievers and low-achievers (Spours et al., 2012), for whom no policy or priority is given regarding accessing HE, vocational training or direct (re-)access to work. Indeed Roberts (2013) queried whether his ‘missing middle’ would become the new NEETs through public policy marginalisation.

Schoon & Lyons-Amos’s (2016) research argues that simply because ‘middle-groups’ are presumed to do alright by themselves, they have little if any access to the types of services given to the deemed less fortunate under the social justice/mobility agenda. This so-called “forgotten middle” however is just one of five groups on education-work pathways which their study identifies, and which they argue is similar to Robert’s (2013) ‘missing middle’ (see Table A2).

Table A2: “Five distinct patterns of transition experiences reflecting more or less successful pathways to employment”.

-
- A. Those with “extended participation in education”, entering employment after age 20 (suggesting completion of a degree);
 - B. Those who entry “employment after some education”;
 - C. Those who engage in “early work orientation” and continuous employment from age compulsory school leaving age of 16. The researchers find this to be a pathway in “considerable decline”;
 - D. Those who make “a relatively early start into the labour market”, a major group in the sample
 - E. The “forgotten middle”, a group likely to “fall off the radar of policy makers”.
-

(from Schoon & Lyons-Amos, 2016, p. 18)

This raises the question of employability, both in terms of what young people regardless of their ‘pathways’ can offer and what employers want. Selingo (2016) for instance explains that even a degree in the subject of the aspired career is no guarantee, because the holder may not be the right graduate for that employer (see also Tomlinson 2008).

Discussed next are contemporary employability and the skills that graduates would need.

4.1.5 Employability: Attributes and Skills

Employability is defined by Knight and Yorke (2003, p.5) as “a set of achievements, understanding and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations”. However, the authors assert that there are vitiating factors such as: the pre-ponderance of “extraneous socio-economic factors” and the “prevailing circumstance” acting as “constraints” on graduates’ occupational choices (ibid.). A university degree reflects what was learned before, and may not easily or smoothly translate into skills for the workplace (see also Selingo, 2016; Tomlinson, 2008).

All educational institutions are required by Government (DfES, 2003; DfE, 2017) to inspire children-and-young-people to acquire skills for career: hence to develop career-friendly curricula at school- and HE levels, and to liaise with business and industry to enhance the employability of young-people (see Scott et al., 2017). Against this, Rae’s exploratory paper (2008) warns about the impact of the post-credit-crunch “economic storm” (p.749) upon graduate employability, as employers/organisations have to restructure for economic viability. This contest raises the question of what ‘employability’ really means (Bridgstock, 2009; Leach, 2015, Selingo, 2016, Tymon, 2013). HEIs are thus pressured to develop curricula that would create more employable graduates (Bridgstock, 2009; DfES, 2003; Knight & Yorke, 2003; Leach 2015; Moreau & Leathwood, 2006; Rae, 2008).

Several research-papers indicate that gaining knowledge and technical skills for a job, e.g. from a degree, is often not enough, as employers also look for personal skills (Bridgstock, 2009; Moreau & Leathwood 2006; Rae 2008; Scott et al., 2017; Tymon, 2013; Yorke & Knight, 2006). Creasey’s (2013) action-research investigated what ‘employability’ meant to students and employers in civil engineering (CE). It involved (a) a focus group comprising students, and employers who advise the school of engineering, and (b) email survey requiring detailed answers from ten recent CE graduates now in employment. The study finds that employability comprises three components: “a sound educational background”, “a set of demonstrable personal and professional skills” and “personal attributes” (p.20 & p.25). Graham (2017) likewise concludes that “it is “soft” behaviours, rather than “hard” (teachable) skills that are most desired by employers” (p.48). The (forward-looking) formative-assessment rather

than summative-assessment, is recommended by Knight and Yorke (2003) as being critical for curricula design towards greater employability. They also recommend 'learning' rather than 'performance' as an employability indicator (see also Yorke & Knight, 2006).

Bowers-Brown and Harvey's (2004) literature review-and-analysis discusses the impact of government policy (DfES, 2003) on HE provision, and highlights the debate about whether there are too many graduates for the job-market (see also Selingo, 2016). The legislation (DfES, 2003) promotes greater access to HE via foundation degrees for those young-people less able to compete. This raises questions about "standards, graduate employability and thus vocational training and education" (p.243). Bowers-Brown & Harvey (2004) conclude that good education regardless of societal strata is good for society – "poor education is associated with a number of social ills" (p.253) – but it does not have to be at university-level. Also, university-education should not necessarily be for getting jobs; instead "in order to be the best at what we do as a society, it is crucial that we encourage people to participate [in education] to the highest level of which they are capable" (ibid.), and access to university education should be based on capability, not public policy.

In stating so, Bowers-Brown and Harvey (2004) resonate with Leach (2017), Spours et al. (2012), Schoon and Lyons (2016) and Rae (2008) in calling for changes in public policy. As Tymon (2013) observes, current government policy is more to do with reducing employment than promoting careers per se, and is driven by political agendas, thus bringing its usefulness into question.

4.1.6 Employability: New Career-Orientations, Intra-Organisational Relationships and Lifelong Learning

The decline of single-stop careers has given rise to boundaryless and protean careers (Arthur & Rousseau, 2001; Baruch, 2004a, 2004b; Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Chudzikowski 2011; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009; Volmer & Spurk, 2011). Briefly, boundaryless careerists are those who adapt to organisational vagaries, thus indicating skills transferrable across organisational structures (psychological mobility) and/or localities (physical mobility). Protean careerists are those with skills of adaptability driven by self-developed values; accordingly, agency, self- knowledge, -determination

and -efficacy are indicated. The literature argues such new career-orientations as promoting employability and career-mobility in this new career-era. Inkson (2006) regards them as the “emancipation from the constraints of ‘traditional’ careers” (p.49), such that the adaptability in these skills could give employees and those seeking employment greater scope.

Briscoe and Hall’s (2006) conceptual paper proposes greater clarity for these career-metaphors to promote conceptual cogency for research and practice. Principally the writers argue that ‘boundaryless-ness’ is characterised by ‘psychological’ and ‘physical’ mobility, which can be at variance with each other (see also Henderson et al 2007). Likewise ‘protean-ness’ consists of two complementary though not necessarily apposite dimensions: value-driven attitudes/behaviours and self-directed career management. From their analysis of extant literature, Briscoe and Hall (2006) combine these four dimensions to propose eight careerist-profiles: “Lost/Trapped”, “Fortressed”, “Wanderer”, “Idealist”, “Organizational Man/Woman”, “Solid Citizen”, “Hired Gun/Hand” and “Protean Career Architect”. This matrix considers challenges and opportunities for these career-actors and those who help them develop their careers.

As can be gleaned from Table A3, a person for instance with a “lost/trapped” career profile (column 5) would find it a challenge to “react quickly” to opportunities, and would need to, and/or be supported to, take action in the form of clarifying priorities and developing essential skills. Conversely a “protean career architect”, high in all four dimensions, would reify their competencies/capabilities that would produce “meaningful impact”, and such enthusiastic vigour may even have to be moderated by their supporting professional/group (see Table A3).

Table A3: Protean and boundaryless combinations: career profiles and development challenges

(from Briscoe and Hall (2006), p. 11)

Table 2 Protean and boundaryless combinations: Career profiles and development challenge						
Protean: Self-directed career management	Protean: Values driven	Boundaryless: Psychological mobility	Boundaryless: Physical mobility	Hybrid category/archetypes	Career actor's personal challenge in maintaining status Quo	Career actor's and supporting groups' career development challenge
Low	Low	Low	Low	"Lost" or "Trapped"	React quickly to opportunities, survive.	Clarify priorities, gain career management skills, expand perspective.
Low	High	Low	Low	"Fortressed"	Find stable, opportunities in predictable organizations that match values.	Broaden in terms of open-mindedness and self-direction. Otherwise, person and employers will suffer unless this person is a perfect fit for an extremely stable situation/organization.
Low	Low	Low	High	"Wanderer"	Continuously find new rides to "hitch."	Help develop self-direction, establish whether fit good after this is achieved.
Low	High	High	Low	"Idealist"	Finding organizations that match values, curiosity, but don't require mobility.	Find challenges to push out of comfort zone and help build adaptability skills—in terms of mindset and working across boundaries.
High	Low	High	Low	"Organization man/woman"	Find stable organizations in which basic performance competence can be demonstrated.	Don't be seduced by performance ability. Increase self-awareness to make leader of high performer.
High	High	High	Low	"Solid Citizen"	Person-organization fit a must. Mobility a threat.	Maintain diversity of talent but leverage solid citizen's contributions.
High	Low	High	High	"Hired Gun/hired hand"	Identify and respond to best opportunities for providing services across boundaries	Convert talented, reactive person into effective, self-aware leader with a sense of priorities.
High	High	High	High	"Protean Career Architect"	Leverage capability into meaningful impact	Provide stages on which to shine, learn, engage. Temper if needed.

However, Inkson (2006) warns that, while as metaphors these labels may illustrate the nature and practice/research-potential of these innovations, employers' agendas in the real world of work may be at variance with the agency and versatility of these career-orientations, and mis-appreciate their potential benefits to the organisation. While Baruch (2004a) argues for the protean careerist exerting their agency rather than be directed by the organisation, Inkson (2006) questions whether employers may create working practices that exploit these boundaryless or protean propensities, whereby the work-role becomes multi-faceted and career-paths (e.g. promotion) even less obvious or secure (see also Leach, 2017).

Briscoe and Hall (2006) likewise question the realism of boundaryless or protean careers, explaining contesting factors of boundarylessness itself, e.g. issues of psychological and physical mobilities in context of the career-actor's contemporaneous personal circumstances. Similarly, Henderson et al. (2007) find that young-people's mobility are driven by belief-systems, which are heavily influenced by values situated in a complex matrix of locality- cultures and socio-economics, such that "[m]obility means different things in different places and young-people within the same locality engage differently with mobility" (p.111).

Leach (2017) also comments that the positive over-emphasis of the protean career-orientation does not reflect the context-situated challenges to career-actor-agency. Arguably there would need to be an equitable symbiotic "psychological contract" (see Leach 2017: p.190) between employer and employee. Kornelakis's (2014) 'integrative literature review' discusses the development of "flexicurity" (p.398), an evolving concept of reconciling employee-need for employment-security with workplace-flexibility, which is also implicated by EU public policy (Wilthagen & Tros, 2004). Kornelakis explains that protean and boundary orientations are good-fit resources, and suggests that "*pay flexicurity*"[sic] (p.408) could provide some opportunities to promote employability, such that pay would be linked to achievement of learning objectives, as opposed to performance, which he argues is "narrowly focused" (ibid). Equally De Haw and De Vos (2010) argue that organizations should also be creative in meeting employees' high career expectations to maximise productivity and minimise breaches of psychological contracts.

Briscoe and Hall (2006) suggest that an organisation valuing protean and boundaryless career-orientations “must be one that allows the career actor to peer beyond their [organisational] borders” (p.13). However, Rodrigues, Guest, Oliveira and Alfes (2015) find that while protean career-orientations benefit both employee and employer, boundaryless career-orientations tend to result in losses for both, an argument which adds more complexity. However, Leach (2015) argues a phenomenological angle: that it is the relationships graduates develop with their (HEI) mentors and other community-associates that are central in developing their selfhood and career-building skills. Hence the career-literature indicates that career-development cannot happen without further learning.

4.2 Career Learning and Development (CLD)

The above narrative explained a complex range of challenges for young-people regarding education-to-work transitions and career-mobility. However, it also suggested hope and opportunities for achieving adult-independence and surviving the ‘economic storm’. For instance, Chudzikowski (2011) asserts that the demise of traditional-careers has given birth to “generally a positive evolution” in career-mobility in this new career-age, where protean and boundaryless careers can play their part along the career-road (p.13).

A young-person’s career-road can be illustrated as a suspension bridge (Barnes et al., 2011). The two towers (respectively left and right) take the strain of internal- and external forces bearing down on the bridge (career), while career-happiness and career-resilience form the most stable foundations. Counteracting the pressures are positive factors and opportunities, such as “lifelong learning” and “political awareness”. Mid-bridge is the weakest and most vulnerable part, where the careerist is in their zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978), from where they must progress, to continually develop their competence. If the pressures, some of which are outside their control, become unbalanced, the bridge will collapse. (See Figure A2.)

Figure A2: The Career Learning and Development (CLD) Bridge

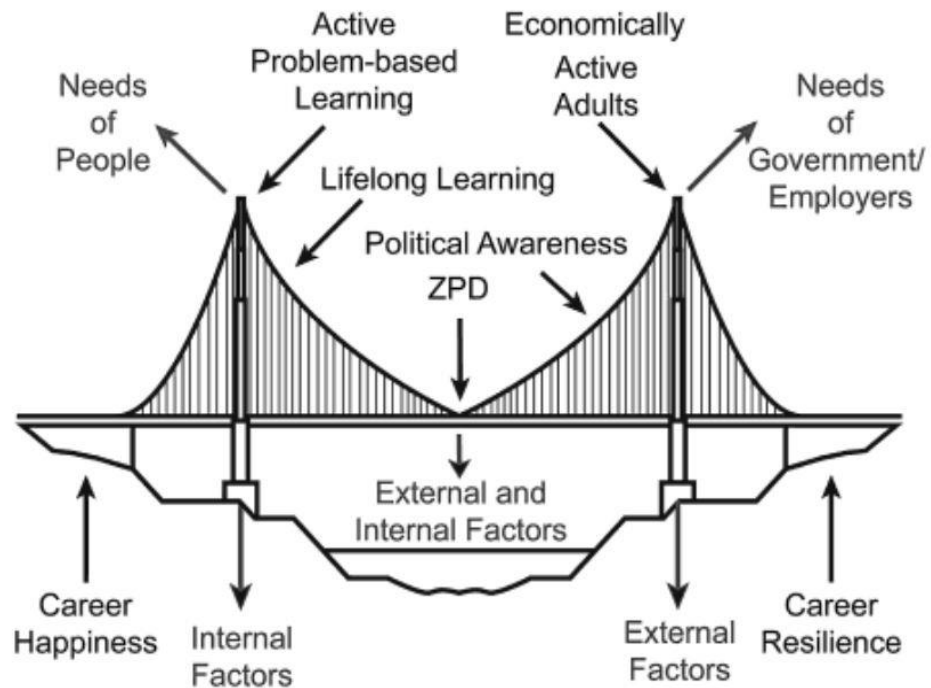


Figure 1.1 The CLD Bridge

(from Barnes, Bassot & Chant (2011), p.211)

For Bassot et al. (2014) the three elements: career-happiness, career-resilience and career-growth (the ZPD) sustain one another. CLD does not happen only at school but throughout a person's entire working-life (vis-à-vis lifelong-learning). They argue that CLD is important not only at the individual level, but also at the community and society levels, because workers do not function or learn in vacuums, but in social context. Just as Leach (2015) concludes, relationships forged with others in education and other communities equip careerists as “career-actors’ for the complex, ongoing, problematic journey of career building in a fast-changing and challenging labour market” (p.61).

4.3 New Career Theories and Lifelong Learning

Savickas (2013) explains that new working practices and global economic forces in the 21st century have driven changes from the linear upward-progressive single careers-for-life to careers that are constructed around the life-circumstances of the person. Career construction theory therefore conceptualises the individual's "*behaviour* as an actor, *strivings* as an agent and *explanations* as an author" (his emphases, p.151). Adaptability, flexibility, creativity, decision-making and readiness are factors within this theory. There appear to be resonances with Leach's (2015) argument that the mutualisation of the careerist with their existential environments are integral in creating what Savickas (2013) calls the making of the self.

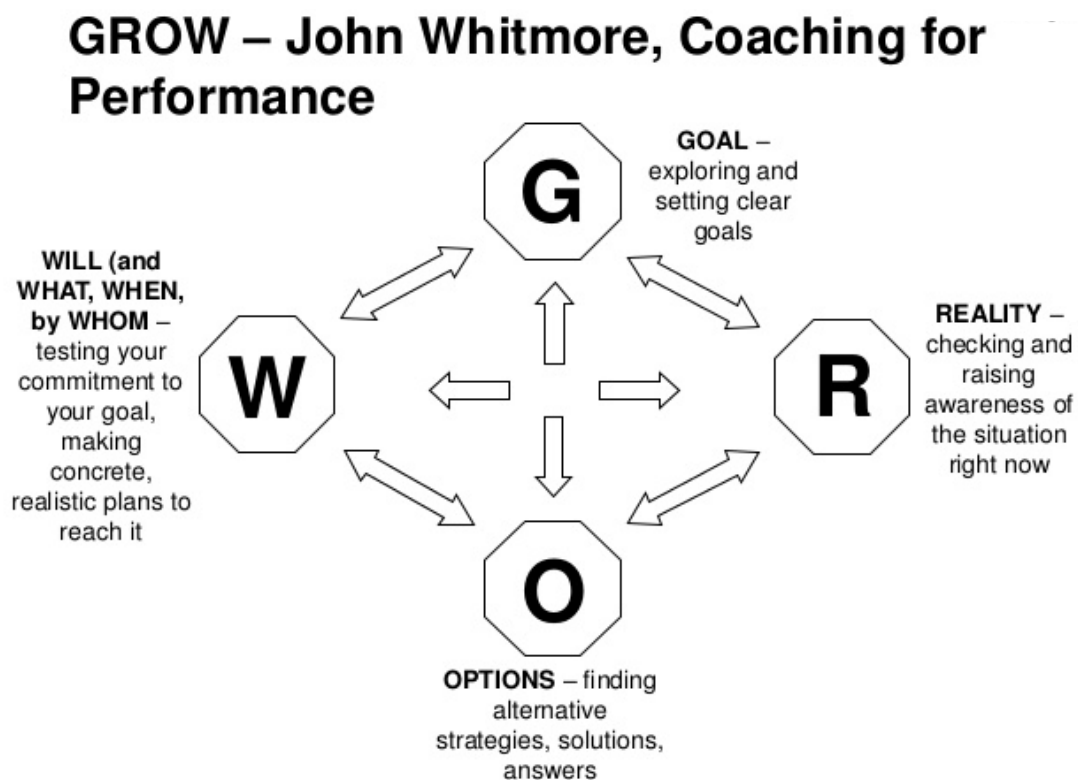
However, planned happenstance (PH) career theory (Mitchell, Levin & Krumboltz, 1999) asserts that often opportunities for a career happen unexpectedly. Individuals can be counselled or coached to be vigilant to alternative opportunities and to factor them into their career construction. Krumboltz's (2009, 2015) happenstance learning theory (HLT) asserts that career and personal life are intertwined, and that occupational ambitions should not be planned in advance – because the future is impossible to predict in today's complex world – but be based on circumspection to capitalise on unplanned opportunities. HLT makes four propositions, on which career counsellors/coaches should focus for their clients: (a) pursuit of more satisfying careers and personal lives, rather than one-career decisions, (b) utilising assessments for stimulating learning, rather than occupation-matching, (c) acting in exploratory ways to create unplanned events that would be beneficial to them, and (d) the success of counselling/coaching is vindicated by accomplishments of the client in the real world outside the consulting room. Five essential qualities are indicated as planned happenstance skills: curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism and willingness to take risks¹ (Babineaux & Krumboltz, 2013; Hagevik, 2000; Kim...et al., 2014; Krumboltz, 2009). HLT can also help clients affected by involuntary career transitions to reorganise their career construction by turning misfortunes into successes (Krumboltz, Foley & Cotter, 2013). At the early end PH skills can promote student resilience in both

¹ The (positive) risk-taking here is different from the dangerous type noted by Thomson (2007) of youth-in-crisis.

psychological wellbeing and academic achievement (Valickas, Raisiene and Rapuano 2019).

Resonances between planned happenstance and positive psychology can therefore be seen, as both focus on strengths, performance, creativity, self-determination, wellbeing etc. The GROW model – Goal, Reality, Options and Will – of coaching (Whitmore, 1992, 2009) represents an intervention which can be used by coaches (see Figure A3).

Figure A3: The GROW coaching model



As Figure A3 shows, passage through the GROW ‘stages’ are not linear-progressive but fluid, thus encouraging fluidity of reflective dialogue. Passmore (2018) suggests certain open questions that would facilitate the passage from one GROW ‘stage’ to/through another until the “way forward” is reached (see Table A4).

Table A4: A sample of open questions to facilitate the GROW process

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Possible questions</i>
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you want to achieve?• What do you want from this meeting?• What do you need to know about...?
Reality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is happening?• Why is it a problem?• What do you mean by that?... Can you give me an example?• What have you tried?... What happened?• How do you feel about that?
Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What options do you think there are?• What have you tried?• What are the pros and cons of this?• Is there anything else you could do?
Way forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can you summarise what you are going to do and by when?• What obstacles and objections do you expect?• How will you overcome them?• Who will you get support from?• What resources do you need?• When should we review progress?

(from Palmer and Whybrow (2018), p.101)

Passmore (2018) further suggests that the Options stage could be split into two for less experienced coaches: Option Generation and Options Evaluation. GROW is being developed by Neist (2014) as a good medium for coaching planned happenstance. How this would work is beyond the scope of this review, as the literature on the PH-GROW interface is currently scant. However, Briscoe and Hall's (2006) matrix could offer fertile soil for generating career-related GROW questions. Those profiles can provide a good framework for phenomenological appraisal for the CYP to understand better who and where they are, where they want to be, and to sample exemplars of chance happenings that could be turned into opportunities for career-construction.

The next section discusses whether EPs as psychological professionals in the learning-context may have a role in education-to-career- and career-mobility transitions for young-people in general.

4.3 EPs: Current Practice

The EP's role is the application of psychology in educational contexts. In the 1990s EP-practice changed to 'consultation' (Kelly, Woolfson & Boyle 2008; 2017; Miller, 1992; Wagner, 1995; Wolfendale, Bryans, Fox & Stigson, 1992), representing a paradigm-shift (a) from a medical-diagnostic model to one of consultative-problem-solving, and (b) from nomothetics to idiography and critical realism (Boyle, MacKay & Lauchlan, 2008; Buck, 2014). In the consultation model EPs involve other agencies/stakeholders in consultation to effect change for a child-or-young-person (Frederickson & Miller, 2008).

Perhaps the clearest explanation of how EPs work is given by the Scottish Division of EPs, which ascribes five "core functions": consultation, assessment, intervention, training and research, at individual, institutions and local-authority levels (Scottish Executive, 2002; BPS, 2017) (see Table A5).

Table A5: Core Functions of the Educational Psychologist (The “Currie Report”)

Appendix 5: Examples of the current role of the educational psychologist: an illustrative matrix

CORE FUNCTIONS					
LEVEL	CONSULTATION	ASSESSMENT	INTERVENTION	TRAINING	RESEARCH
Child and family	Individual discussions Contribution to IEPs Home visits Parents meetings Review meetings, as appropriate	Overall assessment in context Standardised assessment instruments Identifying special needs	Behaviour management programmes Individual and family therapy Working with small groups (eg self-harm, social skills, anger management)	Talks to groups of children (eg anti-bullying groups) Parenting skills	Single case studies Interactive video research with families (SPIN)
School or establishment	Joint working with staff Advice on programmes for children and young people Contribution to strategic planning Policy advice for schools, children's homes Review meetings, as appropriate	Contribution to school assessment policy and procedure	Contribution to whole-establishment interventions (eg anti-bullying programmes, playground behaviour, discipline, raising achievement) Contribution to special exam arrangements Contribution to curricular innovation/initiatives Joint working with class/subject teacher/LST Supporting inclusion Supporting special college placements	Staff training Disseminating evidence-based practice	Design, implementation and evaluation of research in single establishments and groups of schools
EA/Council	Contribution to strategic planning	Contribution to authority assessment policy and procedure Contribution to Best Value reviews	Contribution to establishing authority-wide interventions (eg anti-bullying initiatives, alternatives to exclusion, promoting social inclusion, resource allocation)	Authority-wide training in all areas relevant to psychology Input to multi-disciplinary conferences	Design, implementation and evaluation of authority-wide action research (eg early intervention, raising achievement) Informing evidence-based policy and practice

However through custom-and-practice and specific duties written in legislation (e.g. DfE/DoH, 2015), EP-corpus shows that EP core-functions are deployed within the SEND domain. Love (2009) observes this prevailing role-expectation as limiting EPs from working outside SEND.

Since the Children and Families Act (2014) EP-work now extends into the 16-25 age range. EP-research recommends new requisite competencies for EPs (Atkinson, Dunsmuir, Lang & Wright 2015; Morris & Atkinson, 2018). However, the arena is still SEND (see Apter, Arnold & Hardy, 2018). EPs have the skills and knowledge to work in a wide range of contexts and even to influence school- and public policy (Boyle et al., 2008; Kelly & Gray, 2000, Roffey, Hobbs & Kitching, 2018), albeit mostly in the SEND arena. This begs the question as to how EPs really see their role in light of the opportunities for professional advancement and diversification into the new arena of education-to-work transitions, hitherto under-represented in EP-corpus.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

5.1 Education-to-work transitions

Career-related research and practice are primarily the domain of occupational/work/organisational psychology. Much of it is about applying positive psychology within the young-adulthood to adult age-range. Conversely, educational psychology is primarily concerned with CYPs in compulsory education, and it only recently began to be involved in 16-25 age range principally in the SEND domain – a deficit-psychology paradigm. Thus, though positive psychology is growing (Donaldson, Dollwet & Rao, 2015) there is a research gap in its application in the area of education from the primary school to career – hence the rationale for this thesis. Indeed the necessity for educational psychology to embrace “employability” and “skills required for employment” for 16-25s is stated in a literature review conceptual paper (Stanley-Duke & Stringer, 2017, p.9).

There is ubiquitous evidence that education-to-adult-independence transitions are complex and convoluted (eg. Kehily, 2007; Robb, 2007). Henderson et al.’s (2007) youth-studies research captures this comprehensively as their research was not only longitudinal nor only about education-to-work, but about transitions in general to becoming independent adults (cf. Knowles, 2009). The team commented that their

publication did not do justice to the hypercomplexity of youth-transitions, which is also encapsulated by the body of research into career and transitions by Schoon and Silbereisen (2009a, 2009b) and Nota and Rossier (2015). For Henderson et al. (2007) locality is an important factor for such transitions, because discrete localities have differential socio-economic and cultural values which form part of that hypercomplexity.

This is supported by Briscoe and Hall's (2006) boundaryless/protean career metaphors, especially in terms of adaptability rather than versatility in predicating psychological- and physical mobility. As the researchers say, one may be 'psychologically' ready to move but 'physically' unready, and vice versa. This readiness to move/mobilise would doubtless be a factor in education-to-work transitions too, raising questions for further research about: the student/graduate's selfhood and ZPD (Vygotsky 1978) in order to progress their mobility; or about which of Schoon and Lyons-Amos's (2016) pathways they would be on and how they would move on to careers.

5.2 Public Policy

Despite ostensibly noble intentions, social-justice driven principles, public policy, and legislation have not succeeded in facilitating long-term careers for young-people. The immediate effect is marginalisation, even though official documents (e.g. DfE/DoH, 2015) state 'all children and young people' (loc. cit). Austerity is blamed for the streamlining of public services (see e.g. Leach, 2017; Watts, 2013).

However, research shows that legislation on HE has made curricula more employment-friendly, especially where there is liaison (e.g. Creasey, 2013; Scott et al., 2017) with and training-input from practising/industry experts, to produce graduates with composite skills attractive for their target-employers. But public-policy aims are more driven by fiscal and political exigencies than a genuine interest in current complex job-markets, i.e. getting young-people into not careers but jobs (see Tymon, 2013; also Vuolo et al., 2012, US example). Research shows that young graduates are keen to get any job to gain independence (Tymon, 2013), and then rethink their career strategy from there (Henderson et al., 2007). But once there, they may still be unsure

about career-mobility, and/or affected by psychological-contract breaches (Leach, 2015, 2017).

Several researchers (Leach, 2017; Rae, 2008; Roberts, 2013; Schoon & Amos 2016) call for change in public policy, although it is not clear what the perceived change should produce. New research could look more closely at this.

5.3 Employability and Lifelong Learning

Flexicurity is arguably integral to the psychological contract (see Kornelakis 2014). As such lifelong learning forms essential element for viability of employment- and career-mobility (Barnes et al., 2011; Baruch, 2004a, 2004b; Bassot et al., 2014; Leach, 2015; Selingo, 2016; see also Wilthagen & Tros, 2004). Lifelong learning enhances employability, whereby employees taking the onus for their learning objectives may be more able to manage their own careers in employment-contexts (Romaniuk & Snart, 2000). Both personal development and lifelong (career) learning are therefore implicated. This is not new as Watts, Law, Killeen, Kidd and Hawthorne (1996) noted over two decades ago.

Lifelong-learning is also implicated in public policy (see DCSF, 2009), and is a valued EU precept (Saar, Ure & Holford, 2013). This EU-wide research concludes that lifelong learning/education gives adults a second chance and also enables them to ascend the ladders of social- and career mobility.

Research shows that employability today is influenced by organisational vicissitudes, and to some extent a university education is not a criterion nor guarantee for the start to a career. The HEI/college-organisation link, vis-à-vis Scott et al.'s (2017) "experts", is a useful way of making the curriculum directly relevant. Research suggests that there will always be a need for further learning, and lifelong learning is needed to develop not just to satisfy employers that one is 'a good employee' but also one's self-hood (see Leach 2015). Given that opinion is still divided about boundaryless/protean attributes, Leach's (2015) existential argument may pave the way towards cultivating/inventing oneself as the right person for the job. Such existential principles would have ramifications for lifelong learning to be intrapolated right back to career-learning from school, and extrapolated right through one's working life (see also Watts et al. 1996, regarding dual-career learning in family and job).

Ultimately unlike social-justice and equitability principles, common-sense dictates that the driving forces behind employers are organisational viability of which competitiveness forms an integral factor, quite contrary to the philanthropy of social-justice. This asymmetry presents contesting conditions, that can complicate or compromise psychological-contracts. Flexicurity is a noble notion, but is nobility any match to viability, given that organisational viability (what the employer wants) predicates employment? This raises another question for further research.

5.4 A Role for EPs?

Leach's 'cruel optimism' (2017) is an indictment of public policy and cognate professionals for failing to prepare young-people for fulfilling careers. Perhaps a reason for those failures might spring from the relative compartmentalisations of discrete professionals (i.e. teachers: at all educational levels, career-helpers/advisors etc), since they are situated, each in their respective milieu, along the space-time trajectories of young-people on their journeys towards adult-independence. As soon as their time is done, young-people move on to the next 'teacher/mentor/guide'.

The careerist's road is paved with flagstones of lifelong learning, as discussed. Though Grant and Palmer (2015) suggest the counselling psychologist is the ideal professional for personal development in this respect, the reviewed literature would suggest that the only professional with requisite skills/knowledge who can co-travel with CYPs on their developmental journeys from birth is the EP. The EP-milieu is situated with the CYP as they move along their space-time trajectories.

However, EP literature suggests that EPs are also compartmentalised, and so not demonstrate the autonomy or agency to robustly reify their willingness and capability to develop practice and research to empower those marginalised (non-SEND) young-people, because of their role-expectations (see Love, 2009; Loxley 2018; Roffey et al., 2018). Yet new opportunities abound for EPs to engage with new educational environments of tertiary education/training, and also to work in partnership regarding curriculum design and policy, as they have been doing with schools (see Farrell, Woods, Rooney, Squires, & O'Connor, 2006; Kelly & Gray, 2000; Scottish Executive, 2002).

Masdonati and Fournier (2015) argue that young people aged 16-25 are between adolescence and adulthood, a long transition phase in itself. This is the new age-range in which EPs are encouraged to develop their practice. The authors discuss four key processes underpinning education-to-work transitions in the life-design paradigm proposed by Savickas et al. (2009), namely: school and job market contexts, young-people's relational environments, young-people's identity construction, and their relationship to school and work. This would present an ideal opportunity for EPs to work at systemic and individual levels – opportunities to utilise planned happenstance and GROW. However, Hartung (2015) argues that life-design should start much earlier – from childhood.

That EPs should persist in their role-expectation may be ingenuous discipleship of public policies that marginalises the majority groups, especially when as argued here EPs are the only developmental professionals who co-travel with young-people in their learning-journeys from birth. There remains a research/practice gap in the new area of non-SEND children-and-young-people, even though in principle the opportunities exist for EPs to expand their science and practice (see Gersch, 2009; Joseph, 2008; also Adams, 2016). For instance, like Stanley-Duke and Stringer (2017) Morris and Atkinson (2018) identify a need for EPs to be involved in helping young-people make successful education-to-work transitions (albeit in the SEND domain). Moreover, Wilding (2015) discusses EPs' consultative-systemic approach in addressing issues about unmet human needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy espoused in self-determination theory (Wilding & Griffey, 2015). That consultative-systemic approach could also be adapted for personal- and curricular development in the context of career-transition/mobility.

Likewise, Balchin, Randall & Turner (2006) and Adams (2016) explain how a coaching-consultation model could be developed, or the “third generation” coaching-psychology approach of Stelter and Law (2009) may also be considered. Stelter and Law argue that the “hypercomplexity” and “globality” (2009, p.153; also Stelter, 2014) of contemporary existence force one to reduce societal and cultural markers and turn them into personal values, where through a creative mix of “social-constructionism, narrative coaching, protreptic or philosophical coaching [...] [c]oach and coachee become philosophers to the bigger questions of life” (p.155). This would resonate with

Leach's (2015) existential-phenomenological journey for the over-18s, and go some way to career-learn regarding Henderson et al.'s (2007) differential mobility challenges (see 4.1.6).

Barnes et al. (2011), Bassot et al. (2014), Yorke and Knight (2003) and Knight and Yorke (2006) have respectively indicated that school- and university provision should be made more career-oriented. For EPs there should be scope for developing research-and-practice in what is essentially CLD together with life-design. This could take the form of EP-styled consultation to go beyond school (cf. Adams, 2016) towards career at transition-points and positive psychology coaching for career-development. Furthermore, there is no reason why this could not extend beyond age 25, since this cut-off point is only indicated as a statutory function in SEND. Career development is clearly not, and it can provide EPs with opportunities to apply psychology beyond SEND and also include the marginalised 'middle' groups.

Boundaryless and protean careers, arising from social, economic and job-market uncertainties, are not without their challenges, as discussed. EPs may be able to use positive coaching psychology to help young-people manage their career-needs, perhaps using the framework set by Briscoe and Hall (2006) (see Table A3). Linley and Kauffman's (2007) editorial introduces 'positive coaching psychology' as a marriage of positive psychology and coaching psychology. That special edition of the *International Coaching Review* postulates how that marriage works to promote achievement and wellbeing. Particularly relevant here is Green, Grant and Rynsaardt's (2007) empirical paper on a life-coaching programme with 56 female high school students (mean age 16). Their results show significant increased levels of cognitive hardiness – agentic control regarding change as challenges to be overcome – and hope, plus significant decreased levels of negative affect (see also Viola, Musso, Inguglia & Lo Cocco, 2016; cf. Henderson et al.'s "ill-being", loc. cit.). Also, the positive psychological traits of hope, resilience and optimism are found by Buyukgoze-Kavas (2016) to be good predictors of career adaptability in her study of 416 Turkish undergraduates.

Leach (2015) has argued the graduates' career-building experiences as existentially situated in the educational and social communities in which the young-person is included. Loxley (2018), erstwhile Principal EP, explains how he led a community-based "life-span developmental psychology" model of "radical community

psychology” based on “psychological principles of a humanistic and dialectical kind”, arguing that:

individuals live, work and are educated, by and large, within communities, and that institutions such schools can be seen as open systems within, encompassing, and over-lapping larger and smaller communities. (p.31)

Both Leach’s (2015) and Loxley’s (2018) views about community-psychology resonate with Bassot et al.’s (2014) argument that CLD unfolds at the individual, community and social/societal levels. As Leach (2015) and Bassot et al. (2014) also show, young-people need help to positively construct their selfhoods and career-goals. This could be achieved not just through CLD in schools and expert-input curricula and career-guidance at HE, but phenomenologically through positive career-coaching, perhaps even as an existential lifelong-learning strategy. As Vuolo et al. (2012) observe, turbulent job-markets require young-people to sustain “high aspirations, crystallization of career-goals and intensive job-search” (p.1759), and career is a lifelong project.

Finally, given that EPs have requisite skills of consultation, systemic development and intervention to address young-people’s learning needs from birth, there should be a role for EPs in the arena of education-to-work for indeed all children-and-young-people. To that end, CLD (Bassot et al., 2011, 2014), life-lifelong ‘life design’ (Nota & Rossier, 2015), planned happenstance (Krumboltz, 2009, 2015; Mitchell et al., 1999) and GROW (Passmore, 2018; Whitmore, 2009) could be forged together (see also Burns & Gillon, 2011; Turner & Lapan, 2013). However, whether or how EPs may wish in general to be involved in the new arena would represent a first step in new EP research.

6. Suggestions for Educational Psychology Research

The first question for EPs would surround their willingness to apply psychology in mainstream education and/or career consultation, i.e. outside their role expectations in SEND (Norman, 2013; Stanley-Duke & Stringer, 2017). As advocates for CYPs, EPs should capture the voices and lived experiences of YPs who have undergone fulltime education but are still on the search for long-term/fulfilling careers (cf. Leach, 2017) – especially the ‘missing middle’ who have been marginalised by public policy (see Roberts, 2011; Schoon & Lyons-Amos, 2016). As arguably the only educational and

psychological professional to co-walk with CYPs from birth to career, it should be interesting to see a new EP paradigm of life-design in both theory and practice (see Balchin et al., 2006; Bassot et al., 2011, 2014; Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Knight & Yorke, 2003; Knowles, 2009; Krumboltz, 2009, 2015; Leach, 2015; Mitchell et al., 1999; Nota & Rossier, 2015; Schoon & Silbereisen 2009a, 2009b; Whitmore, 2009; Yorke & Knight, 2006).

Finally, it should also be enquired whether EPs could influence changes in public policy to make the entire education-system geared more towards careers and employability (see Bassot et al., 2011, 2014; Bowers-Brown & Harvey, 2004; Creasey 2013; Leach, 2017; Rae, 2008; Roberts, 2013; Schoon & Amos 2016; Yorke & Knight, 2006).

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Appendix – Educational and Child Psychology, Guidance for contributors

(Mandatory Appendix)

Guidance for contributors

These guidelines are provided to assist Authors, Referees and Editors. Compliance in all respects is appreciated. Manuscripts are accepted for consideration on the understanding that they consist of the authors' original unpublished work that is not being submitted for consideration elsewhere.

The abstract

All papers should include an Abstract (of not more than 250 words) and up to five 'keywords'. The Abstract must be structured and presented under subheadings that indicate: The Aim(s); Method/Rationale; Findings; Limitations; Conclusions.

Length

The main body of text in papers should usually be 3500–5000 words in length although papers outside this range may be considered at the Editor's discretion. Authors must indicate the word-length of papers with and without the reference section, excluding any tables or figures.

Any one issue of the publication will usually consist of a maximum of eight papers. Referees' comments and Editors' judgement of the balance and salience of papers will determine which papers are finally selected for publication.

Style

Overall, the presentation of papers should conform to the British Psychological Society's *Style Guide*. Non-discriminatory language should be used throughout. Spelling should be anglicised when appropriate. Text should be concise and written for an international readership of applied psychologists. Abbreviations, acronyms and unfamiliar specialist terms should be explained in the text at least once. Referencing should follow the current Society formats. For example:

Black-Hawkins, K., Florian, L. & Rouse, M. (2007). *Achievement and inclusion in schools*. London: Routledge/Falmer.

Woolfolk-Hoy, A. & Weinstein, C.S. (2006). Student and teacher perspectives on classroom management. In C.M. Evertson & C.S. Weinstein (Eds.), *Handbook of classroom management* (pp.181–219). London: LEA.

Jordan, A., Schwartz, E. & McGhie-Richmond, D. (2009). Preparing teachers for inclusive classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25, 525–542.

The Editorial Board reserve the right to amend text to achieve conformity with *Educational & Child Psychology's* aims and style.

Manuscripts

An electronic copy should be sent to the Editor for a specific issue, by emailed attachment (in MS Word or rich text format). We are unable to consider papers that are not submitted for a specific issue. Graphs, pictures or diagrams, etc., must be submitted in a format suitable for printing in black-and-white. The cover page must provide the full title of the paper, all authorial details and address (postal and email). The body of the paper, starting on page 2, should include the title and abstract, but omit any detail by which the author(s) may be identified. Text should be in at least 12 point Times New Roman and double-spaced. The submission must confirm that all authors approve the submission and that the paper is their original work and not under consideration elsewhere. Manuscripts that do not conform to these requirements will be returned to the author(s).

Refereeing

All papers are usually read by two referees in addition to the Editor. The refereeing process is anonymous. It is important, therefore, that all submissions conform to the above guidelines.

The referees' comments will, at the Editor's discretion, be passed to the authors.

The Editorial Board is always pleased to consider suggestions for themed editions. Anyone wishing to propose a theme and to assist as a 'Guest Editor' should contact the General Editor, Dr Fraser Lauchlan, at the School of Psychological Science and Health, Strathclyde University, Graham Hills Building, Glasgow, G1 1XQ or by email to fraser.lauchlan@strath.ac.uk or fraserlauchlan@live.com

Part B: Research Report

Achieving “Economic Well-Being” in a World of Rapid Change: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the Career Journeys of Five Young Persons from First Career-Dreams

Abstract

The lived experiences and meaning-making of five ordinary young-persons² 22-25 years of age on their journeys to finding satisfying careers were explored through semi-structured interviews and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Enquiry into the ‘ordinary’ or ‘mainstream’ was felt important as little research has been conducted on the ‘unspectacular’ (Playford & Gayle, 2016), whose voice is under-represented in educational psychology research. Results indicated that pupils were led to believe that university was the launchpad for successful careers and good lives, and that the quest for university started effectively from primary school. More salient, participants indicated that career-assistance was unsatisfactory in pre-tertiary education, which impacted heavily on their decisions. The young-persons ended up with ‘jobs’ (as opposed to ‘careers’) which they felt were beneath their abilities and attributes, but needed in order to reify their notions of independence in a changing world and its insecure job-markets. Participants of this IPA-study reflected on notions of ‘selfhood’, e.g. self-efficacy, self-discovery, evolving from their career-journeys as well as hopes for a better future. The study concludes with final interpretations of how the young-persons’ journeys relate to career theories: protean/boundaryless, happenstance, and kaleidoscope – offering possibilities for further research.

² In this phenomenological report, the following hyphenated words are used to avoid potential de-individualising/de-humanising effects of the abbreviations: CYP, YPs, as follows: ‘children-and-young-people’, ‘young-people’ (general term) or ‘young-persons’ (participants in this study).

1. Introduction

This study examined youth-transition from full-time education into work from the young-person's perspectives. While previous research has examined the issue involving large samples (e.g. Henderson, Holland, McGrellis, Sharpe & Thomson, 2007; Kehily 2007; Robb 2007; Schoon 2016), the intimate voice of young-people with a passion for achievement has been comparatively neglected. Importantly, legislation is in place (e.g. DfE, 2013; DfE, 2017; DfES, 2003a) that all educational institutions have duties to effectively prepare young-people for work/career. As a statutory professional (Educational Psychologist) the researcher is interested in how young-people's actual experiences compared with these directives, what individual views they might have, and whether there could be possibilities for influencing change in public policy, as called for by some researchers (e.g. Leach, 2017; Rae, 2008; Roberts, 2013; Schoon & Lyons-Amos, 2016).

1.1 “Economic Wellbeing”

“Economic wellbeing” is a term used in extant legislation (DfES 2003a, p.14) which Knowles (2009) defines as alluding to adult-independence in gainful (self-)employment. But how it may be achieved is a challenge as children become adults in the current “economic storm” (Rae 2008, p.749) typifying turbulent times and challenging job-markets (see Kehily, 2007; Leach, 2015, 2017; Roberts, 2013; Savickas, 2008; Schoon, 2016; Schoon & Silbereisen, 2009a, 200b; Thomson, 2007; Vuolo et al., 2012). Furthermore, there is a difference between jobs and careers (e.g. Tymon 2013), hence job-security and satisfaction are also important factors, the lack of which can lead to disaffection and the need for new/alternative career strategies (Henderson et al., 2007; Leach, 2017). Indeed, Leach's (2017) phenomenological investigation of eight graduate third-year careerists argues that “the search for career fulfilment can be marked by feelings of cruel optimism, wicked problems and broken expectations” (p.1).

Research shows that public policy has marginalised large groups of young-people deemed by social-justice agendas as not disadvantaged: e.g. the “missing middle” (Roberts, 2013, p.31), “overlooked middle” (Spours, Stanton & Vesey 2012, p.1), “forgotten middle” (Schoon & Lyons-Amos, 2016, p.18). This study selected a sample

representing another marginalised group: young-people having been on the “royal route” to GCSEs and A-Levels (Spours et al., p.3).

1.2 Contemporary Youth World

There is substantial literature attesting that the world in which youth live and work today is one of rapid change and uncertainty (see Di Blasi, Tosto, Arfia, Cavani & Giordano, 2016; Kehily, 2007, Leach, 2017; Robb, 2007; Savickas et al....Van Viannen, 2009; Schoon & Silbereisen, 2009a; Selingo, 2016; Thomson et al., 2007) and buoyant job-markets, where youth transitions to adult identities, careers and work, traditionally along linear progressions are now the exception (Henderson et al., 2007; Lechner, Tomasik & Silbereisen, 2016; Roberts, 2013; Savickas et al., 2009; Schoon & Silbereisen, 2009b; Silbereisen 2016; Vuolo et al., 2012; Watts et al., 1996). Also, Watts (2013) notes a decline in career guidance in schools, which he claims brings its own challenges for young-people making the transition to adulthood and work. This was accentuated by the large-scale Government survey (House of Lords, 2016) reporting how schools/colleges are failing to prepare pupils for work-life.

That is not new. Henderson et al. (2007) conducted a longitudinal study of 100 young-people over a 10-year period, when:

...some, predominantly middle class, eased their way through to a university education only to find difficulty in getting a job afterwards; [...] others are still in the process of making their way back into education after working for a few years. (p.3)

1.3 Research Question

The uncertainties highlighted above formed the basis for this research. It sought to (a) capture the intimate voices of a sample of young-people like Henderson et al.’s (2007) in a north-west English locality, and (b) provide a narrative of their lived experiences and meaning-making in preparing and searching for fulfilling careers from their schooldays to the present. In aiming to explore the issues facing, and the experiences of, young-people 18-25 years of age in the transition from full-time education to work (see Masdonati & Fournier, 2015), as well as hear the voices of such young-people (see Apter, Arnold & Hardy, 2018) this exploratory research asked, “How do ordinary young-people view their continuing journey from first career-dreams

towards establishing long-term careers, and how might they achieve satisfying careers?’’

2. Methodology

2.1 Participants

The participant profile was subject to certain criteria (see Appendix A), summarised here generally as young-people between 18 and 25, articulate, without persistent mental-health issues, and still seeking to improve their career-prospects. From referrals by trusted professional contacts, four women and one man (aged 22-25) all of white-British backgrounds were recruited. Pseudonyms were given to them, whose initials reflected the chronological order in which they were each interviewed (see below, and Appendix B for fuller details).

Table B1: Participant pen-portraits

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Education in addition to GCSEs and A Levels</i>	<i>Current job</i>	<i>Current social circumstances</i>
Barbara	24	None. Withdrew from university after 2 years.	Civil service telephone customer advisor.	Living with boyfriend-partner.
Chelsea	24	Diploma in Media Technology – 3 years at university, failed BSc Hons Media Technology.	Property management consultant of a national estate agency.	Living with boyfriend-partner.
Darcy	24	BA Hons (2:1) Political Science.	Customer advisor in a small family firm selling one type of garment-accessories.	Living with boyfriend-partner, her employer’s son.
Elliot	22	None.	Deputy store manager in an international supermarket chain.	Living with girlfriend-partner.
Faye	25	BSc Hons (2:2) International Fashion Marketing.	Nursery assistant bank (ie. casual) staff.	Single parent of a male infant; on welfare ‘benefits’.

It was decided to make the sample as homogenous as possible, to avoid data that could be confounded by disparity in participant characteristics, while allowing some

variety. Accordingly, the participants chosen were described as bright and academically able, formerly designated by their respective schools as ‘gifted-and-talented’ (See Appendix C for more about giftedness).

Ethical considerations in recruitment also included appropriate boundaries and equitable power-relationships between the participants and their respective nominators (see Appendices D and E). Confidentiality was utmost: each nominator agreed never to broach the subject of the research with the participant referred by them. Each participant was also advised not to discuss the research with their nominator.

2.2 Materials

A semi-structured interview schedule modelled closely on Shinebourne and Smith (2008) was used to elicit candid responses; chosen because it was deemed a useful format (see Appendix D for the finalised interview-schedule.) A high-quality stereo recording-device ZOOM-H1 was used to record the interviews.

2.3 Procedure

The participants were interviewed individually in the confidential environment of the researcher’s private consulting-room. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and then finally analysed.

A pilot study was conducted to adapt the questions to an educational context – it was alcohol-addiction in Shinebourne and Smith (2008) – exemplified in Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). Emulating said exemplar, as further methodological refinement was felt needed and Barbara (pilot participant) was in-between jobs, a second interview was conducted two months later; after she had had a chance to settle into the new job.

2.4 Design- and Data-Collection Issues

The semi-structured interviews were conducted mindful of certain pitfalls and opportunities. Giddens (1984) warns that the researcher, trying to make sense of the participant’s world as the participant makes sense of the subject, may be influenced by the researcher’s motivation and/or level of understanding. Bourdieu (1977, p.2) also warns of an observer who “interpreting practices, is inclined to introduce into the object the principles of his/*sic*/ relation to the object”. This is particularly poignant, because

being a practitioner the researcher must avoid practice-experience driving/prejudicing hypotheses, but instead capture the interviewee's "essence or inner core" (Hermanowicz 2002, p.481; also in Roulston, 2010, p.57).

Kvale (2007, p.19) analogises the role of the interview as a "miner" or "co-traveller", where the interviewer either digs deeper for more nuggets or grows with the interviewee along the interview-journey of self-discovery (see also Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). So, if Kvale's analogy constitutes compartmentalisation, a researcher would be the "miner" while a practitioner would be the "co-traveller". However in the actual natural flow (see Csikshentmihalyi, 1998) of a well-connected interview (see Willig, 2008; Roulston, 2010; Hermanowicz, 2002), it is challenging for the two to be exclusively compartmentalised, as mutual growth is bound to happen, since no bar exists between what Giddens (1984) sees as 'practical-consciousness' and 'discursive-consciousness'. Practical consciousness resides in unconscious routineness, but can be raised to articulatory levels through the consciousness of discourse. According to Jensen (2012), discursive consciousness is a "focused form of intentionality" [i.e. understanding] "that can be mobilized in response to one's own doubts or to alternatives advanced by others" (p.2).

In interviewing, diligence was exercised to 'draw out' and avoid 'putting-in' information (cf. Kvale's 'miner'/'co-traveller'). However, at least one participant (e.g. transcript: Darcy:146-150, Q³:0) expressed a sense of growth towards the interview's end, tokenising some growth during the interview-travel. Thus, while Husserlian 'bracketing' (see Wall, Glenn, Mitchison & Poole, 2009) may be desirable – i.e. suspending one's *a priori* knowledge, understanding, views etc – such may not be entirely possible, as Heidegger's interpretative phenomenological approach in rejecting 'bracketing' postulates that those same *a priori* givens inevitably come into play in making sense of the interviewee's meaning-making (Reiners, 2012). However, Gadamer (1997/1960) emphasises the importance of being wary of one's own bias, "so that the text can present itself in all its otherness and thus assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings" (p.269).

³Q numerals are participants' supplementary or extended quotes for fuller flavour: see Appendix E.

Despite arising from a pilot-study, Barbara's data were included into the analysis, as hers being the product of two interviews contained information too valuable to be discarded. The second interview was necessary for clarifying certain points, 'pushing' (Smith, 2004, 2011) for greater/deeper detail (cf. Kvale's (2007) 'miner'), re-orienting the focus to an educational context, and factoring-in Barbara's settling-in experiences in her new job. Similarly, though Chelsea had very recently gained what she felt to be her new career of choice, her information was also considered too valuable to discard from the overall analysis.

2.5 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Since the intention was to study young-people as real living entities (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012) with perspectives and passions evolving from the earliest constructions to latest lived experiences, IPA was considered the most appropriate methodology. This would offer best opportunities for deep analysis of the individual and collective hitherto little-sought voices of a small sample of young-people – the mainstream (Roberts, 2011; Playford & Gayle, 2016). Also, IPA is comparatively under-represented in Educational Psychology literature (Oxley, 2016). Thematic analysis and grounded theory were felt less suitable as personal discourses would be muffled by the general discourse of the larger samples required. Critical discourse analysis (e.g. Foucault, 1969/2002; Fairclough, 2001) was likewise rejected because, though it could provide analytical depth, the focus could be possibly dominated by markers of power-dynamics between the participants-as-then-students and their institutions.

2.6 IPA: Epistemology, Strengths and Weaknesses, and Procedure

IPA is founded on the principles of phenomenology, idiography and hermeneutics, and is unique in that it gathers as authentically as possible the person's inner world so to examine at a deep level their own understandings of their lived experiences within the context of their social world (see: Heidegger, 1962; Reid et al., 2008; Smith et al. 2009; Willig, 2008): the motivation, aspirations behind them etc, allowing that deep understanding to perhaps engender positive change. Also IPA allows for examining of 'themes within cases' and 'cases within themes' (Smith et al., 2009). These are IPA strengths, as the real living person is not anonymised by statistical data.

However the main weaknesses are that though rich and meaningful the data may be, their idiographic nature cannot be forwarded to generalise for a wider population. Rather they offer understanding, intuitive insights and thus opportunities for future research, perhaps on a nomothetic basis. Smith et al. (2009, p.17) explains such understanding as “practical engagement with the world”, involving “self-reflection and sociality, affective concern, and a temporal, existential location”. Further Smith (2004, p.42) contends that IPA is an evolving methodology, and that “inductive IPA” could “push” for probable deeper hermeneutics, extending extant literature; contrasting “deductive IPA” where hermeneutics and findings are derived from the data and extant literature. Conversely, Heidegger warns of analyses inflected by the “obvious undiscussed assumption of the person who does the interpreting”. (1962, p.192).

Perhaps the greatest weakness of IPA is the discursive perseveration[*sic*] of the existentialism of a tiny number of people, which may be argued as insignificant in the vast complexities of global exigencies that are continually changing. However IPA’s aims are not to generalise findings but rather to present a well-constructed ‘relativist ontology’ (Willig, 2008). As Eatough and Shaw (2019) explain, “IPA seeks to retain the rich and personal detail of the particular whilst pointing to ways in which the particular illuminates (and is illuminated by) characteristics of the lifeworld that are common to us all” (p.51).

Having considered the strengths and weaknesses, and decided on IPA, the research design strongly adhered to the methodology described in detail in Smith et al. (2009), Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014), and principally Smith (2011) (see Table B2).

Table B2: Smith's (2011) guidance on good analysis

<p>[...] IPA quality evaluation guide.</p> <p>Acceptable</p> <p>The paper meets the following four criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly subscribes to the theoretical principles of IPA: it is phenomenological, hermeneutic and idiographic.• Sufficiently transparent so reader can see what was done.• Coherent, plausible and interesting analysis.• Sufficient sampling from corpus to show density of evidence for each theme: N1-3: extracts from every participant for each theme; N4-8: extracts from at least three participants for each theme; and N+8: extracts from at least three participants for each theme + measure of prevalence of themes, or extracts from half the sample for each theme. <p>Overall the paper is judged sufficiently trustworthy to accept for publication and include in a systematic review.</p> <p><i>Caveats</i></p> <p>Compensation. Evidence base and interest factors considered together so that, e.g., a paper with particularly interesting data may gain compensation for a less than ideal evidence base.</p> <p>Partial acceptability. A paper may be deemed acceptable if it has partial but discrete pockets of acceptable, e.g.,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Paper may present four themes, two of which are interesting and well evidenced while two of them are not. In this case, the paper can be considered acceptable as the two good themes make a sufficient contribution in their own right.2. Paper may have number of themes but evidence each with data from the same single participant. This paper may be considered acceptable if the account of the individual is sufficiently coherent that it can be read as an interesting idiographic case-study.3. Paper may present data from two participant groups, e.g., males and females and be deemed acceptable for one participant group but not the other. <p>Safe or borderline? A paper showing sufficient sampling as described above is deemed safe. A paper with a sample over eight with extracts from enough participants to illustrate variation but without detail of prevalence or enough evidence of density of themes is deemed borderline. See text for more details.</p> <p>Unacceptable</p> <p>The paper fails on one of the four criteria for acceptable. It may be: # not consistent with theoretical principles of IPA;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• insufficiently transparent for reader to see what was done;• not of sufficient interest; and• poorly evidenced. <p>Predominantly what lets a paper down is the poor evidence base. Typical ways this can occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• large number of descriptive/superficial themes from a large number of participants;• each theme has short summary and one or two extracts without interpretation;• insufficient extracts from participants to support the themes being illustrated;• no explanation for how prevalence of the themes was determined; and• analysis is crude, lacks nuance. <p>Overall the paper is not trustworthy and would not be judged acceptable for publication.</p> <p>Good</p> <p>Paper must clearly meet all the criteria for acceptable. It then offers these three extra things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• well focused; offering an in-depth analysis of a specific topic;• data and interpretation are strong; and• reader is engaged and finds it particularly enlightening. <p>Overall the paper could be recommended to a novice as a good exemplar of IPA.</p>

The researcher adhered to the seven-stage sequence of IPA- analysis (Smith et al., 2009; Finlay, 2011), as follows (Finlay's italics):

1. *Reading and re-reading* – this initial iterative-cumulative stage involved ‘immersion’ into the data for maximum familiarity. Researcher listened to each recorded interview and read each transcript over ten times in total, including listening without reading.
2. *Initial noting* – brief notes were written in the right-hand column of each transcript; process was repeated several times to avoid data-escape.
3. *Developing emergent themes* – key-words were written in the left hand column as codings for themes arising from the notes; process repeated.
4. *Searching for connections across emergent themes* – Researcher colour-highlighted themes to show their repective connections.
5. *Moving to the next case* – the above sequence was applied to each successive case.
6. *Looking for patterns across cases* – themes were identified as to whether they occurred among all the cases, and the extents to which they differed in terms of individual or collective meaning-making, experiential/existential significance etc for each: diosyncrasies, contradictions and concurrences were noted.
7. *Taking interpretations to deeper levels* – themes were re-examined for diffferential significance in meaning-making and lived-expriences, both within case and across cases.

Smith (2018) proposes a ‘typology of meaning’, comprising five levels of meaning of increasing existential importance: “literal” (generic/lexical), ‘pragmatic’ (context-specific), “experiential” (meaning as it impacts now and on what happens hereon), “existential”, e.g. “What does this mean for [...] who I am?”, and finally “heightened existential”, e.g. what it means for ‘my purpose in life’, etc. (Smith, 2018, p.3). This would be especially pertinent to the seventh stage.

t3. Results and Analysis

Twenty-four themes were identified and subsumed under six super-ordinate themes. These were organised into a sequence, where the reflective path should become progressively more robust. Thus, the first two superordinate themes portrayed how Participants tried to realise their dreams and the part played by education, and is notionally biographical (see Henderson et al., 2007). The next two investigated Participants' current positions and what support they had now or before, relative to career and/or independence (reflections on the past and present). And the remainder two explored their current realities, how they presently saw their agency for change and their hopes for the future (reflecting projectively) (see Table B3).

Table B3: Master table of themes

<i>Superordinate Themes</i>	<i>Themes</i>
Career: making the dream come true	Childhood dream-job and early influences Peer influences University Barriers to achieving career outcomes "Uni-life"
School	University as promise of career Limitations of GCSE options-choice Exams
Work/job and independence	Current jobs Job-satisfaction and pay Money and independence Previous job/work experiences Career prospects
Support in career-context	Family Teachers 'Career assistance'
Reflections about present realities	Where am I now? Myself and the dream-career Experience is what counts Perceptions of the job-market
Selfhood and self-efficacy: the future	Personal resources Challenges ahead Hopes for the future Advice to youngsters

The historical-present-tense is used below to convey the ‘situation-at-the-moment’ of the Participants at the time of the research, so as to avoid complicated grammatical structures, e.g. past future-perfect, past-pluperfect, etc.

3.1 Career: making the dream come true

This key theme traced Participants’ endeavours to get to university, why, and what happened to their dreams.

3.1.1 Childhood dream-job and early influences

Four participants expected that university education would open career doors for them. Barbara had the strongest “passion” (eg Barbara-1:154), and had always wanted to be a journalist. She valued the importance of English; at high school she “really focused” to achieve the highest grades possible to get to college for her A Levels. Then at college “I’d make sure for the journalism course I get 3 Bs” and to push herself to get into university. At university she signed up for a wide range of magazines, and read extra textbooks to learn all she could about journalism in action “trying to take in as much as I could” (Barbara-1:52).

Both Darcy and Faye wanted to be doctors. Darcy was influenced by her paternal grandparents being both doctors. Faye was about 7 when she started reading the family’s “big medical book” (Faye:48)(Q:1)

Chelsea developed an interest in computer-games design in school.

Conversely, Elliot had no clear idea about a career, and decided not to go to university because he could not justify the expense, especially as the fees were to triple (to c.£9000) in his forthcoming First Year: “I didn’t know what I wanted to do and can get pushed down the wrong path into something in debt with something you don’t want to do” (Elliot:68).

Thus for the four, university was perceived to be the launch of their chosen career, a quest that was highly important, but this was contrasted by Elliot’s view as he did not have a definite dream.

3.1.2 Peer influences

Participants explained how peer pressure, actual or perceived, spoilt their early career-dreams. Because she was a taciturn diligent pupil, “a bit of a goody two shoes and wanted to be the best in the class”, Darcy was called hurtful names and lost her way:

I don't know what happened, social society happened to me and I just thought it wasn't cool to be at the top of the class. I probably slipped down a bit then (Darcey:40).

Faye felt the lure of glamour pulling her in another direction. Her dreams of becoming a doctor “fizzled out” even though she loved biology, something she felt good at and had a “sixth sense” about. However, she was lured by peer pressure for “social status and what was popular and what other people were doing” and started reading fashion magazines. “I think the more that I read about things like that, the more I thought I'd love to have this glamorous lifestyle” (Faye:50). Ultimately Faye felt unwilling to commit to the long medical training. (Fay:106)(Q:2)

These off-putting experiences, ranging between demeaning and glamourising, substantially changed the gameplans.

3.1.3 University

University held differential meanings for the participants as a gateway to (a) career and independence, (b) adulthood and (c) better job-prospects.

Three participants took vocational degrees in their chosen field: respectively: journalism, computer-games design, and fashion marketing. But while Barbara and Chelsea followed their young dreams, Faye thinks she “made a last minute decision actually, probably too last minute.” (Faye:)(Q3)

Though Elliot never went, he believes that university holds the answer to his career progression, “because you can reach store manager level, which is very good anyway, however to go to the next stage you have to have a degree” (Elliot:114).

Darcy went to university for a different reason – the inspiration from her “fantastic” Politics teacher compensated for the bullying she got. However, by this time her A-Levels (including Politics and Business) would not have gained her a place on a medical degree. Chelsea believed that university was definitely the place to gain the

skills she needed. Again, Elliot took a different view: that university was not for him at that time.

3.1.4 Barriers to achieving career outcomes

Participants explained how their career aspirations became frustrated at university. Barbara and Chelsea became disappointed after their Second Year. Barbara cited two reasons for her disaffection. Living at home she had to travel some 20 miles. Sometimes lectures were cancelled without notice, and she felt her journey and time had been wasted. More saliently, before she commenced her Third Year and having compiled a journalistic portfolio for her Final Year project, she recalls her tutor commenting, “Right, who do you know in the industry who can help you out and go over these articles with you?” Barbara was stunned:

I just, I just thought if that’s what it’s all about, about who you know and not... I just felt defeated by it, I just thought I don’t, I don’t like this at all (Barbara-1:32).

Chelsea lost interest because the tutors changed her final year into “studio studies” (Chelsea:68)(Q:4). Computer-games design “was what I wanted to do.” (Chelsea:63). “...my head wasn't in it, I just didn't want to do it any more” (Chelsea:60). She gained a diploma instead of a degree, which she did not feel was of any value. Barbara did not start Year Three and left university without qualifications.

Faye’s barrier to a fashion-marketing career came suddenly and unexpectedly. She was in advanced pregnancy by the time of her final exams, and feels she did not apply herself as she should have:

When I was pregnant, I kind of realised that I wasn’t prepared to dedicate myself as much to a career when I had other responsibilities like having a child (Faye:32).

Thus, ‘vocational university’ for Barbara, Chelsea and Faye did not transform into careers as they had hoped, although it was other factors than university that let Faye down. Opinion was split whether university was worthwhile. Darcy and Faye value their decisions to go to university regardless – for them the experience was not wasted.

However though Chelsea “learnt loads” (Chelsea:80) at university, her current (secure) job does not require a degree. She feels adamant that if school had not pushed pupils to go to university “I don't think I would have gone.” (Chelsea:100).

So, Participants’ experiences changed the meaningfulness they had earlier ascribed to ‘university’. Most important, now they no longer view university as the passport to a career.

3.1.5 “Uni-life”

Generally, university was regarded as not only a place of learning but of personal growth. Chelsea, Darcy and Faye enjoyed university life, and value the university experience as part of growing up (Q:5) – For Darcy “being ‘at uni’” and away from parents was highly prized (Darcy:104).

Faye remembers at the time that though college and university were not compulsory, she always wanted to continue her education, because...

my sister was in university and my Dad was always in education, in academia in some way or another. It just seemed that that was what you should do (Faye:32-34).

Barbara wonders whether if she had lived on campus “I would’ve stuck with it” and not dropped out. (Barbara-1:62)(Q:6).

Elliot however had, and has, no desire for the “uni-life” (Q:7). He still does not know what to study and is glad he did not go. However, he still wants a degree and feels that “it opens your job prospects up massively.” (Elliot:46)

Thus, though university did not realise their career dreams, all four who went value university as a good experience for turning them into the people they are today (see 3.6). Overall, university experience significantly impacted – affectively and developmentally. Though Barbara and Chelsea became disenchanted, Faye feels she matured through managing her pregnancy and studies in the final year. Darcy felt, and feels, she needed to be away from parents to define herself.

3.2 School

Here the participants passionately commented on their experiences about the part played by school and A-Level college.

3.2.1 University as a promise of career

Participants feel they were led by school to believe that university would realise their career aspirations. Chelsea feels that school led pupils to believe that a university education would give them a career (Q:8), and she bought the idea: “You go you come out and you get an amazingly brilliant job”. (Chelsea:42-50)

Barbara feels likewise, that not going to university symbolises not having achieved in anything.

It was almost like a ladder from school, to A Levels, to uni and then from uni you’d get really good jobs because you would have this and this in life because you went to university (Barbara-1:168).

Elliot too thinks schools “do drive you to uni”, but he believes that it is because “they want the best for you and normally it gives you the best chance”. (Elliot:68)

The alternative to going to university would be directly into work, and this was not perceived to tokenise success. Darcy explained that she believes university is schools’ ultimate goal: “you’re not geared towards your career, you’re geared to going to uni” (Darcy:188)

3.2.2 Limitations of ‘options’

Participants strongly expressed their feelings about not being able to choose the GCSE option they were interested in or needed to advance to the right A-Levels, needed to get them to university and study for their chosen careers. Barbara (Q:9) sees that the “ladder from school” to university starts from GCSE, which Participants feel were limited in terms of what they could pick, even though they might have had a clear idea of subjects pertinent to their career-paths. Given the choice Chelsea “would have done a lot more arty things – music, drama, dance” (Chelsea:90). A-Level choices too can be limited by GCSE choices: “if you haven’t done them at GCSE you might not want to do them at A-level”. (Elliot:174)

Notwithstanding, because of staffing arrangements no matter how large the school, the GCSE needs of every single child could not be realistically met. While Participants appreciate this fact they strongly feel that these limitations impacted upon their free choice.

3.2.3 Exams

Since university cannot be accessed without A-Levels, Participants feel that schools' mission is simply to ensure pupil pass exams. To Faye the "ladder" to university starts even earlier, from Year 9 Standard Attainment Tests (SATs): (Q:10), She sees SATs, GCSEs and A-Levels as a series of "stepping stones" towards university, (Faye:124-126) (Q:11)

Darcy feels passionately that schools have only one principal goal: "passing your exams, passing your exams, passing your exams [*sic*]" (Darcy:92). Such was her case, except for her "inspirational" A-Level Politics teacher.

This theme highlights three salient points: (i) school's drive towards university access which would presumably ensure good career- and life-prospects; (ii) exams as rungs on "the ladder to university", and (iii) the importance of gaining the highest grades. Participants' disaffection was voiced perhaps most vociferously by Darcy as she mockingly mimics her Business teacher's shrill voice exclaiming:

"This isn't gonna get you an A, this isn't gonna get you an A! You've got to get an A, this is how you get an A!" And then that's it, you get an A and you're gone. [*four-second silence*] And to them that's fine, they're fine, Ofsted are happy (Darcy:92).

In summary, these two key themes showed how the participants bought the idea from various sources that university was to be the realisation of their career-dreams. However, the ultimate reality, especially the arduous exam system and their schools' failure in offering them other-than-university alternatives, had led them to finding different paths to independence far removed from their original dreams.

The next two superordinate-themes discuss how Participants feel about their current jobs and independence, and the parts played by educational and other significant people on their journeys up to this point.

3.3 Work/job and independence

Participants evaluated how previous job experience helped them to develop skills and what various factors of their jobs mean to them.

3.3.1 Current jobs

Except for Chelsea and Barbara, the others feel that their current jobs are in some way beneath them.

Having settled into the Civil Service, Barbara enthused about her new job in telephone customer services, and explains how much it she enjoys doing something that she feels is worthwhile.

It's the first time that I've had a job where I'm actually feel like I'm doing something that's helping people [...]. Most of the calls are quite positive. And you get them ones that phone up all upset and angry, but by the time you've finished the call, you've explained everything and sort of calmed them down and they're really thankful for that. Feel like I'm actually accomplishing something (Barbara-2:10).

She also eulogises the robust structure of the organisation and prospects of progression/promotion. Comparatively in her previous job, even with supervisory duties, she feels that her manager only dangled the promotion-carrot (Q:12). The visibility of her current higher managers – “he comes through every day and he speaks to us” (Barbara-2:98) – makes her feel valued and un-intimidated.

Elliot does not see his job as lifelong; “I enjoy it but it's not something I want to be doing for the rest of my life.” (Elliot:6), because he does not feel challenged enough; “I think my skills will benefit elsewhere.” (Elliot:8). Darcy and Faye feel the same; their jobs are unchallenging. Darcy “definitely” believes she can do better (Darcy:8-10). Faye added, “it's not the glamorous lifestyle I had envisioned as a teenager starting at university” (Faye:20).

Apart from Chelsea who feels that she has found her career in her property management job, and could see herself retiring from the company and industry, the others generally feel that there are better jobs they could do. Such assertions tokenise their self-belief and high self-esteem, and “accomplishment”, very important to Barbara, probably resonates with the others.

3.3.2 Job-satisfaction and pay

Despite being unfulfilling, Participants value their jobs in different ways. Darcy likes hers because she loves talking with people (Darcy:18). However, she exclaimed that working at around minimum wage is “basically 8 hours of your day that's been

stolen away to make someone else money” (Darcy:124). If she could love her job, she would not feel like her time is being “stolen” (Darcy:130).

Barbara derives great satisfaction from helping people (Barbara-2:10 above). More than that, compared with previous jobs, she has never experienced this sense of purpose before. She had felt “passionate” about going into the food industry, but it has lost its purpose, and her passion demised. “I just make coffee; don’t really feel like I’m achieving anything by doing that or by being there” (Barbara-1:94).

Elliott gets job-satisfaction in his manager-role, feeling it is important but only at “60:40 in favour of pay” (Elliot:18). He feels that money would enable him to do things he cannot otherwise afford, and plan for the future.

However, Faye rated job-satisfaction as higher than money, “because it’s nice to see the children changing and growing and becoming little people...” (Faye:22). Because she currently receives ‘benefits’ her priorities now lie with the welfare of her little family. As long as she could have the basic essentials in life and provide well for her son, she was quite happy presently to be on low-income.

Chelsea was the most passionate in stating that her job gave her 100% job-satisfaction. “It’s fantastic.” (Chelsea:119-122). She could see it being long-term. Money is “not that important” and she had effectively taken a pay cut by changing jobs. She reflected: “Maybe that’s a selfish thing. I feel happy when I’m helping people. When I get something for people in a timely manner it really makes me happy.” (Chelsea:129-132)

The common thread here was that all five participants derived job-satisfaction and a sense of purpose/achievement from helping people in various ways, but Darcy was most eloquent in postulating that minimum-wage was ‘stealing time’.

3.3.3 Money and independence

Money was a theme arising from all five participants and was connected with independence. Elliot stated the obvious: money/pay “is very important cos obviously you got to live...” (Elliot:16). He later elaborated that he has independence within the relationship with his live-in girlfriend, “I’ve still got my own money and [...] I can still see my friends, independently” (Elliot:102).

Though Chelsea feels she was 100% independent, her recent pressures of major repairs to her car had reduced her independence to 80%. She feels “proud to be not money-oriented” and her priorities are just enough to live on. Big holidays are “not something I’m interested in.” (Chelsea:150). Faye similarly feels that money is not “that big of a deal” anymore: “As long as I am putting food on the table, living in a nice house and we’ve got nice things, we’re all happy then” (Faye:218).

Hence, independence was constructed by Participants as the ability to have at least a reasonable standard of living and being able to do ordinary things, although in Faye’s case this was facilitated by ‘benefits’. Chelsea’s recent expense lowering her independence might be over-attributed, as it would not be any different to seeking a bank-loan for unexpected large expenses. Perhaps having to ask Mum for the loan was the factor impacting on her sense of independence.

Conversely Barbara attached massively more importance to money. It dominated her interviews and seemed to impact on her decisions and feeling of independence: e.g. moving out of the toxic homelife with boyfriend and back home to Mum; her low-wage impacting on said relationship etc. Most salient was how money made her decide to quit university, something she regrets. However, she could not justify “paying 12 grand to be told you don’t know anyone [in journalism] you’re going to struggle” (Barbara-1:32). As she was enjoying the part-time job, she decided to go full-time there “and then make money” (ibid.).

Barbara wants to save for a mortgage (Barbara-1:162)(Q:13). Grandad had influenced her about the importance of money to avoid ‘struggling’. She recalls with nostalgic affection:

He wanted me to go to university to get like a really good job and make lots of money and sort of be happy that way *[laughs]* so that I was always comfortable and never sort of struggle and when I came out of uni I think he worried that I would sort of spend my life struggling (Barbara-1:192).

This is possibly an instance where iteration on ‘money’ does magnify the importance Barbara attached to the theme (see Smith et al., 2009, 2011). Her other iteration s “passion”. Overall however, ‘money’ was hugely important to Participants, as it impacts on their independence.

3.3.4 Previous job/work experience

Job-experience holds much significance for the four who have worked before. Barbara, Chelsea, Elliot and Faye feel that their previous job experiences with management-supervisory responsibilities helped them in getting their current jobs. Moreover, Chelsea an ex-telephone customer advisor feels empowered at transferring those job-skills to her current role as a telephone property-management negotiator. She explains that both roles “are about interacting with customers” – using a computer as she speaks on the phone, which she particularly likes (Chelsea:20).

Likewise, Elliott feels that previously working for six years in a “local chippy” serving customers, handling money etc, gave him valuable experience for his current role as supermarket deputy store-manager.

There was congruence in the four participants appreciating previous job-experience as an advantage in gaining their current jobs, and as transferable employment skills.

3.3.5 Career prospects

All Participants are looking to improving upon their current job-statuses. Other than Faye, all feel they could progress in their current jobs or companies. Darcy hopes to move into sales thus giving her more interesting and challenging things to do, without further qualifications. Unlike her, Elliott feels that the path to being store-manager is open, but he would probably need a degree in this competitive environment. Chelsea and Barbara are both positive about progression. Settled in a large international estate management company, Chelsea articulated her pleasant discovery that “I can get far in this company” (Chelsea:6).

The only difference with Barbara lies in her 12-month contract, and she is worried about being kept on. She is hopeful that her experiences as a supervisor can give her better chances:

I could go for the team leader roles and that. Then you can progress to like manager and things like that, so there is good progress” (Barbara-2:14).

In summary, these two super-ordinate themes clarified that the current jobs were where the participants had found themselves, not necessarily what they had ideally

wished for: the job was like a means-to-an-end. Job-satisfaction was valued alongside money/pay in order to maintain independence. Job-experience was particularly valued, but Participants believed in themselves, that they could gain still better jobs/careers.

3.4 Support in career-context

Participants reflect on the effects of significant people and systems on their career journeys. From here, “career assistance” is used as the generic term for career-guidance, advice, help, counselling etc.

3.4.1 Family

None of the participants felt unsupported by their families in their decisions about university and current work/jobs, nor pressured into alternative paths.

Barbara was “really scared” about telling Grandad about pulling out of university. As she feared, Grandad told her she would regret it. However, he became positive when she said she was going to work fulltime in the coffee-chain café.

“He did support me and said it was experience in work and it was going to be better then” (Barbara-1:190).

Darcy’s parents just want her “to be happy and then, whatever happens”. However she thinks that is why she nor her brother have chosen a career: “I think they just want us to do what we need to do before we get there” (Darcy:152). Likewise, Elliot’s parents supported his decision, and did not pressure him to go to university because they believed he would find his way too. “They were not upset I didn’t go because they knew I was trying my hardest to do well at work” (Elliot:92-94)(Q:14).

Apart from ‘benefits’ Faye feels she gets much probably too much support from Dad for a 25-year-old. However, she appreciates Dad’s support for her predicament. “I think my circumstances are different or unique in that I did get pregnant at a young age and I have ended up as a single parent...” (Faye:194)(Q:15).

So, though significant people supported them in various ways there was a general feeling among Participants that they could have achieved more to ‘repay’ that support. They generally valued the fact that they were not admonished for disappointing their families’ aspirations for them.

3.4.2 Teachers

Four participants describe how they saw teachers in the career connection. Views were mixed. Rather than a medical degree Darcy chose Politics because she was inspired by “a great politics teacher at school”, but it did not help her career ambitions. The inspiration made her want to emulate the “fantastic” teacher, and career-wise she does not blame teachers and takes responsibility for her decisions. “It’s not all their fault, it’s a lot to do with just [...] having so many other people to deal with because I went to a big school” (Darcy:194).

As English was important for her journalism quest, Barbara valued the emotional (Q:16) and academic support. She was grateful for her English teacher’s kindness. Barbara had lost her way but the teacher helped and encouraged her to get higher grades: “she [...] tried to push me for an A but I never did get that but she was really good” (Barbara-2:74).

Elliot feels that teachers did not help with pupils’ career ambitions: “It was very much: work it out for yourself” (Elliot:66). Likewise, Faye thinks that career was not teachers’ priority: “In my opinion [...] teachers or whatever, they don’t care enough” (Faye:284).

Where emotional support was valued by Barbara, the general view was that teachers were there to help not with career aspirations but passing exams well. The range from inspiration to disaffection further emphasises Participants’ views that a school’s primary concern is ‘exams-for-university’.

3.4.3 ‘Career assistance’

Consensus was apparent regarding how the participants did not value or gain adequate career assistance at school.

Elliot, the only participant who remembered getting career assistance at college in Cheshire, explains that one could go on an appointment as often as one wished although “it’s really down to yourself” (Elliot:78). Though he seldom accessed the service, he felt it helped “to an extent” to look for something suitable. (Elliot:70)(Q:17)

Faye feels she got inadequate and untimely help from Connexions in Year 11. “It was probably a little late, because then [...], you make quick decisions on what you think you want to do for the rest of your life” (Faye:118)(Q:18).

Darcy however feels she was marginalised: “if you were naughty you got a lot of support and if you’re smart and good and quiet, not even smart, then nobody cares about you.” (Darcy:38)(Q:19). For her, school’s priority is ‘getting you to uni’; so once on an A-Level programme their job is done. However, the students unlikely to go to university were more supported:

Kids that weren’t going to uni got taught a lot about careers and the kids that were going to uni got taught a lot about uni. [...] you’re not geared towards your career, you’re geared to going to uni (Darcy:188-192).

Darcy remembers that “career lessons” at A-Level college were not taken seriously because they were not ‘compulsory’ and students messed around (Q:20).

As for Faye, if pupils could know more about “different jobs that are out there”, they would be in a better position to consider career-options:

You’re not going to be 15 in school thinking “I want to be an agronomist when I’m older”. You don’t know that job even exists. [...] you think, Maths, English, Science, I’ll be a doctor, a nurse or a fireman. [...] if I knew then what I know now, I probably would’ve made much better decisions (Faye:144-148)(Q:21).

All five feel that informed career assistance should be introduced around Year 8. Elliot believes some advice should be available then for making choices about GCSEs: “so they can at least make an informed decision and not just picking subjects for the sake of it” (Elliot:172)(Q:22). This is important “because GCSE choices can impact on A-Level choices and career-paths” (Elliot:173-176)(Q:23).

Chelsea thinks Year 9 is too late, as GCSEs are already started, and if the guidance is not available earlier, “you end up like me [*chuckles*]” failing her degree, She thinks it is “very important” that such guidance should be offered at all stages, “not just from when you’re choosing your options, and whether or not to go to uni; it should be offered for everything.” (Chelsea:96-98)

Darcy would have liked “light advice” from Years 7 to 9, and then intensifying from there on. However, she wants to be more philosophical and know herself first

before considering what her career should be “not just what job can I do but what can I be. [...] I think it’s more important to know who you are than what your career’s going to be” (Darcy:200-202)(Q:24).

All five rated career-assistance highly, between 8/10 and 10/10. Faye makes the point most strongly: that career assistance is:

Very important because you shouldn’t have to make the decision of what you want to do for the rest of your life in the last year of school before you have to go and do it. (Faye:148-152)”

Three participants would like to see someone able to counsel children in the school about career-paths. Chelsea suggests pupils could plan from “a mindmap of your interests” and university is not the only answer: “it’s not **all** about university, you could get apprenticeships and train as you learn.” (Chelsea:84)

Faye goes further and wants to see an in-school professional careers-mentor, because pupils fall between the visiting career advisor – knowledgeable about careers but not the pupils – and the teacher – knowledgeable about the pupils but not careers. She also suggests pupils should be able to choose “subjects they are passionate about”. (Faye:304)(Q:25). She illustrates how Graphics excited her because it is so different from English, Maths and Science “I loved Graphics, I loved the drawing, the technicality of it all, everything” (Faye:297-304).

The evidence here strongly suggests that schools/colleges were ill-equipped or ill-informed about the need to provide definitive career assistance. For instance, sciences would have been congruent with Darcy’s medical ambitions, but when she failed her first year (in sciences) she was encouraged to pursue other A-Levels regardless of her career-ambition. Here again ‘passing exams’ was implicated. Also there appears to be too much assumption by school that each child would find their career-paths, especially if they got to university. Notwithstanding, the consensus on the introduction of career-assistance was ‘too-little-too-late’.

In the final two superordinate themes, Participants reflected on the actualities of their current positions and how they hoped to get to a better place in the short- to medium term with a view to long-term goals.

3.5 Reflections about present realities

Participants reflected on how their jobs had shaped them, but they were still on the career-journey and not as independent as they might want to be.

3.5.1 Where am I now?

Chelsea has no issues now as she is settled on a firm career path. However, the others reflect how their quests for career-achievement are impeded by their current circumstances.

Barbara is worried, yet keeps positive about her 12-month contract. The possibility of applying for other jobs advertised internally first makes her feel more secure as she worries about the impending end of her 12-month contract: “it does make me feel better knowing there is that option” (Barbara-1:30).

Elliot feels he is currently only 6/10 happy in his career/job because his promotion prospects are capped without a degree (Q:26).

Darcy, when asked if her current job “might be a long-term position”, said she would move to a more challenging position within her role, but “it isn’t what I want for my life at all” (Darcy:18)(Q:27).

Faye finds herself in a double-bind stasis. She wants to earn more money so she can be fully independent of Dad, but she cannot do that because she has a young child. Having no help from the child’s father makes it worse: “the fact that I’m a single parent without any input from my son’s father, makes it very difficult for me to do anything.” (Faye:272)

It is clear that the four, still on their career-pursuit, are ‘psychologically mobile’ but not “physically mobile” (cf. Briscoe & Hall, 2006). They expressed enthusiasm for bettering themselves, despite one of them feeling impeded by her single-parenthood.

3.5.2 Myself and the dream-career

Participants reflected on how they now felt about their original career-dreams and their meaningfulness.

Barbara feels she cannot do the job of a journalist now as her career dream was not as rosy as its reality:

I didn't really realised quite how competitive it was and how really [momentary pause] brash and abrupt you have to be with people to get the odd news you wanted; [...] yeah felt a bit like I'll never be very good at it so I backed away like, I don't want to do this (Barbara-2:40).

However, she still enjoys keeping the nice part of the dream alive. She wrote a review for a film and felt "I've achieved something" (Barbara-1:48)(Q:28).

Darcy regrets not having worked hard enough to succeed in pursuing a medical career (Q:29).

Faye does not express regret changing her career ambitions to fashion. She might like to have had a fashion business but has not enough dedication because of her childcare demands (Q:30). She rationalises that the situation she finds herself in works for her and her child. She does want to move on career-wise, although she physically cannot:

I'm studying to gain qualifications in the area so it would seem illogical to move to a different area now. So for the time being, this is where I am but I don't know how long it will last (Faye:10).

Elliot feels that his passion for a music-career is unrealistic: "would really like to do something in music but it's nearly impossible to get into" (Elliot:40)(Q:31).

While Faye's position is somewhat different and she no longer looks back, Darcy, Elliot and especially Barbara continue to yearn their original dreams. Indeed Barbara felt she achieved something by doing private journalism, and values it differently now as a hobby. Writing as a job might now take the enjoyment away and it had become less meaningful (Q:32). Overall the evidence points to a yearning for their original career-dreams in some way.

3.5.3 Experience is what counts

Three participants considered that experience, whether connected to work or life, rather than "credentials", was more important for getting a job.

Barbara feels strongly that experience is what employers seek (Q:33). She also thinks graduates can be disadvantaged getting onto non-vocational jobs, because they had lost time studying, while those who went straight into work are now poised for management-roles;

If you went to uni you're kind of back to square one kind of thing [...] they've already progressed and sort of made better of themselves through experience (Barbara:176).

Elliot also implies that graduates come into non-vocational jobs less prepared because they lack experience: "there is a noticeable difference in some of the decisions they [graduates] make at work" (Elliot:164) hinting that they were decisions driven by intellect/cogitation rather than experience.

A distinction between career (long-term) and job (short/medium-term) thus became clearer. As all Participants were now in short/medium-term jobs for independence purposes, the 'long-term career' notion seems to be pushed aside presently: for them independence is currently more important.

3.5.4 Perceptions of the job-market

Here Participants conceptualised the essentialness of short/medium-term jobs and their availability as an essential factor for independence.

Barbara has a "scary" (Barbara-2:27) view of the unsafe job-market (Q:33). She laments that the dream of university-to-a-good-job-and-great-life was a false promise, and as a generation they are now lost because of the lack of jobs: "you'd end up sort of looking at the same jobs that you would've looked at if you hadn't gone to uni cos there's not much else out there to go for." (Barbara-2:122). She thinks this is because the number of graduates in their chosen field outstrip the demand (Q:34)(Q:35).

Darcy thinks that systems have other missions than help with young-people's careers: the real agenda is 'to get you a job – any job'.

I think they put these things in place and just force you to go and do whatever so the numbers get fudged, so just make him a bin-man it doesn't matter if he's got a degree in astrophysics. I remember I was on the dole for a while, on Jobseekers and the whole aim of Jobseekers was to get you a job, it doesn't matter what you've done or who you are, it's just to get a job and that how I ended up working at the [present] office (Darcy:56).

However, Faye is more positive as she talks about 'jobs' rather than 'career'. People can always correct their mistakes; knowledge and experience give young-people hope for getting jobs or careers: "There's always something out there" (Faye:280). She further adds that 'careers' is a dynamic thing as new jobs are created and older jobs die;

people adapt with their life experiences: “Time changes, economy changes, jobs become available and jobs become unavailable” (Faye:314).

Hence, there was fear about the job-market in this changing society, worry about the small pool of jobs availability for the vast shoals of graduates in their chosen field, and concern about graduates missing out on time-served seniority in non-vocational jobs through their years spent at university. However, Faye’s ‘changing world’ could also create new career opportunities (see Mortensen & Pissarides, 1994).

3.6 Selfhood and self-efficacy

This final section collected each Participants’ reflections on their existentialism and their hopes for the future. Hitherto the reader should have been gaining a growing sense of the phenomenological attributes of each participant.

3.6.1 Personal Resources and Phenomonology

Participants demonstrated how they understood themselves in their individual milieux. Because of space-constraints only a couple of salient attributes per participant are discussed, although the transcripts themselves contain many more.

Darcy sees herself as being a very able student as she found studies easy and never had to work hard to eventually gain a BA(2:1) from a leading university (Q:36). Importantly she believes her independence came out of her university experience: “when I went to uni I became my own person really. [...] I think it’s a great way because you’re forced to be an adult and be independent” (Darcy:98-100).

Faye seems much influenced by her sister who “suddenly got independent” at university and had “everything a teenager wants to do” (Faye:138) (Q:37). That apart, she sees herself as a leader: “I suppose it would’ve been nice to have been in some sort of managerial sort of place. I always thought I would be better at leading than I was at following.” (Faye:187-188)

Barbara sees her strengths in being strong-willed, able to do things “on my own” and achievement-oriented (Q:38).

Elliot describes himself as “creative, ambitious and I’ve got lots of ideas”. He just wants to transform them into a career/occupation that is more meaningful to him than working in a store (Elliot:10)(Q:39).

Finally, Chelsea, who sees the education system making it hard for CYPs to be independent (Chelsea:42), believes independence is her typifying attribute (Q:40). She believes that teaching pupils independence from an early age is more important than curricular subjects.

It wouldn't just help with their education. It would help their home lives [...] make them not rely on their parents so much, and go out more and not sit at home waiting for dole money to come in (Chelsea:43-44).

She is proud of her independent spirit: “I don't know where I get my independence from but I'm so glad I have it” (Chelsea:46).

Evidently, each participants felt a high sense of selfhood, self-esteem and self-efficacy. It is surprising however that three of them were pressured away from their first career-dreams, but their failure to immediately gain their career of choice and work-and/or university experiences seemed to have galvanised and strengthened their personal resources and resilience, making them more able to develop themselves through life.

3.6.2 Challenges ahead

Participants considered current short- to medium-term barriers against moving forward to longer term goals of future career and independence.

Barbara's immediate challenge/barrier to happiness is her 12 month contract. Losing that job “could slow down” her independence (Barbara-2:90) because she would not be able to support herself. (Q:41)

Chelsea feels her immediate challenge is a zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978): her telephone skills with confrontational calls. But once she has developed the skill: “I'd be able to take the call. And I wouldn't have to rely on managers. Just adds to that independence which is important in work and home” (Chelsea:142).

Darcy is unsure. She feels she may have to try different things first. (Q:42).

Elliot feels he needs a degree in order to progress in the company. He might do a part-time degree in business which was one of his A-Level subjects.

Because of her child-care demands Faye feels her challenges lie in “knowing that my home life was taken care of” (Faye:256)(Q:43).

Overall Participants recognised the need to develop their skills and knowledge to move forward into the medium to long term. In a sense they are creating their own new prospective realities.

3.6.3 Hopes for the future

Participants explored longer term solutions for their economic well-being and full independence.

Apart from Chelsea who wants to stay on her current career-path, the others explore ideas of long-term careers more connected with their interests and passions. Barbara under the threat of her 12-month contract will continue to try to impress her managers, while writing for pleasure (Q:44). Darcy though unsure is now considering a new career path: to convert her degree and access professional psychology training (Q:45). She muses how she would be like her mother, a doctoral EP, and her grandparents, both medical practitioners:

Yeah, and study more until I’m like a doctor. Then I can be a doctor finally. Not the right doctor that I wanted to be, but I could be, couldn’t I? [...] Yeah that’s nice (Darcy:156).

Elliot will look to galvanise his prior A-Level studies and management-experience to pursue a part-time business degree possibly with the Open University (Q:46), but he will still want to be a bespoke watchmaker.

Faye hopes to pursue her new interest in education (Q:47). She is currently doing two courses: “Level 3 Diploma in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools and I’m doing a Level 3 Early Years Educator” (Faye:240). She rationalises that being a teaching professional would also fulfil her leadership needs, and teaching is growing in meaningfulness for her as being a mum she understand more about children: “I think since having a child, working with children has become more of an option to me. And plus, it’s a way to be the boss to a class of children [*chuckles*]” (Faye:242).

So, all five now had plans and ideas as hopes for the future. While Barbara’s anxiousness and Elliot’s ambition led them to secure their ‘jobs’, which might lead to ‘careers’ within their organisations, Darcy and Faye were now aiming for structured

professional careers, while Chelsea was already settled in her career path. Whether this was what they wanted or needed is another question. Perhaps an coaching/occupational psychology intervention could clear the way ahead for them. Equally these young- persons, though ‘ordinary and unspectacular’ – Playford & Gayle’s (2016) term – may in themselves be so individualistic and resourceful in their range of experiences (eg fashion, journalism, politics, retail, management, academic excellence, interpersonal skills etc) that they might need to ‘find themselves first’ (as Darcy suggests), whereupon there might perhaps be even more opportunities in this changing-world- with-changing-jobs for them to settle into protean (ie bespoke) careers, or at the very least have one steady career for money/independence and a sideline as a labour of love.

3.6.4 Advice to youngsters

Finally, Participants constructed what advice they would give Year 8 pupils (cf section 3.3) about career and independence. Barbara gives the fullest answer consisting of five pieces of advice (see Researcher’s summary in Q:50). Six distinct sub-themes transpired.

Table B4: Six pieces of advice to KS3 pupils

<i>Advice</i>	<i>Contributed by</i>				
	<i>Barbara</i>	<i>Chelsea</i>	<i>Darcy</i>	<i>Elliot</i>	<i>Faye</i>
“Be clear on what you want.”	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
“It’s not the end of the world.”			✓	✓	✓
“University is not for everyone, nor everything.”	✓	✓		✓	
“Experience is what counts.”	✓			✓	
“Ask and find out more.”	✓				
“Have a Plan B.”	✓				

The following four pieces of advice were shared by five participants.

“Be clear on what you want.”

Participants would all advise youngsters to be clear on what they want to do as a career, what fits with their interests and skills, and not to be negatively influenced by others. Chelsea would say “to not listen to other people and to do what they feel is

right, to go with their interests and skills and how they can develop them”
(Chelsea:152)(Q:48).

Likewise Faye advises not to worry so much, or be swayed by others’ pressures:
“Don’t just make a decision based on what you think you like at the moment. [...] You need to think about what it is that you’re really good at” (Faye:282)(Q:49).

“It’s not the end of the world.”

If they have not identified a career, Darcy suggests “it may be too early for you” (Darcy:182), and not to be pressured by people or social media into a race and making wrong decisions (ibid). This resonates with Elliot’s current position where he has not definitely decided what he ultimately wants to do, or Faye saying that even at 25 she is the same position. However, she is more optimistic about positive change:

At whatever age it might be that people start to hound you about what decisions you need to make, just [...] take it easy. [...] if you decide right now that you want to be an astronaut and then you reach the end of university and realise that you want to be a florist, it’s not that big of a deal. There’s [...] always an answer or a solution to whatever problem you think you’ve got with your career or your education or whatever it is. Your knowledge changes, your life experiences change (Faye:280).

“University is not for everyone, nor everything.”

Barbara and Chelsea (who both felt let-down by university) believe that “university is not for everyone [...] or for everything” (Chelsea:152). Barbara suggests apprenticeships from school-schemes are also a viable option, as apprentices are more likely to be successful for the jobs they trained for, from their earliest notions: “they’re the ones who go on to get jobs and jobs they want to do as a kid” (Barbara-2:173).

“Experience is what counts.”

Barbara and Elliot strongly emphasise that work experience is what counts, especially if university is not an option:

“If you don’t know, I would say get out into the world of work and get earning rather than sitting around waiting for something to happen. I think it’s very important to gain some experience” (Elliot:162).

Likewise, Barbara advises: “don’t let anyone make you feel like, you’re not valuable [...] cos going out there and getting experience, as much experience job-wise and life-wise is the best way to go” (Barbara-2:168).

Finally Barbara offers two more pieces of advice.

“Ask and find out more.”

Barbara advises to keep asking and learning from more experienced people: “it’s better to find out answers than being all “oh I don’t know about that” [...] people’ll be happy to answer any questions or queries they have” (Barbara-2:172).

“Have a Plan B.”

From her own experience Barbara’s Plan B is now for security and independence, and Plan A is for pleasure (“hobby”), because doing Plan A as a job makes it lose its lustre “it might make it a mundane every day thing like or [...] I might not [any] longer appreciate that the way I do now.” (Barbara-2:186). She further advises that Plan A could transpire at a later stage: “once you feel comfortable and secure, you could always come back to plan A and try again” (Barbara-2:198).

The participants clearly spoke from experience. Life- and/or work experience might indeed play a crucial part in Participants’ re-inventing/discovering themselves: to know oneself first before asking what job to do (Darcy). Of course, as they themselves asserted, the academic/curricular side of the coin would also be needed. Perhaps ultimately it is a question of flexibility (e.g. Faye:312), balance and pragmatism, as it appeared to have been for these young-persons.

It may be helpful to enquire where on those roads these young-persons are today. The organisation of the themes (Table B3) has presented a temporal progression, and a follow-up study of the same young-people, as Henderson et al. (2007) in their 10-year study, could extend that portrayal. It would also contribute to the growing corpus of the longitudinal IPA (LIPA) model as reviewed by Farr and Nizza (2018).

4. Discussion

Four themes grounded from the analysis underscore milestones in the participants’ career-journeys hitherto: the extent and nature of career-advice/guidance; school exam curricula as “a ladder to university”; university vocational-degree

curricula; and employable graduates. This discussion will then relate those career-journeys to contemporary career theories.

4.1 The career-road travelled

Career-advice/guidance was not seen by the participants as satisfactory (cf. Roberts, 2013). It did not help the young-persons know any better about jobs, or the existence of rarer jobs like ‘agronomist’, or new jobs being continually created to meet market demands (Faye) (see: West, Nicholson & Rees, 1987; Mortensen & Pissarides, 1994). Also, because career-lessons were not compulsory they were not deemed important (Barbara, Chelsea, Darcy). Ironically, it was valued by the young-person (Elliot) who did not go to university. He found the ‘counselling’ helpful in helping him create a strategy for his career-moves: get a job first, then seriously plan. Since university-education is not always necessary for career (Bowers-Brown & Harvey, 2014) this begs the question why schools put so much emphasis on it, and why reaching the “royal road” (Spours et al., 2012) that leads to university is the gold-standard.

Schools’ ‘options’ systems were also seen as flawed. Pupils could make only a limited either-or choice of GCSEs, and not choose the ones they were enthusiastic about, although choice was passionately argued for (Chelsea, Faye). Furthermore the choices must prepare for A-Levels which universities would deem appropriate for vocational or academic degrees, but high-schools individually were regarded as not adequately resourced to be able to offer limitless choice of GCSEs.

At university, students on vocational degrees (especially Barbara) were expected to find their own ‘connections’ in the industry of their chosen career. The universities attended apparently did not provide this university-industry partnership unlike Scott, Connell, Thomson and Willison (2017), even though this has been legislatively indicated (DfES 2003b).

Finally, Barbara asked whether there were too many graduates chasing too few career-jobs (See Bowers-Brown & Harvey, 2014; Tomlinson 2008). Research has already identified that employers have the prerogative to choose the ‘right kind of graduate’ (Knight & Yorke, 2003; Selingo, 2016) with ‘soft skills’ to enhance their employability (Graham, 2017; Nota & Rossier, 2015; Tomlinson, 2008).

Each Participant's journey-to-independence has articulated personal reflective in-depth accounts that are not inconsistent with accounts of the complexities of transitions facing youth (e.g Schoon & Silbereisen, 2009a, 2009b) and the experiences and aspirations of youth in facing the challenges (e.g Henderson et al., 2007, Robb, 2007; Selingo, 2016).

Presently, while Chelsea is the only participant who has secured a long-term career, albeit not what she originally aspired to, Faye's career-path is blocked by her single-parenthood. Darcy could, if she does not achieve her goal as a Practitioner Psychologist, create a bespoke career, as she is interested in so many things and wants to savour life. Elliot, in keeping his options open, could pursue the business industry while keeping his interests alive (watches, music) or do them as sidelines. Faye is now resolved to pursue a long-term career in education although she is keeping her options open. Of all, Barbara seems to be the least secure, as she is yearning to stay in a Civil Service career that only offers 12-month renewable contracts. She has no clear vision outside this, except perhaps to use her writing skills to earn a bit more money. In all, none is pursuing the career-path they studied for. However, they are young-persons with a wealth of personal resources and resilience, and they are nurturing alternative or supplementary career-plans. As Leach (2015) explains:

Career pathways can evolve slowly, involve false starts or a rethink, are affected by changes in public policy and one's personal circumstances, and can involve periods of further study. [...] it is important to acknowledge that career paths cannot be seen in isolation from the social and emotional factors within which individuals operate (p.60).

4.2 Careering off but holding on

In today's complex world of turbulent social and economic uncertainties, new career theories have evolved to meet the strident demands of turbulent job-markets. Employability (vis-à-vis skills-for-employment) has become a central issue especially for young-people transitioning from fulltime education to work/employment (Bridgstock, 2009; Creasey, 2013; Rae, 2008; Schoon & Silbereisen 2009a; Tymon, 2013). New career-theories appear to converge towards a new paradigm where careers become constructed over time (Savickas et al., 2009), and subsumed under the life-design umbrella (Nota & Rossier, 2015). However, life-design is not only about developing careers but 'living' itself in this globalised world – the person-environment

fit – and the training can start from childhood (Hartung, 2015). Related to this are strivings by children-and-young-people and their families to eventually produce the young-person's own economic wellbeing and independence (Knowles, 2009), which gives regard to public-policy ideals. In the life-design paradigm (Nota & Rossier, 2015), career-development and life-satisfaction are a lifelong undertaking where any life- or environmental details can become (re)constructive resources (Leach, 2015).

The 16-25 interstice has its own eponymic ambiguity and unique challenges of self-discovery, self-efficacy, etc. as milestones to full independence (Masdonati & Fournier, 2015). This discussion now continues as a phenomenological interpretation of how Participants' career-quest stories unfold in terms of the following career theories: boundaryless/protean (Briscoe & Hall, 2006); planned happenstance (PH) (Babineaux & Krumboltz, 2013; Kim,...Lee et al., 2016; Krumboltz, 2009, 2015; Krumboltz, Foley & Cotter, 2013; Mitchell, Levin & Krumboltz, 1999) including happenstance learning theory (Krumboltz, 2009), and kaleidoscope career theory (KCT) (Mainiero & Gibson, 2018; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).

Protean careers are those where people create their own hybrid/bespoke careers, and boundaryless careers are those indicated by adaptability to perform across boundaries in the workplace (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). The hallmarks of both are versatility, flexibility and dynamism. Briscoe and Hall (2006) amalgamate the two into a single model presenting eight profiles, each with its competencies and challenges, as well as challenges to psychological mobility – ability to change one's mindset – and/or physical mobility – ability to change one's location/locality. Henderson et al. (2007) explain that mobility means different things to different people in different socio-economic contexts and localities. Notwithstanding, to avoid lengthy explanations, please see Table B5 to glean these profiles and how the careerist's supporter(s) can help with their career-development.

Table B5: Protean and boundaryless combinations: career profiles and development challenges

(reproduced from Briscoe and Hall (2006, p. 11))

Table 2 Protean and boundaryless combinations: Career profiles and development challenge						
Protean: Self-directed career management	Protean: Values driven	Boundaryless: Psychological mobility	Boundaryless: Physical mobility	Hybrid category/archetypes	Career actor's personal challenge in maintaining status Quo	Career actor's and supporting groups' career development challenge
Low	Low	Low	Low	"Lost" or "Trapped"	React quickly to opportunities, survive.	Clarify priorities, gain career management skills, expand perspective.
Low	High	Low	Low	"Fortressed"	Find stable, opportunities in predictable organizations that match values.	Broaden in terms of open-mindedness and self-direction. Otherwise, person and employers will suffer unless this person is a perfect fit for an extremely stable situation/organization.
Low	Low	Low	High	"Wanderer"	Continuously find new rides to "hitch."	Help develop self-direction, establish whether fit good after this is achieved.
Low	High	High	Low	"Idealist"	Finding organizations that match values, curiosity, but don't require mobility.	Find challenges to push out of comfort zone and help build adaptability skills—in terms of mindset and working across boundaries.
High	Low	High	Low	"Organization man/woman"	Find stable organizations in which basic performance competence can be demonstrated.	Don't be seduced by performance ability. Increase self-awareness to make leader of high performer.
High	High	High	Low	"Solid Citizen"	Person-organization fit a must. Mobility a threat.	Maintain diversity of talent but leverage solid citizen's contributions.
High	Low	High	High	"Hired Gun/hired hand"	Identify and respond to best opportunities for providing services across boundaries	Convert talented, reactive person into effective, self-aware leader with a sense of priorities.
High	High	High	High	"Protean Career Architect"	Leverage capability into meaningful impact	Provide stages on which to shine, learn, engage. Temper if needed.

Additionally, PH and HLT offer an alternative philosophy, principally asserting that ‘chance’ (happenstance) produces opportunities for career-decisions – i.e. planning and redirection – and action trumps cogitation about career-possibilities. Five PH-career skills are indicated: curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism and risk-taking willingness. Moreover, ‘tolerance-to-uncertainty’ is also identified (Kim, Lee, Ha, Yang & Lee, 2016). Aspiring and developing careerists can be educated/coached in these skills.

The kaleidoscope career theory (KCT) (Mainiero & Gibson 2018; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005) explains re-adjusting one’s career-decisions to accommodate the shifting demands of life-circumstances. The metaphor illustrates how a pebble-pattern in the kaleidoscope (collation of priorities, responsibilities, options etc.) changes every time the tube (life-circumstances) is turned. KCT argues that such vicissitudes affect primarily women: as women’s life-circumstances are argued to change more dramatically, numerous and critically than men’s, e.g. pregnancy, family-building, work-place gender-inequality in male-dominated occupations etc.

Barbara, Darcy and Elliott’s cases principally relate to PHC, HLT and protean/boundaries principles. Notions of selfhood drive these three young-persons. Barbara will probably always be ‘the journalist’, as the act of journalism-for-fun gives her enjoyment, sense of achievement, and fulfilment. Elliot will probably nurture his love of watches. Doubtless one day he will start his own business as a high-quality watchmaker, and this will have derived its agentic life-force from the cumulative business- and managerial experiences of his present job. Both these young-persons drew their inspiration from their forebears. Elliot’s parents own a business each, and Barbara’s mother and grandfather both valued money as essential for independence.

Darcy still wants to discover who she is before she decides on a career. She feels herself to be boundaryless and versatile – always curious and willing to learn anything and everything to make her dull employment more interesting; discovering more about herself. She will probably factor all these details into creating her ultimate bespoke (protean) career. Becoming a professional psychologist would also give her autonomy to pursue what really interests her – psychological wellbeing of children-and-young-people.

Darcy would also be a good PH candidate. Her Politics teacher's influence led her to eventually gain a BA(2:1), and experience "uni" and the non-vocational degree of Political Science producing happenstances that in turn "forced" her to begin constructing her own career. Darcy will be happy as long as her career in its various forms reflects who she quintessentially is. It means much to her to preserve the family tradition of being 'all Doctors' (medical practitioners and EP). Serendipity, another hallmark of happenstance, seems to follow Darcy. She got her clerical job in a family-business via Jobseekers, and from there entered a relationship with the owner's son, effectively becoming 'family' in both senses of 'relations' and 'business'. It would be interesting to see how her selfhood and career develop given these factors; but how more interesting it would have been to see what critical actions she might have taken on 'the career-road travelled' had she been coached in planned happenstance.

Chelsea's case is predominantly driven by happenstance opportunities. She needily applied for a clerical opening in a national estate-agency branch, and since commencement of this research has quickly found her feet. She bases her career-construction on her discovery of her personality attributes: decisiveness, resilience, confidence at organising, and loving to talk with and help people (cf. Valickas, Raisiene & Rapuano, 2019). These stand her in good stead for this career, which she now wants to settle into and retire from. The meaningfulness of games-designing now pales in the light of the present career-ladder: i.e. progressing to team manager, branch manager etc. Elliot seems to have similar personality attributes, although he, unlike Chelsea, did quite assiduously plan his career moves: starting with the humble position of newspaper-boy to chip-shop server, then store-hand, now deputy-manager, and will probably do so again. Again, happenstance paved the way for him: nobody dreams of becoming a 'chippie-boy/girl' – but a young-person would take those opportunities to simply earn a bit of money.

Faye's case relates predominantly to KCT. For Faye, sudden single-motherhood critically forced her to reprioritise her responsibilities and options. She surrendered the career-path of her degree to work part-time as minimum-wage nursery standby-staff, to fit her working-hours around her child (who goes to a different nursery). Her re-morphed priorities mean that her motherhood becomes the pre-eminent responsibility, although she resents having to depend on 'benefits'. However, she plans to train as a

teacher, so that she can fit her holidays around her child, and the glamorous life she once dreamed of (globe-trotting fashion-marketing) now no longer matters. She will convert her degree (see Rae, 2008) as a passport to the teaching profession. Possibly she was influenced by Dad, who has always been in education, but the decision to become a primary-school teacher is most probably predicated by her responsibilities as a single-parent – bereft of support from her son’s father – where she can understand about children for her own sake, and to the benefit of her school-children and their parents.

Barbara’s case also relates to KCT. Her relationship-breakup forced her to return to living with Mum while pursuing university. The death of Granddad also impacted, and so her priorities shifted to primarily ‘money-for-independence’. These factors and her feelings of being let-down probably sealed her decision to drop university and work fulltime. However, her career-journey continues as she seeks to secure a permanent career/job, which principally must give her financial, social and emotional independence. This is especially meaningful to her because of her fond mutualisation of Grandad’s aspirations for her – to be a success in whatever she does; i.e. a Plan-B, secure employment with career-prospects, and a Plan-A labour-of-love, freelance journalism. Perhaps she too could create a protean career later. Like Faye, insofar as life circumstances forced them into new career trajectories, her changed circumstances might also be regarded as KCT-based, wherefrom they learnt to re-chart new paths to full independence.

5. Conclusion

This research has undertaken to capture the voices, lived experiences and meaning-making of five young-persons on their path to career and full adult-independence. Hoping that it may present a relativist ontology (Willig, 2008), it hopes to epitomise young-people’s ‘plight’ and how this may be ameliorated, since public policy stipulates that those in authority should heed the voices, views and aspirations of the child-or-young-person regarding their preferred futures (UNCRC 1989; DfE, 2010; DfE/DOH, 2014).

Four issues from the analysis are of special existential importance to the participants in terms of shaping their current states and moving on to fulfilling careers: ‘money’, ‘independence’, ‘selfhood’ and ‘relationships’.

For some young-people (like Barbara) ‘money’ would be the *sine qua non* of independence. For others (like Darcy, Faye and Elliot) it would only be important to facilitate a reasonable standard of living while allowing a few luxuries. For yet others (like Chelsea) it would not be extremely important as long as they do not go into debt. A fulfilling career however is important to all, whether singularly- or protean-constructed, and for some (like Darcy and Elliot) a career must reflect the existential agentic entity that each person is. Another constant for all five young-persons is ‘relationship’. Where they turned sour (Barbara, Faye) the young-persons were forced into extended dependence (see Henderson, 2007). However, where they were strong or positive and there was ‘love’, all five thrived – through relationships with their partners, teachers and parents/grandparents. Hence these four things hold differential key-meanings at the higher levels of Smith’s (2018) typology, as these young-persons continuing to strive for better careers and lives.

Legislation indicates that schools should provide quality career guidance/assistance from Year 8 (DfE 2017), but this research found a lack of such provision. Generally there was a desire for quality career-guidance/assistance, which could address (a) alternatives to university as the gateway to a long-term careers and independence, and (b) distributed, not one-off career-discussions. This could be based on what is effectively a "life-design" framework (Ginerva et al., 2016; Nota & Rossier, 2015; Savickas et al., 2009), where career preparation is co-constructed through positive coaching, and test-assessments could drive career-construction rather than occupational-fit (Krumboltz, 2009). It would be consistent with a career-learning model where occupational/career implications would be fully infused into the curriculum from much earlier on: end of Year 8 (age 13) or even from start of Year 7 (age 11), as suggested by this research (see e.g. Barnes et al., 2011, 2014; Bassot, 201, Barnes & Chant, 2014; Hooley, Marriot & Simpson, 2011), right through university (see e.g.: Scott et al., 2017; Yorke & Knight, 2006). Ideally a specialist “career mentor” would be welcome, i.e. an in-house professional who knows the students and is also appropriately trained to help young-people positively plan for careers (see Savickas et al., 2009;

Krumboltz, 2009, 2015; Masdonati & Fournier, 2015). All this then makes better use of human-capital. However, as Knight and Yorke (2003) note, for a proactive view towards career, formative assessment is preferable to summative assessment. However, the evidence here found that passing exams (knowledge-capital) was the main purpose of school.

Despite public policy obligating education to prepare young-people for careers (see DSCF, 2009; DfE 2017), the evidence was that attendance at school's careers services was bolt-on rather than compulsory, and so was not valued much. Were this to be compulsory or infused into the curriculum (see Barnes et al., 2011; Hooley et al., 2011) it could perhaps give more regard to the continuum between human-capital and knowledge-capital, as reflected in formative and summative assessment (Graham, 2017; Knight & Yorke, 2003; Rae, 2008; Yorke & Knight, 2006). Early identification-and-intervention has been re-stipulated in recent legislation (DfE, 2014, 2015, 2017; House of Lords, 2016), but in terms of work/career, it was noted by research some twenty years earlier:

Work, role and self cannot be learned in short order. If we do not help people with their career earlier, we should not be surprised if later, help needs more time than we can readily find (Watts, Law, Killeen, Kidd & Hawthorn, 1996, p.69).

In helping young-people such as the participants here, it might be useful to consider a form of career-construction from an early age to 25 years-of-age (see Savickas, 1997; Nota & Rossier, 2015), enhanced with planned happenstance principles (Krumboltz, 2009, 2015), together with the coached understanding that failures present opportunities for planning and creating new successes (Babineaux & Krumboltz, 2013). This should offer research and practice opportunities involving children-and-young-people – including EPs whether in SEND (see Apter et al, 2018) or outside (see: Adams, 2016; van Nieuwerburgh, 2012; Nota & Rossier, 2015; Obschonka & Silbereisen, 2009; Pop & van Nieuwerburgh, 2019; Torband & Ellam-Dyson, 2015).

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Appendix A – Required Participant Characteristics

These criteria were listed and approved in the Ethics Clearance Application form.

Criteria for selecting research participants

1. The participant must be between ages 18 and 25.
2. They should be articulate and able to discuss their experience of career guidance received from their school or other educational institution.
3. Not have undertaken a psychometric test for career over the last three years.
4. They will have no identifiable therapeutic or special educational needs.
5. They will be no longer in full-time education, can be unemployed or in a job that is temporary or about which they feel uncertain as to whether it would fulfil their ambition or wishes as a permanent career-trajectory.

Appendix B – Brief Pen Portraits of the Participants

“Barbara”

Age: 24, currently Telephone Customer Services Advisor in Benefits Agency, previous **Previous occupations/jobs:** From various minor food services operative rising to assistant supervisor in an international chain coffee outlet.

Education: GCSEs, A Levels, University reading BA(Hons) Journalism but withdrew in final year.

Personal life: Lived with Mum and sister through university years till a year ago, currently sharing a rented house with boyfriend/partner.

People who are currently important to her: Mum, Boyfriend/partner, various friends.

People who especially inspired her: Predominantly Grandad, Mum, English teacher at school

People who did not: Dad – no contact since a young child.

Current aspirations: To earn money so as to be independent.

Lost hopes and dreams: Had always wanted to be a journalist but dropped out of university after the second year.

“Chelsea”

Age: 24, currently property management customer advisor in the lettings department of a regional real estate company.

Previous occupations/jobs: Casual summer and seasonal jobs.

Education: GCSEs, A Levels, University studied BSc(Hons) digital games design, failed it and left with a Diploma in Media Studies.

Personal life: Shared a rented house with boyfriend/partner.

People who are currently important to her: Mum, boyfriend/partner, various friends.

People who especially inspired her: Mum

People who did not: Dad – not seen since childhood.

Current aspirations: To rise up the company.

Lost hopes and dreams: Wanted to be a digital games designer.

“Darcy”

Age: 24, currently customer services advisor and office staff in a small family warehouse business distributing clothing accessories.

Previous Occupations/Jobs: Paper-rounds, odd-jobs in holidays.

Education: GCSEs, A Levels, BA (Hons) 2:1 in Political Science.

Personal life: Lived with parents until university now living with boyfriend, who is her employer’s son.

People who are currently important to her: Parents (Headmaster and Chartered Psychologist), grandparents (psychiatrist and GP), boyfriend, friends.

People who especially inspired her: Grandparents both being doctors, and especially her A Level Politics teacher.

People who did not: Her A level teachers (except the Politics teacher)

Current Aspirations: To discover her real self in order to find a job/career to suit her construction of self.

Lost hopes and dreams: Always wanted to be a doctor but was distracted by the inspiration she got from her Politics teacher.

“Elliot”

Age: 22, Currently deputy store manager in an international chain supermarket.

Previous occupations/jobs: Paper-rounds, the local “chippie” (fish and chips shop).

Education: GCSEs, A Levels,

Personal life: Lived with parents until six months ago, when he moved in with his girlfriend/partner sharing a rented house.

People who are currently important to him: Girlfriend/partner, various friends of his and friends and family of hers.

People who especially inspired him: Predominantly parents.

People who did not: None disclosed

Current aspirations: To do something meaningful in his life as an occupation, to be happy.

Lost hopes and dreams: None, but would like to have gone to university

“Faye”

Age: 25, currently bank staff nursery assistant

Previous occupations/jobs: Various part-time jobs while at university.

Education: GCSEs, A Levels, University – gained BSc (2:2) in International Fashion Marketing

Personal life: Lived with Dad and older siblings till university and sister through university years till a year ago, shared a rented house with boyfriend/partner, relationship ended about eight months after the son’s birth.

People who are currently important to her: 3 year old son, Dad, various close friends.

People who especially inspired her: Predominantly Dad, older sister, Mum (till her death).

People who did not: Ex-partner (son’s father)

Current aspirations: To do something worthwhile probably in the education field.

Lost hopes and dreams: To be a doctor, plus a phase of wanting to be a journalist, completed vocational degree but did not (a) do the sandwich work-placement year through being pregnant and (b) could not take her degree into a career due to parenthood responsibilities.

Appendix C – ‘Gifted and Talented’ Pupils

Introductory Note

This discussion was intended for inclusion in the literature review, but it was felt to be distracting from the main thrust of the review. As the participants of this study were “gifted and talented” in their schools it seems appropriate to include the discussion, and it has to be placed in the appendices due to word-limit constraints.

The Gifted and Talented

The gifted-and-talented are also a marginalised group marginalised by public policy. Morris (2013) explains how Education (Scotland) Act 2004 identifies this as a group that has its own, different, special needs, and thus needs a more challenging curriculum. Some US studies argue the gifted-and-talented as important and beneficial to society, since they have potential to become eminent adults (Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius & Worrell 2011, Augustine 2011, Dai 2011, Ziegler 2012,). But as Subotnik et al. (2011) observe, “giftedness is often excluded from major conversations on educational policy”. They continue:

“In spite of concerns for the future of innovation in the United States, the education research and policy communities have been generally resistant to addressing academic giftedness in research, policy, and practice. The resistance is derived from the assumption that academically gifted children will be successful no matter what educational environment they are placed in, and because their families are believed to be more highly educated and hold above-average access to human capital wealth.” (2011, p. 3)

OFSTED’s (2009) research finds a disparity of educational provision for the gifted-and-talented, and a significant minority remains under-stimulated. Rogers’s (1986, 2007) syntheses of research discuss how gifted-and-talented needs may be met. Her first synthesis (1986), involving comparative studies between gifted and non-gifted children, finds significant differences between the two groups in the areas of cognitive styles, cognitive developmental patterns, cognitive strategy selection, and social and emotional

factors associated with the academic setting. Her later synthesis (2007:382), “covering [...] the entire body of research of published research studies and representative literature [...] since 1861” on educating the gifted, argues that, given their idiosyncrasies, educating the gifted needs re-conceptualisation regarding how their unique set of needs may be met. Rogers’s review highlights five lessons learned, and posits them as “reconsiderations” for educating the gifted (p.383-390) (see Box 1).

Box 1. Rogers’s Five “Reconsiderations” (From Lessons Learnt) For Educating the Gifted

(2007, pp.383-390)

1. Gifted and talented learners need daily challenge in their specific areas of talent
2. Opportunities should be provided on a regular basis for gifted learners to be unique and to work independently in their areas of passion and talent
3. Provide various forms of subject-based and grade-based acceleration to gifted learners as their educational needs require;
4. Provide opportunities for gifted learners to socialize and to learn with like-ability peers;
5. For specific curriculum areas, instructional delivery must be differentiated in pace, amount of review and practice, and organization of content presentation.

Referring to research by Csikszentmihalyi et al. (1993), Rogers (2007:383) highlights the rise in psychological distress (“existential depression”) when gifted/talented learners cannot feel they are progressing or being challenged enough.

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Appendix D – Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

1. What kind of work are you doing at the moment? Do you feel that this might be long term? Or temporary? Please explain why. (What alternatives might you have in mind?)
2. Can you please describe your journey from first thinking about what you would like to do for work to where you are now?
3. Can you tell me about your experience of getting advice or guidance from professionals about careers and work (from your school or college or university)? How do you feel about this experience?
4. Can you tell me what sort of things helped you and what didn't help (or hindered) (regarding preparing yourself for the world of work)?
5. How independent do you feel you are nowadays?
6. Over time have you changed the way you think about work and your independence? Please elaborate.
7. How happy do you feel you are now about your career at the moment [on a scale of 0 to 10]? Please tell me why this is so?
8. How happy do you feel you are now about your independence at the moment [on a scale of 0 to 10]? Please tell me why this is so?
9. What do you feel might be the challenges ahead to get to where you will be happier/happiest in your work-life? How might this fit in with your independence?

Appendix E – Fuller/Supplementary Quotes

Q:0.

Int: What would you want to do?

Resp: I just don't know, I still don't know. I do want to study first, so I want to convert to psychology. So yeah I suppose that's the path I want to take. I need to save up some money from this job and then study what I want to do and then do what I want to do I suppose and hopefully there's a job at the end of it.

Int: So this time, there's a job at the end of it?

Resp: Yeah that would be great or else it would be a waste.

Int: So it sounds like a good plan?

Resp: Yeah it is, I feel quite good about it now that I've said it." (Darcy:144-150)

Q:1.

"...[I] wanted to be a doctor. I don't know where it came from but I always like biology and mum always had these books, I think it was a Readers Digest and it was a big medical book about family medicine and remember always reading that." (Faye:48)

Q:2.

"...I think it disappeared because once I was aware of what was expected of you to become a doctor and all the training, I was too eager to get out into the world of work and I wasn't keen on the idea of training for five to seven years or whatever it was at the time. I think that really put me off, and the pressure of it all, I didn't like that." (Faye:106)

Q:3.

Int: When did you make the decision?

Resp: I can only remember going to a college, university fair at XX University, [...] and I remember seeing all these tables and I knew the only table that I wanted to go and speak to was the XX University's Fashion Buying and stuff like that and I think it was a toss up between fashion

buying and fashion marketing. I think it must've been late college, last year of college that I decided that that was what I wanted to do at uni anyway." (Faye:50-52)

Q:4.

"There was a significant lack of support. I know that in university you support yourself, even asking certain questions there was a lack of support. The third year was about games design but they changed it part way through. And "...I was disappointed because that was what I wanted to do. That's why I think I lost interest." (Chelsea:63)

Q:5.

"I enjoyed moving over to it. It was completely different. And then I was part of some societies and I made friends. I was part of the Radio Society, the Film and Media Society – made loads of new friends, learned about different techniques to do with the course. So there was different software we were introduced to that wouldn't get to us in a normal environment. (Chelsea:80)

Q:6.

"I stayed at home cos I thought money-wise it would be easy to stay at home –but I don't know honestly sometimes I do think maybe if I had lived there and I was in the moment as it is in the actual atmosphere of it maybe I would've stuck with it [ie, not dropped out]" (Barbara-1:62).

Q7.

"I don't really regret about it [going to university], because I didn't really go for the uni life as such and it's not really something I wanted to do even now. "Degree-wise I still wouldn't know what to pick so I'm glad I didn't like something you know that I didn't enjoy or 100% in it. Although I would like a degree because it opens your job prospects up massively." (Elliot:46)

Q:8.

"I don't recall getting much advice about careers other than you have to go to university.

Int: So it that what they told you?

Resp: Yeah, to get a good job, you have to go to university.

Int: Was that at school or college?

Resp: It was at secondary school and college because we were applying for university at college.

Int: So, to get a good job you have to go to university(?)

Resp: Yeah, [whispers under her breath] which I don't agree with [chuckles/laughs]

Int: Did you disagree with that at the time?

Resp: Not at the time, because I didn't know what I wanted to do for certain. Obviously there was a bit of pressure for you to go to university. Yeah, at the time I thought it would be the right thing. You go you come out and you get an amazingly brilliant job.” (Chelsea:42-50)

Q:9.

“I do remember being at school and there being some sort of grid system where if you chose one subject, it had to not interfere with the other subjects. So for example, if you really wanted to do dance and graphics, I couldn't because they were both in the same slot. You were limited on what you could do so you had to tick certain boxes so it would work. (Faye:308)

Q:10.

“...if you fail your SAT's you don't just not go into year 10. You still go into year 10 but you might be more limited at what GCSE's you can do. Maybe those who got bad SAT's had to do BTEC's or something. I can't remember really, I think I must've got good SAT's because I think I got to pick whatever GCSE's I wanted really.

Q:11.

Int: And then, did you feel that was another stepping stone to another exam?

Resp: Yeah, it was always a stepping stone to an exam. You did your SAT's and as soon as that was done, you needed to pick your GCSE's. Then you're studying for your GCSE's [...] and as soon as that was done, you had to think about what [A-Level] college to go to.” (Faye:124-126)

Q:12.

“...where I've worked before where you were promised that [promotion] but, they never really, it was all a bit of false promises really. Whereas this actually, most of the people who are our team leaders and things have

worked their way from the bottom [...] so it is there...it sounds positive so that's good." (Barbara-2:16)

Q:13.

"...I took this new job and its gonna be a lot more better money and I'm gonna be able to save much Quicker and move out and be a lot more independent and have my own place and sort of fend for myself [laughs] but I wanna do that, I've wanted to do that for a long time. (Barbara-1:132)

Q:14.

"...were always, they were trying to help me as best they could – looking for jobs, find out what I would like to do and helping me with the school work.

Int: Can I just ask you how you think they feel now about your present job situation?

Resp: I think er I think they are happy with me and what I'm doing cos they can see I am meaning to be successful – I think they supported my decision not to go to university which was nice because I know people can want their children to go to university. The were not upset I didn't go because they knew I was trying my hardest to do well at work." (Elliot:92-94)

Q:15.

Apart from 'benefits' Faye gets..."...a lot of help from my father. He helped me get a house for me and my son. You know, he helps a lot with childcare and things like that, just general day to day support. Yeah I receive benefits as well. Mainly for my son and I suppose because I've only got my Dad now, [...] so I probably do rely on him a lot more than maybe a 25 year old should but I think my circumstances are different or uniQ:ue in that I did get pregnant at a young age and I have ended up as a single parent..." (Faye:194)

Q:16.

"There was erm, a drama teacher, [...] he was really good...Cos erm, he was one of those teachers where he was a teacher and really good but he was kind of, not like a friend but he was really supportive and if he knew something was up he would sort of take you aside and be like 'right what's wrong' and he'd be there for a bit of support, he was really good. Erm...There was erm, I had a tutor in college who was like that as well, she

was for theatre studies but I can't remember, [...] she was like that IF she knew something was up..." (Barbara-2:74)

Q:17.

"To an extent they did [help] because I had my ideas which they helped explain so, and on certain occasion I really thought that might be, was not what I wanted to do. For example I might have suggested I Q:uite wanted to be an accountant and they explained what an accountant does day to day and you might think that's what you might like or be suitable for you." (Elliot:70)

Q:18.

"It was probably a little late, because then [...], you make Q:uick decisions on what you think you want to do for the rest of your life, when really, who, in this day and age, who at that age, knows what they want to do for the rest of their lives and is it what they wanted to do back then?" (Faye:118)

Q:19.

"I don't know how you're meant to know what you want to do. [...] There was no one telling me, or guiding me really, but I think the reason that we would've got less guidance is because, I think what happened at school was that if you were naughty you got a lot of support and if you're smart and good and Q:uiet, not even smart, then nobody cares about you." (Darcy:38)

Q:20.

"Yeah actually, a time I can really remember getting guidance was in college, only after I'd failed the year, my first year because I did a lot of sciences and it didn't work out, then they helped me, they said look this is what you need to do, you need to choose a subject you want to do and come back next year. We used to have careers classes and stuff and they were absolutely a joke and they were the times when you'd be in the class and everyone was just being stupid and no one really cared. It wasn't Maths or English and it wasn't seen as compulsory. (Darcy:64)

Q:21.

"Yeah, even stuff like being a shop manager. At school that's not even suggested to you. If anything its probably looked down upon when its actually Quite good money if you're in the right business.

Int: Right OK. So can I take that you feel that you missed out on all this information that could've been given to you by professionals?

Resp: Yeah”

Q:22.

“I think light advice, not strong, in years 7, 8 and 9 and then after that start it becoming like a weekly thing where you're sort of talking about what you're going to do. I think it would help to look at things a bit more, I don't know if this is silly, but philosophically. So not just careers but in a philosophical sense you know, not just what job can I do but what can I be? And what will that be and what will it mean? I don't know, sorry, who am I and what can I be basically, rather than this job or this job or this job.

Q:23.

Int: Right OK, so what kind of year would you ideally like them to be thinking about that, it has to be before GCSE's so they know and GCSE's is a kind of gateway?

Resp.: Yeah I think they are in a way, I know you have to do a lot of subjects by standard but there are subjects you can do but if you haven't done them at GCSE you might not want to do them at A-level so I think maybe the year before you pick your GCSE's.

Int: So year 9? End of year 9 is when you choose your GCSE's.

Resp: I think the end of year 8, the start of year 9 you should be getting advice on what subjects are useful for what career paths.” (Elliot:172-176)

Q:24.

Int: Right OK. That's quite profound really, who am I and what can I be rather than what job should I be doing?

Resp: Yeah I mean, I don't think you know, I still don't know and I don't think my Dad knows! But I think it's more important to know who you are than what your career's going to be. First anyway.” (Darcy:200-202)

Q:25.

Int: 8-9 important, OK, so a person who knows about careers to be in school to be able to advise who may get the know the child or children throughout time and not just a one off visit. Is that right?

Resp: Yeah, in the same way that you get, we get like, I don't know what they're called anymore, but you get those people in school that kids go to to talk about periods or whatever.

Int: Are they mentors?

Resp: Yeah, in the same way you have that, why don't you have people there like that who can talk to you about important things.

Int: So you're talking about a career mentor?

Resp: Yeah that's a good title.

Int: Yeah, that sounds really sensible. What about the curriculum itself, when you get into high school, how do you feel the curriculum we know as it is, would that need to change in any way?

Resp: You've got your basic maths, english and science, kids write it off because its something that they know they have to do rather than something they think anything else of. Your other exciting subjects like, I always loved Graphics and always thought it was amazing because it was totally different from your English, maths and science. To me, that subject was more of a hobby than it was about learning about the subject. I think there needs to be more subjects that kids are passionate about, I don't know what they would be because that's not my field of training but like, for example for me, I loved Graphics, I loved the drawing, the technicality of it all, everything. (Faye:297-304)

Q:26.

"...the reason I say 6 is because I have job prospects going forward but they can only reach a certain level and I would like to be higher than that you know, further into my career so I know that with the company I'm at I know I can only go so high." (Elliot:112)

Q:27.

"No I don't think so, I mean, if something could happen where, I'm sort of at the moment, moving onto a different job there into a more sales role

which means I'll take on more responsibility myself but I don't want that and it isn't what I want for my life at all. It's not forever, no." (Darcy:18)

Q:28.

"...maybe I will pick it up again cos a few months ago I saw a film and for the first time in a long time I actually sat and wrote a review for it, I just wanted, I really got a real urge for it again.

Int: How did you feel about it when you wrote the review?

Resp: I felt quite excited when I wrote it and I felt like I've achieved something, felt quite good to get back into that to – do that." (Barbara-1:46-48)

Q:29.

"I wanted that [be doctor] for my whole youth really and I'm still a bit gutted about it and that I didn't try hard enough." (Darcy:36)

Q:30.

"...I don't think I have enough dedication to do it. I think I've got enough on my plate at the minute that I can't see getting any lighter so the idea of taking on, starting a business or taking on a serious job is quite daunting because I wouldn't want anything to come in the way of my home life.

Int: Right, your son is your top priority basically?

Resp: Yes.

Int: Am I right in assuming that you get a lot of satisfaction out of your son?

Resp: Yeah, I suppose everything that I do is for him and his life and his future and his happiness." (Faye:42-46)

Q:31.

Resp: I would really like to do something in music but its nearly impossible to get into so I never followed it up

Int: OK you play an instrument or you...?

Resp: Yeah I played guitar I've not played for a while – but I did have a small band with my mates that we did for a while but like I said I never followed it up

Int: How would that be as a prospect for a career or do you feel that...?

I think it's not a very assured career it's very difficult to be a success so [...] it's just a risk really more than anything." (Elliot:40-44)

Q:32.

Int: Did you ever think about job satisfaction when you were thinking about being a journalist when you went to uni?

Resp: I don't think so, not really... [...] ...I think I was always interested in school in writing and... and erm... growing up I was really into reading film magazines and film reviews. It was more of like a passion but... I don't know if now I would really enjoy it as a job. Maybe it would take the enjoyment out of it because of my interest in films and in the magazines and reading the reviews and stuff. I don't know, that as a hobby, if I did that as a job that would sort of take that away kind of thing." (Barbara-2:43-36)

Q:33

"...From what I've seen so far it seems like...they like to do progression internally you know, for experience.

Int: Do you feel like the progression is based from experience rather than...

Resp: I think so, it seems to be. Most of the team leaders and the management I've worked with and I've seen and I've spoke with have been 'oh I started where you did' and have worked their way up so." (Barbara-2:150-152)

Q:34.

"...to be honest, in this day and age, [...] I don't think it is safe. Most people that I know who have gone to uni, completed uni and done really well. I don't know many of them that have gone away and sort of got into a good job and gone the way they thought they were gonna just cos of the job market at the minute it's just not really. We're all sort of in the same boat when even if you've been to uni, all those that have been, you're sort of... It's just like as a generation, we're all a little bit lost in a way because when we were younger we were told of going to uni and that would get us a really good job but you'd come out and it's kind of like 'Oh there isn't really anything going' and you'd end up sort of looking at the same jobs that you would've looked at if you hadn't gone to uni cos there's not much else out there to go for." (Barbara-2:122)

Q:35.

“...there’s so many universities in Britain and there so many doing all the same courses there are hundreds of thousands of 21 year olds coming out of university thinking yeah I’m going to do this and it’s almost like there’s so many fish for a small pond you know. It’s almost like there’s not enough for everyone to get a chance...”(Barbara-1:176)

Q:36.

“...not to be big headed, I could mainly just do things, school was sort of easy for me. A levels was a big jump but I also still didn’t need to work that hard to do all right. I think that then continued to uni where I didn’t work very hard but I still did OK.” (Darcy:24)

Q:37.

“...I remember visiting her a lot when I was in college and she was in university and she made it seem like she had loads of money and she could go out and do what she wanted and buy loads of nice clothes and stuff so, yeah, I think she just all of a sudden got independent. She’d gone to university, she’d got her own flat, living with her mates, everything a teenager wants to do.” (Faye:138)

Q:38.

“I’d like to think I’m – quite independent --- I like to, yeah, I’m very sort of strong willed *[laughs]* I’m even, at work sometimes they’ll be like do you need some help and I’ll be like no, I’ve started this so I’m gonna finish it – I don’t know – sometimes I see taking help as a bit of a weakness and I don’t like to admit that you know --- so I’d like to be able to look and see yeah I did that and I did that on my own” (Barbara-1:88)

Q:39.

“I’m very creative, ambitious and I’ve got lots of ideas. I just like to put them into something that maybe means more ... I don’t know exactly what I’d like to do other than the one I’m doing already and I would like to do something that really means more *[to me]*.” (Elliot:10-14)

Q:40.

“Int: So if the education system were to change; not that we could foresee it, there might be an indication there to train youngsters to be more independent?

Resp: I think it wouldn't just help. If they were taught to be independent when they were younger, it wouldn't just help with their education. It would help their home lives, but it would make them not rely on their parents so much, and go out more and not sit at home waiting for dole money to come in, relying on the government....” (Chelsea:43-44)

“...I don't know where I get my independence from but I'm so glad I have it.” (Chelsea:46)

Q:41.

“...to go back to looking for jobs again I could be back to square one cos I wouldn't have any sort of...Finances to sort of, support myself while I looked for something else. That's a worry... (Barbara-2:90)

Q:42.

“Oh I need to come to some sort of decision on what I want to do. Maybe I'm not meant to do that, maybe I'm just meant to try a lot of things, I reckon that's probably what a lot of people do isn't it?” (Darcy:144)

Q:43.

“Knowing that my home life was taken care of. [...] So If I wanted to be a teacher for example, I wouldn't pursue that if I didn't know where my son was going to be at that point in time. Say someone walks up to me and said “We want you to be a teacher in September this year, we want you to go into that classroom, you're going to be a year 4 teacher” My immediate thought would be “what time am I going to start, what time am I going to finish because I've got to pick him up or drop him off” and if it didn't work then I wouldn't say yes.” (Faye:256-8)

Q:44.

“So I've just got to make sure these 12 months I'm with this job kind of prove myself, really put myself out there and try and make a good impression and if they do keep a number of people on where I am at the minute, hopefully keep us on and also keep looking out on the civil service internal job...erm...application things they've got online, just keeping an eye out on that really.” (Barbara-2:26)

Q:45.

“...I still don't know. I do want to study first, so I want to convert to psychology. So yeah I suppose that's the path I want to take. I need to save up some money from this job and then study what I want to do and then do

what I want to do I suppose and hopefully there's a job at the end of it"
(Darcy:146)

Q:46.

"I like the idea of business studies, because I've done that at A level. And I think from the job I've been in, it's given me a good understanding of business. So in the future I'd quite like to start my own business and I think that would assist me with that..." (Elliot:50)

Q:47.

"In some sort of educational setting maybe but maybe not a nursery but something along those lines I guess." (Faye:12)

Q:48.

"I would say to not listen to other people and to do what they feel is right, to go with their interests and skills and how they can develop them, because university is not for everyone. You know, You go and do three years, get a diploma. It's not for everything. If guidance is available definitely seek it out.

Int: So if you were asked to give even informal guidance what year do you think you would talk to?

Resp: I'd say not to take them lightly, and not to go with their friends, just because their friend chooses French, not to choose that too because of your friend. Just to be independent. But it's quite hard isn't it for young people?
(Chelsea:152-154)

Q:49.

"The first thing that comes to my mind is probably telling them not to worry about it as much as they probably do. You get absolutely traumatised and made to feel like you have to make the right decision and it just doesn't work like that. I'm 25 and I still don't have a clear idea of what I want to do with my life. When you're in high school at whatever age it might be that people start to hound you about what decisions you need to make, just to make them realise to take it easy. People make mistakes, people make the wrong decisions all the time, if you decide right now that you want to be an astronaut and then you reach the end of university and realise that you want to be a florist, its not that big of a deal. There's always something out there, there's always an answer or a solution to whatever problem you think you've got with your career or your education or whatever it is. Your knowledge changes, your life experiences change.

Int: OK. Can I just take you up on that? Your knowledge changes? And you move with the times kind of thing? So what would you advise these youngsters then? You know, one day you're going to go to work, and to do certain things and your life will change, don't be too stressed about it at the moment?

Resp: Don't just make a decision based on what you think you like at the moment. So say someone really likes football at school and they decide that they want to go and do sports at uni or whatever, that might just be because that's what you're into at the minute and your interests change all the time. You need to think about what it is that you're really good at, so the kid that might like sports is really good at science, and it could go on to do engineering or something like that but he doesn't know that yet because he's so focused on the fact that he likes sports and his mates like football and they watch football on the tv so he goes down that path rather than someone saying "Well actually you're really good at science, did you know you could do all these things?" (Faye:280-282)

Q:50. (Researcher's summary of Barbara's five pieces of advice to Year 8 youngsters)

Int: So it sounds like a good place to kind of end this. If you could give advice to a young person in year 8 or year 9 to choose their options you'd say get your GCSE's but don't get too down, it's not the end of the world. Erm, if you really want to go to university, don't let anyone put you off. Right, but if you don't get into university, don't feel like you're not valued. Right. You said your second advice would be experience is what counts. That's what the job markets about, they're looking for people with experience rather than credentials, is that kinda...?

Resp: Yeah

Int: And your third piece of advice was don't be scared to ask questions kind of thing because people are happy to help?

Resp: Yeah, because you never know unless you ask

Int: And sometimes you never even know what to ask

Resp: Yeah, it's that kind of, you're better looking back and knowing you even asked and tried, rather than looking back and thinking "what if, what if I done that or what if I said that" it could just be as simple as just ask it.

Int: Great. And the fourth piece of advice is if schools do an apprenticeship, try them and go for an apprenticeship because in your experience, they're more successful when they've done apprenticeships

Resp: Yeah, they always seem more successful.

Int: Yeah. And fifthly, always have a plan B.

Resp: Yeah. Yeah.

Int: Right, and you can always choose plan A as a hobby.

Resp: Or, like you said before like, use your plan B and then after, once you feel comfortable and secure you could always come back to plan A and try again and sort of.” (Barbara-2:187-198)

Appendix F – Participant Consent Form

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Title: Young people and economic wellbeing in a world of rapid change: can positive educational psychology help?

Researchers: The researcher is Peter Farnbank (Chartered Educational Psychologist) from the University of Leicester School of Psychology.

Purpose of data collection: Doctoral research

CONSENT STATEMENT

1. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the research at any time before my first session of one to one working with Peter Farnbank (from here on “Peter”), without giving any reason.
2. I am aware of what my participation will involve. I understand that there will be about three to four sessions in all.
3. My data are to be held confidentially and only Peter will have access to them.
4. My data will be kept by Peter in a locked filing cabinet for a period of about five years following on from any publication. Any added-on data will be kept in electronic form for up to one year, after which time they will be deleted. I understand that my identity will be kept separate from data about me, and only a link-code known only to Mr Farnbank will be used by him to identify me. My identity will not be shared with anyone.
5. I understand that for my own protection I will not disclose or discuss my participation in this project with anyone other than Peter. My individual data will not be shared with anybody, unless I wish them to be shared, in which case Peter may advise as appropriate with a view to my protection.
6. The overall findings may be submitted for publication in a scientific journal, or presented at scientific conferences, and every effort will be made to protect my identity.
7. My part in this study will take approximately one months to complete, although possibly shorter, involving approximately three hourly sessions and private reflection time between sessions. My part will be one of a small number of casework studies for the purpose of finding answers to the research question (see title above).

8. I understand that all information that transpires in the course of my participation will be kept confidential at all times.

I am giving my consent for data to be used for the outlined purposes of the present study.
I agree for my parent(s) to be involved (see 2. above).

All questions that I have about the research have been satisfactorily answered.

I agree to participate.

Participant's signature:

Participant's name (please print):

Date of birth: / / Date of consent:

If you have further questions about this study, you may contact Peter Farnbank. This study was reviewed by the University of Leicester Psychology Research Ethics Committee (PREC). You may contact the Chair of PREC Dr. Ruth Hatcher at rmh12@le.ac.uk if you have any questions or concerns regarding the ethics of this project. You may also contact Peter's research supervisor Dr Catherine Steele at cs589@le.ac.uk

Please note that this form will be kept separately from your data.

Appendix G – Ethical application and approval (updated history)

(Mandatory appendix)



University Ethics Sub-Committee for Psychology

15/01/2016

Ethics Reference: 4591-pf70-neuroscience,psychologyandbehaviour

TO:

Name of Researcher Applicant: Peter Farnbank

Department: Psychology

Research Project Title: Young people and economic wellbeing in a world of rapid change: can positive educational psychology help?

Dear Peter Farnbank,

RE: Ethics review of Research Study application

The University Ethics Sub-Committee for Psychology has reviewed and discussed the above application.

1. Ethical opinion

The Sub-Committee grants ethical approval to the above research project on the basis described in the application form and supporting documentation, subject to the conditions specified below.

2. Summary of ethics review discussion

The Committee noted the following issues:

Approved but please also implement the point noted in my last comment on the 'Notes' page.

3. General conditions of the ethical approval

The ethics approval is subject to the following general conditions being met prior to the start of the project:

As the Principal Investigator, you are expected to deliver the research project in accordance with the University's policies and procedures, which includes the University's Research Code of Conduct and the University's Research Ethics Policy.

If relevant, management permission or approval (gate keeper role) must be obtained from host organisation prior to the start of the study at the site concerned.

4. Reporting requirements after ethical approval

You are expected to notify the Sub-Committee about:

- Significant amendments to the project
- Serious breaches of the protocol
- Annual progress reports
- Notifying the end of the study

5. Use of application information

Details from your ethics application will be stored on the University Ethics Online System. With your permission, the Sub-Committee may wish to use parts of the application in an anonymised format for training or sharing best practice. Please let me know if you do not want the application details to be used in this manner.

Best wishes for the success of this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. [REDACTED]

Chair

Title	Young people and economic wellbeing in a world of rapid change: can positive educational psychology help?
Application	4591-pf70-neuroscience,psychologyandbehaviour
Created	23/11/2015 21:25:11
Updated	15/01/2016 10:06:16
Status	Complete
State	Approved

Lead Applicant

Principal Investigator

Co-researcher(s)/co-applicant(s) Names

Postgraduate Research (e.g. PhD, DSocSci, DClinPsy, EdD)

Psychology

Email address(es)

Researcher's contact details are removed for privacy reasons

Supervisor's name

Stacks, Catherine (Do) 1 (ss500)

Research

Does the study require NHS REC approval?

No

Has your project already been approved by an ethics committee in another institution?

No

Project

Is your project funded?

No

Project aims and research questions

The project will use interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) – see below for explanation – to explore the young person's experiences of transition to career and independence as a result of their life, education and work experience to date.

The literature review that will be submitted as part of the PsyD thesis surveys literature from youth studies, pertinent legislation and educational, occupational, coaching and positive psychology. It speculates how these principles may help young people without therapeutic or clinical needs make clearer decisions about transitions into career/work and adult independence.

Can the EP working within a positive psychology paradigm help YPs make confident decisions about their career choices? How may a shift away from deficit psychology into positive psychology empower YPs to transform a state of disaffection to a state of empowerment?

Proposed methods/protocol

Interviews (details would include whether these are face-to-face, online or group interviews, e.g. focus groups)

Who are the 'human participants' in this research?

- (1) The participant must be between ages 18 and 25.
- (2) They should be articulate and able to discuss their experience of career guidance received from their school or other educational institution.
- (3) Not have undertaken a psychometric test for career over the last three years.
- (4) They will have no identifiable therapeutic or special educational needs.
- (5) They will be no longer in full-time education, can be unemployed or in a job that is temporary or about which they feel uncertain as to whether it would fulfil their ambition or wishes as a permanent career-trajectory

Will your research involve the use of human tissue?

-

Clearly describe how you intend to identify, approach and recruit participants.

Via researcher's professional contacts as follows:

Upon ethical clearance, the researcher will discuss with a professional contact who knows of young persons between 18 and 25 years of age meeting all the criteria given below. The researcher will explain that the research will elicit the young persons

Enter the number of participants

6

Start date

01/12/2015

End date
29/02/2016

Where will the study take place?
In the researcher's private office

If the study is to be conducted outside the researcher's home country/place of permanent domicile, what steps are being taken to ensure that the necessary research/ethical/other permissions are secured, and that the researcher is aware of and respectful of any political and cultural sensitivities in that place?
n/a

Will the research described in this application require you to travel outside the UK?
-

Does this research entail more than a minimal risk of disturbance to the environment?
No

Permissions

Are there any legal, cultural, religious or other implications to conducting the study and if so, how will these issues be addressed?
no

How will you gain permission to carry out this research (e.g. obtain data, access to sites etc)?
Via researcher's professional contacts as follows:
Upon ethical clearance, the researcher will discuss with a professional contact who knows of young persons between 18 and 25 years of age meeting all the criteria given below. The researcher will explain that the research will elicit the young person's views and experience of making the transition to work. The contact will approach suitable young persons to gain their willingness to participate in the research and their consent for the researcher to contact each such young person. Once gained the contact will inform the researcher, who will then contact each participant and make an appointment to meet. The venue will be the researcher's private office. The researcher will explain to the young person in general terms what the participation will entail, similar to the discussion earlier between the researcher and professional contact. The researcher will then gain the signed consent of the young person to participate. A blank version of the letter of consent is attached.

What is the evidence you will provide to gain the necessary permissions?
Participant Consent Form
Semi-structured Interview Schedule.

Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited?
No

Does the research involve administrative or secure data that requires permission from the appropriate authorities before use?
No

Consent

Will all participants be provided with a participant information sheet and an informed consent form?

Yes

Is consent being sought for the data collected to be used for future research projects and/or with a view to archiving data and making it available and re-usable by other researchers?

No

Will you be accessing non-anonymised data without consent?

No

Will the study involve participants who are vulnerable?

No

Does the research activity proposed require a criminal record check?

No

Does the research involve observing participants without their knowledge?

No

How will the confidentiality and privacy of participants be maintained?

Participant's identity will be kept with their consent letters and separate from their data/transcripts to which a link code will be written. These two folders will be kept under locked separate filing cabinets. The participants' data will not be shared with anyone else apart from my supervisor. In the report, a pseudonym will be used for each participant and all detail that could identify them will be protected by exclusion or pseudonyms. No organisation will be named nor cited with any identifiable detail in the report.

The data will be kept secure for 5 years following on from any publication after which they will be destroyed.

Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g. victimisations, sexual activity, drug use)?

No

Will research involve the use of the internet or other visual/vocal methods where respondents may be identified?

No

Are there financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) to be offered to participants?

No

Procedures

Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?

No

Will blood, tissue or any other biological samples be obtained from participants?

No

Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?

No

Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or negative consequences?

No

Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?

No

Are there any other ethical issues that you think might be raised in the research?

No

Declaration

I have read the Research Ethics Code of Practice, University of Leicester

Yes

The information in the form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it

No

I understand that all conditions apply to any co-applicants and researchers involved in the study, and it is my responsibility to ensure they abide by them.

Yes

I understand that any significant change to the question, design, methodology or conduct over the course of the research should be submitted as amendment to the original application for re-approval. Departmental Ethics Officers can provide guidance on what is a significant change.

Yes

I understand that at the end of my research I am required to complete a Monitoring Form.

Yes

I understand that further approvals for my research may be necessary beyond ethical approval, including for example the need to complete and have approved a risk assessment and to obtain insurance through the University, and there is a mandatory requirement to obtain University Travel Insurance if I'm travelling abroad to undertake approved research. If you are a member of staff and travelling in relation to your research, please go to this link:

><https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/insurance/documents/travel-single-trip>. If you are a student and travelling in relation to your research, please go to this link:

<https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/insurance/documents/travel-student>.

-

Please complete the checklist below to indicate any supporting documents included with this application:

Consent form(s)

Questionnaire instrument(s)

Monitoring Form

Project ID

4591

Project Title

Young people and economic wellbeing in a world of rapid change: can positive educational psychology help?

Start Date

01/12/2015

End Date

29/02/2016

Actual Start Date

00:00:00

Actual End Date

00:00:00

Declared Number of Participants

6

Actual Number of Participants

0

Reason for Study Closure

-

Summary of Unexpected/Unanticipated Events or Significant Protocol Deviations

-

Final Storage Location of Consent Forms and Collected Data

-

Other Comments

-

Notes

Created By:	Catherine Steele (cs589)
Role Type:	Supervisor
Date Added:	24/11/2015 21:42:40
Peter has already received ethical approval for the pilot study of this work and this application is for the main study. There were some minor tweaks to the interview schedule post the pilot, other than that the process is the same.	

Created By:	Todor Gerdjikov (tvg3)
Role Type:	Reviewer
Date Added:	25/11/2015 12:07:35
Just a quick question. Who will be the 'professional contact' and in what capacity do they know the young participants? Thanks! Todor	

Created By:	Todor Gerdjikov (tvg3)
Role Type:	Reviewer
Date Added:	15/01/2016 10:04:41

RE: Ethical Approval System: Application Requires Review Decision

Farnbank, Peter

Sent: 15 January 2016 14:45

To:

Cc: (Prof.); (Dr.)

Dear Todor,

Thank you very much. I shall certainly ensure that my professional contact(s) fully understand the voluntary participation conditions as you stipulate.

Kind regards,

Peter

From: (Dr.)

Sent: 15 January 2016 10:06

To: Farnbank, Peter

Cc: (Prof.); (Dr.)

Subject: RE: Ethical Approval System: Application Requires Review Decision

OK approved, but please see last note on the 'Notes' page. Good luck with your research!

Cheers,

I've raised the points in the email exchange below. In addition to your response below please ensure that your professional contacts emphasize to your participants that the research is completely voluntary agreeing to participate or not in no way impacts on their relationship with the contact.

Dear ~~XXXX~~

After discussing with Catherine today, I would like to propose the following as an alternative means of recruiting the small number of participants for their individual interviews:

I would approach a professional colleague or colleagues I know within my service or in my work arena (eg specialist teacher, psychologist, therapist, social worker, etc).

In this way, I can be certain, because of my good knowledge of and acquaintance with my colleague(s) and how they work with young people, that there would be no power relationship issues, and that confidentiality would be preserved as it is second nature to them in their work. I would need only four participants aged 21-25 (preferably 22-24).

I do not foresee any power relationship issues, because my colleague(s) would have no vested interest in the young person(s) they would refer me to, as these would be independent young people.

Further to the above, I would like to include one final question in my interview schedule, as follows:

"If you were to give a talk to a some Yr 8 youngsters, what advice might you give them?" (prompt cues: about how to achieve "economic wellbeing", a career and independence?)

I do hope this meets with your approval.

Thank you,

Peter

From: ~~XXXXXX@XXXXXX~~ (Dr.)
Sent: 05 January 2016 13:57
To: Farnbank, Peter
Cc: ~~XXXXXX@XXXXXX~~ (Prof.); ~~XXXXXX@XXXXXX~~ (Dr.)
Subject: RE: Ethical Approval System: Application Requires Review Decision

I am sorry to hear that Peter. Please keep me in the loop.
Cheers,
~~XXXX~~

From: Farnbank, Peter
Sent: 05 January 2016 13:55
To: ~~XXXXXX@XXXXXX~~ (Dr.)
Cc: ~~XXXXXX@XXXXXX~~ (Prof.); ~~XXXXXX@XXXXXX~~ (Dr.)
Subject: RE: Ethical Approval System: Application Requires Review Decision

Dear ~~XXXX~~,

I am afraid there has been an unfortunate development. Though I could foresee no potential power relationships issues, the college principal's office contacted me today to decline my request for their assistance. Their reason is that they receive many such requests and they now have a blanket policy to decline all requests because they say they do not want to put any pressure on their students.

As you probably know, ~~XXXXXX@XXXXXX~~, my supervisor is not back till next Monday, and I will need to discuss with her about alternatives. I shall get back to you as soon as I have conferred with her.

I hope this is agreeable with you.

Kind regards,

Peter

From: ~~XXXXXX@XXXXXX~~ (Dr.)
Sent: 05 January 2016 10:51
To: Farnbank, Peter
Cc: ~~XXXXXX@XXXXXX~~ (Prof.); ~~XXXXXX@XXXXXX~~ (Dr.)
Subject: RE: Ethical Approval System: Application Requires Review Decision

Created By:	XXXXXX (pf70)
Role Type:	Reviewer
Date Added:	15/01/2016 10:06:16
Approved but please also implement the point noted in my last comment on the 'Notes' page.\n	

Attachments

Title	Person	Role	Created
IPA - Interview questions 2a.doc	Peter Farnbank (pf70)	Applicant	23/11/2015 21:52:42
participantConsent-adult v2c main.doc	Peter Farnbank (pf70)	Applicant	23/11/2015 21:52:01

Application History

Description	Stage	Person	Date
Approved: Application approved by reviewer: XXXXXX (tv93)	Complete	tv93	15/01/2016 10:06:16
Assigned: The following reviewers have been assigned to your application: Lead Reviewer: XXXXXX Gerdjikov (tv93) Secondary Reviewer: XXXXXX Farnbank (pf70)	Review	jk17	25/11/2015 09:10:36
Assigned: Supervisor XXXXXX (pf70) approved the application for full review. The following committee administrators have been assigned to the application: XXXXXX (jk17)	Admin Review	pf70	24/11/2015 21:43:01
Assigned: The following supervisor has been assigned to your application: XXXXXX (pf70)	PGR Supervisor Review	cs589	23/11/2015 22:03:03
Not Required: No co-applicants on application.	Co-Applicant Approval	pf70	23/11/2015 22:03:03
Created: Draft application created by Peter Farnbank (pf70)	Draft	pf70	23/11/2015 21:25:11

Appendix H – Ethical approval receipt (pilot study)

(Mandatory appendix)



University Ethics Sub-Committee for Psychology

04/09/2015

Ethics Reference: 3091-pf70-neuroscience,psychologyandbehaviour

TO:

Name of Researcher Applicant: Peter Farnbank

Department: Psychology

Research Project Title: Young people and economic wellbeing in a world of rapid change: can positive educational psychology help?

Dear Peter Farnbank,

RE: Ethics review of Research Study application

The University Ethics Sub-Committee for Psychology has reviewed and discussed the above application.

1. Ethical opinion

The Sub-Committee grants ethical approval to the above research project on the basis described in the application form and supporting documentation, subject to the conditions specified below.

2. Summary of ethics review discussion

The Committee noted the following issues:

I approve this application

3. General conditions of the ethical approval

The ethics approval is subject to the following general conditions being met prior to the start of the project:

As the Principal Investigator, you are expected to deliver the research project in accordance with the University's policies and procedures, which includes the University's Research Code of Conduct and the University's Research Ethics Policy.

If relevant, management permission or approval (gate keeper role) must be obtained from host organisation prior to the start of the study at the site concerned.

4. Reporting requirements after ethical approval

You are expected to notify the Sub-Committee about:

- Significant amendments to the project
- Serious breaches of the protocol
- Annual progress reports
- Notifying the end of the study

5. Use of application information

Details from your ethics application will be stored on the University Ethics Online System. With your permission, the Sub-Committee may wish to use parts of the application in an anonymised format for training or sharing best practice. Please let me know if you do not want the application details to be used in this manner.

Best wishes for the success of this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Mark Lansdale
Chair

Appendix J (Mandatory) – Researcher’s Statement of Epistemological Position

In order to understand the researcher’s epistemological position it would be useful to know first that he is an experienced HCPC-registered Educational Psychologist (EP). The following represents the researcher’s observations of his profession in the research-practice cycle, how this has informed his epistemological position, and his aspirations regarding the research undertaken and the future of educational psychology.

Educational psychology is a complex hybrid discipline: a marriage of psychology and education/teaching. Applicants eligible for the BPS-accredited EP-training must have qualifications in psychology (with GBC) and professional experience and/or qualifications in ‘education’ – which itself is a broad term, vis-à-vis: ‘qualified teacher status’ (QTS), non-QTS, teaching assistant (TA) Levels 1 to 3, higher level TA (HLTA), early years practitioner, lecturer, trainer, mentor etc. In effect an EP under the old MSc training has three graduate-level qualifications in this hybridity: psychology, a National Curriculum subject (in the researcher’s case Music – with art-based models of research, analysis and interpretation), and school-based teaching (BEd, CertEd, DipEd or PGCE). Candidates for the new Doctor of Educational and Child Psychology (DocECP) training who do not come from a teaching or educational background would have other qualifications focused on children and/or young people (CYPs), e.g. social workers, counsellors, career workers, youth workers etc. It is not known that a candidate with an academic pedigree in psychology would be accepted on a DocECP training course.

Thus from the outset an EP would be importing the epistemologies of those other disciplines, and the first success criterion is an epistemological shift to reconcile those understandings into the rather abstruse hybrid epistemology of ‘educational psychology’, whose literature is often flavoured by the individual researchers’ own, often unique, epistemological positions. For instance, Deutsch (2001, 2017) whose key contribution is in ‘dynamic assessment’ (as opposed to psychometrics) would have a very different epistemological position to say Rees (2016) whose interests lie in

neuroscience, while both these EPs share the common ground of promoting learning in CYPs.

The default epistemology of educational psychology is based broadly on social constructionism, which is argued as a remodelling of Glaser and Strauss's (1965) grounded theory (Andrews 2012). Within that relativity is 'constructivism' which Young and Collin (2004) consider is the individual's own relativist understanding of that phenomenon which has been characterised by said 'social constructionism'. However, the researcher observes that there are tensions within that framework, due to the diversity inherent in how a phenomenon is socially constructed by discrete groups of people, each with their own relativist understandings (*vis-à-vis* construction) of the social world. In broadly conceptualising the problem, social constructivism (mainly alongside models such as solution-oriented or personal-construct models) becomes the basis for an EP's *modus operandi*. In simple terms, social constructionism is the process by which a phenomenon (in this case the 'problem') is constructed from 'givens' in the social context, ie values, criteria etc stated by an authority figure such as the Local Authority, the Government, OFSTED, 'the system' etc. However, despite constructionism being a relativist/anti-objectivity ideology, such powerful 'given' constructions assume a relatively social-ontological-nomothetic position in the specific context of the needs of the client.

This incurs power inequalities, which further complicates 'the problem'. So, in formulating solutions to the problem, it is necessary for the EP to operate on an individualist constructivist basis – i.e. how the client problem-holder (e.g the CYP, the school/college etc) understands or perceives the problem – thus representing the epistemological-idiographic position. An EP (the facilitator/consultant for the problem-solving) thus positions her/himself somewhere, with flexibility to shift as needed, in the four-quadrant matrix arising from the axes crossing the ontology/epistemology and idiography/nomothetics continua. Given that an EP works collaboratively in an equitable consultation model, it is appreciable how the EP would constantly shift their position until the differentials among consultees' discrete agendas reach an agreed set of outcomes. As Fairclough (2014, 2010) notes, discourses (both sociolinguistic and

semiotic) create power inequalities, as certain discourses (in this case the ‘authority’/organisation voices) can colonise other less powerful discourses (e.g. the CYP’s voice). Thus, shifts in position are inevitable when discourses need to be mediated.

There are multiple contextual tensions for the EP. These are principally predicated by the expected role of the EP (Love 2009), which is primarily within a statutory function as given in CFA-2014 and the SEND CoP-2015: tensions between service delivery expected by stake-holders and professional autonomy desired by the EP (again a constructionist-constructivist contest). Those expectations inhibit research and practice, especially given that legislation and public policy marginalise the majority of CYPs who are not within the bottom 16% of the normal distribution (i.e. SD -2 and SD -3). Educational psychology is not only about SEND: it is more precisely about applying psychology in education, and transition into young-adult independence forms part of that. At the same time legislation requires the EP to capture the voice of the CYP, which can easily be lost among the ontological-epistemological debates between discrete stake-holders of the CYPs’ social, psychological and (socio-)economical wellbeing.

It was the researcher’s express intention to step outside the box to research into what he considers a very important aspect of youth transition, hitherto neglected by educational psychology. The researcher wanted to explore outside the constraints of SEND and statutory functions, and in so doing take educational psychology outside said role expectation towards the application of positive psychology in general educational contexts, rather than the current SEND paradigm of psychology in deficit arenas. In doing so he is hoping to bring educational psychology to a new place – education to career/work/youthful-independence, in the mainstream, with emphasis on potentials and opportunities to address the challenges. Here he hopes the research can fan the smoking tinder of interest (see e.g. Borrett 2018/in preparation) for the majority of young people: the other 83+% who are not protected by public policy and assumed to do be able to do well by themselves (see e.g. Schoon and Lyons-Amos 2016). However, the fact that those CYPs have their own needs (see Part D of this thesis),

particularly the gifted-and-talented, has been recognised by Scottish legislation (Morris 2013) but hitherto has not generally attracted much attention in the rest of the UK. Given that the EP is arguably the only psychological professional who can walk the continuous developmental walk with the CYP from birth to 25, the researcher argues that it would be remiss of EPs not to embrace this area of research and practice.

The idea of this research theme (transition from education-to-independence/career for non-SEND CYPs) was spawned a long time ago, but it is a theme that currently attracts little interest in the EP community. This is possibly because of the funnelled route into which legislation and public policy have driven the profession, and also that public-sector EPs are expected to practise and research almost exclusively within SEND. Crucial questions arise about the contests alluded to above, i.e.: (a) social constructionism ('givens' – the stakeholders' understandings) *versus* social constructivism ('takens' – the young-person's understanding), (b) role expectation of the EP *versus* the professional autonomy of the EP, and (c) the (lost/mislaid) aspirations of young-people on their career-journey among the turbulence of the current 'economic storm' (Rae 2008) and its ever-changing job markets, and their impact on career-development and the role that HEIs can play to help graduate 'ride out the storm', which in 2008 though not as pessimistic as reported by media "certainly looked gloomy" (p.761). Eleven years on the storm does not appear to be subsiding, and it may well strike a new phase as 'Brexit' looms!

However, somewhere in all that mix lie career interventions for addressing those questions. To navigate these complexities, the researcher wanted to 'mutualise' the multifarious factors into a plausible form. As Hackley (1999) puts it:

"Mutualism holds that meaning is not purely a private cognitive construction governed by hidden psychological structures and processes. [...], meaning is a social construction manifested in and through discursive practices." (p.160)

Crucially the researcher wanted to know what young-people understand about themselves in relation to career and young-adult independence. Such constructivism in the career field is, as Young and Collin (2004) argue, congruent with the career

construction model (Savickas 1989) which takes the science of career/vocational studies into a more convergent mutualised direction (Savickas 1994).

Hence in formulating the research theme, the researcher found it necessary to take both social- constructionist and constructivist perspectives, as youth transitions do not happen in a vacuum but in the context of the complexities discussed above. Thematic analysis was thus chosen, as it afforded enough flexibility to elicit the issues perceived by the young-people under study (in both the research and service evaluation) as well as conceptualise the problem of their transitions in the social context. Interpretative phenomenological analysis could perhaps take the constructivism too far to the ‘taken’ position as to be perhaps idiosyncratically distanced from the reality of the issues being investigated, and grounded theory could perhaps take it too far towards the other end. The researcher therefore needed also a literature review model that would in the first instance capture the broad sweep of those socially contexted complexities, hence why he chose the integrative literature review (Torraco 2016). From there he could then capture the experiences and voices of the young people (the ‘taken’/perceived from the social context) in the main study while giving focus to the issues (the ‘given’).

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Appendix K (Mandatory) – Research Diary

Research Report

2015 - 2016	Reading, supervision and peer-supervision: methodology choice, options for participants recruitment etc
2015 – Aug 4 th	Application for ethical approval – pilot study.
2015 – Sept 4 th	Ethical approval for pilot study
2015 – Nov 23	Application for ethical approval – main study
2015 – Dec 29 th	Ethical approval query
2016 – Jan 5 th	Response to above query
2016 – Jan 15 th	Ethical approval granted
2016 – January	Recruitment of participants
2016 – Jan to Apr	Interviews with participants
2016 – April	Transcription of transcripts, and immersion in same – analysis and writing of draft report
2016 – October	Produced report first draft.
2016 – November	Presented extract of above for Annual Progress Review; attended APR via Skype-video.

Part C: Service Evaluation

“A Step Further”: An Evaluative Study of Campus-Specific Initiatives Offered by the University of Leicester’s Career Development Service

Executive Summary

Research shows that graduates' transitions to career often fail to achieve the careers to which graduates have aspired. Often the academic skills acquired through degrees, even vocational ones, need to be complemented by personal 'soft' skills to enhance employability, thus placing responsibilities on universities and students for career-preparation. This study was principally based on Pearson et al.'s (under peer review) large-scale international study of the relationship between proactive personality (PP) and career-competence (CC) in early careerists. The current study was a scaled-down version which investigated queries by the Career Development Service (CDS) of the University of Leicester (UoL) regarding (a) factors motivating students to take advantage of "campus-specific initiatives" (CSIs) (ie CDS-services), and (b) students' satisfaction with any of those services. The research also predicted students with high career-attitude scores would be more proactive in undertaking more CSIs and job-search related activities. The scales used were: career competence (CC), proactive personality (PP), protean career attitudes (PCA), career expectations (CX) and job-search activities (JSA). The study was a convergent mixed-methods design using an online questionnaire agreed beforehand with UoL-CDS.

Results: First-year and second-year psychology students (respectively $n=47$, $n=15$, plus one third-year) completed the survey. There was a statistically significant positive correlation between PP and the undertaking of CSIs: $r(63) = 0.34$, $p=0.01$ (2-tailed). There was also a significant correlation between PP and JSA: $r(62) = 0.275$, $p=0.015$. Participants' satisfaction-ratings of CSIs were varied and generally positive. However, participants generally did not regard CSIs as a priority, arguably because they did not feel close enough to serious career-decisions. There were discrepancies between their confident self-appraisals and their anxiousness relating to university-to-work transitions. 'Organisational socialisation' was discussed.

Recommendations

Section 4.7 provides the rationale for the following recommendations:

- Formation of a focus group to gain direct and candid views from students who have completed CSIs, with a positive view to develop/enhance the CSIs.
- Future research or replication could include the Planned Happenstance Career Inventory as an extra scale;
- Development of coaching programmes based on the life-design model and Planned Happenstance principles, perhaps using the GROW coaching model, especially for students low in self-confidence and/or resilience.
- Development of initiatives for ‘organisational socialisation’ (see Muñiz & Eimerbrink 2018; Sims 1983), and for augmenting the worst-rated but probably most appropriate CSIs (workshops, employer-interfacing etc). This could be part of the coaching programme mentioned above.

1. Introduction

This report serves two aims: a research on a sample of University of Leicester (UoL) students' readiness about university-to-work transitions, and an exploration about those students' evaluation of career development activities, collectively called 'campus-specific initiatives' (CSIs) provided by the University of Leicester's Career Development Service (CDS).

1.1 Rationale and Aims

1.1.1 Employability and the 'New Career'

In an economic "storm" (Rae, 2008, p.749) rife with insecure job-markets and constant economic changes, graduates and school-leavers alike often encounter challenges that make their career-paths meander before they finally settle into careers with longer-term prospects (Henderson, Holland, McGrellis, Sharpe & Thomson, 2007; Schoon & Silbereisen, 2009a, 2009b; Selingo, 2016). Such forces impact on Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) and students in terms of employability (Creasey, 2013; Tymon, 2013; Graham, 2007; Rae, 2008), and the well-being of graduates (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006; Di Blasi, Tosto, Marfia, Cavini & Giordano, 2016). Even graduates in better-defined careers, e.g. civil engineering (Creasey, 2013), youth-work (Leach, 2017) etc, find challenges which are invoked by discrepancies between the reality of workplace/organisational expectations/agendas and employees' high career-aspirations.

Since the linear one-stop career has become the exception (Schoon & Silbereisen, 2009b), new career theories have been sought with a focus on career-construction (e.g. Savickas, Nota, Rossier, Dauwalder, Duarte & Guichard, 2009) so as to match the complex nature of career transition-and-development in this modern age of economic turbulence, where market forces are buoyant (e.g. Leach 2015, 2017; Vuolo, Staff & Mortimer, 2012). Such forces have given rise to protean and boundaryless careers, in which flexibility, adaptability, innovativeness and agency play their part in mitigating the vagaries of employability (e.g. Baruch, 2004; Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Briscoe, Hall & DeMuth, 2006; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). However, such new-concept careers are not without their own challenges, as questions arise about the

realities of psychological and physical mobility in terms of time-space continua in careers that are now more ambiguous than more traditional one-stop models (e.g. Leach, 2015; Lyons, Schweitzer & Ng, 2015; Inkson, 2005), and about the pressure on such new-age career actors to navigate more in-career transitions in order to “maintain their market-value” Chudzikowski (2012, p.305).

Against this backdrop, research also shows that the university degree is often insufficient for graduates to make a smooth transition from university to work (see e.g. Bridgstock, 2009; Creasy, 2013; Rae, 2007, 2008; Scott, Connell, Thomson & Willison, 2017; Tomlinson, 2008; Tymon, 2013). Employers nowadays seek “soft” behaviours/skills (Graham, 2017, p.48) to complement competency skills learnt at HEIs (see also Creasy, 2013; Perrone & Vickers, 2003; Selingo, 2016; Scott et al., 2017; Tomlinson, 2008). This raises the question of what makes ‘the right kind of graduate’ for employment, which Moreau and Leathwood (2007) note also involves a range of questions about demographics and subjective value-judgements of would-be employers (see also Sullivan & Arthur, 2006).

The Government’s white paper (DfES, 2003) stipulates that HEIs should make their curricula more relevant to their graduates in terms of employability. However, Tymon (2013) argues that the Government has a blurred view of the difference between ‘employment’ and ‘employability’ – vis-à-vis graduates getting into short-term job(s) or long-term careers, although the government might be more interested in lowering unemployment figures. Notwithstanding, the need for quality career- guidance and intervention is supported by the literature (e.g. Knight & Yorke, 2003; Rae, 2007; Yorke & Knight 2006). University CDSs therefore have a role as the intervenor for bridging such complex divides.

Wendlandt and Rochlen (2008) note challenges facing students at the transition from university to work, as follows:

- **Change in culture:** Differences between university- and work communities impose a different set of interactional/relationship dynamics, especially challenging for newcomers unlike the camaraderie

that greets newcomers to university. The ultimate result may be feelings of isolation.

- **Lack of experience and skills:** The mismatch of employer-desired skills emphasises the gaps between skills cultivated in education and from “formal work experience” (p.155), highlighting discrepancies between occupationally and academically encultured communication-skills, increasing graduates’ uncertainties upon entering employment.
- **Inflated Expectations:** The mismatch of real-world employer-expectations and students’ idealised view of the workplace can leave employment-newcomers disaffected by their unmet career-expectations.

In arguing that much needed “organizational socialization” (see Polach, 2004, p.7) is consistent with career-transition theories, Wendlandt and Rochlen conclude that “career counsellors play an important role in preparing students for the transition process” (2008, p.163).

1.1.2. Background to this Study

In light of the recent calls for HEIs to be more involved with career education (DfES, 2003; Rae, 2007), university CDSs are developing the services they offer (see Tymon, 2013; Moreau & Leathwood, 2006; Scott & al., 2017).

In UoL the career development service (hence simply ‘CDS’) offers a number of interventions referred to here as campus-specific initiatives (‘CSIs’). Table C1 below lists the 24 CSIs with brief notes of what each entails, and how they are grouped under categories.

Table C1: The UoL-CDS Campus-Specific Initiatives (CSIs)

(The left column refers to question-items in the questionnaire discussed in section 2.3)

Campus-Specific, Non-Curriculum-Embedded 'Interventions'

- (Q.16) **Application Coaching Appointments (25 minutes)**
- (a) CV
 - (b) Application Form
 - (c) Covering Letter
 - (d) Personal Statement
 - (e) LinkedIn
- (Q.17) **Career Coaching Appointments (25 minutes)**
- (a) Initial support
 - (b) Assessment Centre support
 - (c) Psychometric Test support
 - (d) Reflecting on previous interviews or assessment centres
 - (e) Exploring post-university options
 - (f) Assessing what career paths are open to students
 - (g) How to gain experience and make the most of university
 - (h) Exploring further study options
- (Q.18) **Careers Guidance (Short – 20 minutes, Long – 30 minutes)**
- (a) Aimed at students who want to undertake a PhD, as well as current PhD students.
 - (b) Explores careers options post-PhD
 - (c) Offers guidance with PhD applications
- (Q.19) **Mock Interview (50 minutes)**
- Appointments to gain coaching and support with interviews and assessment centres
- (Q.20) **Business Coaching (30 minutes)**
- One-to-one guidance to help students explore options in business start-up and self-employment and help students get their ideas started
- (Q.21) **Mock Assessment Centre (2 hours)**
- In groups, students discuss a given assessment centre scenario and then present their suggestions/findings/solutions. Students receive individual and group feedback.
- (Q.22) **Workshops (Varying in length)**
- (a) Employer focused / employer facing (E.g. Employer in residence)
 - (b) Psychometric tests
 - (c) CV
 - (d) Interview Skills
- (Q.23) **Quick Queries (10 minutes)**
- Drop in sessions where students can ask any quick questions they might have that wouldn't require a full, regular appointment to answer.
-

This study takes its lead from Pearson, Schneer, De Vos, Van Der Jeiden, Steele & Premarajan (under peer-review). That international study investigates the relationship between proactive personality (PP) and careers competence (CC) in the latter's specific terms of self-knowledge, network and planning, the mediating role of protean career orientation (PCO) on CC, and the impact of cultural values on career development. Pearson et al. find that PP is positively correlated with CC regarding the three CC behaviours investigated. It supports earlier research (Kuijpers & Scheerens, 2006), that students must develop CCs before education-to-work transitions, and that HEIs have a role in actively supporting students' career agency by developing competencies to effectively compete in the job-market (e.g. Bridgstock 2009).

1.1.3 UoL-CDS: Assumptions and Enquiries

The author and CDS were interested in two particular questions for evaluation:

- (1) What factors motivate students to seek CDS's services and undertake the CSIs?
- (2) How satisfied were students with the CSIs they undertook?

CDS also asked two further questions: (a) how much part is played by 'personality factors', and (b) whether ultimately there should be a policy change, such that CSIs be infused into the curriculum in every department. Of course "(b)" is beyond the scope of this study. However, the need for 'employability' oriented curricula is already argued in several studies (e.g. Creasey, 2013; Knight & Yorke, 2003; Pearson et al., (under peer-review); Rae, 2007; Scott et al. 2017; Tymon, 2013; Yorke & Knight, 2006).

1.2 Research Questions

The two main questions above became the focus for this study.

RQ1: What factors motivate students to undertake CSIs?

This represented the research angle. Pearson et al. (under peer-review) find that PP is positively correlated with CC (in terms of self-knowledge, networking and planning). Since PP “(a) significantly influenced the success of college graduates’ job search, (b) was partially mediated through job search self-efficacy and job search behavior, and (c) was independent of self-esteem and conscientiousness” (Brown, Cober, Kane, Levy & Shalhoop, 2006, p.717), it was hypothesised that: (1) students with high career-attitude scores will conduct more job-search activities. Consistent with this proactivity, it was also hypothesised that (2) students with high PP will undertake more CSIs. These two hypotheses identify a gap in the literature.

RQ2: How highly do participants of CSIs rate their satisfaction of the individual CSIs?

This represented the service-evaluation exercise.

2. Method

2.1 Design

This was a “convergent parallel mixed methods design” (Cresswell, 2014, pp.219-220). Quantitative data were collected principally from the scales used for RQ1 and RQ2. Qualitative data were collected from two sources: the open-ended question for each CSI evaluation – (a) “Please say why you gave the score(s) for the Initiative(s) you undertook.” and (b) the short answers to Q.26 and Q.27 in the questionnaire used (see Section 2.3). Both data-types were then collated to give richer information for the research questions.

2.2 Measures

Five career-attitude scales and one job-search scale were used, as follows:

2.2.1 Career competence (CC)

This 16-item inventory (Francis-Smythe, Haase, Thomas & Steele, 2012) was used by Pearson et al. (2015, pp.19-21) and Pearson et al. (under peer-review) to ask participants to agree with statements like: “I network with people who hold important positions” on a five-point Likert-scale (1 = Strongly disagree ⇔ 5 = Strongly agree).

2.2.2 Proactive personality (PP)

The 10-item inventory (Bateman & Crant, 1993) was used by Pearson et al. (2015) and Pearson et al. (under peer-review) to ask participants to agree with statements like: “I excel at identifying opportunities” on a five-point Likert-scale (1 = Strongly disagree ⇔ 5 = Strongly agree).

2.2.3 Protean career attitudes – self-directed management (PCA-M)

This was one of two subscales from Briscoe, Hall and DeMuth (2006) which used the amended wording in Pearson et al. (2015) to reflect the fact that participants were students and not employees. It had 8 items like “I am responsible for my success or failure in my career” to which participants agreed on a five-point Likert-scale (1 = To little or no extent ⇔ 5 = To a great extent).

2.2.4 Protean career attitudes – values driven (PCA-V)

This was the other, 6-item, subscale from Briscoe, Hall & DeMuth (2006) which similarly used the amended wording in Pearson et al. (2015). Participants rated their agreement with statements like “I will navigate my own career, based on my personal, priorities, as opposed to my employer’s priorities” on a five-point Likert-scale (1 = To little or no extent ⇔ 5 = To a great extent).

2.2.5 Career expectations (CX)

This 14-item inventory (De Haw & De Vos, 2010) was used by Pearson et al. (2015) to ask participants to rate how important it was for them to e.g. “have a stable job” on a five-point Likert-scale (1 = Very unimportant ⇔ 5 = Very important).

2.2.6 Job Search Activities (JSA)

This 9-item inventory (Pearson et al., 2015) asked participants to inform how frequently they had conducted job-search related activities over the past six months, such as “Prepared/revised your CV/resumé” on a five-point Likert-scale (1 = Never ⇔ 5 =Very frequently).

JSA was included also because it reflected activities/behaviours rather than attitude/self-attributions, and was intended here to serve in a dependent-variable role or as a focus in a bivariate relationship. This roughly followed the method used by Stead, Shanahan and Neufeld (2010), who used two scales as predictor variables on a third.

2.2.7 Scales for Participant Evaluation of CSIs

Participants rated their satisfaction with the CSIs on a 10-point Likert-scale (1 = totally dissatisfied ⇔ 10 = totally satisfied) for each of the CSIs they had undertaken (See Appendix A. Participants also gave short answers to Qs. 26 and 27 (see below).

2.3 Materials

The author designed a questionnaire following examples on CDS’s Mock Interview feedback questionnaire. The former was approved by CDS, who undertook to promulgate it (See Appendix A). Two versions of this questionnaire, online and paper, were produced by the author (See Appendices A1 and A2).

The questionnaire sought to elicit:

- Basic details about the participant: gender, degree, expected graduation year etc;
- Basic demographic information: nationality, ethnicity, socioeconomic status when the student was 14 years-old (as in Pearson et al., 2015);
- Self-perceived attributes: ie how students would manage/progress their career when they would have one (CC), how proactive they were (PP), how they might navigate their career (PCA-M), what values would drive them (PCA-V), the importance they attached to various considerations regarding a career: e.g. staying with the same employer etc (CX);

- How busy they had been over the past six months in jobsearch-related activities over the last six months (JSA);
- Which of the 24 CSIs they had undertaken, and how satisfied they were with each.

Additionally two questions (Q.26 and Q.27) asked about their strengths and preparedness for transition, as follows:

- (Q.26) “What do you consider to be your greatest strength that will help you get a job or start a business or undertake further studies?”
- (Q.27) “Is there anything you feel unprepared for, in terms of getting a job, starting a business or undertaking further studies?”

2.4 Procedure

The online questionnaire was hosted on UoL Online Surveys (OS). Y1 and Y2 psychology students at UoL are required to complete a number of surveys via the Experimental Participation Requirement (EPR) website, for which they receive ‘credits’. A hyperlink was set up there to lead Y1/Y2 students to the OS website address hosting the questionnaire. As Y3s and postgraduates are not required to undertake EPR, they and other students outside the school of psychology would be invited to access the OS website directly. CDS undertook to alert students to the survey through their own advertising. CDS also gave paper-version to students who presented themselves at their offices, to be completed in the waiting room.

At the suggestion of CDS an advertising poster was designed by the author to be hosted on the Students Union noticeboard, for alerting students to undertake the CSIs before participating in the survey. Unfortunately, in the event, CDS could not fulfil this due to changes in their advertising protocol, and the poster was accordingly amended to absolve CDS of any ‘advertising’ in connection with this study.

2.5 Participants

Targeted participants were students within two years of completing their undergraduate or postgraduate degrees. The assumption was that these students would

be thinking about transition from university to work. All would be UoL students in any department.

Altogether 96 students signed up, all via the EPR platform, but only 63 completed the survey.

3. Results

3.1 Response

The 63 students who participated were exclusively psychology students from Y1 and Y2 and one from Y3 (mean age 18.27 years, age range 2 years, SD 0.48). Of these 32 (hereon ‘Takers’) completed one or more of the 24 CSIs – see Table C2).

Table C2: Participation-Frequencies

Participants who:	Total	Year 1		Year 2 + Year 3	
Completed survey	63	47	75%	15 + 1	25%
Females	53	39	74%	14 + 0	26%
Males	10	8	80 %	1 + 1	20%
Completed/evaluated CSIs	32	23	72%	8 + 1	28%
Provided additional qualitative information (Q26 & 27)	62	53	85%	8 + 1	15%

3.1.1 RQ1: How highly do participants of CSIs rate their satisfaction of the individual CSIs?

All 24 CSIs were undertaken in various combinations by the ‘Takers’, representing 50.7% of all participants. Table C3 show how the CSIs are ranked from most- to least participated:

Table C3: CSIs in rank-order of most to least numerous participations

Rank order by participation rate	n	%n	rank
Q16. Application Coaching Appointments (a) CV	26	81	1
Q16. Application Coaching Appointments (d) Personal Statement	25	78	2=
Q17. Career Coaching Appointments (h) Exploring further study options	25	78	2=
Q17. Career Coaching Appointments (g) How to gain experience and make the most of university	24	75	4
Q23. Drop in's	22	69	5
Q17. Career Coaching Appointments (f) Assessing what career paths are open to students	21	66	6=
Q16. Application Coaching Appointments (c) Covering letter	21	66	6=
Q16. Application Coaching Appointments (b) Application Form	20	63	8=
Q22. Workshops (c) CV	20	63	8=
Q17. Career Coaching Appointments (e) Exploring post-university options	19	59	10=
Q17. Career Coaching Appointments (a) Initial support	19	59	10=
Q17. Career Coaching Appointments (d) Reflecting on previous interviews or assessment centres	17	53	12
Q17. Career Coaching Appointments (c) Psychometric Test support	16	50	13
Q17. Career Coaching Appointments (b) Assessment Centre support	15	47	14=
Q22. Workshops (Interview skills)	15	47	14=
Q16. Application Coaching Appointments (e) LinkedIn	14	44	16
Q22. Workshops (b) Psychometric tests	13	41	17
Q22. Workshops (a) Employer focused, employer facing	12	38	18
Q19. Mock interview coaching	11	34	19=
Q21. Mock Assessments	11	34	19=
Q18. PhD Careers Guidance (a) Aspiring or current PhD students	10	31	21=
Q18. PhD Careers Guidance (d) Exploring career options post-PhD	10	31	21=
Q18. PhD Careers Guidance (c) Guidance with PhD applications	10	31	21=
Q20. Business start-up coaching	9	28	24

Colour-codes

Application Coaching Appointments (Q16)	Business Coaching (Q20)
Career Coaching appointments (Q17)	Mock Assessment Centre (Q21)
PhD Careers Guidance (Q18)	Workshops (Q22)
Mock Interview (Q19)	Quick queries (Q23)

There was a general pattern that certain categories had higher participation-rates. All of the CSIs aimed at job-applications are within the top one-third, while all the PhD-CSIs and half the workshop-CSIs were within the bottom third. The career-specific coaching CSIs (except business start-up) occupy the middle or upper-half. Given that Takers are mainly Y1s, the least taken-up (PhDs, business start-up) CSIs might have seemed least relevant, as such high aspirations must presently seem very distant for Y1s!

Below, Table C4 shows how students rated how satisfied they were with the discrete CSIs:

Table C4: Taker-satisfaction of CSIs ranked by high to low means

Discrete campus-specific initiatives	Mean rating	SE	SD	Min rating	Max rating	Range	I Q R	Median rating	Highest ratings	Most participated
Q16. Application Coaching Appointments (b) Application Form	7.40	.40	1.74	4	10	6	4	8	1 st	8 th =
Q16. Application Coaching Appointments (d) Personal Statement	7.24	.43	2.13	2	10	8	3	8	2 nd	2 nd =
Q16. Application Coaching Appointments (a) CV	7.15	.43	2.20	3	10	7	4	8	3 rd	1 st
Q17. Career Coaching Appointments (e) Exploring post-university options	6.84	.35	1.54	4	10	6	2	7	4 th	10 th =
Q17. Career Coaching Appointments (f) Assessing what career paths are open to students	6.76	.37	1.70	3	10	7	3	7	5 th	6 th =
Q17. Career Coaching Appointments (h) Exploring further study options	6.64	.43	2.16	2	10	8	4	6	6 th	2 nd =
Q17. Career Coaching Appointments (g) How to gain experience and make the most of university	6.54	.39	1.91	4	10	6	3	6	7 th	4 th
Q17. Career Coaching Appointments (a) Initial support	6.53	.37	1.61	3	10	7	3	6	8 th	10 th =
Q22. Workshops (b) Psychometric tests	6.25	.66	2.30	4	10	6	4	5	9 th	18 th
Q16. Application Coaching Appointments (c) Covering Letter	6.24	.51	2.27	2	10	8	4	7	10 th	6 th =^
Q16. Application Coaching Appointments (e) LinkedIn	6.15	.44	1.57	3	9	6	3	6	11 th	17 th
Q17. Career Coaching Appointments (d) Reflecting on previous interviews or assessment centres	6.06	.44	1.82	3	9	6	3	7	12 th	12 th
Q23. Drop in's	6.05	.50	2.34	1	10	9	3	6	23 th	5 th
Q17. Career Coaching Appointments (b) Assessment Centre support	5.80	.55	2.11	3	10	7	4	5	14 th	14 th =
Q18. PhD Careers Guidance (a) Aspiring or current PhD students	5.70	.84	2.67	2	9	7	6	6	15 th	21 st =
Q22. Workshops (c) CV	5.70	.56	2.51	3	10	7	5	5	16 th	8 th =
Q17. Career Coaching Appointments (c) Psychometric Test support	5.69	.64	2.55	1	10	9	4	5	17 th	13 th
Q18. PhD Careers Guidance (b) Exploring careers options post-PhD	5.60	.81	2.54	2	9	7	5	6	18 th	21 st =
Q22. Workshops (d) Interview Skills	5.53	.66	2.56	3	10	7	4	5	19 th	14 th =
Q18. PhD Careers Guidance (c) Guidance with PhD applications	5.40	.88	2.80	2	9	7	6	5	20 th	21 st =
Q22. Workshops (a) Employer focused, employer facing	5.21	.55	2.05	3	10	7	2	4	21 st	16 th
Q19. Mock interview coaching	5.09	.50	1.64	3	8	5	3	5	22 nd	19 th =
Q21. Mock Assessments	5.09	.46	1.51	2	7	5	2	5	23 rd	19 th =
Q20. Business start-up coaching	4.44	.69	1.94	2	8	6	3	4	24 th	24 th

The top-half is dominated by the job-application- and career-coaching categories. Of particular interest is Q.17(e) “Exploring post-university options”. This came equal-10th position for take-up rate but was 4th highest for satisfaction and with the smallest IQR. This may suggest that ‘Takers’ gained more than they expected, but this would need to be reviewed by a future substantive dataset.

Among the 24 CSIs, the six most highly-rated (top-quarter) were:- writing: personal statements, application-forms and CVs, and exploring: post-graduation options, appropriate career-paths and further studies. The six least highly-rated were the workshops in developing interview skills and real-life employer-employee scenarios; also mock one-to-one interviews and mock assessments (i.e. face-to-face/role-play). Coaching in business start-ups and PhD application-guidance also fell within this bottom-quarter. It is interesting that the least popular by far was the business-start-up (entrepreneurialship) coaching; bottom in terms of both take-up and satisfaction (See Discussion).

3.2 Quantitative Results

The five career-attitude/personal-attribute scales and one job-search activity scale all yielded high Cronbach *alpha* values, thus offering some confidence for the hypotheses to be tested (see Table C5).

Table C5: Reliability and Scale Statistics

	<i>Cronbach's α</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Items</i>
CC	.914	57.86	9.16	16
PP	.842	36.24	5.50	10
PCA-M	.816	31.17	4.37	8
PCA-V	.779	22.38	3.59	6
CX	.798	51.62	5.53	13
JSA	.936	27.06	9.09	9

As the data did not meet parametric assumptions (see Coolican 2014), Spearman's *rho* was chosen to show the relationships for both H1 and H2.

3.2.1 Students with high career-attitude scores will conduct more job-search activities.

There was a positive, statistically significant relationship between students with high PP and JSA: $r(63) = 0.34, p=0.01$ (2-tailed). Those with high PP conducted more job-search activities. A statistically significant relationship also transpired between PP and PCA-M: $r(63) = 0.66, p=0.01$ (2-tail); between PP and PCA-V: $r(63) = 0.35, p=0.01$ (2-tailed); between PP and CC: $r(63) = 0.65, p=0.01$ (2-tailed). This suggested that students with high PP also have high PCAs whether their PCAs were perceivably well-managed or value-driven. There was also a statistically significant relationship between high PP and CC: $r(63) = 0.65, p=0.01$ (2-tailed), and also between high PP and CX: $r(63) = 0.41, p=0.01$ (2-tailed). This suggested that students with high PP also had high CCs and CXs. However, the rest of the correlations between the attitude-scales and JSA were not significant – see Table C6.

Table C6: Correlations (rho) between the six scales

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. CC						
2. PP	0.65**					
3. PCA-M	0.46**	0.66**				
4. PCA-V	0.29*	0.35**	0.47**			
5. CX	0.31*	0.41**	0.41**	0.23		
6. JSA	0.22	0.34**	0.21	0.17	0.10	

**significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Thus the hypothesis could be supported in that students with high PP would tend to conduct more JSAs.

3.2.2 Students with high PP will take part in more CSIs.

There was a weak, positive, statistically significant relationship between students with high PP scores and the number of CSIs completed: $r(62) = 0.275$, $p=0.015$. Thus the hypothesis could be supported. However the weakness of the relationship raises further questions (see Discussion).

3.3 Qualitative Results

Qualitative data were collected from questions asking participants to give more information about the CSI(s) they had undertaken, and from Q.26 and Q.27.

3.3.1 Elaborative answers

Though the questionnaire asked 'Takers' to comment on their satisfaction scores, very few narratives transpired. However what transpired was positive (see Table C6).

Table C7: ‘Taker’ Feedback

<i>CSIs undertaken (ref Table C1)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Taker ID #</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Year</i>
Q16. (a)(d)	Both appointments' outcomes were really good, they helped me to achieve what I wanted.	07	F	1
Q16. (a)(b)(c)(d)	The personal statement gave an insight to my actual life, the other things looked at employment history more.	49	F	1
Q16. (all)	They helped in order to get a job.	54	F	1
Q17. (f)(g)(h)	Been given some insight into some of these factors	40	F	1

It is not possible to be clear whether the comments related to the popularity of these CSIs (i.e. Qs 16 and 17) or the leading position in which they appeared in this section of the questionnaire.

3.3.2 Answers to Q.26 and Q.27

(Q.26) What do you consider to be your greatest strength that will help you get a job or start a business or undertake further studies?

(Q.27) Is there anything you feel unprepared for, in terms of getting a job, starting a business or undertaking further studies?

Sixty-two participants gave short answers. These raised the question about the readiness of students for the university-work transition (see: e.g. Bridgstock, 2009; Keogh, Maguire & O'Donoghue, 2015; Wendlandt & Rochlen, 2008). Thematic analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was chosen to organise the findings. As there was no pre-constructed hypothesis, the analysis was data-driven rather than theory-driven, as the data were generated by questions intended primarily for evaluation, not research. However, links to ‘planned happenstance’ career theory (Krumboltz, 2009, 2015) were observed while analysing.

TA promotes a six-stage analytic process: data-familiarisation, initial coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes for levels, defining/naming the themes and writing the report (see Table C8):

Table C8: Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

(reproduced from Clarke and Braun (2006, p.8)

Accordingly, as can be seen in the thematic map below, five main themes (ovals) are identified, under which 24 sub-themes (rounded-corner rectangles) are grouped. Furthermore, 11 sub-subthemes (right-angled-corner rectangles) were identified under four of the 24 subthemes. Green-boxed subthemes are positive, pink-boxed subthemes are negative. Red arrows are used to refer sub-subthemes and the 'shyness/reservedness' subtheme towards the "skills to manage change" main-theme, where intervention could turn those needs into strengths (see Figure C1).

Figure C1: Thematic map of students' readiness factors for university-to-work transitions

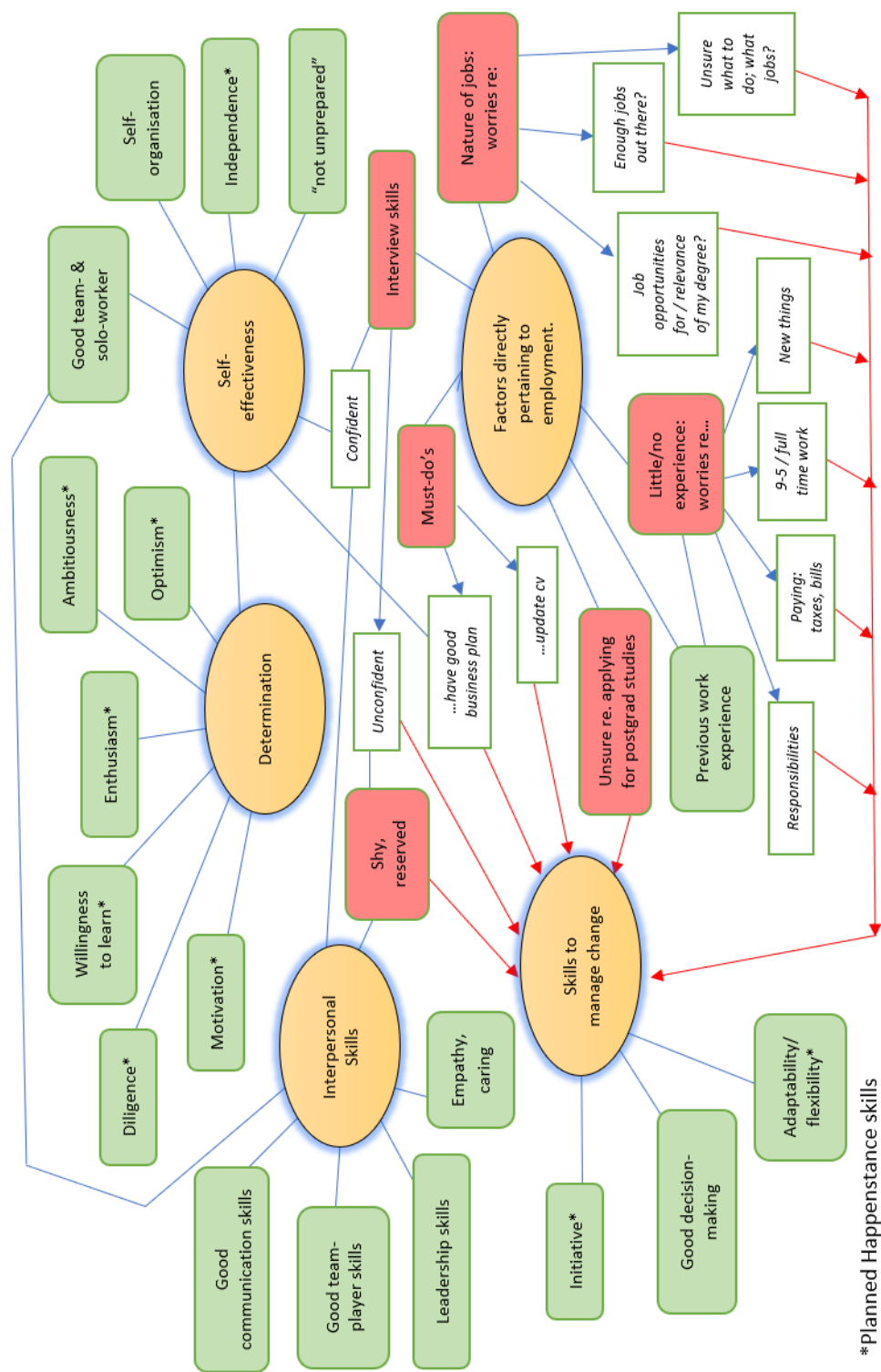


Figure C1: Thematic map of students' readiness factors for university-to-work transitions

Interpersonal Skills

Four of the five subthemes convey confidence. Broadly speaking the students prided themselves with positive attributes, and teamwork- and leadership skills were numerous self-attributed. ‘Good communication skills’ was most highlighted, as was ‘empathy’ and ‘caring’. However, two participants (P-61 and P-63) admitted their shyness/reservedness, which made them anxious about interviews and their own resilience, even though they had empathy and good communication-skills. Thus, resilience in the social context would play a significant part in underpinning interpersonal skills.

Shyness/reservedness, not only in interview-context, could be referred for career-coaching, because confidence would be needed as a ‘skill to manage change’. For instance, P-63 said she was “reserved not determined, so small setbacks will dishearten me”.

Skills to manage change

The three subthemes suggest that the students felt able to manage change for working/adult life. Two subthemes, ‘adaptability/flexibility’ and arguably ‘initiative’, are also ‘planned happenstance’ career (PH) skills/qualities (Krumboltz, 2009, 2015) (marked* in Figure C1), which are: ‘curiosity’, to explore opportunities and learn; ‘persistence’, for achieving one’s goals; ‘flexibility’, to adapt to changing fortunes; ‘optimism’, and ‘willingness to take risks’, taking action beyond one’s comfort-zones.

‘Initiative’ is arguably a ‘willingness to take risks’; for instance, P-26 said that though she already possessed “motivation and dedication” she took a gap-year to take an extra A-Level to raise her chances of securing a place at UoL – a risk, albeit with odds of winning.

‘Good-decision making’, i.e. making the right ones, would require careful thought, planning and understanding of the issues involved. For instance, P-07 and P-50 considered they had good analytical skills, among other qualities, e.g. determination, positive-thinking), and both were confident about their next steps post-graduation (further studies, work in which the degree would be relevant).

Determination

All six subthemes are positive attributes; indeed, they also happen to resonate with the first three of the five PH skills/qualities (Krumboltz, 2009, 2015).

The PH skill ‘curiosity’ may be tokenised by ‘willingness to learn’. This was self-attributed by students who also mentioned enthusiasm, keenness to improve/learn, resilience and passion. For instance, P-37 considered she was “always willing to improve” and able to “offer something different”, arguably suggesting innovativeness arising from inquisitiveness.

‘Persistence’ may be tokenised by ‘motivation’, ‘diligence’, ‘enthusiasm’ and ‘ambitiousness’. Motivation was self-attributed by 11 students as a ‘greatest strength’. Three students cited motivation and diligence together, and diligence alone was cited by seven students. For instance, P-02 considers herself a “fast, keen and resilient learner”.

‘Optimism’ was cited by one student, who also said she had “ability to co-operate with others” (P-41). It is also identifiable where students felt “not unprepared” for the future .

Self-effectiveness

‘Self-effectiveness’ is related to ‘determination’, but is discrete in that it tokenises action/behaviour rather than attitude. Being a good team-worker or team-leader is also an ‘interpersonal skill’. Indeed, ‘good team- and solo-worker’ is by far the most stated self-attribute – by 13 students. Interspersed among those statements are also seven statements highlighting the importance of ‘good communication skills’ – hence why this subtheme is linked to the ‘interpersonal skills’ theme.

Good ‘self-organisation’ was mentioned alongside effective time-management and drive. ‘Independence’ was cited as a good skill too, as it alluded to managing working effectively whether in-team or individually. While arguably optimistic, being ‘not unprepared’ is also consistent with self-efficacy in that students felt their good team-skills and communication-skills would see them through future challenges.

Factors directly pertaining to employment

This is the most complex of the themes, not least having the most subthemes and sub-subthemes. Five of the six subthemes identified are negatives.

There were anxieties about ‘the future of jobs’, as to whether there would be ‘enough jobs’ to go round, or generally unsure ‘what jobs to do’. The students realised the need to ‘update their CV’ or devise a good ‘business plan’, implying that their CVs/business-plan if they had them were inadequate.

‘Little or no work-experience’ produced four sub-subthemes. ‘Responsibilities’ as working-adults would induce a set of new commitments, social and economic. There would be obligations about ‘paying’ taxes and other living expenses. The regular routine of working ‘9-till-5 fulltime’ was also daunting, as were ‘new things’ of which the students had little experience, such as “adapting to the new demands of the company environment” (P-36), or “touching with new things or experience” (P-32), i.e. the fear of the unknown. Conversely ‘previous work experience’ was felt useful in preparing somewhat for the world of work, involving being paid and paying out. This is the only positive subtheme here.

Where ‘interview skills’ were ‘confident’ this would be linked to ‘self-effectiveness’ in particular regard to it being linked further to the ‘interpersonal skills’ theme. Where ‘interview skills’ were ‘unconfident’, this was related to shyness, and as such is a skill-deficit that would need to be referred for intervention towards ‘skills at managing change’. For instance, P-61 admitted to being “unprepared” for interviews “because I can be quite shy”.

Expressions rather than visions of anxiety/insecurity were more numerous. The students valued work-experience, personal-experience and good interview skills, but were generally unsure about “how to make the jump from uni to a job” (P-21). Similarly, P-26 felt she would “struggle with presenting myself at a highly professional level and communicating with professionals” in her work-area, even though she felt that one of her greatest strengths was “motivation and dedication to do whatever it takes to succeed”.

Overall this theme has a preponderance of insecurity-prone subthemes, and is also the only theme which generated sub-subthemes, which all imply deficits. The complexity of this theme is further heightened by several links to other themes and subthemes. As such, this theme is the one that presents the most opportunities for CDS to scrutinise the issues in order to develop interventions for helping students turn deficits (almost all the sub-subthemes) into ‘skills to manage change’ as students proceed in their transition from university to work.

3.3.3 Conclusions of the thematic analysis

Though the students considered they had a multitude of skills, they were worried/anxious about the prospects of actually finding work upon graduation. This highlights the importance of experience, and the gap between knowledge-capital and human-capital (see: Knight & Yorke, 2003; Leach, 2015, Schoon & Silbereisen, 2009a, 2009b) and the need for early ‘organisational socialisation’ (Wendlandt & Rochlen, 2008).

It is concerning that so much uncertainty about university-to-work transition transpired in this analysis. There is an obvious need for students to access CSIs for navigating the transition-divide, highlighting the argument that academic curricula should perhaps play a stronger part in addressing those uncertainties. Rae (2007) identifies eight “personal skills” (p.614) that can be taught within the curriculum, as follows:

- Personal organisation and time management;
- Self-confidence and self-efficacy;
- Personal budgeting and financial literacy;
- Finding opportunities and taking the initiative to act on opportunities;
- Creative thinking and problem solving;
- Being able to take decisions and accept risks in conditions of uncertainty;
- Planning, setting goals and persevering to achieve goals; and
- Working independently; taking responsibility for achieving results.

Of course, Rae's model is much more complex than this. However, it is interesting to note the congruence between his observations above and the skills-and-deficits sets of the participants.

4. Discussion

This study has been conducted in joint agreement between the researcher and the UoL-CDS. Its aim was two-fold as represented by the research-questions: (a) to investigate personality factors motivating students to seek career-development services offered by their university's Career Development Service (CDS) and conduct career-related activities, and (b) to evaluate the students' feedback about the campus-specific initiatives (CSIs) they had undertaken.

4.1 Response

Though the target participants were all fulltime UoL students within two years of completing their degrees, data transpired only from Y1 and Y2 plus one Y3 psychology students. No-one responded via the paper-version nor the OS-platform-version of the questionnaire – all responses came via EPR. CDS informed that those who presented themselves for CSIs and were offered the paper-questionnaire said they would rather do it online.

From the limited data, it has not been possible to draw substantive conclusions. For instance, unlike the Stead et al. (2010) study, it was not appropriate to conduct more elucidating analyses (e.g. canonical correlation analysis (CCA) (see Cohen 2016, Field 2005), or ANOVAs, regressions etc), as the researcher was conscious to avoid incurring Type-1 or Type-2 errors (see Coolican, 2014, 2019).

4.2 RQ1: Hypotheses

The research found statistically significant positive correlations in H1 and H2 between students with high PP and undertaking more CSIs and JSAs. It would make sense that PP, being a stable trait (see Brown et al., 2005), would positively influence other career-attitudes and career-related activities. However, it is a little surprising that

less than strong relationships transpired. Following Pearson et al. (under peer-review), there would probably be a need to develop CCs (i.e. self-knowledge, network and planning), all of which are indicated in the range of CSIs on offer. The question would be how to attract students to undertake them, especially if it were not compulsory to do so. From the present data CC has significant positive correlations with all the other attitude scales but not significantly with JSA. This is somewhat surprising given that from the narratives students appeared to attribute themselves with high self-esteem, which plays an important role in producing positive outcomes related to job-search activities (Ellis & Taylor 1983). Here this has simply not translated into motivated JSAs.

4.3 RQ2: Students' Evaluation of CSIs

This offered some insights into Takers' experience and levels of satisfaction regarding the CSIs. However, there were insufficient data to explore whether take-up rates tokenised preference or that the more-participated CSIs were better-known ones. Shifts in ranking positions between take-up rate and satisfaction rate could be important, because if more students take a CSI because they feel it is important, and then rank it low in satisfaction, this could suggest that they were disappointed with the outcome. However, if more students take a CSI because it is the first on the list, their expectations of the CSI might not be high in the first place, as they might only be interested in getting the EPR-credits.

By all accounts it appears that the students taking more CSIs, i.e. those with high PP, may be the ones who *ipso facto* need them least, while those that need them most (e.g. the “shy” ones) need to be motivated and/or preliminarily coached to take the most appropriate CSIs. This then would have implications for CDS practice, i.e. how to attract the students who need CDS services most, and how to match those needs with the most appropriate CSIs.

That almost exclusively Y1s and Y2s participated may explain why employment/business coaching CSIs were worst rated, given that in Yr1/Yr2 employment or entrepreneurialship must seem such a long way off, and currently not top-priority. This was tokenised by one Taker who wrote in response to the free-answer

part of the first CSI (Q.16): “Only in first year so we have not looked into this as of yet”.

4.4 Qualitative Data

While not robust enough to draw any strong conclusions, anxiousness was found even among ‘Takers’. This is consistent with prior career research (eg Polach 2004; Wendlandt & Rochlen 2008), and raises the question again whether the CSIs taken were the ones most appropriate for each ‘Taker’. TA was able to inform that despite positive career-attitudes there was much uncertainty and anxiety within most of the students themselves. Muñiz and Eimerbrink (2018) note such disparities as “variables contributing to low career readiness [...] which can result in several negative effects for students”. Poor awareness of CDS and its services would lead to confusion about what CSIs to take and/or unrealistically high expectations about an ideal career (see also Wendlandt & Rochlen 2008), which can impact on students’ career decisions.

There is evidence here that students (Y1/Y2) were not giving enough priority to those services. As Tymon (2013) notes, Y1 and Y2 students generally do not engage with the concept of ‘employability’. A couple of participants here did not know what career opportunities were open to psychology graduates. Such low awareness could have longer term consequences. For instance, Neneh’s (2019) study of South African university-students notes that entrepreneurial alertness (EA) is only the first step on a complex journey via entrepreneurial intentions (EI) to entrepreneurial behaviour (EB). And along the way, EA is mediated by competitiveness to influence EI, which is its turn is mediated by PP to influence EB. Little wonder then that there was so much uncertainty among the participants here despite their self-assuredness.

Muñiz and Eimerbrink (2018) indicate a crucial need for “career readiness programs” (CRED) (p.114), which have been arising since the 1990s. They identify a three-stage model of ‘organisational socialisation’: “anticipation”, “adjustment” and “achievement” (see pp.157-158), arguing that since organisational socialisation is likely to begin before graduation, career-development services should be involved at the ‘anticipation’ stage, by focusing on:

(a) providing students with accurate information regarding employment during anticipation, (b) ensuring that students develop the skills required for successful adjustment, and (c) supporting students in coping with the process of change to aid movement toward achievement (p.159).

Muñiz and Eimerbrink (2018) take this further. One of their emphases is the centrality of experiential learning/development. Infusion into the curriculum is also implied (Pearson et al.: under peer-review). For instance, the HEI's "active role" in developing CCs should be sophisticated enough to be "beyond functional, job-related competencies" but also without loss of "academic rigour" (p.33). However, it has been argued earlier by Rae (2007) that undertakings like this place such demands on HEIs in ensuring high standards in co-ordinated/integrated academic and career-oriented curricula that it is questioned whether HEIs should be the place to provide the latter. However, Rae (2008) himself suggests ways whereby this can be achieved, highlighting among other things: students actively taking the initiative, the value of workplace learning (vis-à-vis early organisational socialisation) etc. He also argues against the vocationalisation of non-vocational degrees (vis-à-vis 'academic rigour' above), but that there should be opportunities for students to convert their degrees or add on modules to enhance their employability prospects.

4.6 Conclusion

The research component of this study found that PP has significant positive relationships to varying degrees with JSA as well as the career attitudes (CC, PCM, CX). Hence students with high PP would be more active in conducting career-related activities, which includes undertaking more CSIs. However, students with lower PP may be the ones who would need to do more CSIs, and be incentivised to do so.

The service evaluation component found that the more highly rated CSIs were those activities related to getting a job, while the less highly rated were those that involved entrepreneurialship or PhDs.

From the qualitative data, it transpired that there was generally poor awareness of the services offered by CDS. More specifically there was even less awareness of the discrete CSIs on offer. Overall the students' self-attributions of positive skills for the

workplace were contrasted by their anxiousness/unpreparedness for actual university-to-work transition. While low-career readiness has been investigated (Muñiz & Eimerbrink, 2018; Neneh, 2019) and organisational socialisation has been recommended (Wendlandt & Rochlen, 2008) there appears to be a gap in the literature specifically conceptualising and addressing the anxiety/unreadiness of students facing university-to-work transitions, the final leap into adult-independence. Yet coaching psychology has a rich array of positive psychology approaches to address this (e.g. Grant and Palmer, 2018).

4.7 Taking it forward (recommendations)

At a systemic level the ‘organisational socialisation’ model for education-to-work transitions (Muñiz & Eimerbrink, 2018; Polach 2004) could address the above. This would have implications for both academics and career-counsellors in perhaps an enhanced form of CRED, as Muñiz and Eimerbrink (2018) argue that the process begins before transition. Experiential learning is also indicated in the model. They also recommend in-situ familiarisation of workplace practices, and this should be multi-event. This would resonate with Kolb’s experiential learning theory, which places experience as central to learning, as in Sims’s (1983) model of person-job learning-interfaces.

At an individual or group level, a proactive intervention could be based on Planned Happenstance principles (Krumboltz, 2009, 2015; Mitchell et al., 1999). There are four tenets: (a) that since it is impossible to predict the future in this changeable social and business world, people should be helped/counselled to take action for achieving satisfying personal- and career-lives rather than make single-career decisions; (b) assessment should help clients/coaches develop critical decision-making about careers rather than fit a person into a career; (c) clients/coachees should actively explore ways of producing beneficial unplanned events; (d) the success of career-coaching/counselling is reified in the real world outside the coaching/counselling sessions. In the life-design career-model (Savickas et al., 2009; Nota & Rossier, 2015) it is argued that preparation for adulthood and work/career should begin from childhood (Hartung, 2015) through the 16-25 age -range (Masdonati & Fournier, 2015).

Thus it may make a good fit with PH, while developing the five essential PH skills: curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism and willing to take risks (Krumboltz, 2009, 2015).

Further research is recommended. For instance, a focus group could collate direct and candid views from students who have completed CSIs, with a positive view to develop/enhance the CSIs, and to refine questions for further research. Further research or a replication could include the Planned Happenstance Career Inventory (Kim,...Lee, et al, 2014; Lee,... Lee et al., 2017) as an extra scale.

For practice, CSIs could include coaching programmes, probably based on the GROW model (Passmore 2018, Whitmore 2009,), and possibly combined with PH (see Neist, 2014). Such programmes could factor in the development of initiatives for ‘organisational socialisation’ (see Muñiz & Eimerbrink 2018; Sims 1983), and for augmenting the worst-rated but probably most appropriate CSIs – workshops, employer-interfacing etc (see Creasey, 2013; Scott et al., 2017).

4.8 Limitations

The limitations of this study are predicated by the small dataset (in quantitative terms). Thus the findings, analyses, conclusions and recommendations are subject to that caveat. Furthermore, the participants were not the target population (i.e. Y2s/Y3s and postgraduates in any department within two years of university-to-work transitions). Hence the evaluation of the CSIs could be reflecting the participants’ distanced positionings, which may partially explain why some career-imminent CSIs were so unpopular. A substantive dataset would have facilitated more sophisticated and reliable analyses.

4.9 Critical Appraisal

Critical reflections are reported in Part C of this thesis, as this report may be shared with CDS.

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Appendix A – Survey questionnaire – paper version)



“A Step Further”: An Evaluative Study of Campus-Specific Initiatives Offered by the University of Leicester’s Career Development Service

The University of Leicester’s Career Development Service offers you support to help you prepare for when you will be looking for employment, starting a business or further studies after your current course of study. These are coaching sessions which you would attend voluntarily. For convenience we will call them “Initiatives”.

This survey is being conducted by a doctoral research student in partnership with the Career Development Service. We are interested in students’ experiences and opinions about the initiatives, and want to investigate factors influencing their choices. Your anonymity will of course be assured, as neither the Career Development Service nor the researcher will have any means of identifying you. The survey should take between 10 and 15 minutes.

If you would like to participate *please give your consent below*. You may withdraw at any stage of this participation. (If you have already completed the online version of this survey please do not duplicate with this paper version.)

Please read the following statement carefully and sign below (initials will be fine) to give your consent.

CONSENT STATEMENT

- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw unconditionally at any time from taking part in this study.
- My data are to be held confidentially, and only the researcher, his associates and supervisor will have access to them.
- My data will be kept in a locked cabinet for a period of at least five years after the appearance of any associated publications. Any aggregate data (e.g. spreadsheets) will be kept in electronic form for up to five years after which time they will be deleted.
- In accordance with the requirements of some scientific journals and organisations, my coded data may be shared with other competent researchers. My coded data may also be used in other related studies. My name and other identifying details will not be shared with anyone.
- The overall findings may be submitted for publication in a scientific journal, or presented at scientific conferences.
- This study will take approximately 3 months to complete.
- I will be able to obtain general information about the results of this research from the researcher at their e-mail address pf70@le.ac.uk.
- I am giving my consent for data to be used for the outlined purposes of the present study. All questions that I have about the research have been satisfactorily answered.

(1) If you agree to participate please sign here to continue.

Thank you for participating in this voluntary survey. *Please help this study by answering the questions as honestly, truthfully and accurately as possible.* There are no right or wrong answers, nor any that would put you in a better or worse light.

ABOUT YOURSELF

(2) Your sex	(3) Your course	(4) Your degree or diploma	(5) Your completion year	(6) Your nationality
M/F/Prefer not to say		BA/Bsc/MA/MSc/PhD/Other	20	

(7) Which of the following broad ethnic groups do you consider describes you best?

White	Mixed/Multiple	Asian/Asian British	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	Other
If "Other" please briefly say what you consider your ethnicity to be.				

Please tick the closest matches to the occupations of the main and second income-earners of your household when you were 14 years of age.

	(8) Main earner	(9) Second earner	<i>Notes - Please use this space if you wish to be more specific. (Optional)</i>
(a) Professional			
(b) Managerial			
(c) Entrepreneur/Business Owner			
(d) Office/Clerical			
(e) Skilled worker			
(f) Semi-skilled worker			
(g) Unskilled worker			
(h) Homemaker			
(i) Not employed			
(j) Other, Not applicable - Please explain below			

If you put "Other" or "Not applicable" above, please explain briefly (eg, long-term sickness, foster-home, only one income-earner etc) in the "Notes - " box above.

YOUR PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

In the following tables please rate your agreement with each statement by circling your chosen value.

[CC-S] (10)

1=Strongly disagree. 2= Disagree. 3=Neither agree nor disagree. 4=Agree. 5=Strongly agree.					
(a) I know my strengths and weaknesses.	1	2	3	4	5
(b) I build contacts with people in areas where I would like to work.	1	2	3	4	5
(c) I have a clear idea of what my career goals are	1	2	3	4	5
(d) I know what jobs and careers interest me	1	2	3	4	5
(e) I network with people who can provide me with help or advice that will assist my career progression.	1	2	3	4	5
(f) I have a good understanding of my own personality.	1	2	3	4	5
(g) I seek to become acquainted with people who could influence my future career.	1	2	3	4	5
(h) I have a strategy for reaching my career goals.	1	2	3	4	5
(i) I know what tasks or projects interest me	1	2	3	4	5
(j) I seek career guidance from people with experience that is relevant to my career.	1	2	3	4	5
(k) I recognise what I can and what I can't do so well.	1	2	3	4	5
(l) I know what I need to do to reach my career goals	1	2	3	4	5
(m) I network with people who hold important positions.	1	2	3	4	5
(n) I know which features of jobs are personally interesting to me.	1	2	3	4	5
(o) I have a plan for my career.	1	2	3	4	5
(p) I know how my personality fits with my career choices	1	2	3	4	5

[PP] (11)

1=Strongly disagree. 2= Disagree. 3=Neither agree nor disagree. 4=Agree. 5=Strongly agree.					
(a) I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life.	1	2	3	4	5
(b) Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change.	1	2	3	4	5
(c) Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality.	1	2	3	4	5
(d) If I see something I don't like, I fix it.	1	2	3	4	5
(e) No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen.	1	2	3	4	5
(f) I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition.	1	2	3	4	5
(g) I excel at identifying opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
(h) I am always looking for better ways to do things.	1	2	3	4	5
(i) If I believe in an idea no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen.	1	2	3	4	5
(j) I can spot a good opportunity long before others can.	1	2	3	4	5

[PCA-M] (12)

1=To little or no extent. 2=To a limited extent. 3=To some extent. 4=To a considerable extent. 5=To a great extent.					
(a) When development opportunities are not offered by my company, I will search them out on my own.	1	2	3	4	5
(b) I am responsible for my success or failure in my career.	1	2	3	4	5
(c) Overall, I have/will have a very independent, self-directed career.	1	2	3	4	5
(d) Freedom to choose my own career path is one of my most important values.	1	2	3	4	5
(e) I am in charge of my own career.	1	2	3	4	5
(f) Ultimately, I depend upon myself to move my career forward.	1	2	3	4	5
(g) Where my career is concerned, I am very much "my own person."	1	2	3	4	5
(h) I will rely more on myself than others to find a new job when necessary.	1	2	3	4	5

[PCA-V] (13)

(a) I will navigate my own career, based on my personal priorities, as opposed to my employer's priorities.	1	2	3	4	5
(b) It doesn't matter much to me how other people evaluate the choices I make in my career.	1	2	3	4	5
(c) What's most important to me is how I feel about my career success, not how other people feel about it.	1	2	3	4	5
(d) I'll follow my own conscience if my company asks me to do something that goes against my values.	1	2	3	4	5

(e) What I think about what is right in my career is more important to me than what my company thinks.	1	2	3	4	5
(f) I will side with my own values when the company asks me to do something I don't agree with.	1	2	3	4	5

[CX]

(14) Think about your career expectations. How important is it to you...					
1=Very Unimportant. 2=Unimportant. 3=Neutral. 4=Important. 5=Very Important. (Please <u>circle</u> your value.)					
(a) ...to remain with the same employer for a long time.	1	2	3	4	5
(b) ...to have secure employment conditions.	1	2	3	4	5
(c) ...not to have to worry about the future.	1	2	3	4	5
(d) ...to have a stable job.	1	2	3	4	5
(e) ...to avoid employment insecurity.	1	2	3	4	5
(f) ...to have a regular income.	1	2	3	4	5
(g) ...to have easy access to training.	1	2	3	4	5
(h) ...to have challenging work.	1	2	3	4	5
(i) ...to regularly acquire new skills.	1	2	3	4	5
(j) ...to be able to change professions.	1	2	3	4	5
(k) ...to be able to regularly change jobs.	1	2	3	4	5
(l) ...to develop my full potential.	1	2	3	4	5
(m) ...to progress rapidly through the hierarchy.	1	2	3	4	5

[JSA]					
(15) How frequently have you done each of the following during the past 6 months?					
1=Never. 2=Rarely. 3=Occasionally. 4=Frequently. 5=Very frequently. (Please <u>circle</u> your value.)					
(a) Searched for job listings on recruitment sites.	1	2	3	4	5
(b) Prepared/revised your CV/resume .	1	2	3	4	5
(c) Talked with friends or relatives about possible job leads .	1	2	3	4	5

(d) Sent out CVs/resumes to potential employers .	1	2	3	4	5
(e) Read a book or article about how to get a job.	1	2	3	4	5
(f) Filled out a job application .	1	2	3	4	5
(g) Visited a company's employment website	1	2	3	4	5
(h) Posted a CV/resume on a professional website (e.g. LinkedIn) .	1	2	3	4	5
(i) Contacted a prospective employer.	1	2	3	4	5

THE CAMPUS-SPECIFIC INITIATIVES

In this section please rate your satisfaction with each of the Campus Specific Initiatives that you have undertaken (the approximate duration for each discrete Initiative is given in the heading brackets). Please answer all questions, and for each Initiative circle only one value, either “Not done this” or from “1” to “10” as follows:

1 = totally dissatisfied, 10 = totally satisfied, and 5 or 6 = relatively neutral.

Though you don't have to explain why you give that rating, saying just a few words about it will help us in our evaluation.

(16) Application Coaching Appointments (25 minutes)

(a) CV	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(b) Application Form	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(c) Covering Letter	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(d) Personal Statement	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(e) LinkedIn	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Please say why you gave the score(s) for the Initiative(s) you undertook. (Optional)

(17) Career Coaching Appointments (25 minutes)

(a) Initial support	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(b) Assessment Centre support	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

(c) Psychometric Test support	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(d) Reflecting on previous interviews or assessment centres	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(e) Exploring post-university options	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(f) Assessing what career paths are open to students	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(g) How to gain experience and make the most of university	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(h) Exploring further study options	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Please say why you gave the score(s) for the Initiative(s) you undertook. (Optional)											

(18) PhD Careers Guidance (Short=20 minutes, Long=30 minutes)

(a) General guidance/advice for students who want to undertake a PhD or current PhD students.	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(b) Exploring careers options post-PhD	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(c) Guidance with PhD applications	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Please say why you gave the score(s) for the Initiative(s) you undertook. (Optional)											
If you undertook this Initiative which session did you take?		Short		Long		Don't know					

(19) Mock Interview (50 minutes)

Coaching and support with interviews and assessment centres	Please say why you gave this score. (Optional)										
Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

(20) Business Coaching (30 minutes)

One-to-one guidance exploring options in business start-up and self-employment and help you get your ideas started	Please say why you gave this score. (Optional)										
Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

(21) Mock Assessment Centre (2 hours)

In groups, students discuss a given assessment centre scenario and then present their suggestions, findings and/or solutions. Students receive individual and group feedback.

Please say why you gave this score. (Optional)

Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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(22) Workshops (Varying lengths)

(a) Employer focused / employer facing (e.g. Employer in residence)	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(b) Psychometric tests	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(c) CV	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(d) Interview Skills	Not done this	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Please say why you gave the score(s) for the Initiative(s) you undertook (Optional)

SOME FINAL THINGS

Looking ahead

(23) What job(s) have you applied for? (If you haven't applied please say so, and it would be really helpful if you could say why not.)

(24) Have you got an offer of a job/internship/further studies? Yes / No

Please tell us a bit more if you like. (Optional)

(25) If "Yes" would you consider this to have long term career prospects? Yes / No / Maybe /Not applicable.

Please give a reason(s) for your answer.

Reflections

(26) What do you consider to be your greatest strength that will help you get a job or start a business or undertake further studies?

(27) Is there anything you feel unprepared for, in terms of getting a job, starting a business or undertaking further studies? Please explain briefly.

(28) Please give any other details or suggestions you feel would be helpful for this survey? (Optional)

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your contribution is most appreciated.

Good luck in all your future undertakings.

Please fold this questionnaire and put it in the sealed posting box provided.

Appendix B – Application for Ethical Clearance

Research Ethics Review Form

A checklist using the following sections and headings should be completed for every research project that involves human participants. **It must be completed before potential participants are approached to take part in any research.** It will be used by the tutor or lecturer to identify whether there is the need for fuller ethics approval or whether the research can proceed without this.

Section I: Project Details

Title of Project

"A Step Further": An Evaluation of Campus-Specific Interventions of the Leicester University Career Development Service

Introduction

This project forms Part C of the PsyD programme, where the student has to conduct a 6000 word evaluation study of an appropriate aspect of service delivery.

Purpose of the Study

To investigate factors influencing students' engagement with the Career Development Service's interventions in their final two years and the impact of this on their job search activities.

It is anticipated that the study through its advertisements and recruitment procedures will also promote awareness of campus-specific initiatives among a wider student population.

Rationale

The transition from full-time education into work can be a daunting time for students. While their degrees, especially vocational degrees, may equip them with knowledge and skills for specific job markets, competition for a job or vocation/career presents a separate challenge which demands a set of skills not usually taught in the curriculum. This is where a Career Development Service can provide the supplementary training.

This study will investigate the relationships between personal factors and job-search activities. The former will include personality and demographic factors.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are proposed:

- 1 Students with high proactive personality will have taken part in more campus based initiatives.
2. There will be a difference in levels of proactive personality based on socioeconomic status.

Proposed methods

The project will use a quantitative methodology to survey large samples for analysis for tendencies, variable-relationships and predictions. It will use the Bristol Online Survey (BOS) platform to host an online questionnaire, constructed to investigate personality- and socioeconomic factors of a broad range of Leicester University students across disciplines in their final two years of study. The survey will be anonymous and the researcher will have no means of identifying any of the participants.

The measures to be used are: proactive personality, career competencies, protean career attitudes, career expectations and job search activity.

Participants

Participants will be self-enrolling Leicester University students within two years of completing their current course of study from any discipline.

The Career Development Service (CDS) through their service promotion/advertising material will undertake to introduce a link to an online survey to students in their final 2 years across a range of academic programmes. Additionally the CDS will ask students attending their training activities to complete a paper version of the questionnaire. The CDS will make clear that this is the paper version of the online survey, and a caveat will be included that the student should not complete or have completed the online survey as well as the paper version. (The attached questionnaire is a paper version and the BOS online version will be cloned from this.)

In return a full report from the data gatherer will be made available to the Career Development Service which will hopefully help them infer where their reach is currently, assess some of the impact of their services and identify the current gaps in reach and service provision. The CDS liaison professionals will also have permission to view and sample ongoing and/or cumulative analyses (built into the BOS design).

A link will be available on the EPR platform to psychology students to participate in the online questionnaire. An EPR participant will gain two points.

All participants will be encouraged to use either the online or the paper questionnaire, not both.

All participation is voluntary and the participant approached may decline or withdraw without giving any reason. The identities of these participants will be protected by the anonymous nature of the online questionnaire/survey and the paper version.

Target number of participants

100-200

Gatekeeper's Agreement

Agreement in this project can be evidenced by the following (attached):

1. Email trail between Peter Farnbank (researcher) and the gatekeepers from the CDS ([redacted] assisted by [redacted])
2. Statement (attachment on the same email) from the gatekeepers setting out the areas (campus-based initiatives to be evaluation), the undertaking by the researcher to develop and furnish the questionnaire/survey, and their own undertaking to facilitate and assist in the research through promulgating same.

Section II: Applicant Details

Name of student: Peter Farnbank, MA Ed, MSc

Background: The researcher is a Chartered Educational Psychologist with twelve years of post-qualifying experience. He is also a qualified schoolteacher with 12 years of post-qualifying experience prior to his Educational Psychologist training. He also has 15 years of post-qualifying professional Educational Psychology experience. He has Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance and is statutorily regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

Email address: [withheld for privacy reasons]

Contact address: [withheld for privacy reasons]

Contact telephone number: [withheld for privacy reasons]

Section III: For Students Only

Course/module name and number: PsyD

Lecturer/module leader's name: Dr [redacted]

Appendix C – Ethics Committee Approval Letter



University Ethics Sub-Committee for Psychology

03/08/2018

Ethics Reference: 17746-pf70-ls:neuro',psych&behaviour,deptof

TO:

Name of Researcher Applicant: Peter Farnbank

Department: Psychology

Research Project Title: A Step Further: An Evaluation of Campus-Specific Interventions of the Leicester University Career Development Service

Dear Peter Farnbank,

RE: Ethics review of Research Study application

The University Ethics Sub-Committee for Psychology has reviewed and discussed the above application.

1. Ethical opinion

The Sub-Committee grants ethical approval to the above research project on the basis described in the application form and supporting documentation, subject to the conditions specified below.

2. Summary of ethics review discussion

The Committee noted the following issues:

All potential ethics issues have been addressed.

3. General conditions of the ethical approval

The ethics approval is subject to the following general conditions being met prior to the start of the project:

As the Principal Investigator, you are expected to deliver the research project in accordance with the University's policies and procedures, which includes the University's Research Code of Conduct and the University's Research Ethics Policy.

If relevant, management permission or approval (gate keeper role) must be obtained from host organisation prior to the start of the study at the site concerned.

4. Reporting requirements after ethical approval

You are expected to notify the Sub-Committee about:

- Significant amendments to the project
- Serious breaches of the protocol
- Annual progress reports
- Notifying the end of the study

5. Use of application information

Details from your ethics application will be stored on the University Ethics Online System. With your permission, the Sub-Committee may wish to use parts of the application in an anonymised format for training or sharing best practice. Please let me know if you do not want the application details to be used in this manner.

Best wishes for the success of this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. [REDACTED]

Chair

Appendix D (Mandatory) – Research Diary

Service evaluation study

2016, November	Preliminary reading for Part D: Service evaluation study – supervision etc
2018 – Jan – Jun	Discussions, emails with supervisor and Career Development Service – reading – note making for Introduction section
2018 – Jul 30 th	Ethical approval application
2018 – Aug 1 st -2 nd	Provisional ethical approval and revision
2018 – Aug 3 rd	Ethical approval granted
2018 – Aug 15 th	Survey launched on Leicester EPR and OS.
2018 – November	Commenced data analysis
2019 – June	Service evaluative study first draft completed

Part D: Critical Appraisal

‘Careering Off’ on the Road to Young Adult Independence: Can Positive Educational Psychology Help?

1. Introduction

Gillie Bolton (2003, 2009) (Bolton & Delderfield, 2018) entreats practitioners of all disciplines to regard reflection not only as an instrument of professional development but also to discover more about oneself personally – in effect to co-travel (Kvale, 2007) with oneself on that illuminating and promisingly enjoyable journey. Her encouragement (Bolton, 2009) to ‘write to learn’ can produce deeper understanding of:

- what you know but do not know you know
- what you do not know and want to know
- what you think, feel, believe, value, understand about your role and boundaries
- how your actions match up with what you believe
- how to value and take into account personal feelings
- what your assumptions or even prejudices are and how to address them (p. 752).

This resonates perfectly with my own philosophy, and in my winding journey along this doctorate, my cumulative reflections also invoked critical reflections on my own career-journey. This then is an account of the research experience and its overall impact on myself phenomenologically, written in a slightly informal style to express an authentic ‘voice’. It will hopefully demonstrate my evolution from being first a ‘proud-and-erudite practitioner’ who was an equally ‘naïve-and-humble researcher’ to now an ‘erudite-but-humble researcher’ who is an equally ‘proud-but-naïve practitioner’ (in his new field of research).

The subsections of this critique represent the chronology of my research-journey and the accumulative learning and critical reflections along the way. I shall explain my professional and relevant personal background, and why I decided to embark on the Leicester PsyD. I shall next explain what I wanted to research and why, against expectations of my profession (see Love 2009), and how the two research projects were constructed. Then I shall reflect for future research in this a new area for educational psychology, how I could do research differently, and conclude with some final thoughts.

2. My Background

As a practising HCPC-registered Educational Psychologist (EP), I had completed 11 years of post-MSc experience when I started this doctorate in 2013. Previously I had taught 17 years in schools in Gibraltar and UK, and amassed 22 years part-time as a private music-tutor (among other things). Before and along that first career-path I also had short-term jobs: labourer, insurance-salesperson, civil-servant, supply-teacher, performing violinist – all after qualifying as a schoolteacher. Till my professional-MSc it had been a meandering career-journey, but the learning alongside had proven very useful. For instance, when I applied for an Assistant Psychologist position, my interviewers – university researchers wanting recruiters of participants for an NHS-funded project – were more interested in my past role as an insurance-salesperson, *vis-à-vis* my ‘sales’ communicational skills.

There were many family-members and friends who experienced the same kind of meandering career-paths. In my teens I remember Dad saying how he had to countersign references for “over 40 honours-graduates in Economics every year” from a (now Russell-Group) university for “low-grade jobs in the Post Office”. This got me interested in why such capable graduates ended up in poorly-paid jobs and not on career-ladders.

When I eventually explored doing a ‘top-up doctorate’, I had no illusion that even as an experienced EP and having written-up eight postgraduate-level small-scale studies in education and psychology, I was an utter novice-researcher at doctoral-level. My earlier interest in careers had led me to Leicester, which I heard had a good reputation for occupational/work psychology. There in 2011, I completed a BPS-accredited training-course in occupational-testing, because the world of educational psychology was changing with the advent of the Children and Families Act (CFA-2014). This would launch EPs into the 16-25 arena, inevitably involving education-to-work transitions. This was what I wanted to study: post-secondary/post-tertiary transitions to work-or-career immersed in the complexities of social context and public policy, of which I had become familiar as an EP in the then under-16 arena.

3. Identifying a Subject Area

I was determined to avoid researching ‘more of the same’: autism, dyslexia/dyspraxia, inclusion/exclusion, learning-difficulties etc. I wanted to study something completely new, more positive-psychology-oriented and more outside the usual role-expectations of the EP (see Love 2009). Indeed, Gersch (2009) urges innovation in order for educational psychology to have a better future, advocating positive psychology *inter alia* as a way forward. Joseph (2008) also believes there is a place for positive psychology in the profession. For me ‘education-to-career transition’ is missing from the EP corpus, and mainstream pupils are generally excluded from educational psychology, which is allied to and often subjugated under ‘special educational needs and disability’ (SEND). I wanted to investigate psychology empowering under-25s not only at the cusp of education-to-work/career, but in early career-mobility.

As this was a new area to educational psychology, it could be a unique, original and innovative contribution to knowledge, especially the EP-corpus.

4. Identifying a Research Theme

As an EP familiar with school-to-school/college transitions, I was interested in what kind of planning or career-help were available to facilitate successful transitions into independent adulthoods. More important, the complexities of education-to-work transition in social context also needed examining – legislation, public policy, economic climate, job-markets, austerity etc, and their impact on under-25s’ transitions. What would young-people need to be successful in a career rather than a series of jobs? (DfE, 2011; Moreau & Leathwood, 2007; Tomlinson, 2008; Tymon, 2013).

5. Formulating the Research Questions

My underlying question was “How can an EP help?” – but ‘with what?’ was the crucial question. I started reading outside SEND literature, and came across Henderson et al.’s (2007) ten-year study about the vicissitudes of youth-to-independence transitions – it is not just about work, but also identity, empowerment and other

struggles towards adult-independence. Barnes et al. (2011), explain ‘career learning and development’ rather too neatly, I thought, as it is only in school-context. Likewise Knight and Yorke’s (2003) arguing the role of universities in producing more-employable graduates is also within a specific context, although the narrative does cross the education-work divide. These began to shape up the research questions: i.e. what are the challenges and issues facing young-people at such transitions, and what might an EP-role entail? As my reading widened, I began delving into youth-studies, career-studies etc, pondering meanwhile on the effects of social justice and public policy, which were integral to social context.

6. Literature Review: Phase 1

It interested me how much common ground there was between the different *corpi*, and how Henderson et al.’s (2007) longitudinal study seems to capture this – for instance, the changing circumstances of job-markets (career/vocational-studies), the quest for independence and identity (youth-studies), marginalised groups, impact of public policy, psychological/physical mobility etc. All these reify young-people’s struggles in social-context in getting stable jobs, let alone their ‘dream-careers’.

I presented the literature review for my Probationary Review. However, despite encouraging feedback, I felt my account was rather fragmentary and chaotic. As my reading expanded, I decided it needed ‘overhauling’!

Meanwhile a topic was emerging. Strands from the various *corpi* (*vis-à-vis* public-policy, career-guidance, education/training, ‘mobility’ etc.) were converging to form the plight of young-people trying to achieve ‘economic wellbeing’ for themselves as integral to their independence (Knowles, 2009). I wanted to join them up somehow, because inherent in that quest were young-people’s experiences, views, feelings and more important, hopes! Henderson et al. (2007) numerously quote their young-people, from six diverse UK-regions, expressing such frustration, anxiousness, work- and individual identities etc. Now I wanted to give front-stage to young-people’s ‘voices’ at the local level. A detailed collection of a small sample’s expressions could do the job.

7. Finding a research topic

The ‘voice of the young-person’ is a much-valued precept in public policy e.g. (DfE 2010, CFA-2014) and obligatory for EPs as statutory professionals to report. My topic would be young-people’s ‘voices’ articulating their experiences and views about how effective the career-help at school had been, their education-journeys culminating in HEIs, and how all this eventually translated into their current status-quo. What were their dream-careers? Who influenced them? Most importantly: what went wrong? How did they feel? Where-to now? How would they see/conceptualise new opportunities?

I eventually decided on a fully-qualitative study using individual semi-structured or open interviews to draw out issues. A qualitative study would be more consistent with educational psychology and I would focus on a manageable handful of young-people who were ‘bright and ambitious’ with good educational achievements, but currently still searching for a career in the current “economic storm” (Rae 2008, p.749; see also: Schoon & Silbereisen, 2009a, 2009b).

8. Refining the research question for an empirical study

This evolved slowly. From initial conversations with high school teachers, including Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, the idea of a target-group of young-people was identified: those who fell between SEND and gifted-&-talented – the ordinary what-could-be-called ‘disavowed middle’ – how they would make the transition to adult independence.

My reading elucidated that such ‘middle groups’ did exist in the literature: e.g. “missing middle” groups of poor GCSE-attainers (Playford & Gayle, 2016) and of neither government-sponsored ‘NEET’ schemes nor exam-based education (Roberts 2011), the ‘gifted-&-talented’ (Rogers 1989, 2007), the “overlooked middle” between apprenticeships and the “royal road to GCSE and A Levels” (Spours et al., 2012, p.3).

This decided me to look closely at under-25s who had gone through university but had subsequently not managed to get into the careers of their dreams or got lost among diverse pathways (see Schoon & Lyons-Amos, 2016).

The lack of substantive literature in the EP-corpus on the above should justify my original intention of exploring outside SEND. My research-findings could serve the main purpose of informing from an EP-perspective, notably young-people's voices, here deconstructing 'self' and 'career' in a jobs-scarce world.

9. Deciding on the Research Design and Methodology

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) attracted me, as its basic tenets resonated with my 'exam-free curriculum' experiences of Catholic hermeneutics experiences at a 'public-school' Sixth Form, and later a Catholic college. Also, in my MA(Ed) I had studied critical discourse analysis (CDA) (e.g. Fairclough, 1989), but IPA was more appealing, as it seemed more idiographic and would do the job of capturing the intimate 'authentic voice' of young-people (see DfE 2010, CFA-2014). So, I perused Smith et al. (2009), sampled other related works (e.g. Heidegger, 2000; Giddens, 1984), and read dozens of IPA studies to try and find an ideal 'template'. In the end I surrendered to Smith et al.'s (2009) postulation, that there is simply no standard way of writing up an IPA study, except to adhere strictly to his proposed criteria (Smith, 2011), which looked really onerous.

The qualitative data would be drawn from semi-structured interviews, and Shinebourne and Smith's (2009) schedule, exemplified in Smith et al. (2009), seemed perfect. However, it would have to be remodelled into an educational rather than health context.

10. Deciding on the Criteria for Participant-Recruitment and Selection of Participants

The criteria I decided on were in stark contrast to those in normal EP-practice, as I would be targeting non-SEND young-adults. However, it would be a new area for EP research: the participants being 'middle-group' mainstream young-people still seeking to develop satisfying careers and perhaps currently lost on their career-journeys.

Leads came from professional colleagues, and eventually a list of would-be participants transpired. I chose five who were fairly homogenous in terms of ethnicity,

age, career-stage, locality etc, but who might also have interesting differences between them, e.g. one of them decided not to go to university even with excellent A-Levels.

11. Conducting the Research

This was the most enjoyable part of the project as I was connecting with ‘real’ young-people. It felt both familiar (as my day-job) and yet novel as the young-people (22+) were much older than those I would normally see (2-16).

During the interviews it was tempting to coach and induce reflection, rather like Kvale’s (2007) “co-traveller” metaphor (p.19). I kept reminding myself I was a researcher, not a practitioner, and found ‘bracketing’ helpful (Husserl, 2000; Reiners, 2012; Wall et al., 2009): i.e. freezing my *a priori* knowledge and experience and compartmentalising my feelings *in situ*. It was both an enlightening and humbling experience, as it became increasingly apparent that these young-persons had lots to offer their peers, work-colleagues and their communities. This reminded me of Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003; Knowles, 2009) tenets, especially “making a positive contribution” (p.14).

I could not help feeling moved by some peak moments in the interviews – sensitive and road-to-Damascus moments, which galvanised my esteem for these young-persons: their resilience, resourcefulness, adaptability etc. Especially, it was moving to hear Barbara recounting the abuse she received from her live-in boyfriend including scorn towards her university-education, eventually forcing her to leave their rented home and return to live with Mum. This reminded me of Henderson et al.’s (2007) accounts of young-people being forced into ‘extended dependence’. At the other end, it was inspirational when Darcy explained how she perceived that her future career should fit into who she was; hence she needed to find herself first, and her career would develop around that (see Leach, 2015). Another inspirational moment was when Faye argued that the fears of diminishing job-markets were overplayed, because new jobs/careers were also continually being created as industries/businesses expanded and diversified to meet market-demands (see e.g. West et al., 1987; Mortensen & Pissarides, 1994).

The subsequent data-transcription and analysis were extremely time-consuming and challenging, but also rewarding. Transcribing the transcripts helped to immerse myself in the data. My IPA-readings certainly helped, and it was gratifying that Braun & Clarke (2006) considered IPA, CDA, grounded theory etc as more sophisticated methodologies towards which TA as a first-step qualitative methodology graduates. In a sense, I felt quite empowered by that, as I had used CDA and grounded theory in research in both my Masters.

As the data-interpreting evolved, I felt ever more privileged that those young-persons had given me something of themselves in those rather intense interviews.

12. Ethical principles – confidentiality, sensitivity, authenticity, transparency

All ethical standards, approved by the Ethics Committee, were adhered to, as explained in the respective thesis-Parts. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews allowed respondents to fully have their say. In sensitive moments, particularly with Barbara, who had perhaps had the most arduous journey with extended bereavement, struggling with money etc, I felt my training and experience in coaching/therapy helped to set up appropriate boundaries, and was able to maintain stoic empathy, preserving my stance as a researcher-interviewer on the sensitive task of digging deeper for gold-nuggets of data – not to accompany participants on their interview-journey (see Kvale's, 2007, 'miner' *versus* 'co-traveller' metaphors). Duty-of-care should always ensure that interviews did not traumatise. Conversely it was exhilarating that 'light-bulb-moments' also came to some, notably Darcy, even with 'bracketing'.

13. Research Report, Phase 1

This was probably the most enjoyable part of the thesis, particularly the creativity of developing the research-narrative, albeit bounded by correct parameters. It was extremely hard work, and quite messy: bits of paper everywhere and 'sticky-notes' on flat-screens etc, but I did enjoy it.

It was intellectually stimulating also to link the Discussion and Conclusion with published research. This gave a real sense of purpose and direction. What the participants said was so insightful and poignant that surely their voices must be heard!

14. Literature Review: Phase 2

Some of my initial reading for the Evaluative Study helped to refine and bed-down my research interests. By the time I had finished the research project, I had grown totally disenchanted with my rather chaotic first Literature Review. I wanted a better-defined structure – a ‘mission’ even!

I was caught in a dilemma: should I do a systematic literature review or a narrative literature review? Fortuitously I came across the ‘integrative literature review’ (Broome, 1993; Torraco, 2005, 2016; Whitemore & Knafl, 2005) and immediately felt this could be my solution as a practitioner-researcher. It just fitted my ‘mission’ so well that I could preserve my authenticity in using it (Bourner, Bowden & Lang, 2005).. But I was unsure how it would be viewed, as it is not often used. As this would be a ‘creative’ argument, effectively ‘my story’ in uncharted territory, I was extremely worried about falling into the trap of bias! This was a crushing thought! However, could a research-story – of which a literature review is one type – ever be 100% bias-free?

Aveyard (2014) for instance extols the supremacy of the systematic literature review, initially championed (see van Tulder et al., 2003) for reviewing reports of (medical/health) interventions. However, Aveyard was advising about research in a very specific field. Likewise, PRISMA criteria (see Moher et al., 2009; Moher et al., 2015) advocate the same, and are often applied in EP-research, entailing the eventual selection of a handful of articles for critical review (e.g. Schulze et al. 2017 – five articles). For myself, I questioned how appropriate this would be to my ‘mission’, based on surveying a broad range of literature over several disciplines.

Peer- and lead supervisions assured me there would usually be some (acceptable level of) ‘bias’: much would depend on the sources one works with. The perniciousness of bias would be to seek to report only one side of the argument and

‘cherry-pick’ evidence to support that. Supervision resolved the dilemma: “You’re the professional; you teach us what you want us to know. You can argue the case for a broad sweep rather than counting numbers”. That indeed was immensely empowering!

Continued reading of career-literature widened my vista but at the same time sharpened my focus as I became more selective. For instance, many new readings resonated with Henderson et al. (2007), e.g. Super’s life-long career model and Holland’s career-prototypes (in Savickas & Savickas 2017), mobility (Leach 2015), career-sprinters, wanderers and stragglers (Selingo 2016) etc. My new Literature Review now bore hardly any resemblance to the original, which I now hated. I had turned my attention onto other important issues, especially ‘employability’ for young-graduates and early-careerists (e.g., Creasey, 2013; Leach, 2017; Scott-et-al., 2017; Tymon, 2013). The literature on protean- and boundaryless careers fascinated me. Overall, the new direction motivated me so much that it became a problem. “Stop reading! – You’re building an argument, not a library!” is perhaps the soundest advice from the UoL postgraduate website.

Else’s (2016) doctoral monograph was inspiring – how she impeccably crafted her lines of argument and converged them into a cogent *‘dénouement’*. The chapter on employability was particularly fascinating and helped to direct my own reading.

My new draft took several re-writes before I became satisfied enough. Finding literature about those ‘middle’ groups, I felt, vindicated my epistemological position, and that was given emphasis.

15. Research Report: Phase 2

From new readings, I became dissatisfied with the Discussion and Conclusion sections of my Research Report. Also, new pertinent concepts had surfaced, eg Leach’s (2017) ‘cruel optimism’ and ‘psychological contract breach’, Scott et al.’s (2017) employability learning, Krumboltz’s (2009, 2015) happenstance learning theory (HLT), IPA’s seventh analytical step (Finlay, 2011; Smith, 2018) etc, and I wanted to factor them in, as my research (started 2016) had preceded some of those publications. For instance, Leach’s (2015) notion of selfhood and career-acting made perfect sense, i.e.

self-and-career evolving within the different composites of ‘community’ along the timelines where young-people live and work. This resonates with Henderson et al. (2007), as do psychological and physical mobility (Briscoe & Hall, 2006).

16. Service Evaluation Study

This was probably the most challenging part of the entire thesis. Intended as a quantitative study it took me right outside my comfort-zone. My last experience of quantitative analysis was in my final BSc(Hons) year where I remember having to laboriously/tediously hand-calculate a *t*-test and ANOVA. The sophistication of SPSS complicated things, as I had to learn how to use it. The overall undertaking was very complex and arduous – a research with multiple elements, a service evaluation, quantitative- and qualitative analysis, all rolled into one, and only 6000 words allowed!

Having thought I was pretty smart at Y3 with the NDC, SD, “rejecting the null-hypothesis” etc, and feeling smarter for learning how to basically use SPSS, it was quite a blow when faced with critical decisions about what statistical test(s)/tool(s) to use, and why. This was further complicated by the fact that my questionnaire had produced very mediocre data, and from the least appropriate student-cohorts. However, the challenges of the poor dataset made me think more critically on how I could make the best of it, i.e. (a) how to analyse it in a defensible way, and (b) how to produce something useful/helpful to the UoL career-service!

Access to the UoL MSc statistics-course PS7585 helped crucially. Most of it was based on Coolican (2014) but I also accessed the Seventh Edition (2019). PS7585 took me beyond my Y3, but it was not without supplementary readings in Field (2005) and even a ‘For-Dummies’ book (Hanna & Dempster, 2012). Following supervisors’ advice, I surfed YouTube.com, which proved invaluable. For instance, I could not find in print a clear explanation of “canonical correlations” – used by Stead et al. (2010) whose methodology I wanted to emulate. The innumerable videos on YouTube helped enormously, especially those explaining specific tasks using SPSS.

As a novice I had earlier input the data into Microsoft Excel. I started my statistical codings there, where most pleasingly I found I could colour-code, making it

less tedious (and clearer to see) than non-colour coding straight-off in SPSS.

Fortunately I retained the Excel files, as I could then cross-check my SPSS data with the colour-coded data there – something I continually resorted to.

On reflection I am truly grateful to my two supervisors for, each in their own way, making me think in those critical ways, not just regarding what to do but also how to reconcile their quite different angles on what was to me a mammoth undertaking. In sum, I feel that what I eventually produced (after countless revisions and migraine-filled weekends) did finally reconcile those somewhat opposite yet apposite positions. I feel I have truly grown intellectually through completing this arduous journey itself, let alone the preceding thesis-Parts.

All those psychometric tests I have been using for some 17 years now suddenly make more sense with statistical-thinking! Indeed, when recently an EP who had been working on a new localised EP-test asked me if I could standardise the large dataset they were expecting to collect, I was able to say, “Oh that’s easy! SPSS can do this for you! The hard part is getting your questions right in the first place. I would critically examine all the stimulus-questions first to make sure they are unambiguous, then do a pilot, then when you analyse the data, check for good Cronbach’s *alphas*, among other things; then re-check for any other ambiguities, re-word as necessary before you launch the test for standardisation.”

I would never have thought of ‘construct’ and ‘validity’ so critically before, as I seemed to have mislaid that critical (quantitative/mathematico-logical) thinking over the last 17 years, having been focused on qualitativity, where analysis and interpretation seemed ‘softer’. But in statistical logic, there is no room to hide any inconsistencies or construct-flaws. I cannot claim to be now skilled at quantitative methods, but this project has sharpened the (hyper-)critical way I now think and problem-solve, which has impacted positively even on my day-to-day job, in consultation, formulation, and reporting. These days I even read the supplementary tables, e.g. intercorrelational-tables, 68% confidence-interval tables etc., of psychometric tests I conduct, to sharpen my re-emerging mathematico-logical thinking.

17. Limitations of the Studies

These are already stated in the respective thesis-Parts, with suggestions for future research strategies. Principally the limitations revolve around generalisability issues due to the small samples of both studies, and the selectiveness of cross-disciplinary literature in the Literature Review. In the research-project locality and temporal issues were also limitations, as well as limitations inherent in the qualitative analysis: another researcher may interpret and analyse differently depending on their epistemological positioning. Also, unintentional but perceivable bias is a spectre that is forever hovering!

In the evaluative study the principal limitation was the somewhat disappointing data. It predicated critical decisions: which test, what next, interpretation etc. However, I believe I analysed what I could without overstating, for fear of concluding with false-positives or negated-truths (i.e. Type-1/Type-2 errors).

However, such *Angst* was soothed by Côté's (2014) eloquent challenge of Arnett's (2000) widely vaunted 'emerging-adulthood' theory, which Côté claims is spuriously evidenced and 'dangerously' misappropriated in media. Reflecting thereon, I resolved to take comfort in that not even a 'giant' like Arnett is immune, and new evidence-based challenges can only progress knowledge!

18. Things that did not go so well

The word-limits were a constant frustration. Three self-standing pieces of research and a reflective-critique within 30,000 words were indeed a tall order. Tightening up the writing was an adventure, and ultimately my writing skills did improve as I learnt how to be economical with words and more judiciously selective.

In the evaluative study, participant-recruitment turned out to be the worst mishap. Had recruitment happened as planned (i.e. substantially more Y3s and postgraduates), a more robust research/evaluation report would have resulted, instead of (what I fear were) somewhat stochastic outcomes. But I did try to make the best of the data.

19. Things that went well

In the main study, the interview went better than expected, especially in terms of the incidental reflections inherent in the process and their subsequent contribution to my growth, as well as the participants' '*Eureka*-moments'. A strong feeling transpired that the project inspired both myself and participants. Notwithstanding, it made me realise that it is forever crucial to judiciously manage 'bracketing' in research!

I feel I have grown substantially as a researcher, practitioner and person. It has been an enriching and rewarding experience, although at times debilitating to the point where several times I seriously considered withdrawing. But when my supervisor said, "But, you're a positive psychologist?..." something inside imploded! My passion returned!

Saliently, I have learnt a great deal more about 'career', although I would never say I could know as much as others working specifically in the field, but that is my current zone-of-proximal-development (Vygotsky, 1978).

20. How I would do it differently

I probably would not be so ambitious with the literature review, and would probably have focused on one theme (career-transitions for under 25s), without complications such as the social context or a role for the EP. But then, I think I would probably have felt that my true voice had not been uttered, as I do want EPs to take more interest in this area and fortify their role as 'psychologists who apply psychology in education' rather than merely serve SEND.

I would love to have followed Dr Boon's advice for the Evaluative Study. At my Probationary Review he advised turning my interview-schedule questions (Thesis-Part B) into an online-survey using the EPR platform. There Y1/Y2 psychology-students with recent experiences of school career-guidance would have produced substantial quantitative data, thus evaluating the qualitative findings of Thesis-Part B. I deeply regretted not doing that, as it could have made this perhaps a more integrated and cogent thesis. However, it could be a future piece of research.

21. Overall learning experience

As a distance-learning student there were frustrations and a sense of exclusion. It was prohibitive to visit campus, and I missed out on numerous valuable courses and camaraderie with fellow-research students.

Supervision was empowering and sometimes immensely inspiring, but also sometimes challenging. However, I am grateful to Dr Steele for her generosity in providing more-or-less monthly Skype meetings, when bi-monthly was the expected norm. Skype-typing was needed at the initial stages, because it provided good written notes for easier reference. But by the final-year I preferred the Skype-video-chat medium. This live face-to-face interaction made it feel more ‘real’ as supervision. Also, each session covered more ground, and was formative, rather than summative. It made me think on my feet, and provided the intensity needed for me to practise defending (and adjusting) my arguments.

It was empowering to study theses of UoL graduates, in particular Gallagher (2015) and Duggan (2018) *inter alia*. The variety of writing styles for their reflective-critique chapters was initially confusing: Duggan’s was pretty stoic, and Gallagher’s had a personal touch. Ultimately, I felt here was the only opportunity to express my voice more authentically – as in Shakespeare: “to thine own self be true!” [Hamlet, 1:3:78].

Despite many meanderings especially with the literature review, I ultimately grew intellectually, as the winding journey sharpened my adaptability skills. It is a truism that the more detours you take, the more views you see which you would not, had the road been straight – a bit like PH/HLT (Kumboltz, 2009, 2015).

I think the inauguration of the Doctoral College was a wonderful thing, offering targeted training/courses, with inherent socialisation/networking opportunities, not least to find solidarity with other doctoral candidates to mollify the demoralising solitude and emotional strain of the doctoral-quest. I did want to come to campus, but rather like Briscoe and Hall’s (2006) boundaryless careerist, despite psychological mobility, physical mobility was a totally different matter!

Primarily, a research-doctorate should be completed in the shortest possible time, as new publications (including grey literature) begin to outdate the literature used in earlier stages. As the UoL postgraduate research guide says, this is particularly poignant for part-time research-students. A friend of mine dropped out at the writing-up stage of his part-time PhD, as he could no longer face catching up with new publications and writing 90000 words. That served as a stark warning to me.

The shortish time-limit (5 years) is therefore a strength in the UoL PsyD programme, demanding though it was to ensure completion within that timeframe. I also valued the (presumably *noblesse oblige*) rule of producing a substantive piece of written work for each annual review. This certainly keeps you on your toes and avoids the chasm into which many doctoral candidates like my friend fall.

Overall however, there was a persistent temptation to persevere/*sic* the reading as my interest grew and deepened, but this could have risked diminishing returns of widening the scope and diluting the focus. So I had to force myself to stop reading for all three thesis-Parts.

In researching for a doctorate, we all hope that the originality of our efforts could have some impact on our research-areas. However, I think Prof Sarah Hainsworth aptly put it into perspective (2013 Doctoral Induction Day presentation) when she jocosely said that your doctorate is a mere pimple on the body of knowledge!

22. How I might do new pieces of related research

IPA is a methodology I would want to develop for educational psychology, but perhaps with fewer themes and/or only one participant (see e.g. Pietkiewicz and Smith 2014). I think it will be a welcome challenge to explore phenomenology, hermeneutics etc. even more deeply. The privilege of speaking with Jonathan Smith a few months ago also left an indelibly positive impression on me. I am in the online IPA interest-group, and part of the Salford University IPA group, and will be having my first meeting with the Malaysian contingent in February 2020, where I will discuss IPA for positive educational psychology.

In that connection I would really like to do a follow-up study of my five young-people (Thesis-Part B) to see where along the career journey they are now. It could be a longer longitudinal piece of work, and could possibly be in book form.

I would also like to investigate the marginalised group of the gifted-&-talented (e.g. Augustine, 2011; Dai, 2011; Ziegler, 2012). There is argument that this group has the potential to become eminent adults, which is beneficial to society (e.g. Subotnik et al., 2011) *vis-à-vis* ‘making a contribution’ – the fourth of the five ‘Every Child Matters’ (ECM) outcomes (DfES, 2003). Together with Rogers’s (1989, 2007) findings, it seems a natural progression for educational psychology to inform practice through research (see: Morris, 2013; Toland, 2005; OFSTED, 2009).

I would also like to research coaching psychology and PH/HLT as interventions in education-to-career transitions. Coaching psychology is gradually growing in EP-work (e.g. Adams, 2016), and there is immense potential for development in my research area. It would be interesting to research how HEI career-services work, e.g. bridging the discourse-discrepancies between career-services and students (see Tomlinson, 2008; Tymon, 2013).

23. Contribution to the subject area

With my intention to pursue research outside SEND, I hope this research would be a unique and innovative contribution to the EP corpus. EP research and practice are now venturing into the 16-25 arena, but virtually all published literature is still within SEND, and very much inside the ‘statutory’ box. This research advocates something new: to apply psychology in the mainstream of education at the furthest end of the education journey for young-people.

After the first paradigm shift (1990s) in educational psychology to ‘consultation’ (from the ‘medical’ model), there have been calls in recent Association of Educational Psychologists Conferences (2013, 2018) for a second paradigm shift: to move educational psychology into a more positive-psychology community-based model, for all children-and-young-people (see e.g. Blackpool EPS’s (2018) ongoing research; also

Gersch, 2009; Roffey et al., 2018). Blackpool EPS (2018) is based on the work of Baumeister, Bronfenbrenner etc, and an action-research is currently being designed.

It is hoped the research here will encourage more research into the subject-area of ‘education-to-career for all young people’ – since EPs uphold the ‘inclusion’ banner – especially those marginalised by public policy (see Literature Review). Certainly, there are signs this is beginning to happen – e.g. Borrett’s (in-preparation) research is in the same area as mine: getting ordinary young-people into sustainable employment through re-engaging with education. Such sub-groups were identified in research (e.g. Henderson et al., 2007; Schoon & Lyons-Amos, 2016).

I would like to publish discretely the literature review and research-report in an EP-journal. Then I would like the opportunity to follow up with a quantitative evaluation of the research, just as Dr Boon advised. Also, I would like to present my research at appropriate conferences.

24. Concluding Reflections

My journey as a researcher has been rather like my participants’ career-journeys: not like one of Selingo’s (2016) “sprinters” but more like a “wanderer” (pp.9-24). At times in seemingly endless meanderings through the research-process, e.g. extensive revision of the Literature Review, I have even felt like a “straggler” – that I would get there somehow, maybe (as Selingo notes) some ‘10 years later’ than everybody else, even though the sign-post “Give it up!” did appear several times.

While digesting all the literature – protean, boundaryless, mobility, identity, adaptability, versatility, resilience etc – I could not help being reminded of Mumbai-born Homi Bhabha’s notion of ‘hybridity’ (Bhabha, 1994; Meredith, 1998), which makes sense to me having lived previously in two British colonies. Bhabha discusses how the tensions of cultural and power inequalities between coloniser and colonised eventually create a new – post-colonial – enriched and unique ‘hybrid’ identity in the ‘third space’. This rather resonates with Stelter and Law’s (2010) ‘third generation coaching’, where coach and coachee enter a new reflective space to explore new avenues, and Bolton and Delderfield’s (2018) space between ‘reflection’ and

‘reflexivity’, the space for dynamic growth. I was delighted to find that Leach (2015) also thought along the same lines as Bhabha. Protean and boundaryless careers are probably in the same order of hybridity, ‘third-space careers’, even though Chudzikowski (2011) suggests that the traditional career is not entirely dead.

In a sense, perhaps my research here could also be a ‘third-space’ for educational psychology. I remember one of my undergraduate-psychology tutors, an EP, encouraging me to pursue this career because, she said, “It’s a very dynamic and diverse profession, and you can drive it in any direction you want, really”. With EPs-in-private-practice on the rise and the heralded ‘new paradigm’, there are more opportunities now than ever before.

Before this doctorate I never knew my career was protean or boundaryless. I simply thought I was – not unlike Inkson’s (2006) warning – a ‘wandering minstrel’, a ‘jukebox’ careerist:

*A wandering minstrel I –
A thing of shreds and patches,
Of ballads, songs and snatches,
And dreamy lullaby!
My catalogue is long
Through every passion ranging,
And to your humours changing
I tune my supple song.*

[“The Mikado”, comic opera by Gilbert and Sullivan]

Now I am probably in a better position to “drive it”, my career, in a newer direction. My professional and personal development will be a discipleship of Bolton’s (2009) reflective practice precepts, for my critical reflection has made me realise just how much my own career and personality have evolved, just as Bolton (2009) describes above.

Reflecting further, I also realised that my own life has been replete of unnoticed HLT opportunities (Krumboltz, 2009, 2015), and how so many of my perceived failures (e.g. teacher, salesman, musician/composer, writer) actually took root as HLT/PH career-potentials. These somehow mobilised me – unconsciously I think – to cultivate

some success as self-employer/ee, company-director, expert-witness etc. (Babineaux & Krumboltz, 2013), to eventually become a Chartered Psychologist and a doctoral candidate. It reminds me of ‘chaos theory’ (Gleick, 2008), where out of chaos persistence slowly produces formative patterns. Indeed, I did take a risk at 22 in jumping ship as a penniless general-labourer, to fly to Gibraltar on the grapevine-whisper that there might be a temporary Music-teaching job there.

Teaching/coaching has always been present in everything I do: e.g. supervising Trainee and Assistant EPs, consultation, training, coaching teachers and educational senior-leaders etc. So, I do hope to be able to join an academic team some time in the future to undertake this next phase of my new ‘third-space career’. It will be timely, as I will be substantially freeing-up time from 2020 to pursue other things I am passionate about: like research in the arena I have proposed in this doctorate. One key inspiration from all this has been the positive-psychology paper by Procter, Linley and Maltby (2013) (all variously linked to our Alma Mater), which finds that happier children learn better and achieve more, echoing ECM (DfES, 2003) again, and resonating with Knowles (2009).

I realise my entry into the world of research is late, very late, and the route has been a long-winding one. My own career-journey to and throughout adult independence has been a mirroring of this doctorate-journey. I feel humble that I have stumbled upon this ‘gap’ in the literature, and privileged that my supervisors have supported me, at times quite challengingly, and inspired me to venture into this unknown. As for furthering this, my researcher-apprenticeship, I hear again Prof Peter Evans’s unforgettable words way back in the mid-70’s on appraising my portfolio as a budding music-composer: “You cannot stand on the shoulders of giants without climbing on their backs first”. Well, I am certain I could never stand on the shoulders of the academic giants before me, and especially those to whom I am so grateful for helping me towards the dawn of this new career. But perhaps I could just peep in the ‘gaps’ between their shoulders for my future research stories.

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