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IN SEARCH OF EXPERIENCE: A TALE OF TWO SYSTEMS.

How can the practices of organising work placements be improved to match a young person's aspirations?

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‘I declare that this dissertation has been composed by myself, that it has not been accepted in any previous application for a degree, that the work of which it is a record has been done by myself, and that all quotations have been distinguished appropriately and the source of information specifically acknowledged.’

Signed:

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Abstract

Set within an urban secondary school with young people from socio-economic circumstances where access to social capital is limited, a comparison of pupil aspirations against work placements received revealed that few young people were receiving work placements related to their aspiration. I set up a pilot project with the aim of finding out if the introduction of new methods would improve the outcomes of work placement provision. The project used an action research approach exploring the journey taken by young people, employers and support staff considering perspectives of those involved whilst focussing on helping the young person to develop their individual identity prior to a work placement being arranged. Placements built on the affirmed aspiration ensuring a qualitative journey for the young person to help them make the right decisions for their future. It emerged through the research that using a CLD approach relating work placements to pupils' values and identity combined with structural flexibility would provide young people, schools and employers with a more objective purpose and active involvement through work placement learning.

Keywords

Identity

Work Placements

Experience

Values

Governance

Journey

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Foundation of practice

As a practitioner working within secondary schools in Glasgow, I work with a range of managers, partners, colleagues and administrators in a central team within Education Services. My role is to help young people in the senior phase (S4, S5 & S6) to build experiences which will help them identify and achieve a positive outcome upon leaving school. Having extensive experience of working with young people facing educational inequality in both formal and informal settings I help young people to identify with their objectives for a better life and create a path to achieving this. Fulfilling this role has alerted me to the challenges and barriers faced by young people throughout their journey from the various support mechanisms in place. I strongly believe young people have a right to achieve their full potential and opportunities available to them should assist their development. One primary input offered during their preparation is the opportunity to participate in work experience, where the young person visits an employer gaining experience in a vocational setting in order to develop learning for their future. Whilst supporting young people with applications for college placements I was able to quickly identify concerns surrounding the provision of suitable work experience as part of the young person's journey. I found the work placements offered to young people was not relevant to their aspiration.

One pupil who wanted to work in the construction industry, informed me his placement was in a hotel and was unrelated to the construction industry. When navigating this difficulty with other staff, it was highlighted this was the only placement available on the database where placements are offered. I was then approached by another pupil who was applying for a college course to become a hairdresser. The pupil had completed courses in hairdressing and was informed she was skilled in this activity. Again, speaking of the relevance of the work placement, I found her work placement was in a nursery school. On this occasion, I underwent a series of discussions to find the pupil applying for a course in hairdressing had a deep passion for helping others and dreamed of becoming a social worker but questioned her ability to see the ambition become a reality.

I found the experiences of both pupils mentioned confusing, causing dissonance between the aspirations of pupils and the practices of organising work experience. Within a secondary school the aspirations of pupils are recorded, yet the work placements mentioned are far removed from their aspiration. This raises concerns for me as a practitioner. Each young person mentioned had a clear idea of their aspiration, however, neither received the opportunity to relate experience of a work placement to their ambition. I felt these young people were being denied the right to achieve their full potential through a lack of opportunity where their aspiration was the primary focus of the of the work placement.

The work experience programme is managed and directed by my colleagues based at head office of the local authority with many parties such as health & safety officers, administrators and school support staff involved in the creation and organisation of placements, with each party having a unique perspective of what is considered to be a suitable objective. Employers are approached by the authority to become placement providers negotiating dates, times and circumstances upon which they would be willing to provide opportunities for pupils. The local authority requests a suitable week from schools for pupils to attend at which point placements are matched to schools administratively, through remote coordination of corresponding dates and locations. After all decisions regarding placements are complete and placements have been allocated to schools, pupils are invited to browse the electronic database to choose an opportunity made available by the local authority.

It was on reflection of the experiences of the young people mentioned and how routine practices impacted on their desired outcome which subsequently led to this research project. I felt practice in this area should be changed to provide young people with knowledge which they could then relate to the decisions they are required to make regarding their future. I developed a pilot programme to change the way work placements are identified and coordinated thus enabling young people to make informed decisions about their future.

1.1.1 Why the concern?

Introducing some of Dewey's work, Qualtar draws us to the simple concept *"experience is the best teacher" (2010, p.3)*. If experience is considered to be knowledge, and decisions are based on knowledge, how can a young person make a decision of whether or not a career path is suited unless they have direct experience and understanding of the relevance of the placement they receive? Relating Dewey's concept to work experience leads to an understanding that a work placement should be a positive experience helping pupils to develop their interest or passion for an identified area of aspirational future. The placement should be part of a learning experience and a nurtured desire to help a young person reach decisions regarding their aspired goal. Wurdinger and Carlson clarify this further where *"Students need to create things first hand by creating, designing, testing and building ideas to determine their worth." (2010, p.9.)* The statement leads me to reflect on the consequences which could be faced by a young person as a result of entering a work placement not suited to their aspiration and question whether or not this would create decreased esteem and confidence. The aspiration is only an idea and cannot be confirmed until the young person experiences the activity. If the young person does not see the relevance of the work placement, they could become confused as they still have no clarity over what to expect in the future. This also raises an interesting point about the quality of work placements and whether the initial introduction to the workplace adds to a young person's inner expectation of achievement for their future.

1.2 Policy

The young people referred to earlier appear to have little or no awareness of the quality of work experience. This has been recognised through the following statement;

> *"The key message we have had from young people on our Interim Report is their need for significantly enhanced quality work experience while at school and college. Employers clearly look for work experience and it is incredibly important in preparing young people for the transition into successful employment. (Scottish Government, 2010, p.4)*

It would appear young people were an afterthought in the identification of the quality of work placements as the commission had not included their opinions until an interim report was already produced. Perhaps if the working group had consulted with the primary beneficiaries at the beginning, they would have been able to build their responses into the interim report as opposed to this being a consequence of feedback on thoughts from other areas. However, recommendations following the interim report were;

> *"A modern standard should be established for the acceptable content and quality of work experience, and guidelines should be made available to employers. …This should involve input from young people. Work experience should feature in the Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool and in Education Scotland school inspections." (Scottish Government, 2014 p.10)*

Measuring this against "*Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth*" (Scottish Government, 2010), the minister for Skills and Lifelong Learning talks about the purpose of the government strategy for economic growth including employer needs and skills systems. What if young people have no desire to learn the skills required for economic growth within a particular sector? If we look at the pupil mentioned earlier, the young person revealed her passion lay in helping others and aspired to become a social worker, yet she was encouraged to apply for hairdressing. Continuing on the hairdressing path had a higher possibility of admission into college, perceived as a respectable outcome in the context of positive destinations. However, from a perspective beyond the position of statistical delivery, the destination becomes negative and is directed by economic drivers instead of the best interests of the young person. Interventions and actions from practitioners helping young people at the very root of aspirational development are overlooking the core values of practice to meet government objectives, focusing primarily on statistical evidence and economic growth. Surely if young people are happy and healthy, with the ability to make informed decisions; a desired purpose and aspiration to work in a field which suits their skills and values comes naturally, gaining employment and contributing to society. The economic

objectives could be met and better served to ensure this was the case, as this could increase the level of sustained destinations for young people upon leaving school.

Education Scotland have introduced work placement standards ensuring a qualitative learning experience, recognising the importance of practical learning and putting theory into practice.

> *"Work placements should enable young people to experience a relevant, challenging, enjoyable and appropriate learning experience within the contemporary workplace. (Scottish, Government, 2015, p.3).*

The Standard changed the terminology from work experience to work placement and introduces words such as "*appropriate*" tightening the definition to ensure experiences gained by pupils are a further step toward gaining knowledge. This helps the young person make decisions regarding their future as opposed to the focus being on attendance within a work environment. When interpreting the Work Placement Standards, (*Scottish Government, 2015*), practical workplace awareness is presented as a key element in enhancing a young person's expectation of life beyond education, nurturing their aspiration for future career choices. The Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce released the final report identifying challenges faced by young people entering the labour market, informing us only "*27% of employers offer work experience opportunities"* to pupils. (*Scottish Government, 2014, p.3*). Where this information highlights the challenges involved in ensuring there are enough placements for all young people to attend, further data on the percentage of pupils receiving practical placements tailored to their aspiration and in what career area would give a more accurate picture of the complexity of challenges faced in work experience provision and what objectives are being met through the distribution of opportunities.

1.3 Why is the project essential?

Introduction of the Work Placement Standards (*Education Scotland, 2015*) requires local authorities to look closely at how work experience is designed and implemented. Progressive steps to tailor work placements to a young person's aspiration will require planning and active change at all levels of involvement. Where the qualitative challenges identified earlier are significant, this is only a starting point

in ensuring young people are given the service they deserve in relation to learning from a valued work placement.

1.4 Summary

The research aim was to investigate circumstances surrounding the elements of experiential learning in relation to pupils' aspirations, specifically focussing on activities related to work experience systems within the current context of working practice. This involved exploring strategies and decisions impacting on practices prior to the pilot project and developing improved practices to meet needs of young people leading to suitable outcomes in the area of work placements and a deeper understanding of the journey taken through participation. The project lasted eighteen months and changed emphasis from a systematic administrative process to a qualitative endeavour initiated by the young person putting their aspirations at the forefront of practice. Starting with the aspiration of the young person, I worked collaboratively with staff in one school and employers to source placements which were suited to the aspiration of each young person. I then followed this with the necessary administrative processes to ensure compliance at all levels of policy.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The topic of work experience has received much attention with the most prominent periods being the 1940's and from 1995 to 2006. Mann highlighted the need for change as the education system was not designed to cater for the range of jobs available to young people upon leaving school as there was "…a serious bottleneck in secondary school education since the turn of the century." (1941, p.320). Seventy-five percent of students were taking up courses which could lead to *"white collar jobs"* (p.320) yet there were only enough of these jobs for a quarter of the students enrolling. Adding to the economic argument of Mann, McCluskey draws our attention to the *"educational values"* (1944, p.295) of work experience recognising the challenges faced in identifying the values and recreating these in other areas of the education system. There appeared to be recognition the issues relating to work experience stemmed from a lack of individuality within the system;

> *"There appears to be almost universal agreement concerning the educational values of work experience, but vastly more must be known in order to identify those values and embody them in successful educational programs. One problem is the effective integration of work and verbal experience. Another is the identification and distribution of individual differences in work experience"* (1944, p.295)

Mann (1942) and McCluskey (1944) unintentionally complement one another's arguments about a lack of individuality within the system, however, the most fundamental question of the highlighted period comes from Sutton & Amiss who are trying to determine what work experience is. The suggestion that work experience should be *"supervised by a qualified instructor – in other words a supervised by proper school authorities"* (1946, p.411) on the other hand raises questions of the quality of vocational input. How can a school be expected to provide adequate up to date knowledge of working practices in areas other than education? The above references were during a time of recession where work experience was viewed as a valuable addition to a young person's education to enable them to maximise the opportunities available for their future. From 1995 to 2006, research in relation to

work experience became more structured and solution focussed concentrating on the benefits work experience brings in relation to employability where previous research generally focussed on experiential learning and building knowledge.

More recently, literature relating to work experience has been incidental as part of career guidance or employability and transition from school to work. Literature directly related to young people entering into the workplace as part of their educational journey is scarce. Oxenbridge and Evesson (2012) carried out an extensive review of the research on young people entering work; *"relatively little research was found which examined young workers' perceptions of work prior to obtaining employment"* (2012, p.8) Oxenbridge and Evensson also highlighted works by Morris et al (1999), Taylor (2003) and Besen-Cassino (2008) clarifying that young people were not at the forefront of research and perceptions of adults in various roles such as parent, advisor or employer was considered foremost. It's possible the rich learning experience found in work placements during the 1940's has become overlooked indulging disciplined accountability where the young person learns the mechanics of attendance rather than building knowledge to enable professional conversation adding to the motivation of learning.

2.2 The impact of work experience

The Department for Work and Pensions carried out a study of the impact of Work Experience and found the results were positive in economic terms (2012, p.29).

Figure 1

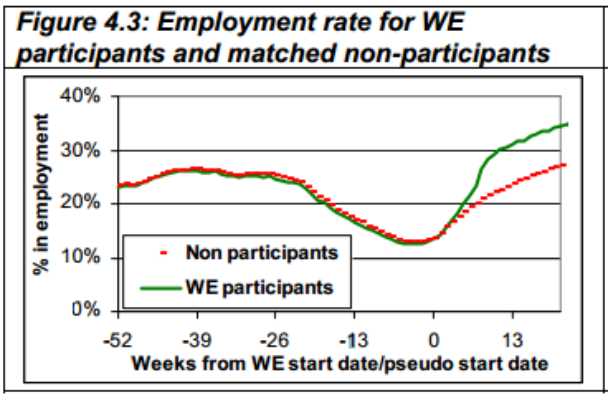

Figure 1 demonstrates the impact of work experience where employment rose for those taking part. The quantitative analysis clearly demonstrates benefits to the economy; however, the report fails to explain what participants taking part thought of the opportunity received, or the impact of this on the employer or the individual. Research carried out by ACAS during the same period found;

> ***"high proportions of young people in the UK perceive work experience (or a lack of it) as the main enabler (or barrier) to obtaining work."***
>
> (ACAS, 2012 p.6)

Collecting views relating the activity of Work Experience to employment prospects, research from City & Guilds tells us 28% of young people thought previous work experience was important and 78% of employers think work experience is essential to ensuring young people are ready for work, with 67% of employers more likely to hire a young person with work experience over someone with none. (2013, p.4). The figures mentioned are misleading when used as a measure of importance from employers against the Education for All Policy discussed earlier as only 27% of employers offer work experience (Scottish Government, 2014, p.3). The significance of how employers view the experience is echoed by Johnson & Burden who found;

> *"Almost without exception, employers felt that young people who had undergone a period of work experience while at school …were better equipped than others for the world of work. Young people expressed similar views, although there were some misgivings about the quality of some work placements." (2003, p.39)*

Interestingly the concern regarding quality of work placements came through the young people's views and not the employers. The presentation of this comment appears to be an unintended consequence of the research with views on quality having lesser significance; surely this area deserved further investigation to gain an insight into the journey of the young person. Work experience created with an economic focus is similar to previous times of recession where young people gain experience to add value to a CV with the opportunity to learn and develop knowledge achieved as a consequence rather than a design of the programme.

When talking about Career Theory, Killeen in Watt, Law et al refers to "*strategies and techniques*" offering *"rationale for those who control its destiny"* (2002, p.23) The language demonstrates hegemonic circumstances where dominance from someone in a professional position has the ability to use their skills to influence an outcome as opposed to having a neutral position of providing knowledge and information which empowers recipients to make their own decisions. They go on to highlight the common perception of the difference between "*good jobs and bad jobs"* being about the level of salary (2002, p.25), having no consideration for the values and personal qualities of the individual.

When considering the research question, there are many writers who focus on young people entering the workplace for the first time upon leaving school, how to give career advice to young people or how to get young people through the transition from school into the workplace. (Nathan, 2006, Anthanasou, 2007, Silver & Brennan 1988, Crouch, Finegold, Sako, 2001, Facer 2011). Although these themes are relevant to the topic of Work Experience, concepts related to the identity and experience of the young person are more deserving of thorough investigation in relation to the impact of the research question and literature related to the topic. Shilling takes a more direct approach to expressing the purpose of work experience suggesting the primary purpose is economic;

> *"Work experience takes students from the classroom into a place of labour to give them a realistic taste of working life in capitalist enterprises… purposes of work experience extend beyond the "educational", as this activity has the potential to facilitate an insertion into waged labour in terms of part time work and the securing of future jobs." (*1989, p.70)

Shilling does not take into account career options which fall into non-profit making categories involving the humanitarian professions such as medicine, social work and education. Where there may be financial gain through showing exemplary skills through work experience for some young people, the placement for the majority of young people, and certainly for those in need of knowledge, relating to a future identity is more likely to be a practical education giving young people an understanding of the expectations placed upon them within a working environment.

2.3 Identity

Kidd & Teagle refer to culture as "*the way of life for a group of people*." (2012, p.6) and the definition of identity being about figuring out "*who we are"* as people (2012, p.7). In addition to this, Dewey explains how an experience *"influences the formation of attitudes of desire and purpose"* (1997, p.39) highlighting the contribution a learning experience can make to the development of a journey and future career without any focus on economic activity. However, Burke & Stets (2009) provide us with the idea that identity encompasses a range of individual qualities and experiences;

> *"An identity is the set of meanings that define who one is when one is an occupant of a particular role in society, a member of a particular group, or claims particular characteristics that identify him or her as a unique person." (2009. P.3)*

Kidd and Teagle have expanded on this advising culture is both objective and subjective, built "*through the meanings we give to symbols*" (2012, p.11). The objective meaning determines who people are in a material and/or physical sense – dress, food, music, physical appearance etc. The subjective meaning allows us to "*make sense of the world around us*" (2012, p.11) They also introduce us to biological explanations of identity which focus on identity being passed down through nature as opposed to a nurtured outcome. (2012, p.13) Where this can be said for the objective meaning of identity related to culture, it is difficult to understand how this can be applied to the subjective meaning of identity as there would be a variety of inputs constructing the identity and not just the input of parents. Kidd & Teagle also refer to Goldschmidt (1990) who, on the other hand, talks about the human sense of self identity being driven by the need for self-gratification. (2012, P.13). I questioned how the decision of what is and is not gratifying reached. How does a person know what is gratifying within the culture and identity they belong to?

Beard and Wilson defined experiential learning as *"the sense-making process of active engagement between inner world of the person and the outer world of the environment"* (2013, p.51). Raising a question of steps involved in the creation or

realisation of an aspiration leading us to consider methods where young people identify with the aspiration and how they relate this to practical activity confirming the idea should become a purpose. Ensuring young people are employed in a field where their identity is recognised could safeguard long term futures for young people as they enter into adulthood and become parents, breaking the cycle of deprivation, offering children more stable and secure environments. (Bastleer, 2010, p.38).

Besides the symbolic process being about the people within communities, Cohen alerts us to the practitioner responsibilities when engaging with communities; *"Identification with a community is a symbolic process"* (1989, p.27). Educators have a role in helping young people to identify with who they are in order to support them move forward with a clear direction. *"In general, it is the inability to settle on an occupational identity which most disturbs young people"* (Erikson,1968, p.132). Receiving inadequate support in realising an aspiration or providing insufficient opportunities in the context of relevant work experience, has the scope to impact, on a young person's future and on future generations of their families. Price and McDonald highlights the system lacks recognition of this;

> *"…there are still few studies of young people and work that focus on young people as subjects. This, they write, has led to a situation where we have little understanding of how young people construct their identities as workers and how they experience their first jobs." (2011, p.10)*

Expanding on the chance conversation which is thought to have changed the life of W.H. Auden, Head talks of how the action which made Auden change his aspiration from a science related career to writing poetry was triggered by *"an underlying, but yet unrecognised need."* (1997, p.71) The decision to change careers was indeed related to the chance conversation, however, it is difficult to relate to the suggestion that events would have been the same had the conversation not taken place and other life events would have made the connection in the absence of the conversation. Not only is this difficult to imagine and impossible to guarantee; the evidence present is that the outcome was achieved due to a single event pin pointed by Auden. He feels his entire life was changed and identified the point where this happened. Putting this into context has led to questioning the purpose of informal

education, examining why it has become necessary to advise and guide young people if the answer will come to them through life events irrespective of conversation.

“Identity acquisition is too fundamental to be simply the product of chance.”

(Head, 1997, p.71)

To look at Head’s quote from another perspective; should conversations where a young person can relate to their identity and focus on a suitable future be left to chance? Head also refers to a sense of *“vocational identity”* pointing to Eriksson’s (1968) theory of a *“sense of industry”* (1997, p.71). A sense of vocational identity would include the aspirations of the young person and not only the sense of industry mentioned by Erikson. Where the ideological sense of being and the sense of purpose related to industry are important, equal consideration should be given to the culture with which the young person identifies as well as the individual strength and ability related to the ideological outcome for the young person from their own perspective and self-awareness and not the perspective of adults within the system.

> *“Using the theoretical framework of Bourdieu (1983), parental employment patterns can be understood to impact upon children’s outcomes in several ways: through the effect on household income and socio-economic circumstances (economic or financial capital); through the provision of cultural norms and expectations (cultural capital); and through social relationships and interaction (social capital). Parents’ qualifications (human capital) play an important part, and are related to levels of both economic and cultural capital.”* (Cusworth, 2009, p.3).

Knowledge of the world of work is often passed down from parents and adults with a range of experiences, who understand how the attitudes of society and the working world can be influenced to benefit the individual in their journey from leaving school to entering into the world of work. If this knowledge is not readily available, the young person is limited to experiences offered within education systems and organisational structures such as work placements accessible through local authorities.

2.4 Strategy

Brockman, Clarke & Winch discuss the currency of qualifications in relation to the labour market (2011, p.28) suggesting qualifications have a numeric value within the workplace related to pay i.e., more qualifications is equal to higher earnings. Carr, Wright & Brody on the other hand found work experience more significant in determining a person's long-term employment prospects;

> *"It is of some interest that for those in the labour market, the amount of early work experience is a statistically significant predictor of employment 10 years later, whereas level of education is not."* (1996, p.76).

It should however be noted that the likelihood of being employed neglects to analyse the type of work or salary a person receives. Head relates to the subjective experiences which force people into taking action;

> *"change can occur only when the working classes become fully aware of the oppressive conditions in which they live. The working classes are exploited by the ruling or capitalist class to the point where they simply cannot endure hardship any longer." (Head, 1997, p.44)*

This is not necessarily the case. The feeling of hardship and inequality could be steered or avoided if a person understands the power structures they are faced with and the functional process they have to adhere to in order to progress. Career guidance is often seen as a definitive approach where the young person has to fit fundamental criteria in order to pursue their ideological aspiration. For example, if a young person isn't good at certain subjects, their career choice is limited. Law talks about career development being *"… not static but dynamic, continuously reconfiguring available evidence; "each new attempt seeks in part to resolve problems left by previous attempts". (2002 p.25)* This clarification confirms practitioners are confined by the boundaries of evidence. The questions from a CLD practitioner perspective as opposed to a career guidance perspective would naturally be;

1) What constitutes evidence?
2) How is the cultural identity or values of the young person taken into account?

3) If the previous attempts to resolve problems haven't been successful, what is different about this approach to make it more successful?

Law goes on to discuss the career development of young people, reinforcing the point that career guidance works in cycles to combat problems as they emerge with each new generation.

> "*each new generation seeks also to achieve a congruence with the social and cultural ambience in which it is set, so that such ambiences represent a 'readiness' for the acceptance of new ideas about career development." (1981, p.142)*

Why would individuals seek a congruence within one particular setting? As discussed earlier, individuals have their own identity. Why would the setting and ambience be so important that it would take priority over the individual? There is also a question around the need to seek new ideas and whether these ideas are born from the experiences of individuals who feel they were unsupported in their aspirational journey. Elliot instead tries to focus on the end result and continuous improvements of practice;

> *"When values define the ends of a practice, such ends should not be viewed as concrete objectives or targets which can be perfectly realised at some future point in time. As such they would constitute technical ends which can be clearly specified in advance of practice." (1991, p.51)*

It takes time to realise Elliot isn't referring to outcomes for young people. On the surface of Elliot's view, it would appear the practice of trying to find a definitive outcome requires the sacrifice of values which underpin the profession of education to meet requirements of strategic and economic targets set by government policies relating to positive destinations. Having a flexible approach to service delivery, the practitioner should have the experiences and outcomes of the young person at the fore of purpose when organising a work placement or activity.

The suggestion that work should be more closely linked with formal education has been recycled and rebranded several times over; *"The debate over whether work experience should be more closely linked to the school curriculum is relatively*

recent" (Shilling, 1989, p.254) …. This quote is from 28 years ago and has since been reintroduced in many formats with Green et al (1999) refocussing on the strategy ten years later;

> *"Thus, in the case of work experience in both general and vocational education, it is now envisaged that it could fulfill an important new role, providing an opportunity for those young people in full-time education and training to develop their understanding about changes in the 'world of work', to enhance their key skills and to make closer links between their formal programmes of study and the world of work (Guile & Griffiths, 2001, p.115).*

The majority of writing in relation to work experience is in an economic context. Guile & Griffiths expand on the relationships and learning involved;

> *"… although there has been more recognition of the need for new learning relationships between education and work and a new agenda for work experience, there has been much less discussion of the extent to which the actual context of work may affect learning and development." (2001, p.115)*

This takes us back to the 1940's where McCluskey focussed on the educational values of work experience and the concept of realising how the placement connects with the individual. If practitioners are responding to individual requirements of the young person, ideas related to their future would come directly from the young person through interaction and understanding of their cultural and personal identity.

Kidd & Teagle present Willis' (2000) argument where;

> "*… the function of schools in a capitalist society is to prepare working class children for a life of labour under capitalism. Working class children are unaware of this process and their involvement in it.*" (2012, p.47)

If the young person understood how much their ideological aspiration was reliant on being proficient at certain academic subjects it is possible the level of academic output could increase in order to achieve a goal created by the underlying thirst envisaging the aspired identity. Seeking to *"achieve a congruence with the social and cultural ambience"* (Law, 1981, p.142) requires in depth, reflective conversations

with young people taking time, patience and understanding at the pace of the young person. Career advisers have a defined role in ensuring young people are aware of their options when progressing beyond school, however *"… vocational guidance has developed a discrete specialism without any regard for issue"* (Head, 1997, p.70). In contrast to the practices of career guidance, understanding social circumstances in order to help young people activate a career path, CLD practice employs techniques where the career path is a means to improve the lives of young people aiming to break the social cycle a natural outcome is that CLD practice breaks down barriers which prevents career development.

> *"Learning is grounded in experience. As trainers and facilitators, then, we must seek to create experiences from which people can learn. Challenge, success, failure, conflict and harmony can all provide powerful opportunities for experiential learning. (*Hutchison & Lawrence, *2011, p.3)*

The authors are pointing to educators having a duty to help young people identify with their future through relevant work programmes.

2.5 Governance

Although there is little research into the governance of work experience, Kidd & Teagle highlight functionalism being used to form and understand a structure for operating a social system. *"It explains the process of socialisation & how culture can create order in society".* (2012, p.41) Taken in the context of operating work experience systems, functionalism could be construed as another form of conformity which is generally understood to have an authoritarian or hierarchical structure. This has an impact on the people who think or act differently from what the system understands. By transferring focus from functional to more flexible systems and processes with a basic structural overview, as people are unique and processes affect different people in different ways, the focus becomes about the unique process for the individual as opposed to the process of the structure.

Schon alerts us to the positivist perspective faced by practitioners; "*Computerised information systems are used increasingly to monitor and control the performance of individual workers"* (1995, p.336). The focus changes from an educator being in a

position of trust and responsibility where decisions made will be qualitative in nature, to systematic conformance where the educator can demonstrate an obligation has been fulfilled irrespective of the outcomes and quality of practice.

2.6 Summary

The literature sourced has highlighted some interesting points about the outputs of work experience. The purpose of work experience in the 1940's was for economic output and continues to have "…*a narrowly functional view of the relationship between education and work*." (Guille & Griffiths, 2001, p.115) It neglects to reflect the identity of the individual. In summation, the literature addresses;

- The identity of the young person has emerged as the glue which binds the social and cultural context to the practical elements of the placement yet their views are not being listened to.
- Noting young people highlighted the lack of quality in work placements raises concerns that this wasn't picked up at a more strategic level. The strategy of providing work placements thus far is to provide young people with the practical skills sought by an employer as opposed to the young person using placements as a method of personal growth which enables them to develop their identity as an individual.
- Understanding qualifications are not the only form of currency when building their ideal future if they feel they aren't good at a particular subject.
- Further inquiry into the quote from Schon in relation to computerised systems and how this affects work placements would give a better picture of whether the appropriation of governance of placements is proportionate to the activity.

Overall the literature expresses a lack of individual identity within the system with decisions and assumptions being based on a young person's academic ability or an economic agenda and statistical outcomes.

Chapter 3. Questions and objectives

The research was designed to create recommendations for improved systems of practice in the area of work placements for pupils to access relevant, good quality learning experiences empowering young people to take the next steps toward a positive future. The project explored the journey taken by young people toward their aspired future and examined whether changes to the identification and organisation of work placements provided better outcomes. In answer to the overarching question; ***"How can the practices of organising work placements be improved to match young people's aspirations?"*** Inquiring into the following provided a suitable response to the research:

- How does the identity of the young person relate to the work placement?
- Is the strategy suited to the desired outcomes of work experience?
- What are the impacts of governance on work placements?
- What needs to change to improve the young person's journey?

Answers to these questions provided insight from the perspective of stakeholders involved in the process and offered a basis for developing new methods in tailoring placements to further meet the needs of young people's aspirations.

Chapter 4. Methodology and Method

4.1 Introduction.

Prior to the pilot project, work placements were offered to young people via a computer database. The young person decided which placement was suited to their needs. However, placements available were not tailored to the individual young person and covered a limited number of vocational options. Placements were sourced by a central administration system external to the school with no way of knowing whether the placement met the needs of the young person or not. The system had only one objective; making sure young people were offered work placements in a quantitative context where statistical outcomes indicating the number of young people attending and completing a learning experience was at the fore of practice. The aspiration of the young person was a secondary consideration to the outcome of attendance. Measuring work placements in this way *"…disengages the researcher from people."* (Gray, 2014, p.60) In using this approach to provide work placements there is no validation the young person's choice is aligned to their identity. As a consequence of this, the young's persons aspirations not being contemplated, nor their feedback sought. Whilst drawing on relevant statistical information from previous practices created an informed baseline of data I was aware that "*records themselves are not neutral*" (*Gray, 2014, p.429*). and gave no indication of the subjective identity of the young person, whether their aspiration was met, improved or changed in any way, indeed the available data was mainly concerned with health and safety considerations and what tasks were associated with the placements.

The research design for the pilot project intended to demonstrate an understanding of the perceptions held by participants at a subjective level examining the beliefs and values contributing to the experiences undertaken. I wanted to *"gain access to people's social and cultural constructions of their reality."* (Gray, 2014, p.160). Cohen et al (2011) explains that qualitative research is a journey of "*discovery rather than proof and the researcher attempts to collect data without interfering with the normal flow of life*." (McGrath & Coles, 2013, p.77.) However, my objective was to take the young person on a journey of self-discovery and as a consequence, I was required to question the thought process of those involved in the research. I sought

to use an interpretivist paradigm to consider the journey and perspectives of participants and stakeholders involved, i.e. young people, employers, education staff and organisers.

Few methodologies were suited to the qualitative approach required in finding out how the organisation of work placements could be improved to match a young person's aspiration. Critical theory could partially fulfil an element of the research methodology as I intended to analyse *"the unspoken and implicit power relations governing actions and understandings"* (Somekh & Lewin, 2012, p.322) in order to demonstrate that young people as individuals were being deprived of suitable work placements within the system. As well as highlighting these concerns, I also sought to change the system by removing unnecessary barriers which preventing this. However, "*The aim of critical theory is to critique, not to initiate or manage change*." (McNiff, 2013, p.50). By researching in such a way that combined the practical aspects of work and inquiry of how things could be improved for the learner, an action research approach was the most compatible as it focused on engaging in;

> *"… careful, diligent, inquiry, not for purposes of discovering new facts or revising accepted laws or theories, but to acquire information having practical application to the solution…"* (Punch, 2009, p.135)

The idea behind the research question was to create knowledge of the actions which were required to give meaning to a young person's journey in relation to work placements. Although the pilot project was not designed to repeat the cycle typically required for action research, the methods used during this practitioner research project were modelled on the principles of action research where *"acting and doing come together." (Punch, 2009, p.135).* The focus intended to change the practice of how work experience is viewed and organised, leading to improved outcomes for young people.

As a CLD practitioner I wanted to ensure the improvement was interpreted by the young person and not the database or adults within the system and felt the action research approach as described by McNiff (2013) was the most effective way of substantiating my approach and driving this change. I was aware I was part of the research process and the knowledge I held in respect of my values played a vital part of the process. I believe young people deserve the best experiential

opportunities available and decided action research would provide knowledge in the practice of how work placements impact on a young person's journey. Using the action research approach put forward by McNiff (2013) determined I would work collaboratively with everyone involved critically analysing the thinking of participants and allowing them to critically analyse my thinking in terms of what I was trying to achieve and why. This created transparency, honesty and trust that any actions taken were suited to the objectives of the young person's journey.

This was a shift from the regular practice of matching young people to work placements through a date matching system, to offering work placements which were identified through dialogue with each young person. The project was designed to support young people to identify with work placements recognising how their individual identity contributed to their choice and ensuring this was reflected within the work placement provision. I felt helping the young person to understand how the knowledge they held which had been "*socially developed*" (McNiff, 2013, p.2) was similar to the process I as a practitioner experience in exercising reflexivity. This in turn ensured the actions taken within the pilot project were detached from the authoritarian desire of outcomes related to statistical return ensuring the project remained focused on the reflection of changes within practice and the young person's journey.

4.2 Progressing the Pilot Project

The methods I was practising prior to the pilot were not fit for the desired purpose of developing young people as their identity was disregarded when placements were being offered and this initiated my "driver for change" (Somekh & Lewin, 2012, p.97). I began the research through a review of practice and asked myself how the organisation of work placements could be improved to reduce or eradicate inequalities in the way work placements are offered. I believe young people should be creators of their own destiny and as a practitioner with extensive experience am aware of how quickly and often a young person can change their aspiration. I wanted to support the young person to link the deeper understanding of self into the experience. I believed this could create an awareness of qualities which could be interrelated across a vocational field as opposed to a defined task or job role helping

young people to become more confident in transferring the knowledge they acquired through attending a placement if their aspiration changed at a later date.

Through discussions with the senior management of the participating school, I became aware of the dynamics within the school and the difficulties they perceived were present in young people receiving suitable work placements. Although I was aware of some of the challenges from my own perspective of values, I expected there to be a "*conflicts of values*" (McNiff, 2013, p.94) between the school understanding and my own, however, I was pleasantly surprised to find I was not alone and there was a desire to change the systemic process toward a more effective system which nurtured the aspirations of the young person.

The participating school identified thirty young people from S4 who had no access to a suitable work placement prior to the pilot project. I held initial discussions individually with young people to determine what attracted them to and how well they understood their aspiration aiming to explore whether they had chosen the most appropriate aspiration and route. I used open ended questions which related the aspiration to the young person's sense of identity. My own interpretations of the dialogue taking place brought in part at least, personal and lived experience of my own journey and the journey I've taken as a practitioner. I hoped to create a journey of self-discovery to ensure recognition of where their aspiration linked into their belief system and individual life experiences. At this point the young person had the opportunity to change or modify the initial work placement request to a more appropriate placement aligned to the conclusions they had reached through discussion (Appendix 3) Linking the underpinning knowledge of identity outlined by Kidd & Teagle (2012) was designed to help each young person to identify with their future and create a sense of belonging within the identified vocation.

When deciding who should be involved in the project from a strategic and partner perspective, I sought volunteers from a range of roles. I took the approach that action research *"…can promote collegiality and sharing practices amongst practitioners who may not usually work together to understand each other's work.*" (Slavin-Baden & Major, 2013, p.254) The strategy for guiding research into processes related to work placement allocation, was relevant to teaching and non-teaching strategists i.e. four strategic managers, two from within the participating

school and two from other schools. The strategic managers were targeted due to their involvement with young people and their experience of working within work experience systems prior to the pilot project.

I approached employers who had the ability to design placements which were aligned to the objectives of the young person and were willing to engage with a new format of offering work experience, tailored to building broad knowledge of a vocational field as opposed to offering delivery of a task driven role during the placement. I held meetings with the specified purpose of;

- communicating an understanding of maximising learning and building knowledge during the placement;
- allowing the young person to explore opportunities within the chosen area of work;
- learning expectations in relation to achieving the desired aspiration and discovering further career interests within the sector.

The placements were tailored collaboratively with employers uniquely designed to reflect the professions across the industry.

4.3 Data Collection

There were three stages which seemed most relevant for ensuring qualitative data collection. 1) The preparatory phase, gaining deeper insight to placement provision and inform practical navigation of any barriers which would affect organisation of the project; 2) Pre-placement discussions with young people to find out what they considered to be a suitable placement and affirm the aspiration; 3) Post placement interviews from the perspectives of the different roles involved in the project which would give subjective meaning to the work placement experience.

I began my inquiry through a simple audit of the work experience database gathering a random sample of work placements received by young people from 2014. The sample contained fifteen young people spread across year groups S4, S5 and S6. I measured the data sample against the identified aspirations previously collected by the school (Appendix 2). The rationale behind this was to gain awareness of how likely it was for a student to be offered a placement matching their aspiration prior to

the pilot. I wanted to substantiate my supposition that the system prior to the pilot was concerning for young people receiving placements. This information was used to present to strategic managers allowing me to explore the impact of placement provision prior to the pilot project. It also provided a gateway to examining power relations potentially contributing to or creating barriers which could impede the practice of offering suitable work placements.

Information on the young people who had not received a relevant work placement was requested from the participating school. The list gave details of the young person's name, their intended destination upon leaving school (e.g. college, university, apprenticeship) and their aspired occupation. I used the initial aspiration as a starting point to form the basis of discussion exploring the aspiration with the young person.

I developed a schedule to sit down with each young person prior to arranging a work placement. (Appendix 4). It was essential to do this prior to arranging the placement as I felt responses from the young person would inform the level of placement suitability. McNiff makes us aware of challenging preconceptions (2013, p.95) and I was mindful that previous attempts to organise work experience resulted in focussing on the mechanics of the administrative system. I had to change my thought processes to ensure the young person was at the centre of practice.

I arranged to sit with each young person (appendix 4) to engage in dialogue using open ended techniques, ensuring focus remained on the data being collected helped avoid the temptation "…*to train them in whatever direction is currently favoured" (Midgely, 2002, p.100).* This assisted the process of data collection as I was aware of having to ask myself "*What is the data for? Who needs to know? Why?"* (McNiff, 2013, p.76) keeping the data about the young person and the pilot project. I also employed a strategy of active listening skills during the interviews examining the expectations and experiences of the interviewee;

> *"… a set of techniques designed to focus the attention of the interviewer or observer on the speaker. The goal of active listening is to attend entirely to the speaker, not to oneself or one's own inner dialogue, with the goal of accurately hearing and interpreting the speaker's verbal and nonverbal communication" (Ayres, 2008, p.8)*

Using this method alongside audio recording and field notes I found instilled confidence and helped create a natural trust between myself and participants.

> *"Neither audio nor video recording replaces the need to make field note, since technology only keeps a partial record and cannot replace the sensitivity of "self", open to nuances of meaning and interpretation." (Somekh & Lewin, 2012, p.133)*

Taking notes during interviews to capture the thoughts, emotions, diversions and pressures seemed to create a distraction from using a voice recorder on its own which I felt in previous research created an unspoken barrier and altered the natural flow of conversation as mentioned by Bell (1999, p.145).

The affirmed aspiration of the young person (Appendix 3), following initial discussions, gave a starting point for sourcing partnerships with employers. Where most employers were sourced from within the local authority, large external organisations who were able to provide a range of experiences within a relevant environment were also approached. The employers participating in the research were all from the public sector. Work placements were designed to build knowledge of the career field where a range of opportunities within the sector were witnessed and experienced, replacing specified tasks being identified prior to attendance. The focus of the project was placed firmly on the young person experiencing and building knowledge of what happens within the industry (Appendix 5) instead of the duties carried out by an individual employee within the workplace. Pupils were not asked to take up any tasks unless there was a specified outcome attached to it.

Follow up interviews were arranged after attendance at the placement (Appendix 4) as I wanted to validate my research through practice as discussed by Elliot (1991, p.69). The objective of this round of interviews was to evaluate the suitability and significance of the project identifying the journey which had been travelled (appendix 3). This data provided areas of potential development to further enhance the experience of work placements.

Using the same format of open ended questioning, interviews were carried out with strategic managers within schools, (Appendix 4). These focussed on discovering the drivers that matched pupil to placement prior to the pilot project, what guidance was

given prior to young people accepting a placement and how they felt the pilot project had developed over the span of the project.

To ensure a balance of perspectives, it was important to triangulate the data by taking the views of employers into account. "*Triangulation can be helpful: this occurs when data from at least three different sources are scrutinised and the analysis compared*" (McNiff, 2013, p.106). I emailed all employers with an invitation to take part in the research and three employers volunteered to take part. Everyone who responded to the request to take part in the research was included in the sample and employer interviews were conducted in the same fashion as strategic managers. (Appendix 4)

4.4 Analysing the Data

"*Quantitative data can be useful to get a sense of trends*" (McNiff, 2013, p.106)

Firstly, I had to analyse the quantitative data produced to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the allocating work placements prior to starting the pilot project. I analysed the quantitative data to find how many young people had received work experience relevant to their aspiration (Appendix 2). This formed a baseline of data for presenting to strategists during interviews in order to gain a qualitative perspective in relation to the research question.

McNiff tells us *"To analyse anything, you need to identify some kinds of categories of analysis using identified criteria and standards to guide your choice."* (2013, p.111). I found this particular statement to be challenging in terms of analysing the data as I was unaware what themes the data would present prior to listening to recordings and reading field notes. However, I was aware that I was trying to improve outcomes in relation to the work placements and initially decided to keep the categories broad with the identified criteria being; challenges; learning; behaviour. I used the reactions of participants during interviews where possible to gauge the level of improvement. For example, raising eyebrows whilst saying "absolutely brilliant" indicated a very positive improvement where shrugging shoulders "yeah it was good" would mean very little improvement and required further investigation. I used a "*constant comparison, an approach widely used in grounded theory research…*" (Slavin-Baden

& Major, 2013, p.43) I felt this system was most effective in terms of identifying the journeys taken in varying roles.

I transcribed the data in order to familiarise myself with the evidence available and identify themes. This required listening to the interviews several times and matching with field notes to ensure I was interpreting the data as accurately as possible. After transcribing the interview data and comparing this to field notes, the following themes emerged during the coding process; Governance, Strategy, Identity and Benefits with each category analysing the perspectives of strategic managers, employers and young people. The language used during interviews gave an account of the level of increased awareness young people had achieved through the placement. In doing this I was able to measure if my practice had improved the learners journey.

4.5 Limitations

As a practitioner, I quickly became conscious that I did not have full control of all conditions which could impact on the project. I was aware of distractions caused by administrative challenges, having to reschedule one part of the planning process to ensure clarity surrounding concerns from a health and safety perspective. There were also unforeseen circumstances of the reliance of administration processes used prior to the pilot project which struggled to adapt to new ways of working.

The research was carried out in one school and most young people involved had an idea of their aspiration. A larger sample may have yielded different results as could a variety of approaches such as streaming young people dependent on their level of engagement within the school. Although initial interviews were carried out with all young people taking part in the project, only six contributed to the research as only young people who returned parental permission to take part in pre-placement and post placement interviews were included in the sample. This amounted to a sample of twenty percent of young people taking part. Access to participants was restricted due to timetable considerations and time for interviews was restricted to fifty minutes. Some interviews with young people had to be split into two sessions and as a result some young people interviewed had more time than others to think about their

responses. Responses of the young person were based on one placement where a different placement may have given different data.

Interviews can also be a limited form of gathering evidence as opinions can be influenced by others within the structure such as parents, support workers, teachers, employers or myself. People sometimes say what they think someone else wants to hear.

It was assumed that the young person had no formed opinion of the governance of the project, however, as parental consent was required for attendance and young people were required to comply with conditions whilst attending and this could have been an area where there was a level of awareness and opinion could have offered an additional perspective.

4.6 Ethics

An application for approval was submitted to the University of Aberdeen (Appendix 1) and the opportunity to take part in the research was offered to all participants of the work placement project irrespective of their role. This included young people, employers, teaching staff. Prior to each the research I explained to participants how data would be collected during their participation and they had a right to withdraw from the research at any time before, during or after the research stage prior to report writing. No participants have come forward to express a desire to withdraw from this research.

Using virtue ethics as described by Brooks, "*knowing the right thing to do and choosing to take this action*" (2014, p.24) was at the fore of practice throughout the pilot project. This was embedded in my values as a practitioner where the project was about improved outcomes for young people and remained focused on that objective. I was aware of letting the young person take the lead and taking care not to guide practice in a way which made organisation easier. Whilst gathering evidence during interviews with young people, strategists and employers, I was aware that comments relating to negative experiences could be expressed. Any comments which were not relevant to the research were disregarded and did not form part of the project.

At the initial interview stage, all young people involved in the project were given the opportunity to participate in the research. The sample taking part in the research was decided pragmatically as only young people who returned parental consent were eligible to take part in the research. There were six young people who returned consent forms and took part in the research as part of data collection process. Data from observations or conversations was collected following receipt of the returned informed consent form (Appendix 6)

My position of being employed as a practitioner within the role, although beneficial due to the employer being supportive of the research purpose, required careful consideration. As a researcher, I sought to ensure where my own experiences contributed to research process, the data being collected remained impartial. I felt this would provide the best possible outcomes guiding future development of placements for young people. I had a responsibility to remain unbiassed and avoid making assumptions about the choices of the young person, taking great care not to steer them in any way that made the organisation of the project easier to manage. . *"Ethical dilemmas are especially likely to occur when researchers who are practitioners are faced with multiple responsibilities and sensitivities"* (Mauthner M, Birch M., et al, 2012, p.70). Consultations with managers, young people, employers and support staff had to remain focused on the objectives, ensuring the young person understood their journey. This involved rearranging placements if the young person did not feel the opportunity was relevant to their journey, or cancelling placements if the young person felt they would be overwhelmed by the experience. The research involved practical organisation as well as interviews, therefore care was taken to ensure participants fully understood which information would be collected and used for the purposes of the research. As a practitioner, I retained my position of having a duty of care to ensure participant interests were protected and through practice was aware all participants could be considered vulnerable for a variety of reasons.

All participants were informed of how and where the research will be distributed and all interview recordings have been stored in an encrypted electronic file system. Participants taking part in the research have received assurance of integrity of the evidence given and requires to be treated with respect and honesty before, during and after the research process.

Chapter 5. Data Presentation

5.1 Introduction

The research began by gathering data from the previous system prior to the pilot where the aspirations of young people were analysed against their vocational aspiration. The implementation of the pilot project sought to reverse this process, where the aspiration was considered prior to the organisation of placement. I acted to ensure the aspiration and work placement were aligned to the young person.

The research carried out highlighted a variety of considerations in relation to how young people choose, access and attend work placements. As well as recognising the benefits to young people attending work placements, three main areas of interest emerged from the data which can be categorised as identity, strategy and governance. Each theme contains knowledge and understanding from the perspective of interviewees which can also be broken down and categorised as pupil, strategist and employer. Strategists include teaching and non-teaching strategic managers. Employers interviewed had experience of offering placements before the pilot project as well as the new method of organising placements. Pupils taking part had previously been offered placements through the traditional system, however it was felt the placements were unsuitable and the pupils opted not to attend. The pilot project took a different approach from the traditional organisation of placements which was reflected in the findings of governance. Understanding the journey from the perspective of the young person has offered a valuable contribution to the knowledge of characteristics which impact a young person's outlook of their aspiration post work placement.

5.1.1 Initial Findings

Measuring a sample of the aspirations audit against the work placement database revealed very few young people within the school were receiving placements related to their aspiration (appendix 2), with only one of the fifteen placements sampled being a partial match. The majority of placements offered to pupils were within a nursery establishment. Where pupils taking part in the pilot had been offered placements previously, it was evident their aspirations had not been considered as

all of the pupils taking part had no suitable placement offered to them. This was confirmed by pupils with one young person saying *"I didn't want to go on work experience. The only placements were in a nursery or a shop."* (pupil 5) There were no young people on the pilot with the aspiration to work in nursery education or retail.

5.2 Governance

On discussing the initial findings with an in-school strategist, there appeared to be frustration that pupils were not offered opportunities aligned to their aspiration. Following pursing of lips, clasping of hands, shrugging the right shoulder and raising eyebrows the strategist revealed; "*I had to say to the pupils when they logged into the system to choose their placement; if you don't see anything you fancy doing, just go back to class.*" (Strategist 1). These opportunities were offered as part of the traditional date matching system prior to the pilot project where placements are controlled and allocated from a central point of administration.

Administrative and organisational input had little understanding or consideration of the values attached to experiential learning and a mechanistic approach to the governance of work placements left little room for flexibility to achieve qualitative outputs. When tailoring the work placements within the pilot, to the aspiration of the pupils, it became evident more time was spent appeasing the mechanics of process (appendices 8,9 & 10), than ensuring the placement was matched to the aspirations of pupils.

"…what's the point, the system doesn't want to change!" (Strategist 1)

When trying to change the focus from the previous system, ensuring placements met the aspiration adding self-realisation to the journey of the young person, I felt that unnecessary restrictions were placed on compliance having to respond at one point with "*Due to administrative difficulties in processing the opportunity below prior to the end of the school day yesterday, I'm not sure if xx was able to issue the paperwork to the young person."* (email 8th June 2016). The tick box system was causing frustration. Further frustrations arose when the system couldn't recognise that local authority departments are generically bound by the same overarching policies and legalities surrounding the hosting of placements and yet much time was required ensuring employers under the umbrella of the local authority understood their

responsibilities for each placement being undertaken despite the majority of placements being supervised, knowledge building experiences as opposed to the traditional placements where pupils undertake a role with designated tasks.

> *"At some points, I felt like giving up and saying let's just tick the boxes we have to tick and move on – what's the point, the system doesn't want to change!" (Strategist 1)*

There were times during the organisation of the pilot where navigating constrictions of local policy removed focus from the purpose of the placements; it often felt the journey of the young person would be significantly restricted. Much perseverance was required to realign the pilot project ensuring maximum benefit to pupils focusing on identity and aspiration where each work placement was tailored to give as wide a range as possible during the week-long placement.

Using the CLD approach, where the journey begins with the young person's aspiration, challenged the traditional governance of how young people access, choose and attend work placements as it removed control of the destination from governance of the system and placed it firmly on the young person. The purpose of governance was realigned to meet the needs of the journey being taken and understood. Whilst sourcing placements for the pilot project, the system also had difficulty aligning itself to professions of a humanitarian context. Confidentiality concerns prevented placements for young people aspiring to become a social worker, psychologist or CLD practitioner and alternatives had to be sought within other areas.

Employers felt the governance of placements was *"…cumbersome and processes were repetitive."* *(Employer 1)* The employer takes time out to create a programme, carry out a risk assessment and complete initial paperwork which is returned to be put into system by a central administrator. The employer was referring to completing initial paperwork, twice if the placement was self-found. Another employer expanded to explain that they felt having to set aside time to follow through with a meeting with all managers hosting a placement with a visit for individual health and safety checks as *"unreasonable"* (Employer 2). For example, where the employer offers placements for four young people at different locations they would be obliged to

schedule time to release a manager at each location to meet with a workplace vetting officer from the local authority to go over the placement details and ensure each manager within the organisation was aware of their responsibilities as an employer in relation to the health and safety of pupils during the placement. The findings of the local authority officer are then uploaded to the electronic system where a job card detailing pertinent information from the meeting is created. The school sends out the job card and consent to parents, on return of consent the job card is sent to employers. All three employers interviewed referred to this as a *"resource intensive activity" (Employers 1,2,3)*

Throughout the organisational process communication with employers during the pilot project worked well at a local level. Using an informal approach to ensure the necessary guidelines were being adhered to meant employers were aware of their responsibilities in relation to ensuring the placement schedule was a qualitative journey for the young person. All health and safety requirements were met without employers feeling overburdened by repetitive processes. The pupils, schools and employers were more engaged in the placement purpose however upon evaluation, employers felt that more attention should have been given to the reflective processes following the placement such as feedback and communication between the pupil, employer and school. Two of the three employers interviewed noted that the work placement seemed to come to an abrupt end and there was no follow on to the next steps of a young person's journey.

5.3 Benefits

5.3.1 Employers

Employers feel work placements are a valuable source of giving young people the opportunity to build knowledge of their future career. It was also noted that pupils who had not been given the opportunity were *"ill equipped when entering their first experience post school." (Employer 1)*

5.3.2 Strategists

Strategic managers recognised the importance of work placements and clearly expressed benefits of the activity in relation to a young person's development with the definitive purpose being;

> *"To raise the aspirations of young people, give them an insight into the world of work, to develop skills and equip them so that they know what skills they require when they go into the world, to let them know the qualifications and entry requirements to get into the field they are interested in" (Strategist 1)*

This reflected the views of strategists covering a variety of roles within the process.

5.3.3 Pupils

Pupils were enthused and energised at the prospect of attending a placement within the desired industry with several daily knocks on my door from pupils to ask ***"Do you know when I'll be going on work experience?"*** or about the general progress of organisation.

> *"People have been coming to see me to discuss their thoughts about what they would really like to do. That's never happened before and I feel this is key and they know they're not just getting discarded to a placement they don't identify with for a week." (Strategist 1)*

All pupils were excited with the exception of one pupil who felt not ready to take part in the activity prior to the pilot project starting.

5.4 Strategy

5.4.1 Employers

The employers felt offering work placements to schools "*raised the profile"* of their organisation and provided a unique opportunity for *"talent spotting*" among young people who attended. *"If a young person shows a particular strength or skill, we would always encourage them to apply for apprenticeships" (Employer 1).* It was also felt that more preparatory work should be carried out with young people to help them identify with their aspiration. One employer found young people who attended the

work placement to *"confirm rather than explore" (Employer 1)* the aspiration were more engaged during the placement.

5.4.2 Strategists

Previously work placements were facilitated similar to being taught an academic subject as opposed to being a part of the young person's journey toward the transition of leaving school *"… it was delivered in a class and it was up to the young person whether or not they took from the lesson".* (Strategist 4). This system provided limited knowledge of how to relate pupils' life experiences to their aspirations as the original placements offered prior to the pilot were *"…in a nursery or a shop"* (Pupil 5) and young people could not identify how their aspiration was formed or how the placement would impact upon their future.

When comparing the previous system with the pilot project a strategist was asked; *"The previous system didn't link to the aspiration – at what point do we follow through with the aspiration in relation to work experience*?" Responding with confidence the strategist replied *"We didn't do this with work experience but now that we have an extra period within adviser time, it needs taught and the kids need to know why it's important." (Strategist 1).* Whilst recognising the importance of preparation, the strategist felt that this should be taught in a classroom environment and resourced as part of the curriculum; an extra period of classroom tuition on a ratio of up to 1:25 would close the knowledge gap of linking the aspiration. Other strategists felt that one to one or small group discussions with young people provide self-realisation of potential where experiences linked to values and identity of the pupils would form the understanding that this was a valuable part of a journey toward an individual outcome related to future aspiration.

> *"Work experience was not used as an intervention tool or knowledge building exercise; it was used to tick a box and say x number of pupils had received work experience." (Strategist 2)*

Strategic managers felt the option of organising alternative work placements where pupils are permitted to source their own opportunity proved challenging and unrealistic as well as the pupil identity not being met and pupils losing enthusiasm due to the expected timescale for governance. (Appendix 7);

"Pupils could do a self-found placement if there was nothing suitable offered through the system. To be honest the pupils at our school seldom returned a form as the majority don't have the networks to identify opportunities. The placements we did receive forms for were not high quality at all." (Strategist 1)

The pupils who would benefit most from engaging in work placements to maximise their potential aspiration had little or no links to social capital with one strategist saying *"… the pupils I work with don't know anyone who works."* (Strategist 2) The discussion led to further concerns regarding the links between work and qualifications;

"If a young person doesn't have access to anyone who works, they have to rely on what they know. The only thing they know is the education system, however pupils don't fit in with the academic requirements as they can't identify with the purpose of achieving qualifications." (Strategist 2)

Similarly, this was also recognised within the environment of the school with one strategic manager making the link to qualifications and the sense of purpose being;

"To raise attainment – if they are focussed and know what they want to do, this will raise attainment as they will know what they have to do to get there. They will begin to see the purpose of the subjects they do, that they are not just doing history or maths for the sake of it and it is a means to get them a step closer to achieving qualifications as it's contextualised and they know why they are doing that subject." (Strategist 1)

All strategists had an ambition for young people to be treated as individuals and a real desire to ensure work placements were of the highest quality and matched to the young person's aspiration;

"… I think the pilot is a lot more meaningful; I really do… I like that the pilot is targeted at the stage where a young person needs it most in terms of their journey." (Strategist 3)

The try it out Challenge where young people are invited to apply for a six-week experience within a career field of their choosing was also felt to be an extremely worthwhile learning experience in terms of ensuring a suitable work placement.

There were differences of opinion in relation to timetable restrictions with a strategist saying;

> "*…the timetable should not be considered as a barrier to the experience. Pupils miss classes for a variety of reasons such as sickness or appointments and have to catch up with work*" (Strategist 3)

Another strategist was of the opinion that flexible placements should occur on a *"Tuesday and Thursday afternoon"* (Strategist 1) as this is when the school timetable accommodates vocational programmes.

5.5 Identity

5.5.1 Pupils

The pupils interviewed were aware of their aspiration and how their aspiration was formed, however four of the six young people did not think they could achieve the aspiration. "*I thought it would be too tough because I was told I wasn't any good at graphics and you can't do the job without graphics." (pupil 2)*

More motivated after the pilot to fulfil their ambition and realising they did not have qualifications to enter university, three of the interviewed pupils sought an alternative route to their profession through foundation apprenticeships.

All pupils interviewed felt whilst the work placement was enjoyable and taught them about the practicalities of the career fields, there was a deeper realisation of the qualities which were required to fulfil their aspired role. *"I hadn't considered that being a sports coach would take so much patience and care."* (Pupil 4) The language used by the participants demonstrated that personal values were an important part of the learning experience. Using words and phrases such as *"trusting me; open and honest; helping people understand and develop; I didn't know there was so much patience and care involved",* (Pupils 2,3,4,5,6) demonstrated participants felt they could have an impact on the lives as others in a range of ways. One pupil changed

the aspiration from becoming a car mechanic through fear of not doing the job properly. *"Someone could be hurt if I don't fix the brakes on their car properly".* (pupil 6) Another said *"I think my values means I could do a job and help people. I can do the right thing." (Pupil 5)* These examples demonstrate the deep subjective connection to the pupils' values of impacting on the lives of others.

Comments such as "*I didn't know they did that*" (Pupil 4) and "*It was great, I learned about…*" (Pupil 3) tells us there was a drive for knowledge from pupils in relation to aspired career field and learning various roles within the context of a profession as opposed to a defined job role. Participants on the programme expressed enthusiasm when talking about understanding the step by step process of how the end results are achieved and how the tasks they were doing fulfilled their sense of purpose and contributed to the end result. Widening the scope of experience ensuring a variety of knowledge about the industry created a sense of pride in pupils that they were learning and achieving whilst doing something new. This featured high on the positive impact for pupils with one strategic manager voicing *"You know it works when pupils start talking about it during other classes."* (Strategist 3)

5.5.2 Strategic Managers

All strategic managers involved in the research were in agreement that the current approach required development to maximise the benefits which could be achieved toward the purpose of helping pupils in their journey. When talking about the identity of the young person and the successful connections to work placements, there was an awareness of the need to develop staff to understand the objective and subjective identity of the young person;

> *"I would like to see this move forward but I'm not sure we have the resources to do it. The staff need trained, it's unreasonable to expect them to pick this up and run with it. The idea moving forward would require mentoring teaching staff through activities." (Strategist 1)*

The strategist was enthusiastic about ensuring staff were equipped to guide young people through the process of linking their identity to their aspiration, however, the quote highlights limitations of resources and techniques within teaching. Recognising

professional approaches, other than teaching, such as CLD which has already had a positive impact through the pilot project could help close the knowledge and skills gap further for pupils.

5.5.3 Employer

When discussing pupils on the pilot and a pupil from another local authority, one employer noted the difference between the level of maturity in relation to the career aspiration with the pilot pupils being less aware of their purpose and desired outcomes from the placement. Getting the aspiration right prior to placement could help pupils to connect with their experiences. Employers were more attuned to the passion the pupils demonstrated for a vocation than the knowledge of the career area.

> *"If the young person has difficulty understanding how their values fit with the placement and the ethics of the organisation they struggle to understand the purpose of being there." (Employer 1)*

Employers felt the process should begin with understanding the aspirations of the young person in relation to the work placements and the placement should be used as an opportunity to provide further exploration of the journey toward a desired future. *"It's about knowledge and information of the career, but it's also about who they are." (Employer 3)* There is a desire from the employer to maximise the placement in relation to the identity of the young person.

5.6 Summary

The processes of sourcing placements and communicating the purpose and journey of young people to employers within the pilot project was well received by the school, employers and young people. Feedback between employers and schools requires further development, however feedback between the school and the pupils was very good. On return to school pupils sought to discuss their experiences and new-found knowledge with excitement and an enthusiasm eagerly trying to find out about the next step in their journey toward achieving their aspiration; even although in some cases the placement had changed their outlook of the profession. "*I don't want to be an accountant any more, it would bore me silly – I want to be an auditor instead*"

(Pupil 1). The journey built sufficient knowledge of the industry for the pupil to recognise attributed strengths could be valued in alternative roles. Making the journey less prescriptive for the young person with a focus on identity and reflective knowledge helped understand the relevance of work placements in relation to the transition from school toward a positive destination. When the passions and values of the young person were realised and considered during placement, the aspiration turned into an ambition and a vocational journey as demonstrated by the young people who sought alternative pathways.

On reflection of the interviews, the balance of each theme changed significantly depending on whether the category was classed as employer, strategist or young person. Strategists, although hopeful to align placements to the young persons' aspiration, were constrained by governance and developed a strategy to cope with restrictions of compliance within the system with little reflection of the young person's identity; employers were more focussed on educating young people with a view to future recruitment, with governance being a necessity to ensure compliance with regulation. Young people on the other hand were captivated by understanding how their values and sense of identity contributed to the roles they were being exposed to and learning about connections to their everyday lives.

Using terminology such as "*a nightmare" (Employer 1) and "the biggest challenge for us is the processes" (Strategist 1),* employers and schools felt work placements are driven through excessive governance and administration. This highlights an absence of focus relating to the journey being undertaken or of the links which create outcomes as the awareness of this is absent from the processes and governance. It is also worth noting where the aspiration was based upon values or people based professions involving helping others, sourcing placements proved difficult due to confidentiality and issues related to ethics; yet values were highlighted very strongly during the research from the perspective of the pupils.

Chapter 6. Discussion, Analysis and Data Interpretation

6.1 Introduction

Over seventy years ago, McCluskey highlighted difficulties around understanding the values associated with work experience (1944, p.295) and as the findings demonstrate, this is not a readily understood practice. The work placement system has previously been driven by systematic process as opposed to the identity and aspiration of the young person. The work placement pilot project was designed to shift practice from a system which is driven by governance to a system which puts the young person at the centre of practice. The purpose was to ensure individual identity was recognised within opportunities to develop knowledge providing growth to furnish young people with the necessary tools to make decisions which affect their future.

The design of the project considered four main elements in recognising a young person's relationship with the work placement. Two of these were catered for within the previous system;

- Personal organisation such as discipline, timekeeping, travel, independence and the ability to follow instruction. The young person comes to understand the practical expectations being placed upon them.
- Knowledge and awareness of the world of work and how the opportunity relates to the immediate and connected industries in a practical sense of supply and demand.

The remaining two elements, which came to the forefront of the findings through the research, are very subtle and require practitioners to forge a relationship with the young person in order to develop an in depth understanding of the identity and values they hold;

- The young person's emotional connection to the work placement, how they perceive their strengths, weaknesses, likes, dislikes and how they feel about using these in practice. Is the young person confident, scared or nervous about using their attributes in the next step of their journey? How they will be received and what impact they will have?

- The individual and cultural identity of the young person and how their values connect with the placement objectives. The young person comes to understand how the opportunity relates and affects everyday living and the lives of others and feels driven by the impact they can make.

The findings of the research have raised several points related to how work placements are sourced, allocated and undertaken. Concerns have been expressed by stakeholders through the findings where most people involved in the research were questioning the purpose of organising work experience as a systematic programme instead of as part of the young person's journey. Where a programme is in place the *"…identification and distribution of individual differences in work experience"* mentioned by McCluskey earlier (1944, p.295) becomes lost as programmes tend to focus on commonalities rather than individuality. McCluskey makes a valid point in identifying the values linked to work experience, however the this gives the impression that values are a transferrable attribute which can be contextualised into a formula. Why must values and identity be transferred into a programme? Surely if values are at the centre of the experience, the programme being developed should be wrapped around the values identified as opposed to being turned into mechanistic achievement processes. More thought should be given as to how these values are recognised and within programmes as The previous system failed to help young people to relate the work placement to their individual identity.

6.1.1 Initial Findings

In relation to the research question the findings have shown prior to the pilot project the system was operating on an any placement is better than no placement approach to work experience. There was nothing built into the system to ensure young people understood their connection to the placement or the purpose of attending.

"Why set young people up for a fall?" (Strategist 2)

Strategists who took part felt work placements should be driven from the young person and instead were being driven by a top down approach to service provision with staff trying their best to accommodate a system which limits young people's

ambitions leading to strategist 1 telling pupils to "*just go back to class if you don't see anything you fancy*". The findings also clarify that the views of young people are not widely taken into consideration which brings us back to Killeen in Watt, Law et al who referred to "*strategies and techniques*" offering *"rationale for those who control its destiny"* (2002, p.23) confirming the journey of the young person is created by external forces who determine what is in the best interests of the individual.

If the young person has difficulty understanding how these interests and values are aligned to the placement, difficulties arise as they cannot identify with the purpose of the knowledge they are being presented with and how this relates to their journey. The journey therefore remains stagnant and the purpose of the work placement is deemed to be insignificant by the young person.

6.2 Benefits

The benefits of young people attending work placements from the previous system was voiced in interviews with strategists who were not involved in the pilot project. "*I think it give the young person structure*" (Strategist 4) Benefits included more functional aspects of attending placements, such as understanding the importance of good time keeping, discipline, tidy appearance and importance of following instruction. It was felt simple exposure to a working environment was a huge benefit and I dare say for some young people who have never experienced anyone within their social circle of friends or family who worked this would be a step forward. However, I would argue that placements are not maximised under this system as young people already learn most of these things in a school environment. Prior to the pilot, the expectations of many employers were being met as young people are going into placements to find out about the industry ensuring the employer has fulfilled their obligations of social responsibility and engaged with the Scottish Governments DYW policy (2014). The expectations of schools are met as employers are providing placements for pupils. However, the expectations of young people remain unfulfilled under the system prior to the pilot.

The benefits of the pilot project added to the functionality of work placements ensuring the young person understood all aspects of using this as a key part of their journey.

Making the journey about the young person instead of about the system helped young people to realise the importance of the activity. They respected and engaged with the placements as it was driven by them and they weren't simply following an instruction to attend. They understood the choices they made and why they were important, bringing an understanding of what they were trying to achieve and build on for their future. Making the journey less prescriptive helped young people to understand what is important to them as individuals and how this translates into their aspirational future.

6.3 Governance

The organisation of work placements prior to the pilot project demonstrated that the governance of placements takes priority over the needs of young people which are not routinely considered. The system practiced confirmed that work experience is a "*tick box*" (strategist 2) exercise to say young people had received work experience, with more time being spent adhering to the mechanistic process of governance (Appendices 7-9), than ensuring placements are suited to the identity and aspirations of the young person. The findings express barriers which are felt by young people, employers and work placement organisers and is supported by the comment made from the Scottish Government policy where**;**

"Many feel the current approach is formulaic and does not provide a strong experience." (Scottish Government, 2014, p.37).

Price and McDonald et al clarify this further explaining the purpose behind some of the perceived barriers, introducing us to layers of vulnerability to be taken into consideration as well as some of the historical barriers such as Health and Safety concerns due to a young person's "*physical and emotional immaturity, their lack of work experience*…" (2011, p.89). Where some of the administrative challenges surrounding work experience processes can be easily identified, such as "health and safety concerns", the use of "*structural functionalism*" (Kidd & Teagle 2012, p.41) could also be construed as a format of unconscious confinement, limiting the choices made by young people as the system created does not cater for individual requirements instead "*overemphasizes the role played by consensus at the expense*

of conflict". (Kidd & Teagle 2012, p.42). In other words, the young person is in internal conflict as they don't fit into the boundaries created within the system.

The first stage in the Work Experience process prior to the pilot project was "*to do with getting the pupils to access the database so that they can see what vacancies are on offer and then apply for up to 3 vacancies that interest them.*" (Work-It Coordinators Guide, 2017) The language in the coordinators' guide refers to the systematic process of going through the "*tick box*" system referred to in the findings. However, there is no mention of enquiring into how the young person understands and relates to the placement. Surely the first stage would be to have dialogue with the young person identifying their aspiration and the circumstances surrounding this. The objective becomes tokenistic in demonstrating young people gain experience as there is no focus on the quality of the placement or the level of learning taking place. This questions the effective use of time spent vetting work placements if there is no method of ensuring the placement would be a valued addition to the recipient's journey.

Whilst organising the pilot project I found myself having to navigate restrictive processes which could have had a detrimental impact on the pupils involved. The work placements initially offered did not reflect the aspirations of the young person and when I tried to change this by putting the aspirations first and sourcing suitable placements, the system was not supportive mainly through the "*health and safety concerns*" mentioned by Price and McDonald. (2011, p.89) The timescales for this were so far in advance that "*Pupils forget what they have applied for, employers forget to schedule etc.*" (Strategist 1). The impetus for the placements to become successful was becoming lost with one strategist stating;

"*what's the point, the system doesn't want to change.*" *(Strategist 1).*

Being qualified to vet placements enabled me to reduce timescales for some placements however navigating the administrative process remained challenging. I felt the system of approval was unsupportive as the pilot project breached the traditional confines of approval and often had to escalate requests to a senior manager to make sure placements could go ahead as arranged with employers.

6.4 Strategy

Oxenbridge and Evenssons' (2012, p.8) views of young people only being considered after the perceptions of adults understandable in light of the findings as the sample of placements shows us young people were not receiving relevant placements prior to the pilot project. The pre-pilot strategy devised by the school focused on creating a coping mechanism in relation to obligations of governance, with young people's passion and identity remaining an aspirational objective of local policy. No-one probed to find out how the aspirations of the pupils came about prior to them choosing a placement leaving the experiences received during work placements to have accidental outcomes instead of a designated journey of self-discovery where impact is as a result of design through each young person building knowledge and making individual decisions. I previously carried out research reflecting on the experiences of successful professionals in relation to their aspirations and found their journey from school produced similar findings;

> "*All interviewees felt their aspirations were not created or led by the education system and most felt the system created barriers in their journey. Of the four professionals being interviewed, three had to navigate the system of rejecting hierarchical actions within school where decisions were made which they felt* did not reflect their aspirations." (Fisher E, 2015, p.9)

The reference from Sutton & Amiss relating to work experience being "supervised by *proper school authorities*" (1946, p.411) is questionable in light of the absence of understanding by staff including qualified professionals in relation to pupils' values and cultural identity. "*there was nothing on the system I wanted to do*" (Pupil 3) There is a gap in the system in recognising the journey the young person has travelled to date and the reasons for the journey and decisions already made;

> *"The gap is so great that the required subject-matter, the methods of learning and of behaving are foreign to the existing capacities of the young. They are beyond the reach of the experience the young learners already possess." (Dewey 1997, p.19)*

The leap from attending school to attending a workplace is vast and young people risk being overwhelmed by the experience if they are in the wrong type of work placement or have insufficient knowledge prior to participation.

The discussion with a strategist in the findings speaks volumes for the young person's journey or the lack of it where they don't understand the purpose of gaining qualifications with one young person clarifying the reason for attending school to be "*… because the council makes me*." (Pupil 6). Willis (1977) in Kidd & Teagle;

> *"argues that the function of schools in a capitalist society is to prepare working class children for a life of labour under capitalism. Working class children are unaware of this process and their involvement in it."* (2012 p.47)

Schools are measured in a statistical fashion ensuring that focus remains on qualifications achieved. The more qualifications gained by a young person, the better the job or academic course they are accepted for upon leaving school. Without the sense of belonging and purpose attached to a future career, young people don't understand why they are trying to achieve qualifications.

Many young people are reliant on the experiences afforded to them by schools and local authorities. Where a young person has access to capital, there is access to knowledge and possible work placements in professional areas of interest. Many of these placements are out with the confines of the local authority taking place during school holidays in a more informal method which means they are not bound by the same restrictions and policing mechanisms enforced on placements controlled by the local authority.

The strategy for implementing the pilot was a collaborative approach to ensuring the best quality of experience for each young person. I worked with school staff and employers to ensure the approach remained focussed on the outcomes set by the young person, going beyond the acceptable level of policy ensured young person's needs were met. *"I like the fact that the pilot is targeted at the stage where a young person needs it most in terms of their journey."* (Strategist 2). Pupils were ready at different times with some pupils not taking part as they felt they were not ready. Reflecting on this caused me to ask why anyone go where they felt they didn't belong.

Surely sourcing and allocating placements would be best provided by professionals who have knowledge of how the values and sense of qualities held by a young person contribute to the experiential journey and how the placement could provide further benefits in recognising the young person's individual identity. This ties in with step five in Erikson's model of acquiring a sense of identity where "*Identity versus role confusion - If in adolescence a sense of identity does not emerge the individual will be confused in making decisions affecting adult life*" (Head, 1997, p.11). The most successful work placements were those where the young person had a personal identification and sense of belonging with the concept of the industry and an understanding of how their values contributed the purpose and outcomes of the roles being experienced. Young people were captivated by a subjective connection to their unique identity where the sense of belonging in relation to personal values drove the success of the placements.

6.5 Identity

Prior to the pilot project, the identity of a young person was not the primary consideration in the allocation of work placements. Placements were chosen based on what was available within the system without prior dialogue with the young person to ensure they identified with their aspiration. This resulted in a position where young people "*didn't want to go on work experience*". (Pupil 2). Kidd & Teagle tells us that identity can be expressed through culture. (2012, p.7). Does this mean that identity is equal to a sense of belonging? If you feel you belong to a particular culture, why would you change your identity? Why would a young person put themselves in a position that was out of their comfort zone where they felt they didn't belong there? The data has shown when a young person understands and identifies with the values and qualities they possess, they become more motivated and enthusiastic about their future. The subjective sense of belonging could be the doorway to a better future where the young person understands what they are trying to achieve and how the work placement helps them to create, build or reject the individual identity they are presented with through participation.

"It's not just about knowledge, it's about the personal journey." (Pupil 4)

There appears to be a general lack of understanding within the system of how individual experiences give young people an understanding of how their identity fits the purpose of the knowledge they are accumulating. Employers recognised the importance of values highlighting that a work placement should be an opportunity to explore the inner sense of belonging with one saying *"It's about who they are." (Employer 3)* Pupil 4 thought the placement was related to knowledge already acquired from other areas and working with groups was similar to a teacher taking a class where the reality of doing this was very different. In the literature, Burke & Stets informed us "*identity is the set of meanings that define us when one is an occupant in society… or claims particular characteristics as a member of a group*." (2009, p.63) Followed by Kidd & Teagle relating culture to both the objective and subjective nature of culture through "*the meanings we give to symbols*" (2012, p.11). The expectation of the young person was that the placement would focus on the objective of acquiring, attending and learning about a job role as opposed to the perspective of subjective identity which considers the fundamental basics of helping young people to find out who they are prior to and during a journey of further discovery. The work placement was successful as the pupil was able to combine the objective and subjective culture of the role in relation to their individual identity described as "*the sense making process of active engagement between inner world of the person and the outer world of the environment.*" (Beard & Wilson 2013, p.51).

A young person on an engineering placement visited a school being built and expressed concerns that the designers had put the playground on the roof saying that *"…kids could throw things off or jump over. Someone could get hurt." (Pupil 2)* The findings demonstrate a deep subjective connection to the values of the young person, a realisation of having the ability to impact on the lives of others.

"*I can do a job and help people. I can do the right thing.*" (Pupil 5)

I found humanitarian professions became more dominant with young people who recognised the need to help other and yet sourcing placements within this field proved challenging for reasons of client confidentiality and vulnerability. There is also little scope to gain such experience from the education system; for example, health and fitness is represented through qualifications in physical education, science is represented through physics, chemistry and biology, expressive arts are represented

through art and drama, politics is represented through history, geography and modern studies. However, there are no curricular subjects directly linked to the humanitarian professions such as social worker, CLD worker, welfare rights worker etc. How does a young person take part in a journey when their aspiration is to help other people and they have no access to experience which allows them to explore this?

6.6 Summary

There is an imbalance of strategy, governance and identity where the young person's morals, identity and values hold little worth and come second to statistics and economic outputs. Much of this was highlighted in various parts of the literature, however particular emphasis on the young person's lack of identity was summed up well in relation to work experience by Price et al when suggesting *"…we have little understanding of how young people construct their identities as workers…"* (2011, p.10). Elliot gives a good understanding of how the values held contribute to the outcomes of each young person in balance with the search for an end result and recognises that "*concrete objectives*" (Elliot, 1991, p.51) cannot be set as a goal to work towards.

Vicarious knowledge is often used as a substitute for experiential learning when preparing young people for their future. (Dewey 1997) Young people's identification with a work placement is not just about the knowledge held, it's about the journey of how the young person relates their identity to the knowledge they possess. In the absence of this understanding, those responsible for guiding and supporting the journey of the young person use a mechanistic process as a replacement for knowledge, experience and confidence in their decisions and advice. The pupil scheduled to attend a hairdressing placement mentioned in the introduction was driven by teaching, careers and support staff guiding the young person, which led to decisions being made on her behalf as described by Oxenbridge and Evensson (2012, p.8) or influenced as described by Killeen in Watt et al (2002, p.25). Through intensive interaction with CLD practices, the same process introduced in the pilot project, the young person's aspiration was found to be social work as there was an understanding of social circumstances related to personal experience. Using CLD

techniques to help pupils recognise how their aspiration was formed and how their values and personal qualities contributed to their future had a sense of belonging and could identify with the knowledge they were receiving within the placements.

> *"I enjoyed visiting the school that was being built and seeing how it's different from this one" (Pupil 2)*

The ability to relate parts of the work placements within the pilot programme to the young persons' experiences created an anchor for the pupils to hold on to whilst venturing into unknown territory creating new experiences and building on the knowledge already accumulated;

> *"I saw the wiring in the new school being fitted and now I'm back at school I look at the walls and imagine where the wiring is running behind them"* (Pupil 2)

Linking the work placement to existing personal knowledge meant there was not too far a leap for the young person as the identification to existing knowledge challenged the young person from a safe baseline of support helping pupils to recognise their subjective identity.

One strategist talks about training teaching staff to understand the values and identity held by a young person relating to their future. (Strategist 1) This deserves further analysis;

- CLD practitioners are already trained in the subjective identity of the young person and the reflective process which adds meaning to the values held by the young person. What qualities do teaching staff have that would benefit the process of work placements more than CLD practices?
- If a young person is not engaging with school, why would they engage in activities organised by teaching staff or the school?

It is important to realise learning from work placements is not a standalone activity and forms part of a journey for the young person during their transition. The findings demonstrate that the work placement system prior to the pilot project has become a mechanism to feed employers what they need in a capitalist society. When developing young people within education, it becomes automatic to source methods enabling teaching staff to fulfil CLD roles through upskilling however engaging with

CLD techniques through a CLD practitioner when delivering the pilot project allowed young people to link work placements to existing personal knowledge making the experience enjoyable as it was not too far a leap to transfer the knowledge gained into everyday living.

Chapter 7. Implications of Research

7.1 Practice and Recommendations

This research journey has influenced and altered my CLD practice, I have built upon abilities and techniques related to contact time with young people. I have reflected on this as a process in the concluding chapter of this document however, the direct result on my own practices is a deeper understanding of the young person's journey through open and transparent dialogue. Although I felt I practiced this method previously, I am now more aware of how the process of change was directed towards statistical outcomes.

The approach in place prior to the pilot project demonstrated a lack of understanding of the subjective journey taken by the individual. The work experience system prior to the pilot was reactive to the needs of policy and fulfilled the local authority's statutory obligation of service provision where;

> *"…school pupils are entitled to undertake a period of work experience from 1 May in their S3 year if they are going to reach school leaving age either during their S4 year or at the end of the Christmas term of their S5 year." (Scottish Government 2008)*

The government policy for the provision of work placements was being fulfilled only in part as it also states*: "The essential purpose of an effective work experience programme is to enhance the education of young people and their understanding of the world of work."* (Scottish Government 2008). Recommendations would include policy makers shifting practice from the strategy of starting with sourcing placements and towards finding out how the young person's identity links to their aspiration then sourcing placements which furthers this.

Practitioners engaging young people in reflective techniques to make decisions for their future should have confidence that systems and processes supporting this activity will be both protective and supportive. The primary responsibility for health and safety falls on the employer and the creation of a system ensuring the employer understands they are accountable could alleviate the burden of policing from the local authority. Perhaps a service level agreement for major employers, particularly

those in the public sector, may cancel out the requirement for a visit each time a young person wanted to attend a work placement. I feel an overarching policy should be created to assist this and agreed by all directors of council departments to communicate the necessary working arrangements to protect young people on work placements within the umbrella of the local authority. The policy should allow automatic approval for all placements within the council family without the need for further policing mechanisms. Where some parts of the process are important to protect the young person's safety the administrative processes should not be the driver of the placement, the young person should remain at the fore of practice.

For young people across Scotland the implications of this research has the potential to be far reaching. A culture shift in the way work experience placements are administered and delivered would be a radical step toward re-centring the young person as the expert in their own future, reinvigorating the young person's enthusiasm for their aspiration and handing them the reins to their own journey.

Among my colleagues are CLD practitioners, teachers and support staff. The implications for this network of employees in contact with young people would be widespread. It could be the teaching profession for whom the change to practice could be greatest. The findings of this study suggest teachers may need to relinquish some of the power they hold over young people and enable young people to have autonomy over their destinations. On the other hand, teaching staff could retain their authority but recognise the authoritarian approach does not furnish young people with the freedom of thought required when making decisions for their future. Work experience placements could be delivered by the CLD sector and youth work practitioners instead. In order for this to happen, a national shift toward greater recognition of CLD as a distinct professional sector which is uniquely placed in its educational delivery would be required.

In my considered professional judgment, it is the encouraging approach of trained CLD staff who are best placed to be having dialogical conversations with young people in order to build a trusting relationship where the young person feels comfortable in exploring their identity through open questioning and active, respectful listening. Decisions driven by the young person through dialogue with professional CLD staff could lead to a proactive approach in providing work placements which are

built around the aspiration and identity of the young person. However, a more realistic change would be for every practitioner in contact with young people regardless of their professional label (youth worker/CLD practitioner/teacher/manager) to help the young person on their journey of self-discovery by abandoning pre-conceived notions and learning to recognise that the young person is the driver for their own future.

Implications for other fields of practice effected by this research could include the broad range of organisations who organise and host young people on work placements. Following the pilot project, one participating employer submitted the concept for a business award and won the prize for “Innovation in Youth Employment” last year. This is an indication the pilot project has potential to be developed further to benefit other employers and young people. Work placement being driven by the young person through a CLD approach towards identification of the underlying self has the potential to make the system become more fluid. Organised placements may not be wasted through lack of interest from young people, employers might take more responsibility as they have designed the placement aware of the expectations of the young person and vice versa, young people might recognise the purpose of the placement as it would have clear objectives which could feed the needs of the aspiration. The mechanics of health and safety vetting of employers could also become more streamlined as the placements being visited would become more likely to have an impact on the outcomes of the young person and the ultimate outcome could be a higher number of young people feeling energised about their future.

Further research should be carried out in relation to the lack of opportunity to gain experience within the humanitarian professions. This research has shown any opportunities made available in this field give an unrealistic experience due to the young person being unable to connect with service users, understandably, for reasons of confidentiality and vulnerability of clients. In addition to this, a longer research project over many years could gain further insight as to whether the young person stays on the identified pathway to their identified future.

7.2 Dissemination

I have begun dissemination of the findings of this research through presentations to employers at a local and national level. I attended a national conference of managers to present ideas which sought to link the pilot project to giving young people opportunities within their desired industry. The target audience for further distribution will be all senior employees within the local authority education department, employers, teaching staff and CLD practitioners. The research will also be available through the University library. On circulation of this research I will host a meeting of strategic personnel within the local authority and present the findings offering an opportunity to ask questions regarding the research methodology and discuss recommendations of how the research can be applied or built upon.

I have also arranged to present these findings at the Scottish Learning Festival to interested parties within the education system. I am committed to working alongside other professionals to create/design a structure to improve the organisation of young people's work placements matching their aspiration.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

I set out on a path exploring how work experience could be improved for young people and whether the pilot project would create improved learning. I took an action research approach to improve my practice through social action with young people, strategic managers and employers. The approach I have taken is in contrast to Sutton and Amis (1946) who were also attempting to find out what work experience was back in the 1940's however, their approach was to ensure work experience was of an authoritarian nature "*supervised by the proper school authorities*" (p.411). The research has shown that there is still a top down approach where adults know best. However, this should not take away the merits attached to adults having useful knowledge and experience which could benefit young people through advice and guidance.

On reflection of this research I found my journey as a practitioner thought-provoking and worthwhile. I gained a deeper insight into how small judgements within systems and processes can have a huge impact on a young person's future. I found there to

be an imbalance in the understanding of the young person's journey from an administrative perspective. Everyone within the system appears to have their own agenda and is working independently leaving many young people isolated. The pilot project was carried out within one school and although I felt this was successful, it would be presumptuous to assume this technique would work in every school for every practitioner as there are varying levels of experience a practitioner could bring to the role. Finding out why the aspiration is attractive offers the practitioner a route into the identity of the young person however, each practitioner would be best served to reflect upon their own experiences and recognise whether or not they are the best person to advise or guide the young person within the individual circumstances present.

I feel my practice has developed knowledge of the benefits gained in engaging young people prior to shaping and attending a work placement. Whilst interactive dialogue was taking place with young people, I realised from a CLD perspective the that young person holds the key to their own destiny. The CLD approach helps a young person to understand the path they have taken which then helps carve their path for the future and inquiry from a practitioner identifying or questioning the attraction to an aspiration helps the young person to reflect on their ideas and young people who could identify with the journey leading to an aspiration felt a sense of belonging within the work placement.

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Appendix 1

College of Arts and Social Sciences

Ethical Approval Form

This form should be completed and submitted to the appropriate supervisor or School Ethics Officer for consideration by the College Research Ethics and Governance Committee.

Important Note: If your research involves NHS patients, tissue or data, or NHS staff, please contact researchgovernance@abdn.ac.uk for further guidance on ethical approval procedures.

BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM APPLICANTS SHOULD REFER TO:

1. **The College Checklist of Good Research Practice: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/cass/documents/CASS_Ethics_Checklist_June_2015.pdf**

2. **The College Research Ethics web pages can be found at: www.abdn.ac.uk/cass/research/research-ethics-and-governance-325-php**

3. **Information on data management, collecting personal data and data protection act requirements can be found at: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/documents/policy-zone-governance-and-compliance/data_protection_policy_April_2015.pdf**

4. **Information on University Expectations of researchers can be found in the University's Framework for Research Governance at: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/research/research-governance-304.php**

WHEN COMPLETING THE FORM APPLICANTS ARE REQUIRED TO:

1. **Consider each question carefully and provide details of potential ethical issues which might arise, allowing the reviewer to make an informed decision on whether they have been addressed appropriately. Applicants are expected to provide additional information beyond the initial 'yes'/'no' answer to the questions provided.**

   Failure to provide enough information to allow the reviewer to provide informed approval of ethical issues within the research might result in the need to restart the review process.

2. **For all applications, researchers must provide a brief explanation of the potential ethical issues which might arise when carrying out the research/course (e.g. justification of the need to use certain research methodologies which might raise potential ethical concerns) and how they are to be addressed. This should be provided in a separate Word document appended to the application. For clearly defined research projects/courses, the project proposal or course outline document should also be attached. Any other**

documents relevant to the research (e.g. consent forms) should also be attached to the application.

Code and Title of Course/Project: Med CLD

Name of Principal Investigator or Course Co-ordinator: David Johnston

Project/Course Start Date: April 2016

Application Date: February 2016

Signature of Course Co-Ordinator:

Recruitment procedures

		Yes	No	N/A
1	Does your research activity involve persons less than 18 years of age? If yes, please provide further information.	X		
2	Does your research activity involve people with learning or communication difficulties? (**Note:** all research involving participants for whom provision is made under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 must be ethically reviewed by NHS NRES).		X	
3	Is your research activity likely to involve people involved in illegal activities? If so, please provide further information.		X	
4	Does your research activity involve people belonging to a vulnerable group, other than those noted above? If so, please provide further information.		X	
5	Does your research activity involve people who are, or are likely to become your clients or clients of the section in which you work? If so, please provide further information.	X		
6	Does your research activity provide for people for whom English is not their first language? Please provide further information on how this will be provided, or, if it will not be provided, please explain why not.	X		
7	Does your research activity require access to personal information about participants from other parties (e.g. teachers, employers), databanks or files? If so, please explain how you will ensure that use of this data does not contravene the Data Protection Act and protect the anonymity of subjects.	X		
8	Do you plan to conceal your own identity during the course of the research activity? If so, please provide further information (e.g. that this is necessary for the nature of the		X	

	research, whether subjects will be contacted directly after the period of observation).			

Consent Procedures

9	Please provide details of the consent procedures that you intend to use for obtaining informed consent from all subjects (including parental consent for children). You should provide details of how you will let subjects know that participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time. You should also provide details of the processes for giving potential subjects adequate time for considering participation and for obtaining written consent. If research is observational, please advise how subjects will provide consent for being observed. If any of these issues are not applicable to your research of if you do not intend to address them for reasons of research methodology please provide further information.
Informed consent will be in the form of a letter posted to pupil's home by the school taking part in the research, this keeps the pupil's personal address private and protected. The letter will outline a description of the research project and what the research aims to achieve. Information on voluntary participation and withdrawal from the project will be included in the letter. In order to participate in the research, participants will be asked to return the signed counterpart at the bottom of the letter with parental approval if participant is below the age of consent.	

Possible Harm to Participants

10	Is there any realistic risk of any subjects experiencing either physical or psychological discomfort or distress? Or any realistic risk of them experiencing a detriment to their interests as a result of participation? If so, please provide details of what this might be and how you intend to address such issues.
No risk present.	

Data Protection

11	Please provide details of how you intend to ensure that data is stored securely and in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Please give specific consideration to whether any non-anonymised and/or personalised data will be generated and/or stored and what precautions you will put in place regarding access you might have to documents containing sensitive data about living individuals that is not publicly available elsewhere? If your research relates to the latter, please consider the consent of the subjects including instances where consent is not sought.
The research project will not have cause to access or collect any data which would usually be considered sensitive, however, all data collected was anonymised and has not identified individuals taking part or the organisation with which they are associated. All consent forms received have been scanned to create an electronic copy and saved in a data space with encrypted access only, hard copies were shredded. Data created from narratives or reflections are stored on an encrypted drive to protect the data received. As a researcher, I am placed in a position of trust by everyone involved in the research.	

Participants taking part in the research and the information entrusted to me has been treated with respect and honesty before, during and after the research process.

It is the responsibility of all researchers to ensure that they follow the College and University's various policies designed to ensure good research practice. This includes providing appropriate information sheets and consent forms, and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data. Any significant change in the question, design or conduct over the course of the research activity should be notified to your School Research Ethics Officer and may require a new application for ethics approval.

Appendix 2 – Pre-Pilot Work Experience/Aspiration Match

Pupil	Year Group	Aspired Career	Work Placement	Match
Pupil 1	S4	Sciences	Child Development Officer	No
Pupil 2	S4	Administrator	Nursery Teacher	No
Pupil 3	S4	Criminal Psychology	Teaching Assistant	No
Pupil 4	S4	Beautician	Nursery Teacher	No
Pupil 5	S4	Fashion	Nursery Teacher	No
Pupil 6	S4	Nursing Care	Nursery Teacher	Partial
Pupil 7	S4	Computing & ICT	IT	Yes
Pupil 8	S4	Nurse	Pupil Support Teacher	No
Pupil 9	S4	Public Relations	Nursery Teacher	No
Pupil 10	S4	Sport & Leisure	Technician	No
Pupil 11	S4	Arts & Social Sciences	Nursery Teacher	No
Pupil 12	S4	Social Care & Advisory	Nursery Teacher	No
Pupil 13	S4	Security & Protective Services	Child Development Officer	No
Pupil 14	S4	Performing Arts	Shop Assistant	No
Pupil 15	S4	Science & Mathematics	Chef	No

Appendix 3 – Aspiration changes

Pupil Name	Career Aspiration/Role	Aspiration result Following Initial Discussion	Provider	Duties	Chosen Dates	Aspiration Following Placement
Pupil 1	Accountant/Finance	No Change	Corporate Finance	Variety of roles within finance including accountancy, general finance and auditing sections.	Week Commencing 15/02/16	Now wants to be an auditor - dislikes accountancy and finds it boring
Pupil 2	Engineer	Electrical Engineer	Corporate Regeneration	Project support to design electrical systems for buildings.Varied programme across sector from a managers perspective including site visits.	Week Commencing 04/04/16	Electrical Engineer - More confident at being able to achieve aspiration
Pupil 3	Hospitality	Photography	Corporate Graphics Team	Shadow photographer gaining insight to the skills required to enter the profession. Pupil should bring own camera if possible and will receive the opportunity to build a portfolio of work.	Week Commencing 04/04/17	Photography - More confident at being able photographer achieve aspiration and has taken steps to arrange further work placements on own initiative
Pupil 4	Sports Coach	No Change	Corporate Sports Provider	Taking classes instructing disabled kids - finding out about the governance attached to sports coaching and the route to professional input.	Week Commencing 06/06/16	Sports therapy with disabled children. Likes the idea of being able to help people within a job role.
Pupil 5	Nurse/midwife - Adults	Any Healthcare	Local Hospital	Career Insight Programme (Appendix ??) Participants will receive an overview of services within the health service	Week Commencing 13/06/16	Nursing - pupil has now registered for vocational qualifications where previously aspired to attend university.
Pupil 6	Mechanic	No Change	Car franchise	Overview of becoming a mechanic, what the role involves, the knowledge required & responsibilities attached to the remit.	Week Commencing 15/02/16	Something outdoors - thought if he fixed a car and the brakes failed someone could get hurt.

Appendix 4 - Interview Schedule

Research Participant	Pre-placement discussion	Post Placement interview date
Pupil 1	08/01/2016 – 10:40	02/03/2016 – 13:20
Pupil 2	03/03/2016 – 13:20	19/04/216 – 12:10
Pupil 3	03/03/2016 – 15:00	18/04/2016 – 14:50
Pupil 4	19/04/2016 – 15:50	22/06/2016 – 15:00
Pupil 5	31/03/2016 – 10:45	20/06/2016 – 15:00
Pupil 6	11/01/2016 – 12:10	26/02/2016 – 14:10
Strategist 1	07/01/2016 – 10:00	21/06/2016 – 16:30
Strategist 2	12/01/2016 – 14:00	N/A
Strategist 3	15/12/2016 – 11:00	23/06/2016 – 13:20
Strategist 4	14/01/2016 – 15:30	N/A
Employer 1	28/01/2016 – 13:00	29/02/2016 – 10:30
Employer 2	03/03/2016 – 10:00	10/05/2016 – 15:00
Employer 3	22/03/2016 – 10:00	14/06/2016 – 14:30

Appendix 5 – Sample Pilot Project Programme

CAREER INSIGHT PROGRAMME TIME TABLE		
MONDAY	**13/6**	
START	**END**	**Service**
09:15	10:00	Introduction to the week and orientation session
10:00	10:45	e-health Information Governance – Data Protection and Data Management *Case Study discussion and Q&A session*
		BREAK
11:00	12:10	Medical Records and Medical Administration – Departmental Tour
		LUNCH BREAK
13:00	15:30	Financial Governance – Counter Fraud, Payroll, Procurement and Health and Safety *Case Study discussion, Q&A sessions and Department Tour (Ward Products)*
TUESDAY	14/6	
START	**END**	**Service**
9:15	9:30	Learning log completion
09:30	10:45	Nursing - Interactive demonstration
		BREAK
11:00	12:10	Radiology – Interactive demonstration and Departmental Tour
		LUNCH BREAK
13:00	15:30	Laboratory Medicine - Interactive demonstration and Departmental Tour
WEDNESDAY	15/6	
START	**END**	**Service**
09:15	09:30	Learning Log completion
09:30	12:00	Occupational and Physiotherapy - Interactive demonstration and Departmental Tour *Short Break at some point during session*
		LUNCH BREAK
12:45	14:45	Pharmacy - Interactive demonstration and Departmental Tour
		BREAK

Appendix 6 – Consent Letter

Dear

I am currently the employment and skills adviser at XXX School. I am also a student undertaking research at the University of Aberdeen as part of a Med (CLD), Work Based Practice qualification. I am conducting research exploring the experiences of those involved in work experience through a pilot project trying to ensure each young person receives a work placement suited to their aspiration.

The project will discuss the how xxx reached their desired career, explore whether or not they have looked into this and where appropriate, provide alternative options to meet their needs. I would like to request consent for xxx to take part in the research I am conducting as part of the project which will explore the journey xxx has taken. The research involves 2 interviews and attendance at a work placement for one week. Work placements attendance will be scheduled to take place in February, April and June. Interviews will take place within the school environment and will engage discussion regarding the journey taken before during and after the work placement.

The research has been approved by the University of Aberdeen and xxx High School. Participation in the research is voluntary and participants have the right to withdraw their consent at any point of time until the final report is written (August 2016). Please email the address below to notify withdrawal.

The information published for this research will be held by me as the researcher and by the University of Aberdeen. I will be taking notes of conversations and actions during interviews and focus group discussions, taking place periodically between March and June 2016. All information collected will be confidential, treated with sensitivity and individual identity will remain anonymous. Your commitment to taking part will assist the research by looking at various career options and the journey each person takes when making decisions for their future. I am asking for your permission to use stories, journeys and reactions that are given within meetings and groupwork sessions. If you would like to discuss this in any detail, please do not hesitate to contact me by email initially at Elisha.fisher.13@aberdeen.ac.uk
I hope you can take part in the study and that you find exploring the information to be a rewarding exercise.

Kind Regards

Elisha Fisher

I hereby give consent for participation in the research study described above.

Pint Name _____

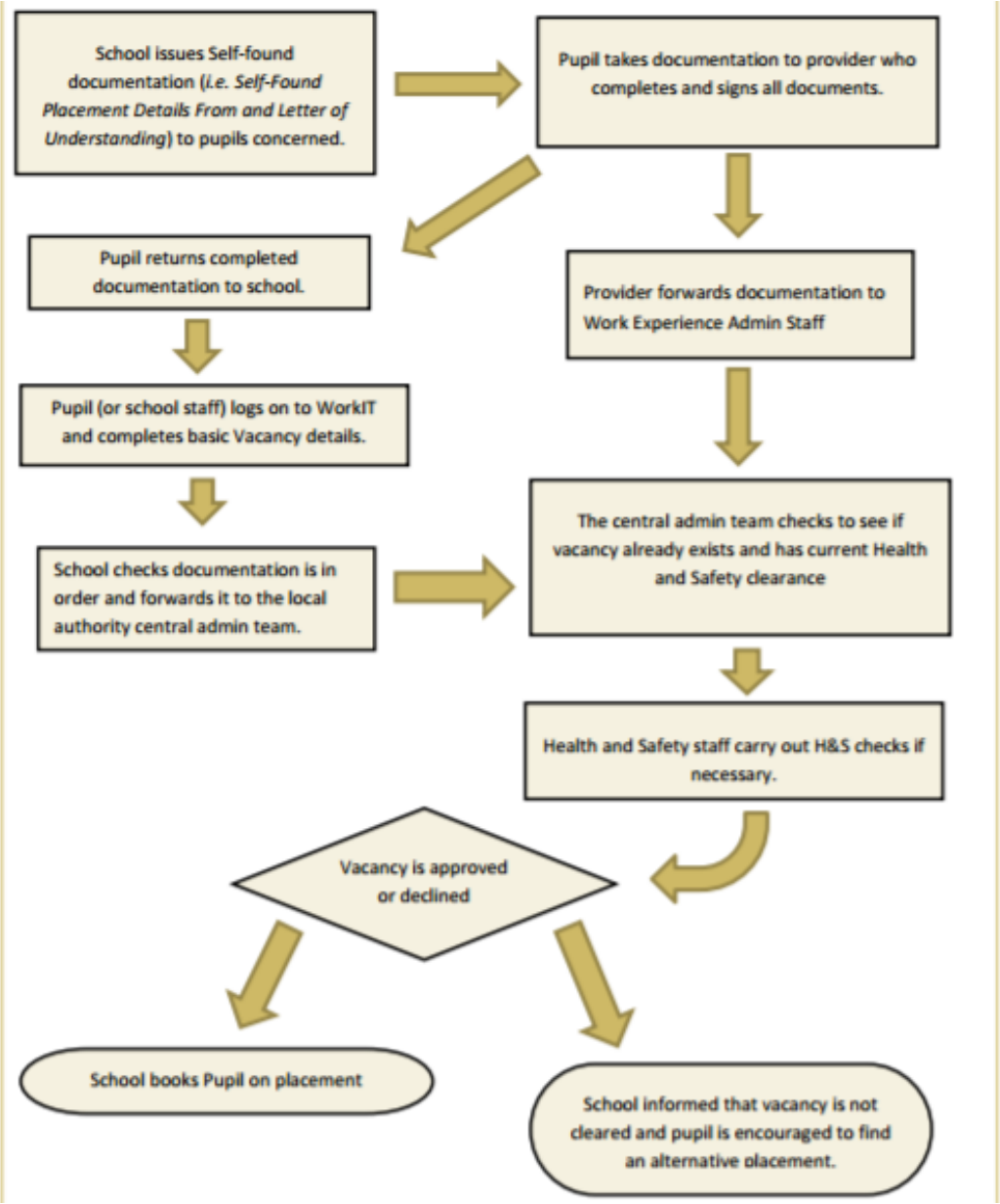
Signature *(Participant)* _____

Signature *(Guardian)* _____

(if required)

Date: ____ / ____ /2016

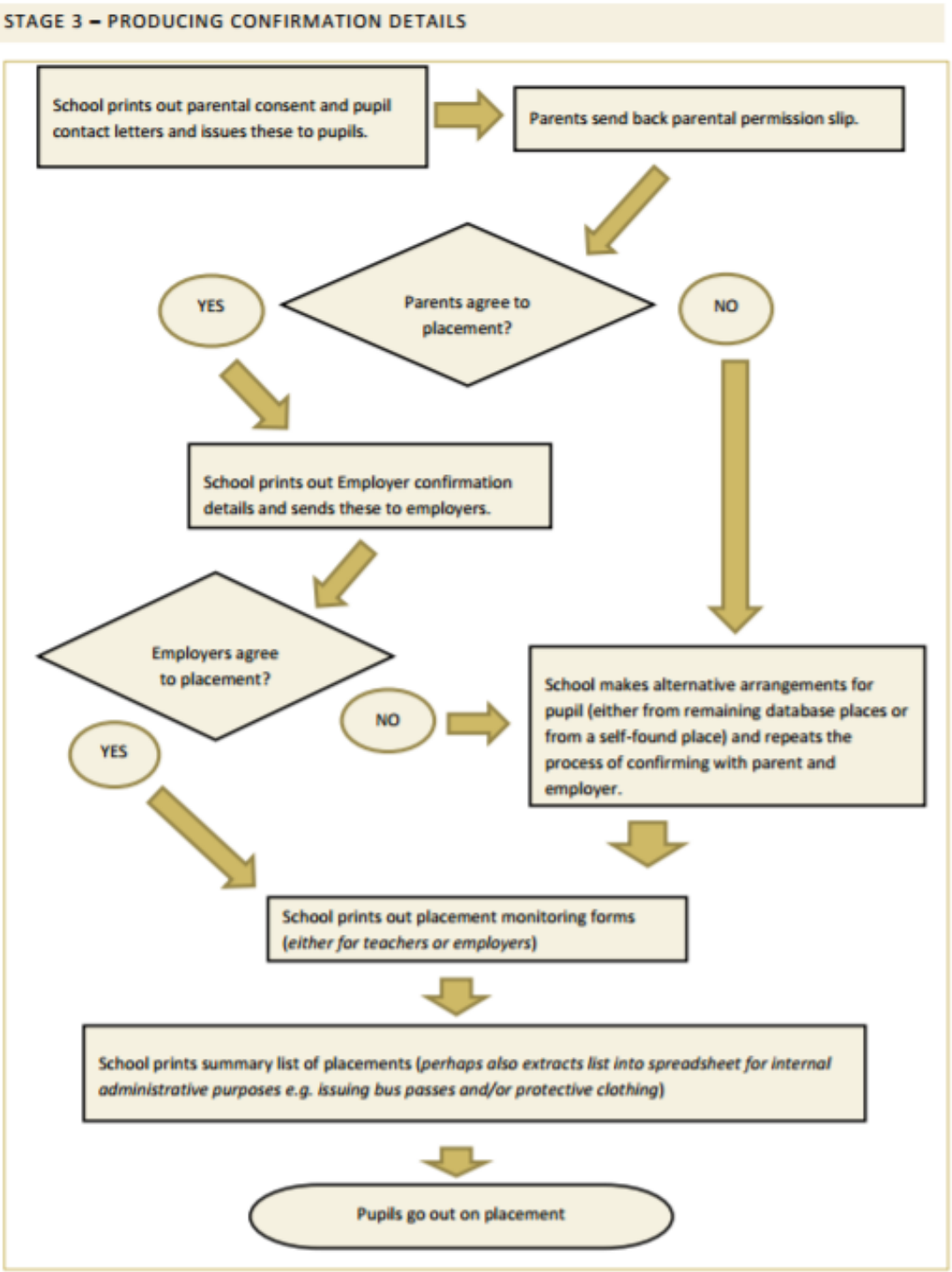
Appendix 7 – Pre-Pilot Self Found Placement Process



existing schedule

Weeks Before	Event Details
6	All self found applications should be completed
6	Confirmation letters to employers/parents should be generated
12	Pupils should be making requests for placements
12	Teachers should be accepting/declining requests
15	Pupils should be issued with welcome letters and guide and shown how to access WorkIT
15	If finding their own opportunity - pupils should be issued with self-found documents

Appendix 8 – Pre-Pilot Administration Process



Appendix 9 – Pre-Pilot Timescales

Stage 1 – Introducing Pupils to WorkIT	
18 – 16 weeks prior to placement	Schools extract pupil data from SEEMIS and use upload facility in WorkIT. Pupils issued with Welcome Letters and Guide and instructed how to access WorkIT. Pupils asked to look at opportunities and make requests. If finding their own opportunity pupils should be issued with Self-Found documents to give to their provider for completion.
Stage 2 – Viewing, Booking and Amending Pupil Requests	
8 weeks prior to placement	Cut off point for sending self-found forms to your central admin team. *Please Note, after this period there may be insufficient time to complete Health and Safety visits and checks.* WE Co-ordinators check WorkIT to see what requests have been made by pupils. Requests are accepted or declined by WE coordinators. The situation is monitored by WE coordinators and they check: • whether pupils have still to make requests • which pupils have had all requests declined • progress of self-found requests

	as bookings are made, whether providers need to be contacted and information informing pupils what to do is printed.
Stage 3 – Producing Confirmation Details	
8 – 4 weeks prior to placement	Schools generate letters to parents and employers. Parental consent letters should not be sent any less than 2 weeks before the placement date, except in exceptional circumstances – please check with your Local Authority.
Final Stage	
4 – 2 weeks prior to placement	Dealing with situations where: • providers are not able to take pupils • parents do not give permission for the placement pupils have not found suitable placements