

HOW CAN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
CONTRIBUTE TO ENHANCING YOUNG
PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVE OF
THEMSELVES AS AGENTIC IN THEIR
COMMUNITY?

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Abstract

Government and educational priorities place importance on young people of secondary school age being active, having their voices heard and participating in their community. These may emphasize young people as having knowledge of, able to act on and change their social environments. A young person with an agentic perspective may feel they have the ability to change something about themselves or their environment for a valued goal; this may increase their resilience and adaptability to life challenges.

This research aimed to investigate how Educational Psychology can contribute to enhancing these agentic perspectives.

A systematic review of agency related literature revealed little consistency in definitions, little coherence on agency's components and no previous models identifying factors that enhance young people's agentic perspectives. Comparing relevant articles through meta-ethnography developed a model that suggested an inter-relationship of factors between an individual, their community and how they make sense of life there.

The empirical research used realist Grounded Theory to analyse focus groups with young people and develop a new model to triangulate previous findings. The resultant model has more explanatory power indicating how psychological factors relate over time between an individual's thoughts and feelings, their structural context and social interactions with others.

I argue that focus on young people's agency can be a golden thread linking many areas of Educational Psychology practice. The model may guide assessment and intervention facilitating EPs working with young people, professionals, families and communities to enhance young people's agentic perspective. Implications for practice are discussed. Further research and development in this area could contribute to increased awareness and discourse on agency; facilitating young people's pro-social and active involvement in their community.

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SYSTEMATIC REVIEW: WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT
ENHANCING YOUNG PEOPLE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL
AGE'S SENSE OF THEMSELVES AS AGENTS IN THEIR
COMMUNITY?

ABSTRACT

Human agency does not have a common definition or conceptualisation in the literature. It might focus on people intentionally, altering one's functioning and life circumstances, or on their capacity to act in and shape their environment. Current conceptions of the self may not be adequate to cover communal agency.

Government's current ideologies of creating a 'Big Society' may involve young people being seen as agents and seeing themselves as agents in order for them to be more involved in their communities.

A literature search was conducted using several terms and conceptions for agency. Following addition of inclusion criteria there were six relevant qualitative studies. These were synthesised using meta-ethnography. The resulting synthesis was developed into a model suggesting factors for enhancing agency of young people of secondary school age. The model was triangulated with some quantitative articles that were found in the initial search but were not able to be meaningfully synthesised in the review.

The meta-ethnography revealed eleven concepts that have an effect on enhancing young people's agency. These can be divided into the following three areas:

- Communal living
- The individual
- Linking the individual to the world

The model developed from this suggests an inter-relation of these concepts and areas in determining a young person's agency.

Little empirical research has been carried out using formal research methodology in this area and there is little consistency in definitions of agency or coherence on what agency's components are. There are research gaps in agency theory, young people's perspectives of agency and benefits of enhanced agency.

INTRODUCTION

HUMAN AGENCY DEFINITIONS AND PROPERTIES

There are several definitions of human agency in the literature, including:

- 'To be an agent is to influence intentionally one's functioning and life circumstances' Bandura (2008, p.2).
- 'The capacity of the individual to plan and initiate action' Onyx & Bullen (2000, p. 29).
- 'It is the intentional causality and process that brings about a novel state of affairs which would not have occurred otherwise'. Bhaskar (1994, p.100).
- 'People's ability to act on behalf of what matters to them' Alkire (2005, p.7); Alkire conceptualises it as an intrinsic and instrumental part of one's own well-being.

Based on discovered literature, I shall use a definition similar to Martin et al (2010, p.29) but adapted to link a person's intentional and reasoned action to their valued goals¹:

'Human Agency is the deliberative, reflective activity of a human being in framing, choosing, and executing their action toward a valued goal in a way that is not fully determined by factors and conditions other than their own understanding and reasoning'.

¹ I added the phrase 'toward a valued goal' to Martin et al (2010, p29) to include an important factor from social-cognition theory (Bandura, 2008).

In general there is little agreement in definition or clarity in the concept. This might be due to there being mixed agreement and clarity on the actual properties of human agency in the literature as well. Bandura (2008) suggests that people are both products and producers of environments suggesting there are four core properties of human agency: Intentionality, Forethought, Self-reactiveness/regulation, Self-reflectiveness. Dietz and Burns (1992) believe that to have agency, actions must be intentional, agents must have the ability to make choices. Musolf (2003) believes that social structure and agency co-evolve.

Paris and Young (2008) found key elements in agency literature, useful in searching and developing an understanding of agency. Table 1 summarises these:

Table 1: Elements of Agency Identified in Philosophical, Psychological, Social-Psychological and Educational Literature on Agency (adapted from: Paris and Lung, 2008)

Intentionality	Bandura, 2001; Giddens, 1979
Mindfulness	Greene, 1978a
Perceived control	Zimmerman, 1995
Perceived empowerment	Danielewicz, 2001
Perceived self-efficacy	Bandura, 2001; Wheatley, 2001
Persistence	Bandura, 2001
Initiative	Arendt, 1958; Bandura, 2001
Self-reflection	Bandura, 2001
Self-regulation	Bandura, 2001
Sense of moral responsibility	Greene, 1978a
Flexible, generative thinking	Greene, 1978a; Giddens, 1979
Will to act	Danielewicz, 2001
Motivation	Deci and Ryan, 1985
Independence	Greene, 1978a

In reviewing quantitative measures of human agency at the individual level, Alkire (2005) summarises five agency-related measures in terms of the different theories and issues relating to assessments. Given the definitions, ideas and properties above, quantitative measures seem problematic in dealing with the complex and entangled nature of agency. The summary however provided useful background information on different theories of agency and more key words with which to search the literature for my review. Other theories emerged from literature and I adapted Alkire's work to produce Table 2, which offers further illustration of the variety and depth of theory in the conceptualisation of agency.

Table 2: Summary of agency-related measures (Adapted from: Alkire, 2005)

Author(s)	Theory	Assessment (adapted from Alkire, 2005)
Schwartz	Self Direction is one of ten universal values that motivate human action. Self direction is independent thought and action – choosing creating exploring	-Definitions are local but may not be comparable across cultures. -Measures relative value of agency in comparison with other goals (not its instrumental use in furthering such goals) -Might conflate agency with individualism/independence
Welzel, Inglehart	Mass liberty Aspirations are a measurable intermediate variable. They are (partly) created by economic development and in turn provide a source of public pressure for democratization.	-Look at agency with respect to Public space only. (political agency) -Might pick up values of individualism (in freedom of speech question).
Ryff	Psychological Well-being across cultures includes six domains, two of relevance: <i>Environmental mastery</i> (being able to choose or create contexts suitable for personal needs and values); and <i>Autonomy</i> (is self-determining and independent)	-Source lists for psychological well-being were biased. -Questionnaires would require adaptation across cultures. -Looks at global rather than domain-specific, agency, and the practical relevance of such evaluations needs study. -Measures control (self-mastery) and independence (here called autonomy) which are not the same as agency
Self-Efficacy Bandura et al.	People's agency has internal and external determinants; people can learn to increase their own agency. Self-efficacy is "concerned with people's belief in their capabilities to mobilise the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to exercise control over given events".	-Cannot discern if agents value the goals they can advance efficaciously. -Maybe policy-responsive -May be good predictors across Cultures -In some settings collective-efficacy may be a more useful scale than self-efficacy because they are less individualist
Self Determination Theory Ryan, Deci et al. 1985	Humans have 3 basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence and relatedness. A person is autonomous when his or her behaviour is experienced as willingly enacted and when he or she fully endorses the actions in which he or she is engaged and/or the values expressed by them. Autonomy can be distinguished from dependence/independence and from individualism/collectivism.	-Explores agency that people value and have reason to value -May be policy-responsive -Distinguishes autonomy from Individualism -Appears to identify a relevant and valued domain across cultures -Can be used with respect to different domains
Hope Theory (Synder et al 1991)	Expanded the definition of hope from the positive expectation of goal attainment to include two interrelated cognitive dimensions: agency and pathways. Agency refers to the determination and commitment that helps one move in the direction of a goal, and is considered the driving force of hope. Pathways refers to an individual's perceived ability to find one or more effective ways to reach his or her goals, as well as the perceived ability to formulate alternative plans when obstacles get in the way of goal attainment.	Snyder noted that the two dimensions of hope commonly, but not always, co-occur, indicating that both Agency and Pathways are necessary for the operation of hope.

This table is not exhaustive and conceptions of agency may run through other literature such as, Rotter’s (1971) ‘locus of control’, Archer’s (2007) ‘internal conversations’ or Tolonen’s (2008) ‘social capital’. At the moment there is no common definition or theory of agency though it seems implicit in many areas of research.

DEVELOPING THE CONCEPT OF THE SELF AS AN AGENT

Bruner (1996) sees understanding and a sense of oneself as an agent as a central requirement for selfhood: ‘that one can initiate and carry out activities on one’s own’. (1996, p. 35)

In some literature there is a distinction between the self as an object and the self as an agent (Carr, 2004). This is represented in Table 3 (Robins et al, 1999 p448; in Carr, 2004).

Table 3: Two aspects of self (Robins et al, 1998 p448)

SELF AS AGENT	SELF AS OBJECT
Self-awareness	Self-representation
Self as 'I'	Self as 'me'
Self as consciousness	Self-concept
Self as collection of states of consciousness	Self-schemas
Self as perceiver	Self as object of perception
Self as biological organism adapting to the environment	Self as a concept socially constructed in a community and culture
Self as an organism with capacity to learn	Self as a repertoire of learned skills
Self as speaker	Self constructed in language
Subjective experience	Narrative self and autobiographical memory
Self as organism motivated to achieve (conflicting) goals	Ideal self and possible selves as goals to be achieved
Self-regulation	Self evaluative beliefs
Self as user of coping strategies and defence mechanisms	Self esteem and self efficacy.

So, literature suggests an emerging idea of a link between the self and sense of a person's agency. Martin, Sugarman & Hickenbottom (2010) argue for an 'agentive personhood theory' which would influence how we understand and evaluate ourselves and our lives.

Martin (2004) argues that conceptions of the self found in Educational Psychology are currently inadequate for education. Educational Psychology is replete with self studies. To emphasise this, Martin (2004, p.1) lists thirty-two different self studies including: self-discipline, self-concept, self-image, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-regulation. I agree with Martin's (2004, p.3) proposal that these conceptions tend to be highly instrumental and/or intrinsically focused away from ourselves as engaged social people.

Martin (2007, p80) suggests three underlying conceptions of the self:

(a) The expressive self - found mostly in research and theory on self-esteem and self-concept.

(b) The managerial self - found mostly in research and theory on self-regulation and self-efficacy.

(c) The communal self - found sometimes in sociocultural research and theory in Educational Psychology, but not typically emphasised or evident in studies of self-esteem, self-concept, self-regulation, and self-efficacy.

Martin (2007) also suggests that three dimensions are helpful in interpreting the sociocultural and school contexts within which self-related studies in Educational Psychology are positioned:

- (a) A psychological dimension of self-control versus self-fulfilment,
- (b) A social political dimension of individual freedom versus civic responsibility, and
- (c) An educational dimension of personal development versus institutional socialisation.

Figure 1 presents Martin's (2007, p.84) idea of how the three underlying conceptions of the self fit with the three dimensions that may interpret how self related studies are positioned in Educational Psychology.

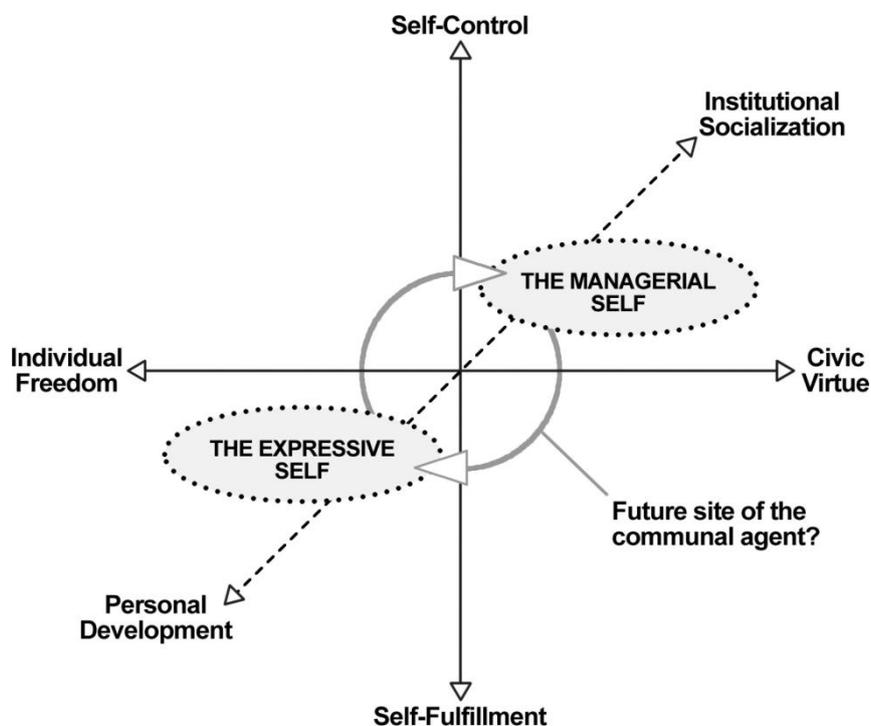


Figure 1: A socio-cultural, psychological landscape of the selves of Educational Psychology. (Martin, 2007, p.84)

Martin (2007) argues that by positioning its two main conceptions of selfhood in this way, psychology effectively offered schools and broader society a way of reconciling conflicting demands for the institutional socialisation and personal development of children and adolescents through education. Martin (2007) concludes that the hybrid managerial-expressive self is unable to integrate personal and societal demands of schooling with respect to the formation of selves as communal agents (hypothesised by Martin [2007] in Figure 1). Many theorists (e.g., Mead, 1934; Vygotsky, 1986; Wittgenstein, 1953) conclude that self understanding would be impossible outside a recognition and understanding of others gained by participating with them in joint social interactions.

‘It is because we are first and foremost active in socio-cultural contexts with others that we come to recognize and understand ourselves at all’
(Mead, 1934, p263)

Martin (2007) believes it is important that more communal conceptions of selfhood with greater potential to achieve such integrative reconciliation be developed, refined, and adopted more widely in educational psychologists’ self-related research. This was one objective of my research following this review.

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE’S AGENCY IN EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

Many argue agency is an important stage of human development, if not - *the* most important (Bandura , 2006). This is underscored by research on brain development that suggests actions of individuals exerting agency, shape the neuronal and

functional structure of the brain itself (Kolb and Whishaw, 1998). Viewing one's self as an agent may help a person cope effectively with life challenges and use adaptive defence mechanisms (Carr, 2004).

Hoffmann-Ekstein, et al (2008) reviewed Australian literature, policy and practice with regard to children's agency in communities and found that although they sought to support and protect children in communities, they do not acknowledge or work with children's capacity to act in and shape their environments. Educational institutions have been criticised for not supporting their pupils to grow into critical, creative citizens able to contribute to the development of a democratic society (Rainio, 2007). Some research suggests that the current curriculum and emphasis on testing produces young people to see themselves as a fixed object, level or label (Reay and Wiliam, 1999).

Rainio (2008) suggests that recent sociocultural literature identifies at least three ways of understanding the development of individual agency in social practices:

- (a) agency as self-change- transforming the object of activity
- (b) agency as becoming a responsible and intentional member of a learning group- a member of a society; and
- (c) agency as resistance and transgression: transforming one's relation to and position in an activity and thus transforming the dominant power relations, and creating subject positions in discourses and interaction.

Rainio (2007) conceptualises agency as both a prerequisite and outcome of meaningful, engaged and motivated learning. Rainio (2008) believes a central question for educational research is how students' agency develops and emerges in the practices of education. This is also a focus of my review. There seem many contradictions in education (Bruner, 1996) and reflected in Martin's (2007) three dimensions of self related studies in Educational Psychology that make Rainio's (2008) question difficult.

Despite this, there are government policies, initiatives and research that link to all the above and suggest that enhancing young peoples' sense of themselves as agents in their community is important at this current time in England (outlined in the bridging section, p50). I have used the word 'community' in this research to refer to what the young people may perceive as their community at a specific place and time. As young people may identify with several communities of such natures as geographical, school, local, interest or practice, there may be aspects of all of these that contribute to enhancing or limiting their agentic perspective. However, as I suggest the research has legislative links to Citizenship agendas and the Government's Big Society ideology (see p50), there is an implication in my use of the word 'community' that links the young people to being engaged with their environment and their social networks in the locally governed area in which they live. There are other areas of research and/or practice in education where young people's agency is an underlying element but is not explicitly recognised. This includes work

on pupil voice, pupil centred reviews, participation, resilience (Newman and Blackburn, 2002), children as researchers, children as learners, aspirations, competence (Chawla and Heft, 2002), control (Jackson, Kim and Delap, 2007) and empowerment (Alsop, Bertelsen and Holland, 2006).

FOCUS OF THIS REVIEW

This review and following empirical research will focus on:

- Exploring and developing a conception of communal and agentic self/personhood.
- Looking at how young people's agency emerges, develops and is supported.
(How individuals, schools, communities, families, EPs and other professionals can contribute to enhancing this)

Given educational and government priorities I shall focus on secondary school age young people. Specifically this review will examine what is known about enhancing a sense of agency for young people in their communities.

METHOD:

THE SEARCH

As agency is not clearly defined I searched widely using several synonyms of agency conception. The terms below in Table 4 can be located in the literature and can be seen in Tables 1,2 and 3.

Table 4: Terms used for the literature search

Target population and location terms: Adolesen*, child*, young, youth, teenage*, school, community, environment, social actor*
Effect and intermediary terms: foster*, enhanc*, facilitat* increas* Self*, concept*, views, sense
Agency conceptualisation terms: Agency, Agen*, positive contribution, Self Direction, Mass liberty aspirations, environmental mastery, autonomy, Self efficacy, Self determination, Resilience, mastery, intention*, positive activities, personal agency, self agency, empower*

NB: the character "" is included as a wildcard to be used in a search to represent unknown characters, words, or phrases.*

I searched the following electronic databases between the 10th of September 2010 and the 31st of January 2011: Ovid, PsycInfo, ERIC, British Education Index, Australian Education Index, Wiley online, Web of Knowledge, Scopus, Google Scholar.

Boolean search terms such as AND / OR linked the three sections above for specific searches.

In addition, hand searches were conducted of The Journal of Personality (29-9-10) and The Journal of Educational Psychology (31-1-2011) which were judged to be of particular relevance to the research focus.

INCLUSION CRITERIA

The inclusion criteria are a set of agreed conditions that studies must meet in order to be included in different stages of the review, based on the research question. The

following were used for the initial screening of studies identified from the literature search:

1st INCLUSION CRITERIA

KEY WORDS: (From theory and shown in Tables 1,2 and 3)

PARTICIPANTS: Children/young people. Ages 0-18

SETTINGS: Any / Community

INTERVENTION: Any direct intervention that enhances agency or indirect factors that enhance agency.

STUDY DESIGN: Any

PLACE, TIME AND LANGUAGE: Worldwide, 2000 or more recent (due to recent conceptions of Agency), English language only.

Titles, abstracts and keywords of identified records were screened to exclude ineligible studies (if specified in sufficient detail). Most exclusions were from agency relating to adults, agency relating to the business sense of the word and for theoretical conceptions not being closely related to the above varied definitions of agency. Despite the many conceptions and key words used for agency it is entirely possible that research linking to enhancing agency or young people's sense of it has been overlooked due to it being in the form of a different conception or vaguely construed.

This identified 31 studies. I wanted to keep the age for young people and design wide in the first search to ensure I had access to any relevant background research or discursive articles providing potential further detail. Further inclusion criteria were applied to focus on secondary school age young people and designs that systematically explored a direct conception of agency.

2nd INCLUSION CRITERIA

KEY WORDS: (From Theory, Tables and additional literature)

PARTICIPANTS: Secondary School Age (11-18)

SETTINGS: Any / Community

INTERVENTION: Any direct intervention that enhances agency or indirect factors that enhance agency.

STUDY DESIGN: Must link to researching and systematically exploring a direct conception of agency and not merely suggest that something enhanced agency in discursive terms or look at a concept of agency in isolation.

PLACE, TIME AND LANGUAGE: Worldwide, 2000 or more recent (due to recent conceptions of Agency), English Language only.

Consequently, 6 qualitative and 5 quantitative articles were identified that may contribute to my systematic review. It is noteworthy that the inclusion criteria did not change much and despite their width only produced a small number of articles in this area.

I decided that meta-ethnography (Britten et al, 2002) would be best tool to provide an in-depth focus on the qualitative papers that represented the core of the search. This involves induction and interpretation, and thus follows a similar approach to the methods of qualitative data analysis used in the studies being synthesised. Meta-ethnography is further explained in the discussion section. Findings would then be triangulated with the few relevant quantitative studies as these would not meaningfully synthesize by themselves due to being low in number, conceptually different and having different measures.

ASSESSING THE WEIGHT OF EVIDENCE

Studies included in the in-depth review were analysed using the EPPI-Centre weight of evidence (WoE) tool for qualitative papers (EPPI-Centre, 2007; Spencer, Ritchie, Dillon, 2003) (See Appendix 1). This used three criteria (A,B,C) to ascribe an overall transparent quality and relevance (D) to each study:

- A. Soundness of studies (internal methodological coherence), based upon the study only
- B. Appropriateness of the research design and analysis used for answering the review question
- C. Relevance of the study topic focus (from the sample, measures, scenario, or other indicator of the focus of the study) to the review question
- D. An overall weight, taking into account A, B and C.

Table 5 shows section D, the 'Overall Weight':

Table 5: Overall Weight of Evidence for papers in the synthesis.

BLANCHET-COHEN (2008)	PUNCH (2001)	MANUELITO (2005)	DAVIS (2008)	SKOVDAL ET AL (2009)	CARGO ET AL(2003)
HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH

QUALITATIVE CODING

The six qualitative papers were coded and synthesised following Britten et al's (2002) worked example for using meta-ethnography.

The first stage involved the careful reading of the papers in order to identify the main concepts. I also recorded the details of the study setting, participants, data generation and concept of agency explored; these provided each study's context for interpretations and explanations.

The next stage required that the relationships between the concepts arising from the different papers were considered. I looked across the different papers for common and recurring concepts. To be explicit about the concepts' comparisons with one another, I created a grid into which I placed the concepts from each paper (see row labels in Appendix 2). The first four rows of the grid include relevant details of the study setting and research design. From row five onwards, each row represents a key concept. A description of what each of these concepts represents is shown in the synthesis table (Table 6). The last row of the grid represents the main explanation or theory arising from each paper that was relevant to my research question.

Developing the grid, I used Schutz's (1962) notion of first and second-order constructs: first order construct refers to people's everyday understandings and second-order construct refers to the constructs of the social sciences. Thus, in Schutz's terms, the explanations and theories in the last row of the grid (Appendix 2) are second-order interpretations. In translating the studies into one another I completed the grid, entering each paper into a separate column (Appendix 2). Each cell of the grid was considered in turn. First, I identified the actual concepts described in the paper concerned; second, I made sure that the concept was encompassed by the key concept used to label that row of the grid. Thus, by completing the grid, I established that each concept in each paper was encompassed by one of the key concepts in the grid.

I then returned to the concept labels. I aimed to use terminology that encompassed all the relevant concepts from each paper. To enhance validity of the theme translation and label generation I worked with tutors as co-researchers. After I had originally completed the Table and found what I thought were the key concepts with examples from the papers, I sent a copy without concept labels to my tutors and to a non-academic colleague (See Appendix 3). Their task was to identify what they thought the theme was from the examples in each paper (and how they would label it). I also asked them to make a note if they thought any of the themes may be merged or if they thought any of the examples do not belong in a theme or should be grouped elsewhere. I found my co-researchers used terms that were similar and in agreement for labels for the themes that are now termed:

- Critical reflection and questioning
- Self-efficacy
- Planning
- Identity
- Social capital
- Self-sufficiency

I found there was a more obvious discrepancy among my co-researchers over the themes that are now labelled as:

- Decision to persevere in the face of social pressure
- Negotiating Independence
- Responding to context
- Learning.

This helped me term the concepts in a way that attempted to encompass everyone's views but also reflected the literature. I think the more discrepant concepts are also ones that the English language makes it hard to succinctly articulate. They revolve around social relations, learning and culture.

QUALITATIVE SYTHESIS

By reading the finalised concepts and interpretations off the grid, I could establish the relationships between the six studies. The relationships between them seemed to be reciprocal, from which a line of argument could be developed. In Schutz's terms, the building blocks for the synthesis were the second order interpretations of

the original studies, from which I constructed several (third-order) interpretations. I used one of my tutors as a co-researcher in developing these third order interpretations in a similar method to before.

The steps of the synthesis, including the key concepts and second- and third-order interpretations, are given in Table 6. In the Table, a line of argument is developed by considering each concept and second-order interpretation in turn. Third order interpretations come from how the concepts relate; a second order interpretation may be a specific example from the literature but the third order is an interpretation from looking at the themes and thinking about the second order interpretations.

From Table 6, I was then able to produce a diagram that to me represents the overall findings of the synthesis (Figure 2, Findings).

This conceptualisation of what I believe the synthesis of the papers is saying was triangulated with the five relevant quantitative papers the search produced. As these papers could not be meaningfully synthesised, they were individually considered along with other articles that were found following my initial inclusion criteria to provide further support or refutation of the findings of the meta-ethnography. They were also assessed for their weight of evidence.

FINDINGS

Table 6 is an expression of my synthesis. The papers revealed themes that formed eleven concepts of factors that link to enhancing agency for young people. These concepts can be grouped in to three areas (denoted by colours).

Table 6: Synthesis, including concepts and second- and third-order interpretation

CONCEPTS	SECOND ORDER INTERPRETATIONS	THIRD ORDER INTERPRETATIONS		
<p>IDENTITY Constructing an identity that provides a positive sense of self and is shared with others.</p>	<p>A) A community approach in defining and understanding self determination helps to enhance agency.</p> <p>B) Young people’s agency is asserted to overcome power differentials, cope with life and negotiate their role and place in their world.</p> <p>C) A Transactional partnering process between adults and young people is key for agency development.</p> <p>D) An agentic subculture founded on peer and group support fosters well-being in the given context.</p> <p>F) Agency as coping, engaging and protection of an individual in communities. Resilience. Agency as going ‘toward a social psychology of coping’.</p> <p>H) Agency may be enhanced from the Interrelation of: efficacy, intention, connectedness, engagement, reflection and negotiating social boundaries</p>	<p>E) Agency of young people can depend on a communally interactive and compensatory process.</p> <p>(COMMUNAL LIVING)</p>		
<p>NEGOTIATING INDEPENDENCE Overcoming conflict between desired autonomous goals and structure, rules or boundaries.</p>			<p>G) An individual’s positive sense of self and capacity for action can foster agency when outweighing negative self perception or communal boundaries (as in E)</p> <p>(THE INDIVIDUAL)</p>	
<p>SOCIAL CAPITAL Increasing social resource and ability for agency by proximity.</p>				<p>I) A feeling of being connected to something that links with a young person’s values or well being can encourage agency. This can depend on G (above) and be supported by E (above).</p> <p>(LINKING THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE WORLD)</p>
<p>DECISION TO PERSEVERE UNDER SOCIAL PRESSURE Intention to maintain doing something in the face of social pressures.</p>				
<p>SELF EFFICACY A belief that one has the capabilities to execute the courses of actions required to manage prospective situations.</p>				
<p>CRITICAL REFLECTION AND QUESTIONING Critically interfacing with their own and others attitudes, motivations, behaviours and beliefs in their community.</p>				
<p>PLANNING Strategic action, creating a pathway to a goal</p>				
<p>SELF SUFFICIENCY Increasing the tools, physical resources and competencies one has to use to assert agency effectively as an individual.</p>				
<p>RESPONDING TO CONTEXT Agency can depend on the specific communities’ culture and context</p>		29		
<p>LEARNING Increasing the learning process so young people move from being unaware of issues to directly involved in them.</p>				
<p>CONNECTION TO OWN WELL BEING Young people must feel that their well being is connected to their community. Something of value.</p>				

The line of argument which constitutes the synthesis achieved is as follows:

The first area suggests that there are four factors enhancing young people's agency:

- Young people may be agentic in order to construct an *identity* that provides a positive sense of self and is shared with others.
- Young people may assert their agency to *negotiate their independence* by overcoming conflict between desired autonomous goals and structure, rules or boundaries.
- Increasing *social capital* gives young people the resource and ability for agency by proximity.
- Young people must also have strong intention to make a *decision to persevere toward a goal in the face of social pressures* or they may conform to the same pressures.

In relation to these factors it may be that a community approach in defining and understanding self determination helps to enhance agency. Young people's agency may be asserted to overcome power differentials, cope with life and negotiate their role and place in their world. A transactional partnering process between adults and young people and between young people's peers may support and foster well being. It seems that, as the above factors are dependent on social interaction and the examples are based within community living, there may be an important communally interactive and compensatory process to enhancing young people's agency. I have termed this area 'Communal Living'.

The second area suggests there are a further four factors that enhance agency in young people:

- One driving force for agency is a belief that one has the capabilities to execute the courses of actions required to manage prospective situations. Therefore *Self efficacy* may play an important part in seeing one's self as an agent.

- *Critically reflecting, questioning* and interfacing with their own and other's attitudes, motivations, behaviours and beliefs is a meta-cognition that affects agentic behaviour depending on judgement of an issue.
- Young people may have a temporal extension of agency through *planning*. Setting goals and anticipating likely outcomes of prospective actions may strategically guide and motivate their efforts.
- Young people's agentic behaviour may be more likely to occur if they are *self-sufficient* by increasing the tools, physical resources and competencies one has as an individual.

In relation to these factors it may be that an individual can be resilient in coping and engaging by themselves in their community. It seems the above factors relate to individual perceptions, cognitions and resources. Hence it may be that an individual's positive sense of self and capacity for action can foster agency when outweighing negative self perception or communal boundaries. I have termed this area 'The Individual'.

The third area suggests there are a further three areas that impact young people's agency:

- Agency can depend on the specific communities' culture and context. Agentic properties may be a *response in a specific context*.
- Increasing the *learning* process may aid young people's agency by moving them from being unaware of issues to directly involved in them.
- Young people must feel that their *well being is connected* to their community.

Agency may occur from a young person striving for something of value to them. The literature also recognises the interrelation of many factors and a sense of connectedness to the world for an individual. A feeling of being connected to something that links with a young person's values or well being can encourage agency. This can depend on the individual and can be supported (or blocked) by

communal living its social processes. I have termed this area 'Linking the Individual to the World.

It emerged from the synthesis that enhancing agency for young people in their communities requires an interrelation of, attendance to and recognition of all of the concepts and the three areas these concepts may relate to. I chose to clarify this new model in diagrammatic form (Figure 2):

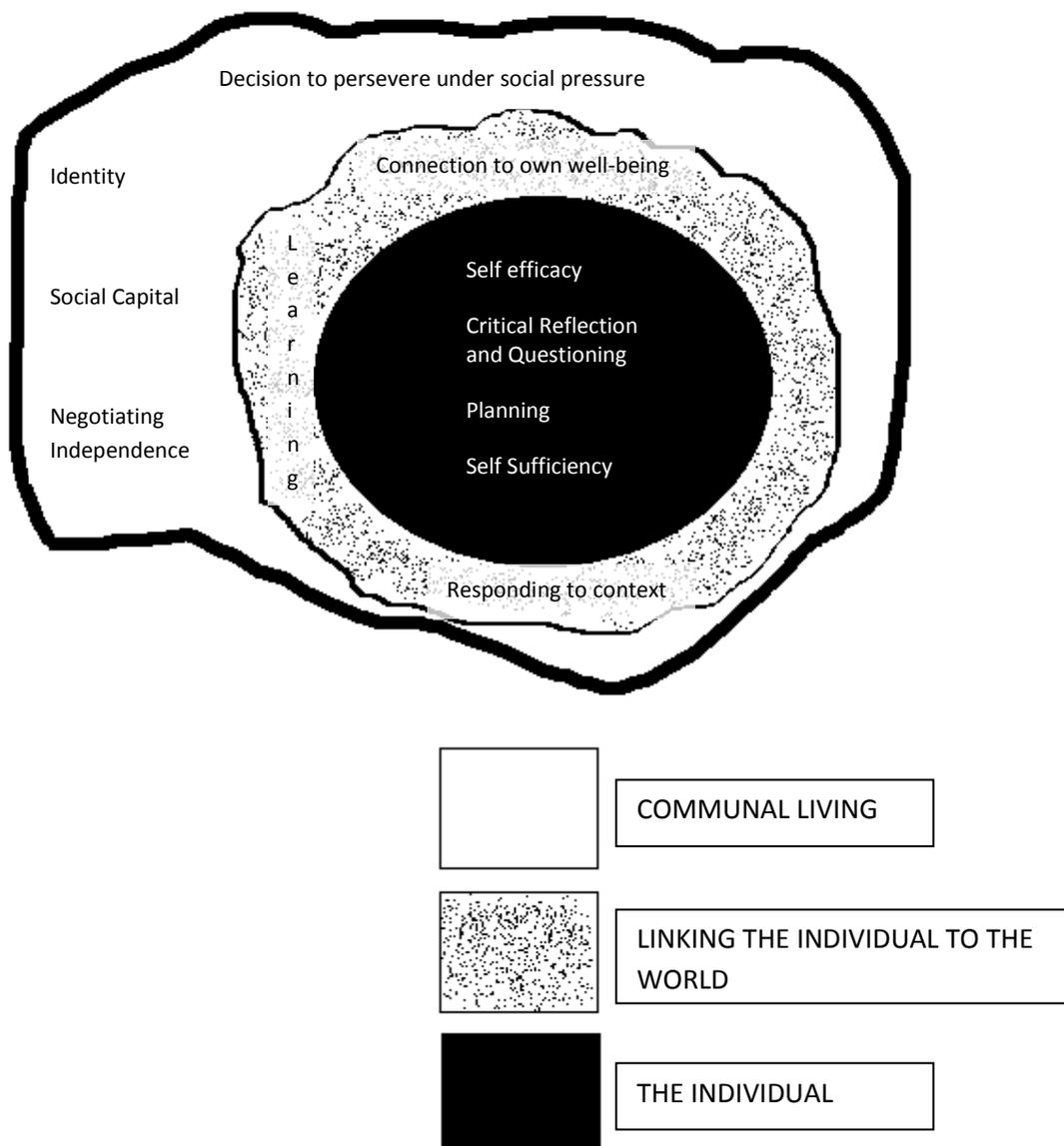


Figure 2: The inter-relation of factors from the synthesis that impact on enhancing agency for young people of secondary school age. The Figure is in the form of a biological cell as a metaphor for the interaction between the areas.

This model attempts to show the different factors literature has suggested impacts on enhancing secondary school age young people's agency. All the factors in the suggested three areas have an interaction that is fluid and has *flow*. These interactions are difficult to measure or articulate and therefore hard to represent diagrammatically. The model reveals inter-relation between factors, but does not explain exactly how they affect each other over time. My empirical research will attempt to give greater explanatory power to how the supporting factors of young people's agentic perspective interact.

To support or refute the model in Figure 2, I will attempt to triangulate it with the remaining quantitative papers my search produced as well as other relevant articles found following my initial inclusion criteria.

TRIANGULATION

Appendix 4 presents the papers used to triangulate the model produced from the synthesis. The table in the appendix describes the paper, the main area of research, support for the model, refutations or missing factors from the model and a weight of evidence. The table in the appendix shows support for the three main areas and many of the concepts in my meta-synthesis and model. It has also highlighted some considerations not covered in the meta-synthesis that may need exploring further.

Due to the diversity and difference in focus, method and samples it is difficult to give too much weight to these articles in supporting the meta-synthesis, they can only provide an indication.

DISCUSSION

UNDERLYING PSYCHOLOGY

This systematic review suggests several factors interact to affect young people's agency. It is possible to split these into three inter-related areas.

The area I have termed 'The Individual' links with Bandura's (2008) suggestion that there are four core properties of human agency (relating to an individual):

Intentionality, Forethought, Self-reactiveness/regulation, Self-reflectiveness.

Bandura (2008) also suggests that self efficacy is an underpinning driving force for these properties. The three areas in the model (Figure 2) suggest a conception on young people and communal and agentic because of the links between the individual and their community. This can also suggest how young people negotiate socio-cultural, institutional, and psychological tensions depicted in Figure 1 (Martin, 2007).

There is a strong social psychology element that is apparent in the area I termed 'Communal living'. This links with theorists such as Mead (1934) and Vygotsky (1986) who suggest that self understanding would be impossible without a recognition and understanding of others gained by participating with them in joint social interactions.

In attempting to triangulate quantitative studies with my meta-synthesis it emerged that Attribution theory (Weiner, 1992) may be an underlying psychology that is missing from the model.

MY REVIEW METHOD

Building on the explanations and interpretations of the constituent studies, I developed third-order interpretations, consistent with the original results and also extended beyond them. A model (Figure 2) produced from the synthesis is a conceptual development and new contribution to the literature. The third order interpretations are also middle-range theories in the form of hypotheses that could be tested by other researchers. As so few relevant articles were found, a meta-ethnography in this instance didn't exclude any qualitative papers that fitted the inclusion criteria. I believe that deciding on my method of review after the search gave a fairer representation of everything that can be found in the area rather than pre-deciding what systematic review process to follow. I think due to my subject matter being conceptually complicated this also meant it was best to be guided by what was there and being flexible in approach.

The overall process of this systematic review was in part guided by the literature and part emerged from my own reflection, questioning and tutor's suggestions on how best to tackle the results of the search. Figure 3 shows the process that emerged for me and is adapted from Britten et al (2002) and Harden (2005):

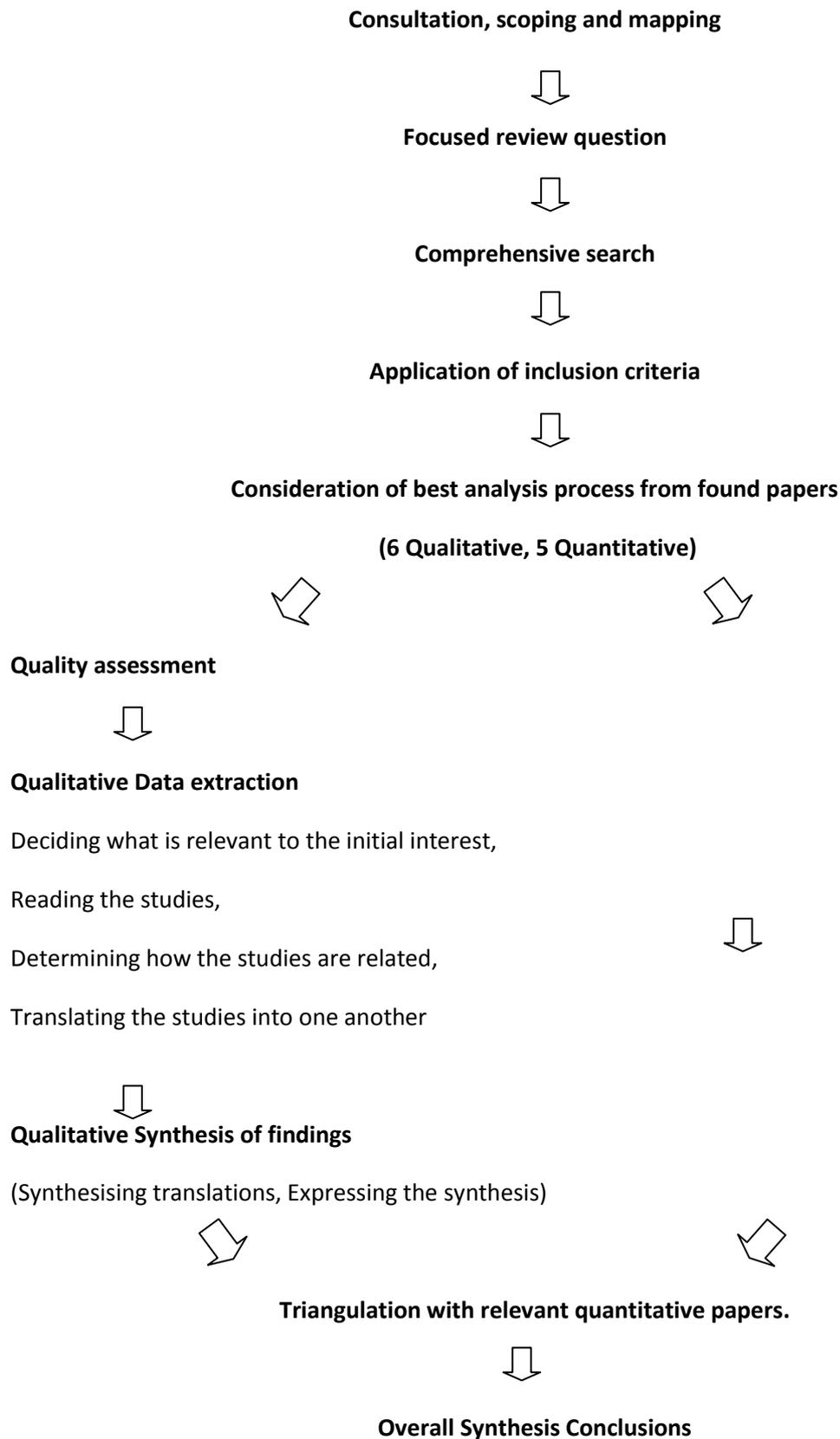


Figure 3: My Systematic Review Process- Adapted from Britten et al (2002) and Harden (2005).

The synthesis has assumed that the concepts are transferable across settings, but the model has accounted for context specificity. It has not assumed that the studies are commensurable or that the results of each study are specific to one particular context at one particular time unlike other qualitative researchers (Britten et al, 2002). The qualitative studies were from a comprehensive search of the literature and were from researchers worldwide.

As conceptions of agency, and agency itself could be argued to be interpretive, the choice of an interpretive method such as meta-ethnography is appropriate. To claim that generalisation is not possible is to deny the transferability of any shared meanings or generative mechanisms (Brittain et al, 2002). The assumptions on which the synthesis is based may be tested by inviting authors of the synthesised studies to consider the applicability of the third-order interpretations to their own work. This was not possible due to practical and time constraints.

The applicability of the third order constructs was triangulated with the few quantitative papers that fitted the inclusion criteria and with others found in the original search. Here I made further judgements about quality and suitability for inclusion during the process of the synthesis. Although some may argue that the quality of the included studies must be assessed before the synthesis, Noblit and Hare (1988) argue that the worth of studies is determined in the process of achieving a synthesis. Methodological details are relevant for synthesis in relation not only to quality but also to context. Care was taken to note when triangulating articles didn't

directly fit the inclusion criteria in order to be open and reflective about their use. The fact these studies were so diverse meant it was hard to meaningfully synthesise them but also pointed to the fact that research on young people's agency is complicated and not well defined. These articles offered support for the model (Figure 2) and further areas for consideration.

Being a single researcher undertaking a meta-ethnography offered its challenges. I felt the theme generation from the papers and wording of the third order interpretations had been affected by my own world views. Use of co-researchers (tutors) to discuss the labels for the themes and third order interpretations proved a useful tool and helped make the labels for these themes and concepts less subjective. The labels and semantics for the concepts can be debated, but I think the theory behind them is still drawn out in the model (Figure 2).

CONCLUSION

This systematic review has developed a model (Figure 2) from the literature that relates eleven concepts that have an effect on enhancing young people's agency.

These are:

- IDENTITY
- NEGOTIATING INDEPENDENCE
- SOCIAL CAPITAL
- DECISION TO PERSEVERE UNDER SOCIAL PRESSURE
- SELF EFFICACY

- CRITICAL REFLECTION AND QUESTIONING
- PLANNING
- SELF SUFFICIENCY
- RESPONDING TO CONTEXT
- LEARNING
- CONNECTION TO OWN WELL BEING.

These can be divided into the following three areas:

- COMMUNAL LIVING
- THE INDIVIDUAL
- LINKING THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE WORLD.

The model suggests an interrelation of these concepts and areas in determining a young person's agency.

This review has revealed that very little empirical research has been carried out using formal research methodology in this area. Further to this, there is little consistency in definitions of agency or its components.

When it became apparent that there was almost no research on sense of agency in relation to young people's conception of their self, I had to use research that was based on signs or symbols of young people's agency and some reported experiences that may link to agency. As part of the model (Figure 2) suggests that a component of agency is to do with individual self perception, I have assumed 'sense of agency' and 'agency' inter-relate. This also shows there is a lack of research on enabling young people to see themselves as agents. This may be due to a lack of conception of the self as a communal agent (Martin, 2007).

There was little UK specific research. Research was worldwide although a majority of articles came from Africa.

Currently there seems to be anecdotal and experiential evidence using different conceptions of agency, but little research evidence to substantiate any claims, benefits or issues.

There are a number of gaps which need to be addressed through subsequent research:

- An overarching theory of what enhances young people's sense of agency.
- The perspective of young people on enhancing their sense of agency.
- Benefits of young people seeing themselves as agents in their community.

BRIDGING THE GAP: REVIEW TO RESEARCH

AIMS OF THIS DOCUMENT:

- To identify the link between the systematic review and empirical research.
- To recognise the theoretical and epistemological underpinnings of the empirical research

IDENTIFYING AN AREA OF RESEARCH

I became interested in the concept of human agency from University discussion in the first year of the Educational Psychology Doctorate training course. This interest was furthered by my critical reflection on literature around the subject.

When exploring literature, I felt theory around agency (Bandura, 2008) helped me explain conceptual gaps I had from existing interests on efficacy, personal construct psychology, self-determination and meaning making. It also helped me make sense of feelings about my previous work with young people, current work as a Trainee EP (TEP) and my own world views about pro-social human psychological development.

MAKING SENSE OF THE RESEARCH AREA AND DEVELOPING A FOCUS.

The systematic review revealed that the concept of agency is ill-defined and its components not clear or widely agreed (see p39). It also identified a gap in agency theory for young people that could be the focus of my research as a TEP. I identified a lot of literature relating to the area but never quite from the same perspective.

During the research process I found human agency is not a popular discourse in current UK society. Combined with the sometimes abstract nature of the topic this

made my research journey difficult. The majority of educational psychologist colleagues and other educational professionals I spoke to had no familiarity with this concept (although they all had several ideas of links to it). I am aware of an Australian document (Hoffmann-Ekstein et al, 2008) where a research collaborative reviewed literature, policy and practice context focussed on 'children's agency in communities' but of no such UK papers. One of the articles from the systematic review (Manuelito, 2005) also showed an American Indian community who had dominant discourse of self-determination running through their social system.

In negotiating communication barriers on the concept I found the following phrase helpful to make concepts of agency and agentic perspectives accessible:

'A feeling that someone has the ability to change something about themselves or their environment (for a valued goal)...

I found it also aided understanding to give a contrasting statement.

Conceptual issues I wrestled with were the inter-related link between agency and sense of agency, a person's moral disengagement with actions leading to human oppression and suffering, issues of agency and structure, issues of free will and agentic foci.

Some of these are on-going but I found some sense of conceptual control by using the terminology 'agentic perspective' and exploring it from a pro-social point of view. Different foci of young people's agency were revealed in the model (A future focus

and an identity focus) that link with other theory (Hitlin and Elder, 2007). A 'pragmatic' type of agency theorised by Hitlin and Elder (2007) may be at a core biological unconscious level that wasn't relevant to this research; e.g. moving to get a glass of water to quench thirst. Although a full model of human agency should perhaps include this analytical type of agency, I don't think excluding it or not having it emerge in this research context is problematic as it doesn't contribute to an agentic perspective that may deal with higher order needs in Maslow's hierarchy (1943). Agency in this pragmatic sense links to a controversial issue to do with the concept of free will (Bandura, 2008, 2011; Harris, 2012). This is not something I will discuss here; I have implicitly given my views in the above paragraph. As Berger, (1991) suggests:

'...[it] is not whether agency exists, but the extent to which we exercise it and the circumstances that facilitate or hinder that exercise' (p3)

The systematic review model showed inter-related factors between an individual and their surrounding social structure. This links to the idea of Structuration² (Giddens, 1984). I feel the explanatory model produced from the empirical research linked more to a morphogenetic sequence (Archer, 1995) that while recognising the interdependence of structure and agency suggests that they operate on different timescales. The model emerging from my research goes toward isolating structural, cultural and interpersonal factors which provide a context of action for young people

² social theory of the creation and reproduction of social systems that is based in the analysis of both structure and agents, without giving primacy to either.

as agents. The model suggests how those factors shape young people's subsequent interactions and how those interactions in turn reproduce or transform the initial context. Due to this analytical dualism and interactional sequence the empirical research model may be of more practical use to applied educational psychologists.

This highlighted importance for developing theory to aid young people's pro-social agency *due to* supporting their feeling that they are an agent in their world with the capacity to reflect on and choose actions that are positive to them in the long term within their community, context and relationships they are part of fortuitously or by their own making.

UNDERPINNING PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

The terminology 'agentic perspective' comes from Social Cognition Theory (Bandura, 2006) in which people are producers as well as products of social systems. This fits with a critical realist perspective I have taken to this research that already places emphasis on human agency (Houston, 2001). Critical realism assumes that a reality exists (ontological realism), but that our understanding of this will always be fragile and unfixed and may be constructed differently by each individual (epistemological relativism: Danermark et al., 2002). In short, '[w]hat is real is not dependent on us, but the exact meaning and nature of reality is' (Larkin et al, 2006, p. 32). Differences in the meanings individuals attach to experiences are considered possible because they experience different parts of reality. This provides an indication of the way in which the social context manipulates the meaning individuals have created from an experience (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The social cognition paradigm is founded on the

premise that human speech and behaviour reflects these differences in meaning either directly or indirectly (Folke, 2004). Human agency from this perspective is summed up from a critical realist perspective by Archer (2000):

'The "inner conversation" is how our personal emergent powers are exercised on and in the world... This "interior dialogue" is not just a window upon the world, rather it is what determines our being-in-the-world' (p328).

Bhaskar (1998) acknowledges the constructivist's insight that people can transform their everyday worlds and yet critical realism provides a more adequate account of social life by also acknowledging the role of structural factors. Why it was important to take this perspective as a researcher became more evident following the systematic review model that linked an individual to the social world around them. As Bhasker (1998) suggests:

'The emphasis on human agency [in critical realism] means that actor's accounts form the indispensable starting point of social enquiry' (p16).

Hence, analysis of interview data may be considered a reasonable method of accessing and developing an understanding of young people's different perceptions about reality.

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

In the research process ontological assumptions (about what there is to know) led to an epistemological position (assumptions regarding what can be known) which then led to methodological assumptions (Lopez & Potter, 2001).

I had originally planned that I would work with youth councils to generate data. I had planned to involve the young people in their own research project as well as conducting semi-structured interviews. In skilling up the young people up to research what they were passionate about and jointly involving the young people in my research, I had hoped this would form an intervention (based on theory from my systematic review model) that I could assess. This original plan was not possible for several pragmatic reasons including time, changing groups, prior commitments of the young people and negotiating access via the young people's 'gate-keepers'.

Instead I used focus groups and realist Grounded Theory (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) to keep within my philosophical assumptions and research objectives. Grounded Theory can adapt to the needs of critical realism (Oliver, 2011). Critical Realist Grounded Theory addresses both events and the meanings made of them. It is well placed to operationalise critical realism's fallibilism (Oliver, 2011). Its methods of open coding, constant comparison and questioning the data are intended to push the researcher beyond their received understandings (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

Grounded Theory's traditional concept of saturation can be reframed as the point in a critical realist study at which the theory arising from inquiry has, for the time being, greater explanatory power than its rivals. Realist Grounded Theory embraces the

idea that there are many ways of knowing (epistemic relativism). It can also accommodate researchers' pre-existing theoretical knowledge, hunches and hypotheses as necessary 'points of departure' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 17) and building blocks for the development of more abstract theory. I attempted to be transparent about using the systematic review model as my starting position although I considered it likely to be replaced as the research proceeded.

Realist Grounded Theory moves from individual action to reasons to rules to structures (Sayer, 1992), and sees attention to individual meaning-making as an integral step to understanding causality. This places importance on my focus groups already being established agentic groups in local communities as I have assumed their actions can be traced back through individual meaning making to social structures or relationships (Sayer, 1992). Rather than use a random sample or vulnerable group, I felt factors the enhanced an agentic perspective would be more evident where the young people were already agentic. This view is supported by Maslow (1972, p7):

'If we want to know the possibilities for spiritual growth, value growth, or moral development in human beings, then I maintain that we can learn most by studying our most moral, ethical, or saintly people.'

A limitation of critical realism is that explanations do not seek to infer generalisation beyond the study because no two contexts are the same (Kempster and Parry, 2011). Universality of my model(s) may be problematic.

However, context and direct experience were factors in the model(s) that took into account differences in young people's life circumstances. The suggested factors and contexts that are beneficial to enhancing an agentic perspective can be starting points of inquiry or action when exploring other contexts.

The research is centred on discussion with young people of secondary school age but may have a bias toward the older end of this range. Most participants were 14-16 years old. Young people at the lower end of secondary school were not represented as much and were not selected to participate by the schools or youth organisations who perhaps believed pupils at the older end of the range would contribute more to the research. I gained a sense through the focus groups that there may be some differences between those who had just started secondary school and those who were on the verge of leaving. Those who were new to school had built less positive relationships and those who were about to leave school had a strong motivational focus for the future in terms of what they would do next that impacted on their current actions.

From a critical realist perspective I am aware that my findings may be influenced by my own existing knowledge and theory. Other people may interpret the findings differently in terms of their own views of the world and I encourage readers to judge the validity of findings with relevance to their own experiences, ideas and circumstances.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

During the planning stages of the empirical research study, approval was gained from Newcastle University's Ethics Board. Though the original plan may have created more complex ethical concerns, numerous issues remained with the actual research.

I met and briefed the young people I worked with and provided a consent letter (see Appendix 5) for them and/or their legal guardian to sign (depending on age) before focus groups began. I gave an opportunity to ask questions or withdraw before I recorded the focus groups. To address an issue of potential power imbalance between myself as the researcher and the young people, I stated that there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers, I had no expectations, I was genuinely interested in their views and I was not looking for them to say anything in particular about the topic area.

The young people were debriefed (see Appendix 6), thanked for taking part and given an opportunity for further questions in person or via my contact details.

I attempted to be sensitive to personal information, because in discussing influences on the young people's motivations, they shared information about themselves, their goals and values, their families and relationships, their historical experiences and how these affected them. I was touched at their openness and reminded them of the confidentiality of the group. Although discussion of their experiences sometimes seemed to stir emotional responses about their own lives, the young people

commented that the discussion itself was a positive experience and that they didn't often get a chance to talk about themselves in this way. It may be the focus groups themselves contributed to the young people's agentic perceptions of themselves as explained by the research model. Although this could be seen as a positive intervention, I was cautiously aware of my active role in the focus group and any potential influence I may have had on the young people's agentic perceptions by discussing the topic with them.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The systematic review and the empirical research took place across 2010-2012. This period straddled two governmental leads in the UK.

There are educational and governmental policies, research, initiatives and schemes that suggest enhancing young people's agentic perspectives in their community is important at this time in England. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 12, 1989) encourages thinking about why young people's agency is important by stating that:

'Children should not be treated as silent subjects of our concern, but as people with their own views and feelings which should be taken seriously.'

In the UK the convention has impacted importantly on legislation and practice for Special Educational Needs, but has affected less the general way in which schooling is conducted (Lodge, 2005). In 2002, Citizenship was introduced as a statutory

subject in the English National Curriculum for secondary schools putting the emphasis on young people's actions in their community. Education legislation has previously emphasised pupil voice and participation (e.g. DfES, 1994; 2004a). The Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) means that all young people will continue in education or training to 18 from 2015. This places importance on raising the aspirations and agentic perspectives of young people preventing them from disengaging from education and ensuring they can access jobs with high quality training. This research may also link to the current Government's 'Big Society' concept, where one of the aims is to '[e]ncourage people to take an active role in their communities' (HM Government, 2010, p2). In November 2011, the DfE published a review into the training of EPs that suggested:

'As a society, we need to make sure we understand children's development so that we can best support them to reach their full potential, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds. EPs are employed to provide professional advice on children and young people's educational and emotional development and by understanding their needs and their educational contexts, they are well placed to identify and provide them with effective support to improve their life chances' (p5).

Understanding human agency and how to support young people's agentic perspective may help the profession achieve this suggestion. Research in this area

could help us further understand young people's psychological development and how to enable their life chances through this.

REFLEXIVITY AND ALTERNATIVE FRAMEWORKS

Willig (2008) identified personal reflexivity as the need to consider how the researcher's own beliefs and experiences may have shaped the research process. I have a value driven desire to improve and develop life chances, pro-social action and feelings of fulfilment for young people lasting through their lifespan. A focus on human agency felt like a missing link that helped me make sense of some applied Educational Psychology work that felt like it linked to my value-base.

I aimed to avoid potential researcher bias (Robson, 2002) by remaining open to the views expressed by the young people and findings expressed in the literature rather than let my background influence how I construed data. Epistemological reflexivity refers to the need to consider how the assumptions that have been made about knowledge and reality may impact on research and findings (Willig 2008). I think it would have been problematic to explore the concept of agency from any other perspective although different qualitative methods or mixed methods could have been used within the critical realist framework. This is because of a contentious dualism that pervades some fields of psychology, pitting autonomy against interdependence, individualism against collectivism, and human agency against social structure (Bandura, 2006). Other frameworks may not have adequately accounted for this dualism. A critical realist perspective links agency and structure and I was aware that this may influence my findings and creation of models. As the

subject of the research was a core element in the underpinning epistemological assumptions I hold, they may have complimented each other well, or I may have missed other important ways of dealing with agency as a subject.

The research used a socio-cognitive theory definition of agency that is in keeping with a critical realist view but to prevent a narrow approach to the research I did not rely on the psychological processes already suggested by this theory. The systematic review combined theoretical perspectives on agency and drew links between them to develop overarching processes that were refined and developed in the empirical research.

The blend of individual agency, agency enacted through other people and group agency varies cross-culturally but agency itself crosses cultures (Bandura, 2006). My systematic review combined papers from different cultures, although my empirical research focused on a particular county in a particular country in western society. Context was identified in both models as a factor involved in young people's agentic perspective, which would account for some cultural and contextual difference.

A pro-social approach to enhancing agentic perspectives of young people meant that my views stood in line with Humanistic Psychology and a belief that all humans are intrinsically motivated towards constructive fulfilment and at the core trustworthy. For the purposes and objectives of applied Educational Psychology it made no sense to look at agency from any other perspective.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

I feel my conception of agency has changed due to carving my way through the messy conceptual ideas in the literature and my research. At times this felt like struggling through a jungle with glimmers of light among the dense foliage. I had to cut down several trees, shape old ones and plant new ones in order to make a clear, accessible path through to the other side. I feel I overcame moments of confusion and have emerged from the process with a clearer view of the concept, its factors and its applications. I feel key factors that have helped my understanding were finding analytical distinctions in different foci of agentic behaviour and in analytical distinctions of agency and structure. The inter-relation and inter-dependence of these and associated psychological theories meant the research was sometimes too conceptually dense to be easily accessible. Finding analytical distinctions showing how everything inter-related over time enabled clearer conceptualisation of this area that will be of more practical use to education and educational psychologists. It helped me appreciate the importance of dialogic, social and cognitive processes in the shaping and enacting of agency from an agentic perspective on one's self.

Whatever I thought of myself as an agent when I started, through this research process and its findings I feel I have increased my own agentic perspective. I feel more motivated, confident and able to go about planning and enacting ways to change factors about myself and my environment to achieve my valued goals.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: WHAT IS A THEORY FOR DEVELOPING YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVE OF THEMSELVES AS AGENTIC?

ABSTRACT:

My systematic review found little consistency in definitions or components of agency and no previous models identifying factors that enhance young people's agentic perspectives. I developed a model through meta-ethnography showing inter-related factors between the individual and how they make sense of life in their community.

This research hoped to test and develop this model to be of practical use to applied educational psychologists.

Focus groups were conducted with three established groups of young people who were already agentic in their community to explore factors that had developed their agentic perspective. Following transcription, analysis used realist Grounded Theory.

The model developed from this has more explanatory power than the systematic review model and indicates how psychological factors relate over time or from different time perspectives of the young people. The factors are analytically distinct while still inter-dependent. Factors were identified in the external structure around a young person as well as their contextual social interactions, thoughts and feelings. A core category of 'positive relationships' suggested a fundamentally social aspect to young people's perspective of themselves as agentic. Individual and social action from this perspective made the model cyclical.

I argue that focus on agency is a golden thread that links many areas of Educational Psychology practice. The factors in the model may guide assessment and intervention and facilitate EPs working with young people, professionals, families and communities to aid young people's psychological development and increase awareness and discourse on agency. There is a role for further theory development, research and application in this area.

INTRODUCTION:

Many argue agency is an important aspect of human development, if not- the most important (Bruner, 1996, Bandura , 2006, Nijnatten, 2010). For the purpose of this research, I will use the phrase 'agentic' from a social-cognitive perspective, meaning people are producers as well as products of social systems. The systematic review suggested a young person's physical or symbolic actions in the world (agency) and a person's feeling of being able to influence their action or events in the world (sense of being an agent) are inter-related and are explored together here under the term agentic perspective. A young person with this perspective may feel they have the ability to change something about themselves or their environment for a valued goal which may increase their resilience and adaptability to life challenges. This may oppose or overcome a young person's 'victimic' or 'self as an object' perspective (Bruner, 1994, Polkinghorne, 1995, Carr, 2004) in which they feel they have no power to affect their lives. This research will have a pro-social focus to facilitating young people's agency as does the majority of literature of human agency.

Legislative context for this research is shown in the bridging section (p50). My employing Local Authority's Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014 emphasises that young people should 'make positive choices for personal responsibility' and a strategic priority is to 'enable children and young people to participate well and make good decisions' (p9). The network of professionals in the Authority who are to ensure this is achieved does not currently include Educational

Psychologists. My research will hopefully support the Authority's aims and involve educational psychologist work with other agencies and professionals in the Authority.

I believe the concept of young people's positive sense of agency may underlie many areas of education and Educational Psychology, but due to unclear concepts and definitions it is being overlooked. These areas may include; pupil voice, pupil centred reviews, resilience (Newman and Blackburn, 2002), participation, aspirations, children as learners and researchers, competence (Chawla and Heft, 2002), control (Jackson, Kim and Delap, 2007) and empowerment (Alsop, Bertelsen and Holland, 2006).

This research will encourage a more communal, relational and agentic conception of the self and of young people. This may have greater potential to reconcile educational conflict between institutional socialisation in schools and communities and personal development of children and adolescents as suggested by Martin (2007) (see Figure 1, p16).

FINDINGS FROM MY SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Due to the Raise in Participation Age and the other educational and government priorities I decided to focus on young people of secondary school age. The synthesis of literature only included this age group and my empirical research will continue to target this age range.

My systematic review found that little empirical research in this area has been carried out using formal research methodology. It also found little consistency in definitions of agency, little agreement on what agency's components are and no previous models that identified what factors enhance young people's agentic perspectives. There are currently research gaps in:

- Agency theory;
- Young people's perspectives of themselves as agents; and
- Specific psychological benefits of having an agentic perspective.

Through meta-ethnography a model of factors that enhance young people's agency and sense of being an agent was developed. This is shown in Figure 2 (p32).

This split eleven interrelating factors into three sections and linked an individual to the community they lived in. It highlighted a transactional partnering process between adults and young people and between young people's peers that may support and foster well-being. The individual's perceptions, cognitions and resources were important for their agency in striving for something of value to them. A feeling that their well-being connected to these values encouraged agency. This could depend on the individual and can be supported (or blocked) by communal living and its social processes.

Currently there seems to be anecdotal and experiential evidence using different conceptions of agency, but little research evidence to substantiate any claims,

benefits or issues. There is little UK specific research on enhancing young people's agentic perspective despite many Local Authorities' objectives to increase participation, voice, influence and pro-social motivation in young people. There is a gap for my empirical research to focus on developing a theory for exploring how young people's perspective of themselves as agentic emerges, develops and is supported.

METHOD:

OVERVIEW

I used qualitative research including focus groups to explore what supports young people's perspective of themselves as agentic in their community. I adopted a critical realist perspective, assuming that whilst the view of reality held may differ between participants, a reality exists which can be subjected to analysis and allows social phenomena to be explored (Danermark et al., 2002). Given this perspective I also assumed that my involvement with the theory from my systematic review had an impact on my thinking and approach and therefore was overtly used to develop questions for the focus groups. Data was analysed from three focus groups using realist Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) (See bridging section, p46). The generated model was then compared to the systematic review model and conclusions were drawn.

DATA GENERATION

PARTICIPANTS:

The research took place in a large county in the North of England, involving young people from schools, youth groups and youth councils from both rural and urban areas. An original methodology that was in-keeping with agency theory developed from my systematic review was not pragmatically possible (See bridging section, p46). The groups were found by searching local news websites, secondary school newsletters, talking to youth organisations in the area and speaking to other educational colleagues in the area. They were screened so they were of secondary school age and were established groups of young people who had recently been, or were currently involved in positive and active projects in their community. What they may have positively done in their community was not narrowly defined, but included groups who had:

- been consulted by authorities for community issues, initiatives or funding
- organised or jointly created their own event, initiative or group
- volunteered for other groups or organisations in their community

It could be argued that they were groups of young people who were already agentic in their community and hence may have had some idea of what it means to have a sense of one's self as an agent. This was therefore a purposive sample (Robson, 2002) to satisfy the specific needs of the project (see bridging section, p47).

The three groups used were the first that were able to collaboratively organise dates to meet with me. Altogether they included 11 young people (6 males and 5 females) ranging in age from 13-17.

PEN PORTRAITS OF THE GROUPS:

GROUP A: Student Voice Organisation based in a secondary school

This group involved students in the organisational structure of school and local community giving them roles and responsibilities.

GROUP B: Group who set up a music concert for the community

A group of young people in a secondary school organised, advertised and played in a 'music mega mix' concert.

GROUP C: Group who organised 'Camo day' (an awareness raising day for Army charities)

This group of young people co-designed and co-led workshops and activities with the Armed forces for members of the community to raise money for charity. The young people also spoke to the press and the event was published in local newsletters.

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups were used to generate data. I made every effort to create a safe environment for the young people to discuss their views and followed guidelines stated in my ethical approval from university (see p49 in the bridging section).

A question guide (see Appendix 7) was developed to gain rapport and bring themes from the systematic review model into focus. The questions were open ended and allowed the participants to talk about what was important to them while keeping some focus on the research concept. In practice it developed into an exploratory conversation with me facilitating discussion using the guide when it felt appropriate and asking for more detail on new views naturally emerging from the young people during the interview. The focus group method allowed participants to respond, challenge, develop or comment on one another's contributions, creating rich data.

Discussion was recorded on two digital recorders. In addition to what was said, I used the interaction among the participants in the focus group as a source of data.

This was recorded using contemporaneous memos at the time of interview or on reflection immediately after. Other sources of data I had available to me were the agentic stories of the groups, conversations with adults who helped me organise the groups (and who were involved with the pupils and the projects), observation of the pupils interacting with themselves and adults, and the items produced from the groups such as posters or news articles. As they were established groups I assumed their interactions were not significantly affected by the focus group context. The

setting was less artificial than one-to-one interviews and so was likely to have higher ecological validity (Willig, 2003).

DATA ANALYSIS

I used realist Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to analyse the data; see bridging section, p46. As agency is an under-developed and under-conceptualised area I hoped Grounded Theory would provide new insight as suggested by Stern (1995):

‘...the strongest case for the use of Grounded Theory is in investigations of relatively uncharted water, or to gain a fresh perspective in a familiar situation’ (p.30)

The abbreviated version of Grounded theory was used due to pragmatic issues (Willig, 2008).

PROCEDURE

I transcribed data and was part of the interviews, so during analysis made an attempt to distance myself from the data. This was in an attempt to prevent being influenced by my previous experiences and pre-conceptions (Popper, 1957). I made an attempt to search for what didn't fit and maintain awareness of subconsciously applying existing theoretical codes during initial coding while at the same time appreciating and developing theoretical sensitivity.

Following transcription (see Appendix 8) the theory was developed following the procedure in Table 7.

Table 7: Procedure of theory generation interpreting Strauss and Corbin (1990).

STEPS	ACTION
1	Transcribed and read data.
2	Opencoded transcript 1 (line by line) (see Appendix 9)
3	Opencoded transcript 2 and then compared this back with transcript 1 (line by line).
4	Opencoded transcript 3 and then looked back at transcript 1 and 2.
5	Compared open codes for all transcripts
6	Axial coding: data was put back together in a new way after open coding, by making connections between (and within) categories. Notes of potential links had been made on the right hand side of my transcript during my open coding (See Appendix 10).
7	Selective Coding: decision on core category and overall integration into theory.

Although open and axial coding are distinct analytical procedures (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p98) when engaged in the data I alternated between the two modes. I also noted which categories or constructs occurred at a higher rate in discourse and inferred these as more dominant and influential concepts during selective coding. I continued until I felt I had reached theoretical saturation.

I developed a model after identification of patterns and relationships to show how the theory fitted together. This was complicated due to the interrelating nature of many of the constructs and was developed through several attempts until I felt I had made some sense of the data and had conceptual control.

FINDINGS

Twenty-five inter-related and inter-dependent constructs emerged as contributing to young people's perspectives of themselves as agentic. To form a visual model of interpretational use, I grouped similar types of constructs in five areas relating to internalisation of the external world. A sixth area (social interaction) was added as a proposed link between two of these five areas to clarify the model (see Figure 4, p67). The term 'social interaction' is used here with wide meaning for interactions in the world. It not only includes interaction directly with other people, but with media, historical context and the environment (which were mentioned as important interactions for the young people in the focus groups) in a planned or fortuitous event.

A young person's feelings may have a significant impact on their sense of themselves as an agent, in turn likely to lead to action (probably social interaction) which makes the model cyclical over time. This is shown at the bottom of the model (see Figure 4) and in Figure 6, p92. Although some constructs have more direct links to each other, following the arrows denoting influence can lead to any construct via other constructs. Certain constructs had more prevalence in the discussions and were highlighted in Figure 4 as having higher influential power in the model.

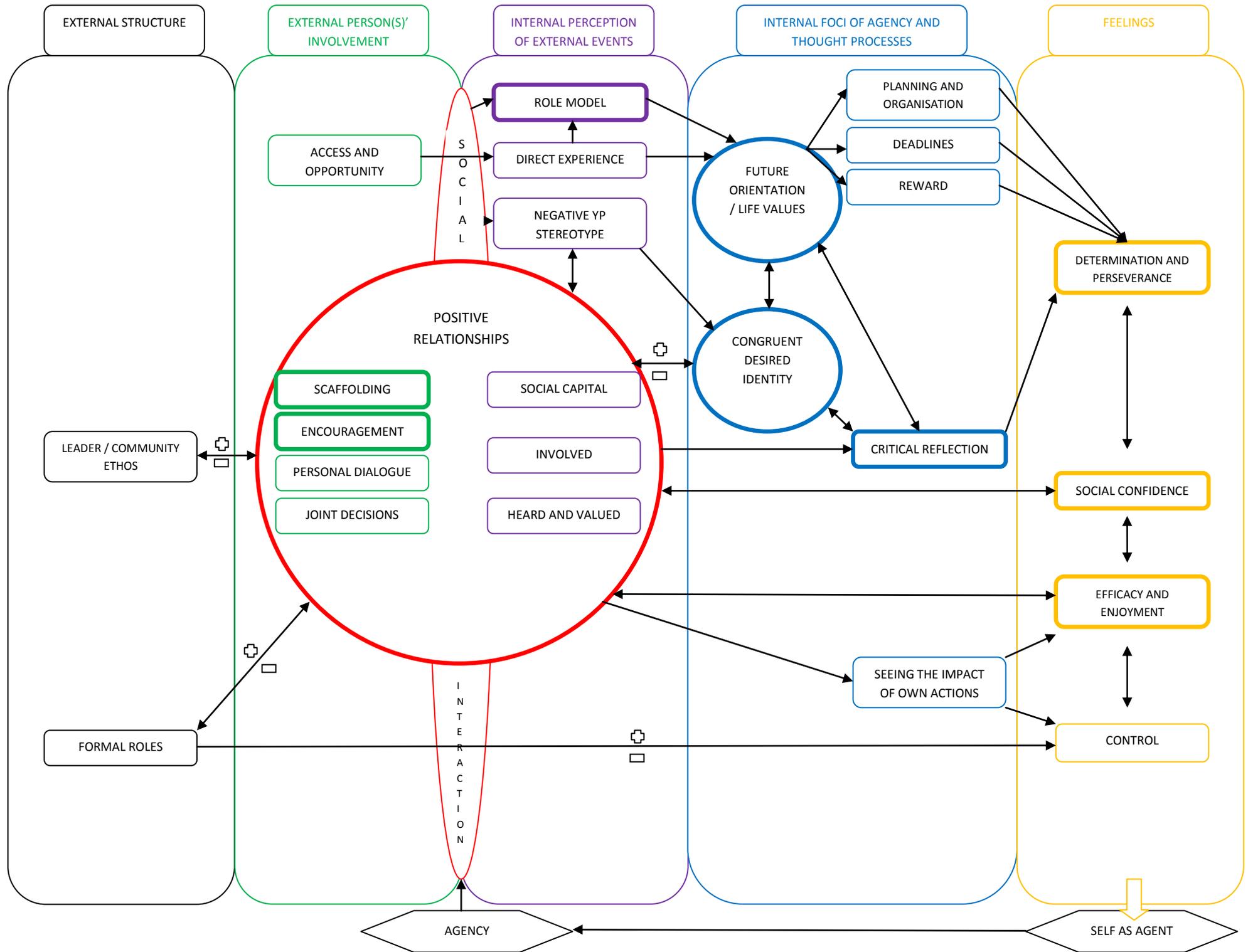
Comparing the systematic review model and this one reveals many similar factors contributing to developing young people's perspective of themselves as agentic. They both suggest interrelating factors between an individual and external

environment. The new model (Figure 4) has more explanatory power and is more explicit in suggesting how constructs may influence each other.

Two internal motivating goals for a young person that are the object of their agency were identified as well as feelings that contributed to a sense of one's self as an agent. A core category subsuming several constructs was termed **positive relationships** and was dominant in discussion and axial coding.

I will explain the core category of **positive relationships** followed by the rest of the constructs grouped into the five areas ranging from external structure to feelings (left to right on the model). Construct terms appear in a different font. All names of the young people have been altered and their quotations are referenced from transcripts in the format: Name, Group letter (Page number) Line number(s); e.g. (Becca, A (3) 65-66).

Figure 4: a model of supporting constructs for a young person of secondary school age's perspective of themselves as agentic in their community.

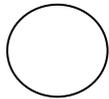


KEY:

COLOURED BOXES: These are added layers to make sense of groups of constructs and where they are situated in the process of internalising from the external world. The core category of **positive relationships** crosses over two of the five conceptual areas. I have conceptualised this as inextricably linked to 'social interaction' which was added to the model to aid explanation.



= construct from the data.



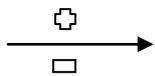
= Focus of agency.



= direction of influence.



= dual direction of influence.



= direction of influence that can be supportive or suppressive.



= goal of the model.



= Constructs in **bold** show higher influential power in the model.

THE MODEL EXPLAINED

CORE CATEGORY: POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS:

This emerged as core to developing young people's perspectives of themselves as agentic. This is depicted in the model as requiring interaction between the young person and another person. 'Positive' denotes the type of relationships described by the young people in the focus groups: reciprocal, equal (in decision making), comfortable, allowing compromise, trusting and harmonious. They are relationships where "*everyone knows you and everyone trusts you*" (Becca, A (3) 65-66), enabled when "*everyone realised that nobody's different and everyone is the same so everyone gets on really well*" (Katherine, B (10) 228-229).

It was a theme that appeared in the discourse more frequently than any other and linked into several constructs, suggesting there is a fundamentally social aspect to the concept of a young person's agency.

The young people were clear that although **positive relationships** could be had with senior figures (a family member, teacher, or other adult in the community) and peers together, there was a distinctive beneficial role for each and one role should not be confused or merged with the other.

These **positive relationships** were directly affected by **community ethos** (determined by the **leader**) and by the **formal roles** set up in a community. They were also affected by a **negative stereotype of a young person**, a person's goal for

a **congruent desired identity**, a person's **social confidence** and a person's **efficacy and enjoyment** (constructs explained later in this section).

The positive relationships had a direct impact on all the above constructs as well as a young person's **critical reflection** and a young person **seeing the impact of their actions**.

In the model (Figure 4) there are seven constructs encompassed by the core category of **positive relationships**. Although these constructs are distinct in themselves, they enabled **positive relationships** and could be subsumed into it.

They link to the same constructs as the core category, yet some more directly within and outside it as shown in Figure 5 and omitted from Figure 4 to be more accessible to the reader.

I have explained each of these constructs in turn.

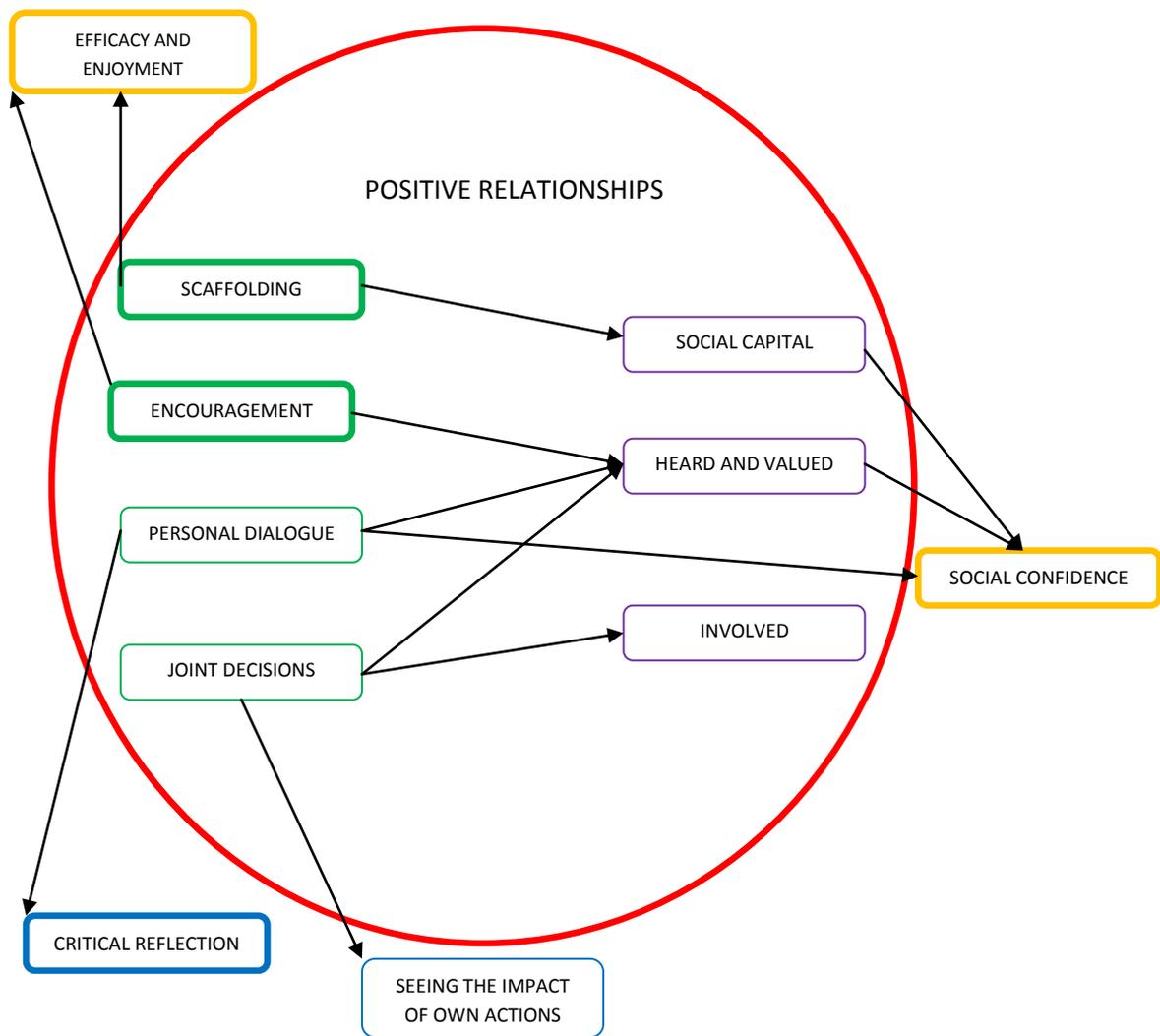


Figure 5: Model of interaction of constructs in the core category 'positive relationships'.

SCAFFOLDING: A process whereby another person supports the young people in developing their skills or achieving their goals, in a manner led by the young person's views and effort, but moved on and supported at a time when the individual's limits in a particular scenario are being reached.

Amanda: "I like to try something my way, but not properly because it might cause a problem, then I ask like an older student or a teacher for like how it could be better or a guide or something and then I just expand it from there and try and work it and remember and keep thinking about each step" A (7)136-139.

This **scaffolding** is from peers and senior figures (as above). There was a distinction between the role of a peer and a senior figure in the process. They were both useful at different times.

ENCOURAGEMENT: Support from peers and senior figures with regard to the young person's developing skills or pursuit of a valued goal. It reinforces positive thoughts and intentions and motivates young people to take action, feeling that they have justification for it from others:

Amanda: "I think my dad helped because he just said '...whatever you want to do, I'd like for you to just be happy and just keep your head up at school'" A (8) 168-169.

PERSONAL DIALOGUE: The act of speaking to others about themselves. A dialogic process focusing on what is personal to the young person is supportive of their agentic perspective:

Jackson: *"I'm definitely thinking a lot more positive actually. I didn't realise I had done so much until I talked about it"* A (16) 345.

Amilie: *"Talking about yourself does make you think"* A (16) 349.

The research focus groups were seen by most of the young people as supportive **personal dialogue**.

JOINT DECISIONS: Young people jointly making decisions that affect their community along with peers or senior figures mean the young person may feel **involved and heard and valued**.

Katherine: *"He [The head teacher] likes to have the student input on things as he knows that without that it won't be successful"*. B (7) 144-145.

SOCIAL CAPITAL: Having more people around to comfortably interact with may increase a young person's ability to act via proximity. More **positive relationships** mean more **social capital**. Increased **social capital** also means young people have more people to **scaffold** their skills and goals.

Becca: *“There are a lot of hard things that you want to go and do but you go ‘oh how am I going to do that?’ but there is so many people you can talk to about it...you have people around you that can help you”* B (9) 182-185.

INVOLVED: When perceived as **involved** young people have an increased sense of belonging and their motivation to act increases because decisions in the group inextricably affect them.

Katherine: *“Student voice is good really as it gets everyone in the school involved”* B (6) 115.

Jackson: *“I just like getting involved in the wider community”* A (9) 182-185.

HEARD AND VALUED: Young people may be more likely to interact with others if they feel **heard and valued**.

Carl: *“Sometimes we think what we do isn’t noticed and why are we bothering doing this but, it’s nice when people are interested in stuff like that”* C (13) 279-280.

John: *“If they believe that what we say is worth listening to then that helps”* C (5) 98.

I will now explain the rest of the model (Figure 4) moving from the outside world to a person's feelings (i.e. left to right on the page), discussing each construct in each area.

EXTERNAL STRUCTURE

Constructs in this area are all about a given structure in a community that is suggestive of ways people should act.

LEADER / COMMUNITY ETHOS: The reflected culture of a community. There is a link between the community ethos and the ethos or values presented by the community's perceived leader. Comparison of the vision of a head teacher affecting the school community was used in the focus groups. Young people thought if they had "*ideas ...that we think are good we see [the headteacher]...it's good he makes time*" (Katherine, B (7) 142-144).

Brenda: "*...the old head teacher was different, she approached things differently. You wouldn't even say anything to her because you know it wouldn't happen...she...had the power but didn't really do anything with the power, it seemed more...data based*" B (6) 118-121.

A positive community ethos seemed similar to the summation of all the constructs within the **positive relationships** core construct. An ethos unlike those constructs hindered **positive relationships**. It was thought a community with **positive relationships** could dually influence the **leader /community ethos**.

FORMAL ROLES: Having a socially recognised role of responsibility for action in the community directly affected a person's sense of **control**. If they were not in a socially recognised role with responsibility for action they felt they had less **control** over their environment.

Becca: *"obviously you can change more being on the youth council than Joe Blogs can in year 7 that doesn't take part in anything..."* A (15) 315-316.

Formal roles given to individuals could contribute to **positive relationships** in certain circumstances where the roles supported each other. **Formal roles** could also cause barriers to **positive relationships** if a young person was required to act in a way that wasn't supportive to another person. **Positive relationships** in a community could also affect how **formal roles** may be set up by the individuals in that community in the first place.

EXTERNAL PERSON(S)' INVOLVEMENT

Constructs in this area all involved a person's action upon or with young person.

ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY: A senior figure with can provide a young person with access to valued resources actively creating opportunity for new learning experiences.

Amanda: *"...you go to ask if you can do things and they'll open the opportunity instead of you just sitting there and wondering. The*

teachers and adults are more forward and they'll show you the opportunity instead of waiting to be asked, so it's there for you and you've got more access to things..." A (4) 85-87.

SCAFFOLDING, ENCOURAGEMENT, PERSONAL DIALOGUE AND JOINT

DECISIONS also involve the action of other people but have already been discussed in the 'core category' section.

INTERNAL PERCEPTION OF EXTERNAL EVENTS

Constructs in this area are all perceptions about someone or something from the young person's perspective.

ROLE MODEL: Aiming to *be like* or *not be like* another person and / or their life situation. This **role model** can be a peer or a senior figure.

Amilie: "...my mum doesn't have a lot of money, my family in general don't have a really big income so that's kind of a push for me to go to Uni and get a stable job that means I don't have to be in that [situation]"

A (9) 192-193.

This seemed to cause a powerful sense in the young people of what they should value in their life course and orient them to achieving future goals based on what they felt as a 'push' or a 'pull' from seeing their **role model**. They suggested this is also affected by fortuitous social interaction with others, historical figures, the media, but most dominantly by experiences with family members.

Luke: *"I think it's seeing other people do well, like family members and stuff who have gone onto college and university and good well paid jobs and you look at them and say, why can't I be like that?. I have potential to do that, so that's motivation in a way by just looking at other people..."*

John: *"I find mine the opposite to you because my dad had lots of promise when he was at school and then he messed up at college o-levels and I decided I didn't want to do that, I wanted to do something else..."* C (7) 134-140.

DIRECT EXPERIENCE: Likely to lead to enhanced value and increased motivation to repeat that interaction or action. This **direct experience** of a topic or event increased learning and awareness.

Brenda: *"...sometimes with comic relief you don't witness it first hand, like you don't really see all the starving children but [meeting soldiers who have lost their legs] makes you want to help a bit more"* B (2) 37-39.

Daily fortuitous social interactions also contributed to this indicating the importance of a young person's context and life circumstances.

NEGATIVE YOUNG PERSON STEREOTYPE: A general social stereotype of young people as lazy, intrinsically badly behaved, careless and rebellious. A young person

may be made aware of this stereotype through social interaction, affecting **positive relationships** in a negative way if believed by others in the relationship. It could also be altered by the young person being in a **positive relationship** with someone where the other person alters their stereotypical views. This **negative stereotype of young people** also supported their agency to overcome the stereotype, making themselves appear different to the stereotype holder in accordance with how they viewed themselves (**congruent desired identity**-see p80).

Carl: "...people don't really take us seriously because they look at teenagers and think they aren't going to come up with any serious ideas. They look at one example of a bad teenager...those few examples get spread in the media and they use that as a role model for everyone. Then they see you on the street and they try and avoid you"

C (10) 185-194.

SOCIAL CAPITAL, INVOLVED, HEARD AND VALUED also involve the internal perception of external events but have already been discussed in the 'core category' section.

INTERNAL FOCI OF AGENCY AND INTERNAL THOUGHT PROCESSES

Constructs in this area are all processes or goals that are part of on-going internal thoughts or conversations in the young person.

I will discuss the two foci of agency constructs first and then move to the thought processes.

FUTURE ORIENTATION / LIFE VALUES: An active engagement in future thinking and future-related behaviour that allows future life goals to appear psychologically closer and amenable for **planning**. What a young person values as important in their life has intrinsic motivating power shaping present choices and action as well as being a focus for their desired life trajectory. For young people of secondary school age a future focus on employment or further education was dominant discourse.

Becca: "University, the only thing in the whole world at the moment that motivates me to do anything knowing that one day I want to go to medical school, that's just the big thing" A (6) 118-119.

Amilie: "Moving into further education for those in later year groups is a big focus as well as getting jobs and stuff" A (4) 68-69.

CONGRUENT DESIRED IDENTITY: Wanting to maintain a positive identity in a social world; a motivating drive to make other people see the young person as they see themselves.

Carl: "...your opinion of yourself and what other people think of you, if there is a difference between that it can affect how you relate with people" C (8) 153-156.

Others communicating they see the young person similarly to how they see themselves can reinforce **positive relationships** and strengthen a desired identity.

Carl: *"You can perform in front of parents and show you have a talent. Knowing that makes you want to learn and do that in the future"* C (3) 48.

Others communicating they see the young person differently than they see themselves can motivate the young person to take action to change the other person's view.

Jamie: *"Say if a teacher thought you would get a certain grade at GCSE and you think 'no I'm better than that'...if you think you can do better than what they think you will push yourself to disprove them".* C (8) 148-151.

If the view of the other person is vastly different from the young person's view of themselves and doesn't seem changeable it can negatively affect **positive relationships**.

PLANNING AND ORGANISATION: Based on a young person's **future orientation and life values**, this can enable a course of action to achieve personal goals and organise what resources are needed.

Brenda: *"We planned it so much in advance that it was ok and well organised"* B (3) 50.

DEADLINES: Based on a young person's **future orientation and life values**, deadlines (set by anyone) can affect current action to achieve their goal within the imposed time frame.

Katherine: *"we get a deadline and we have to do that deadline or else we won't pass it which gives us motivation to do it"*B (10) 213-214.

REWARD: Based on a young person's **future orientation and life values**, rewards (again set by anyone) can support action to gain a meaningful target.

Katherine: *"We have...a reward day...it's a way to keep us achieving as we feel like we are getting something from it"*B (6) 127-130.

CRITICAL REFLECTION: A mechanism for thinking about another's or one's own life circumstance, what to maintain or change about it and why. It includes introspection, but also involved thinking critically about the world.

Amanda: *"...keeping a diary is a good way so you can look back and think, why did I do that, what was wrong with me and then you can look at what you did wrong or what other people did and then you can change based on that"*A (14) 296-298.

This had influence on the two agentic foci in the model and could act as a mediator in deciding what to value as important.

SEEING THE IMPACT OF OWN ACTIONS: Seeing something in the environment change due to their direct action is likely to reinforce a sense of being an agent and having **control**.

Brenda: *"...I ordered loads of stuff and the first meeting we just started doing it and last week it all came together and it's just nice to see the effects of things and then it's in the papers and stuff. It's your idea and you can carry it through and change things"* B (5) 100-102.

FEELINGS

Feelings mentioned influenced each other to a certain extent and together provided a strong agentic perspective for the young person likely to lead to action.

DETERMINATION AND PERSEVERANCE: A sense of striving to achieve something. The motivating feeling is responsible for many actions a young person may decide to take and persist with.

Jamie: *"Determination again, if you really want to get it done then I think you can no matter how old or young you are"* C (9) 180.

SOCIAL CONFIDENCE: Confidence to interact and share ideas and experiences in social situations. Being more socially confident meant young people were more likely to approach others for a given purpose.

Jackson: *"When I was in school I didn't used to talk to anyone at all. So student voice...boosted my confidence so much, I'm talking to everyone now. I...nearly every day have a casual conversation with the head teacher. My parents are saying well 'you never used to talk to your teacher unless they were telling you off', so, it's kind of good"* A (11-12) 240-243.

Social confidence could influence **positive relationships**: if one had less confidence it may mean equal and reciprocal relationships suffer.

EFFICACY AND ENJOYMENT: A feeling of being good at something and therefore enjoying it.

Amanda: *"I do things just to do them. I like to do them and to know I can do them"* A (5) 95.

A young person feeling they have the ability to do something and are good at it was a strong motivating feeling and was reinforced through enjoyment. It could also affect **positive relationships** as low efficacy meant a young person may not feel able to contribute or be a positive part of a group.

CONTROL: A feeling that young people's actions have direct control over something, likely to lead to a sense of being an agent.

Amanda: *"It's harder to sculpt something that you think is beneficial because you might have twenty other people say 'it's fine the way it is'. So it's more difficult, but it's nice to think you can"* A (15) 321-322.

DISCUSSION

OVERVIEW

The model (Figure 4, p67) and findings have explanatory power for how young people's perspective of themselves as agentic in their community may emerge and be developed. It expands the systematic review model and answers my empirical research question.

The findings link existing psychology theory and research in an original way. I want this new perspective on older concepts to be clear, easily understandable and of practical use to EPs so will provide less detail and use lighter citation than if I were to attempt to explain every concept that emerged. Although I explore some existing research, there is room for others' understanding of various psychological theories to make links to the model.

Concentration on human agency provides a golden thread linking various areas of psychological research and Educational Psychology practice, focusing on positive human development and increasing young people's life chances.

WHAT THE YOUNG PEOPLE SPOKE ABOUT MOST

These have the most influential power in the model (highlighted in Figure 4, p67) and provide focus for what may otherwise be complex and lengthy discussion of all the factors. A skeleton of the model presenting only these factors is shown in Appendix 11. Symbolic interactionism believes that the meanings individuals ascribe to events are of central importance to a social researcher but also notes these

meanings are only obtained through a process of interpretation. From this and a phenomenological perspective I have assumed how young people have perceived their experiences is reflected directly in how they talk about and behave in relation to them (Dean, Smith and Payne, 2006).

The core construct enhancing young people's perspective of themselves as agentic in their community was **positive relationships**. Research suggests the importance of positive interpersonal relationships for healthy human functioning (Bowlby, 1969; Moos, 2002; Seligman, 2011). These relationships affect motivation by influencing beliefs, emotions and values that are consistent with their relational environment (Martin and Dowson, 2009). It may be that the concept of relatedness is important in these positive relationships and this serves to integrate other psychological theories such as belonging-ness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) as well as motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Bandura, 2006), meaning management (Heine, Proulx & Vohs, 2006) and social learning (Wenger, 1998). This concept may also link with the idea of the relational self (Anderson, 2002; Gergen, 2009) in which knowledge about the self is linked with knowledge about significant others.

If one accepts that humans are fundamentally social beings (Fiske, 1992; Wenger 1998) then this also places importance on **positive relationships** as being both supportive of our development and an important end state in itself. The young people recognised and valued feelings of **social confidence** to develop and maintain these relationships.

Within **positive relationships** young people talked most about **scaffolding** and **encouragement**. This may be because it was easy for the young people to recognise and remember others saying positive things to them and helping them. In the case of my research model, **encouragement** may help enhance a sense of **efficacy** through positive language about their ability. Research suggests young people's perception of their teacher as supportive or not predicted students' interest in learning and their engagement in the classroom (Wentzel, 1998). Young people described support by peers or senior figures to go further when they reached their perceived limit. This may be similar to the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD; Vygotsky, 1978). A 'Zone of Reflective Capacity' (ZRC) shares the ZPD's theoretical attributes, but describes the way in which a person's capacity for reflection can expand when he or she collaborates over an extended period with other people who have similar goals (Tinsley and Lebak, 2009). This also has implications for **positive relationships** affecting **critical reflection** in my model through **personal dialogue**.

Two main foci for young people's agency were suggested by the research model; a focus on their future and on their identity in inter-personal relationships. Hitlin and Elder (2007) suggested that there are different temporal foci implicating different forms of agency that go unrecognised when all 'lumped together' as part of the same concept. The two agency foci in the model are suggestive of a temporal understanding of agency; how factors influence young people's actions at different time periods and as they shift temporal focus themselves.

Young people spoke about agentic focus on their future life course trajectory (**Future orientation / life values**). Adolescence seems to be a period of particularly deep change in respect to time perspective (Lewin, 1939). Hitlin and Elder (2007), Bandura (2008) and Seginer (2009) use differing terminology (life course agency, forethought and future orientation respectively) but describe a similar property involving exerting influence in the present to shape one's life trajectory and individuals' capacity to orient themselves toward long-term outcomes. They collectively suggest this focus influences perseverance, coherence and meaning across difficult life course situations, supporting the link in my model between **future orientation and life values** affecting **determination and perseverance**. This might be because the cognitive representation of the future is brought into the present, motivating current behaviour (Bandura, 2008). The idea of 'possible selves' (Markus and Nurius 1987) as cognitive representations of who we would like to become (or not, as my model suggests from the **role model** construct) are motivational, long-term goals for the self and become an internal focus of action in **future orientation and life values**. The **role models** presenting these 'possible selves' depend on young people's interactions and experiences, particularly with parents, siblings and peers (Seginer, 2009). These beliefs about possible future selves motivate current agentic choices and over time, these actions get folded into our sense of self and become guiding forces for 'identity agency' (Hitlin and Elder, 2007). This supports the bi-directional link between **future orientation and life values** and **congruent desired identity**.

Maintaining a **congruent desired identity** focuses interactional goals on achieving desired social goals (Hitlin and Elder, 2007). This may also link to literature on 'impression management'; a goal-directed conscious or unconscious process in which people attempt to influence others' perceptions by regulating and controlling information in social interaction (Piwinger & Ebert, 2001). When action feels identity congruent, experienced difficulty highlights that the behaviour is important and meaningful. When action feels identity incongruent, the same difficulty suggests that the behaviour is 'not for people like me' (Oyserman and Destin, 2010) which in turn may cause a young person to 'enrich' an existing identity, 'patch' the mismatch to form a new identity or 'splint' to reclaim a previous identity (Pratt, Rockmann and Kaufman, 2006).

Critical reflection is a link between the two agency foci and a young person's **determination and perseverance**. Through functional self-awareness people reflect on the meaning of their pursuits and the soundness of their thoughts and actions (Bandura, 2008). In verifying the adequacy of thought by self reflective means, people generate ideas and act upon or predict occurrences from them.

WHAT THE YOUNG PEOPLE SPOKE ABOUT LESS (YET MAY BE IMPORTANT)

Although the young people spoke about some constructs less, some have important influential power from my interpretation of the literature, field notes, observations and discussion with adults organising the groups of young people I interacted with. These constructs were perhaps less obvious to articulate or identify from the young people's daily experiences and feelings.

The research model expands the systematic review model through temporal ordering of factors contributing to young people's perceptions of themselves as agentic that explains how structural and agential phenomena interlink over time rather than merely stating their theoretical interdependence. This fits with a morphogenetic sequence (Archer, 1995) and is presented in Figure 6 using an adaptation of this and Bronfenbrenner's (1979; 1999) model of Ecological Theory.

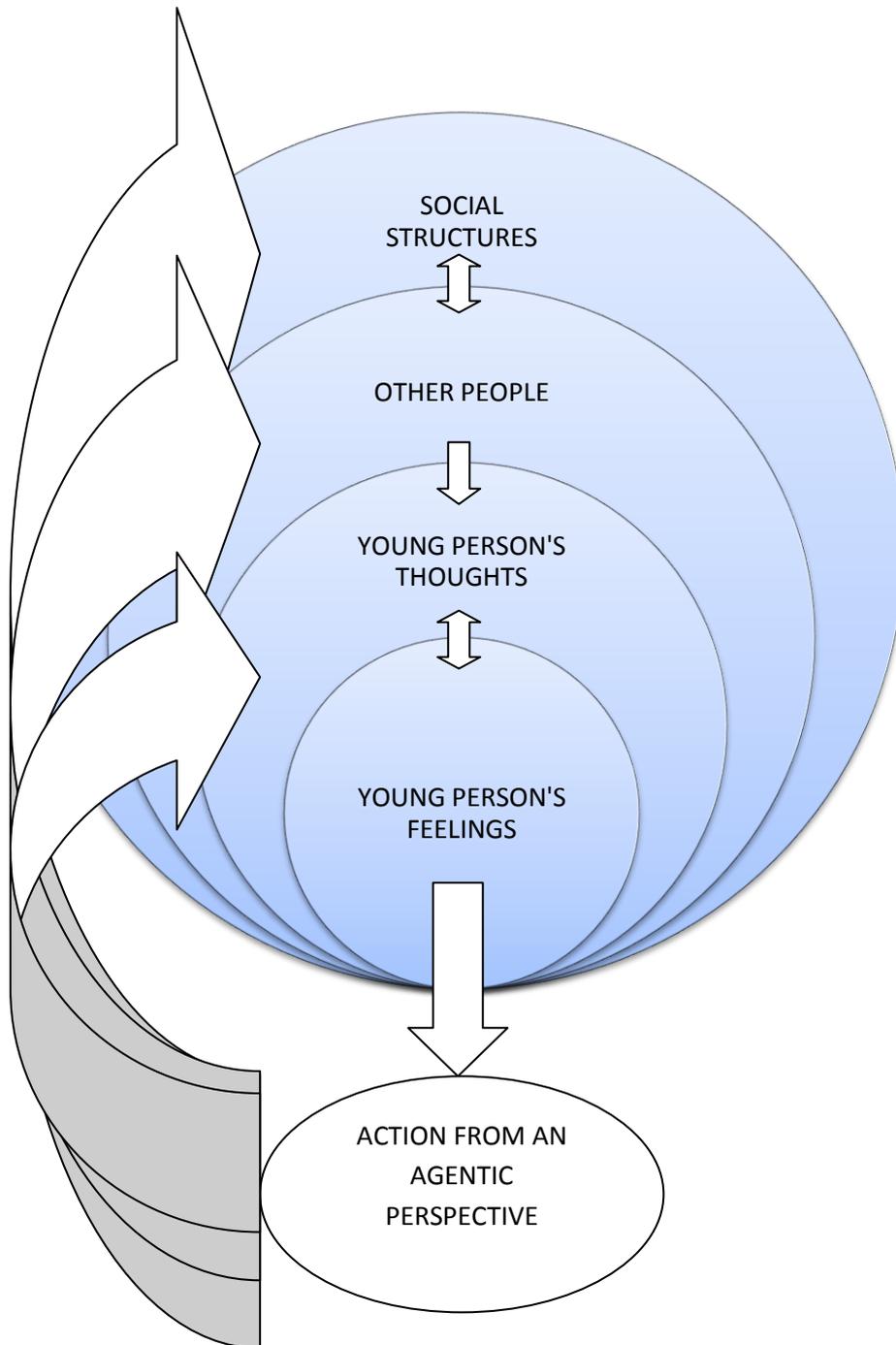


Figure 6: Adaptation of archer's morphogenetic sequence (1995) and bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979; 1999) conveying inter-related yet analytically distinct areas affecting young people's agentic perspective over time.

While structure and agency are interdependent, Archer (1995) argues that it is possible to unpick them as distinct analytically. The model (Figure 4, p67) reflects Archer's (1995) morphogenetic sequence, wherein certain structural (external) factors shape the subsequent interactions of young people and those interactions in turn reproduce or transform the initial context. This seems a helpful description of the overall layering and 'flow' of the model produced from this research. It suggests an iterative process where agency supports agency and is a prerequisite and outcome of meaningful, engaged and motivated learning (Rainio, 2007).

Organisational Psychology models and theories may relate to the **leader/community ethos** in my model. Bryman (1992, p146) identified themes that linked the vision of a leader to empowering effects on organisational members. Findings from organisational culture research (Ridder, 2004; Westhuizen, Mosoge, Swanepoel, Coetsee, 2005) indicate that a healthy and positive organisational culture exists in high-achieving schools; the same cannot be said for low achieving schools.

The model reveals the importance of **personal dialogue**. The importance of dialogic approaches in facilitating a view of young people's role as active in community purposes is shown by Lodge (2005) in Figure 7:

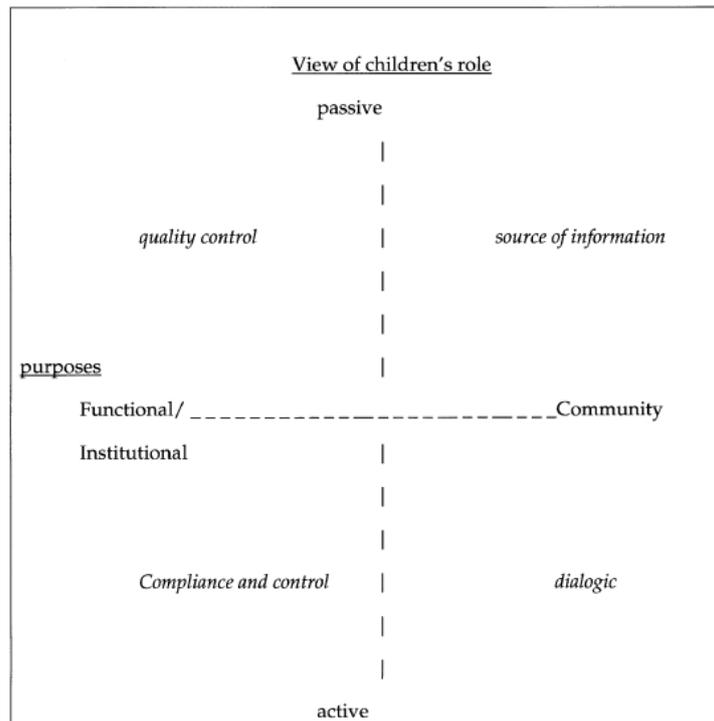


Figure 7: Approaches to student involvement in school improvement (Lodge, 2005, p131)

Dialogue is used here with a particular meaning- It is more than conversation; it is the building of shared narrative (Lodge, 2005). Dialogue in the model is valuable in promoting **critical reflection, social confidence** and a feeling of being **heard and valued**, as well as for interpretation and reorganisation of knowledge (Lodge, 2005). It is the basis of **positive relationships**.

Dialogic activities may also link to the construct of **joint decisions** in the model through the concept of participation. Hart's (1992) 'Ladder of Children's Participation' and Shier's 'Pathways to Participation' (2001) are commonly used in discussion of young people's participation. The peak level of participation in both models comprises making decisions jointly between adult and young person.

The feelings suggested in the model provide for a powerful agentic perspective that may lead to positive action from the young person. Each feeling can be linked to separate theory in the summary of agency related measures (Alkire, 2005) shown in the systematic review (Table 2, p13). My model assimilates these theories. When these feelings combine with an agentic foci in the model it may cause a young person to take action from a strong agentic perspective. This is shown in simple form extricated from the model in Appendix 12. It explicitly links theoretical beliefs of personal Efficacy (Bandura, 2008), Attribution (Weiner, 1992) and Self-Determination (Deci and Ryan, 2002).

IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Developing young people's perspective of themselves as agentic may increase psychological resilience and adaptability to many life challenges and fortuitous events. This is vital in increasing young people's engagement with their own development and their community which may contribute to a sense of fulfilment in life, as Welzel and Inglehart (2010) suggest. Having an impact on the world and experiencing control over outcomes may be crucial for psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Hitlin and Elder, 2007; Seligman, 2011). In contrast, not seeing one's self as an agent may lead to feelings of helplessness and lack of hope that may also lead to moral disengagement (Bandura, 1999). The factors in the model are similar to factors suggested for increasing resilience (Newman and Blackburn, 2002), furthering the links between agency and one's ability to adapt to life's challenges.

Focus on agency is a golden thread that links much popular and evidence based work in the Educational Psychology field (noted in the introduction, p57). This focus may facilitate EP's work with other professionals to co-ordinate the impact of interventions based on psychological theories (as highlighted in this discussion). The model can guide assessment and intervention if used as a map to link varied social and psychological theories together with the aim of enhancing a young person's agentic perspective. If any factor is assessed as lacking or problematic, an intervention can be applied to enable that supportive factor; in turn affecting other areas. Use of the model should acknowledge the research focussed on young people of secondary school age and may have a bias towards the older end of secondary school age. Having worked with young people who were already considered highly agentic, applicability can't be assumed to various vulnerable groups. It may provide building blocks for guidance and further research with these groups and wider populations.

A list of interventions that could be used throughout the model would be limited by my own knowledge and should be left open to professional interpretation and evidence based research. However, my journey through the literature highlighted the following as some useful interventions and/or practice that may contribute to developing various factors in the model. The factors I have suggested they develop are from my understanding of the interventions and/or practice, but I acknowledge that this can be open to interpretation. These are shown in Table 8:

Table 8: Interventions and/or practice that may contribute to developing various constructs in the model

		PRACTICE OR INTERVENTION (EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY)												
		Motivational Interviewing	Narrative Therapy	Pupil Voice Organisations	Pupil Centred Reviews	Young people as researchers	Goal setting	Appreciative Inquiry	Dialogic teaching	Modelling	Philosophy for children (P4C)	Positive Activities	Solution oriented work / consultation	Creative participation methods (drawing, photography, video, role play, internet, etc)
		<i>Miller and Rollnick (2002)</i>	<i>White and Epston (1990)</i>	<i>Lodge (2005)</i> www.pupil-voice.org.uk	<i>Sanderson and Smull (2005)</i>	<i>Kellett (2005); Burton, Smith and Woods (2010)</i>	<i>Locke (2001)</i>	<i>Cooperrider (1996a and 1996b)</i>	<i>Alexander (2006)</i>	<i>Vygotsky (1978)</i>	<i>Lipman (2003)</i>	<i>DCSF (2010)</i>	<i>Lethem (2002)</i>	<i>Rudkin (2007); Strack, Magill and McDonagh (2004); Various</i>
A G E N T I C P	Leader/Community Ethos			X	X			X					X	
	Formal Roles			X	X	X						X		
	Access and Opportunity			X	X	X				X		X		X
	Scaffolding									X	X		X	
	Encouragement	X					X	X		X		X	X	
	Personal Dialogue	X	X		X				X		X		X	X
	Joint Decisions			X	X	X							X	X
	Social Capital			X	X					X		X		
	Heard and valued	X		X	X	X			X		X		X	X

E R S P E C T I V E C O N S T R U C T	Involved			X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X
	Positive Relationships			X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Role Model		X							X				
	Direct Experience					X						X		
	Negative YP stereotype			X	X	X								
	Future Orientation / Life Values	X	X				X	X		X	X		X	
	Congruent desired identity		X		X		X		X		X			X
	Critical reflection	X	X					X	X		X		X	
	Planning and organising	X			X		X						X	
	Deadlines						X							
	Rewards											X		
	Seeing the impact of own actions			X	X	X								X
	Determination and Perseverance	X					X						X	
	Social Confidence			X					X			X		X
	Efficacy and enjoyment	X				X				X		X		
Control			X	X									X	

Examples of this work can be found at individual, group and community levels. Table 8 highlights that within methods currently employed by applied educational psychologists are intervention for all constructs. However, I think it is uncommon for many of these methods/practices to be used together, highlighting need for multiple practical approaches, integrated to developing young people's perspectives of themselves as agentic. It suggests the importance of raising young people's aspirations, dialogic approaches, developing positive cultures that foster positive relationships and aspects of young people's participation and social learning. It also suggests there may not be enough intervention that **scaffolds** young people's learning and skills or that stimulate thought about **role models** to be like or not. It also appears there is no obvious work designed to ameliorate the **negative stereotype of young people**.

I hope the model can facilitate EPs working with young people, professionals, families and organisations to aid young people's psychological development and increase awareness and discourse on agency. Increasing common discourse on the subject of human agency itself might be an important part of enhancing young people's perspectives of themselves as agents as highlighted by the model and positive feedback on the focus groups from the young people themselves. It may only be when discourse on agency is increased and life is therefore seen as an opportunity to thrive, that people would begin to value agency highly (Welzel and Inglehart, 2010). This research and model may also facilitate development of public and educational policy. Focus on young people's agency may involve a paradigm

shift in how young people are viewed; paying attention to their power, or lack of power, to influence or organise events and to engage in the structures that affect their lives (Blanchet-Cohen, 2008). As Prout and James (1997) note:

‘Children are and must be seen as active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and the societies in which they live. Children are not just the passive subjects of social structures and processes’ (p. 8)

Policy change may propel this paradigm shift and refine approaches to empowering communities, giving young people a sense of belonging, opportunity and control over their lives. Including the model in policy may be of use informing educational organisations, teachers, social workers, youth justice teams and other professionals working with young people and families of beneficial ways to set up positive learning environments and reflect on how to interact with young people to support their agentic perspective.

Further research in this area would be useful to:

- support or refute aspects of my model
- explore the models applicability for wider age ranges and populations
- continue to develop clarity in the concept of agency
- highlight psychological benefits of a person seeing themselves as an agent
- promote popular discourse on agency

There is an obvious educational psychologist role in continuing to develop theory, research and common awareness in this area, alongside direct work with individuals, schools, families and communities to enhance young people's agentic perspective.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: EPPI-Centre weight of evidence (WOE) tool for qualitative papers (EPPI-Centre, 2007; Spencer, Ritchie, Dillon, 2003)

Based on:

EPPI-Centre (2007) Review Guidelines for Extracting Data and Quality Assessing Primary Studies in Educational Research. Version 2.0
London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research.

Spencer, L., Ritchie, J., Dillon, L (2003) Quality in Qualitative Evaluation: A framework for assessing research evidence. London: National Centre for Social Research

(Extract from) Quality assessment of qualitative studies using EPPI WoE

<p>N.13 Weight of evidence A: Taking account of all quality assessment issues, can the study findings be trusted in answering the study question(s)?</p> <p><i>In some studies it is difficult to distinguish between the findings of the study and the conclusions. In those cases, please code the trustworthiness of these combined results/conclusions.</i></p>	<p>N.13.1 High trustworthiness</p> <p>N.13.2 Medium trustworthiness</p> <p>N.13.3 Low trustworthiness</p>
<p>N.14 Weight of evidence B: Appropriateness of research design and analysis for addressing the question, or sub-questions, of this specific systematic review.</p>	<p>N.14.1 High</p> <p>N.14.2 Medium</p> <p>N.14.3 Low</p>
<p>N.15 Weight of evidence C: Relevance of particular focus of the study (including conceptual focus, context, sample and measures) for addressing the question of this specific systematic review</p>	<p>N.15.1 High</p> <p>N.15.2 Medium</p> <p>N.15.3 Low</p>
<p>N.16 Weight of evidence D: Overall weight of evidence</p> <p><i>Taking into account quality of execution, appropriateness of design and relevance of focus, what is the overall weight of evidence this study provides to answer the question of this specific systematic review?</i></p>	<p>N.16.1 High</p> <p>N.16.2 Medium</p> <p>N.16.3 Low</p>

APPENDIX 2: Concepts' comparison grid

META-ETHNOGRAPHY

AUTHORS -> METHODS V	BLANCHET-COHEN (2008)	PUNCH (2001)	MANUELITO (2005)	DAVIS (2008)	SKOVDAL ET AL (2009)	CARGO ET AL(2003)
SAMPLE	42 (10-13 year old) Canadian	37 (8-14 year old school children) Churquiales- in Camacho Valley- Southern Bolivia.	36 individuals -administrators, teachers, parents, and students. South Mexico	42 children (6-18 years old), four were girls and 38 were boys. Mean age of 12.5. Kenya	48 young carers (11-18) West Kenya	173 (12 to 19 year olds) British Colombia, USA
DATA GENERATION	- 42 (30-40 minute) open ended interviews. - A visual survey for children (pictures in response to questions) - A visual map for children to express perspectives.	- Semi-participant observation -semi-structured and informal interviews. - classroom observation - task-based techniques at the school which included: photographs (which the children themselves took), drawings, diaries and worksheets	-Ethnographic techniques over a period of two years. -participant observation -individual interviews (2-4 hours) -focus group of 4 - document analysis -emergent design	Participant observation- permission to walk around city. 6 days a week 2 months in 2003 5 months in 2006 Interviews after observations.	Participants used photography(photovoice), drawing and writing to provide accounts of their coping strategies. -34 individual interviews -2 group discussions Coded and analysed in Atlas.Ti using thematic networks analysis (Attride- Stirling, 2001).	4-year period from November 1993 to June 1998 -Individual and group interviews, documents, and observations -constant comparative method and theoretical sampling. -Atlas.Ti used
SETTING	International Environmental conference for Children	Eighteen households Community school	Ramah Navajo community Pine Hill school USA Self determination act and tribal or community schooling.	Small, rural market town: Makutano, West Pokot, Kenya	Household -coping strategies and Agency of young carers in HIV/AIDS hit Africa.	Teens and adults participating in the community health promotion project.
AGENCY CONCEPTION	The conscious choice of taking the decision to be environmentally involved.	How children negotiate their autonomy within and between the four main arenas of their everyday lives at home, at work, at school and at play	Self determination- defined by the community and school	The physical practice and shared understanding of street children's subculture	Ability and resilient strategies for coping and caring for a family.	Theoretical framework of youth empowerment.
EMERGENT THEMES FOR ENHANCING AGENTIC SELF CONCEPTS OF ADOLESCENTS IN THEIR COMMUNITY						
CONNECTION TO	'Connectedness'.	Children have to <i>want</i> to do	Seeing your community	Well being in the street is	Sense of wellbeing by	Seeing things as

<p>OWN WELL BEING</p>	<p>To feel a sense of 'Wonder' about...X</p> <p>To feel 'inter-related' to...X...to achieve a sense of well being.</p>	<p>something to act without question.</p>	<p>{land you live on and education} as inextricably important and connected to your own future.</p>	<p>inextricably linked with the children's ability to live in them efficiently.</p>	<p>keeping family healthy.</p>	<p>'meaningful', 'going somewhere', 'fun' and 'relevant' to themselves and the community</p> <p>Relational aspect of needing to belong.</p>
<p>CRITICAL REFLECTION AND QUESTIONING</p>	<p>'Questioning'.</p> <p>'children critically interfacing with society's behaviour and attitudes towards...X'</p> <p>Questioning is expressed primarily in 'denouncing adults moral superiority' and in 'realising the complexity of issues'.</p>	<p>'Children do not merely obey their parents passively or without question'</p>	<p>Critical reflection on the communities self governance.</p>		<p>Searching for 'Socio-cultural Resources' such as 'local understandings of childhood' or spiritual questioning to find 'meaning in circumstances'</p>	<p>'Raising consciousness' of complex interrelated environments and people.</p> <p>'Reflection'</p>
<p>SELF EFFICACY</p>	<p>'Belief in Capacity'.</p> <p>'children's confidence in their own capacity'. Self efficacy</p> <p>'optimism for the future'. Hope</p>	<p>Power struggles for competence 'children move in and out of relative independence and competence in relation to different people'</p>	<p>(belief in self is linked to self determination)</p>	<p>(children take on different roles and tasks depending on what they feel they can manage)</p>		<p>'ACTUALIZING YOUTH POTENTIAL' Helping youth reliaise their potential by enhancing their 'Esteem' 'Confidence' and 'Competence'</p>
<p>DECISION TO PERSEVERE UNDER SOCIAL PRESSURE</p>	<p>'taking a stance'</p> <p>'committing to a view' even in the face of peer or adult oppression or social boundaries.</p> <p>'Overcoming lack of support' or being seen as different</p>	<p>'Parents' reactions to children's strategies may vary from acceptance and compliance to restriction and oppression'</p>	<p>'Persevere' - 'think for yourself', 'speak for yourself'</p>	<p>Creativity in creating niches for themselves.</p>	<p>Deciding to be a young carer in face of peers.</p>	<p>Youth being empowered to take control of what they want.</p>
<p>NEGOTIATING INDEPENDENCE</p>		<p>AVOIDANCE STRATEGIES</p> <p>COPING STRATEGIES(Making adult request for action acceptable on their on terms)</p> <p>HOUSEHOLD</p>	<p>(negotiation of structure is a community task)</p>	<p>Creation of own subculture.</p> <p>The children create an 'anti-society' that enhances their own agency but means communication with adult world difficult.</p>	<p>The ability to cope on their own is determined by the extent to which they are able to participate in their community and negotiate support from it.</p>	<p>Empowerment emerged as a transactional partnering process between adults and youth.</p> <p>{Tension here as can be</p>

		<p>NEGOTIATIONS(hierarchy among siblings and adults- who does what)</p> <p>Children's multiple strategies are not merely used in resistance to adults' power, but are part of a complex process in which they assert their agency, creating time and space (away from adult surveillance) for themselves despite restrictions from a variety of sources, including adults, other children and structural constraints.</p>		<p>Utilization of space- creating own space away from adult gaze</p> <p>Asserts children's power in own world away from adult constraints.</p> <p>leadership and negative and positive sanctions.</p>		<p>uncool to be joined with adults}.</p>
PLANNING	<p>'strategic action' 'children's purposeful and conscious approach';</p> <p>'sense of success and building on strengths'</p>	<p>'children, as competent social actors, may choose to respond to the requests or demands of others with a mixture of obedience, compliance, defiance and resistance. Equally they may act on their own initiative rather than just respond or comply'</p>	<p>'planning'- 'plan with a goal' {for the community}</p> <p>'Proactive'- 'just do it', 'try hard for self'</p>	<p>(implicit in the street children's plans to obtain money and build a space for themselves)</p>		<p>'CONTROLLING THE PROCESS' Helping young people to 'Take responsibility', Decision making, Take action' and 'activity planning'</p>
RESPONDING TO CONTEXT	<p>'children positioning themselves within a given social and physical context'</p>	<p>'The ways in which children respond to adult control over their lives varies in different contexts, in response to different individuals, and depending on the type and location of the task'.</p>	<p>Ramah Navajo versus Anglo-American Concepts of Self-Determination are similar. 'do for yourself', 'persevere with a goal in mind', 'plan and talk for yourself'</p> <p>The difference is that Ramah Navajo is used in a communal sense and commitment to community is important.</p>	<p>'The duality of understandings shared by street children marks their society out as a culture embedded within mainstream culture'.</p> <p>This is a subculture.</p>	<p>'Contextual background': Conditions in which children provide care and support.</p>	<p>(Creating a culture as a transactional process between youth and adults)</p>
ENOURAGING LEARNING	<p>'engagement with the environment'.</p> <p>'Direct or indirect' contact with issues to increase curiosity about how it all works.</p>		<p>Navajo Education as Part of Self-Determination</p> <p>Navajo education is viewed as an important part of self-determination.</p>	<p>(own education- street children didn't attend school) (It is noted that there is a need for greater integration of workers with street children to enable formal education)</p>	<p>Education gives children a sense of normality. [links to increasing social support]</p>	<p>ENABLING YOUTH through Facilitating, Teaching, Mentoring and Providing feedback</p> <p>CREATING AN EMPOWERING</p>

	'Integration' with adult issues through education.		'Maintaining' sense of self, teachings, wisdom, local language Respect for others	[Link to increasing social support]		ENVIRONMENT: <u>ADULT SUBPROCESS</u> WELCOMING SOCIAL CLIMATE(by adults) through providing opportunities, Believing, Respecting, Encouraging, Caring
IDENTITY	Overcoming being seen as different.		(As part of a Navajo community) Tribal.	Argot, body language and appearance (both differing to adults- <i>shared identity</i> and within peer group- <i>individual identity</i>)- (links to Archer?) 'Through the daily practice of scavenging, the street children reaffirm their bonds to one another, strengthening their sense of shared identity'. [all links to increasing social support] [Links to negotiating autonomy and space within imposed structure]	Constructing positive social identities around their caring roles. 'Perceptions of young carers' positive and negative. Sense that they are a 'good' person.	Working with adults might not be seen as 'cool'.
SOCIAL CAPITAL	(Link to education and integration with issues to engage)	Negotiate household tasks and delegate between them. The more social capital the more delegation.	'Planning' for the community- 'caring for your people'- 'respect for your people' 'maintaining'-peer support	'Socialization and the group as support network' Games and glue sniffing are some main ways of doing this.	mobilising social support Community support Family support	'Becoming socially integrated'
SELF SUFFICIENCY			(enhancing community resource)	Economic niche to create own money. Regularly performed a variety of jobs to gain money to save for personal item or group money. Get food in return as well.	'Engaging in income generating activities' Also jobs in hope of reciprocal favour [link to social support]	Building Competencies
SUMMARY / SECOND ORDER INTERPRETATIONS						
<u>EXPLANATION / THEORY (SECOND-</u>	Agency is enhanced from the Interrelation of: efficacy, intention,	Young people's agency is asserted to overcome power differentials, cope with life and	Agency is linked to self determination and a community approach in	An agentic subculture founded on peer and group support is created in order to foster well-	Agency as going 'toward a social psychology of coping'. Coping, engaging and	A Transactional Partnering Process Between Adults and

<p><u>ORDER</u> <u>INTERPRETATION)</u></p>	<p>connectedness, engagement, reflection and negotiating social boundaries</p>	<p>negotiate their role and place in their world.</p>	<p>defining this helps to enhance agency.</p>	<p>being in the given context. Interventions must support, not belittle this subculture.</p>	<p>protection in communities. Resilience.</p>	<p>Youth is key for agency development. This approach allowed youth to control the process in the context of a welcoming social climate and with enabling adult support.</p>
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Entries in parentheses contain explanations of the contents of the cell that are implicit in the papers.

The empty cells are those for which there were no relevant data in the paper concerned.

Those in quotation marks use the original author(s)' own words; those not in quotation marks are based on our paraphrasing of the original papers. As a way of remaining faithful to the meanings and concepts of each study, the terminology used in the original paper is preserved in the grid.

First order construct = the everyday understandings of ordinary people. Second-order construct = the constructs of the social sciences. Thus, in Schutz's terms, the explanations and theories in the last row of the grid are second-order interpretations.

APPENDIX 3: Concept comparison grid for triangulation of other's views.

WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT ENHANCING YOUNG PEOPLE'S SENSE OF THEMSELVES AS AGENTS IN THEIR COMMUNITY?

(AN EXERCISE TO INCREASE THE VALIDITY AND JUSTIFICATION OF THEMES)

NOTE: words in brackets have been added to help my co-researcher make sense of the example; words in quotes are direct from the text.

Please identify what you think the theme is from the examples in each paper (and how you would label it) and write it in the empty box across from the examples in a row. In addition please can you make a note if you think any of the themes may be merged / if you think any of the examples do not belong in a theme or should be grouped elsewhere.

Thank-you.

PAPERS > THEME?	BLANCHET-COHEN (2008)	PUNCH (2001)	MANUELITO (2005)	DAVIS (2008)	SKOVDAL ET AL (2009)	CARGO ET AL(2003)
	(For young people to engage with X they need ...) To feel a sense of 'Wonder' about...X To feel 'inter-related' to...X...to achieve a sense of well being.	Children have to <i>want</i> to do something to act without question.	Seeing your community, the land you live on and education as inextricably important and connected to your own future.	Well being in the street is inextricably linked with the children's ability to live in them efficiently.	Sense of wellbeing by keeping family healthy.	Seeing things as 'meaningful', 'going somewhere', 'fun' and 'relevant' to themselves and the community Relational aspect of needing to belong.
	'children critically interfacing with society's behaviour and attitudes towards...X' Questioning is expressed primarily in 'denouncing adults moral superiority' and in 'realising the complexity of issues'.	'Children do not merely obey their parents passively or without question'	Critical reflection on the communities self governance.		Searching for 'Socio-cultural Resources' such as 'local understandings of childhood' or spiritual questioning to find 'meaning in circumstances'.	'Raising consciousness' of complex interrelated environments and people. 'Reflection'
	'children's confidence in their own capacity'. 'optimism for the future'. Hope	Power struggles for competence 'children move in and out of relative independence and competence in relation to different people'	belief in self is linked to self determination			Helping youth realise their potential by enhancing their 'Esteem' 'Confidence' and 'Competence'
	'committing to a view' even in the face of peer	'Parents' reactions to children's strategies may vary from	'Persevere'- 'think for yourself', 'speak for	Creativity in creating niches for themselves.	Deciding to be a young carer in face of peers.	Youth being empowered to take control of what

	or adult oppression or social boundaries. 'Overcoming lack of support' or being seen as different	acceptance and compliance to restriction and oppression'	yourself'			they want.
		Children's multiple strategies are not merely used in resistance to adults' power, but are part of a complex process in which they assert their agency, creating time and space (away from adult surveillance) for themselves despite restrictions from a variety of sources, including adults, other children and structural constraints.		Creation of own subculture. The children create an 'anti-society' that enhances their own agency but means communication with adult world difficult. Utilization of space- creating own space away from adult gaze Asserts children's power in own world away from adult constraints.	The ability to cope on their own is determined by the extent to which they are able to participate in their community and negotiate support from it.	Empowerment emerged as a transactional partnering process between adults and youth.
	'children's purposeful and conscious approach'; 'sense of success and building on strengths'	'children, as competent social actors, may choose to respond to the requests or demands of others with a mixture of obedience, compliance, defiance and resistance. Equally they may act on their own initiative rather than just respond or comply'	'planning'- 'plan with a goal' (for the community) 'Proactive'- 'just do it', 'try hard for self'	street children's plans to obtain money and build a space for themselves		Helping young people to 'Take responsibility', Decision making, Take action' and 'activity planning'
	'children positioning themselves within a given social and physical context'	'The ways in which children respond to adult control over their lives varies in different contexts, in response to different individuals, and depending on the type and location of the task'.	Ramah Navajo versus Anglo-American Concepts of Self-Determination are similar. 'do for yourself', 'persevere with a goal in mind', 'plan and talk for yourself' The difference is that Ramah Navajo is used in a communal sense and commitment to community is important.	'The duality of understandings shared by street children marks their society out as a culture embedded within mainstream culture'. A subculture.	'Contextual background': Conditions in which children provide care and support.	
	'Direct or indirect' contact with issues to increase curiosity about		Navajo education is viewed as an important part of self-determination.	It is noted that there is a need for greater integration of workers with street children to enable	Education gives children a sense of normality.	CREATING AN EMPOWERING ENVIRONMENT: ADULT

	how it all works. 'Integration' with adult issues through education.		'Maintaining' sense of self, teachings, wisdom, local language Respect for others	formal education.		SUBPROCESS WELCOMING SOCIAL CLIMATE(by adults) through providing opportunities, Believing, Respecting, Encouraging, Caring
	Overcoming being seen as different.		Seen as part of a Navajo community. Tribal.	'Through the daily practice of scavenging, the street children reaffirm their bonds to one another, strengthening their sense of shared identity'. Argot, body language and appearance.	Constructing positive social identities around their caring roles. 'Perceptions of young carers' are positive and negative. They have a sense that they are a 'good' person.	Working with adults might not be seen as 'cool'.
		Negotiate household tasks and delegate between them. The more people the more delegation.	'Planning' for the community- 'caring for your people'- 'respect for your people' 'maintaining' relationships	'Socialization and the group as support network' Games and glue sniffing are some main ways of doing this.	mobilising social support Community support Family support	'Becoming socially integrated'
				Economic niche to create own money. Regularly performed a variety of jobs to gain money to save for personal item or group money. Get food in return for jobs.	'Engaging in income generating activities' Also do jobs in hope of reciprocal favour.	Building Competencies

APPENDIX 4: Triangulation evidence of the synthesis.

WHO	RESEARCH AREA	SUPPORT FOR SYTHESIS	REFUTATION / MISSING FROM SYNTHESIS	WEIGHT OF EVIDENCE
<i>COMMUNAL LIVING</i> <i>Agency of young people can depend on a communally interactive and compensatory process.</i>				
Mcintyre(2006)	Participatory Research (PAR)	Those who participated became active learners and does who engaged in various types of decision making and action (p.642).	-	LOW- NOT WITHIN INCLUSION CRITERIA. Based on discussion with university aged students although embedded with discussion with groups of middle school adolescents in the US.
Boeck et al (2008)	Participatory Research (RE:Action)(UK Based)	'Young people expressed a strong sense of agency as members of the project team', 'knowing that they can determine their level of participation – from being hands-on researchers and involved in all decisions, to playing more of an advisory role – is important to them' (page 6).	-	LOW- NOT WITHIN INCLUSION CRITERIA. Evaluated participatory research and not a direct conception of agency.
Burton, Smith and Woods (2010)	Participatory Research	Teachers and Psychologists observed several social, cognitive and personal benefits to the children brought about by their engagement in the processes of questioning, data gathering, analysis, knowledge generation, and dissemination for a research project.		LOW- NOT WITHING INCLUSION CRITERIA. Research with Primary Aged Young people.
Strack, Magill and McDonagh (2004)	'Photovoice' tool for research	Suggestion that a process such as 'photovoice' provides youth the opportunity to develop their personal and social identities, be instrumental in building social competency and help develop a social morality for becoming a positive agent within their communities and society.		LOW- NO EMPIRICAL RESEARCH.
Gelder, Sitlington, Pugh (2008)	Tension between Agency and Structure. Self Determination perspective. (Investigation of the perceptions of the self-determination of youth with emotional and behaviour disorders from a community high school, separate educational facility, and	The authors suggest students in a residential facility gave higher self evaluation on a self determination battery test (and lowest on from the separate educational facility) because the residential program offered a great deal of ongoing structure to the students involved and included at least some coordination between the classroom and residential component.	I think these two articles link to an idea that the structure or environment young people may find themselves in contributes to them seeing themselves as a fixed 'object' or an agent. It seems testing and being part of a separate educational facility may impact on their sense that they are fixed in who they are in	MEDIUM: Small Sample Size.

	residential facility)		their world. Both situations, it seems, don't contribute to enhancing a sense of agency, and hence implicitly suggest the opposite (less tests and more connection to positive relationships) enhance a sense of agency.	
Reay and Wiliam (1999)	Tension between Agency and Structure. Self Determination perspective (Explores the extent to which children's perceptions of testing contribute to their understandings of themselves as learners.)	Although children's responses are varied, what most share is a sense of an event (with regard to testing) which reveals something intrinsic about them as individuals.		LOW: - NOT WITHING INCLUSION CRITERIA. Focus groups with Year 6 pupils.
THE INDIVIDUAL <i>An individual's positive sense of self and capacity for action can foster agency when outweighing negative self perception or communal boundaries</i>				
Vandenplas-Holper, Roskam and Fontaine (2010)	Self Perception: Considering scholastic, social and physical competence at present, in the past and in the future. They also considered The cause of change.	Highlights cross cultural differences and the importance of the specific context the young person is in when thinking about enhancing agency.	Nearly all of the children who saw change indicated that they had changed/would change in a positive way. Children more often thought that they would change in the future than that they had changed in the past. Children who saw change also made more internal attributions (effort and ability) than children who saw only stability. Attribution theory (Weiner, 1992), may provide further areas for investigating what enhances young people's agency that isn't covered in the meta-ethnography.	HIGH
Duckworth, Loew, Oettingen and Gollwitzer (2011)	Goals: Planning and reflection.	A technique involving thinking of the future with relevant obstacles in the present and identifying actions when opportunity arises enabled students in the intervention condition to complete more than 60% more practice test questions the control group. These findings point to the utility of planning and reflection as a self-regulatory strategy of successful goal pursuit.		HIGH
Mouratidis and Michou (2011)	Goals: Planning and reflection. Self Determination Perspective	They found that autonomous motivation (i.e. students' engagement in class activities because they find such activities enjoyable or personally important) and social development goals (i.e. students' focus on developing		LOW- Sample is younger than inclusion criteria.

		meaningful social relationships) were positively associated with positive emotions.		
<p>LINKING THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE WORLD</p> <p><i>A feeling of being connected to something that links with a young person's values or well being can encourage agency. This can depend on 'The Individual' and be supported by 'Communal living'.</i></p>				
Smith and Dalton (2004)	Experiences and perceptions of secondary students who had participated in a vocational education and training in school (VETiS) program.	A factor analysis of results showed a factor associated with self-confidence about employability, and a factor associated with assistance in achieving specific post-school employment. Students who had completed a work placement were significantly higher on self confidence about employability and both these factors than students who had not. Smith and Dalton (2004) argue that the work placement experience plays a considerable part in developing student agency in the decisions and the journey that they make in their transition from school to work.		MEDIUM
Contento, Koch, Lee, Sauberli and Calabrese-Barton (2007)	Examined the impact of an innovative inquiry based science education curriculum for middle school students, called Choice, Control, and Change, that was designed to foster healthful eating and physical activity and a healthy weight through enhancing agency and competence	Students significantly improved on several curriculum-specific eating and physical activity behaviours. Their outcome beliefs and overall self-efficacy, but not their attitudes, became more positive. This strategy based on fostering personal agency, cognitive self-regulation, and competence may provide more insight if explored further.		HIGH
Hansen, Larson and Dworkin (2003)	Adolescents' reports on different developmental and negative experiences in organised youth activities, including extracurricular and community-based activities.	Youth activities were associated with experiences related to initiative, identity exploration and reflection, emotional learning, developing teamwork skills, and forming ties with community members.		HIGH

APPENDIX 5: Letter of consent



Consent form for persons participating in research projects

Name: _____

Project Title: Towards a theory for enhancing young people’s agency and sense of being an agent in their community: Young people’s perspectives on their own stories of positive agency.

Name of Researcher: Russell Sharp

Name of Supervisor(s): Dr. Richard Parker, Dr. Simon Gibbs

1. *I consent to participate in the above project, the particulars of which have been explained to me.*
2. *I acknowledge that:*
 - (a) *Russell has explained the aims of this study and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it.*
 - (b) *I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied;*
 - (c) *I agree to the audio-recording of the focus group and/or interviews and I understand that Russell is the only one who will listen to it.*
 - (d) *I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded, subject to any legal requirements.*

Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Participant)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Researcher)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Parent/Guardian, if appropriate)

APPENDIX 6: Debrief sheet

Debriefing Sheet

ENHANCING YOUNG PEOPLE'S AGENCY

Thank you for participating in this study.

One of the main aims in this study was to develop an overarching theory of enhancing young people's agency and sense of agency in their communities. It was important that the perspective of the young people was emphasised. The reason for developing this theory was to go toward understand how to empower young people in their community and give them a sense of wanting to actively engage with their community. This also links to Local Authority, Government and my personal objectives.

Human agency does not have a common definition or conceptualisation in the literature. It might focus on people intentionally altering one's functioning and life circumstances, or on their capacity to act in and shape their environment. Current conceptions of the self may not be adequate to cover communal agency.

A synthesis of literature undertaken before this research was developed into a model of enhancing agency for young people of secondary school age. Eleven concepts emerged that have an effect on enhancing young people's agency. These can be sorted into the following three inter-relating areas: COMMUNAL LIVING, THE INDIVIDUAL, LINKING THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE WORLD. The model developed from this information suggests an interrelation of these concepts and areas in determining a young person's agency. We have been testing and developing this model.

As you are a group of young people involved in doing something positive in your community, I thought you would be key people to talk to about what they think enhances young people's agency and help me conduct my research.

My analysis of the interviews will use a procedure called Grounded Theory which is a systematic methodology in the social sciences emphasising generation of theory from data in the process of conducting research. After each data collection session key issues were noted. Constant comparison is the heart of the process. At first you compare interview (or other data) to interview (or other data). Theory emerges quickly. When it has begun to emerge you compare data to theory.

I'm hoping that by researching this together there has been a dual outcome to help me generate a theory for my research and for you to help you think about positive aspects of your group, make you think about yourselves differently and give you ideas for the group in the future.

I hope you feel a positive sense about yourself, your peers and your community and new skills you have acquired in this process. Should you have any worries or questions please get in touch.

By taking part in this study, your views and experiences have helped us to consider what enhances young people's agency and sense of agency in their community.

If you would like to read an article on this general topic, then please see:

- Bandura, A. (1986) Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Bandura, A (2008) Toward and Agentic theory of the Self. Self-Processes, Learning, and Enabling Human Potential, p 15–49

If, for whatever reason, you later decide that you no longer want your responses to be part of this study, then please contact Russell Sharp (see details below) to have your data removed from the study and destroyed. As a final point, all data collected in this study will be analysed in an aggregated form and you will remain anonymous.

If you would like more information, or have any further questions about any aspect of this study, then please feel free to contact **Russell Sharp**:

Phone. XXXX XXXXXX

Email: russell.sharp@XXX.XX.XX

X & X

X

X

X

X

APPENDIX 7: Question guide

QUESTION GUIDE

- 1) **Why did you join [The youth group]?**
(why did you decide to be involved in [the project in the community]?)
- 2) **Do you feel the [project in the community] has had an impact on young people's lives? If so, how?)**
- 3) **When do you feel motivated to do something?**
(Why? A specific time?)
- 4) **What do you value most in your life and why?**
- 5) **How do you think you best learn new things?**
(Have you learned new things from your experience in the youth group)
- 6) **What makes you question if what you are doing is helpful to you?**
(did you have to think hard about being involved in [the project] or how [the project] would work)
- 7) **What helps you think about or plan for the future?**
- 8) **What gives you the confidence to go and do something you want to?**
- 9) **How do you know you are ready to go and do something difficult?**
(how did you know you were ready to do [the project in the community])
- 10) **Who helps you achieve things you want to?**
- 11) **How important is what other people think of you? Why?**
- 12) **How are you able to work well as a group?**
(how did you decide who did what in [the project in the community])
- 13) **What makes you stick with something until the end?**
- 14) **Do you think you can change who you are? If so, how?**
- 15) **Do you think you can change things in the area you live in? If so, how?**
- 16) **Do you think about yourself differently from being involved in [your groups project] or by being part of this conversation? If so how?**

THANKYOU !

Links to model from systematic review and literature:

1. To ease into interview and make reference to the youth group being target audience.
2. How target audience see what they do.
3. Connection to own wellbeing.
4. Context.
5. Learning.
6. Critical reflection and questioning (Bandura: Self Reflexivness)
7. Planning (Bandura: Forethought)
8. Self-Efficacy (Bandura: Self efficacy)
9. Self Sufficiency (Bandura: Intention)
10. Social Capital
11. Identity
12. Negotiating Independence
13. Perseverance
14. Overall view as agent to alter self
15. Overall view as agent in community.

KEY THOUGHT TO GUIDE: WHAT DO I NEED TO ASK THESE YOUNG PEOPLE IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THEIR EXPERIENCES.

APPENDIX 8: Example Transcription

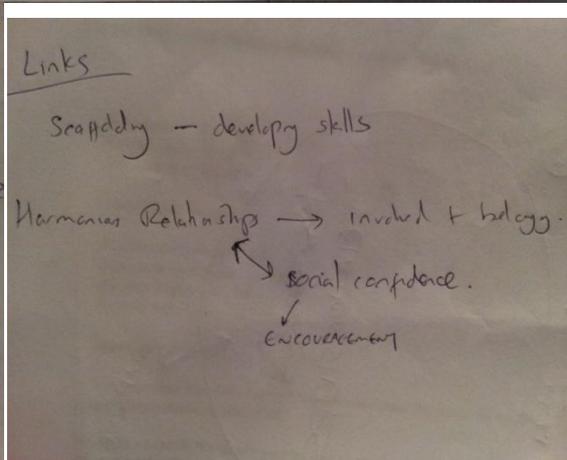
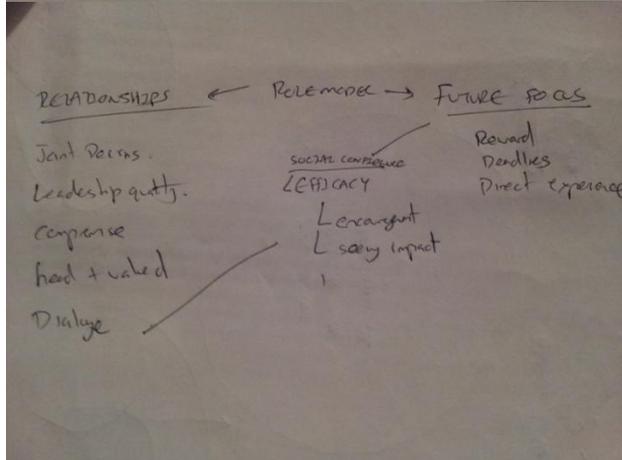
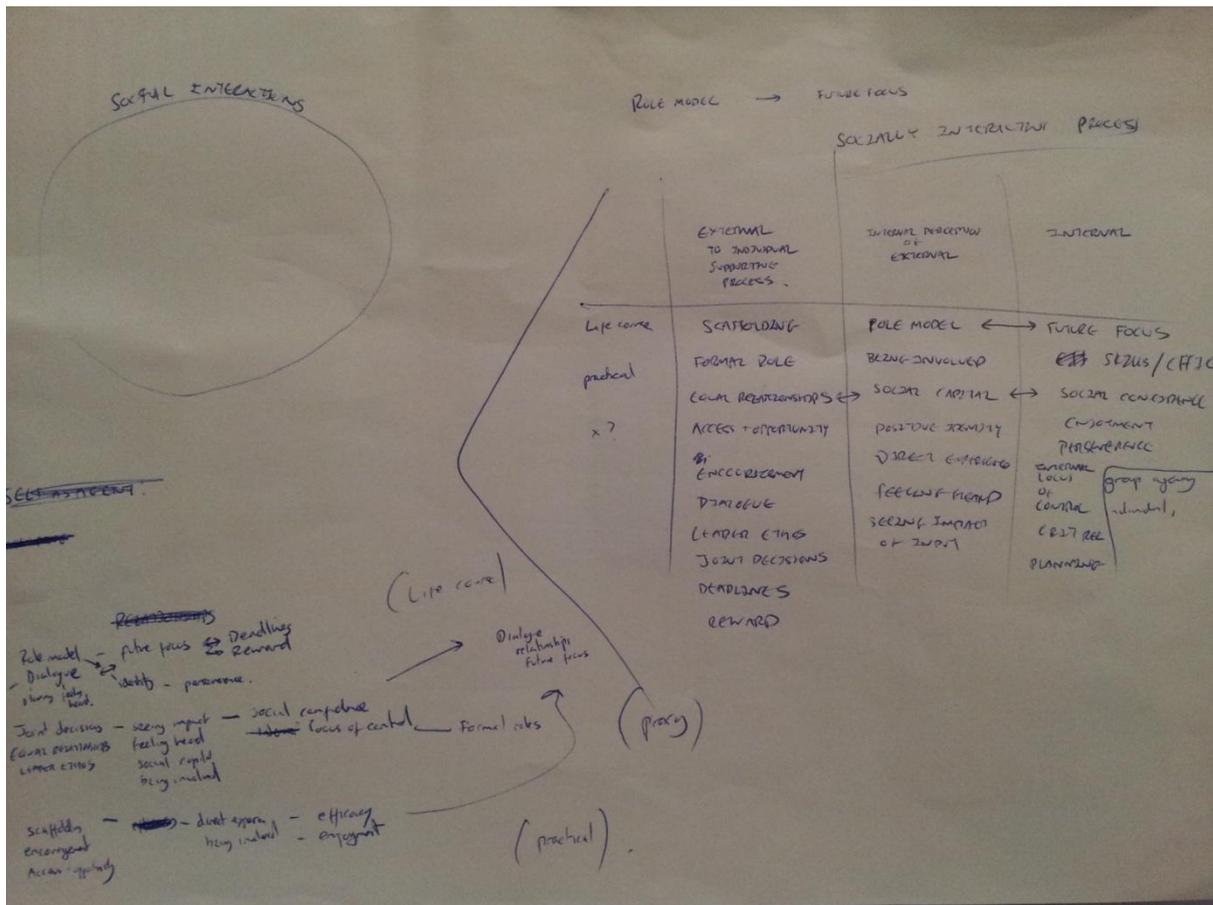
GROUP	PAGE	LINE	TRANSCRIPTION	GROUP ■ / TIME 40:44 / MEMBERS 5 / AGES 14-17 / GENDER 2M 3F
■	1	1	INT: Thank you for being involved. I know a bit about the Student voice organisation from your website and video but would you mind telling me a bit about what you think the student voice organisation is about.	
■	1	5	■: Basically it's in the title, it's student voice it's what the student body is all about and what it needs and what the school can do to get them there. It's all student based and there are benefits for students and help from teachers and everything	
■	1	10	■: It's the best route the students use with the teachers for getting things done. The student voice is where you go if you have a problem, if you need something doing, if you want to change something within the school- there's a student council as well but the student voice has main priority over everything. We are the middle, the cogs.	
■	1	10	■: it's not just about the students getting help, it's about the students helping, if they want to help then they've got a chance with student voice instead of having to awkwardly ask a teacher they can just say 'I'd like to do this in school please' and they can.	
■	1	15	■: It's also about developing skills.	
■	1	15	INT: So you guys are like a middle ground between the students and the teachers?	
■	1	15	■: I'm nodding, yeah, I'll remember not to nod as you won't be able to tell after.	
■	1	15	INT: So why did you all decide to join student voice?	
■	1	15	■: I just really wanted to do something in the school. When I first joined it was a really big thing and I really wanted to just do something because I was bored. So I joined student voice and gradually I became more and more powerful and then I'm where I am now.	
■	1	20	INT: In what way did you become more powerful?	
■	1	20	■: well I've got more roles than other members of student voice	

APPENDIX 9: Example of line by line coding

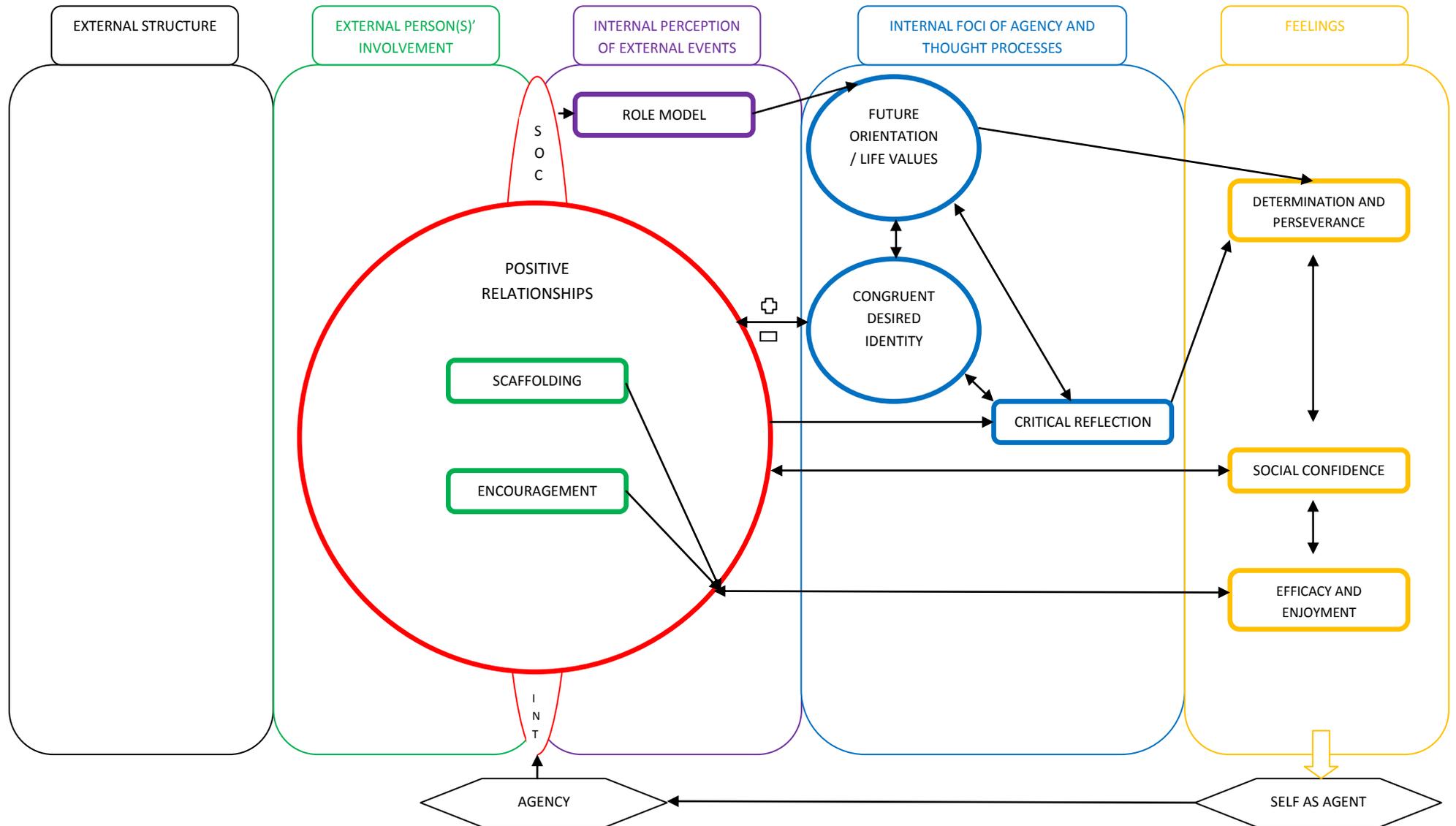
opportunities and exploratory interests	A	8	150	Mrs [] I went to and said look I want to be involved it sounds really good fun. She was asking what my interests were and what I thought I was good at and I said English and I got to work with the department as a whole and so that really developed an interest in English more so because, now I'm taking it at A-level so before student voice I probably wouldn't have pinpointed that interest, I wouldn't have thought about it that much. INT: so is there anything that helps you all plan for the future?, You mentioned about university, what helps you plan to do things like that?
Determination & persistence	A	8	155	B: I've just always known that I wanted to do that, I don't know. Just the minute I left primary school I thought I'm going to do this and I'm going to do it this way and no one's going to stop me doing that [laughs]. I guess I was just kind of determined. INT: ok, where do you think that determination came from?
role model not to be like doing better than peers.	A	8	160	B: this sounds really horrible actually, but I think it's because my sister whose older than me never really did very much, like she said 'I'm going to take a gap year out' and never really went back to anything and I kind of wanted to do more than that, I just wanted to do better than anybody else so [laughs] that sounds really mean. INT: that's interesting, why do you think that was important to you?
family role model not to be like	A	8	165	B: because, I didn't want to be like my sister, I wanted to have something behind me or do something that people could say 'wow, that's really good'. I wanted to be smart because my sister started of that way and then she just let it slip she was just like 'I can't be bothered anymore', I never want to not be bothered, because my mum was the same so, I wanted to kind of stop the trend. INT: does that ring bells with anyone or had anyone got a different view?
want positive things judged by others	A	8	170	A: I think my dad helped because he just said, oh you know, 'whatever you want to do, I'd like for you to just be happy and just keep you head up at school' and stuff like that. So I did, and I find that you get more motivation from other teachers as well because if you talk to them they want you to do better and if you talk to students they always egg, is 'egg you on' the right term? That sounds awful I mean... AE: encourage?

confidence knowing more people & teachers: good relationship opportunity to learn / meet people outside school.	A	3	45	B: I feel MUCH more confident. If I hadn't joined student voice I probably wouldn't have know a lot of people and I wouldn't have known most of the teachers that I do and we wouldn't have had such a good relationship. AE: We do get a lot of good opportunities with student voice and the leadership team, like we got to meet out local MP and we represented the school so you do get to meet some really interesting people. INT: what did you say to him?
	A	3	50	AE: He basically just wanted to know about student voice like you do and we told him about the roles and how it's beneficial to the school and... B: he wanted to know about our campaigns to become student voice president and our different approaches and stuff. INT: And what made you join?(To S)
Focus on future	A	3	55	S: oh me, well erm, It was just like setting myself for the future and something good on my C.V and that I've taken part in. INT: do you feel student voice has had an impact on the other students in school?
community feel having all year groups. comfortably being more people.	A	3	60	AE: I would have thought so, we are more of a community you could say. There are lots of things within school that help but student voice is every year group. I know people in every year group. Like I think for year 7's it's easier to be part of a big group because you get to know people and you feel more comfortable and confident within school instead of feeling so new and you don't know where you're going or who everyone is. B: yeah my little sister in year 7, she loves student voice, she's one of the tiny geeky ones with a big rucksack on. She knows a lot of bigger years and she can say hi to them and not be like 'oh my god, who are they, their so big'. INT: how about the...sorry were you going to say something...
and relationship with the people /	A	3	65	A: I was going to say, everyone know you and everyone knows they can trust you and student voice is a good

APPENDIX 10: Example of axial coding



APPENDIX 11: Young people's most talked about constructs for enabling their perspective of themselves as agentic in their community.



APPENDIX 12: Feelings that enable action from an agentic perspective
depending on a young person's temporal focus

FEELINGS IN THE YOUNG PERSON

TEMPORAL FOCUS

