Into The Light:

A grounded model for supporting the growth and learning of early phase entrepreneurs

A project submitted to Middlesex University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Professional Studies

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1 Abstract

This thesis offers a new model of early phase entrepreneurial development which places the central emphasis on the learning and development of the founder and the consequences for the team dynamics amongst the co-founders; in contrast to conventional approaches that stress the correct application of methods or techniques derived from financial or management theory.

The research was conducted through the application of grounded theory method and other supporting mixed qualitative and quantitative methods. The research draws upon my own direct coaching and mentoring work with different samples of early phase entrepreneurs.

One outcome from the research is a new psychometric instrument that is now in use at fifteen universities in the UK and several technology accelerators in the UK and Hong Kong. The instrument identifies and differentiates between three distinct elements derived from motivational theory: Mindset, relational preferences and work style. My research suggests that it is these aspects have a determining influence on the way the entrepreneur conceived and develops their venture.

The research was conducted by making transcriptions of recorded mentoring and coaching sessions. I created a database of codes and categories and then developed a model based on this data. Built into the project was a strong emphasis on the development and testing of the model with users.

My thesis shows that entrepreneurs do not follow a single course or method, but adapt between different profiles depending on and their own mindset and how they decide to evolve their venture.

This thesis highlights the need for entrepreneurs to develop the necessary agility to develop the necessary skills and behaviors or work effectively in collaboration with others. This lays the basis for a learning approach that is quite different from the classical linear "life cycle model" prevalent in the Silicon Valley model.

This research contributes to the rapidly developing eco-system of micro-businesses and provides a set of practical learning tools for early phase entrepreneurs.

2   Introduction

2.1   Preamble

In this doctoral thesis, I describe my qualitative work-based research project on the learning and development of early phase entrepreneurs. I will set out how I approached the research design and methodology, such as sampling (Bryant and Charmaz, 2013), data gathering and analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 2015) and then show how a new theoretical perspective and conceptual model emerged inductively, based principally on grounded theory method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). I then describe how I iterated and tested this model in real world settings and the progress of its dissemination and application. Throughout, I will attempt to describe the ethics of my approach and highlight ethical dilemmas that I confronted, and how I attempted to resolve them (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009).

Today, the instrument developed as a result of this research project is now in use at London School of Economics (Atter, 2015), and the European Space Agency incubator (Atter, 2015) and with the National Association of College and University Entrepreneurs (NACUE, 2015). This is the basis for my claim that new, useful and validated knowledge is being applied in a real world setting. I agree with Denzin and Lincoln when they write (Lincoln, 2011):

> *"Whereas traditional researchers cling to the guardrail of neutrality, critical researchers frequently announce their partisanship in the struggle for a better world".*
> *(Lincoln, 2011, p164)*

This neatly expresses the fundamental motive which has fuelled my research project: Pragmatic outcomes (Creswell, 2013). My underlying intent behind this research is simply to be useful and produce pragmatic outcomes that really support entrepreneurs (and their mentors) learn more effectively and develop stronger and more sustainable businesses. For example, one area I seek to have

impact is described by Angen as *"supporting the development of self awareness in the research participants" (Leitch et al., 2010)*.

A foundation of this research has been my mentoring and coaching sessions with my clients, who have also kindly agreed to be my research participants. My research ethic has been to *"research with people, not on people"* (Reason and Bradbury, 2001) and with this ethic in mind I have held an overriding concern that the primary benefits of the research flow to the participants. In other words, for this to be a valid research project, in my view, it must first have created value for its participants through coaching, workshops, and through the applied use of the instrument derived from the research project itself.

In brief, from 2010 - 2015, I have undertaken practitioner research through my role mentoring and coaching early phase entrepreneurs and supporting their development through learning conversations (Haan, 2008). Through the Grounded Theory Method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) (Bryant and Charmaz, 2013), I have coded, analyzed and categorized each "fragment" of data from the chosen sample of clients. By interacting and engaging with the data, and interpreting it, I have developed an original model of early phase entrepreneurship and developed a web based questionnaire instrument to enable the model to become accessible and useable to entrepreneurs and their mentors. This instrument has been tested and validated through use at leading tertiary institutions.

However, I did not get to this point in a straight line and the outcomes of my research and my current positioning as a professional are very different from where I set out. I learned the hard way a lesson Korzybski relayed to all of us (Bateson, 2002):

> *"The Map is not the territory, and the name is not the thing being named".*
> *(quoted in Bateson, 2002 p31)*

This thesis is designed to describe a journey, and perhaps is something of a

journal (Marshall, 2001). For writing the thesis was itself a cathartic process and as I wrote descriptions, explanations and summaries, stimulated further shifts in my ontological and epistemological position. For example, in having to "put it all together" from the bottom up, I realize now that I am much more clearer researching and writing from an interpretivist perspective than would have been evident whilst immersed in the earlier phases of the research project. In this I was strongly influenced by my early reading of Bohm (Bohm, 1996), Gergen (Gergen, 2009) and Bateson (Bateson, 2002), whose powerful summary of the subjectivist position strongly influenced me:

> *"All experience is subjective...Experience of the exterior is always mediated by particular sense organs and neural pathways. To that extent, objects are my creation, and my experience of them is subjective, not objective".*
> *(Bateson, p31)*

Guba and Lincoln, also reinforce this subjectivist position in science research generally when they write the following, referring to the Heisenberg uncertainty principle and the Bohr complementarity principle, (Lincoln and Guba, 1994):

> *"...the notion that findings are created through the interaction of the inquirer and phenomenon...is often a more plausible description of the inquiry process than is the notion that findings are discovered through objective observation "as they really are, and as they really work".*
> *(Lincoln and Guba, 1994, 107).*

This insight has implications for research and knowledge creation, but also suggests useful avenues for enquiry in entrepreneurship as phenomenological approach might also be a factor exploited by entrepreneurs when they demonstrate their capacity for seeing the world in new ways (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009).

Next, I want to carefully explain how my interpretation of each of the words within my research topic has evolved. This is especially necessary in my research

field, as terms such as "entrepreneurship", or "learning", have very ambiguous meanings.

2.2 Definition of Terms

The following definitions below are not merely of technical or scientific interest. My research question itself is not neutral, but laden with implication and colored by my own axiological perspective that I bring as a researcher (Creswell, 2013).

How we construct meanings around words goes to the very heart of this thesis. As Strauss and Corbin write (Strauss and Corbin, 2015):

> *"Meaning is not inherent in words. Words take on meaning when they are given so by users (participants in the case of research) and readers". (Strauss and Corbin, 2015, loc 2626)*

In other words, we all construct and reconstruct meanings around these words. As a researcher, it is vital that I am clear and transparent about what meanings I place on the key words in my question, as a point of departure into detailed description of the course of my research project.

2.2.1 Entrepreneurs

One of the findings from my research is that the definition of entrepreneur in the dominant political and economic discourse has become narrowed in recent years, and has tended to follow the prevailing venture-driven "Silicon Valley" model, with an emphasis on wealth creation; or the Drucker entrepreneur-as-manager perspective (Drucker, 1985), with its emphasis on business and organizational development. By contrast, I adopt an older and more inclusive definition that goes back to the original theorists, such as Richard Cantillon (Cantillon, 1959 (1st Ed.1755)), Jean Baptiste Say and Joseph Schumpeter, who linked entrepreneurs to the process of creative destruction, and wrote (Schumpeter, 1942):

> *"…the function of entrepreneurs is to reform or revolutionize the pattern of production by exploiting an invention or, more generally, an untried technical possibility for producing a new commodity or producing an old one in a new way, by opening up a new source of supply or materials or a new outlet for*

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products, by reorganizing an industry". (Schumpeter, 1942, loc 2869)

For me, this definition comes closer to the truth. Entrepreneurs are socially and economically disruptive and can encompass a wide spectrum of different typologies; from the Silicon Valley tech entrepreneur, through to the market trader, application developer, social entrepreneurs and even freelancers. All, in my view, are entrepreneurs.

Today, there is a high degree of convergence across different fields of entrepreneur. Makers and designers can now develop products and market them on the web, and thereby become internet marketeers. This cross over effect itself challenges the conventional definitions, which tend to categorize different types of entrepreneurs as if they were in sealed specimen boxes. Entrepreneurs develop alternative and self-reliant forms of income and deliver a wider choice to consumers, but often do so out of a desire for freedom and a sense of achievement (Robinson, 2010).

As Adam Lent, Director of the RSA (Lent, 2015), writes:

> *"A small revolution is already underway. Millions are choosing to set up their own small business rather than work for a giant corporation. Political and social change is increasingly delivered by many small initiatives and campaigns rather than big parties. And, more than ever, people make their own decisions about how to live their lives rather than accepting the rulings of big religious and civil organizations".*
> *(Lent, 2015, web page)*

The collective economic and social impact of small innovative entrepreneurial micro-businesses has only recently become evident, with the Hargreaves Report in 2011 prompting a sea change in thinking (Hargreaves, 2011). The Hargreaves report connected the overall opportunity presented by the digital revolution to the policy and practice towards intellectual property and highlighted in particular the critical importance of smaller, dynamic firms to the overall health

of the economic eco-system. He writes as follows:

"Over the last decade the majority of productivity growth and job creation has come from innovation, primarily by small and young firms...Small and young innovative firms are playing an increasing role in job creation. They represent only six per cent of UK firms with more than 10 employees but they have created 54 per cent of all new jobs since 2002".
(Hargreaves, 2011, p 11-16)

Hargreaves makes a crucial link between entrepreneurship and the growth of intangible intellectual assets, in the fields such as design, cloud computing and the internet-of-things, but also criticized the extent to which rules designed for larger companies were often inhibiting innovation. He writes:

"Small and young innovative firms are of crucial importance in terms of growth and jobs but proliferating use of IP rights can push up IP transaction costs and block these new players from entering markets".
(Hargreaves, 2011, p 07)

By recognizing the role played by micro-businesses and being able to map their overall activate and typologies, via subsequent government backed research, such as the Young Report (Young, 2015), we are developing a sense that entrepreneurial businesses are not just small stand alone businesses in a state of high growth, but actors in a much wider valuable eco-system, some of whom nevertheless choose to stay small and independent (Robinson, 2010).

This point is reinforced by looking at just one dimension of the emerging eco-system; the design industry, often conducted by smaller micro-businesses and freelancers working in collaborative networks. The Design Council recently quoted government figures demonstrating the size and vitality of the design industry:

"From 2011-13, jobs in product, graphic and fashion design increased by an astonishing 17.7% building on record growth in previous years to 177,000 jobs.

Design had the largest increase in Gross Value Added (GVA) during 2012-13, up 23.8%. The GVA for design in that time increased from £2.5bn to £3bn. This means the UK now has the second-largest design sector in the world and the largest design industry in Europe" (Design Council/Mathers, 2015 / Blog).

The Design Council article is interesting also for highlighting the definitional problem of "embedded" entrepreneurial designers and creatives working across various industrial sectors, often within the context of larger firms. These proactive and innovative independents and micro-businesses must, in my view, be brought within our definitions of entrepreneurship if we are to understand both the sociological and economic impact, and create a basis for understanding how entrepreneurs learn. For instance, Peter Thiel rightly describes the viral and networked effect of entrepreneurial firms, in being able to make connections and rapidly transmit new ideas (Thiel, 2014).

It is possible therefore to now see Makers and Designers as part of a broader innovative economic community. Maker co-working spaces such as DoES in Liverpool, present the emergence of a fascinating new forms of self organization, based around communal sharing and collaboration, more than competition (DoES, 2015).

Economist Will Hutton has described how the pace of innovation is accelerating, building on the theories of Kondratieff and innovation waves (Hutton et al., 2011). Returning to Schumpeter therefore, it is possible to see entrepreneurship as disruptive and revolutionary, not just at the firm level but at the societal level (McCraw, 2006).

It is helping entrepreneurs fully participate in this revolution that lies at the heart of this research. In my view, this goes way beyond the conventional tutoring we provide entrepreneurs in how to start up a company or incorporate a new legal entity; and must address the readiness of the entrepreneur to contribute to a developing eco-system based around transformative technologies, even if they

themselves contribute only a very small piece to the whole.

2.2.2   Early Phase

My basic thesis is that too much attention is being paid to so called Gazelle companies (Miller and Stacey, 2014), with most government funding going to companies that might have otherwise got money from the market. My attention is on those formative companies and networks, at the pre-funded stage, which too often appear to be starved of attention and support. The premise is that these companies are not simply large companies – in waiting. They represent a fundamental shift in the life choices of some 5.2 million people (currently the number of small business owners in the UK) (Koulopoulos and Keldsen, 2014) and (Robinson, 2010). For example, many of the emerging Gen Z entrepreneurs who I have worked with, do not wish to attract an Angel Investor and prefer to grow their venture more organically in order to preserve their freedom and ownership.

This might well be stretching the definition of what we currently mean by the word "entrepreneur" as we have, in my view, conflated the term "entrepreneur" with "start up" or indeed SME (small to medium sized enterprise) (Storey and Greene, 2010). But I agree with Koulopoulos, writing in the US business publication, Inc. when he writes as follows (koulopoulos, 2015):

> *"Part of the problem is that many of the metrics we rely on to plot the future of small businesses are simply misleading…the potential represented by micro-entrepreneurism - already as high as 10% of the US workforce - is not tracked in any meaningful way" (koulopoulos, 2015).*

As a business coach working in government programs such as the Growth Accelerator, my view has been that traditional measures such as employment and sales are insensitive to value creation in the modern digital economy. As Economist Paul Romer points out (koulopoulos, 2015):

> *"We fail to appreciate the magnitude of the change because the*

opportunities do not add up, they multiply." (koulopoulos, 2015, Inc).

My proposition is to restore the term to the more inclusive definitions of Cantillon and Say (Cantillon, 1959 (1st Ed.1755)) and Say (Say, (Trans. 1880)) who when using the term entrepreneur would have been referring to what we might term today as "traders" or even "trades-people". As well as these older sources, I would also cite Lent (Lent, 2015) and Tony Robinson (Robinson, 2010) who apply the term entrepreneur to the emerging "army" of bloggers, on line traders, designers, coders, social networkers and e-commerce sellers, often working independently, or in "micro-businesses" of less that ten people (Robinson, 2010).

Such independent businesses can often have a philosophical aversion to the growth models associated with Silicon Valley as they wish to avoid sharing equity, acquiring debt and committing to unsustainable levels of growth. I have written about this in my own blog article, Collaborative Entrepreneurship, based on direct experiences of meeting many entrepreneurs at the student entrepreneurship conference in Liverpool, 2015. (Atter, 2015c, Web Blog)

Radical innovation is taking place in areas such as crowd funding, on line selling and social media marketing (Miller and Bound, 2011). Independent freelancers and micro businesses can in fact be part of networks that create millions of pounds and dozens of jobs (Robinson, 2010). For example, Juxdit (O Toole, 2015), a specialized crowd-funding consultancy based in Liverpool, run by a twenty-something entrepreneur, is a nodal point in a high value network (Atter, 2015c). The founder, Annie O Toole, recently won Entrepreneur of the Year award at the NACUE awards (NACUE, 2015). Juxdit is now moving beyond consultancy and is establishing an online market place for crowd-funded projects (O Toole, 2015).

In another example that captures the zeitgeist of the times, Alan Radbourne (Radbourne, 2014) was seeking work after graduating of Loughborough

University. Fortunately, he found a pound coin on the floor (Radbourne, 2014). This began a quest to see how much money he could make from that one pound, starting with a bottle of washing up liquid (Radbourne, 2014). Alan has now created a national enterprise educational project, with a video, book publication and a speaker program (Radbourne, 2014) (NACUE, 2015).

The point I would make about these three examples is that they would not fall into our contemporary definitions of a "start up" nor an SME business (Storey and Greene, 2010), as they lack the structure and organization of a conventional firm (Atter, 2015c). Yet, they are clearly entrepreneurial in nature in that they are "first movers", market creators, and product innovators, and they do seem to fall under the broader and inclusive definition offered by Schumpeter above (Schumpeter, 1942).

Many of todays emergent entrepreneurs would concur with Peter Thiel, when he writes" (Thiel, 2014):

> *"You can have agency not just over your own life, but over a small and important part of the world", (Thiel, 2014, loc 847)*

In short, innovations in social media, crowd funding, and productive technologies, such as 3D printing; combined with new value systems, enable a new generation of entrepreneurs to emerge who can adopt new forms of more independent and networked forms of organization. This challenges us to revisit our paradigms of entrepreneurship and forms the backdrop against which my research is conducted.

2.2.3   Learning

My view is that entrepreneurs are learning agents (Reis, 2011). They re-conceptualize the reality around them and recreate themselves (Arbnor and

Bjerke, 2009) . Contemporary theories of lean start up emphasize learning as an integral process to entrepreneurship (Reis, 2011). They are living examples of the ecological theories of Gregory Bateson (Bateson), (Raelin, 2008). Learning in this context often needs to attain Level III learning if they are to meet the threshold set out by Bateson for survivability (Raelin, 2008):

> *"The rate of learning must equal or exceed the rate of change".*
> *(Quoted by Raelin, 2008, p3)*

My view is that learning for entrepreneurs integrates self-learning and learning that takes place in the work environment. Entrepreneurial learning meets the test of both Angen (Quoted in Leitch et al., 2010) and Bateson in integrating theory and practice (Raelin, 2008) (Engeström, 2008). Entrepreneurs do not learn their arts in the class, but out in the field, where they learn to "hustle" and spot emerging opportunities. As Peter Thiel points out (Thiel, 2014):

> *"…successful network businesses rarely get started by MBA types: the initial markets are so small that they often don't appear to be business opportunities at al".*
> *(Thiel, 2014, loc 530)*

Opportunity spotting involves being able to see the world in entirely new ways (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009b) and to me this must involve the ability to challenge our fundamental precepts about the world in a way that recalls Bateson's line of argument and which also places entrepreneurial learning in a long tradition of experiential and work place learning traditions (Raelin, 2008). As Raelin describes (Raelin, 2008):

> *"Work based learning…is concerned with learning at each of these three levels but is particularly interested in providing a setting for third-order, or triple loop, learning to emerge".*
> *(Raelin, 2008, p05).*

2.2.4   Growth

One of the fierce debates currently ranging is over life cycle theory (Levie and Lichtenstein, 2008) and the idea that entrepreneurs grow their businesses through predictable stages. The very idea of growth is itself being challenged by new independent entrepreneurs, who prefer to remain free and autonomous, yet connected (Robinson, 2010). Growth in this sense may not therefore take place through the traditional means of looking at financial and employment metrics. We should instead also address questions such as the influence the entrepreneur has through social media and their career capital they are developing, the intellectual and creative property they are developing. Indeed, there is a view that the attempt to monetize a promising business concept might actually alienate early adopters and choke off the viral effect that can help scale a business. This was a key concern of Mark Zuckerberg in the early days in the foundation of Facebook (Fincher, 2010). We therefore need to define growth in ways that are appropriate to pre-funded and possibly pre revenue companies. For example, Ellis and Brown discuss a range of case studies of new, high growth firms and one particular case, Yelp, a San Francisco based social review site, caught my attention (Ellis and Brown, 2014a). They write:

> *"It turns out that people really liked giving recognition for their reviews of local businesses....Yelp leveraged this inherent user behavior, offering special recognition to users who are first to review a business, and letting other users give kudos for reviews that are useful, funny, or cool. The most engaged Yelp users are awarded "Elite" status".*
> *(Ellis and Brown, 2014a, loc 152)*

The interesting thing about this example is that it reinforces a theme that I believe is emerging in contemporary entrepreneurship of empowerment and collaboration, rather than merely the ruthless competition between them (Atter, 2015). Yelp helps other businesses get noticed and also recognizes the contributors and writers that generate the ground level information in the first place (Ellis and Brown, 2014).

2.2.5 Supporting

By "supporting" I mean the various interventions that might be made to help, enable or catalyze entrepreneurial growth and learning. This might well mean conventional training, coaching and mentoring. However, implicit in my thesis is a need to reconsider our approaches and adopt that age old coaching principle of meeting the client where they are. For this generation and for those entrepreneurs outside elite institutions where one-to-one support can be funded, this might well mean online through web applications and e-learning platforms. As one entrepreneur put it to me recently, "One day in a workshop cost me a million clicks through SEO marketing" (private conversation).

One specific area I was keen to look at was the role of mentoring, often cited as critical to the growth and learning of entrepreneurs. It appears that this generation seeks authentic and real experiences and values the affirmation and support of their peers, rather more than endorsement from their elders. Writing in the Gen-Z Effect (Koulopoulos and Keldsen, 2014) , Koulopoulos and Keldsen write about the difference between older forms of mentoring, which they describe as "playing it forward", with a more experienced mentor passing on what they know to the protege; in contrast to more emergent forms of mentoring which is multi-directional. They write:

> *"…for Gen Z, experience and influence don't flow only from the top of the pyramid; it's just as likely that knowledge and ideas will percolate up from the bottom."*
> *(Koulopoulos and Keldsen, 2014, loc 1335)*

My intention therefore was to capture this shift towards multi-directional mentoring and build structures that supported this development.

2.2.6 Model

By "Model" I mean more than just theory. I seek to create a three dimensional

model that expresses how my theory of entrepreneurship works in practice (Fulcher and Scott, 2011). My goal therefore is to move beyond a written statement of a proposition and offer a representation or graphic expression, in such a way that it can be interpreted and used by practitioners.

As Kurt Lewin once said, "there is nothing so practical as a good theory" (Kolb, 1984, p4). As James Fulcher and John Scott explain theory presents an abstracted view of reality and helps us project what might happen next (Fulcher and Scott, 2011, p21):

> *"...research design involves constructing a researchable project from theoretical ideas. Theories are systems of concepts that are connected together through logical reasoning and that my be translatable into models and hypotheses".*
> *(Fulcher and Scott, 2011, p94).*

They go on to write, theory development involves the following:

> *"...abstract from the particular and unique features of events and situations in order to isolate what they have in common and what can, therefore, guide us in understanding events and situations that we have not yet encountered".*
> *(Fulcher and Scott, 2011)*

This brings the definition of theory close to, but not quite the same as model. There are significant differences. *I understand the use of the word "model" by reference to the very foundations of sociological theory arising from Action Frame of Reference, which includes consideration of five basic elements (Fulcher and Scott, 2011):*

> *"According to the action frame of reference, any action involves five basic elements:*
> *Actors*
> *Ends*
> *Means*

Conditions

 Norms"

(Fulcher and Scott, 2011, p43).

Peter Berger writes theoretical statements must be arrived at through the observation of certain rules of evidence that allow others to check on or repeat or to develop his findings further (Berger, 1963, p23).

This definition is important as this distinguishes my use of "model" in this research based context from use of the word "model" in consulting environment, which in my experience is often used to mean a more intuitively derived construct.

I consciously adopted grounded theory method as the principal means to conduct my research and this implies a commitment to inductively develop a theory, based on the phenomena and data generated in the project (Strauss and Corbin, 2015). This theory building is a clearly expressed part of grounded theory method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967b).

But what is the difference between a theory and a model?

As Strauss and Corbin write (Strauss and Corbin, 2015):

> *"Theory denotes a set of well developed categories (themes, concepts) that are systematically developed in terms of their properties and dimensions and interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains something about a phenomenon".*
> *(Strauss and Corbin, 2015, loc 1980)*

However, to me, a model suggests something larger in scope that a theory and is a representation of social reality based on a theory. A model however, needs to be expressly more descriptive and predictive that a theory. It moves beyond simply being a valid statement of how things work in general and shows how things work in practice.

In defining what a model is, Grix quotes Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias as follows (Grix, 2010):

> *"…an abstraction from reality that serves the purpose of ordering ad simplifying our view of reality while representing its essential characteristics".*
> *(Grix, 2010, p21).*

As Grix points out, the key test of a model is as follows (Grix, 2010):

> *"What you believe your model can tell us about social reality".*
> *(Grix, 2010, p20)*

2.2.7   Grounded

This term refers specifically to Grounded Theory Method (Strauss, 1967), the dominant methodology used in this research; but more generally it can also be used as a lay term to mean real, authentic and relating to the same level as the subjects who are the intended beneficiaries. If possible, it should be their words and reflects their interests and needs.

2.2.8   Into The Light

This presents a metaphor as a guiding concept or theme (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). It relates to the theme of emergence that I shall describe in depth the next section, but in this context relates to the emergence of the entrepreneur as they struggle to get attention, support and (if possible) funding.

2.3   My Research Stance: Pragmatism, Interaction and Emergence

Following on from the interpretivist ontological position, I have adopted a qualitative methodology based on recognition that I, the researcher, am the principle instrument through which data is gathered, analyzed and interpreted (Leitch et al., 2010). I refer here specifically to the use of my own recordings of

mentoring sessions, which I then code and categorize, as a basis for generating a model (Charmaz, 2006). This process, while rigorous and critical in nature, is essentially interpretivist (Creswell, 2013).

This interpretivist research approach seems closest to my underlying intent to contribute to entrepreneurial learning; and also fits well philosophically with my professional background as a mentor and coach. I also believe that interpretivist research and qualitative methodologies that flow from it, connects to my own personal volition and professional role. My research says a lot about who I am.

This is described by Costley et al., as "positionality": Who am I? What do I stand for? What decisions do I make and why? (Costley et al., 2010). These questions relate not only to myself as a researcher, but also to me as a professional mentor and coach. This professional persona underpins my research role, particularly as my data gathering has been undertaken as a result of my professional practice. My assumption is that a different entrepreneurial mentor will likely to have generated a different set of outcomes even had they mentored and coached the same participants at the same time. Therefore, my research findings may have low repeatability scores, but is nevertheless a truthful and ethical reflection of my own research stance. In common with other interpretivist researchers, I do not believe conducting research in the human sciences is any more value free than playing the violin.

As a piece of interpretive qualitative research, I become the crucial instrument through which the project is designed, data is collected, analyzed and interpreted. Early on, it is therefore vital that I set out my own positioning within the research project.

To set against this subjective and interpretivist stance (Charmaz, 2006), I have also sought balance from two sources:
Firstly, a rigorous process of user testing and revision, to ensure the results that I have generated make sense within a specific domain (Buchanan and Bryman,

2009) (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009b).

Secondly, reference to academic literature to test and critique the model and its findings. I was keen to establish whether the model I was generating made sense in the context of relevant epistemologies, such as philosophy, psychology and sociology (Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2008) (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009b). In using grounded method, I was concerned to avoid coming to any a priori theory, or hypothesis, which would then require post-rationalization. Rather, I have referred to academic literature post facto to check and test the model I have generated (Creswell, 2013). I will refer to this more specifically in the Project Activity section.

Looking back, my research emerged from a process rather than being designed and engineered in advance. To understand this, I think it is necessary to examine the golden threads that have been woven into this research (Costley and Lester 2010) and resulted in my adopting a specific research stance.

Writing from as phenomenological perspective, Moustakas (Moustakas, 1994) cites Addison (Addison, 1989), stressing the importance in grounded theory method of continuous open inquiry taking account of the context in which the data is situated (Moustakas, 1994).

Creswell writes (Creswell, 2013):

> *"Whether we are aware of it or not, we always bring certain beliefs and philosophical assumptions to our research. The difficulty lies in first becoming aware of these assumptions and beliefs and second in deciding whether we will actively incorporate them into our qualitative studies" (Creswell, 2013, loc 603).*

In my case, the writing of this thesis has been part to the research itself. As I write, I am able to critically reflect on the journey that I have undertaken and make new connections and insights, often which were not apparent to me. For

example, it is much clearer to me now than when I started that my philosophical premise in undertaking the research reflects a strong attachment to pragmatism, as set out by Dewey, Mead and Rorty (Fulcher and Scott, 2011). As Dewey wrote in 1929:

> *"The test of ideas, of thinking generally, is found in the consequence of the acts to which the ideas lead, that is in the new arrangement of things which are brought into existence" (Dewey, 1929, p.136)*

I came into my research project as a management consultant and executive coach, and having spent a lifetime being concerned with change, impact, and phenomenology. I am not a professional academic researcher searching for esoteric gaps in the knowledge map. Asking myself reflective questions about "how can I have impact?" brought me naturally to questions of qualitative and work based inquiry in the context of my coaching and mentoring interactions with clients.

My role as Entrepreneur-in-Residence at Birkbeck, 2012-14, reinforced my longstanding interest in entrepreneurship and connected me to a community of practice where I have felt very much at home. My intellectual interests and emotional attachments have therefore shifted during the course of my research. The topic and the research questions that arise from it have shifted significantly, rather as a sailor would make navigational changes based on weather and shifting tides in a storm.

While I will describe my involvement very much in terms of the intellectual discourse in the field, my own belief tells me that my flow of energy and consequential focus of attention is at least as important. Entrepreneurship developed as a field where I felt I could make a contribution, rather than belong to an army of business consultants in the corporate world. In this sense, my journey has been *gestalt* (Nevis 1997) (Barber 2006), allowing the flow of energy to settle on an area that is truly significant for me.

This approach, in allowing myself to be directed in part by my internal flow of energy, is quite different from a classical scientific approach, where a piece of doctoral research will have been undertaken to identify and close a gap within a specific knowledge domain. Even though it can be assumed that the researcher perusing a scientific method has a level of personal and professional commitment to the task, their emotional state is less of an concern and is presumed to be excluded from considerations in the research process (Creswell 2013).

From the perspective of the discourse around entrepreneurship, I am very much in agreement with Bygrave, quoted by Leitch (Leitch, Hill et al. 2010), who argues that the ultimate validation of entrepreneurial research is in its influence on the practice of entrepreneurs. Leitch argues that entrepreneurship is a practice-based discipline bounded by its contextual nature and stresses the need for pragmatic real-world outcomes. (Leitch, Hill et al. 2010).

Entrepreneurship therefore, is not only a field in which I have experienced some personal excitement and had a close in view as Entrepreneur-in-Residence, it is naturally a field that lends itself to pragmatic real world solutions. Moreover, Cope (Cope 2005) argues that entrepreneurship research can benefit from the development of "bottom up" interpretative theories that are inextricably grounded in the lived world. In short, entrepreneurship presented a field in which there was good work to be done and I had the necessary motivation, access and positioning to be able to do it.

Another twine of the "golden thread" woven into this research project is interactionism (Mead 1934), a sociological cousin of the pragmatic philosophical movement (Strauss and Corbin 2015). My professional domain is executive coaching and mentoring. My practice was therefore built around dynamic interactions in the coaching session, involving both individual one to one and also group coaching sessions. During my coaching career I became strongly influenced by the relational school of coaching, which emphasized the

psychodynamics in the relationship and took a broadly constructivist epistemological position. For example, Prof. Eric de Haan, quoted Joan Riviera, The Unconscious Fantasy of an Inner World (Riviere, 1952):

> *"We tend to think of any one individual in isolation; it is a convenient fiction. We may isolate him physically, as in the analytic room; in two minutes we find he has brought his world in with him, and that, even before he set eyes on the analyst, he had developed inside himself an elaborate relation with him. There is no such thing as a single human being, pure and simple, unmixed with other human beings".*
> *(Riviere, J. 1952, quoted in Haan 2008)*

Researching my own professional practice therefore involved getting inside that coaching process. A core part of my research goals was to examine the dynamics of what was really happening between the client and myself. George Herbert Mead originated the field of symbolic interactionism (Mead 1934), along with Lev Vygotsky (Vygotsky 1997). Knowledge is co-created through action and interaction, both between people and between our inner and outer mental states. We anticipate and interpret each other's actions, and respond according to this mental picture we form of the behavior of others. This interactionism is especially present in the psycho-dynamic relationships of the coaching session (Haan 2008).

In seeking to utilize the unique and privileged perspective I gained as a coach to early phase entrepreneurs, I placed myself as an active participant in a co-created process (Stacey 2003).

I could therefore not maintain a position of a neutral and scientific observer (Lincoln 2011). Nor could I have any real idea what would be generated in the course of a coaching session. It is very important to emphasize that the transcript data generated in this research project is not interview data, but transcribed recordings of a dynamic conversation in which I am an active and at times an unconscious participant. For example, even when I adopted a more

directive approach in a session, such as with Case 1 (Case#1, 2014a), this had unintended consequences, generating a greater degree of compliance on his part. This session had fewer insights than other sessions, where I adopted a more inquiring posture.

When I came to code this conversation, what was significant, or figural for me, was not what I had said; but the generational and cultural dynamics that were generated between a 50-year-old Caucasian mentor and a 24-year-old Asian student. I am minded of Gabriel and Casemore's perceptive remark on presence of power in caring relationship, when they write (Gabriel and Casemore, 2009):

> *"...the person who is a continual helper....is actually subtly placing themselves*
> *in a position of enormous power" (Gabriel and Casemore, 2009, p28).*

At the time, I thought my conversation with Case 1 was about how he proceeds with his business. This is what I planned for. Actually, there was a lot more going on in the conversation than I realized at the time and which generates new themes to explore as part of my research. Coaching is *generative*, not predictive.

For me, both pragmatism and interactionism combine into a central theme that will run through the entire thesis; which is emergence (Griffin 2002). My research findings have emerged from a process, and not as a result of conscious design and planning. Writing is a creative struggle, not just a descriptive recounting of a linear flow of events.

2.4   My Research Goals

From the above chapter, it should be clear that setting out my research goals is not just an exercise in starting with a white sheet of paper and draughting my ideal plan. I have entered the research role with a valency based upon ontological, epistemological and axiological positions through which I viewed events and made choices (Creswell 2013). Denzil and Lincoln write:

> *"The researcher is bound within a net of epistemological and ontological*
> *premises which - regardless of ultimate truth or falsity, become partially self-*

validating" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p12)

For example, in becoming more involved with early phase entrepreneurship through my university-based roles, I recognized that I had no effective model to coach or mentor entrepreneurs. I also realized that having read widely around the subject, there seemed to be no effective or validated model of entrepreneurial learning to draw upon. As mentioned previously, I found that most models are based around some variation of the life cycle model. Not only does this orthodox start up model have only limited relevance to the emerging generation of Gen Z entrepreneurs, it also fails to apply to the millions of entrepreneurs outside elite institutions and with little access to investment capital.

Grounded theory method is expressly a methodology for model building based upon the data. Therefore, it was naturally a useful methodology to draw upon in order to provide a fresh research perspective on an under-researched part of the entrepreneurial population.

That said, all researchers have a responsibility not just to go with the flow, or to act on guy feelings, they must critically evaluate the choices they make and act with consciousness. As Costley et al, point out:

> *"To examine why you have chosen a particular project helps you, to some extent, to state something about your ideology, your values, and what you find important" (Costley, Elliott et al. 2010).*

The 6 July 2013 was a seminal day in my research journey. Following a coaching session with a female entrepreneur, black British, with Afro Caribbean origins. She was describing her intention to set up a social enterprise, with a retail operation to help fund the activity. Coincidentally, I was also reading Habermas around the same time. I recall asking her a question about how she will find financial backers for her venture. She looked surprised and replied:

"…you're looking at me, really? (laughing)"
(Case#8, 2013b).

I understood this to be a reference to her ethnicity and gender; and also possibly to her self-perception of being excluded from the elites that receive the lion's share of enterprise funding. I noted also her reference to herself as a "maverick", in that someone such as her would typically not be undertaking such a venture (Case#8, 2013b). Immediately after I made the following log entry:

"Habermas

Emancipatory knowledge

Entrepreneurship as route to freedom from low income, low expectation trap

Women

Afro-Caribbean British

Migrant

Link to power motivation and desire for autonomy".

(Journal/6 July 2013)

It was in this session that I saw through the confused mass of data that I had acquired from the recording of my coaching sessions, and began to see patterns and themes that were of general significance. This was a form of theoretical sampling, where I referenced known and widely accepted theory to understand and interpret the data. This is a good example of how in grounded theory the development of theory is developed simultaneously and in concert with an examination of the data (Strauss and Corbin 2015).

By the 10 August 2014, I made the following entry:

Affirmation of excluded groups

•Migrant

•Black community

•Women

•Tech/geek

Narrative story telling

Real event being recorded, not an interview set up to gather data

Window onto real life, and into a messy social /relational process

Who am I in this? How am I situated?

What's new?

Contradictions; paradox in entrepreneurship (Journal/10 August 2014)

I was also beginning to notice that entrepreneurship (for my clients at least) was not a simple matter of going in a straight line. There were tensions and trade offs that had to be reconciled. As Reissman states (Kohler Reissman, 2008):

> *"A good narrative analysis prompts the researcher to look beyond the surface of the text".*
> *(Kohler Reissman, 2008, loc 396).*

What is clear is that between these dates I resolved to engage fully in the grounded theory method, and allow theory to emerge inductively from data.

Through my experimentation, I formulated the high-level goal was to develop a model, based on a sound theory, which would provide entrepreneurs with a framework for growing their businesses and developing themselves. Initially, my idea was to develop a coaching model or framework. However, the more that I understood the needs of early phase entrepreneurs, the clearer it became that the solution would have to be an economic, accessible and scale-able online instrument.

I came to this view for two reasons:

Firstly, while I was becoming increasingly comfortable working with the data emerging from my audio recordings, I recognized that any research has to gain wider acceptance to be genuinely useful. From a professional practitioner point of view, simply annunciating a model would have limited value (and impact). I wanted to find a way to test and validated and the model, and it seemed to me that the best way to do this was to invite groups of student entrepreneurs to

complete a questionnaire based instrument, based around the dichotomies that I had identified during the grounded research.

The second reason was that a model would remain inert and "on the shelf" unless there was a "delivery channel". For this generation, one of the simplest and effective ways to do this was to use an online survey instruments. I was aware that many students and researchers were already using tools like Survey Monkey to test out models and gather a wider set of data.

I therefore developed a plan to evolve a model using grounded theory, but then adapt the resulting coded database into a questionnaire. I was able to draw upon my earlier career experience of using various instruments to create a tool that could be disseminated via software, and which could be accompanied with guidance notes and coaching points. This seemed the only viable means create the degree of access needed to entrepreneurs and therefore make an impact that I felt was necessary. One of the realizations that I came to was just how large the population of early phase entrepreneurs actually was. In a sense I began to see that by adopting a business-to-consumer (B2C) approach, rather than providing a B2B solution to the coaching community, I could generate much greater impact for my work and help more entrepreneurs.

This also involved a redefinition of myself in the process. My involvement with entrepreneurs had made me realize that I belonged more to this community than to the specialized professional coaching community. An idea developed in my mind to build a software instrument that developed beyond the research coding database and delivered useful reporting outcomes directly to student and graduate entrepreneurs, and open up new ways to engage and empower them.

On 10 June 2014 I shared my model and my plan with my tutor and consultant. The feedback was that the model was both useful and interesting, but that the questionnaire was not strictly necessary for my research. While noting this, I will put somewhat less emphasis in the description of the development and

dissemination of the questionnaire. However, I did think it is still relevant to include it within the scope of my thesis as I believe it to be a good example of where mixed methods research can play a useful role. While grounded theory method is the dominant methodology for my research, the questionnaire has been a useful means to refine the model and test its validity.

In summary therefore, my research goals evolved up until the early part of 2014, but by June 2014, had settled upon the development of a model of entrepreneurial learning using grounded theory method, and then further to design and develop a useful software tools that could be used to validate the model and disseminate it directly to the target group of early phase entrepreneurs, mostly students or recent graduates.

2.5   Research Questions

One of the most effective ways to tackle a broad research topic is to convert it into a question, that can then prompt an inner dialogue and also set in motion a deepening inquiry (Marshall, 2001). My research goals shaped my main research question, but have also given rise to several other project related questions that must be addressed before the main question can be answered. As in any classic problem solving challenge, it is these subsidiary questions that help break down the main question in to more manageable chunks (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009). They also avoid huge conceptual leaps and ensure the approach to addressing the main question is methodical and progressed step-by-step.

I felt that it is often easier to approach research by responding to a question that had myself as the subject, and position my research as part of a critically reflective inquiry (Shaw, 2002) rather than trying to work directly from a broader research topic. By late 2014, this question had taken the following form:

**How do I develop a model to support the growth and
learning of early phase entrepreneurs?**

Fitting underneath my research question, however, were a series of more specific project related questions that enabled my research to be progressed. These questions were directional in nature and each pregnant with the seeds of further questions. But they enabled me to move forward with my inquiry, without having to have every detailed planned in advance. As my research progressed, the questions became increasingly specific and directed towards a specific set of outcomes.

I will refer to this process at various stages throughout this thesis and I will summarize my conclusions at the end of this thesis.

The table below summaries the evolution of my research questioning:

Table 1 Research Question

Research Question:

| How do I develop a model to support the growth and learning of early phase entrepreneurs? |

	Learning Theory	Model Development	My Practice Application
January 2014	What is our contemporary understanding about how entrepreneurs build sustainable entrepreneurial activity?	How to develop a grounded theory, bottom up, that will gain acceptance from the entrepreneurial community it seeks to help?	How can entrepreneurs be supported to learn in this emergent way?
June 2014	How do individuals actually learn to develop the entrepreneurial competencies they need?	How to construct a coherent theory based upon the contradictory conclusions emerging from the grounded research?	What learning interventions can I make using my model of entrepreneurship?
January 2015	How do I find a way for entrepreneurs to learn about the model in ways that are relevant to them?	How do I graphically show a model based on my theory, in a way that can be understood and interpreted by early phase entrepreneurs?	How do I develop and test the model so that I can prove the concept and advance to a prototype?
June 2015	How do I pragmatically support the growth and learning of early phase entrepreneurs?	How do I express the model in ways that bring the theory to life and generate useful insights to early phase entrepreneurs?	How do I gain wider acceptance of my new model?

3 Literature Review

3.1 The Research Setting

In this section I want to explain how my research fits within the field of research and entrepreneurial literature.

To formulate my research project plan, I read widely across different research methodologies and philosophies, essentially trying to see which one was the best fit (Costley et al., 2010). Broad summaries by Lane and Corrie, Grix and Bryman introduced me to the spectrum of possible approaches to research (Lane and Corrie, 2006) (Grix, 2010) (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009).

Partly as a result of my own positioning as a practitioner/research and partly because of an intellectual agreement with the pragmatic school of thought (Mead, 1934) (Kolb, 1984), I was very much attracted to an inductive, interpretivist approach as described by Leith at al (Leitch, Hill et al. 2010) who summarized such research in the following terms:

> *"Interpretivist inquiry…attempts to embrace the complex and dynamic quality of the social world and allowed the researcher to view a social research problem holistically, get close to participants, enter their realities, and interpret their perceptions…" (Leitch et al., 2010, p70).*

This position is in alignment with (Cope 2005), who argues for a more phenomenological approach (Moustakas, 1994) to entrepreneurship research, as follows:

> *"Rather than trying to confirm or disconfirm existing theories, the aim of phenomenological research is to develop "bottom up" interpretive theories that are inextricably grounded in the lived world" (Cope, 2005, p 171).*

I arrived at this interpretivist position only after some personal struggle, ontological blind spots and epistemological meanderings, but ultimately I

became attracted to the potential insights that interpretivist research provides, as summarized by Leitch (Leitch et al., 2010):

"As entrepreneurship is multifaceted, complex social construct, we have contended that knowledge production requires inclusivity, diversity and pluralism in research perspectives and approaches " (Leitch et al., 2010, p79)

In other words, my research has specifically avoided going down the road of applying a survey to hundreds of people, and analyzing statistical results from a theoretically derived model, which might be common in positivist social science research, as described by Bryman, Grix and others (Buchanan and Bryman 2009) (Grix, 2010). I have chosen instead to focus on generating meaning in concert with my research participants through coaching dialogue, in order to produce a model grounded in their experiences, and therefore more likely, in my view, to be relevant to others in similar situations. This approach seems to be backed up by Bouckenooghe, who argues, as follows (Bouckenooghe et al., 2007):

"...it is clear that quantitative strategies such as surveys and experiments will not suffice. There is a growing need for more ethnographic studies and other systematic field study approaches, in which real-life situations are directly confronted with conceptual theories".
(Bouckenooghe et al., 2007, p168)

For instance, the RSA noted the lack of depth and relevance of much of the research into entrepreneurship (Dellot and Thompson, 2013). According to the authors of the RSA report, Disrupt Inc, Dellot and Thompson (Dellot and Thompson, 2013) as many as 10 percent of young people in our economy have an intention to start their own business, but currently only 3.5 percent are doing so. We also know that of those 3.5 percent who start up, a large proportion cease trading within the first year (Dellot and Thompson, 2013, p5). However, they point out the following:

"...the language used by support services may alienate and serve to

discourage young people who do not tend to associate with the label of the 'entrepreneur'. The concern is that current interventions to support young entrepreneurs do not cater well for these unconventional entrepreneurial journeys".
(Dellot and Thompson, 2013, p6)

They go on to argue that despite the flurry of media commentary surrounding young enterprise, very little is actually known about how young people become entrepreneurs. I was interested in how Dellot and Thompson described their approach to the RSA research:

"The starting point for this project was to question our assumptions about this journey by analyzing what might be termed the "lived experience" of young entrepreneurs, as opposed to just their opinions and attitudes measured in surveys".
 (Dellot and Thompson, 2013, p7)

The validation of the interpretivist approach and the qualitative methodologies that flow from my own research project seemed to be reinforced by the calls from major public bodies for research in this field. This should be of much greater concern to practitioner-researchers such as myself than the skepticism of the research community still locked within a positivist deductive ontology and constrained by hypothetic-deductive methodologies (Bouckenooghe et al., 2007).

It is important to note early on the controversies surrounding interpretivist research, which is still uncommon in the field of entrepreneurship (Bouckenooghe, Clercq et al. 2007). Short (Selig 2014) summarizes the critique of much entrepreneurial of the literature from established social science research journals, such as ORM. From a hypothetic-positivist position (Leitch, Hill et al. 2010), Gregoire et al, 2006, quoted in Leitch (Leitch et al., 2010), argues the need for entrepreneurship research to be built on a "linear accumulation of knowledge which comes from a widely shared paradigm" and

"argues for maturation of the field through "a set of codified theories, models, methods, and/or measures - which are to direct ongoing research". (Leitch, Hill et al. 2010).

In my view the probable reason for what many researchers see as the poor quality of the research into entrepreneurship arise from challenges that are intrinsic to the field. I have experienced similar challenges common amongst entrepreneurial researchers, described by Short (Short, David J. Ketchen et al. 2009), such as small sample sizes, lack of clear referenced cases, ethical boundaries, such as confidentiality.

However, there is a more constructive reason why some researchers such as myself choose the interpretivist route, and that is connected with what Leitch calls "aptness" (Leitch, Hill et al. 2010). Bouckenooghe explains as follows:

> "…at the heart of entrepreneurship often lie disjointed, discontinuous and non-linear events that cannot be studied with methods designed for continuous and linear processes".
> (Bouckenooghe et al., 2007, p168)).

As a result, and in contrast to Gregoire, Leitch argues as follows:

> "We argue for inclusivity, diversity, and pluralism in research perspectives and approaches".
> (Leitch et al., 2010, p68).

In support of this call for philosophical and methodological innovation in entrepreneurial research, Short also quotes an ORM Editorial Panel member:

> "On the qualitative side, I see great potential to gain insights into the minds of entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurship process".
> (Short et al., 2009,p9)

3.2   The Entrepreneurial Context

The context which is being experienced by early phase entrepreneurs will very much shape the approach needed to learning and development. As I will describe, entrepreneurship is becoming both more significant than in the past, but also subject to more varied definitions and competing paradigms.

A Cambrian Moment

In January 2014, The Economist magazine declared a "Cambrian Moment", comparing the rise of the digital entrepreneurial culture to the birth of life itself (Economist 2014). Not only were the overall growth and number and size of entrepreneurial businesses across the world exponential, the exotic diversity of forms reflected a clear break form earlier periods. The basic building blocks of life had now come into being. This included the web, the iTunes store, and sophisticated Internet payment gateways; but also innovative forms of financing such as crowd funding and angel syndicates. Emergent technologies, from the digital outsourcing of oDesk and eLance, to the prevalence of API keys, allowing web sites to plug into each other, massively reduced the cost of business start ups and getting product to a worldwide marketplace (Economist 2014).

However, the Economist article argued that this was not just a matter of economics and the demographics of business start-ups. This was now a global cultural phenomenon distributed across the worlds major cities, such as LA, London, Berlin, Beijing and Amman:

> *"Between them they are home to hundreds of startup schools ("accelerators") and thousands of co-working spaces where caffeinated folk in their 20s and 30s toil hunched over their laptops. All these ecosystems are highly interconnected, which explains why internet entrepreneurs are a global crowd".*
> *(Economist, 2014 Jan 18 p1).*

What the economist article is pointing out is that the nature of entrepreneurship has changed, and not just its scale. Setting up a business, particularly as tech start

up, is increasingly being associated with youthful endeavour and energy, rather than a reward for accumulating expertise or wealth through traditional life long careers. This is captured in the recent film documentary, Start Up Kids, which takes an almost ethnographic perspective on the emerging generation of start up entrepreneurs (Halldorsdottir and Vilhjalmsdottir, 2012).

The question that occurs to me is if The Economist is right, and there is indeed an explosion of new exotic life forms across the planet, then how do we educate develop and train entrepreneurs for this?

The Impact of Silicon Valley

It is widely accepted that this phenomena that emerged from the Silicon Valley culture of the mid-1980s onwards and this has been captured now in popular and influential movies and TV series, to the extent that its absurdities and vanities are paid the compliment of being ruthlessly mocked in movies such as Social Network; and even its own hit TV Series, Silicon Valley, (Fincher, 2010c), (Judge et al., 2014). Legends such as Steve Jobs are the subject of best selling critical biographies (Isaacson 2011).

Building on a nexus of government research institutions, world class "entrepreneurial" Universities (Etzkowitz 2012), inbound migration and social affluence, companies such as Apple and Microsoft burst onto the scene and created whole new categories of products that had not been seen before. It was the universal, scale-able nature of these products that was so dramatically different from businesses that had come before.

Since then, other billion dollar companies have been born and grown with breathtaking speed and audacity. Google and Yahoo! in the mid-1990s and later Facebook and Twitter in the 2000's. This tide continues, with Uber recently raising $1.4bn in funds, valuing the company at $45bn (FT: Bradshaw, 2015.16.03). The globalization of this phenomena is demonstrated by the fact that it is a Chinese internet start up, Alibaba, that achieved the largest IPO in

history, at over $16bn (FT:Clover, 2015, May 7).

The CEOs of these tech firms have not just become impossibly rich; they have also acquired rock star levels of fame. Jobs, Gates, Brin and Zuckerberg are major cultural figures and role models for an emerging generation of global youth (Fincher, 2010c). What the tech start-up CEOs represent is more than just a business case methodology in how to acquire billions in start up capital. It is freedom. It is significance. It is adventure. From Sergey Brin's driverless cars to Elon musk's "Moonshots" (Thiel 2014), this is a generation inspired by the opportunity to escape time and space; and average college grades and dull careers!

The Dominant Entrepreneurial Paradigms

Entrepreneurship as a specific field of study, with its own paradigm, research methods and theories, is relatively new, and can really only said to have emerged as an independent body of study since the 1990s. Prior to this date, entrepreneurship appeared to treat very much as a branch of the management and micro-economic sciences, where entrepreneurship was treated merely as a facet of running a business, small or large. Peter Drucker states the following:

> "…the entrepreneur is often defined as one who starts his own, new and small business".
> (Drucker, 1985, p19) .

Peter Drucker goes onto describe entrepreneurship as a competency required of all managers (Drucker, 1985), large or small, and in his mind entrepreneurship is equated with behaviors, rather than being defined via a specific economic activity or assigned as an intrinsic personality trait (Drucker, 1985). He goes on to link entrepreneurship to broader themes of innovation and cites entrepreneurship evident in larger corporations, such as GE and Marks and Spencer. Drucker uses the term "systemic entrepreneurship" to convey the idea of entrepreneurial drive and flair imbuing an organization both large and small with the capacity to grow and compete successful within an industry (Drucker,

1985).

Drucker's perspective implies entrepreneurs were merely running small-to-medium-sized-enterprises and therefore had to become professional and scale their businesses along a conventional development curve (Drucker, 1985). Managers running small or large businesses were not different in nature, they were simply large firm managers in training. It was simply a matter of scale. My sense is that Drucker was writing from the perspective of the mid 1980s, which seemed to be the era of the globalizing corporation, led by IBM, GE, Toyota and AT&T (Drucker, 1985).

However, the emergence of a new breed of Silicon Valley based technology firms in the 1980's and in particular, the explosion of web based forms in the mid 1990s, reconnected the concept of entrepreneurship with disruption and a very non-systematic approach to founding a business and in my view created a delta between theories of business in general and in entrepreneurship in particular. Apple's original advertising set in a dystopian corporatized future, with the young "rebel" breaking through glass, could not have made the point more clearly (Scott, R / Apple, 1984). This is reinforced by reading the biographies of tech pioneers such as Steve Jobs (Isaacson, 2011), which demonstrated a very different paradigm for founding a company, based on visionary leaps, highly personalized leadership and unorthodox management practices (Isaacson, 2011).

The success of Silicon Valley in the 1980s-90s changed our understanding of what entrepreneurship meant, particularly as some of the early victims of the disruption caused by the internet were the previously admired (and feared) telecommunications companies, such as AT&T. Companies seemingly from no where could create whole new industries and grow to be larger than traditional corporations built over decades.

Writing after the "dotcom" crash of 2001-03, the corporatist perspective was reinforced by writers such Jim Collins, with his popular classic Good to Great

and (with Jerry Porras) Built to Last (Collins, 2001), (Collins and Porras, 2005), which stress the enduing attributes of successful, log lasting firms. Collins thesis is that "good enough" is indeed the enemy of excellence (Collins, 2001). This is in sharp contrast to the contemporary understanding that has developed within entrepreneurial circles, whereby "good enough" i.e. a minimal viable product (MVP) is a good starting point, and you are ready to move on (Reis, 2011).

Nevertheless, today, General Motors now face competition in the electric car category from Tesla, founded by internet billionaire Elon Musk (Thiel, 2014). Almost every facet of our social and economic lives is being transformed by the internet, to the extent that whether you are buying a house or hiring a cleaner, a web-site will feature at some point on the value chain.

There remains a degree of truth to Drucker's thesis in that many of the few most successful Silicon Valley start ups have now become more or less monopolistic and corporatist in nature, as can be judged by the rising concern over business practices, such as the creation of proprietary "walled gardens" on the web through which media is distributed under protective Digital Rights Management, (Katz, 2012) (Berners-Lee, 2014). Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web, has called for a Digital Bill of Rights to protect citizens from encroachments by corporations on the web (Berners-Lee, 2014). He writes as follows:

> *"If a company can control your access to the internet, if they can control which websites you go to, then they have tremendous control over your life". (Berners-Lee, 2014.09.28)*

In my view, from the Silicon Valley ecosystem, there emerged a very few big winners who have since developed many of the similar attitudes and behaviors as their forebears. The emergence of these super high growth firms recalls Nicholas Taleb's thesis, Black Swan, which explains the emergence of "extremistan"; random winner-takes-all success stories (Taleb, 2007) that too often become role models others foolishly seek to copy.

My research interest and focus of attention is on those "normistan" (Taleb, 2007) companies that are unlikely to emerge as global titans and yet, may provide freedom, purpose and decent earnings for their founders, and when connected together, can produce global networked effects (Robinson, 2010) (Thiel, 2014).

Built on a string of successful billion dollar companies, there is little question that the Silicon Valley model has become the dominant entrepreneurial paradigm, in terms of the public discourse around entrepreneurship. For example the drive to replicate Silicon Valley miracle lay behind the government drive to establish Tech City in London's Shoreditch area. "Clicks and bricks" are now seen as being different from each other, with entrepreneurial hi-tech startups overtly and self consciously distinguishing themselves from orthodox corporate leadership and governance. For instance, in the view of the think tank, Global Entrepreneurship Institute (Global Entrepreneurship Institute, 2015):

> *"Entrepreneurs are directly involved in the dynamic, and very complex, interrelationship between financial management and business strategy. This is the significant difference that sets entrepreneurial management apart from all business management practices. In almost all cases, the person making the decisions has personal risk at stake".*
> *(Global Entrepreneurship Institute, 2015/Web page).*

Yet the Silicon Valley Model is not uniform, and there are at least three variants within the Silicon Valley paradigm across wildly disseminated literature. This amounts to something of an "intra-paradigm war" with exponents of their respective paradigms debating in academic seminars, and espousing their views through book launches, across social media and through the dissemination of proprietary educational programmes (Thiel 2014), (Reis 2011).

Just compare their respective views on the learning and development of entrepreneurs:

Eric Reis:

"Start Up success can be engineered by following the right process, which means it can be learned, which means it can be taught".
(Reis, 2011, p2)

In contrast, Peter Thiel:

"The paradox of teaching entrepreneurship is that such a formula necessarily cannot exist; because every innovation is new and unique, no authority can prescribe in concrete terms how to be innovative".
(Thiel, 2014, loc 52).

The Orthodox Paradigm: The Life Cycle Model

Founded in 1996, the Global Entrepreneurship Institute espouses a more conservative view of entrepreneurship, based on their definition of 'entrepreneurial management"; with its emphasis on the classical business life cycle. Citing Drucker, they define entrepreneurial management as follows:

"We define entrepreneurial management as the practice of taking entrepreneurial knowledge and utilizing it for increasing the effectiveness of new business venturing as well as small- and medium-sized businesses".
(Global Entrepreneurship Institute, 2015, web site), whose description of the life cycle is outlined below:

The life cycle model:

"Stage 1. Opportunity Recognition
Stage 2. Opportunity Focusing
Stage 3. Commitment of Resources
Stage 4. Market Entry
Stage 5. Full Launch and Growth
Stage 6. Maturity and Expansion
Stage 7. Liquidity Event"
(Institute, 2015/Webpage)

The key features of this model are that it is rational, linear and progressive. Entrepreneurs are expected to progress along this curve. If they do not do so, they are considered to have "failed"; or, they tend to be dismissed merely as "lifestyle" businesses. For example, from the perspective of the UK government's employability agenda, companies that fall outside the 6% of high growth "gazelle" firms, the impression is created that other firms are not yet investable or are too risky to be supported with direct financial assistance (NESTA, 2009).   For example, NESTA concluded in their influential paper of 2009 the following (NESTA, 2009):

> *"...economic policy should focus on promoting innovation and on the small number of companies with high growth potential, rather than broadly based business support programs or new start ups and SMEs".*
> *(NESTA, 2009, p3).*

For example, a higher proportion of government "start up" assistance, the Growth Accelerator program (http://www.growthaccelerator.com/) for example, directs support towards firms that are already a long way up the growth curve and have over a £million in sales and three years of generating profits (Robinson, 2010). The life cycle model has therefore significantly influenced the machinery of entrepreneurship, such as the funding mechanisms, and the incubators and accelerators mentioned by The Economist at the beginning of this section (Economist 2014), with biological metaphors of birth, growth and maturation (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

The practical implications for this emphasis on growth is that early phase entrepreneurs are placed under some pressure to "leverage" through debt, sometimes called "bootstrapping"; or alternatively dilute their equity by attracting co-founders and possibly angel investors. In my view, incurring credit card debt, or borrowing from "friends, family and fools" can generate ethical and financial risk to early phase entrepreneurs, without any secure income or validated sales opportunities. As entrepreneur and micro-business campaigner

Tony Robinson, OBE, tweets:

"A business plan, a loan and a mentor never were the keys to start up success. Finding customers and asking them the right questions always were".
(Robinson, 2010, retweet 11/05/2015)

The Uncertainty Paradigm: Lean Start Up

Eric Reis is a successful entrepreneur in his own right and also became Entrepreneur-in-residence at Harvard University. In 2011, Reis wrote a landmark book called Lean Start Up that presented a radically new perspective on the Silicon Valley journey (Reis 2011). The book has since become a best seller and is supporting by a training academy rolled out in key locations around the world. Reis challenges the notion of founders scaling up through the life cycle, either by incurring debt or diluting equity. Instead, entrepreneurs should focus on testing for actual buying behaviour from targeted customer groups; and designing, testing and launching only "minimal viable products" (MVP) (Reis 2011). An example would be posting a web page with a "Buy now" button, but without any back end database or any developed prototype. Instead, the entrepreneur works to deliver the product only once there is proven sales behavior.

Reis, in effect is advising to grow a business through sales, rather than scaling via an investment approach. It is worth noting that in the GEI model above, the commitment of resources occurs at step 3, and market entry at step 4. Reis effectively inverts this, with a view to reducing the risk to entrepreneurs and avoiding the commitment of their personal resources until there is proven demand (Reis, 2011).

Lean Start Up has become the prevailing method of early phase start up and terms such as Lean, MVP, A/B testing, etc. are common place amongst the start up community. Lean methods are also strongly encouraged in University start up environments, such as the University of Amsterdam (van Dortmond, 2013), not least because it is felt to keep the student entrepreneur safer. In my view,

using lean methods has enabled many more people to enter entrepreneurship than otherwise would be the case. As a methodology, it can empower early phase entrepreneurs who lack a decent credit card or wealthy relatives. Reis also consciously introduces the necessity for a disciplined methodology, in contrast to the more vision-led and at times chaotic approaches of the Silicon Valley pioneers (Reis, 2011).

However, there are several critiques made of the Lean method:

(i) Lean methods require highly process driven and scientific approaches to product testing and demand assessment. This is not always possible, due to the intuitive and creative nature of certain products and the tendency of runaway viral successes (or failures) to scotch the best laid plans.

(ii) The method can lead to incrementalism, with start-ups appearing to limit their imagination to the launch of poorly prepared MVPs rather than stretch towards a larger vision, supported by higher quality products with the possibility of attracting the right level of seed capital.

(iii) There is an ethical challenge to the potential for misleading prospective customers about the actual availability of products, who might be unaware that they are actually using only a test product which would under the orthodox life cycle model only be exposed to specially selected focus groups.

The Radical Paradigm: "Moonshots"

Peter Thiel, billionaire founder of Paypal, and author of "Zero-to-one" wrote:

"We dreamt of flying cars, but we got 140 characters".
(Thiel 2014)

He was making a contemptuous remark to his fellow Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, Twitter especially (and also knocking the cautious instrumentalism of Reis). For Reis, real entrepreneurs are those who conceive whole new categories and create billion dollar businesses that achieve de facto monopoly status. His arguments seem close to those of Rene Mauborgne,

author of Blue Ocean Strategy (Chan Kim and Mauborgne, 2005). Entrepreneurs are those strike out into bold new directions and who thrive of genuine innovation, not replication.

Thiel's view presents a quite different challenge to Global Entrepreneurship Institute seven step model (Institute, 2015) and to Reis's "validated learning". Thiel extols the "moonshot" approach, based on big bold visions, requiring a large scale injection of equity early on, from either deep pocketed angel investors or full blown venture capitalists with the resources to fund major ventures (Thiel 2014). This suggests the entrepreneur has to be prepared to work with co-founders; and accept rapid equity dilution. This means of course, that the entrepreneur is pooling the risks with others on the one hand, but also accepting that they might well lose ownership of their venture on the other. This happened to Jerry Yang at Yahoo! and Tim Severin at Facebook (Fincher, 2010a). It is a "winner takes all" model, that recalls Nicholas Taleb's characterisation of "extremistan" in his work, Black Swan (Taleb, 2007).

Thiel's voice has resonance because he describing the process that we most associate with the Silicon Valley stars. The difficulty with his thesis, and he makes no bones about this in his book, is that his version of the Silicon Valley paradigm is the hardest to replicate outside the specific conditions of Silicon Valley. Thiel's model will only work if there is a large and highly sophisticated venture capital industry. For instance, Silicon Valley insiders mocked the recent roadshow mounted by Boris Johnson, which boasted that London technology start-ups had raised $1.3bn (Forbes/Konrad, 2015). Uber alone has raised $1.4bn (Forbes/Konrad, 2015). Only Silicon Valley has the scale needed to support the entrepreneurship that we all associate with the Silicon Valley miracle. In the view of both venture capitalist Peter Thiel, and also Stanford University's Professor of Entrepreneurship, Dr. Henry Etzkowitz (Etzkowitz, 2012), this "miracle" is so unlikely to be replicated elsewhere any time soon.

There is another aspect to the argument that backs up Thiel's thesis: In the US,

the "death rate" of SME businesses has exceeded the "birth rate" significantly since 2008, reports Gallup's president, Jim Clifton (Clifton January 2015). In Thiel's view, conventional SME businesses following either a conventional life cycle pathway, or a lean start up approach, are doomed to be caught in a spiral of highly competitive, low income markets, with fractions founders and demanding small scale investors (Thiel 2014).

For me, this has major bearing on how we orientate the learning and development of entrepreneurs. Rather than chasing after "unicorns", perhaps we need to better equip them for the real world economy in which they live.

3.3 The Learning Conundrum

The question remains therefore, what exactly are we preparing entrepreneurs for?

Under the orthodox life cycle model, our efforts ought to be directed towards transferring foundational management skills and preparing entrepreneurs to grow professionally managed businesses. Entrepreneurs attract funding early on, but only after a rigorous and detailed business planning process.

Under Reis's stripped down version, we would focus on transferring the self sufficiency necessary to sustain a micro-business over the months (and possibly years) it needs before it generates sales. This might include coding, and the analytical and process skills needed, such as SEO optimization.

According to Thiel's theory, both these approaches would kill any genuine entrepreneurship stone dead. Under the "moonshot model" we would prepare entrepreneurs by stimulating their creative thinking, their deal-making capacity, and their ability to "pitch" big bold ideas to people with lots (and lots) of money, with an emphasis on planning (Thiel, 2014).

To some extent, these approaches are mutually exclusive, the detailed business planning under the orthodox life cycle model makes it difficult to stay "lean", and is likely to choke off the creativity required for the "blockbuster" idea favored by Thiel. The solo proto-entrepreneurs of Reis's model have too few resources to build space ships, or flying cars for that matter.

If we follow the Lean model, are we condemning our young people to a lifetime of low income, bankruptcy and unsustainably long hours? As we extol the virtues of entrepreneurship through razzmatazz and hype, are we selling an attainable and authentic vision of the future?

My sense is that as Europeans we are trying to swallow the "whole enchilada" (as

they would say on the West Coast) without differentiating the intra-paradigm contradictions that exist in Silicon Valley. In a sense, we are trying to grow billion dollar companies, but doing so applying Reis's model and not Thiel's.

Globalization of the Silicon Valley Model

Beneath all the hype, there is genuine recognition of the huge productivity engine the Hi-tech revolution is creating. EU and Asian leaders look to the US with a mix of admiration and envy. The Triple Helix Association (Association 2015) is a worldwide association of academics and policy makers, founded by Dr. Henry Etzkowitz of Stanford University and Prof Layersdorff of the University of Amsterdam. The intent is to support the recreation of the nexus of Governmental, Academic and Business institutions that proved to be foundational to the Silicon Valley model (Association 2015).

As Etzkowitz writes:

> *"The design principles of such innovation-support mechanisms are well known and easy to initiate, but the ingredients for their success are more elusive".*
> *(Etzkowitz, 2012, p1)*

> *"the key to regional innovation is the creation of a human capital and R&D development strategy in an institutional infrastructure characterized by permeable academic, industry and government boundaries and interacting helices".*
> *(Etzkowitz, 2012, p21)*

Etzkowitz is in effect saying that the real drivers of innovation and growth in the Silicon Valley model are more than money, infrastructure and science. It is a culture of collaboration across institutions, and the development of entrepreneurial capabilities. For example, it was the visioning of DARPA and the early identification of the commercial opportunities at Stanford, that laid the foundations for what would become Google (Etzkowitz 2012). These cultural and

human facets are hard to recreate elsewhere, with long lead times and sustained development over generations.

The EU Horizon2020 program is designed to foster a similar culture of innovation and entrepreneurship across Europe, supporting by a science and technology infrastructure (Horizon 2020, 2015). Significant EU funds are being allocated to the program over several years. In addition, a new European wide Patent regime is designed to reduce the barriers to innovation (Horizon 2020, 2015). A further significant development was the introduction of the Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme in 2011 (http://www.seis.co.uk/) which seeks to encourage the kind of early phase angel investment so key to fostering the Silicon Valley eco-system.

One of the challenges Europe faces is that the most innovative firms tend to run out of investment funds in the high growth phase of their evolution, leading them to be acquired by larger corporations eager to access emerging technologies (FT / Vasagar, 2015). For example, Autonomy has been acquired by HP; Deep-Mind by Google; and Skype by Microsoft (FT/ Davies, 2014). It remains to be seen whether Horizon2020 can help foster the multilayered and interdependent eco-system required for entrepreneurship, enabling high risk, risky ventures to cross the "Valley of Death": the funding gaps which often occur as the business enters a phase of consuming large amounts of cash without having yet secured sustainable revenues.

In the UK, the recent report by Lord Young (Young 2015) bears out that entrepreneurship is reaching a high water mark. Leading think tank, The Global Entrepreneurship Index, ranked the UK 4th most entrepreneurial country in the world and the leading centre of entrepreneurship in Europe (Young, 2015). There are 5.2 million small businesses in the UK, with the numbers rising rapidly (Young, 2013). More significant than the total is the fact that since 2010, company "births" have outstripped "deaths" by an increasing margin (Young, 2015). The employment patterns on a longitudinal basis show that while

employment dropped significantly during the recession, SME employment remained on a solid growth curve (Young, 2015).

Beyond these numbers, Lord Young's report also points to the cultural and demographic shifts taking place in the nature of entrepreneurship (Young 2015). Those in the 18-24 years old category are twice as likely to start up a new business. The other significant trend is the emergence of the micro business, with less than ten employees aside from the founder. This is the most rapidly rising employment category (Young 2015). It is interesting to note how different the perception is between the more recent Lord Young reports, which stress the broadening of the entrepreneurial base and the relative health of the entrepreneurial eco-system, compared with the more Darwinian NESTA report, the Vital 6%, placing emphasis on the few high growth innovators.

Learning Challenges
The current context of entrepreneurship presents significant challenges to the development of early phase entrepreneurship.

Firstly, if Etzkowitz is right, there are likely to be very specific circumstances in which clusters of entrepreneurship are likely to develop. To pretend otherwise, might be to mislead millions of young Europeans into folly, losing valuable years of building their career equity. Instead, perhaps we should be instructing those in the 18-24 category to "knuckle down" to hard study and building a career, and come back to the idea of forming a start up when they have experience and money behind them.

This is a broad ethical challenge to early phase entrepreneurial development. Is it fair and honest to encourage more early phase entrepreneurs when already, we know that more than 50% start ups will fail after one year; and only 6% of all start ups will result in sustainable high growth companies after 5 years (NESTA, 2009)?

The second challenge comes from a quite different direction and challenges the very basis of entrepreneurship that is derived from the classic life cycle model. By adopting a complexity perspective, we can challenge the basis that companies need to progress along a path in a fashion derived from the Silicon Valley model. As we have seen from Lord Young's numbers, there is rapid growth in the micro-business sector. Many entrepreneurs appear to choose to remain small, independent and agile. Increasingly, creative entrepreneurs and makers remain solo, yet group into networks and collectives (Atter, 2015). As I write in my own blog article:

> *"This new, contemporary form of student entrepreneurship displays a tech savvy, diverse, empowered generation who are comfortable integrating business minded entrepreneurship with social purpose. The student entrepreneurs I spoke to are more likely to find ways to collaborate that compete. They start with a firm philosophical foundation; think through intrinsic design; and utilize new forms of crowd funding, community-based co-working and social media tools. This is a quite different journey than the classic start up".*
> *(Atter, 2015d / blog).*

An article by Levie and Lichtenstein (Levie and Lichtenstein 2008) from University of Strathclyde challenges the basis of linear model, and pointing out that the research does not support its validity and also challenges the basis of the linear progressive Silicon Valley model. The authors call for the adoption of what they call the "Dynamic States" model (Levie and Lichtenstein, 2008, p2). Interestingly, they provide a direct link between the theory of business inception and growth, and the life cycle of learning we experience as humans. They wrote:

> *"...the proposition that all businesses follow the set sequence is not at all supported by the evidence".*
> *(Levie and Lichtenstein, 2008. p21).*

They conclude:

"…life-cycle theories of business growth, although popular among researchers and especially practitioners, are not accurate representations of the early growth and development of entrepreneurial firms".
(Levie and Lichtenstein, 2008, p29).

Finally;

"The dynamic states model eliminates a long held assumption in the management literature that the "right" way for a business to develop is to grow, according to a number of stages".
(Levie and Lichtenstein, 2008, p32)

In the dynamic states model, we are required to embrace the complexity, randomness and the concept of emergence, rather than impose an *a priori* model of logical and sequential growth (Levie and Lichtenstein, 2008).

I believe that the combination of my direct experience at the Liverpool SEC conference and the insights provided by the dynamic states model provide a major insight into as how we should approach the learning and development of early phase entrepreneurs. Rather than seeing entrepreneurs as either high growth "Gazelle" companies moving through a linear pathway or merely lifestyle entrepreneurs making cup cakes; we can see the potential for millions of young people entering the workforce, choosing an independent but networked entrepreneurial activity, that is self sustaining, fulfilling and possibly more resilient to down turns (Young, 2013).

By understanding the paradigm shifts that are taking place, we can avoid the trap of "mentoring" early phase entrepreneurs in a directive fashion towards following a method, by advising them to scale up, seek investment and dilute their equity. This is a particular risk when working in government-backed program where job creation and economic impact tend to override the concern for any specific individual entrepreneur.

Tony Robinson, OBE, has written about the "power of many", referring to the 5m SMEs. I believe he's right. It might be less glamorous that Elon Musk's "moonshots", nor as cool as Apple, but there is indeed something amazing also in a diverse, dynamic, self generating, self organizing community or independent entrepreneurs, comprising designers, creatives, software developers, freelance consultants, trainers, coaches, makers, dealers, traders, social activists, who collectively add billions of pounds to the UK economy (Young, 2013), (Dellot and Thompson, 2013).

My goal is through my research to support and empower real people in real situations to grow, develop and learn. It is this dynamic context that provides the backdrop, rather than transplanting the various Silicon Valley models that are hard to replicate and may succeed only in a specific time or place.

3.4   The Academic Setting

In this research project I have had to approach the academic literature with caution. Early on in my research, during 2012-13, I became stuck by relying too heavily on theories that I had read rather than had developed from original research. I have described elsewhere how I needed to "bracket" these academic theories and pursue a more grounded approach (Strauss and Corbin, 2015). However, academic literature has played a key part in my research during the latter stages, when I returned to research sources to test my own emergent theory in comparison to theories that already existed and which might confirm our challenge my findings. Naturally, if the theory that emerged from my research was completely novel and had no connection with any other literature, this would present a challenge to show how my research fitted into the knowledge landscape.

In fact, when I returned to the academic sources I was greatly encouraged and found many readily available sources of research that reinforce the findings that I had arrived at independently, and which also provided added insight in to

related areas.

For example, I have drawn upon a wide selection of academic literature in the fields of philosophy, psychology and particularly social psychology (Hogg and Vaughan, 2014b) (Turner and Oakes, 1986) and sociology (Fulcher and Scott, 2011) (Berger, 1963) to test and evolve my own theoretical thinking. For example, Heckhausen's Rubicon Model (Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2008) setting out a four stage model of motivational mindsets, was supportive of the binary mindset model emerging from my own research.

Fortuitously, a special edition of journal Education + Training has recently just published a special edition on entrepreneurship and I have drawn upon several articles dealing with Theory of Planned Behavior (Joensuu et al., 2015) and entrepreneurial education evaluation (Henry, 2015). This material has reinforced my interest to look at the underlying attitudinal and mindset issues, and how this relates to education and development of entrepreneurs. For example, Theory of Planned Behavior stresses the relative importance of attitudinal antecedents, social norms and perceived behavioral control as elements influencing the translation of intention into action (Joensuu et al., 2015). This gives theoretical support to the proposition emerging from my research that the critical dimensions to be examined are mindset, relationships and work style (Hogg & Vaughan, 2014a).

4   Methodology

4.1   Research Philosophy

In this section, I would like to describe the philosophical choices that I made and the impact these choices have on the development of my research findings.

Conducting any research project is to put into practice a philosophical stance in relation to the creation of knew knowledge. This is essentially the domain of epistemology. As Grix writes (Grix, 2010):

> *"…methodology is driven by certain ontological and epistemological assumptions and consists of research questions or hypotheses, a conceptual approach to a topic, the methods to be used in the study – and their justification – and their justification – and, consequently, the data sources".*
> *(Grix, 2010, p32)*

Orthodox scientific deductive research, beginning with a literature review and the formulation of a hypothesis, to be proved or disproved, is often an expression of logical positivism (Lane and Corrie, 2006). In contrast, inductive research studies describing the subjective experiences of a section of society will naturally seek legitimacy for knowledge creation in a cluster of existential and phenomenological philosophies. As Anselm Strauss writes, inductive research contrasts strongly with deductive and involves the following (Quoted in Moustakas, 1994):

> *"Where do insights, hunches, generative quotes come from? Answer, they come from experience, from actual exploratory research into the phenomena".*
> *(Quoted in Moustakas, 1994, loc 267)*

The key as I see it is to approach the research task with awareness of the

philosophical premise in which it is being conducted. The failure to do so can result in the creation of "blind-spots" where the data is interpreted only through a specific lens. Moustakas refers to Husserl in drawing our attention to differentiating between the object itself and how we perceive the object, the key difference being the presence of meaning that we as humans inevitably place on things we see (Moustakas, 1994).

Even in the manner in which I have constructed the structure of my thesis is an indicator of my philosophical stance. I have set out the main chapter heading as "Methodology" and my "Research Philosophy" as a sub heading. In doing so, I am essentially stating my position as a pragmatist. I see methodology in this sense as the process of generating an answer to my research question. I describe my philosophy in order to be transparent about what I am bringing into the research project but also to be reflective about how my philosophical position might have shifted as a result. However, the key for me is the generation of practical outcomes of use to my clients and to the wider entrepreneurial community, and not to substantiate a specific philosophical stance in favor of another.

For example, early on in my research project, I was approaching my research from a logical positivist perspective, hoping to use logic derived from literature to develop a theory, which could then be used to substantiate a learning model of early phase entrepreneurship. As I examine the task more deeply, I recognized that I did not have access to the level of resources needed, nor was I equipped with the necessary quantification skills needed, to pursue this line of research. By mid-to-late 2013, it was becoming clear that I was not getting traction in my project. This prompted a pivot in my research direction, and I began to recognize the value in generating theoretical knowledge bottom up and implicitly therefore beginning to adopt a more constructivist and subjectivist epistemological position.

By the time that I began my research project, I was already well disposed to many common elements of qualitative interpretative research, based upon the

detailed analysis of audio recordings. I had recognized through my research that there was a need to build up a new model of early phase entrepreneurs, to account for the innovations taking place and the shifts in social attitudes. I have also described how my own professional transition from executive coach to entrepreneurial coach and then ultimately, entrepreneur, had a bearing on my own positioning in respect of which method to adopt. It was both a personal motivation and a commercial imperative that any model developed through my research was both scalable and accessible to a wide spectrum of the entrepreneur population.

This personal and professional context really matters. As Buchanan and Bryman write:

> "Those organizational, historical, political, ethical, evidential and personal factors are not just unwelcome distractions. They are core components of the data stream, reflecting generic and specific properties of the research setting, central to the analysis and interpretation of results and to the development of theoretical and practical outcomes".
> (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009, p2)

They go on to write:

> "Researchers commonly study topics in which they have a personal interest, using methods in which they are trained and competent, and with which they feel comfortable".
> (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009, p12).

As a specific example of what they mean was my decision to leverage my existing contact points with entrepreneurs i.e. my coaching sessions, using audio recordings. I could have adopted a different data collection strategy, for example by using surveys, or by generating my own transcripts. But I felt that the response rates to surveys would have been low and uneven given the anecdotal information I was receiving about low response rates to surveys in

college environments and via the student's union. Furthermore, surveys require larger sample sets, with the sample selected for statistical validity. In my case, I was keen to explore in depth the specific experiences of entrepreneurs who I knew were working in interesting fields of activity and which were under-researched. In other words, I adopted a purposeful sampling strategy, rather than a statistical sampling approach.

As I have described above, I was already sceptical about the value of note taking, relying on self-generated memory traces, which would have implied a much greater level of editing and memory reconstruction in my part as a researcher.

Also, I had a very specific contract to coach my clients. I was not their consultant, which might have opened up a broader access and created possibilities to do more action research, transformative work, or participatory inquiry (Reason and Bradbury 2001). I was limited to working within the confines of having a limited number of meetings with them individual, or in small groups, for between one to two hours over the course of six to nine months. My learning contract with them was to create opportunities for dialogue and stimulate their self-awareness, develop latent capability and boost resolve towards action. But my role was not to be there with them on the barricades, or direct the battle from the rear.

Once again the circumscribed nature of my professional engagement placed practical and ethical constraints on the type of research that I could undertake.

With a reality of a small and purposefully selective sample set, with a deep and generative type of coaching interaction, and where a transcribed recording was the primary means of data collection, my methodological choices were narrowing but also focusing.

Even so, there was still a wide spectrum of choices available to me within this field as a specific methodology consistent with a broad qualitative research strategy. Creswell summarizes at least five different approaches to qualitative

inquiry (Creswell, 2013):

1. *"Narrative*
2. *Phenomenological*
3. *Ethnographic*
4. *Grounded theory*
5. *Case studies".*
(Creswell 2013)

Only grounded theory method clearly and explicitly is designed to generate theory and as this was a key element missing from my practice, grounded theory was the natural choice for my research design. However, all of the other qualitative methods feature in my research in some way. For example, my analysis of audio recording and transcripts can be described as phenomenological; and I have also developed case studies to illustrate the functioning of the model that has arisen.

4.2   Research Design

In this section, I want describe the research project I designed in order to generate the outcomes that I was looking for, and demonstrate how I generated rigor and transparency in this process. The term *design* has a complex meaning. It conveys a sense in which the project is both *engineered* but also *created*. The balance between these two is critical for understanding the project.

Design and Emergence in My Research

During the early stages of my research in 2012-13, my early attempts at coding using grounded theory method revealed that I was still too wedded to a mental model that I was seeking to validate; perhaps as a result of my over eagerness to generate economically useful "product" for my consultancy practice. I had not, to use Husserl's phrase, "bracketed" my own assumptions and impulses (Creswell 2013). The resulting coding was "thin" and was more of an exercise in my simply grouping codes under predetermined categories.

When I did eventually (after coaxing) trust the grounded theory method, what emerged was far richer and more powerful than I had imagined, creating new possibilities that I was eager to pursue and which was subsequently to show was more importance to entrepreneurs than the model that I had created in my own mind. Moustakas's describes the moment of discovery as follows (Moustakas, 1994):

> *"…in which everything is perceived freshly for the first time".*
> *(Moustakas, 1994, p34).*

As I repeatedly listened to the recordings and thought creatively and inductively about the meanings, I noticed the idea of dissonance and contradiction was a common theme throughout the sessions. Not only was this of practical help in helping target advice and counselling support, it also enabled my findings to connect with broader themes of psychosocial processes such as agency, self-actualization and social processes. Rather than imposing a model, the insights flowed from the data.

This process of trial and error, of recognizing when I was blocked or meandering away from rich sources of insight, calls to mind the notion of *bricolage,* as described by Claude Levi Strauss (Lincoln 2011). As Denzin and Lincoln write:

> *"...the researcher-as-bricoleur abandons the quest for some naive concept of realism, focusing instead on the clarification of his or her position in the web of reality and the social locations of other researchers and the ways they shape the production and interpretation of knowledge".*
> *(Lincoln 2011 p.168).*

> *"The implications for research point to a process of unlearning, of "letting go"...we actively construct our research methods from the tools at hand rather than passively receiving the "correct" universally applicable methodologies".*
> *(Lincoln 2011 p.168).*

The implication of this is that I settled on my particular design, such as it was, and chose grounded theory method, not because I am wedded to this specific research paradigm, but because it seemed to be the straightest line to achieving my pragmatic goals, in the context of a high interactive set of relationships with my clients who were also to be the subject of my research. Strauss and Corbin write that the researcher (Strauss and Corbin, 2015):

> *"...enters vicariously into the life of participants, feel what they are experiencing, and listen to what they are saying through their words and actions".*
> *(Strauss and Corbin, 2015, loc 2588)*

This is certainly true in my case, and pragmatically, I needed a research design and methodology that enabled me to rigorously research the flow of these relational experiences. Grounded theory method seemed an ideal choice, given the methodology it provides for converting live data into code-able information as a basis for model building and this aligned with my pragmatic outlook (Lincoln,

2011). As Denzin and Lincoln write:

> *"The legacy of Anselm Strauss rests on pragmatism and its development in symbolic interactionism".*
> *(Lincoln, 2011, p365).*

Writing this thesis has therefore been about the unpacking of my experiences in conducting this research, and disentangling the interwoven threads, and reaffirming boundaries between myself (the researcher), the subject and the concepts that have emerged. This is a hermeneutic process. As Moustakas writes (Moustakas, 1994):

> *"Hermeneutic science involves the art of reading a text so that the intention and meaning behind appearances are fully understood".*
> *(Moustakas, 1994, loc 295)*

This awareness has enabled me to more critically examine my research process and affirm or modify the outcomes. The thesis writing has therefore been part of the research process, and not merely a description of it. As Strauss and Corbin write (Strauss and Corbin, 2015):

> *"An important part of doing analysis is reflecting back on who we are and how we are shaped and changed by the research".*
> *(Strauss and Corbin, 2015, loc 2993).*

The theme of emergence has therefore a wider field of view, with this thesis demonstrating the emergence as myself as researcher, rather than an all-knowing consultant, having the confidence to allow the data to speak for itself and having the mental agility to spot the patterns and themes that flow as a result. There is therefore an interest parallel process between the unfolding that is taking place at the methodological and concept formation within the research project, and my own maturation as a professional. As Lincoln and Guba writes (Lincoln and Guba, 1994):

> *"...Questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm, which we*

define as a basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways".
(Lincoln and Guba, 1994, p105)

As an example of this, I would highlight important considerations of ethics (Gabriel and Casemore, 2009) that I will examine in this thesis. Being a coach is to take on the role of trusted confident, with the only agenda being working for the success of the client. Yet, I now had to consider how I could generate meaningful research data from the session, an outcome that could not be said to be in the interests of the client. Even if the clients agreed to be recorded, and have this recording transcribed, was it still professionally ethical for me to attempt to combine the role of coach and researcher? How could the client know in advance what they would say, or what my conclusions might be? I was not asking them simply about their opinion on something, or how they acted in certain situations. I was asking them to share their business ideas and concepts; and also real their fears and vulnerabilities.

To answer these points, we once again return to the theme of emergence. The easier part of the answer is constructing an ethical "contract" with the client. The harder part is recognizing the emergent impacts on the relationship that might occur (Gabriel and Casemore, 2009). As Griffin states (Griffin, 2002):

"Ethics are not given in any kind of whole or autonomously discovered by an individual, but continuously negotiated in the interaction between persons".
(Griffin, 2002, p59)

For example, at a macro level, what effect does my positioning as a researcher have on the coaching relationship? At a micro level, simply being a professional and securing an ethical release form, might interrupt the normal flow of a coaching conversation. Ethics are fundamental a relational matter and emergence through the psychodynamic interaction between people.

When I look back, my formal education was completed at age 23, with an MSc for the London School of Economics. I then pursued a business management and consultancy career, during which time I undoubtedly developed the identity of an expert consultant, able to incisively identify underlying patterns and make conclusions.

For example, for periods of my career, I was head of Reward at the Hay Group (Hay group, 2012). This was a highly numerate and quantified field, resting on assumptions that there should be a close relationship between people, performance and pay. The methodologies of surveying closely mirrored positivist /objectivist approaches to research. Statistical analysis was used to identify patterns and correlations. My disenchantment with the field rose after the first dot-com crash of 2001, when many of the correlations between stock ownership and effectiveness were proven to be false.

After having worked inside a client organization, I developed a greater appreciation for the leadership and organizational dynamics and the development issues that arose. I subsequently established my own executive coaching business. I developed expertise in tools such as Myers Briggs and Emotional Intelligence 360 degree instruments. It is still possible to see in this a pattern of my reliance of expert tools, with myself as the expert with the model.

Over some years, I became disenchanted with these tools and instruments. I could no longer accept that human personality could be differentiated meaningfully by reference to factors such as extroversion and introversion; and began to feel that individual motivation and value systems were much more sign efficient in shaping our identity and how we interacted with each other.

Similarly, I became disenchanted with 360 degree feedback tools (HayGroup 2012), as they relied upon an assessment according to a predetermined questionnaire and presented the information in quantified tables and charts (HayGroup and Goleman 2008), as fact; which obscured the large measure of

inaccuracy that existed in the tools validity. This was particularly true when using such tools across cultural and linguistic boundaries. There was little scope in such instruments to address issues of marginalization, alienation, collective collision and power dynamics, all of which can and do affect the results of 360-degree feedback instruments.

Increasingly, I began to use a self-developed technique of verbal 360-degree assessments, in which I would interview a cross section of the client's peers, direct reports and stakeholders, and then write a summary interpretation of the interviews. I felt that this was much more intellectually honest and less persecutory for the client. I could shade the comments in the report and present them as tentative findings; and avenues for exploration. It is much harder to do that with histograms and pie charts.

My emergence as a qualitative researcher began during my studies for my Masters in Executive Coaching at Ashridge, an institution noted for its constructivist, phenomenological and participatory approach to research. A key part of my Masters research was audio recording my client coaching sessions and critically evaluating them. In my Masters thesis, I analyzed the case of "Tom", where due to my over-laborious attempt to "contract" with him within the session, he experienced a loss of energy within the session; though this was recovered later as a result my use of contextual questioning. The key point however was that I noticed the critical importance of working with energy and focus. I was able to hear this on the audio; and I was trained in a method of listening and interpreting a live recording.

So useful was this "audio playback" that I incorporated into my work with my own professional supervisor. I would send her recordings of my coaching sessions; and she would listen, interpret and provide feedback. I was encouraged to adopt this practice through the writing of Julie Hay, who identified the need to broaden the range of learning activities (Hay, 2007). She writes:

> "...we don't know what we don't know. What we write down during and after

sessions consists of what we allow ourselves to be aware of...we can't make
notes about those aspects that are outside our awareness but if you listen to
a tape of yourself you will begin to spot these."
(Hay, 2007, p25).

In other words, in my own professional practice, I had direct personal experience of the richness that could be gained by reviewing audio passages and how much information was being lost (or suppressed) in the midst of the conversational flow.

As a result of the richness of this experience professionally, I lead a research project as an Ashridge Research Fellow on the use of comparative methods in supervision. Together with faculty member Dr. Liz Wiggins, I co-presented a paper at the European Mentoring and Coach Council European Conference in 2010 (Wiggins and Atter 2011); and subsequently co-authored two articles (Wiggins, Haan et al. 2011), (Atter, Haan et al. 2014). The focus of this research was in comparing and contrasting three common methods in professional supervision of coaches:

- Free recall
- Transcript analysis
- Audio playback

In the study, three coaches worked with three supervisors, each pair experimenting with three different methods of supervision. Free recall referred to simply the coach bringing their recollections into their supervision session. For example, they might recollect a coaching case, prompted by questioning and listing from their supervisor.

In contrast, transcript analysis draw upon practice in coaching psychotherapy and required the coach to draft detailed notes immediately after the session, and then read these notes at the outset of the supervision session.

Finally, we examined the use of audio playback. Our final article published in

2014, Reliving The Moment, summarized the conclusions, as follows:

> *"...the benefits from using audio playback included re-evoking unacknowledged feelings, generating new insights, changing the dynamics between supervisor and coach and slowing the conversation down to notice unexpected habits and patterns"*
> *(Atter et al., 2014, p2)*

By working with an audio recording of a real event (as opposed to a data gathering interview specifically for research purposes) we were able to show that the audio was much more than a simple reminder or memo as to what was being said. The researcher experienced a new event, which might involved the re-experiencing of certain prior experiences but also the incorporation of new experiences which might have arisen due to distance and perspective, or because of moods and emotions being experienced at the moment of replay.

For example, I had some concerns after the group coaching session involving Case 7 (Case#7, 2013a). I recall being quite positive, as there has been a wide level of participation in the group and Case 7 seemed to have reached a point of insight. Yet, when I played back the audio with my professional supervisor, I noticed that I had made a joke at Case 7's expense (Case#7, 2013d). While there was general laughter in the room, I could not hear Case 7 laugh (Case#7, 2013a). Had I just put him down in front of others?

As a professional coach and subsequent researcher, I am a habitual note taker, downloading my thoughts and recollections immediately after a session, on a train, bus or in a coffee shop. Using my mobile devise, I keep these notes stored in Evernote, which allows me to tag and date record the notes. I have found these a vital resource as a researcher in keeping track of the twists and turns in my research.

This exercise has important implications for grounded researchers and for research generally. I am deeply skeptical about the role of surveys for example

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in accurately recording an individual's viewpoint and perspective. It is worth quoting Eric de Haan who summarized research into memory and related cognitive processes (Haan, 2011):

> *"Memory appears to be essentially a 'social reconstruction', in other words a reconstruction of whatever is being remembered taking into account the circumstances at the time of remembering. It is an active process that creates a new narrative that will bear some resemblance to earlier narratives or to a recording of the same experience. However, memory will also necessarily include new narrative elements, born of emotional and cognitive processes during the passing of time or prevailing at the time of recall. It is well known that the activity of recounting itself engenders both censorship and new creativity....".*
>
> *(Haan, 2011, loc 2491).*

The significance of my research therefore is that I am both a participant experiencing the original event; and also a researcher reliving the moment, by hearing audio recordings and the voice tone, utterances and pauses that convey emotions and trigger new experiences, at the moment I am listening to, interpreting and coding the data. This is quite different in my opinion to simply re-reading an interview transcript of someone giving an opinion, or reading texts. The degree of my emotional engagement in the original experience and in the implications of the outcome pose both unique possibilities but also unique ethical dangers, which I intend to address in the course of this thesis.

Consequently, prior to, and running parallel with, my doctoral research, I had direct research experience of working with the emergent themes based around interpreting and re-experiencing the original coaching session through audio; and being able to draw rich conclusions from it. Inevitably this influenced my approach to my doctoral research project and had to hand available techniques and methods. This is the art of the bricoleur, which means to use things that come to hand and use and reuse materials that one has at ones disposal.

The long view therefore is that I came into my research project already having experienced some disenchantment with the quantified and positivist approach to consultancy research; and by contrast had moved a long way towards developing skills as a qualitative researching, working with grounded interpretative methods.

In summary, it is therefore possible to see at least five levels of emergence:

1. Career emergence, with my transition to the role of researcher

2. Subject emergence, leading to the definition of my subject area of my research

3. Methodological emergence, and choices about how I will pursue the research

4. Concept emergence, with the definition of theory, model and key concepts arising from my research

5. Emergence of self awareness, as I write up the results in this thesis and reflect how all the pieces fit together

Having an awareness of these levels of emergence will make it easier to understand my stance and research goals, and how I come to frame my research questions. They will also help illuminate how and why I interpret the microcosm of each code of datum and why I can visualize a model in a certain way.

Project Planning

While recognizing the emergent and generative nature of my research, I also felt the pragmatic need to formulate a phased approach to conceiving, developing and testing the project as a whole. This involved a great deal of trial and error. I was aware from the grounded theory method literature, such as Charmaz, that there were specific steps involved in this methodology (Charmaz, 2006).

However, I was also conscious that I need to do more than simply write up a theory. If I was to produce a useful model, I would need to factor in client involvement and testing. I was not sure at the outset when and how this can be done, as it depended on gaining the right level of access to relevant user groups. In practice, I simply had to respond to opportunities to work with groups of

entrepreneurs and utilize this in my research. This fortunately occurred at Central St Martins and the LSE. Therefore, only when looking back in retrospect, I can see a clear logical flow to my research activities.

This I have summarized as follows:

Table 2 Research Design Summary

Concept Formation	Model Building	User Testing
Question Formulation	Theory Development	Dynamiqe Questionnaire V2.0
Sampling #1	Visualization	Sampling #3
Data Collection	Questionnaire design	Model Development
Initial Coding	Sampling #2	Dissemination
Focused Coding & Categorization	Report Generation	Publication
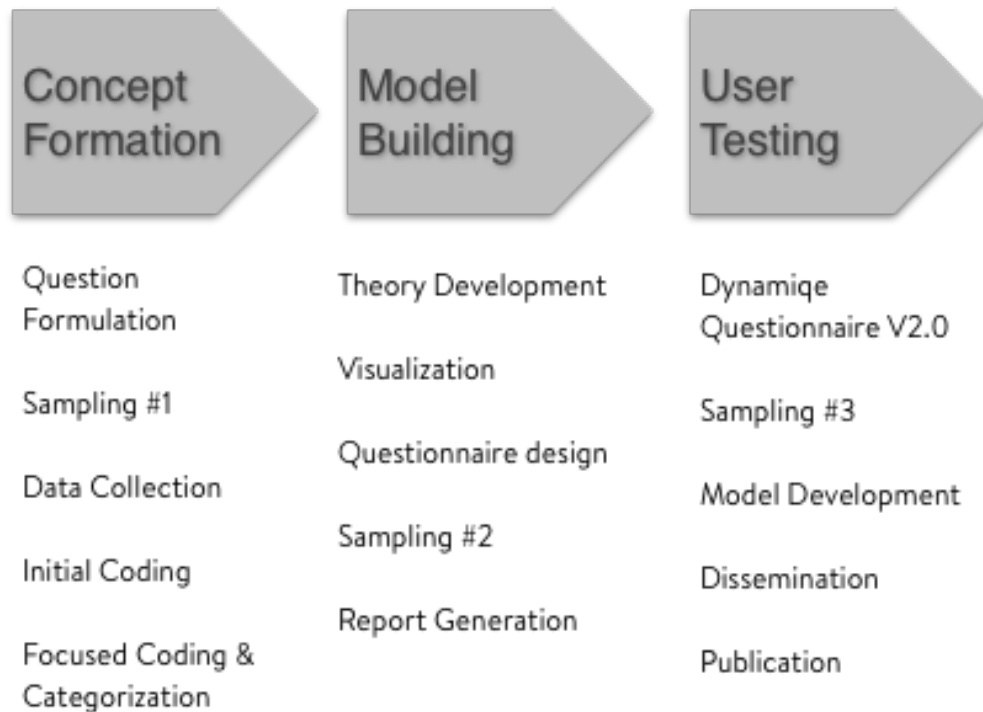
This design is also reflected in the three different sampling groups that I used at different stages:

• Coaching clients
• Early tested with workshop clients
• Broader testing with active entrepreneurs

In the first phase, the data gathering was conducted in a highly confidential manner, with a small group of coaching clients, each of which was intensively analyzed through a grounded theory method. However, this process was "opened up" in the Central St Martins workshop, where I discussed the findings openly and this first group of users were exposed to an early version of the model. In the third phase, I have had an opportunity to test the model, via the

Dynamiqe questionnaire, with more than 180 users (as at May 22, 2015) and also engage with them directly in several workshop environments (NACUE, Alacrity Foundation and LSE Generate).

It is therefore possible to see the engineering of this layered approach, anticipated early on as I considered how to generate meaningful and practical results. I did not know which specific events I would have in from of me, but I was aware of the need to look for opportunities to test and iterate the model that I was developing.

Yet it is also necessary to look at the design aspect as a creative process, in which I am drawing meaning from the data that is emerging and learning how to craft a model that will best express the key dynamics that I was uncovering. This returns to the theme of emergence and discovery. In contrast to my earlier attempts at the outset of my research, I had to be comfortable psychological in not knowing what the model would be — in having no theory or explanation for what I was hearing. Rather like a blank canvas confronting the artist, I had to "bracket" (Strauss and Corbin, 2015) my thoughts and put aside my opinions, so that I could more carefully tune into what the data was telling me. This required me to distance myself from the literature and my prior experiences so that I could allow new interpretations of the data to emerge (Strauss and Corbin, 2015).

So in my research design there is a tension between the necessity to engineer effective research processes, much of which can be anticipated; and allowing for creative scope to allow meaning to emerge and for me to iterate a model based on themes and insights that came to light during the project. Reflecting back, my sense is that in the early phase of my research, I was attempting to over engineer the project, perhaps through lack of confidence as a novice researcher. Later on, I was increasingly comfortable to allow myself to be lead by the themes emerging from the data. This is as much a process of my own maturation as a researcher.

Within grounded theory, it is possible to deploy the method in a wide variety of ways and as Bryant and Charmaz point out, it is possible to use grounded theory methods in either quantitative or qualitative research (Bryant and Charmaz, 2013). However, grounded theory has been adopted almost exclusively in qualitative research. As Charmaz writes (Charmaz, 2006):

> *"My position aligns well with the social constructivists whose influences include Lev Vygotsky (1962) and Yvonne Lincoln (2013), who stress social contexts, interaction, sharing view points, and interpretive understandings".*
> *(Charmaz, 2006, p14)*

As a professional Coach, this is how I have been trained and so, while I have become aware of the range of options open to me as a researcher, I do have a natural professional preference and volition, based on the research question that I am addressing.

In contrast, an objectivist using grounded theory method would be placing greater emphasis on chronology, events, settings and behaviours (Bryant and Charmaz 2013).

This is broadly in line with Denzin and Lincoln's findings that set out three broad strands within Grounded Theory Method (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011):
Positivist:
Originating with Glaser "All is data" (Strauss 1967). The objectivist grounded theorist:

> *"...assumes that a neutral observer discovers data in a unitary external world...The research stands outside the studied phenomena".*
> *(Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p365)*

Post-positivism which demonstrates the following characteristics:

> *"It places less emphasis on emergence than the objectivist and constructivist*

approaches, as it provides preconceived coding and analytic frameworks to
apply to   data".
(Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p365).

Denzin and Lincoln critique Strauss and Corbin's earlier work, writing that their books:

"...made grounded theory a method of application rather than innovation".
(Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p365).

They note however, that Jane Corbin has in recent times moved much closer to the constructivism of Cathy Charmaz (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

Constructivist Grounded Theory
As Denzin and Lincoln describe:

"To the extent possible, constructionist grounded theorists enter the studied
phenomena and attempt to see it from the inside. Researchers and
participants co-construct the data through interaction".
(Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p366)

This seems a highly relevant methodological perspective given my coaching interaction with clients is the primary means of collecting data. Unquestionably, I have been strongly influenced by the interpretivist and constructivist approach of Charmaz (Charmaz 2006). This seemed to fit exactly with my desire to work directly from my experience of clients and to develop an original theory ground up

In practice, while using grounded theory method as the principle backbone around which I built my research project, I nevertheless incorporated other practices in support. For instance, I could see the value in the forensic phenomenological approach proposed by Moustakas. (Clark 1994).

I was also influenced in my eventual decision on methodology by the difficulties I had encountered in my first attempt at using grounded theory, when indeed I had formulated a post-positivist perspective, strongly influenced by Engestrom (Engeström 2008). I was in effect, trying to force fit the data into a model. The results were not convincing and I found myself distracted for six months on a road to nowhere.

In response to this, reading Charmaz, Creswell, Denzin & Lincoln, Guba and Moustakas was breath of fresh air and liberating as a researcher. (Charmaz 2006), (Creswell 2013), (Lincoln 2011), (Lincoln and Guba 2000), (Clark 1994).

4.3   Research Methods

One of the key insights I gained also was that grounded theory method still allowed me to draw upon techniques and methods from other branches of qualitative research. I saw great value during my research of conducting what Strauss and Corbin call microanalysis, and the forensic observation of minor data, such as key words and utterances. This has much in common with narrative research and hermeneutics (Strauss and Corbin 2015).

A good example would be voice tone. With audio recordings it is possible to compare certain key words with the audio recording of how they sounded. For example, Yes, might mean a firm rebuttal to an implied competency challenge. As in "Have you got a business plan?" "Yes". But it could also mean a compliant response, as in "Yes, yes, yes, I agree, absolutely". The actual meaning of these two phrases is quite different and is much more evident if the audio recording accompanies the data set.

At the same time, I also sense a risk in moving whole-heartedly to a constructivist perspective. The "I made it up as a I went along" phrase was conjured in my imagination, and created some anxiety when I imagined a skeptical audience. Perhaps most of all, I fear being ignored. By reading Bryman (Buchanan and Bryman 2011) I understood that it was possible to combine different methodologies, albeit with the caveat that the overall research design must generate an end product that is more than the sum of its parts. (Buchanan and Bryman 2011).

Denzin and Lincoln make clear several reasons for adopting a mixed methods approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). They list eight, although I highlight six that I believe are most relevant to my research objectives:

- Construct instruments
- Corroborate findings
- Reduce cultural and investigator bias
- Demonstrate credibility

- Increase generalizability
- Inform professional practice

(Denzin and Lincoln, 2011)

I was also mindful of Bouckenooghe et al, descriptions of the largely positivist & objectivist research environment in entrepreneurship (Bouckenooghe et al., 2007). I have to therefore make a pragmatic accommodation to the research context in which my project is being conducted. Having an instrument to test and validate the model, derived initially from constructivist grounded theory, seems to combine the best of both worlds and create a self-reinforcing proposition. The key however, is to ensure that grounded theory method is given privilege in terms of generating the theory and model, with quantitive research used to validate and operationalize the model.

4.3.1   Triple Loop Learning

As I write elsewhere in this thesis, writing up this project up is part of the research and not just a record of it. Only after many twists and turns, have I been able to focus my research on a specific emergent question. Once settled, this enabled me to deploy a rigorous grounded theory analysis, in conjunction with supporting methods such as journaling, narrative analysis and surveying, that aided the testing and validation of the model. While much narrower in focus than the original research question, the results this process generated have been more significant and have more general applicability than the study I had originally intended.

There seems several ways to describe the project in terms of its shape and scope. A narrative perspective is important of course. I will describe a process of research beginning 12 April 2012 and concluding only with the submission of this thesis in May 2015. Given the three years of elapsed time, it would be useful to segment the project into phases as in a flow diagram. There is a definite flow to the sequence of events within my project, largely determined by grounded

theory methodology. As mentioned earlier, I found Kathy Charmaz' s (Charmaz, 2006) seven step model particularly useful (and also simple) as a framework for describing the process of my research.

However, the challenge in writing this thesis goes beyond writing up a linear description of a project, that can be preplanned in advance. Another way of looking at the shape of my research project is to see it as a series of recursive loops, that recall Gregory Bateson levels of learning (Raelin, 2008)

This is a non linear way of looking at the project and is helpful in understanding the continuous and iterative nature of the interrogation of the data. Within my project, I can see three distinct levels of learning that I had to engage with:

I. Exploratory: What was the client saying about their experience of being an entrepreneur?

II. Relational: What was going on in the between myself and the client/research subject; in terms of data generation and interpretation?

III. Expansive: What does the data suggest about the nature of entrepreneurship?

This is a recursive process. Each of the loops remain open, to be succeeded by another. They are loops within loops, which is to suggest that even at later stages it was necessary to go back to the original data and re-analyze it; and on even to listen again to the original audio recordings.

The important point that Bateson would make, along with Schon, Raelin and also Engeström (Schon, 1991),(Raelin, 2008) (Engeström, 2008) is that we learn through struggle; by making choices and decisions as the situation unfolds; and being critically reflective about this process. A process in which we can engineer a project and then execute it flawlessly has more in common with operations management than research. It is through the resolution of difficulties and contradictions that we can expand our learning as Engeström articulates in his model of Expansive Learning (Engeström, 2008) which he based on Vygotskian

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semiotics (Engeström, 2008) (Daniels, 1996) and Mead's symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934).

An example of this was the insights I generated from tabulating the coded data according to the frequency of interventions (number of statements) made by myself and linking this to the number of Level III (i.e. deeper) codes. What I found was that the more I intervened by trying to help the client with advice and guidance, the less the client contributed in terms of depth and quality into the conversation. A possible explanation for this is offered by Roger Casemore from the perspective of relational ethics, and the implications for the power distributed with relationships (Gabriel and Casemore, 2009). He writes:

> *"Never do anything for your client that they can do for themselves…the person who is a continual helper, who is always helping and doing things for everyone else, is actually subtly placing themselves in a position of enormous power".*
> *(Gabriel and Casemore, 2009, p29)*

It is therefore possible to see a continual loop, from the original source data in the recordings, through to understanding the relational dynamics between myself and the client/entrepreneur, and what this might suggest about their struggle for autonomy and empowerment. I was strongly influenced in this by sociological perspective by Habermas (Finlayson, 2005), and the concept of self efficacy (Fulcher and Scott, 2011) ; and also by Bauman and the concept of alienation (Bauman, 2007). Through reading and continual engagement with the data, I came to notice the dissonance and contradictions that entrepreneurs wrestled with; and began to realize that this was at the heart of the matter.

To further illustrate this point, it is possible to see from the Transcript of Case 1, that the client was prompted into a continual passive "yes" mode, where he was respectfully accepting my advice and asking me to elaborate (Case#1, 2014b/Transcript) . Not spotting the "game" (Berne, 1964), this is what I duly did. However, later in his start up project, Case 1 had difficulty in securing the

right deals to help start up his retail project (Case#1, 2014b/Transcript). Had I been more attuned to what was happening between the two of us, it might have been possible to have identified that pattern, anticipated the risks and to prompt him to adopt different behaviors.

For this reason, it is important to balance the understanding of the linear flow of the project, with the search for depth and meaning, which is more cyclical in nature.

The triple loop learning pattern that emerged through my research project was reinforced by my preference for adopting three related learning cycles that I felt were necessary to produce a robust validated model:

In the exploratory phase, my focus was on working with an initial group of entrepreneurs to really understand their story and what they were struggling with as entrepreneurs. This involved moving through the grounded theory sequence as described by Charmaz (Charmaz, 2006), based on grounded theory method evolved from Glaser & Strauss (Strauss, 1967), Corbin (Strauss and Corbin, 2015), Locke (Locke, 2003).

In the second, more relational, phase, I was keen to test the model with a different sample. To do this, I developed a simple survey tool, based on the coded model developed from the first cycle. I was keen to know whether entrepreneurs could place themselves into the model, and whether the profiles, or archetypes, that emerged from my research were robust enough to make sense to entrepreneurs. Could entrepreneurs relate the model to their own direct experience?

Finally, in the third phase, I wanted to ensure that the model was applied into a real world setting. Later, I shall describe my project work with the Alacrity Foundation, NACUE (National Association of College and University Entrepreneurs) and the London School of Economics Generate program. In all

three cases, the model has been tested but also revised.

In preparation for the NACUE Leadership event on April 24, I conducted a statistical analysis on each question in the survey instrument produced as a result of the research. There are twenty-one questions. In Q19, "*Is your venture based on a clear economic proposition or on trial and error*", there seemed to be a possible problem. There were too few responses to the right hand polarity in the future case, and there seem to be too many "zero" responses (which equal "don't knows") and that would suggest that the question as written is not really providing a valid choice. Yet, the words *"economic proposition"* and *"trial and error"* were both codes generated in the initial round of coding, and based closely on the words used in the transcripts. This illustrates the iterative nature of this inquiry. Only after generating a wider pilot test group of sixty-six, has it been possibly to identify a potential problem with one of the original codes.

This of course raises an interesting dilemma for any mixed method research project. Does the lack of responses to a survey based on sixty-six, invalidate the original model built on a coaching dialogue of nine, and reinforced by a further seven (so sixteen in total)? In this respect I am very clear — no. I have reviewed both the original audio and the transcripts around this question, and it is clear that there was a frequent reference to this dilemma summarized in the question. However, there might need to be something in the phrasing of the question which will need to be reviewed and this is work ongoing. But from a research design perspective, the interpretative codes made form the original transaction takes precedence, as this is the closest point to the original data source.

In my view, grounded theory method has provided a firm foundation for model building, particularly with the added second loop. But the survey method both helps to scale and distribute the model, and by bringing it to a wider audience, also provides a feedback loop and checking mechanism. In this sense, while I have used a mix of methods through my project for various reasons, the primary research method has been grounded theory method; and this is where I shall

place the focus in the description below.

When I look back into my coaching journal it is clear that by late 2013 and when I commenced grounded theory, and after a year of struggling to find the right approach, I had all but abandoned any idea of a strategic plan or grand design, and was content to "feel the steps across the river". I began to enter a stage of bricolage (Costley et al., 2010). Rather than seeing a seven step model stretching in front of me, I was really only aware of an immediate focus on the data gathering and analysis, using the material that I had to hand. I was content to trust in the data and allow the patterns to emerge.

4.3.2   Mixed Methods

The emergent mixed methods process described by Creswell and Plano Clark is very apt (Creswell, 2011):

> *"Emergent mixed methods designs are found in mixed studies where the use of mixed methods arises due to issues that develop during the process of conducting the research".*
> *(Creswell, 2011, p54)*

For example, after having developed a database of codes using grounded theory, I felt the need to recombine these themes and create a series of case histories to illustrate how the themes "played out" in practice. Similarly, after generated the coded database using grounded theory method, I realized that there was a great opportunity to convert the database into a survey instrument, and use this to validate and refine the model that had been generated. Again, Creswell and Plano Clark describes this process:

> *"In an exploratory design, the researchers first collected qualitative data, analyze it, and then use the information to develop a follow up quantitive phase of data collection".*
> *(Creswell, 2011, p187)*

When I put aside the logical and post-positivist expectations of having a preconceived plan for what I would find, I began to enjoy a process of emergence and exploration. I was able to see new possibilities the more intensely I observed the data for what it was. By late 2013, I realized that to progress my research, it was not so much a matter of designing elaborate plans, but to focus on the data and allow the process to unfold.

As Moustakas writes:

"In grounded theory research, data collecting, coding, and analysis occur simultaneously and in relation to each other rather than as separate components of a research design".
(Moustakas, 1994, loc 219)

In a further qualification to the linear planning format, each step has within it, several action sequences which need to be elaborated in order to understand how I conducted the research. For example, each sample set had its own journey which moved at different times. If we take the example of the coaching seminar on 23 October 2012, the transcription was generated only on 12 April 2014 and coded on 29 July 2014. This partly reflected the workload constraints, but also the fact that this coaching conversation took place in the context of a seminar and not an individual meeting, and was therefore more difficult to transcribe and edit and to gain the necessary ethical approvals for inclusion within my research.

The variability in the timing and sequencing of the data analysis, also tended to reinforce the creative and exploratory nature of the project. I had at times to make do with the data I had, and the research built up in a rather fragmented way depending on the transcriptions and data that I had available.

Furthermore, once I decided to utilize my coaching sessions as a forum for enrolling my sample and gathering data, this created specific dynamics and required careful and purposeful sampling, ethical contracting. Sampling therefore had several steps within it, such as designing the sample, enrolling the

participants and gaining ethical approval.

Perhaps because I was aware of the rather messy, ad hoc nature of this research, made me particularly concerned with the follow up validation, revision and testing of the model, which I shall describe in the subsequent chapter on my research results.

Therefore, it might be best to see the components not as sequential phases, but more parallel streams of activity, all interacting along the way. In support of this, I have created an inventory of each and every document or file generated during my project, including the following (See Appendices):

- MP4 audio recordings of my coaching sessions,
- Transcription
- Coding spreadsheets
- Model designs
- Emails
- Photographs (from workshops)
- Written drafts
- Presentations
- Journal notes.

These all represent different categories of information and one can therefore look at them systematically, more like a map than a sequence. What is fascinating is how these pieces of data relate to each other. For example, a passage of reading (captured in reading notes) prompts a new direction of thought in relation to coding (captured in a sorted database) which prompts a new theme to emerge in writing (captured in a draft). So what is as interesting as the linear flow is how the different categories of information interact with each other.

There are many opportunities to incorporate a range of methods into grounded theory. For example, Strauss and Corbin advocate the use of a research journal when they write:

"The value of the research journal is that it enables a researcher to become more self aware not only of his or her biases and assumptions but also of the reason for making certain decisions and to obtain insight into his or her own behavior".
(Strauss and Corbin, 2015), Loc 1358.

In the context of professional coaching practice, Julie Hay writes as follows:

"...a development journal will contain far more than your instant reflections on events as they occur. You will use it to capture the themes and patterns you identify across your work".
(Hay, 2007), p28.

I concur with this absolutely. My research journal was a way of integrating all the sources of data and information, and making the necessary connections. This is particularly true in the context of the co-created nature of coaching and mentoring conversations, where a writing tool can aid the reflective process (Hay, 2007), p28.

In a sense, there is a point of professional convergence between the needs of an ongoing reflective element to my professional practice, through journaling and recordings; and the data analysis required as a researcher. They are not the same thing for sure, and have a different ethic, but they bear similarities and certainly the opportunity to leverage the reflective work I have done as a professional coach for purposes of my research has proven extremely valuable.

The Document Inventory is set out in narrative order, labelling them with the number of the project phase, using Charmaz's seven-step model (Charmaz, 2006); and then color coded them (See Appendices). This allows each file reference to be re-sorted by activity, theme, etc. I did this to reflect the grounded theory ethic of working ground up. I was keen avoid simply imposing a neat flow chart structure on what had been an often fluid and at times chaotic and discontinuous process and reflect more genuinely what had actually

happened.

07 April 2014	5	Theory building	Journal	Evernote/Model characteristics	Intro contradictions		
08 April 2014	4	Initial Coding	Coding	TA Sorted & Coded 16.01.13	Case 4 coding		
08 April 2014	5	Focused Coding & Ca Data Analysis		Master Coded File Sort & Ranked 8 April 6 Themes		Listed codes	Sorted
08 April 2014	5	Theory building	Journal	Evernote/Model Design	More descriptive		
08 April 2014	5	Theory building	Reading	Evernote/Zygmund Bauman	Struggle		
09 April 2014	3	Data Collection	Transcription	Transcript No.2 (16.01.2013) Case 7			
09 April 2014	5	Focused Coding & Ca Data Analysis		Master Coded File Sort & Ranked 9 April			
09 April 2014	5	Theory building	Journal	Evernote/Life Experience	Entrepreneurs making pivotal life decisions		
09 April 2014	5	Theory building	Journal	Evernote/Methodology	Based on enabling entrepreneurs to tell their own narrative; their		
10 April 2014	4	Initial Coding	Coding	Transcript Analysis 16.01.2013 Client Co Case 7 codes			
10 April 2014	4	Initial Coding		Case 7 Transcript Sorted & Coded			
10 April 2014	5	Focused Coding & Ca Data Analysis		Master Coded File Sort & Ranked 10 A 12 Factor Model		Processes	Contradiction

As we can see from taking just a narrative slice from just a short period (14 .04.13 - 13.05.13), there are several project phases happening in a non sequential order. For example, as new data or insights were provided, I continued to review the formulation of my research question. In my case, it was not simply a matter of setting out a question and then applying a method to answer it. I found fresh insight that attracted my attention and opened up new perspectives to research that were more valuable and significant than the question I had originally set out to explore.

By doing this post-project documentary analysis, I was also able to better understand and reflect backwards on how various research elements would combine together. For example, to take a microcosm, I can now recognize that my deeper reading on sociological theory, with a view to revisiting my research question (Step 1) was also catalytic in helping me recognize that entrepreneurs were acting with agency to overcome social constraints. Specifically, my reading of Bauman (Bauman, 2007) on 08.04.2014, captured in a reading note, helped provide a breakthrough in my own ability to recognize a pattern in the data, recorded in my research journal on the same day. In this way, reading, reflecting and coding worked in synergistic way. If I had just presented my research project in a neat flow chart, I would not have recognized these connections and they would not be evident to the reader.

4.4   Research Techniques

One of the great advantages of grounded theory method is its transparency. Even after several iterations of the model and resulting questionnaire instrument, it is still possible to relate specific statements made by clients to the words used in the model. By constructing a sortable and color-coded spreadsheet, it is possible to go to the granular level detail as well as analyze patterns more broadly across the database. So, I can count how many times clients said yes or no.

This is really important in the context of the end user of the model being entrepreneurs, not coaches or researchers. If the model and the questionnaire instrument are to be widely adopted, there has to be the element of face validity and a very direct connection to the aspirations and concerns that originated in that population. It might have been possible to have generated considerable insights using different qualitative methods, but other approaches would not have been so clear and transparent to the end user.

Having completed a grounded theory model, I then supported this through the development of twelve case histories. For confidentiality reasons I blended 3-5 actual stories together. These were helpful to test out the model and test whether real people could be slotted into the model. This was a means to test the explanatory value of the model. Could the model I developed meaningfully distinguish people and explain different facets of entrepreneurship.

I also found myself borrowing heavily from narrative and discourse analysis in help applying hermeneutic analysis. The coaching sessions in effect produced stories or narratives, and following the pragmatic bricoleur approach, I was ready to use any tool or method available to generate insight and understanding.

Charmaz supports the use of audio recording as a means of data collection and she highlights as one of the principles advantages the facility it provides the researcher to focus their attention on the subject whilst maintaining eye contact

(Charmaz, 2006). I would also add that being free from the mental and physical distraction of note taking allows for the researcher to notice body language and attend to the overall quality of interaction between themselves and the subject.

By contrast, note taking creates a quite different dynamic. The researchers eyes are mostly directed downwards and relational contact is broken. I would also add that the process of note-taking in my experience can also amount to a subliminal signal to the subject. As the researcher writes, the subject feels rewarded psychologically: I am saying something important and may therefore overly dwell on those points. Note taking, in my view, reinforces the researcher-as-expert, conducting observation ON someone, not working in partnership WITH them.

By using audio, I was able to coach the client and gather research data at the same time. The audio is a recording of a real event, with the subject working through subjects and generating awareness and insight. It is through eye contact, empathic listening and responsive questioning that the coach develops rapport within a session. This to me is the real meaning of the relational contract. My sessions are for coaching the client, for their benefit, and not to gather data for my research. Adherence to this principle is one reason why I can be more confident in the results. The creation of a safe coaching space leads to deeper insight and relational depth. The client is more likely to reveal fears and insecurity in this setting.

The caveat is of course that the client must have trust in the confidentiality of the recording and the research process in general. The client needed to give their informed consent and gave awareness that the research was being conducted, without it influencing their thoughts or behavior. Of course it is hard to know how far the presence of a recording device influenced the behavior on the client. This generation of student entrepreneurs is quite used to revising lectures and seminars. The real test is perhaps in the depth and quality of the data. In my coding strategy I developed three levels of coding to indicate the

extent to which the client moved beyond specifics and surface level concerns and revealed deeper insights about their values motivations and beliefs. By using grounded theory method, with the generation of a coded database, it became possible to measure the frequency of level three codes.

One possible back in note taking is that it introduces an editorial element very early on into the data collection. The researcher using notes is in effect editing the flow of information into the dataset, and is likely to be unconsciously filtering the information. Later on it is too late to go back and check for bias or fill in blanks.

By contrast I found one of the most productive and creative means to interpret the data was to move between the transcript, with the emphasis on words and semantic meaning back to the original audio, where voice tone, pace, intensity, pausing and utterances, taking at the same time, revealed vital clues about what was happening beneath the surface.

For example, the flat monotone voice of Case 1 (Case#1, 2014a/Audio MP4) contrasts with the confident, energetic and good humored exchanges with Case 5 (Case#5, 2013a/Audio MP4). It would have been impossible to have captured the richness of this data through either notes or by asking them to complete a survey.

With such data available, I was presented with a veritable playground full of possibilities.

However, by choosing the recording I was also confronted with limitations. Not least, there was a practical limit on how many people I could record. This small but deep approach to data collection also lends itself to qualitative methods. The sample sizes I was working with were just too small too have been credible for survey sampling methods.

So having tested, experiment and meandered through a range of methodologies, and discounted others, I settled on constructionist grounded theory method as the main framework for my research.

4.5 Research Process

Charmaz sets out a useful process map for a designing a constructivist research project using the common comparison method; and this is the method I broadly followed (Charmaz 2006). However, she reminds us early on that grounded theory method is not really a sequential activity at all. It involves continuously moving from data, coding, theoretical analysis, and iteratively back again. In my case, this sometimes involved revision the original audio recording. The model that was created was revised iteratively also, with categories collapsed and reformed.

That said, if we present the activity in its logical sequential format, this is how it would look like:

1. Research Questions
2. Recruitment and sampling of participants
3. Data collection
4. Initial coding
5. Focused coding and categorization
6. Theory building
7. Writing up & dissemination

(Charmaz, 2006)

Running alongside this process flow, there are two related processes in support:

- Memo writing
- Theoretical sampling

(Charmaz, 2006)

4.6 Research Ethics

Research ethics is a complex and layered subject, as there are many dimensions to the ethical questions generated in a research project. I would argue that in orthodox scientific research, using the scientific method, the most evident ethical issues are addressed in the domain literature and often, ethics are a matter of the competent execution of this research process. By contrast, subjectivist and constructivist research works in a less regulated and predictable environment and has to consider ethical questions from scratch in each and every study. The emergent and generative nature of this research, also means there is greater implicit risk as the impacts on the research participants cannot be so clearly anticipated. Above all, interpretive research positively embraces the value judgments of the researcher, whereas the scientific method seeks to isolate and minimize these factors in the research methods (Bell and Wray-Bliss, 2009).

There is a greater tendency in subjectivist and constructivist research for the research question and the themes to emerge during the project. For instance, in my own project, there are intimations in the data that ethnicity and gender are significant in shaping the participants approach to entrepreneurship, and I have addressed this in the study. However, as this was not a known feature at the outset I do not have ethical approval from the subjects to espouse a model of ethnic entrepreneurship. If I do so, this might go beyond my psychological contract with the subjects, who possibly would have been more sensitive about being involved where ethnicity or gender related subjects featured prominently.

With this illustration in mind, it is possible to see research ethics as being at least three levels:

4.6.1 Project Ethics:

At the macro level, it is important to establish if the overall outcomes from the research generate a social benefit. Does the research do good or harm? This

question is harder than it might seem. I am reminded of a media article recently in which medical researchers were encouraged to use *more* live animals as in being overly restrictive in their use, they were generating results with low validity and therefore meaning the entire cost/benefit analysis of the research was undermined (Guardian / McKie, 2014, 19 April). In my own research, a similar dilemma might have emerged if my research mislead the participants into undertaking foolish ventures or mixed them to fruitless and badly designed enterprises, rather than focusing on laying the foundations for a solid professional career. This is what Bell and Wray-Bliss refer to as the "rightful purpose of organisational research" (Bell and Wray-Bliss, 2009).

It is also important to describe the project in the correct way, and be truthful about what the research has, and has not achieved. The research conclusion and the abstract, need to fairly relate to the substantive findings.

The involvement of the Academic Tutor and Project Consultant is critical in this regard. For example, in review an early summation of the research findings in May 2014, there was a clear view taken that the project was generating significant new knowledge in the field, and that the overall methodology was appropriate (Sutton and Atter, 2014, 26 February, Journal note & email commentary).

4.6.2   Design Ethics

In design ethics, I am looking to "bake in" an ethical approach to my research project by anticipating and planning the architecture that will deliver an ethical outcome. This addresses areas such as has the appropriate methodology been used and whether in designing the study, I am incorporating the right validity measures. For example, my own emphasis is on the usefulness of the model of entrepreneurial learning to entrepreneurs, rather than its acceptance and citation amongst academics in the field of entrepreneurship. Therefore, in my view the validity test is relevance to entrepreneurs, not to academics.

As a practical consequence of this, I have not invested time and resources to prove statistically the construct of the questionnaire, such as reliability coefficients, test/retest scores (Creswell, 2011) and so on. This is because I am not claiming the model is predictive and nor am I claiming that the instrument will reliably generate similar results over time. On the contrary, I am expecting the results to change. I see validity as its ability to prompt reflectivity within the user, not that I can predict how they might think and feel at some point in the future. In writing this, I am making an important statement about the expression of my pragmatic and also subjectivist philosophy: I want to empower users with a useful model, not disempower them by presenting objectified scientific analysis, based on a statistical "black box" that proves what they are and what they are not.

My philosophy tells me that people — and particularly entrepreneurs — create their own reality and can find resources within themselves and my instrument is designed to encourage this process, not provide a short circuit. The questionnaire instrument and graphical feedback model that has resulted therefore, are still largely subjective in nature and is designed to illustrate and feedback the users reflective process, and are not statements of scientific fact. For instance, when users review the output from their Dynamiqe report, they might well say, "this isn't really me". My response has been, "well, what is it?" and invite them to complete the questionnaire again, and this time to identify the questions that might have generate an inaccurate — or rather unhelpful, result. Dynamiqe is a reflective aid, and not a scientific instrument.

Design ethics also makes important allowance for agreeing access from the necessary authority to commence research and also for receiving informed consent from participants. As mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, not having the right level of access agreements in the University context fundamentally affected the scope of my research project. In closing off certain options, the by product was my research became more focused and ultimately, more impactful

as a result. Broadly therefore, the impediments I encountered had a positive ethical benefit.

I also had to carefully design the relationship I had with my clients who were to become my research subjects. I had to ensure that I was consistent both with my ethics as a professional coach and also as a researcher. One practical consequence of this was that I had to be much more formally contractual on the ethics of confidentiality and other key areas of concern, than I would typically be in a coaching relationship. In my coaching practice, I typically briefly overview my stance on professional ethics and refer the client to my professional body. However, I place much more emphasis on discussing and agreeing ethics relationally, as I shall describe below.

In the research context, this would have been insufficiently transparent and referenced. I therefore requested all clients and research participants, completed an Ethical Approval Form. This required that I researched and anticipated specific ethical considerations ahead of time, such as how my thesis was going to be stored and accessed in the future.

There was natural an additional concern in coaching entrepreneurial clients as they were sharing at times commercially sensitive information.

The double bind was how to meaningfully and ethically present the research data. In this regard, grounded theory method proved valuable in comparison to say, case study methods or ethnographic description, where it would have been far harder to disguise the client cases without losing the essence of their story. Because grounded theory method atomizes and aggregates abstracted data, this problem is minimized.

4.6.3   Relational Ethics

It is crucial to emphasize that this thesis rests up the integrity of my work in

coaching and generating dialogue with clients. This means there needed to be an open trusted relationship in place, otherwise the responses from the client could not be accepted as their valid point of view. For example, had they seen me as an authority figure being sent to assess them from the University, this might have skewed their responses entirely. Without this foundation, much of the data arising from it is far less valuable and open to challenge. The key to resolving this dilemma between reliability and transparency is the presence of audio recordings and transcripts generated by an independent professional third party service. This always provides a means to verify the source of the data and the interpretations that I have placed upon it.

5 Project Activity

5.1 Antecedents 2012-13

The challenge I have is to explain my research having been very much an insider to it. Looking back, I can now recognize two distinct phases to my research, with the period 2102 to 2013 being a time when I was really trying to find my way. I shall describe my earlier attempts to research between early 2012 and the end of 2013. Even though these efforts were ultimately abandoned, there was still some value being created for the main body of my research beginning in 2014. By responding to various mistakes and being distracted by various themes, I found myself, by chance, on the right path.

Originally, in January 2012, I had approval to pursue a quite different research project, relating to the agility of boards in navigating ethical dilemmas. Due to the cancellation of the client project relating to board governance, I had no reference site and so I had to fundamentally re-think my purpose and direction of my research. However, once again, my document inventory is revealing. Even as early as 12 April 2012 I wrote a research journal entry exploring ideas about entrepreneurship, and linking my interest with corporate boards to the issue of founder teams and the shared topic of how they raise finance, and the implications of the human dynamics. And, having already developed an interest in agility, there was a potentially very interesting theme emerging. This was a pivotal moment, as it opened up a fruitful line of inquiry and perhaps, even anticipated the emergence of entrepreneurship as a core area of interest.

In September 2012, I was appointed as Entrepreneur-in-Residence at Birkbeck, and this seemed to reinforce the directional shift. On 2 November of that year, I wrote a longer journal entry exploring my ideas and reflecting on my reading on entrepreneurship.

In part prompted by the disappointed of the earlier project cancellation, and spurred on by the excitement of a very new role, I reformulated my research

goals in the latter half of 2012 to take advantage of the perspectives the new role might provide. It was almost too good to be true. This proved to be so.

The organizational context in which my work was being conducted changed significantly. My research topic was geared to my role as Entrepreneur-in-residence at Birkbeck, University of London, with a view to generating an understanding of how entrepreneurial hubs could be built in a University context. While I had envisaged my role as Entrepreneur-in-Residence might provide an ideal vantage point to research this topic, I had underestimated both the difficulty in gaining the necessary approvals and also the scale and depth of data I would need to acquire to tackle a project of this size. For example, given the transient involvement of students and alumni in the enterprise structure, creating the formalised action research structures necessary to generate meaningful progress was proving impossible. As early as 28 April 2013, I generated a journal note in which I wrote down a series of problems in pursing my research project as I had originally conceived it.

Re-reading my Proposal (08.01.2013) document today, it comes across as quite naive and abstract. This presented a further problem of my own making: I was seeking to conceptualise and think through a solution from my reading and professional knowledge, supported by the data I would generate along the way, rather than use an appropriate methodology to generate an original model. I was still clinging on to post-positivist models, such as Activity Theory (Engeström, 2008), which I intended to use as a conceptual framework for my work, rather than allow the concepts to emerge form the data. This was to cause further problems when I did eventually come to apply grounded theory method within my research.

Based in part on critiques from my Tutor and Consultant, I began to read more intensively about grounded theory method in the second half of 2013. I had already been making recordings since, although originally with a view to using this for textual or narrative analysis. I conducted more recordings during 2013.

My first attempt at transcription took place on 16 January 2014. As I shall describe, this proved problematic. Even at the time, I was aware that I was editing and interpreting the audio files and generating a fairly sketchy transcript to work from. I was transcribing an event in which I had been a co-creator. I was acutely aware of mistakes in my professional coaching style and became self conscious about missed opportunities to listen and explore the themes the client had been raising. Coaching young entrepreneurs was new territory for me and I could see, on reviewing the audio files, that I was slow to pick up on cues and tune into their language and mental frameworks. As Arbnor and Bjerke point out, creating new knowledge as a qualitative researcher requires a close ethnographic understanding of the subject (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009b).

My first attempt at coding was on 29 July 2013. I followed my instinct, and started to categorize the themes to which I had already become conditioned. For example, I was coding on whole paragraphs. I was seeking a right away to utilize categories that I had already developed as part of my attempt to generate a conceptual model. In essence, I was clinging to a post positivist methodology (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009) and seeking to find evidence for a hypothesis that I had already developed. It is also clear from the first attempt that I was noticing themes that were of interest to me, which were largely coaching and mentoring related, rather than listening for the real issues and concerns that were coming directly from the client. This was rather like building my own echo chamber.

In the notes I made on 30 July, I proudly announced that I had identified key themes from the data:

"I saw connections and themes emerging, such as Motivation, Agility".
(July 30 Journal Entry, Appendix 1)

Exactly, these are words that appeared in my Research Proposal seven months previously. I was not, as Husserl would say, effectively "bracketing" my thoughts (Cited in Creswell, 2013). As s a result I was imposing my mental model on the phenomena (Creswell, 2013).

However, along with this, I did make some editorial notes, such as the following:

> *"I noticed that there were contradictions: Self reflection vs Impatience, and decided that this presented a healthy tension and likely reflected the realities faced by entrepreneurs".*
> *(July 30 Journal Entry: Appendix 1)*

This theme of contradictions was to become important later on in my research. This was new and I had not anticipated this, and certainly not been in a position to notice the presence of contradictions and tensions so directly from the data. So, while I would now recognize that my efforts during this period were not really grounded theory method, I was becoming sensitized to the issues. I was started to become attentive to what the client had to say, rather than what I was already thinking.

Having made these early efforts, I found myself getting stuck. The data (such as it was) was not generating insights that produced any original or interesting thinking. I was trying to rely more and more on conceptualizing and model building, but without the data and insight necessary to back this up. Simply, it wasn't grounded.

In late December 2013, these issues came to a head and my Tutor and Consultant critiqued the progress I was making. In particular, the tendency to impose my own mental model was becoming obvious. This was even apparent in the organization and layout of my material. For instance, in the transcript, I had simply recorded my codes in the margins without having separated my own contributions from the clients. Back to "Motivation" and "Agility," I coded it in the conversation because I thought that is what it was about, not because those were the words used by the client.

From my Tutor, I received an anonymized example of a grounded theory template. In this spreadsheet, I was able to see for the first time the rigor involved in separating the different fragments of information, creating specific codes and then color coding them to organize them into themes.

In summary, this quotation from Buchanan and Bryman is very apt to the situation that I found myself in by late 2013:

> *"...research methods must be regularly reviewed and adjusted in a flexible manner, as initial plans become inappropriate and as fresh lines of inquiry become apparent".*
> *(Buchanan and Bryman, 2011, p6).*

Grounded theory had emerged as highly relevant to my task at hand, precisely because I had learned a great deal from the twists and turns in my journey thus far.

I would now like to return to the Charmaz seven-step model (Charmaz, 2006) for conducting grounded theory and set out a linear description of the research process I engaged in from early 2014 through to the completion of my project.

5.2 Evolution of My Research Topic

A crucial foundation for any research project is the setting of the research topic. Yet, in contrast to post-positivist research, constructivist and subjectivist research enables the topic to emerge from the discovery process and as the researcher identifies significant themes in the data (Creswell, 2011) and (Lincoln, 2011) and (Lincoln and Guba, 2000).

In late 2013, and early 2014, I began to work on what I regard to be the real research project. Throughout the twists and turns thus far, I had come to the realization that the core issue I was researching was early phase entrepreneurship and how new entrepreneurs entered the field and how they identified and resolved the contradictions inherent in the entrepreneurial process.

By January 2014, I remained sceptical about the available theories of early phase entrepreneurship and I decided to develop a theory bottom up (Lincoln et al., 1994) (Grix, 2010), and using grounded theory as a methodology seemed to fit with the need for pragmatic outcomes that would be accepted within the field of practice (Charmaz, 2006). However, as I progressed the coding work in the first half of 2014, I began to generate a series of more specific and directed questions as part of my own internal dialogue as a researcher:

Table 3 Project Questions

January 2014	
Learning Theory	How do individuals actually learn to develop the entrepreneurial competencies they need?
Model Development	How to construct a coherent theory based upon the contradictory conclusions emerging from the grounded research?
My Practice Application	What learning interventions can I make using my model of entrepreneurship?

In the remainder of this chapter I will address how I went about addressing these questions.

The focus of my work had narrowed to developing a coaching and mentoring methodology to support early phase entrepreneurs. This moved the attention away from the organizational setting and back on to my own professional practice. I also recognized that it was impossible to develop any approach to university enterprise hubs, or coaching methodologies, until I had first created a model of early phase entrepreneurship. I had to understand the client and their lived experience. My early efforts at grounded theory had made me realize that this was an essential stepping stone.

I had not yet crystallized this into a topic but I recognize that this was the broad theme that was directing my attention. Perhaps what I did not realize in early 2014, is that in focusing my research on early phase entrepreneurship I was both narrowing my attention but also opening up a rich stream of inquiry that would in itself justify become the full basis of my study.

This was particularly true as in researching the experience of early phase entrepreneurship, I was also to become skeptical about the role of mentoring and coaching, and I was keen to explore that various ways in which young entrepreneurs might seek to learn, including peer to peer interactions, group activities and social media tools. By late 2014, coaching seemed now to be just one way in which entrepreneurial learning might be supported, and as it is quite labor intensive and expensive to deliver, I was increasingly curious about alternative learning technologies.

In February 2015, during a consultation with my tutor, I finalized my research topic on a model for understanding early phase entrepreneurial learning, as follows:

A grounded model for supporting the growth and learning of early phase

Shortly after, I added the "Into the light" metaphor to signal the theme of emergence and place the context

This final research topic brought together a number of strands. The golden thread that ran through my research, even as far back as 2012, was how entrepreneurs learn:

- Board dynamics of founders and directors
- Decision making and agility in group settings
- Life and existential choices
- Disruption and emancipation
- Emergence and evolution

Naturally, by allowing the research topic to evolve in this way, it reinforces the highly constructed and emergent nature of my research.

5.3 Data Sampling

In this section, I want to describe the decisions I made regarding how to design a sample that would generate the right depth of data that I needed to address my research question. As I moved closer and closer to my real focus on the learning and development experiences of entrepreneurs, this also started to define the choices available for sampling and data generation.

5.3.1 Researching a relational process

Even as far back as 2012, I recognized the value of the coaching interactions that I was engaging in. Indeed, my initial priority was finding ways to better understand how to coach entrepreneurs and how to build this into a University setting, so my coaching interactions were naturally a center of attention and an obvious place to look for data. Through my Masters studies and ongoing research at Ashridge, I had been trained to record and analyze transcripts. It always seemed quite apparent to me that the crucial interactions were taking place inside the coaching session. I had become familiar with a body of coaching research (Atter et al., 2014), (Haan, 2008), which drew upon the direct analysis of coaching interactions (Day, 2010).

In the literature of grounded theory method, there seems to be a wide spectrum of choice available. There were of course alternatives that I considered. I could have chosen to survey students using more traditional means. However, I discounted this as I was skeptical about the value of opinions gathered after the fact and I was also aware based on discussions with the Students Union, that response rates to surveys were poor. Even focus groups, which allow for more direct interaction and interpretation, relied on a participant remembering how they thought and felt at a given moment in time.

In my research, I wanted an approach that drew upon more direct and real experiences. In this regard I was strongly influenced by a phenomenological approach dating back to Husserl (Creswell, 2013), but also reflected in the

phenomenological research of Clark Moustakas (Clark, 1994). In my coaching practice, I was already using audio playback as a methodology. I recorded a client session, and then transcribed it, and then reviewed this transcript with a client. The value was in noticing what was happening between us and therefore, what patterns might be present in the client's other interactions. We could therefore jointly spot a parallel process (Day, 2010) (Hay, 2007). I was already experienced enough with this technique to know how much information was being missed and opportunities for deeper exploration passed by, as the conversation flowed one way or another (Atter et al., 2014).

The challenge however, was to decide which clients to record and sample. This was a both a practical but also an ethical dilemma. It was clear to me that many entrepreneurs would be sensitive about talking about their business to another person, even without recording. There were coaching clients whom I would not even ask as they had already raised concerns about confidentiality. Other client entrepreneurs I knew to be at a sensitive stage in product development and any unwarranted disclosure could put their venture at risk.

5.3.2   Purposeful Sampling

At the same time, I was keen to capture the diverse spectrum of entrepreneurs whom I was working with. One of the exciting insights that came quickly was just how many different types of entrepreneur there were, but this did not seem to be captured in the literature. For instance, I was working with a former nurse who was developing a pharmaceutical product; a social entrepreneur developing and building a retail concept; a migrant entrepreneur bringing a retail concept from his home country to the UK; and a classic web developer building a Silicon Valley start up. All of these individuals came under the more inclusive definition of entrepreneur: Self generating, risk taking, innovative and disruptive. All of the sample I eventually chose had in some way struggled to emancipate themselves from social forces that constrained them, be that gender or ethnic prejudice; or being an outsider as a result of social class or migration.

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The sample I eventually chose therefore reflected the nature of the people I was coaching and also the extent to which I could practically and ethically contract with them to record our coaching session. I therefore adopted an approach of purposeful sampling. Creswell describes this as follows:

> *"One of the more common strategies is maximal variation sampling, in which diverse individuals are chosen who are expected to hold different perspectives on the central phenomena."*
> *(Creswell, 2011, p174)*

Whilst I am convinced that purposeful sampling allowed me to work in depth with participants who had a high degree of trust in the process, and were therefore willing to share and divulge in great detail their thoughts and feelings, the partiality of the sample and the subjective way in which I put this together further reinforced my need to test and validate the model (Creswell, 2011) and (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009).

In a sense there is a paradox here, which Arbnor and Bjerke describe (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009c), as the greater our tendency to objectify the participants, the less we understand them; and the more we generate a subjective understanding, the harder it is to develop objective results that are capable of being generalized.

It is for this reason that I have adopted an element of mixed method research within my overall project, while retaining the dominant focus on grounded theory method. With confidence that there are indeed testing and validation methods later in the research process (see sections 6 & 7 below), it was in a sense, easier to engage in the subjectivity of choosing a sample, rather than relying on more objective approaches, such as random probabilistic sampling (Creswell, 2013).

In all forms of research, there has to be an element of trust in the sampling process. Participants to a sample have to be enrolled first of all, and this might

suggest some form of incentive or requesting participation from those who already have an interest in the subject, such as students. Often, surveys and interviews must be conducted in the most efficient and objective way possible, with standardized and referenced questions.

However, unlike other forms of anonymized and randomized sampling, I could not recruit large numbers of participants or request responses to standardized forms via the social media. The confidential nature of the subject matter made focus groups an unlikely possibility. The closest comparison method, the "dialogue-as-interview" method has may parallels (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009), but was not quite the same as what I was attempting. In the "dialogue-as-interview" the purpose of the exchange is still to gather data. In my case, I was seeking to extract data from a coaching session, the purpose of which was the generation of insight for the client. In "dialogue-as-interview," the research might well gather the data in the course of a generative conversation (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009), but is not under such performance pressure as a coach, who is contracted to provide relevant guidance and insights (Hay, 2007).

Within the context of entrepreneurial coaching and mentoring, there is also a need for the coach to provide feedback, share observations and identify risks. This can alter the flow of the conversation and interrupt the generation of data for the research. There were instances in the data gathering where it was me responding to questions or providing feedback on a business plan already sent to me by the client.

While offering potentially rich sources of data for my research, it created a potential ethical risk right at the core of my research. The core ethical reason of why I was there was to create benefit for the client, and not to pursue my research.

There is also another implied risk inherent in the approach I adopted. There is a known tendency for the client to help the coach. Supporting my research might

be one way. This psychodynamic process, "the helpful client," could distort the nature of the data gathered. The client might, for example, try to appear "more intelligent" or on "best behavior" than they might have otherwise have been. One of the ways I mitigated this risk, was to identify clients who were established clients and who I sensed were confident and outspoken. For instance, I ran group coaching sessions and from these groups, would invite clients who were working on more advanced projects. The clients I selected had therefore, already had experience of sharing their thoughts and feelings in a group setting.

With these considerations in mind, the development of my sample set really involve three key stages:

- The building of a trusted coaching relationship
- The selection of the right participant for the sample
- The construction of the right ethical relationship

5.3.3   The building of a trusted coaching relationship

During the period from October 2012 to June 2014, I carefully selected a sample of nine from my cadre of coaching clients, which numbered approximately fifty-six during this period.

The criteria I used was as follows:

1. Was our coaching relationship strong enough?
2. Was there something distinct or specific about the individual entrepreneur that would be informative about entrepreneurship?
3. Did I have an opportunity to record the coaching session and secure ethical approval in the timescale that made sense for my research?

As I mentioned, the clients I invited to agree to a recording of the session were either (a) established clients with whom I had worked in a group, or (b) groups themselves where there was already a healthy level of group exchange and disclosure. Filling all of these criteria was difficult. For example, in two cases, the

client refused to allow the session to be recorded and/or be included in the research.

I was keen to represent a spectrum of different types of entrepreneurs, including social enterprises, tech entrepreneurship, and food startups. From sources such as the RSA report quoted above (Dellot and Thompson, 2013), I knew there was work to be done in supporting a broader range of entrepreneurial types and this was already evident in the coaching work I was undertaking. Below, I have summarized in very brief terms, a demographic profile of the nine clients within the database:

Table 4 Summary of Sample Cases

Case #	Description	File Name
1	Chinese, male, migrant to the UK, with a retail background	01.18.04.2014
2	South American, male, with a business background	02.18.04.2013
3	South American, male, with a business background	03.23.10.2013
4	White, female, British, from creative background	04.16.01.2013
5	Black British female, working on a health-related start up	05.03.03.2013
6	White, female, British, from a business background	06.26.02.2014
7	White, British male from a technology background	07.16.01.2013
8	Black, British female, with a retail background	08.04.04.2014
9	White, European, male, technology background	09.02.06.2014

All were between 25-35 and were university educated.

I think the significance of this will become clearer as I describe how the model unfolds. There are a number of interesting patterns to emerge from this sample. Firstly, they might all to some degree be regarded as "outsiders", either because of their ethnicity, gender or nationality, and mostly from lower income or under-employed economic status. Secondly, this population does not correspond to the typical profile of a UK based entrepreneur, which statistically is more likely to be male, over 40, and from a finance, technology or scientific background (Levie et al., 2013).

One theoretical theme I have been interested to explore is self efficacy, a concept evolved by Habermas (Fulcher and Scott, 2011) and its relationship to entrepreneurship; and also the notion of alienation from a prevailing corporate employment culture (Finlayson, 2005). With a project of greater autonomy, which relates to concepts evolved by Zygmund Bauman (Bauman, 2007). As Finlayson writes of Habermas' concept of the public sphere, in which free association becomes possible (Finlayson, 2005):

> "...life-world is generally conducive to autonomy, understood as the pursuit
> of self chosen goals".
> (Finlayson, 2005, p55)

The underlying question for myself as a coach and mentor is to what extent am I advancing or inadvertently inhibiting the client in the realization of these goals? And, how does this feature in the research that I generate?

One key consideration was the inclusion of a broad base of gender and ethnicity; and also clients of domestic and foreign origin. The reason for this was because I was concerned that the issue of entrepreneurial learning had been narrowed by a policy and industry obsession with the Silicon Valley model. I was aware from the research conducted by the RSA (Dellot and Thompson, 2013) that there was an increasing thriving community of creative entrepreneurs and micro-

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businesses that did not conform - indeed, rejected - the notions of the Silicon Valley growth model. So alongside the tech entrepreneur, I was keen to include other forms of entrepreneurship.

A similar and related concern was gender. 56% of the participants in my coaching seminars were women.

Finally, the set up the session had to be thought through carefully. I needed to have a confidential space and the client needed to be requested in advance for their permission to record. I did this in person first of all, again not always easy to catch the client and have this informal buy in. But I felt it to be very necessary. Secondly, I would follow up with an email of the Ethical Approval form.

In both the initial informal conversational request, and in the form itself, it was crucial that several key items came across to the client very clearly. This related to the following areas:

- Confidentiality and anonymity
- Use and purposes of the research
- No consequences

These points were crucial as it was vital the client knew that they were not being assessed or evaluated in comparison to others in any way. Also, it was important to stress that they could refuse, or withdraw from the study, at any time. One of the difficulties was communicating these points in a way that avoided "research-speech"; using jargon and legalistic phrases that while accurate, reduced the overall capacity of the client to absorb the conversation. My concern here was not that there would arise an actual ethical complaint, but that some residual thought or concern might exist in the client's mind, resulting in a skew of the data.

This is one of the reasons I considered a means of measuring the depth and quality of the coaching relationship, and in the coding section I will show how I

sought to use three level of coding to indicate the quality of the coaching integration. It is of course hard to know whether the coaching dialogue would have been richer in the absence of the recording. However, I did collect more than enough Level III codes and this is suggestive that the selection of the sample was effective and the data was collected from real coaching conversations taking place in a trusted relationship.

5.4   Data Collection

One key consideration that I had learned prior to my research on my own coaching practice was that simply gaining agreement from the client to make a recording was not the end of the matter. Coaching and mentoring are relational processes and the quality and quantity of the data that I collected was directly related to the strength and depth of the relationship between the client and myself. Both coaching and mentoring fall broadly under what Raelin termed learning dialogues, which he described as follows (Raelin, 2008):

> *"Learning dialogues are concerned with the surfacing, in a safe presence of trusting peers, those social, political, and even emotional reactions that might be blocking operating effectiveness".*
> *(Raelin, 2008), p2.*

Interestingly, Raelin refers to "peers" in this definition (Raelin, 2008). This term works at a number of levels. As an entrepreneur myself, it was often important that I present myself on a peer-to-peer level, working out complex issues faced by the client, rather than being an all-knowing expert consultant. But further than this, I was keen to experiment with group coaching models, which do incorporate an element of peer-to-peer interact and group process (Brunning, 2006b), (Hawkins and Smith, 2010) (Thornton, 2010).

As James Surowiecki points out in Wisdom of Crowds (Surowiecki, 2005):

> *"…if you can assemble a diverse group of people who possess varying degrees of knowledge and insight, you are better off trusting it with major decisions rather than leaving them in the hands of one or two people, no matter how smart the people are".*
> *Quoted in (Hawkins and Smith, 2010), p.63.*

Creating a process of data collection from these learning dialogues was both a great opportunity but also a significant challenge. The key questions are how the data is created and what, as the research editor, do I include or exclude as

significant code-able information?

For example, on 16 January 2014, I conducted group coaching session in which for an extended period a member of the group was "coached" by her peers on the use of social media (Case#7, 2013a). The surface details at Level I coding were less important than the group collaborative process (Level II) and even more, the need for attachment and belonging, which is often denied to entrepreneurs working independently.

Coaching and mentoring are similar concepts and are sometimes used interchangeably, there are important distinctions (Hawkins and Smith, 2010). In the Odyssey, we read of Ulysses entrusting his son, Telemachus, to his trusted lieutenant Mentor (Homer, 2002). Homer's intention in describing this triadic relationship becomes clear when we read Telemachus, as follows:

> *"You've counselled me with so much kindness now, like a father a son. I won't forget a word".*
> *(Homer, 2002) and quoted by Hawkins and Smith, (Hawkins and Smith, 2010), p39.*

We see therefore that mentoring has its origins in the notion of inter-generational learning, but also a paternalistic and somewhat directive form of learning. A more contemporary view is provided by Clutterbuck and Megginson, quoted in (Hawkins and Smith, 2010):

> *"Mentoring is off-line help by one person to another in making significant transition in knowledge, work or thinking".*
> *(Hawkins and Smith, 2010) p39.*

Somewhat confusingly, there are also a number of hybrid situations between coaching and mentoring. As Hawkins and Smith write:

> *"We know from experience that there has to be a degree of overlap between these two crafts, and that much of what is commonly termed "executive*

coaching" is necessarily a blend of coaching and mentoring." (Hawkins and Smith, 2010), p41.

However, I disagree with Hawkins and Smith when they describe coaching as follows:

"Short-term issues, problems, goals and performance".
(Hawkins and Smith, 2010), p41.

I share Eric de Haan's view about coaching being a relational process, when he writes that the purpose of coaching is:

"To encourage reflection by the coachee, to release hidden strengths and to overcome or eliminate obstacles to further development"
(Haan, 2008, p6)

In my view we can define and distinguish mentoring and coaching as follows:

1. Mentoring engages the client in a process of broad scanning and longer term visioning, drawing upon their own life experiences and having travelled along similar pathways, with a view to enabling the client to reach their full potential.

2. Coaching focuses with the client on intensity and depth, seeking to identify and remove external roadblocks and internal inhibitions to the client realizing their full development.

Both mentoring and coaching can engage in both short or long term forms of activity. Mentoring can for instance, be instructive or be concerned with warnings about consequences (Haan, 2008). Coaching on the other hand, can identify in the moment psycho-dynamic experiences, such as avoidance or parallel processing (Day, 2010).

Given the spectrum of potential outcomes from my positionality (Costley et al., 2010) both as a peer entrepreneurial mentor, or as a psycho-dynamic coach, I

had to be highly considered in my approach. For example, my decision to create three levels of coding, with Level III reflecting the psycho-dynamic depth, both reflects my own professional alignment and positioning around the relational school of coaching, but also seeks to explore the potential identify in the literature in this field (Brunning, 2006a).

Therefore, I first had to select the right sample of clients who I sensed would be ready to explore these themes, and then create an environment in which the client could not only talk freely but be prompted to think and reflect at greater depth than they would do normally. The essence of coaching is to move beyond everyday conversation and prompt the client into a reflective dialogue (Day, 2010).

A precondition for this was the creation of safe space. This does not just relate to the physical environment but also to the psychological space: what was I allowed to ask questions about? What was the data going to be used for? And would any judgment I would (inevitably) form about them influence other key relationships. In this regard, I was also keen to experiment. Six of the initial nine participants in the sample were individual coaching sessions, held in a confidential space. But three of the session were recorded during group coaching sessions. I had found group coaching, involving between six to eight clients, a popular form of coaching format for young entrepreneurs. They seemed to enjoy the dynamic exchange and there was the added benefit of the peer-to-peer exchange that takes place across the room. Rather like learning a language, we can sometimes do this better when we are listening and learning from others. There is also rising interest in the coaching literature in experimenting with alternative forms of coaching formats (Thornton, 2010).

The key point here is that the environment in which the data is collected plays a key role in its later coding and interpretation. The data collection methods I used went way beyond simply recorded attitudes on preset form. As Strauss and Corbin point out, qualitative researchers often…:

"...enter vicariously into the life of participants, feel what they are experiencing, and listen to what they are saying through their words or actions".
(Strauss and Corbin, 2015) Loc 2588.

I think this is important to emphasize as it positions both the challenges I faced as a researcher, but also explains better the rich sources of knowledge that flowed from my project. In particular, by being a participant in a real event, I was able to re-experience that event when I came back to listen to the audio and re-read the transcript at the time I coded the data. I was therefore a great deal more emotionally interwoven as a researcher into the fabric of the conversation. As Hay points out in relation to the benefits of using audio recordings:

"Reflecting on the past can be done from memory but may be enhanced considerably through the use of recordings".
(Hay, 2007), p7.

I should point out that this is not a view shared universally, and other Coaching Supervisors, such as Eric de Haan, put the focus on memory reconstruction as an active learning process (Haan, 2011). In other words, how we reconstruct our memories is a significant piece of information of itself, and a too great a reliance on data can in fact interrupt this process. This debate within the coaching supervisory community appears to mirror the post-positivist and constructivist positions in research (Lane and Corrie, 2006).

The words uttered by the client and captured in the recordings will inevitably have been influenced by the inner mental states experienced by the client and which will never be known (Haan, 2008). For example, Charlotte Sills has written extensively about the importance of psychological contracting (Sills, 2006); and Hay, de Haan and others emphasize the role of transference, counter transference and parallel processing as means where the relational dynamics between two or more individuals can become complex and unpredictable (Hay, 2007), p15; (Day, 2010) (Haan, 2008). Indeed, this is one of the reasons why

supervision is encouraged by the professional bodies such as the EMCC; and why recording is sometimes used as part of this supervisory process (Atter et al., 2014). I might have thought glibly after a session, "hey, lots of great data," but in reality I would have captured only a fragment of the reality experienced by the client.

In this respect there is a fundamental question about the ethics of my coaching and how real and genuine the data actually was. In part this was because I was also reacting differently to each client. Not unlike the nursing staff in Glaser & Strauss's pivotal study, "In The Time Of Dying" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), professionals will react differently to each client based on relational triggers. These questions are examined in the coaching literature, such as the writings of Michael Carroll (Carroll, 2011).

If I compare two recordings from my first sample, Case 5 and 6 (Case#5, 2013a), (Case#6, 2014a) there are clear distinctions. Case 5 was a warm convivial individual who had some experience of coaching in a different field. She was somewhat younger than me but we clearly shared s similar professional outlook. Our conversations were chatty with a lot of "door step conversations" both at the beginning and at the end. Case 5 was eager to open herself up and share issues and concerns about frustrations she was experiencing with her clients and the set backs she was experiencing in launching a new start up venture in the health sector. One of the richest items of data to emerge related to the connection she made between her levels of pricing she had set for the new venture and her own confidence and self esteem as an entrepreneur.

Here is an extract from the transcript Case 5, and the codes it generated:

"Data Fragment

Codes

Level I

Level II

Level III

"There is a resistance in me" (Case#5, 2013b/Transcript)

Resistance

Inhibition

Self Doubt".

(Atter, 2013b/Coding Database)

"And when we...we costed it out, you know, what...and it just came to this sort of astronomical figure and it was just like, well, how do we work this, you know?" (Case#5, 2013b/Transcript)

Pricing Assumptions

Value

Self Doubt"

(Case#5, 2013a/Audio MP4)

"I mean, the person who actually offered to pay upfront, I remember saying to her, "Are you sure?" (Case#5, 2013b/Transcript)

"Market Validation

Pricing

Self Doubt"

(Case 5/Atter, 2013b/Coding Database)

Case 6 by contrast was a senior executive of a similar age to me, who was in the midst of developing a software product (Case#6, 2014a/Audio MP4). Our relationship was business like, but detached. She had high levels of professional self confidence. She clearly saw our relationship as advisory in nature and seemed uncomfortable when I probed her about the relationships with her co-founders, which I suspected was an area of vulnerability. The data generated in this session was somewhat limited on both quantity and depth (Atter, 2014a/Coding Database).

This contrast can be quantified by looking at the number of deeper Level III codes that were generated, that indicated psycho-emotive process at work.

Case 5 generated 67 Level III codes whereas Case 6 generated 17 Level III codes (Atter, 2013b/Coding Database), (Atter, 2014a/Coding Database)

There is no criticism of either participant implied here. My job as a coach is to create an empathic connection with the client. This does not always mean being warm and close; it could equally mean respecting the distance and reserve preferred by a client, especially female ones, who have different needs and expectations. For example, had I as a coach attempted to become overly convivial or began to ask personally probing questions, I might well have breached the psychological contract that underpins the coaching. As a researcher, I therefore had to forego the opportunity to press for more data. The key ethical concern in coaching is ensuring that the client is always the primary beneficiary of the relationship (Carroll, 2011).

In data collection therefore, I had to continually balance my role as a coach with my task as a researcher. There is evidence on the audio that at times, I found this balance stressful. For example, it may have accounted from my exaggerated concern for timing, which prompted me to bring the session with Case 4 to a premature and abrupt close (Case 4/Atter, 2013a/Audio MP4).

Eric de Haan explains how tacit relationships can emerge from our unconscious relational processes and can form quite independently from the content being exchanged at the surface level (Haan, 2008). Prof de Haan identifies a number of different types of partnerships that are formed unconsciously as the relationship unfolds; such as guild-master & apprentice; doctor & patient; parent and child; midwife and mother and "old pals" (Haan, 2008). For instance, in Case 5 my relationships might be categorized as "mates," knowing the implicit messages of "you're ok, I'm ok," (Berne, 1964) whereas in Case 6 our relationship might be characterized more as rivals, somewhat guarded and careful not to impose too much. Naturally, I contributed and perhaps unconsciously encouraged these dynamics. In Case 6, I clearly sought to establish my professional credentials early on, which might in turn have evoked some

competitive responses (Case#6, 2014b/Transcript).

More important even than the words spoken is the data contained in voice tone, word choice, the pace & rhythm of the conversation. With Case 5, the conversation is vivid, the voice tones warm and the pace varies (Case#5, 2013a/Audio MP4); in Case 6, voice tones are flat and the vocabulary more business like (Case#6, 2014a/Audio MP4). I was more emotionally involved and would inevitably find it easier to both remember and interpret what Case 5 was talking about. By contrast, I would have to put more effort into re-experiencing the conversation with Case 6 to the same extent. In fact, as I try to recollect, my experience is one of emotional distance, and a little struggle.

It is possible even, that with Case 6 there was some competitive transference taking place, where we both competed to enact our masterful parent ego (Hay, 2007), (Berne, 1964).

The key point here is that data collection is not a simple matter of recording the words spoken, transcribing and coding them. The audio captures only part of a whole conversation between myself and the client and does not capture how I experience and interpret the words when I listen to the audio a second or third time.

However, whilst accepting these limitations, the alternative of either in session note-taking or the use of recollected notes, would have missed vital pieces of contextual data. As Hay points out:

> "...taking notes may mean that you miss something significant while writing down the previous points...Not taking notes will leave you (the coach) free to focus your full attention on the client".
> (Hay, 2007), p23-24.

If I am not focusing on the client, I am missing vital information and also limiting my own experience of what is happening in our interaction.

When I came to code the data, I was able to move from transcript to the original recording. Data collection therefore is a term that is likely to understate the role of the relational process when the data is collected during live events. In the grounded theory literature, I noticed there was reference to a wide spectrum of data collection methods. I sense this is an area that required more attention. Particularly in a methodology that atomizes the data I think it is crucial that researchers are able to refer back to a data collection method that as far as possible recreates and if possible allows the researcher to re-experience the original event (Atter et al., 2014). This aids the later interpretation and validation of the findings. If the primary collection is leaky, then this knowledge is lost forever.

There is another significant advantage in recording the sessions. As a coach, I am free from the burden of having to remember things or write down what the client is saying. In my view, nothing reinforces the relational dynamic of "expert" as when the coach or researcher writes down notes during a session. Apart from sending signals about what is and what is not regarded as important, the coach / researcher can more easily lose eye contact and miss vital clues in the expression of body language of client. Coaching has been liked to a tango (at the 2010 EMCC conference in Paris, we were all given tango lessons). Even bad dancers like me know to keep your eyes on your partner when moving closely together.

As a coach, I am in the habit of listening intently during the session and shortly afterwards downloading everything I can recall in the session. This is grounded theory term can be regarded as a form of memo-ing as I also include thoughts and feelings about the session. These rapidly generated notes contained in notebooks are also part of the data set and are perhaps the beginning of a process of coding. These notes are a form of memory reconstruction, but usually created shortly after the event rather than at a distance, as would be the case in a typical professional supervision session.

Finally, there is another flow of data generation and collection that ran in parallel to the recorded coaching seasons, and these were the professional supervision sessions, with my coach supervisor. Professional coaching bodies such as the ICF and the EMCC strongly recommend the use of professional supervision for three principle reasons (Hay, 2007):

- Formative: It is developmental in nature
- Normative: It reinforces ethical standards
- Restorative: It can rebuild the ego after set backs and mistakes (Hay, 2007)

In two cases, H and L, I brought the recordings into my professional supervision session. The reason I did this was related to Julie Hay's triple lock (Hay, 2007):

- I was entering new professional territory by researching and coaching this type of entrepreneur and I wanted to learn how to do incorporate research into my professional practice and reconcile the roles of coach and researcher.
- There were also ethical and boundary issues I wanted to explore.
- I felt in a couple of areas I had made a mistake and wanted to review this with my supervisor.

For example, on replaying the audio file with my supervisor, we were both concerned that I had made a joke in the group session which drew laughter from the group but, possibly, not from the client being coached. I might in this instance being attending to a group dynamic rather than to the individual needs of the client who was a member of that group.

In another instance, I was puzzled as to why the client seemed to want to restart the conversation. In replaying the audio, both of us noticed that I was trying to rush the client to a closure and tried to bring the conversation to a premature close.

The supervision sessions were in a sense a form of triangulation. My supervisor was another pair of ears and helped me understand and interpret what was happening "in between the lines" or in the spaces between the words.

There is of course one data collection method that I should refer to and that is video, which is sometime used in learning and research contexts. However, in my view as the client is more identifiable on video than audio this method multiplies the ethical risk, without generating substantially more data to warrant it. Video methods are also likely to be more intrusive and prompt self consciousness in the client.

Professional transcription

Having generated the recordings, I then faced the enormous challenge of converting the audio file into hard copy transcript. My first attempts to do this myself were evidently not successful. It was taking too long and therefore ironically putting distance between the original event and when I was in a position to code, but more importantly too much of the rich nuance was edited or filtered out. There was a danger also that my transcription could have been self serving, summarizing complex passages in ways that were favorable to my argument and introducing words that were mine and not the clients. Transcribing personally did at least familiarize myself with the data. However, this was something of a time luxury as I had been involved in the original event. It is evident from the grounded theory literature, that in some cases coding is completed on interview notes by fellow researchers and so in contrast, I already had direct personal experience of the event (Strauss and Corbin, 2015), (Bryant and Charmaz).

Based on recommendations from a fellow researcher I engaged the help of a professional transcriber with experience of research environments. This made an immediate difference as from late 2013 I had accurate and very detailed transcriptions to work from. There is clearly a cost issue here and not all researchers will be in a position to outsource this part of the process.

A crucial final step is the data preparation phase. This is so significant it might warrant a separate section by itself. Essentially, to be in a position to code the

data it was necessary to transfer the transcript into an Excel spread sheet. I then created two columns, for my contributions and one for the clients. Each whole sentence from the transcript was individually numbered, see example below:

Figure 2 Coding Indexation

After my false start in the second half of 2013, I began afresh in the early part of 2014. In part this took advantage of the directional guidance from my tutor but also as a result of deep reading I did on grounded theory method. I was particularly emboldened by the constructivist approach of Chairman (Charmaz, 2006). As I describe above, no matter how hard I might try to be an objective and neutral observer, my job as a coach was to mirror the emotional tenor set by the client, and respect the boundaries they preferred to work in. But I was not a neutral observer. I was an active participant in the data collection process and as a result, I was therefore actively construction and reconstructing meanings (Charmaz, 2006), (Gergen, 2009).

The co-creation process was captured nicely by Joan Riviere:

> *"We tend to think of any one individual in isolation; it is a convenient fiction. We may isolate him physically, as in the analytic room; in two minutes we find he has brought his world in with him, and that, even before he set eyes on the analyst, he had developed inside himself an elaborate relation with him. There is no such thing as a single human being, pure and simple, unmixed with other human beings".*
> *Quoted in (Haan, 2008, loc 106).*

From this reading I understood the importance of bracketing. I did this quite literally by create a new folder in Dropbox and putting all my earlier attempts. This was a symbolic and mental turning over a new leaf.

The initial coding of each research subject began once I had transferred the transcripts text onto an Excel spreadsheet; and then sorted the data fragments from myself and the client. Each sentence was defined as a data fragment; and coded in sequence. For example, the client might talk at length and make several statements in succession, such as the following:

"5.2.24
Definitely.

5.2.24.1
So there's that, that sort of piece of it.

5.2.24.2
And, also, people, even after I've met them on Skype, it's, you know, it's all sort of very…you know, they're moving away, getting a cup of water, do you know what I mean [laughing]?

5.2.25
It's so hard sometimes to keep their focus and…"
(Atter, 2013b/Coding Database)

The table above indicates that this was the 5th research subject; and the "2" relates to the subject/client data. "24" refers to the fact that this was the 24th sentence that had made in the session. "24.1, 2, 3" etc. relates to the sequence of sentences that flow in that passage.

Data preparation is a critical step. It atomizes each sentence into a specific fragment that can be analyzed, rather like a passing thought or moment in time.

Yet, it is also possible to see that one fragment in the context of a sentence passage, or indeed, as part of a whole session and ultimately a coaching relationship. My coding technique also identified a particular client and reference point in a conversation, through both color coding and a numbering system. Even as the data became to be subsequently sorted and combined, the data can always be traced to a conversational fragment back to its source.

The data preparation enables the level of transparency necessary to validate the results. It enables the researcher to revisit the codes based upon further creative thoughts or insights that might emerge.

Another practical benefit when working with audio is that it enables the researcher to quickly locate the sentence within what can be a 60-90 minute conversation.

As a final step, each of the spreadsheets for each participant is color coded. Once the codes are amalgamated into a master database, this has great value. It is possible to see the extent to which a code or category is supported by a number of research subjects or only one. As I revised the model, it would occur quite commonly that a code that didn't quite work in the categorization process might have been derived from only a small number of the participants.

With the number system it was then also possible to sort the data either according to the original sequence or according to the levels of coding. This supported practically the task of iterating between the audio files, the transcripts, the coding databases and the categorization model that developed in parallel.

5.5   Initial Coding

Strauss and Corbin write as follows:

> *"Researchers bring their many aspects of self and experiences to the research*

process. These, sometimes even unconsciously, enter into how data is interpreted".
(Strauss and Corbin, 2015), loc 1021.

This quote is interesting as it shows grading acknowledgement of the more constructivist position of Charmaz (Bryant and Charmaz). As Denzin and Lincoln point out, Corbin has shifted her position in recent years (Lincoln, 2011), and this suggests a possibility of a consensus on the constructivist nature of grounded theory method.

Coding is defined by Strauss and Corbin as follows:

"Denoting concepts to stand for data".
(Strauss and Corbin, 2015) Loc2551

Coding is the foundation of grounded theory method and it serves the function of being able to convert live data into abstract analysis that can be interpreted and categorized.

Let us take a specific example from a data fragment generated in a transcript on 29 December 2013. How are we to interpret it?

5.2.51.4: "I've never really done anything like this".
(Case#5, 2013b/Transcript)

At the simplest level, it could be read as a simple piece of narrative information. The client was saying that a specific activity was new to them. Yet, the sentence is pregnant with a lot more meaning than this. The negative phrasing, of "never" suggests that this is a significant transition. The sentence could have been phrased *'This activity is new for me".* The absolute nature of "never" signifies the message being conveyed by the client.

Yet, relying on our intuition can never be certain and therefore coding calls upon

a creative process. I coded this sentence with three words, as follows:

- Emergence
- Uniqueness
- Taking the plunge

Emergence was a fairly apparent recognition that the client was emerging into this kind of activity. Uniqueness reflected a learning process that was implied. "Taking the plunge" was a metaphor that I noticed was used several times in the session by the client. We know from Grant and Oswick that metaphors are often associated with strong emotions and implied meaning (Grant and Oswick, 1996); indeed, are often a way we shield ourselves from strong feelings (Daniel N. Stern, 2004). "Taking the plunge"; or jumping into water without checking for safety limits, is one of the two fears we are actually born with (fear of drowning; with the other being fear of loud noises). This simple cliche therefore may hint at some existential fear of failure in setting up this new venture.

As Arbnor and Bjerke write:

> '...symbolic language may awaken our imagination and offer us a trip into the "magic" kingdom of the "wordless" entrepreneurial thought".
> (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009b, loc 1433)

When I began to code, I found it difficult to simply code a whole sentence with one word. This seemed to be reducing the whole sentence to a simple bland label. As we have seen, even in a simple sentence there are potential many angles and levels. Therefore, I began to recognize that within each sentence there seemed to be a pattern. There was an apparent and surface level activity, such as doing something for the first time. There was a subliminal process, of which the client was aware, that suggested some inherent difficulty or challenge. The client might not mention it at first but was often open for discussion if I mentioned it. At the third level, were the more unconscious and deep-seated messages being conveyed of which the client was unaware of often avoiding.

In other words, the client might well have said: *This is a new venture for me and I feel afraid.* Their actual phrasing was not only suggested and implied, it was also possible to learn about what the client was shielding for themselves in their shadow side.

This is what Strauss and Corbin describe as "microanalysis" (Strauss and Corbin, 2015), which they explain as follows:

> *"It is like using a high powered microscope to examine each piece of datum up close".*
> *(Strauss and Corbin, 2015), Loc2204*

As a result of this, early on in the coding process, I added two extra columns. I developed a simple hierarchy of codes, which enabled me to reflect this depth of meaning. While not strictly defined at first, after working on a few transcripts, a clear pattern emerged in the levels of coding, which I captured in my Research Journal:

> *Levels, depth of conversation:*
> *Code 1 being statements at the surface (Evident)*
> *Code 2 being partially indicated (Suggested)*
> *Code 3 where meaning concealed and indicated obliquely by the data (Interpreted)*

As Strauss and Corbin write:

> *"Concepts can be named and renamed throughout the analysis and often do as sensitivities to meanings become clearer as the research process proceeds".*
> *(Strauss and Corbin, 2015), Loc 2596*

By June 2014, I had later elaborated three levels of coding analysis as follows:

Level I: Surface level

This involved chat and small talk. It also included descriptions of day to day activities and project updates. It also includes a lot of relational interactions, such as "yes/no" responses and non-lexical utterances. Early on in the conversation, I noticed there was a lot of "positioning". Often, the client gave project updates, that frequently seemed designed to impress me, or perhaps make them feel good in themselves.

Level I data is significant, and certainly informs the practical side of entrepreneurial activities, and was useful on the work-style dimension, such as being strategic, methodical, learning, etc. However, it also contains a lot of "noise" and is also difficult to differentiate, in that many entrepreneurs would say similar things. For example, it was clear they had read similar books, used standard jargon terms, such MVP. It appeared as if entrepreneurs occupy a similar terrain ethnographically. Meet ups and events at GooglePlex and other entrepreneur hangouts tend to reinforce this common language.

Level I Coding examples from the Master Data base (10 April 2014):

- Product range
- Facing Criticism
- Product comparisons
- Simple
- Unreasonableness

Level II: Sub-conscious Level

As the coaching conversation became more reflective, the client was able to access and surface hidden thoughts and feelings. This might range from great optimism and self confidence, through to anxiety and confusion. I noticed that Level II was accessible to the client, rather as is described in the Johari window (Tollman et al). What they were revealing was aspects of their inner selves that were known to them but somewhat shielded from others. In the bravado world of entrepreneurship it was vital that as a coach I was able to build sufficient trust for the client to let me see behind the mask.

Level II coding examples from the Master Database (10 April)

- Professionalism
- Relationship
- Client Affirmation
- Learning
- Optimism
- Collaboration

Level III Coding:

With a trained ear, it is possible to listen contextually at a deeper level. This is a method perfected by Carl Rogers and his humanistic psychotherapy, and this is one of the key capabilities I was able to develop whilst studying for my Masters in Executive Coaching (Rogers, 1947). As the client talk and wrestles with their dilemma, the use of cliches, metaphors, word repetition, voice tone, and non-verbal clues, which provide a rich source of information about the unconscious mind.

I began to notice that at Level III there was a struggle going beneath the surface, as self confidence battled self doubt; and clarity of vision mixed with uncertainty. A preference for working with others was tempered by a desire for freedom. It was at Level III that the core issue at the heart of this research became clear: the dichotomies and polarities at the heart of the entrepreneurial role.

By using three levels of coding I was beginning to create a database and the levels I believe added richness and depth to this process.

After I completed five of the sample, I created a Master Database of codes, now all color coded. I notice in the Document Inventory that there was a burst of creative energy, and I rapidly completed a series of coding sorts and groupings.

There were 1249 codes in total, with 203 of these being at Level III. Naturally many were either the same or very similar to each other. I then sorted the database to cluster words that were the same or similar. What I noticed was that the Level III codes seemed much more distinct and unique than at level II or I. Codes such as Survival, Identity, Intention were words that offered far more latent meaning and significance. Level I codes would have been the kind of everyday activities that anyone might have thought of in relation to entrepreneurs. For instance, Entry Product; Unique Sourcing; Product Image; Consumer Behavior. At Level I, there was not really anything unique being added to what we already knew were the common concerns of entrepreneurs.

However, at Level III there seems to be an entry point into the "magic kingdom" as Arbnor and Bjerke describe it, (Arbnor and Bjerke, 2009a). Level III codes offered depth, meaning and significance. The pivotal moment came when I wrote down a journal article, as follows:

Level III coding examples from the Master Database (10 April)
- Out-of-Control
- Purpose
- Risk
- Self Belief
- Motivation

Because the Level III codes seemed to be the most differentiated and unique to my research, I decided to focus on this level as the focus on my ongoing inquiry. Interestingly, Strauss and Corbin also use three levels in relation to categorization (Strauss and Corbin, 2015), with a pyramid formed by lower level concepts at the base; categories in the middle and core categories at the apex. Bateson, Raelin and Engestrom all use three primary levels to model the learning process (Raelin, 2008) and (Engeström, 2008). In essence, my approach is similar. As it turned out, many Level III codes were used directly in higher order codes in the model building phase.

Kathy Charmaz writes:

"…grounded theory can aid researchers in explicating their participants simplicity meanings and actions….the most significant meanings and actions are often implicit. Successive, meticulous grounded theory analysis can help researchers define implicit meanings and actions to theorize tentative but plausible accounts of them".
(Lincoln, 2011), P361.

It is important to stress here also, that this learning loop was not complete. Having produced a long list, which I began to group and sort, this inevitably raised questions about what certain words meant. For example, the word identity came up frequently in the codes. I was curious about what this term meant. I therefore returned to several of the audio and transcriptions. It was clear that in some instances this meant "being authentic," and in other instances, it meant "living a culture". So during this period I iterated from the audio, transcript, coding spreadsheet and Master Database, fine tuning and adding codes, and deleting codes that seemed to be either inaccurate or too generic to mean anything.

A number of actions might arise from this:
• The code might be combined with others, because it was similar
• A code might have been downgraded or upgraded in importance
• Examining one code might spark the creation of another.

This was a process that Strauss and Corbin term the constant comparison method, which they define as follows:

The analytic process of comparing different pieces of data against each other for similarities and differences.
(Strauss and Corbin, 2015; Loc 2561)

They go on to explain the process as follows:

"Taking one piece of datum and examining it against another piece of datum both within and between documents". (Strauss and Corbin, 2015, Loc 2789).

Sometimes, this involved using the actual words from the client, a technique referred to as "*in vivo*" coding (Strauss and Corbin, 2015). I tried to do this as often as possible to preserve the freshness and authenticity of the coding. Examples would include "out-of-control" and "part of my life" at Level III, both of which became significant in later category building. Both were terms lifted directly from the transcript.

Another coding method is the use of gerunds, as explained by Denzin and Lincoln:

"Gerunds enable grounded theorists to see implicit processes, to make connections between codes, and to keep their analysis active and emergent".
(Lincoln, 2011), p367

Examples from the coding database include the following:
• Knowing
• Learning
• Recognizing limitations

This creative and iterative nature of the coding process was captured by Strauss and Corbin when they write as follows (Strauss and Corbin, 2015):

"During analysis, researchers are moving rapidly between the abstract and the concrete. They are constantly asking questions and making comparisons. While managing the details of data, they are simultaneously looking for the relationships and trying to identify patterns".
(Strauss and Corbin, 2015) Loc 2560.

This captures very closely to the process of analytical coding that I conducted from late 2013 to September 2014.

Because of the richness and greater differentiation of the codes at Level III, I decided that this would be the level I would focus on in terms of developing themes and categories.

There was an added and unexpected benefit that emerged from my coding research method (Creswell, 2011). I later realized that it was possible to analyze statistically the nature of interactions between myself and the client. For instance, it was now possible to examine the overall percentage number of fragments contributed by myself in contrast to the client. Interestingly, this showed wide variation in my own percentage of verbal contribution, from a high of 69.7%, to a low of 46%. The average number of fragments recorded was 54.5%.

Traditional notions of coaching would suggest an 80/20 rule, with the client speaking 80% of the time and the coach interventions limited to 20% (Haan, 2008), (Hawkins and Smith, 2010). This raises the issue of whether I am coaching or mentoring (Hawkins and Smith, 2010). In mentoring we might expect the percentage contribution to be higher, as the mentor uses a more advisory style, combined with story telling and feedback provision.

Secondly, it is possible to measure the richness of the conversation by analyzing how many of the client fragments were coded at Level II or Level III. On average, 33% of the client fragments were coded at three levels. This suggests that about a third of the conversations across the board were of sufficient richness. However, self critically, it is necessary to consider how to increase this percentage to ensure the maximum return on the contact time spent with the client.

There appears to be a slight but noticeable correlation between the amount of interventions I make, and the number of Level 3 coded fragments from the client. The more frequent my interventions, the lower frequency of Level 3 are recorded. For instance, in the session where I generated 69.7% of the statement fragments, the client's contribution generated only 13.6% of Level 3 fragments as a proportion of their contribution as a whole. In the two sessions where my contribution was less

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than 50%, the client generated Level 3 fragments of around 36-38%. In other words, where I intervened frequently, the client's contribution to the conversation was not only less frequent, but also less rich in terms of depth and significance.

Therefore, it is possible to draw an initial conclusion that where I limited my own intervention, and used a more coaching style, the client was able to adopt a more reflective mode, and attended to their underlying patterns and mental processes. Interestingly, many students often request a directive mentoring style, soliciting advice or direct knowledge sharing. Yet, paradoxically, it seems the more this style is used, the more the student's own process of self discovery is interrupted.

My sense is that there is balance here, and that early phase entrepreneurial mentor coaching is likely to involve a more interventionist style than is common in more general executive level coaching. On the evidence from these sessions, an intervention of around 40-50% produces an effect of one-third of the client fragments being code-able to Level III. However, there are clearly limits, and the data from my research suggests that when that intervention exceeds 50% there is a diminishing return.

Grounded theory therefore enables both a quantitative and qualitative perspective to emerge. It enables statements, or fragments, to be coded qualitatively; and then enables those codes to be analyzed statistically. It can help reveal and substantiate connections that would not otherwise be obvious.

5.6   Focused Coding and Categorization

Charmaz describes focused coding and categorization as follows (Charmaz, 2006):

> *"One goal of focused coding is to determine the adequacy and conceptual strength of your initial codes. Assessing your initial codes involves comparing them with data and distinguishing those codes that have greater analytic*

power".

(Charmaz, 2006, p140).

This is certainly something I experienced. Having being stuck for a lengthy period of time between 2012-13, I recall three days between 8-10 April 2014 where my research crystallized. The catalyst was the fairly mundane procedure of bringing all the codes together into one spreadsheet column. Even this cutting and pasting prompted a revision and edit to some codes. It was also not a straight forward process either, as I had already created three levels of codes in a fashion that can be described as paired comparison, in which I continually compared one code to another, sorting them into one of three columns.

The resulting spreadsheet however, was much more than a simple list of words. I had already placed a value on the codes and was able to link them back to a specific coaching session.

During these three days, an unexpected creative process occurred. Just as some people can hear a meaning in a language, or a rhythm in music, or the logic in a mathematical sequence, I was able to discern a pattern in the codes. This happened by wrestling with a problem. I was confronted with 203 Level III codes from an original 1249 codes. What to do with them? I was initially anxious as they clearly did not fall neatly into my a priori model that I had previously tried to construct. There were as many codes contradicting "agility" etc. as there were confirming it. There was therefore dissonance and anomaly within the data. As Kuhn points out, the ethical scientist sees anomaly as an opportunity to review their model of the world (Kuhn, 1962). The theme of contradiction and dissonance leapt out at me. Because of the data sorting process, I was able to see pairs of codes:

• Self Belief
• Self Doubt

- Boldness
- Hesitancy

- Drive
- Distraction

Charmaz writes as follows:

> *"Certain codes crystallize meanings and actions in the data".*
> *(Charmaz, 2006), p19.*

I experienced a slight annoyance at these contradictory words. As Griffin points out (Griffin, 2002), we do not like paradox and frequently try to suppress it. I recall going back to the data, the transcript and the audio to see if I had been mistaken and that hesitancy, self doubt and distraction were not really there at all. But they were. I was confronted by statements such as the following:

> "...I really need to believe in myself"

In all honesty, I could code this simply as "Self Belief". This would be a gross reduction, resulting in a loss of meaning, and this would undermine the ethics of my study. The statement is clearly suggestive, in my view, that the entrepreneur is willing themselves to have self belief but somehow, at the moment, it is lacking. Anyone who has to say this to themselves is, paradoxically, speaking to an inner doubt and possibly a suppressed anxiety.

The key moment came when I stopped trying to suppress and explain away the dichotomy, and embrace it. The pattern was staring me in the face. The dichotomy was the pattern. Entrepreneurs are wrestling with both risk and caution, doubt and confidence, a desire to be independent and a need to be part of a winning team, a boldness to go it alone and a fear of failure. Like myself as a researcher, entrepreneurs were people who embraced the dichotomy and reconciled competing polarities that threatened to pull them in opposite directions. This is what made entrepreneurship hard. This recognition of what

was right in front of me, also connected with other themes from my prior reading.

The notion of distinction or the difficulty of forced choice recalls the writing of Kurt Lewin and Conflict Theory (Hogg and Vaughan, 2014a) (Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2008). Lewin described the common predicament of having to choose between two competing attractive options; or between two opposing unattractive options; or between various combinations of options which contained both attractive and unattractive features about them (Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2008) (Lewin, 1997). This notion of choice and dilemma and the inner conflict that it generated as described by Lewin seemed to be reflected in the responses of my clients in weighing up a range of competing alternatives (Lewin, 1997).

I also think that the further elaboration of Lewin's theories by Miller and the introduction of gradients is also relevant to my model and this is reflected in the design of the scaling or continuum (Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2008). In other words, the psychological choice is not simply between A or B, but between competing gradients which reflect the relative opportunity or risk in pursuing a specific course of action (Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2008).

From a sociological and complexity perspective Ralph Stacey (Stacey, 2003) describes change as occurring in that place of bounded instability, between structure and chaos. This is the place where entrepreneurs sit, neither willing to return to the (apparent) safety of regular paid employment; nor willing to wholly embrace chaos (Stacey, 2003).

As Charmaz writes"

> "*A flash of light or instantaneous realisation of analytic connections can happen any time during the research process*".
> (Charmaz, 2006), p17.

The next level of analysis was to go through the data and recognize where other dichotomies might exist. To my excitement, I saw that dilemmas, choices and trade offs permeated the coding database. Even in mundane discussions on putting a business plan together, and complaining of a lack of time or a frustration of the need to "get on with it", I now saw in the context of a contradiction between being strategic and methodical, and being action-orientated and responsive to market and consumer activity.

I then realized that I needed to understand what the dichotomy actually was. How do I explain and categorize for example, Self Belief vs Self Doubt?

Strauss and Corbin write:

> *"Data that appear to be conceptually similar are grouped together under a conceptual label".*
> *(Strauss and Corbin, 2015, loc 2790)*

But I was facing a slightly more complex situation. I could see how codes like Self Confidence and Self Belief, and other similar codes, might be categorized together. But how to categorize words that were in contradiction to one another?

Wrestling with this question lead to a further insight: The dichotomy was an expression only of a symptom which had deeper causation. Scouring back through the codes, I then recognized the other codes that were hard to interpret and seemingly outliers, such as Identity, Culture, Authenticity. These codes were less frequent and did not connect easily with other parts of the database. They also were not contradicted by other codes. I only recognized why this would be the case later, when I came to reflect on the theory, and model that expressed the theory. The reason these "special" codes had these properties was because they were meta-codes which had more fundamental explanatory value than others.

The dichotomy between Self Belief and Self Doubt therefore could only be understand if, at a deeper level, I recognized that there was a more fundamental question going on about the search for Identity. The entrepreneur, often young, from an "outsider" background as a migrant or member of ethnic minority, and female, were looking to construct an authentic and sustainable representation of themselves. This was why Self Belief and Self Doubt were significant as they were expressions of this process of identity construction.

Having separated Identity as a meta code, it was then much easier to group a dozen or so codes which related to it:

- Survival/Failure
- Part of my life / New idea
- Memory / New experience
- Valuing Myself / Support from others
- Uniqueness / Learning from others
- Struggle / Capability
- My story / Role models

The database was full of couplets like this, which indicated a struggle going on at a deeper level.

I returned to two particular transcripts at this time, Case 8 and 2 (Case#8, 2013b/Transcript), (Case#2, 2013/Transcript). The first Case 8, was a feedback and debriefing session following her unsuccessful competition bid. She had submitted a very bold plan to create a social enterprise involving a significant retail space near in a new retail park. As part of the judging panel, we recognized the clarity of her vision and rated the plan highly on potential impact, but had rejected the plan as we were not convinced about her ability to execute the plan. When I shared this with her, she described how her confidence had arisen from her family, who all had grown up with entrepreneurial activity involving a family restaurant. She was part of an ethnic minority and described how she had grown up being an entrepreneur to the extent that it was "just part of me…my life

story". (Case#8, 2013b/Transcript)

In Case 2, there were close similarities (Case#2, 2013/Transcript). A migrant from South America, he described how the product he was launching originated from his native country and how important it was for the identity and values of his country to be reflected in the brand and the way he did business. He often felt frustrated by the rather bureaucratic and institutional style of many of the retail buyers he had to work with. In expressing these frustrations, he frequently used labels to describe his attachment to his culture and how this was part of who he was. To me, Case 2 displayed the restless energy and the drive to succeed that has distinguished many migrants, from the new arrivals flooding through Ellis Island; to Marconi, Hauser and Sergey Brin: A need to define themselves in very uncertain surroundings where they have affirmation or reinforcement as to who they are.

By returning to the transcripts, I was able to then understand the significance of the simple coded words that in isolation might have meant very little. In the context of an unfolding life which needed to be understood, the codes take on a new significance.

I began to focus more and more on the meta-categories and see where I could find other outliers, which had explanatory depth, and could be easily contradicted by another code. In other words, while some entrepreneurs might be full of self-confidence and others racked with self doubt, the issue of their sense of identity would always be a significant factor and would explain the generation of the dichotomies.

In a similar fashion to identity, I noticed another major theme: Relationships. The social dimension to entrepreneurship seemed self-evident and the role of others always appeared to be significant to each of the cases. Relationships also seemed to able to explain the dichotomies and "wrap around" the other dichotomies in the database:

- Building trust / protecting myself
- Affirmation /Insecurity
- Getting buy-in / Freedom to act
- Competitive / Community
- Togetherness / Avoidance

The concepts of identity and our involvement with social groups and various tiers of relationships are perhaps most clearly described in social psychology (Hogg and Vaughan, 2014a). This epistemology investigates our sense of self, or ego, in relationship to our sense of belonging and identity with groups. As Hewstone et al, write (Hewstone et al.):

> *"A self concept is a cognitive representation of oneself that gives coherence and meaning to ones experience, including one's relations to other people. It organises past experience and helps recognise and interpret relevant stimuli in the social environment".*
> *(Hewstone et al., 2012)*

As Allport pointed out, at our core most of us have an embodied sense of who we are and define this in physical terms, even though our physical self will change during our lives (Turner and Oakes, 1986, Hewstone et al., 2012). It is paradoxical that although we experience physical even personality changes, we still hold on to a sense of the continuing self throughout our lives. It seems to me that the continuity of self is a key concept in entrepreneurship and is relevant to my research. Codes such as "identity" and "taking the plunge" all suggest to me that the concept of "who am I?" is a very central question to entrepreneurs going through a major life transition, like starting up a venture or going into business on their own. With all the risks and opportunities involved, our sense of a competent, successful well regulated self might come under question (Hewstone et al., 2012).

One of the most influential theories that explains the relationships between

different levels of our identity is Self Categorization Theory, developed by John C. Turner (Turner & Tajfel, 1986). This theory distinguishes an individualist perspective represented by personality researchers such as Allport, compared to the more interactionist approach evolved from Lewin (Lewin, 1997). Turner describes the paradoxical nature of both individual and social identity as follows (Turner and Oakes, 1986):

> *"The paradox is to integrate two very different orders of phenomena: the psychological - to do with the mental properties of the individual - and the social - processes, properties and products deriving from the inter-relations between individuals".*
>
> *(Turner and Oakes, 1986, p237).*

Their conclusions are highly relevant to entrepreneurship. Through a process of increasing abstraction and what Turner calls "de-personalization" (Turner et al., 1992) it is possible for us to hold different levels of identity, rather as in a nested table. We incorporate our group associations into our sense of self while being able to identify and present ourselves as a separate individual (Turner et al., 1992). This is a more dynamic and interactive concept than is commonly presented in orthodox individually orientated analytical psychology (Hogg and Vaughan, 2014a). Turner and Oakes write (Turner and Oakes, 1986):

> *"…social identity is therefore a "socially structured field" within the individual mind and an important element of the psychological or subjective process of society".*
>
> *(Turner and Oakes, 1986, p250).*

Identity and relationships can therefore be seen as elements within an integrated social process that makes it possible for the individual to develop unique characteristics but also form group associations and shared identities that become features of that individual identity (Turner et al., 1992). This is relevant to entrepreneurs who might see themselves part of an entrepreneurial eco-system, comprising their co-working space, or membership of an

accelerator program or just their wider entrepreneurial networks, formed of coders, designers and social media (Pompa, 2013). The concept of self categorization (Turner and Oakes, 1986) also becomes crucial to understanding the dynamics of a start up team and the often intense pressures co-founders feel in putting aside their individual self identity and create a new identity co-created with others (Wasserman, 2012).

Fear of de-personalization and loss of autonomy and independence appear to be one reason why many entrepreneurs continue to desire to be their "own boss" (Robinson, 2010) (Turner and Oakes, 1986). Equally, the need to create sustainable and viable businesses with the right mix of capabilities, capable of attracting the interest of investors, is a driver for forming close knit start up teams (Ellis and Brown, 2014b) (Wasserman, 2012). This can be reflected in shareholder agreements that make collective ownership a legal reality and a possible impediment to future independent action (Wasserman, 2012). The entrepreneurial journey therefore implies a complex transition from an institutional or organizational environment such as a University or a Company, towards some form of independence; but only in the context of the formation of a founder team or activity network in which the sense of self might well be circumscribed.

My research interest is the factors entrepreneurs use to determine where they want to be on this individual-group spectrum, and how this might change over time.

From a sociological perspective, we can see that forming relationships is an existential necessity. We define ourselves by and through our relationships with others. This is the point Mead (Mead, 1934) and Vygotsky (Daniels, 1996a) make, and is the key to understanding the significance of symbolic interactionism. Yet, forming relationships generates inescapable dichotomies and dilemmas: Do I spend my time bringing others on board, or do I strike out on my own and take independent action?

There also seems a close connection here with the concept of the zone of proximal development, originated by Vygotsky (Daniels, 1996b), but developed more fully in the learning sciences by Engestrom (Engeström, 2008). In its simplest form, it poses the question how much can I develop and learn by myself, compared to the potential growth I can gain by working with others? Every entrepreneur faces this dilemma. I might like the idea of being my own boss, but relying only on our own resources creates limitations and bottlenecks. I might be able to code a web site, but it would take me thee times as long as finding a software developer. This choice, as far as I can see, is present in all stages of the start up process and also relates even to independent solo entrepreneurs working as part of networks or creative communities.

The basic pattern seemed to hold. I now had two meta-codes: Identity and Relationships. However, I now faced an even deeper problem. How do these two relate to each other? Was I simply generating a discrete list of factors that are important in entrepreneurship? I felt that this was not sufficient. Having had to read through many coaching books as part of my profession, with 10 steps, 8 factors, 5 dimensions etc., I was reluctant to simply stop at a list of significant factors. I knew that at some level Identity and Relationships must be factors that related to each other.

Then again, another insight: They were dichotomies at a deeper level. It was rather as in peeling back an onion, revealing processes that were manifesting themselves in contradictions. It is perhaps no coincidence that during this critical period from 8-10 April, I read Zygmund Bauman. In a journal entry dated 8 April, I entered one word: Struggle (Journal 8 April 2014). Bauman wrote something that struck me very hard and suggested a possible explanation for entrepreneurial behavior, but also one that accounted for the anxiety that seemed to go with it (Bauman, 2007):

"If the idea of an "open society" originally stood for the self-determination of a free society cherishing its openness, it now brings to most minds the terrifying experience of a heteronomous, hapless and vulnerable population confronted with, and possibly overwhelmed by forces it neither controls nor fully understands".

(Bauman, 2007, p7).

If Bauman is right, and I believe he is, then entrepreneurial behavior can well be understood not simply as a desire to set up a new business nor to exploit a market opportunity, but as an existential, self creating process that mitigates their feeling of vulnerability and alienation.

I also recall the quotation from Carl Jung:

"The self is made manifest in the opposites and in the conflict between them. Hence, the way to the self begins with conflict".
(Jung, 1974, p265)

By mediating between the polarities, entrepreneurs were forming and reforming themselves.

Identity as a word is a source code and a link to rich learning sources, including Habermas and his dichotomous theory of communicative interaction (Finlayson, 2005). Influenced by Husserl, Habermas sees the threat on colonization by "the system" of the life-world, the natural spontaneous space in which we as humans interact freely (Finlayson, 2005). The role of the entrepreneur, with its emphasis on self determination and self efficacy seems to be one community with an active interest in upholding this realm and protecting it from the encroachment by government and corporations. Finlayson summarizes this perspective (Finlayson, 2005):

"…lifeworld is generally conducive to autonomy, understood as the pursuit of self chosen ends".

(Finlayson, 2005), p55.

The evidence in the transcripts, and the codes that reflect my interpretation of their experiences, suggest that the underlying experience was a struggle to be free of the social constraints which all of us are likely to feel, to some extent. In connecting with this broader sociological theory, I could now recognize why it is so important for entrepreneurs to define their identity and to construct appropriate and effective relationships around them. Partly to mitigate risk, but also partly to enjoy the freedoms that the life world provides for self expression and personal exploration.

By continually moving between the Codes, the Meta-codes and back to the transcripts and audio, what emerged therefore was a picture of entrepreneurs not so much as moving in a straight line from concept to launch, but individuals struggling to construct an identity for themselves in relation to others and working towards a greater space to exercise freedom and work towards self directed goals. Identity and Relationships were therefore, as in the lower level codes, merely manifestations of a deeper process going on.

This I termed Social Process, drawing upon my own psycho-dynamic and social psychological training, and experience as a professional coach, it seemed to me that the key dynamic at work was the entrepreneur going through a process of constructing their identity and defining their relationships with others. I think this is especially relevant to entrepreneurs who are engaging in process of transformation that might be likened to a "birthing process", with many of the references to "start up", "incubation", "life cycle" drawing us back to the theme of emergence. By comparing the meta-code Identity with Relationships, and the sub-set codes with which they were associated, I came to realize that entrepreneurship involved both an internal process of defining oneself and creating one's identity; but also a process of defining boundaries and communicative interaction with others (Finlayson, 2005).

At a practical level, this insight also helped explain the puzzling dichotomy of the following codes:

• Working for myself
• Be part of a winning team

Both featured in the Transcripts. For example in Case 5, the client was wrestling between the choice of remaining an independent but networked entrepreneur or moving to found a start up based around larger scale health interventions. (Case#5, 2013b/Transcript)

Consider the following extract from the Case 5 Transcript (Case#5, 2013b/Transcript/5.2.40.2 - 5.2.48.2):

"We put in a bid to run sort of like a little XX centre, and we put in a bid for about £XXk because it was also about buying the weights and all of that, and we haven't really heard anything back from that particular centre, right now, but I think we could probably use the basis of some of that bid.
I think we kind of know the philosophy and the…sort of the ethos and what it is that we're doing it for.
You know, so that would be the sort of the pilot, is to go in for three months, and we just thought wow!
And then we thought, well, what would we charge if we were…if we were going to a group of people, so, you know, the initial session always would be one-on-one just to try to assess what's happening with that person's body, what's happening with their mind, around their goal-setting.
And then – you know, because I'm not…I'm not proven yet, you know.
This is still quite new".
(Case#5, 2013b/Transcript)

Also, in Case 4, as follows(Case#4, 2013a/Audio MP4):

"I work autonomously partly because I've done the job for so long, so I work a lot on my own".
(Case#4, 2013b/Trasncript/04.02.31)

This illustrates for me the dichotomous nature of the "entrepreneurial condition", being confronted on the one hand with quite exciting "wow" opportunities when working in concert with others, but also working on an inner process of "am I good enough, is this right for me and can I really do this?"

I would also refer back to my earlier points regarding the data collection methodology: Without a trusted space, I do not think many entrepreneurs would be so revealing about their inner process.

We can see in this extract the reference to working out the ground-rules in this emergent relationship... *"the philosophy and the...sort of the ethos"* and yet in her mind this was also generating questions about her own readiness. Perhaps in this fragment, we can also see a commonly cited challenge when working with female leaders which is the introjection of societal norms which can create self limiting barriers, recently popularized by the COO of Facebook, Sheryl Sandberg, in her book, Lean in (Sandberg, 2013), but also resting on feminist literature, such as Cordelia Fine, Delusions of Gender, (Fine, 2010) when she writes:

> *"Somewhat inconveniently, when faced with the prospect of a maths test that will probe one's mathematical strengths and weaknesses, the female mind brings out its gender identity....Research suggests that the deadly combination of knowing-and-being (women are bad at maths and I am a woman) can lower performance expectations, as well as trigger performance anxiety and negative emotions".*
> *(Fine, 2010, p32).*

The writing of both Sandberg and Fine seem to link back to the notion of there being an internal process of mental construction and an external process of sociological orientation that were frequently at odds with each other. This had vital implications later as I began to realize that I was in the process of constructing a model and not just generating a list. There was a dynamic

relationship between Identity and relationship which was captured in the social process.

Throughout April 2014 I continued to play and toy with the database of codes and trying to analyze the relationships between them. By mid April, I had developed the thinking to the point where I had the following assets in place:

- Level 3 Codes, such as self reliance, memory, etc.
- Contradictions, such as Identity and Relationships
- Social Process

However, I recognized that there were many codes that could not reasonably be sorted under the umbrella of social process. This was evident visually, as many of the columns in the coding database were over filled by a seemingly long list of Level 3 codes, such as risk, opportunity and sustainability. As I thought about why the model was only able to explain part of the coding database, I returned to re-read the transcripts and listen to the audio. There was something missing for sure. Again, re-experiencing the context of the conversations, but after having gone through an intensive round of coding, made me more sensitive to those aspects of the conversation that I had grouped under "chatter" at Level 1 or less important codes in Level 2. I also noticed that what was on the mind of the entrepreneurs was a whole series of other dilemmas that I had missed on the first time around.

- Rigorous / Room to Think
- Structure / Bouncing idea
- Thoroughness / Just Starting

This did not seem to relate to a social process, at least not directly. Again, as I paired codes together there seemed to be many in direct contradiction to each other. I was now sensitized to this and went through a similar process of assembling the codes under columns and trying to identity a meta-code that would envelope the others. Initially, I thought I had found it, in Structured and Adaptive, but there were too may codes left over that could not be grouped

under these meta-codes and so they failed in this respect. For example, codes such as Vision or Holistic could not comfortably fit under either of these two words. Through trial and error, what did emerge were two meta codes that related to Vision, with codes such as the following:

- Holistic
- Competitive landscape
- Investment mindset
- Product Evolution

There was also a group of codes that related to strategically impactful areas but pointed to Method, and which were different in nature to Vision, such as the following:

- Customers
- Markets
- Quality
- Technical difficulty

These second batch of codes seemed to relate to a much more tangible real world setting of the entrepreneurs. As with Identity and Relationships, there seemed a dynamic tension between the words: Vision and Method. They were words that would appear hard to reconcile in practice. Indeed, the transcripts showed a frequent tension between them, as can be evidenced by extracts from the coaching session with Case 3 on 23 October 2013 (Case#3, 2013a/Audio MP4):

> *(3.2.4.3) "Can I not set up a business I want to set up, and make the business plan up as I go along?"*
> *(Case#3, 2013b/Transcript)*
> *(3.2.4.6) "I tend to have a big vision, right, if you do this, this and this, it should work and to get people to help me figure out the details".*
> *(Case#3, 2013b/Transcript)*

As I became more attentive to the details of the text, I became drawn to

evidence where within the same fragment, the dichotomy seemed to exist, as if the two ideas are in tension with each other at the same time, rather than addressed in a more sequential manner.

I realized that one code that fitted perfectly, which I had rather assumed had just been a bit of "biz jargon" was a Level 2 code, Strategic. In the sense I intended from the coaching perspective, it meant the process the entrepreneur was going through to think through where they were and where they were going (Neil, 2008). In the fragment above, the client is describing where they are now, *"have a big vision..."* and then they *"throw forward"* to use Heidegger's phrase, to that future state, *"get people to help me figure out the details". (Heidegger, 1949), (Ree, 1998).*

I felt that I had made progress but there were still many Level 3 codes that were uncategorized and still forming a long list of ill sorted words. I still lacked a coherent explanation for all these phenomena.

Again, I went back to the transcripts and audio recordings to see what I had missed, but this time with even greater attainment and with some big clues about what I was looking for. I had a sense that there was something about the way entrepreneurs got their projects off the ground.

As I looked through the words once more, there seemed to be two natural groupings and these came to me quite quickly: Opportunism, the sense that entrepreneurs were seeing opportunities and "taking the plunge"; but also a process of learning, which could often mean experimentation, trial and error and developing new capabilities. For example, one of my clients was a nurse who had developed a process for freeze drying ingredients, which could be useful in geographies around the world where storage and refrigeration were a problem. This involved a number of experiments and tests, and advice from pharmacological experts. It seemed to be a quite different process from the more strategic and methodical approach taken by others entrepreneurs. She

was aware of a broad idea of what she was looking to do but the specific market and the specific product were not yet clear to her, and could only become clear when she had fully understood the properties of the material she was working with.

I therefore settled on two meta codes: Opportunistic and Adaptive. However, once again following testing and trial and error, there were too many codes that could not be grouped under these and, although significant, they failed as meta-codes. Opportunism seemed to work, but I changed the second meta code to Learning. These were the two words that worked best as they explain the remaining Level 3 codes:

- Flexibility / Tentative
- Taking the plunge / Experiencing
- Flexibility / Enriching myself
- New realities / Knowing Nothing
- Risk / Practical Learning

Once again, there seem to be a dichotomous relationship between these two codes that was not apparent when the words were simply sitting in long lists. I would characterize this as the "sink or swim" dilemma; that is, how do I learn to do something before learning how to do it? The opportunist will see the chance and move to exploit it, even at the risk of exposing their lack of competence. In contrast, the learner will create the chance by developing a capability through experimentation, trial and error, coaching and practice.

The final piece of the jig saw fell into place when I realized that the dynamic between Opportunism and Learning involved the process of Emergence. It is through resolving these tensions between the opportunity and their competency to exploit it, that the entrepreneur emerges into a market place. For example, these are extracts from Case 4 (Case#4, 2013b/Transcript):

We have a sense that they can see an opportunity:

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(4.2.7.3) "I can help other artists as is very hard to find work, and they could come to the workshops while working on their own art practice and they could learn in the non academic environment".
(Case#4, 2013b/Transcript).

But, developing the necessary skill set will require adaptive learning, which is quite relational and cannot be exactly defined in advance:

(4.2.3.4) "I can glean some expertise from people who are working along the same lines".
(4.2.4.5) "I would like to draw together the different strands and bring them together because at the moment they seem quite disconnected".
(Case#4, 2013b/Transcript)
(4.2.3.3) "So having interaction with other people who are also thinking about starting their own businesses is really important for me".
(Case#4, 2013b/Transcript)

So, once again, we see an entrepreneur not being defined by a specific trait, but by being a person wrestling with a dilemma: I can see the opportunity but before I dive in, how do I learn when I have not actually done it yet?

I could also see how Emergence formed a dichotomous relationship with the other element previously discussed, Strategic. It became clear to me that the entrepreneurs in my study were wrestling with the dilemma of adopting a Strategic approach to their entrepreneurial venture, or a more Emergent approach based on being agile in exploiting opportunity and developing the necessary capability. What Case 3 is telling us is that there is an opportunity but there is no way in which they can develop a meaningful strategy before the opportunity has fully matured, which is co-dependent in part on their own learning (Case#3, 2013b/Transcript). This is a quite different process in my view that the way entrepreneurial start ups are presented in the start up hand books (Storey and Greene, 2010) and in the University enterprise courses, which stress heavily the idea of business planning as being a foundation of the start up

process. My research suggests that there is an awful lot going on before emergent entrepreneur can be in a position to write a plan.

By contrast, if we look at evidence from Case 2, we see a more strategic and measured perspective emerging, as follows (Case#2, 2013):

> *"Okay. So, in terms of the actual development of the product and the business… Because if…so, if someone was an angel investor or some other external…solely a funding person, they're going to want to see…what the business is, aren't they [laughing]? I mean, what sort of detail or how much…what was one…? Because [I mean, we'll] need that at some point – it won't be funded… If it's just funded by us, then I suppose, fine, but…although we need some concept of how we're going to do it between us anyway, I suppose. Maybe it's not that different, in the end, to what…if we wanted money from someone else…to what we're going to do anyway, because we need a plan of action on what we're going to do and…don't we, so…?"*
> *(Case#2, 2013/Transcript)*

We see Case B thinking through a series of moves and playing around with implications in her head. But interestingly, we also so a clue right at the end, that while she is primarily engaged in a work process at this point, the relational process is still at work, the "don't we, so…?" This indicates that there is a hesitancy and a need for reassurance, that was surprising for a mature business women. Again, back to the points raised above by Sandberg and Fine (Sandberg, 2013) , (Fine, 2010).

In summary therefore, I had by the revised version of the Coding and Categorization model arrived at a point where I was satisfied that there were two major processes at work:

- The Social Process
- The Work Process

There was evidence in the detail of the fragments that these two processes were not only distinct from one another but they were in dynamic relationship to one

another: The need to develop ones identity and create productive relationships with others, was commonly in tension to the work activity of getting work done. The entrepreneur has to conceive and mobilize projects yet can do this only by working through and in concert with others. This can be categorized as the "be my own boss" but "part of a winning team" dilemma. Reconciling the two is possible but requires constant agility on the part of the entrepreneur in the context of an unfolding and unpredictable context.

I had evolved these categories through the coding, and meta coding process, and the evolution of border categories that had emerged from my inquiry. Starting with a spreadsheet formed by the transcript and the three levels of coding, numbered and color coded, I then transferred these on to meta spreadsheets. Note that the numbering system allowed me to find any fragment of evidence, as follows:

- First Number: Identified the Transcript
- Second number: Identified the client statements
- Third number: Identified the statement sequence
- Fourth number: The fragment within a statement sequence. For example, I know that 4.2.3.4 relates to Case 4 (Atter, 2013a/Coding Database), and is the third statement or passage of speech and is the fourth sentence or fragment within that passage.

To my mind, this demonstrates the transparency and reference-ability that is the hallmark of the ethics of grounded theory method. By seeking to envelope the words under broader codes, I assembled a number of spreadsheets, which contained the following codes each colored differently according to its original source, as below:

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Figure 3 Coding

In Figure 4 below, there is an example from 26 April of the categorization in progress. While it was close to the final version, in that I had by then identified the Social and Work Processes, the underlying contradictions still required further work. The key to resolving this was the discovery of the role of mindset, which emerged from the data and was reinforced both by my own professional experience and through academic reading (Dweck, 2006).

Figure 4 Categorization

Reflexivity					Mindset			
Processes	Social Process				Work Process			
Contradictions	Autonomous		Relational		Structured		Adaptive	
	Self efficacy	Motivation	Shared Values	Patterns	Methodical	Strategic	Opportunitistic	Learning
	Freedom	Self Belief	Affirmation	Awareness	Methodical	Understanding Markets	Emergent	Enriching myself
	Uniqueness	Drive	Building Trust	Transparency	Economical	Investment mindset	Flexible	Experiencing
	Ownership	Reward	Getting Buy In	Collaboration	Cautious	Product evolution	Risk-taker	Action learning
Level 3	Being left	Assertion	Acceptance	Togetherness	Limitations	Investment	Openness	Enriching myself
Codes	Defining self	Confidence	Affirmation	Attachment	Methodical	Competitive Landscape	Room to think	Experiencing
	Autonomy	Combative	Anxiety	Avoidance	Rigorous	Competitive Analysis	Taking the Plunge	Knowing nothing
	Retaining ownership	Domination	Hesitancy	Making business	Structure	Differentiation	Thoughtfulness	Potential to grow
	Uniqueness	Intention	Comparisons	Parrallel Process	Economy	Opportunity	Time to Think	Real learning
	Freedom to act	Motivation	Insecurity	Relationships	Evidence-based	Portfolio	Bouncing ideas	Action learning
	Self reliance	Optimism	Visibility	Community	Explanation	Product evolution	Fizzling out	Capability
	Freedom	Purpose	Getting Buy In	Making connections	Play later	Thinking about the whole	New beginnings	Coaching
	Working on my own	Self belief	Disconnectedn	University community	Problem solving	Holistic	Out-of-Control	Nurturing
	Authenticity	Self efficacy	Collaboration	Using connections	Stages	Markets	Risk	Just starting…
	Identity	Drive	Self Doubt	Role clarity	Quality	Customers	Adaptation	Practical learning
	Culture	Rewards	Building Trust	Transparency	Thoroughness	Ethnography	New realities	Learning style
	Memory	Shares	Engagement		Execution Problems	Impact	Tolerating risk	Unable
	My story	Movement			Failure	Pivoting	Unburdening	Holistic
	Survival				Investing more than planned	Sustainability	Flexibility	
	Part of My Life				Technical difficulty		Tentative	
	Self				Delegation		Getting so far	
	Struggle				Quality minded		Stuckness	
	Investing in myself						Emergence	
	Valuing myself						Creativity	

5.6.1 Mindset

Having identified both Social Process and Work Process as the key dynamics that formed the basis of theory, I recognized that there was still a missing element. I could still not yet explain why one entrepreneur would emphasize one dimension as opposed to another. In other words, I needed to explain why one entrepreneur might emphasize "being my own boss" where as another felt they wanted to "be part of a winning team"; or the choices they adopt between being strategic as opposed to a more emergent in their approach to entrepreneurship.

To address this, I once again went back to the data. By now I was able to scan and see patterns in the data, particularly as I was tending to work with a more focused and categorized group of codes. Several of the codes stood out as having importance beyond their place in the dynamic contradictions:

- Motivation

- Values

- Goals

- Identity

These codes indicated for me that what lay behind the dynamic contradictions was a code that I had struggled to include under any of the categories so far: Mindset (Dweck, 2006). For me, this term recognized the underlying mental processes that shaped an individual's orientation and was closely linked in my mind to the concept of paradigm (Kuhn, 1962) used in the research domain.

Working with mindsets had been a longstanding professional interest off mine as a professional executive coach. The connection to the role of mindset to entrepreneurship occurred at a very specific moment in time for me. I had attended a talk at Cambridge University being given by the Entrepreneur-in-Residence, Dr. Darren Disley on 7 January 2013. He described his own personal journey from a kid growing up in the East End estates in London, becoming a professional football player, and then pivoting to study science; eventually gaining a PhD in bio-science. He subsequently co-founded Horizon Discovery which won the Queen's Award for Export in 2014. He described his own commitment to mentoring other entrepreneurs. But what stuck me was the emphasis he placed on mindset as being key to his own personal narrative. He cited Professor Carol Dweck's book, Mindset, as a key work which had helped him understand the difference between the talent mindset and a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006). She writes:

> *"Mindsets frame the running account that's taking place in people's heads. They guide the whole interpretation process. The fixed mindset creates an internal monologue that is focused on judging".*
> *(Dweck, 2006, p214).*

> *Whereas growth mindsets are "...sensitive to positive and negative information, but they're attuned to its implications for learning and constructive action."*

(Dweck, 2006) p214-15.

The speech by Dr. Disley, and the privilege to have an individual meeting with him subsequently, crystallized my understanding of mindset and it is importance in entrepreneurship. This also further confirmed my view that the field of entrepreneurship was underpinned by socio-psychological theory and not merely a mini branch of business studies.

As I began to search through the codes however, I began to take a different view from Professor Dweck on the dichotomies within mindset. I began to notice a difference between what I termed a Reflective mindset, in comparison to a Driven mindset. In reading through the transcripts, it seemed clear that the entrepreneurs were moving between a reflective state (Time to Think; Bouncing Ideas; Openness) and a more focused driven mental state (Action Learning; Impact; Competitive). I noticed that some entrepreneurs got stuck either in high reflectivity, such as Case 1, who never managed to focus down sufficiently in order to deliver on an operational project (Case#1, 2014c/Transcript), compared to Case 7 who buried themselves in the detailed operational delivery to such an extent that they missed key milestones and failed to bring other co-founders in to the venture (Case#7, 2013d).

As with other dichotomies, entrepreneurs needed to resolve a healthy balance between these competing polarities. By moving with agility from one polarity to another, entrepreneurs also respect the fact that each state required a separate mental process and cannot easily be blended together. Both reflectivity and drive are necessary elements in an entrepreneurial mindset, although each appears to become more relevant at different phases of the start up journey.

I theorized that early on, entrepreneurs might need to adopt a more reflective mindset, so they can scan the environment and consider alternative ideas and engage in creative problem solving. However, later on, it seems necessary to adopt a more focused approach, when the entrepreneur purses a specific goal

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with determination and tenacity and their ideas converge around solving very specific problems. At times, the entrepreneur needs to step back, think through options, and consider pivoting to overcome roadblocks. There seems to be a concertina effect, with mindset moving between reflective and driven states, depending on the volition of the entrepreneur and the requirements of the project.

At this stage, I would like to examine more deeply the academic theories relating to mindset that have been used to challenge and test my own emerging theory. There seem to highly relevant and widely referenced theories that shed light on what is meant by the rather ambiguous phrase "mindset", a phrase that has entered the lexicon of common business language (Dweck, 2006). There are three specific sources of literature that seems to be most useful:

- Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)
- Dynamic Motivation Theory (Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2008)
- Moral Psychology (Narvaez.D, 2009)

5.6.2 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

Developed originally by Ajzen (Ajzen, 1991), TPB seeks to understand the relationship between intention and action. In an ideal world, there would be a one-to-one relationship, but we all know that this isn't the case. There are a range of factors that might advance or inhibit the translation of our intentions into action. TPB provides what is essentially a formula to understand the relationships at play:

- Intentions (and antecedents to intentions)
- Social Norms
- Perceived Behavioral Control

TPD provides therefore a more structured view about what the elements within mindset might be (Joensuu et al., 2015). Their paper seems to indicate that volition is not by itself sufficient, and that our perception of the social setting around us is crucial, as is our own perception about our abilities to manage the

necessary steps involved in execution (Joensuu et al., 2015) (Fulcher and Scott, 2011) (Hewstone et al., 2012)**.**

To illustrate this, a recent article by Joansuu et al presented research amongst entrepreneurship students at various Finnish Universities that explored the relationship between entrepreneurial intentions and the actuality of business start ups (Joensuu et al., 2015)**.** The research indicated that antecedents of intentions were primary in inhibiting the likelihood of setting up a firm. Masculine gender, vocational qualifications and higher education levels all led to a higher propensity to set up a business (Joensuu et al., 2015)**.**

The authors write:

> *"…entrepreneurship education in higher education is a heavily masculinized discursive space which positions certain students to convert their gender capital into entrepreneurial capital required to be successful. In our study, it is possible to that female students have difficulties seeing themselves as "entrepreneurs" even though they could see themselves as "business owners" or "self employed".*
> *(Joensuu et al., 2015, p13).*

From this perspective, it is clear that we need to see mindset as something more than simply a mood or a level of willpower that we can conjure up. It goes to the heart of who we are and how we see ourselves, and contains an element of our constructed identity (Turner et al., 1992) (Gergen, 2009).

5.6.3   Dynamic Motivation Theory

Another perspective from social psychology is motivation theory (Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2008), and this can help deepen our understanding of what is meant by "mindset". Originating from Kurt Lewin's Field Theory (Lewin, 1997), dynamic motivation theory also seeks to understand how our goals are formulated in the context of dilemma and conflict and what factors determine

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our choices (Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2008). However, motivation theory comes from a more a dynamic perspective and driven by the drivers and strength of rewards in a given context. This is founded on the early gestalt research of Lewin (Lewin, 1997). Cattell identified motivations that were generated by our interaction in our environment, and not necessarily related to our abilities or our temperament (Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2008).

In 1983, Kuhn identified the distinction between "choice motivation" and "control motivation" (Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2008). This was later further developed by Heckhausen into the Rubicon Model of motivation (Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2008), based on the premise that there are four motivational mindsets:

- Pre-decisional
- Pre-actional
- Actional
- Post-actional

Heckhausen's position is that we move through different mindset stages, ranging from a more open, reflective and deliberative mindset early on, to one where we become increasingly focused and immersed when we enter the execution phase (Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2008).

This position is compatible with my own findings. Indeed, I believe that my own theory collapses these four mindsets into two, with "pre-decisional" and "post-actional" being absorbed into what I call the "reflective mindset"; and the "pre-actional" and "actional" mindsets being bracketed into what I have termed the "driven mindset" (Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2008):

> "*The deliberative mindset is characterised by open mindedness and by the objective processing of all available information of an action outcome (desirability) and the viability of individual wishes (viability)...The implementation mindset is characterized by cognitive turning toward information that facilitates the initiate of goal orientated behavior, and*

prevents postponement".

(Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2008, p278).

In both the Rubicon model and my own research model, each mindset has both positive and negative implications (Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2008). The key is the agility of one's mindset to optimize the process of reflection but also recognize that its time to into action. For example, if an entrepreneur stays deliberating for too long, they risk prevarication and might enter the execution phase in a distracted state of mind. They will miss that "flow experience" describe by Csikszentimihayli (1975).

Transactional Analysis, with its notion of open and closed scripts is theory that broadly reinforces this perspective and places the concepts in a relational context. As Sills and Fowlie write (Sills, 2011):

"We write our scripts - the result of the interplay between our hungers (for structure, relationship, and incident) and our early experiences…Script becomes pathology when it is not amenable to updating with new information and experience, and when our non-conscious relational patterns impede our healthy relating".
(Sills, 2011, Loc 2284)

However, while Theory of Planned Behavior and Dynamic Motivation Theory tells us a lot about mindset, I don't feel this is the whole story. I've had too many entrepreneurs say to me that they are putting their "heart and soul" into the venture, or that they "believe" in what they're doing. These words move us to a different place. If we look at the transcript of Case 8, there are constant references to the inspiration she draws from her culture and her faith (Atter, 2014b). She is passionate about mobilizing social action and building a social enterprise able to provide legal and facilitation support for social action groups (Case#8, 2013a)**.** This leads me to believe that the more analytical aspects of social psychology, while valuable, are ultimately limited. To understand the question of volition, we need to consider moral psychology and the value-based

decisions we make (Haidt, 2012) (Narvaez.D, 2009).

5.6.4 Moral Psychology

In a recent article, Psychologist Nina Strohminger argued that our personalities are shaped not so much by our memory, but through the moral choices we make and what it is we choose to value in life (Strohminger, 2015). Drawing upon scientific studies of memory loss and personality transformation, she concludes:

> *"It's not that identity is centered around morality. It's that morality necessitates the concept of identity, breathes life into it, provides its raison d'être". (Strohminger, 2015, web page).*

It is this moral sense that defines us and is the source of our passion and drives. It is what attracts us to certain people and repels from others (Haidt, 2012).

I conclude therefore, that mindset comprises sociological, psychological and philosophical dimensions. Mindset has practical day to day implications for our flow of energy and attention, but also helps explain existential choices we make.

My research findings show that mindset shapes how entrepreneurs engage in two primary processes: The social process and the work process. Each of these processes have contained within them a pair of dynamic contradictions that have to be resolved by accessing our goal-directing systems, our self and social categorizations and our value judgments, all bundled into what we might term mindset.

5.7　From Theory to Model

Figure 5 below shows the summation of this model, with the different model elements listed in rows to the left; and the categorical distinctions set out in columns. The coding and categorization model was mostly completed by May 10 2014, although it continued to go through tactical adjustment:

Figure 5 Model Summary

Reflexivity	Mindset							
Processes	Social Process				Work Process			
Contradictions	Autonomous		Collaborative		Strategic		Emergent	
Distinctions	Identity	Motivation	Value Driven	Attached	Visionary	Methodical	Opportunistic	Learner
Categories	Self Belief	Freedom	Affirmation	Awareness	Market Insight	Methodical	Emergent	Enriching myself
	Uniqueness	Drive	Building Trust	Transparency	Investment mindset	Economical	Flexible	Experiencing
	Ownership	Reward	Getting Buy In	Collaboration	Product evolution	Cautious	Risk-taker	Action learning

5.7.1　Theoretical Summary

Having reached this formulation through detailed coding work, it was necessary to step back and critically examine the theory and the relationships described within it. I now needed to sense-test the theory by relating the outcomes of the coding and categorization with what I knew from literature and other aspects of my professional expertise.

Reading Strauss and Corbin clarified for me what I needed next:

> *"Similarities and uniqueness or differences are very important in theory building because it enables researchers to differentiate concepts by their differences but also in the end to integrate them together through a common thread".*
> *(Strauss and Corbin, 2015) Loc 2808*

The keystone of the theory rests on the relationship between mindset, social relationships and work style, so this is where I will now turn the focus of my attention.

The following statements seek to summarize the key tenets of the theory that emerged from my research:

- The model's scaling reflects thematic distinctions (not logical polarities)
- The theory describes systems of goals/drives ("ergs") and not personality traits (Hewstone et al., 2012)
- Determined by individual-group interaction
- Dynamic over time, reflecting the emergence (and possible instability) of the entrepreneur's self categorization
- Entrepreneurs develop and learn by resolving a series of distinctions within themselves and between themselves and their environment.
- The key to the resolution of these dichotomies is mindset, and the nexus of drives, values, and goal-setting systems that consciously or unconsciously shape our decision making.
- An entrepreneur's mindset is expressed through their relational preferences (Collaborative or Autonomous) and their Work Style (Strategic or Emergent)
- The resolution of these contradictions is likely to be transitional as the entrepreneur evolves new perspectives and they confront differences challenges in their start up journey
- A key component of the learning process was the extent to which the mindset of the entrepreneur was open and reflective or focused and driven

The theory is based on the grounded statements of entrepreneurs themselves, who seemed to move between competing dilemmas and contradictions, which were well described by Lewin's conflict theory (Lewin, 1997). My findings indicate that entrepreneurs are required to mediate between their social process, resolving their need for autonomy with the necessity to work with others; while working through challenging and quite technical activities which they are often confronting for the first time.

The theoretical premise is that entrepreneurs need to move dynamically and with agility in order to find the right balance for them, based on their own evolving mindset and in their specific context.

I am clear that the model is not based on logical polarities. For instance, Autonomy and Collaboration are not antonyms, but are distinct values on a scale. It is theoretically possible to combine both the right degree of autonomy with the right degree of collaboration with others, but achieving this balance is hard and requires psychological effort to achieve it. It doesn't just happen and nor can it be left to chance.

The dynamic values that the theory describes are not a facet of personality or traits. I see it as entirely possible for introverts to be collaborative and extroverts to desire a degree of autonomy. The reason for this is that a key driver of the dynamic theory is that entrepreneurs are responding to both situational context and also their own value system, factors which both shape their mindset. Entrepreneurs have self efficacy and volition and from this perspective, I challenge the notion that our personalities can be reduced to a few fixed elements.

By engaging in entrepreneurship it is possible that our personalities might change and that we can develop or re-balance certain inherent traits. However, this is not the point of my research. My interest is in how entrepreneurs grow, learn and develop sufficiency in key tenets of entrepreneurship that enable them to be successful and sufficiently adaptive.

Based on my research, I believe that entrepreneurship involves a de-stabilization in our social environment and therefore increased fluidity in our self continuity and self categorization (Turner et al., 1992). It is that dynamism that my theory seeks to capture.

The key to this is self efficacy, of which a key part is self awareness (Hewstone et al., 2012). Self efficacy also draws upon theories of emotional and social intelligence, which emphasize strongly the notion of awareness as a key precondition for effective adaptation and change (Goleman, 2011) and also to the work done by Dr. Joiner on agility, (Joiner, 2006) which emphasizes the need for leaders to retain balance and alignment through a series of transitions (Joiner, 2006).

5.7.2 Model Development

In this section, I will try to show how by June 2014 I was developing responses to three key questions that had emerged during the course of the preceding six months. These are a more specific and directed set of questions than those I was addressing in January 2014.

Table 5 Project Questions

June 2014	
Learning Theory	How do I graphically show a model based on my theory, in a way that can be understood and interpreted by early phase entrepreneurs?
Model Development	How do I find a way for entrepreneurs to learn about the model in ways that are relevant to them?
My Practice Application	How do I develop and test the model so that I can prove the concept and advance to a prototype?

I was becoming aware that by using grounded methods, I was generating potentially rich insights (Moustakas, 1994) (Strauss and Corbin, 2015). But the challenge I faced now was to turn this work into a coherent theory of how entrepreneurs learn, supported by meaningful interventions that I could make. Again, this project was not just about developing a theory, but delivering a viable model in practice.

By May 2014, I had reached a point by which interesting patterns and dynamics

were beginning to emerge, but I did not yet have an over arching theory to explain what was happening and address directly my research question that had emerged has the key focus point of my study: Understanding how entrepreneurs learn and develop.

After solving this part of the puzzle, I felt the need to consider the outcomes or products of this model. What would be the product of the model? What happens when all the dynamics of the model are in play?

I felt at this stage that I needed to step away from the data and think more conceptually and creatively about what might be happening within and between the different elements. I started sketching and drawing different models and patterns, to see if anything clicked. Again, I was able to bring onto the process years of experience of having supported coaching and consulting clients to build models. Running in parallel with my doctoral research, I was working on a consultancy project using acton research methods with elements of grounded theory with a frontline customer service team. Together with the project team, we were asked to develop a model of customer management that was portable across different countries. This assignment was very fresh on my mind while confronting this aspect of my research project.

What I had discovered was that there were many different types of models, depending on the different types of relationships one was trying to understand and interpret (Hayes, 2002) These can be summarised as follows:
- Linear
- Concentric
- Triangulated / Complex Triangulated
- Pie Diagrams
- Two x Two
- Spider Diagrams

Once I had made the dynamic connections between the different factors, or

polarities during April 2014, I began to experiment with different models from May 2014 onwards, to see if I could capture the relationships that were emerging in the data.

Linear Models

Linear models show the elements or actors of a model in a sequence, such as phases or steps. This might be used in a consultancy project to show the flow of events or in operations management showing a value chain. I sensed that a classical process flow would not be right, as it built up sequentially and is open ended, but I did test a variant which was a circular flow diagram, commonly used in cognitive behavioral models, as follows:

Figure 6 Circular Model

While the model has some interest, it does not express the creative tension between the factors that I was hoping for. It also does not provide any explanatory depth and I found myself stuck at a generic level.

Concentric Models

Concentric models are helpful to show the relative importance or centrality of factors, with a central factor radiating outwards. Whilst these format

emphasised the central importance of mindset, it had a similar drawback to the circular model above in that it did not convey any of the complexity that I was uncovering form the data

Triangulated /Complex Triangulated

Triangulated models are useful to show the tension between three primary factors, that have to be balanced or reconciled. The complex version can include an inverted triangle within the main triangle to show a different level or order, for example the "hard factors" in the large triangle, with "softer" more subjective factors inside.

This model has some merit and at a conceptual level, it is useful to show the elements function together. It is also possible to show more complex relationships, particularly by using the mid-point inter-sections. For example, the intersection between Social Preference and Work Preference can indicate the preferred level of autonomy or collaboration, and this can therefore indicate the impact on work outcomes.

However, the draw back as indicated above is that the model implies the outcome is a balance or pyramidal harmony. This is on contrast to the theme of choice and dilemma that the data was suggesting. In other words, the model seemed to imply that there was a perfect harmonious intersection, rather than a series of continually uncomfortable trade offs.

Figure 7 Complex Model
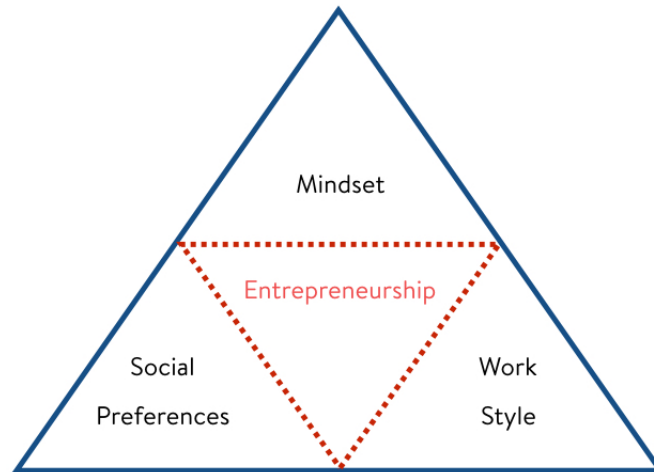
The other difficulty with the inverted triangular format was that it was only a conceptual framework, as there would be little prospect of my being able to construct a useful instrument or tool form it.

Pie Charts

A key step to resolving how to convey the dynamics of the data analysis came when I began to experiment with designing simple questionnaires, which also led me to think about how to express the data. On June 7, I produced a simple questionnaire design, recognizing that Social Preferences and Work Styles would require different scales. Below, I have included the illustration of the Social Preference Scale.

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Figure 8 Early Questionnaire Sample

		Social Preference				
	Answer the questions in relation to your role as an entrepreneur.					
	Place a 1 in the column that you agree with, or mostly agree with. For example, if you disagree with the statement "I consider my reasons before I take action", then place a 1 in the No column and a zero in the Yes column					
		Yes	No			
15	My culture and identity gives me a unique perspective	0	1			
16	I know I will be successful	0	1			
17	I need to be free to make my own decisions	0	1			
18	I have the personal drive to succeed	1	0			
19	I want to be rewarded for taking risks	0	1			
20	I want to control my own future	1	0			
21	I am the right one to lead this venture	1	0			
		3	4			
22	I want to be part of a winning team	0	1			
23	I tend to place trust in people early on	0	1			
24	I want people to share my vision	0	1			
25	I look for a win/win with others	1	0			
26	I need to attract the right people in order to build a strong company	1	0			
27	I build networks with others	0	1			
28	I listen and learn from others	0	1			
		2	5			
		Relational Score	Autonomy Score			
	Social Preference Score	6	8			
	Mindset Multiplier factor		6.4	Applied to dominant preference		

Figure 9 Pie Charts

After tabulating the mock results, I created a pie chart to indicate the relative weight of Autonomy versus Relational Scores. I did a similar exercise for both Strategic and Emergent. By chance, I placed the pie charts by there side. I knew I was making progress as I could now not only express that there were stark and definitive choices an entrepreneur would have to make between the competing polarities, but I was also now able to quantify and express this numerically.

By completing a simple questionnaire derived from the original analytic codes, it now seemed to be possible to develop a useful instrument that an entrepreneur could use reflexively to think about how they were orientating themselves immersed *within* their entrepreneurial role.

However, I also sensed that retaining 2 separate pie charts would be cumbersome and also, by separating the two, I was still missing a key factor, which was how these two dimensions worked together.

Simply by looking at the two pie charts next to each other gave me a strong visual prompt to merge the two together and this is what led me to experiment further with the creation of a two-by-two model. I was also excited by the possibility that rather than having two halves, I would be creating quadrants, which would then require the entrepreneur to account for how they positioned themselves simultaneously against both dimensions. This seemed to be much closer to expressing the dynamic tension and contradictory nature that was at the heart of my emerging model.

Two by Two models
These models are used when two factors are measured according to two divergent axes and create trends lines when the points are plotted.

Between June 7 and June 10 I had another acceleration in my analytic process (Charmaz, 2006) as I worked through the possibilities of putting the two dimensions together in a single model. I also saw the possibility to utilize the

nexus, or crossing point between the two dimensions and recognize that this was the pivotal role performed by mindset, which seemed to shape the direction and extent of the entrepreneurial preferences along either of the two polarities. For instance, I hypothesized that an entrepreneur who valued independence and freedom would likely to have a preference for autonomy in their own venture. Similarly, an entrepreneur who enjoyed collaboration with others, would likely demonstrate a preference for a team based working style.

I saw the need to test and re-test this emergent theory, but as a basic idea it seemed to be logical and also borne out by the data. I thought back to Case 6 for instance, and recalled her preference for working within a team structure, even at risk to having some of her own ideas valued and recognized (Case#6, 2014b/Transcript). I also thought about Case 7, who had burrowed away independently without having built the necessary networks or collaborations he would need to realize his venture (Case#7, 2013b/Transcript).

The new possibility was to ask deeper questions about the mindset, social preferences and work styles of entrepreneurs worked in concert with each other to generate a three dimensional understanding.

It now became possible to develop an understanding of how entrepreneurs acted when they were both autonomous and strategic; or when they were highly collaborative and emergent. Once again the codes helped here, as I could return to the database and identify categories and themes that seemed to indicate one quadrant or another. For example, opportunism, and being an opportunist, seemed to indicate an entrepreneur who was both autonomous (free to act) and emergent (see new possibilities). I found it quite easy to develop distinct descriptions of entrepreneurs using this method. Entrepreneurs who were strategic and autonomous were likely to use their own creative imagine and invention to drive a venture; whereas those who had a strategic orientation and were also preferenced towards collaboration, were likely to value and support a team process.

I was able to make sense of the type of entrepreneur I had worked with who was highly networked within a collaborative community and attuned to new developments in their field. This described how creative entrepreneurs frequently operated.

By grounding the model in a questionnaire structure, I also saw the potential to build a useful model that could help an entrepreneur think and reflect about the trade offs and dilemmas they were experiencing. The two-by-two format had also moved me a long way from linear explanations and deterministic life cycle models, and seemed to offer a fresh perspective on the various factors influencing the mindset and behaviors of entrepreneurs.

Spider Diagrams

As I experimented with showing the two-by-two model graphically, I discovered the feature to express the values on the X & Y axes as a pattern, rather than simply lines. The resulting analysis creates a shape, rather than trends lines. This shape is generated by scoring the factors on two intersecting axes.

Figure 10 Spider Diagram
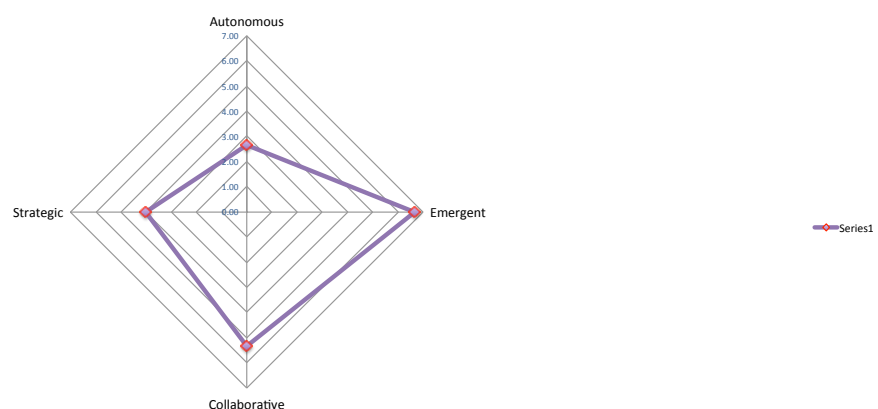
The graphic this generated seemed to offer the best potential to express the dynamic relationship within the dynamic analysis, and with iterations and

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revision, has been the basis for the ongoing development of the model. The two-by-two spider diagram offers a readily accessible and graphical expression of the combination of polarities that was generated from my grounded analysis. It authentically conveys the elements of the model, and also has the useful (and validating) feature that it can generate a quantified analysis that the User can accept or reject, and revise through on going trial and error. This model had the possibility of direct engagement with users, rather than simply being presented and read in a passive state.

The advantage of working with the Spider Diagram is that it had two primary axes, which could be represented by the Social Process and the Work Process, with the polarities at either end. I could see how different entrepreneurs might emphasize Autonomy and Strategic at one time, but then shift their focus to Collaborative and Emergent at another. By using this approach, I did not have to pre-determine which polarity and set of relationships were more important than another. This was for the User to decide. I also very much liked the idea that the outcome of the model would produce a moveable pattern, or shape, rather than a line or list. This might allow different entrepreneurs to easily compare and contrast their different approaches to entrepreneurship. I believe that there is a great advantage in being able to visualize a pattern, as a prompt for a reflective process, rather than having this simply presented as a list of words.

This new model formulation also fitted with the ideas described above: I was not looking for the one right way to be an entrepreneur, but to understand the variety of approaches and the choices that were being made along the way. Having a model that allowed for the diversity within the entrepreneurial journey fitted well with the philosophy that underlay my project.

In the example below from 8 July, it is possible to see the simple questionnaire on the left; the summary table, and the spider diagram generated as a result.

Figure 11 Questionnaire Version 08.07.2014 with Spider Diagram
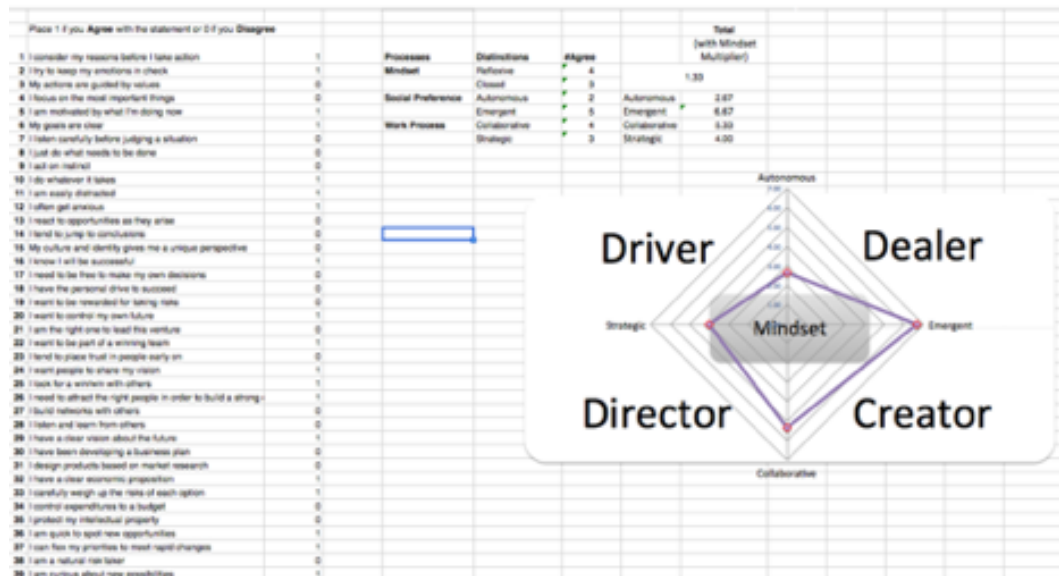
A key step was the recognition for the need for both a Current and Future state. I was keen to capture the notion that entrepreneurs were "in flight" and I theorized that entrepreneurs might need to move between the different profiles through their entrepreneurial journey, both as they developed as people and also because of force of circumstance. I was influenced in my thinking by exposure to recent work by Marshall Goldsmith, Triggers (Goldsmith and Reiter, 2015), which centers on the concept of circular creation and relationship between our own personal change and the influence our environment has on us. The authors explain the concept of Triggers as a prompt for us to change aspects of our mindset or behavior (Goldsmith and Reiter, 2015). This model seems highly relevant to entrepreneurs, who are at one and the same time self directed but also subject to random and uncertain environmental influences.

This resulted in the reformulation of the questionnaire template to include both

a Current and Future state, as can be seen below:
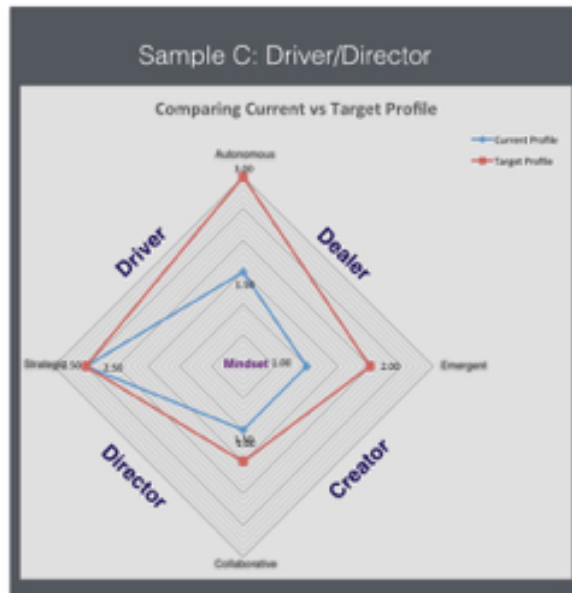
This created the possibility for the entrepreneur to think about the gap between where they are now and where they need to be in their venture, and to think through the implications for both their own personal development, and to anticipate both risks and opportunities that might arise along the way.

From an analytical point of view, it also opened up the possibility to compare and contrast the Current and Future, not only at the overall level but also in specific item responses.

A key problem was to understand how Mindset fitted specifically into this model, given that the axes were formed by Social and Work Processes. It then occurred to me that this potentially sat at the very centre of the intersection and essentially magnified or limited the extent to which an entrepreneur emphasized

or de-emphasized a given polarity. For example, I formulated an assumption whereby the entrepreneur was highly aware and reflective, they were more likely to exhibit higher levels of a particular polarity as this would be part of an active and conscious choice. It suggests to me that the entrepreneur will have reflected and learned from experience, and this might paradoxically have enabled them to develop sufficient competency in a broader range of attitudes and behaviours. An entrepreneur in a reflective mindset is more likely to recognize when they are stuck and a change of approach is called for.

On the other hand, a driven mindset suggests a more impulsive and instinctive "do whatever it takes" approach, which in my view is likely to lead to less attachment to any particular polarity and will lead to a more pragmatic and reactive pattern of behaviour. It suggests a mental framework which shields the entrepreneur from distractions, but at the same time will also tend to screen out useful feedback information. This results in a tendency to get "stuck" in unproductive loops. An example of this would be the common tendency for entrepreneurs to attempt to do things for themselves; or to "take then plunge" before having a thought through plan in place.

5.7.3   Towards a Dynamic Mindset Model

In their work on entrepreneurial psychology, Locke and Baum emphasize the critical importance of maintaining a healthy balance of vision on the one hand, and drive on the other (Locke and Baum, 2007). They write:

> *"Foresight is the ability to see beyond the immediate moment, to see past what is working now, to see what will work in future. It's the ability to see not just actuality but potentiality".*
> *(Locke and Baum, 2007, Loc 2903)*

Later they add:

> *Entrepreneurs…want things to happen. They want to make the vision real. They are impatient for results. They show initiative. They are practice rather than passive."*

(Locke and Baum, 2007, Loc 2967)

While I agree with Locke and Baum to some extent, I also noticed that their chapter lapsed into a common pattern of presenting to entrepreneurs a long and often contradictory lists of characteristics, or talents, which they must have "in store" for whenever needed. This is superhuman! Of greater interest me are the choices entrepreneurs make as to when and how to emphasize one attribute and what might get in the way of making that choice when circumstances demanded it. We develop and exercise our talents through activity in a specific context, not by storing them in some kind of "warehouse" (Engeström, 2008). This leads me to think more and more about the creation of a more dynamic and interactive model, than simply conveying long lists of attributes that in theory, entrepreneurs needed to demonstrate.

However, what we can learn from transactional analysis and broader psychological theory is the necessity to be able to access both a reflective state and also a driven state, but not get stuck in either. Entrepreneurs must have the agility to move between strategy and execution and between independence and team working. Inevitably personal volition would play a part, but also the context in which the entrepreneur found themselves, and this often related in my view to the start up stage that the entrepreneur was working on.

This seemed to sharpen the focus of my research still further and go into more detail about how entrepreneurs learn and develop in the context of their emerging business.

To address this, I felt the need to develop a visual model showing how my emerging theory would work in practice. I developed a more mature model, which I decided to call Dynamiqe.

Having thought through the catalytic role of mindset, it now seemed clear to me that this was placed at the very central position in the model. The interaction between the social and work dimensions, shaped by mindset, seemed to generate naturally distinctive entrepreneurial profiles.

Above all I was excited by the possibilities of what was happening in the quadrants. What happens at the intersection of Autonomy and Emergence; or Collaboration and Strategic? This question opened up the possibility to create rich descriptions of entrepreneurial behavior. I could reasonably describe what being Strategic or Emergent meant from the codes; but what about when Strategic intersected with Collaboration, or Autonomous with Strategic.

This seemed like an opportunity creative work. I developed profiles descriptions, drawing upon the Coding Database:

5.7.4   Profile Descriptions

Driver

An entrepreneur who has developed their own vision and business concept, often through scientific, technical or creative innovation or involving some other specialty in which the entrepreneur has thought leadership. They can see the big picture and are likely to have a long time, life changing commitment to pursuing this specific venture.

Dealer

An entrepreneur who identifies and exploits shifts in the culture and environment around them. Seizing the moment, they put together deals that enable them to move quickly and profit from the gap in the market. Often, the Dealer will have several projects on the go at once, trying out what will work best. Dealers are often quick to exit from projects which get stuck or appear risky or complicated.

Director

The strategist behind an entrepreneurial venture, they will often have carefully analyzed and evaluated the market, and conducted market and consumer research. They will build teams around them, and employ others to develop products. They will pay great attention to the funding needs of the business, seeking sources of finance as the venture develops.

Creator

The Creator will be immersed in a community of like minded people and will draw upon their energy. The Creator is capable of making unique things that no one

has thought of before and seem to come from "nowhere". The Creator will view entrepreneurial projects more from an aesthetic point of view than a financial one. It has to be good, it has to be cool. A passionate, demanding perfectionist seeking to make the world more beautiful.

These archetypal descriptions are intentionally neutral to positive in nature as their purpose is to describe and define differences. However, also implied within the model are potentially negative patterns and derailment factors, which might arise when some of the attributes of each profile are applied in an inappropriate context or taken to excess. For example, it is possible to see within the Driver profile the risk of becoming too attached to a vision and failing to take other people with you. This can be seen in Case 7, working for too long independently on an e-commerce proposition based on his own professional background, without engaging with users in the market and without building a collaborative to support the venture. As a result, he was taking too long to get the venture off the ground.
.
In another example, we see in Case 6 indications of the Director profile, being overly concerned to build a team but often at the expense of protecting her own interests, having been the prime product developer and too concerned to put the ambiguous relationships amongst the founders at risk (Case#7, 2013b).

In Case 5, we can see the Creator profile and the immersion in the development of emergent products and new possibilities; and the overwhelming concerned to collaborate with others (Case#5, 2013b/Transcript). This results in low pricing of work and a tendency to invest too much in product development prior to generating sales.

By linking back to the case histories and the transcripts, it was therefore also possible to develop a matching set of derailment factors for each of the profiles, summarized as follows:

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5.7.5 Derailment Patterns

Driver

Overly structured and didactic in their approach, they too often fail to listen and respond to those around them. They have introverted their vision, making feedback indistinguishable from personal criticism. The readiness to buy into their vision becomes the test of personal loyalty to them. They are also prone to grandiosity, and their projects lack contact with the real world. Random events and unpredictability can disrupt their venture. Often surrounded by "yes men", working for free with the distant prospect of stock options.

Director

So concerned with creating and maintaining harmony within the founder or start up team, Directors are unable to make the tough choices and manage the necessary trade offs. Decision-making slows down "snow ploughs" and people lose faith in the venture. Directors are too probe to bringing in "big company" management methods too early into a fledgling venture and they have a tendency to over complicate decision making.

Dealer

The Dealer has a preference for highly flexible, emergent ways of working and a networked style, but they need to build structure and discipline into their work process, and often needs to do more to generate transparency about what they are doing to others. They can be seen as a "lone wolf" and in a start up team, this can create mistrust and early fragmentation.

Creator

The Creator is prone to becoming detached from sources of advice and support, as they spend too much time in their own head. They do not validate ideas and objectives. They are also prone to do too much by themselves, often working at areas in which they have no expertise e.g. Building a website, selling, etc. One symptom is that projects are too slow as the Creator seeks to build in more and more features and adapt the product to the very latest trends.

It is worth reinforcing at this point that the profiles are intended to define

entrepreneurial roles that are formed through goal-systems and motivation profiles, and are not personality types or trait descriptions. It is likely that for an entrepreneur to take a venture from concept through to execution they will need to demonstrate some aspects of all of these four profiles, or team up with co-founders and contributors who will. For example, both entrepreneurs and introverts will need to adopt a "dealer" role at some point, in order to build networks, attract investors and generate sales. **How** they do this might vary, but **what** they do is governed by necessity.

Similarly, referencing works by Elliott Eisner (Eisner, 2002) we can understand the creative process used in meaningful innovation, in which he identified specific contributions of the creative mind (Eisner, 2002):

- Sensory differentiation
- Concept formation
- Imagination "process of creating something that is not, but which could be"

Creativity is not therefore defined to only those we might classify broadly as "creatives" (artists, designers, musicians, etc) but to anyone engaged in the creative process, and this might include scientists, coders, and analysts (Eisner, 2002).

Moreover, those who might be referenced towards the Creator role, will also have to move to the Driver, Director and Dealer roles at some stage in order to build a viable business. For example, one of the commonly cited issues raised during my research at Central St Martin's was the difficulty of charging the right value for creative work. This is one of the reasons many creative workers move beyond individual work, to form collectives or develop more scale-able means to distribute their product. A good example of this is Juxdit who have recently

launched an online market place for crowd-funded creative projects (O Toole, 2015).

5.7.6 Development of Archetypes

In March of 2014, I attended an entrepreneurial development workshop at Central St Martins which began a new strand of research where I began to develop narratives of entrepreneurs, so that I could take a more aggregated view of how real individuals might interact with the emerging model. One of the advantages of ground theory method is that is breaks down the transcript data into fragments and allows an almost forensic examination, as a basis for building up theory. However, my experience is that it can also be easy to lose site of the wholeness of people who form part of the study. I felt a need to create archetypal cases so that I could 'road test the model". Before piloting it with real clients in live testing.

In the Workshop, we developed composite and disguised profiles of our target clients. We were encouraged to blend real stories together to preserve anonymity, but at the same time, retain a richness of detail and reality. We started by using a narrative template examine the person's life history, the demographic profile, and the values and beliefs. We then moved on to mind-mapping their story and issues and concerns.

These mind maps were the basis of the narrative cases I was to develop that enabled me to describe the characteristics of each quadrant. By drawing upon examples from real life, but at the same time creatively recombining these cases, I was able to develop clear pictures in my own mind of the different entrepreneurial profiles. This was to be a key outcome from my research and created the opportunity for the client to be able to compare and contrast themselves with these profiles, or archetypes, so that they could better understand themselves by through their similarities and differences to the model. This learning approach is commonly used in assessment methodologies

such as the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (OPP, 2001) and based originally of the work of Carl Jung (Jung, 1974).

In preparing these mind-maps, I drew upon the 56 entrepreneurial clients that I was working with during the period from 2012-14, looking to distinguish common characteristics and describe patterns that were similar across a range of cases. I created a dozen archetypal profiles based upon common characteristics, and by blending a number of client cases together, merging and synthesizing their identities. I described typical or recurring issues and concerns that they had raised, drawing upon the transcripts. In a sense, after the atomization involved in grounded theory method, I was developing a more holistic and human-centered concern for how the model worked in a real world setting, and with real people.

Figure 14 Developing Archetypal Profiles
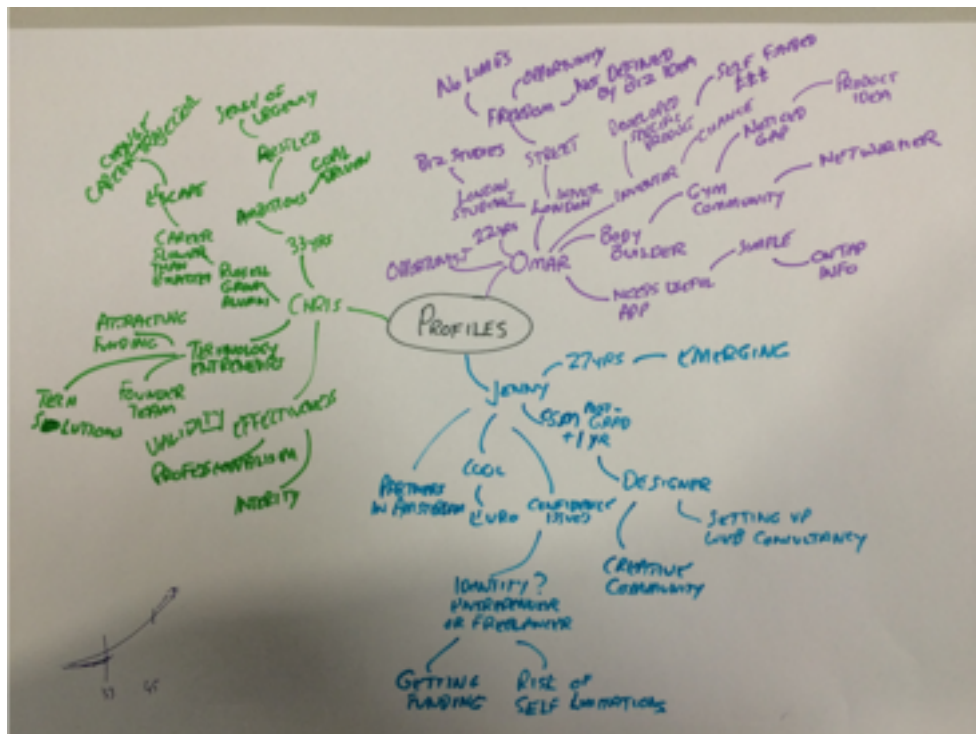
Initially, I used a stock photo library of images to try to capture the essence of the human face for each study. This was useful, but I found these photographs too generic and somewhat lacking in meaning. In preference to this, I began to

work with artist Philip Reitsperger, a Masters student at Central St Martins, and asked him to interpret the archetype descriptions. To my mind, Philip managed to animate the characters and brought them to life. Using this method, I developed nine archetypal profiles, similar to "Brett" shown below:

Figure 15 Brett - Tech Entrepreneur
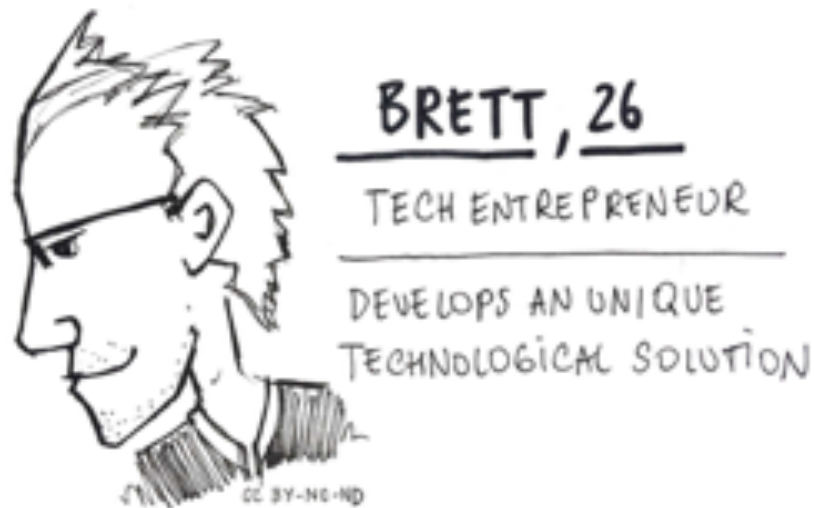
Brett is 26 years old and has just completed a doctorate in computing science and now wants to realize his dream of changing the way we relate to each other. He has developed a unique technological solution to linking mobile social networking sites, and believes he has a winning concept.

He is struggling to know how to protect his business idea. The technology has already been written up in a publicly available PhD. He is wrestling with a dilemma. He recognizes that he needs to build a strong team underneath him, but who can he trust? For now, he is keeping things close to his chest.

Brett sees himself as a successful CEO of a large successful business. While his passion is for the technology, and how it might change the world, he also believes he deserves a big payout and expects at some point to become rich in the process.

5.8   Model Testing

Having formulated these archetypes, I then plotted them within the 2x2 diagram to test the idea as to whether my research Model was actually capable of meaningfully differentiating and explaining different types of early phase entrepreneur. This exercise seemed to support the model and a useful device for situating client profiles within an understanding of early phase entrepreneurship.

By engaging in this imaginative activity, I was able to develop a coherent and real world view about how the intersections of the model worked, either magnified or inhabited by different mindsets.

Figure 16 Model Testing with Archetypes
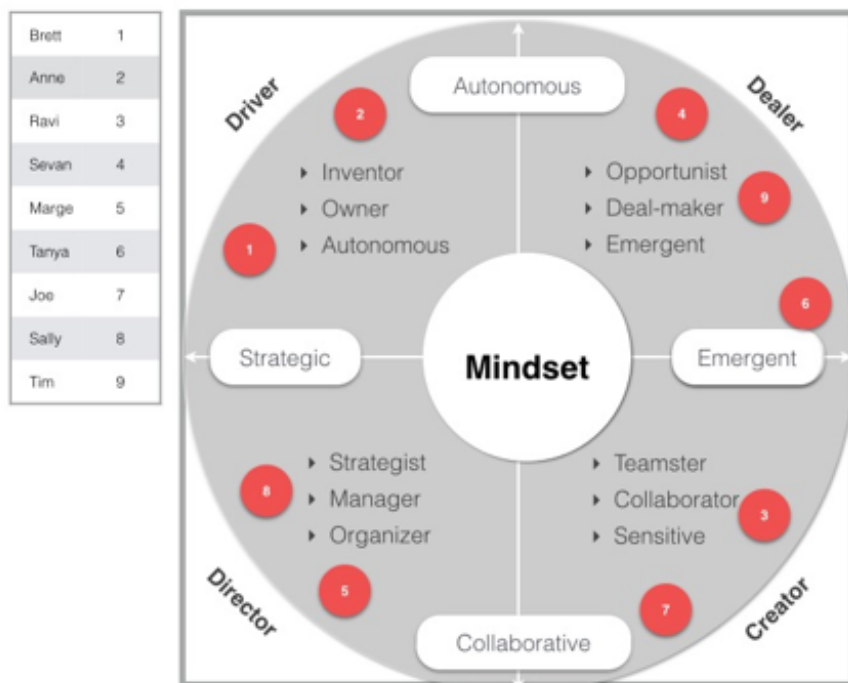
5.9   Write Up and Dissemination

While I felt that I was coming to the conclusion in one stage of my research, I also felt that another phase was about to commence. I had reached a point where I had a working model and I had developed a theory to support it, but at present this had been developed purely within the confines of my own head, supported by testing and sharing with my Tutor and Consultant. I sensed it was time to take it "on the road" and ensure I could test and develop the model. This comes back to several key theme that I have sought to emphasize during this thesis:

1. My research project is about making a real-world impact on entrepreneurship

2. This can only be validated through the acceptance, utilization and dissemination of the model by the entrepreneurial community, who are intended to be the primary beneficiaries of the research

3. My learning therefore must be ready to engage in interactive and recursive test and revision, incorporating the feedback and suggestions from "user" entrepreneurs

4. In order to understand their learning process, I had to engage in one of my own (this creates a parallel learning process between the entrepreneurs and myself)

A perfect opportunity found me, in the form of contributing to a workshop being run at Central St Martins. The workshop was designed for international entrepreneurs and included an eclectic mix, ranging from an American social entrepreneur working on rock music events in London; a fashion entrepreneur from Sydney; and a local home brew beer manufacturer from Brazil. The interesting aspect from my point of view is that each of the seven people in this new sample, were from different countries and working on very different types of entrepreneurial projects.

The Central St Martin's event would also provide an opportunity to test the model in a late stage of development. I obviously wanted to move beyond a

simple "yes, it looks fine" type of response. It seemed important to me to find out specific things that could stretch the model and validate its effectiveness:

Effectiveness Tests

1. From a state of naïveté, can the entrepreneurs place themselves into the model in a meaningful and intelligible way?

2. Can they relate to the model and describe their own entrepreneurial journey in a way that makes sense?

3. Can we see responses in different profiles, suggesting that each genuinely reflected a distinct and useful description of an entrepreneurial journey?

4. Were the design principles I have evolved through the development of the model validated (and enriched) by the user narratives?

5. Were the entrepreneurs able to find out something new about themselves that they did not know already?

To meet these challenges, I needed to design and develop a specific methodology that could generate the answers to these questions. While I recognized the value of grounded theory method in building a model, I also recognized that a different approach was called for to test and revise the model. This returns to the points I made earlier about using mixed methods approach, to triangulate and provide an alternative perspective (Creswell 2011), (Buchanan and Bryman 2009).

One of the best ways of creating a "blind test" was to develop a questionnaire, that could elicit responses and based on the values generated, place the user into the model (Buchanan and Bryman 2009). This is because had I shown the model and asked the user directly, "Which one of the profiles are you?", I would have conditioned their responses to one of the four profiles, without necessarily validating the assumptions underlying the model. By completing a set of questions designed to sort into A/B categories, it would be possible to then examine the responses to the questions and see if the polarities provided meaningful choices, independently of the subjective perception of the user and

outside the relational dynamics that were likely to influence the user in direct personal interaction with myself. In this respect, I am shifting my research stance and adopting a more neutral and objectivist position.

I am doing this for entirely pragmatic reasons, and I refer again to the comments I have made in my introduction which reinforce the need to do "whatever works" for the benefit of the research project, without being harnessed to any one paradigmatic view of research methodology. In this respect, I did not believe more grounded theory could validate a model build on grounded theory. It called for a fresh perspective and one which created a more objective framework for gathering and testing views about the model. The User would then also be in a much more informed position to respond to the proposition: "Is this profile valid or not?"

There is also a distinctly entrepreneurial thread to the approach I was to take. As Eric Reis points out in Lean Start Up, validated learning is not asking someone their opinion about whether they would buy a product or not (Reis 2011), it is to get them to buy the product. This means in practice creating a step where the user is requested to experience the product and then give an informed opinion (Reis 2011). Reis uses the following maxim:
"Build - Measure - Learn" (Reis 2011).

The Lean Start Up approach he has developed and advocates was derived from Toyota model and places a strong emphasis on what he calls "Validated learning" (Reis 2011 - p9) in order to develop a "minimal viable product" (Reis 2011-p10). With half a mind on the development and commercialization of my research, the validation of my learning (Reis 2011) was becoming a highly relevant question.

For instance, if a user completes a questionnaire but gets stuck half way through, and exists the questionnaire tool, this is a form of data which tells you far more about your model than an opinion sheet, with a 1-5 rating scale. It is the users "stuckness" that is the response you need. This might arise because the model is

too complex, not relevant to the user or too abstract and hard to understand. Similarly, if a user successfully completes a questionnaire process and then uses the tool for something specific purpose, to entrepreneurs, this is far more meaningful than a "Star rating" on a 5-point rating scale.

I therefore had the idea to create a questionnaire tool based directly on the codes generated in the grounded theory research. I had already placed a value on these codes by categorizing them. What I needed to know was (a) had I categorized them correctly, and (b) were the categories meaningful and recognizable to the entrepreneurs. A questionnaire can be useful in this regard as it can gather a wider range of more neutral responses, and is less subject to the relational factors involved in direct dialogue, where the response of the participant can be skewed by the presence of the originator of an idea.

I was beginning to put into practice what Creswell describes as an emergent sequential mixed methods; that is, an opportunity to use a quantified method has arisen during the project in support of the model derived largely using qualitative means. (Creswell 2011). Creswell goes on to quote Green et al. 1989, in identifying five major reasons why using mixed methods is useful as this point(Creswell 2011):

• Triangulation (e.g. corroboration)
• Complementarity (e.g. illustration)
• Development (one informs the other)
• Initiation (Contradictions)
• Expansion (Extend breadth and range of inquiry)

(Creswell 2011).

All these reasons seemed relevant at this stage. The notion of methodological triangulation fits well with the philosophical perspective of pragmatism, in that testing and "kicking the tyres" usually involves rotating around the subject and using different instruments to examine the road worthiness. The use of a questionnaire would also help illustrate the model by putting it to use in real life

cases and generating comparison data to show whether the responses it generates are meaningful and descriptive. I also sought a specific means to develop the model further and refine the questionnaire so that I could revise the codes and questions, and understand the relationships inherent within an instrument.

As Creswell suggests, the contradictions that emerge from using mixed methods I saw as a positive opportunity rather than as a problem. (Creswell 2011). For example, one methodological problem that was to arise was how to "measure" in questionnaire terms the client's sense of the future. From qualitative data, in descriptive form, it is somewhat easier to describe a journey from now and into the future, as we can used tenses, metaphors and imagery to convey our sense of moving through time. However, expressing this in a questionnaire format is far more difficult and this is something that I had to wrestle with.

My first attempts to analyze both a Current and Future state were not successful. I was confronted with the ontological problem (Jacquette 2009) of how to describe the future. This required the use of imagination in the context as I understand it today (Heidegger 1949). This is implicit in language, yet providing a meaningful question response (and instructions) is somewhat harder. However, in confronting this problem, I was able to understand the implicit difficulties of describing our journey now and into the future more fully.

Finally, the concept of expansive learning has already been identified as a key theme and by using an alternate method of inquiry (Raelin 2008), it is more likely to expose issues and flaws in the original model, rather as aeronautical engineers using infrared and not normal light to search for cracks.

With these thoughts in mind, I designed the following process for the second phase of project:
Step I: Design questionnaire to be delivered via a confidential on line platform

Step II: Provide the Participant with their report so they could think and react to it

Step III: Provide an opportunity for an open discussion forum to air views and provide responses

Step IV: Show a visualization of the model and explain definitions

Step V: Provide a one hour one-to-one feedback / coaching session where the results of the questionnaire would be discussed, to be recorded and transcribed

Step VI: Analyze the transcripts for patterns and insights that can answer any one of the five effectiveness tests above.

I designed this process of inquiry to gather as many perspectives as possible on the model, and also provide fresh impetus to revising and developing it. It is important to note, that I saw this process as a supportive mechanism, which could suggest and prompt a rethink of the model, and not in any way as a competitor to the grounded theory method which remained my primary research methodology. Below, I have set out below the methodology I used for developing the questionnaire, and the report outputs generated from it:

Process of Instrument Generation
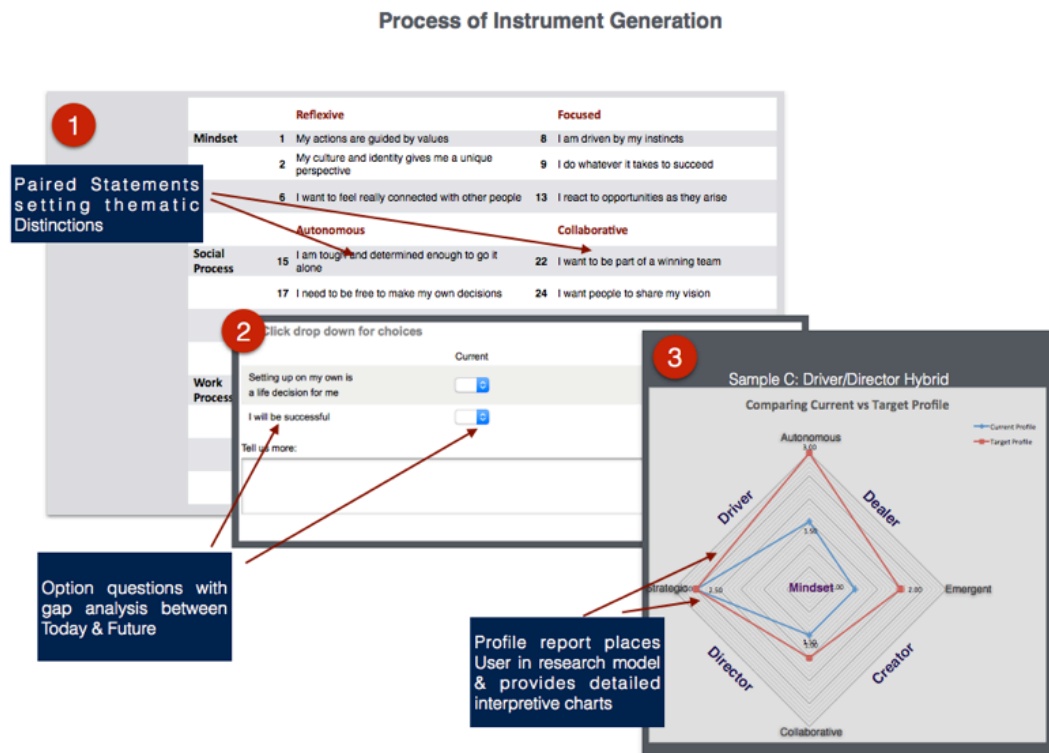
As I explained in the preceding chapter, to design the questionnaire I first of all built an Excel spreadsheet in which I had two columns, A & B, with codes that represented either of the two polarities. For example, in Column A, I placed 7 codes that I had grouped under Strategic, and in Column B, 7 codes that had been grouped under Emergent. I did a similar thing for Autonomous and Collaborative.

I next produced a simple table tallying the scores. I found that the Excel programme had within it a template for a 2 x 2 chart, which generated a "spider diagram". This is perfect for what I was looking for, as I could now generate a template that could show the two axes, and represent the scores graphical in a rectangular shape.

One of the difficulties was reflecting the impact of mindset. I took the view early on that this could not be easily measured or quantified. As with the Social preference and Work Style access, I developed two columns to reflect the codes

in reflective and driven mindsets. However, I could not see any easily way to develop a three dimensional model, reflecting mindset, social preferences and work style in a simple graphic way. To resolve this, I developed a simple holding assumption based on one of the key design features of the model: The degree of reflectivity for those with a reflective mindset, I would add +20% to the scores; and for those with a driven mindset I would reduce the scores by -20%.

This had the effect of emphasizing the scores positively or negatively. It meant that someone with a similar set of scores on social preferences and work style would have a significantly reduced pattern in their spider diagram than those with a reflective mindset. Based on the earlier work I had completed this seemed to be an approximate "best fit," even though I could not justify this position through objective assessment. However, I did add this as an additional test going through the validation research:

1. Do those scoring more highly on the reflective scale demonstrate an attachment to a particular profile;

2. Can those with a reflective mindset show that they are more designed and considered in their approach in comparison to the driven mindset?

These seemed to be a key question underlying my research and would likely require further study beyond the scope of this research project.

Through trial and error, I was also able to find an online survey platform that could act as a delivery mechanism. I wanted to deliver the questionnaire to the participants with a high degree of anonymity and without have first to explain what the model was all about. Using a survey platform such as Survey Monkey (and later adapted to Survey Gizmo) seemed like an ideal way to do this. I found that I could export the data into the Excel spread sheet format and generate the spider diagram charts.

The workshop facilitator requested the participation from the group and also

requested the completion of the Ethical Approval Form. The facilitator made it clear that I would be available for consultation before hand if anyone had any questions or concerns about completing the exercise. Prior to the workshop therefore, I was able to email the participants the survey link and for the first time, entrepreneurs with no specific knowledge of the research program and having had no prior briefing on the model, were now asked to complete the questionnaire.

There were seven respondents. The data that returned provided my first insight into how the model I had developed would work in practice. Prior to the workshop event itself, I was able to analyze the patterns in the results, as follows:

1. All seven completed the survey
2. There were results in each of the four profiles
3. There was movement between the Current and Target profiles.
4. There was a mix of Reflective and Driven mindsets, and movement between the two from Current to Target.

In reviewing the data, I was heartened by the fact that there seemed to be a dispersal across the profiles and the Codes had generated different responses. This is important, as if all the respondents had answered A rather than B, then it suggests B is really a non-viable option or might be poorly understood.

One of the limitations of this approach is that it effectively forces the choice of the respondent: It is either A or B in the Current; or A or B in the future. In the questionnaire, I added a feature that generated a lot of debate in the forthcoming workshop: The question asked whether the user wanted to increase or decrease the emphasis on this item in future. This added shading to the question and linked back to the dynamic element in the design principles of the model. In later versions, the questionnaire matured into a scale, giving the User a wider spectrum of options while still emphasizing the notion of choice.

5.10 Model Visualization

To support the feedback process to the Central St Martin's group, I prepared a report template which included for the first time a full visualisation of the model and the explanation, drawing heavily from the material I have summarised above. This was a crucial step as this was the first time that it was being presented to a sample of active entrepreneurs. Would they grasp what the model was all about?

The concept of pivotal moments was grounded in a body of coaching research undertaken at Ashridge, which has been termed "critical moments" research (Haan 2008). The idea behind this research is that significant turning points in a person's life are mirrored in a fractal setting of a moment in time. This is closely connected with the psycho-analytical work of Stern (Daniel N. Stern 2004), as well as the phenomenological research of Moustakas (Clark 1994), who in turn had been strongly influenced by Husserl, Heidegger and other existentialists (Heidegger 1949), (Clark 1994).

The notion of pivoting was also becoming established in entrepreneurial circles through the writings of Peter Thiel (Thiel 2014). He writes as follows:
"Rivalry causes us to overemphasise old opportunities and slavishly copy what has worked in the past" (Thiel 2014 - loc 409).
Citing the pivotal merger between his own Paypal and Elon Musk's X.Com, he writes:

> *"If you can't beat a rival, it might be better to merge."(Thiel 2014)*

Pivotal signals the need for awareness and choice in the midst of intense ambiguity and risk. "Pivotal Moments" therefore seemed an ideal label to put on the box, and signal the key themes to the first users.

The survey itself contained two questions, each with a Current and Future. The current response was Yes/No, and the future was Increase/Decrease. The idea behind this was to request the entrepreneur compare two statements derived from codes on either polarity, and then to show which of these would increase

or decrease in future. As it turned out, the data for current was quite useful but the data for the future was vague and resulted in an idealized response, with most people rating most statements "increase" in the future, as all had a neutral or positive attribution.

5.10.1 Central St Martin's Workshop Session and Follow Up

In the workshop itself, I began by inviting the participants to give the reactions and observations having completing the questionnaire, having made it clear that no one was under any obligation to share or discuss their results. I asked open questions to the whole group, rather than singling out a specific person or requiring them to respond in turn around the room. I even explained specifically that that I was not going round in turn to avoid the risk of wanted disclosure.

The striking thing about the responses was the ease with which the participants had grasped the model and were beginning to use its language. The group also began to openly declare their profiles and in many cases had already compared and contrasted the group with each other. There seemed to be high trust within the group and participation levels were high.

One of the more striking discussions was between an entrepreneur who described themselves s being too open and reflective and who now wised to focus on results. They also described themselves as easily swayed or distracted by others and overly concerned with involving others in their ideas, and as a result had been slow to get their project off the ground. By contrast, another participant said that for them it was the exact opposite, and they were far too driven and focused and had missed opportunities to explore new ventures.

I share these points only at a generic level at this stage, to show how the model was aired. These dichotomies were explored in more depth in the coaching sessions and I will share specific anonymized evidence below.

Having presented the model and discussed the features with the group, they were each tasked to formulate an action plan, by identifying three specific things they could do to move between their Current and Target profile. This was another key test built into the methodology: Can entrepreneurs apply the model into their real world setting?

5.11 User Testing

I recreated the two-by-two model, and asked them to place sticky notes in the relevant quadrants. As you can see form the model below, they were able to complete this task quite easily, along with specific definitions that made sense in interpreting and applying the model.

For example, we can summarize a few of the action steps as follows:

- Stop caring what others think and listen to my intuition (Autonomous / Strategic, with Driven Mindset)
- Design thinking workshop to improve "think out of the box" (Autonomous / Strategic, with Reflective Mindset)

This is a good example of how within the same quadrant, the differences in mindset can produce a radically different activity.

Figure 18 Model Testing at Central St Martins

Towards the end of the workshop, the facilitator gathered together the feedback points on the model, and these points were highly informative and shaped the future direction of the model, as follows:

Figure 19 User Feedback from Central St Martins
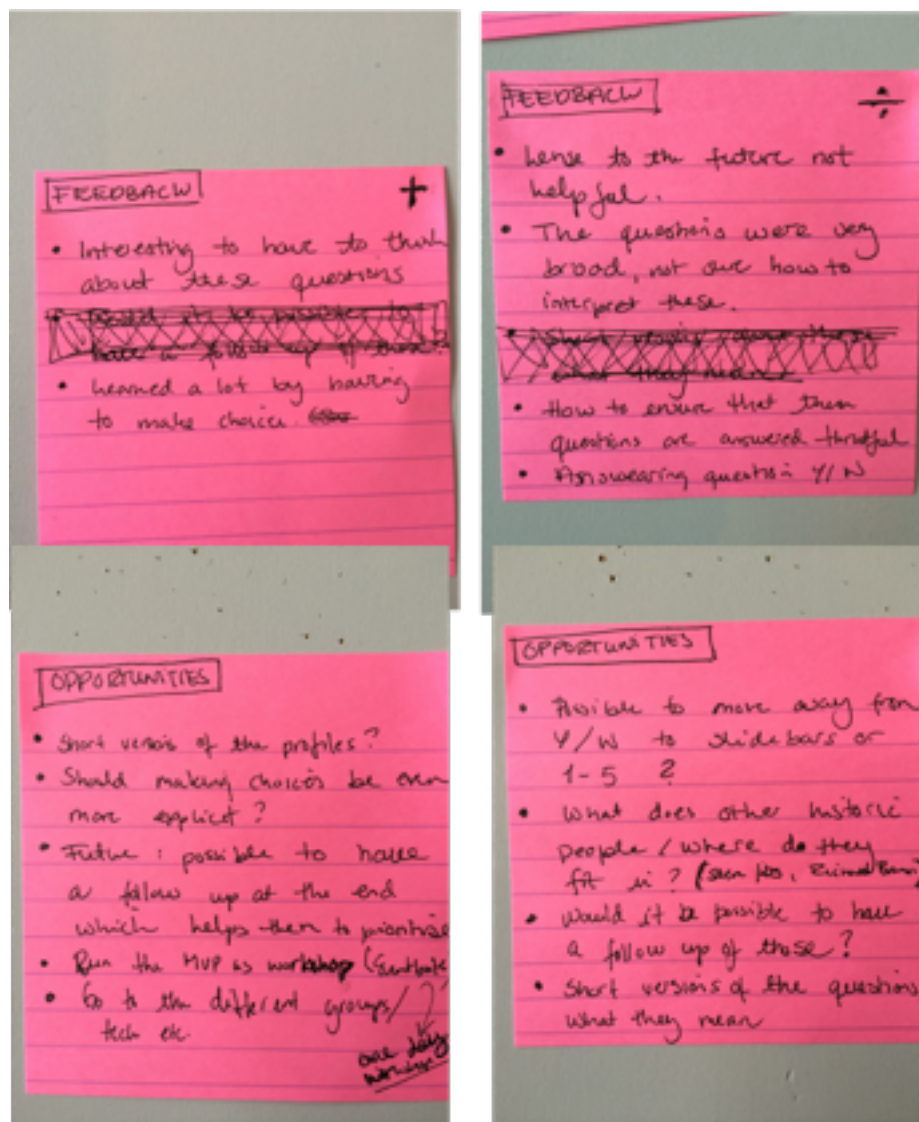
There are many significant point in these slides, but what stood out for me was the following:

"Learned a lot by having to make choices". This is the client summarizing the learning theory behind the research better than I ever could.

5.11.1 Coaching Transcripts

From transcripts we see the participants thinking through the implications of their results and relating it to their entrepreneurial life. What was most evident is that it prompted them to think and reflect? In some cases, it presented a profile that they did not expect. In other cases it brought to the surface issues

and challenges that they were aware of but had spent insufficient time thinking through. From the earnestness which each of them engaged with the material, it reinforced for me the validity of the instrument that I had developed and the model upon which it was based. Indeed, in my view, the qualitative evidence is more informative and useful than a customer satisfaction survey or opinion questionnaire responses.

It is worth noting beforehand however, that one of the main weaknesses of the questionnaire I developed was the failure to produce meaningful differentiation in the "Future" state (marked in red on the charts). Simply asking whether the client wanted to increase or decrease the emphasis was not generating useful responses. By contrast, the "Current" state (marked in blue) shows significant variation.

I have chosen to illustrate five of the eight cases in this write up to show the diversity of experiences and to make it easier to disguise the identity.

Case A :

This entrepreneur describes the impact working through the questionnaire. From this, I learned something important: The questionnaire was a valuable reflective tool in its own right and not just a means to generating a profile.

We can see a process of open reflection going on, which is shown in the relative size of the quadrant shapes.

Figure 20 An Industrial Designer involved in a small furniture design venture
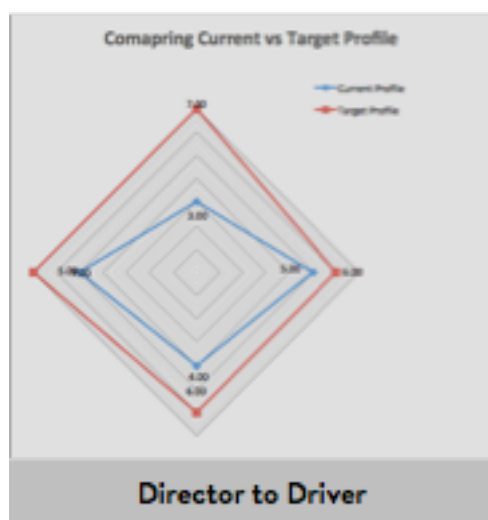
"Well, for me, I mean, when I actually started doing the questions for this, I think I did mention the other day as well, it was just interesting because it made me consider things that I hadn't previously. Sometimes, because you're working and you're so involved in what you're doing, you just go through the processes, so you don't always have time to reflect. It's difficult to do so. And, when you actually do, it makes you think, well, actually, perhaps I need to move out of this or maybe I'm stopping myself, and what was quite interesting with my results and just in terms of what I wanted to do going forward, I feel like I've always wanted to do something and start something myself, and maybe I'm not entirely sure what that is."

Interestingly, Case A actually refers to being stuck inside a more driven mindset. Through this process of reflection, Case A described their journey from working in a larger company and now enjoying much more autonomy and creative

freedom:

"With this, it's different, a completely different environment, but em...but I do, I just have the desire to just create more and not be so restricted, so have more creative freedom, in that sense, and I guess that's, again, why I've come on the course. But now, it is just a matter of..."

"And what was interesting in terms of this here, I kind of saw myself as more towards the collaboration side of it, and that was less than everything else, which I mean, I don't know if you can give me any other insights on that, but I did find that interesting, which I think, in a way, it does...it confirms the fact that I am quite headstrong and I'm happy to go forth on my own ideas and stuff".

The result is an emergence of a headstrong and more autonomous perspective. Case A does not yet have a strategy, but is in strategic mode. One of the coaching points to emerge is what I termed idealisation, which is the undirected desire to enhance all four dimensions. So while this process of opening up is necessary, there also needs to be a moment of closure and focus, which is reflected in a substantial change of profile shape.

Case B:

This case demonstrates the visionary and autonomous entrepreneurship of the Driver profile.

What came across clearly is the vision that was already being crafted in this entrepreneur's mind, and the extent to which he was identifying resources to deliver this *for him:*

Figure 21 Industrial Designer working on innovative home brewing project
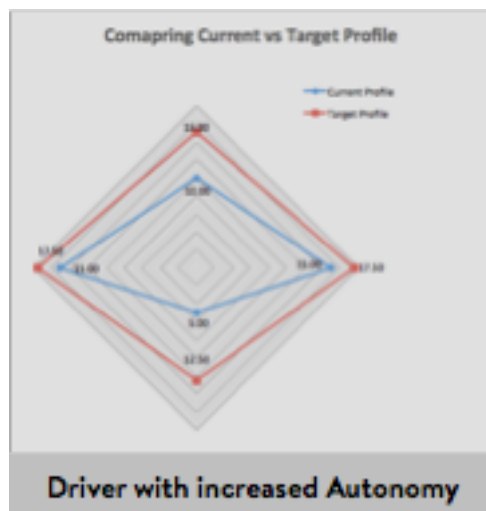
"I have seen this gap in the market where people would really like to home brew and like do some brewing, by themselves, but they are afraid that they will mess up and invest a lot of money in making beer that maybe goes wrong. So, my idea is to have a brewing company that will help these people make their own beer. So, well, like in like we're producing their beer but it's like more a crowd-sourcing…"

"Well, as the business model is a crowd-sourcing idea, I thought at first that maybe attaching this idea to an already existing manufacturer will be maybe the best idea".

Case B is "seeing an opportunity", which emphasizes the extent to which visioning is a key part of the mature formulation of the Driver profile. This is in contrast to the market research and planning driven approach of the Director

profile.

It is also notable how Case B is "throwing forward" (Heidegger, 1949) and strategizing about how to execute the venture. A mental map is forming. The coaching points in this situation relate to testing assumptions and the guess work involved in creating this mental image.

Case C :

This case shows the extent to which entrepreneurs can become stuck between strategic thinking and emergent action. An intriguing profile of someone highly work focused, balancing both a strategic and emergent orientation, but finding this very hard to sustain. This entrepreneur expressed a desire to refocus away from work priorities, to be clearer in her own mind (autonomy) in order to create opportunities to build a work venture in collaboration with others (Collaboration).

Figure 22 A fashion entrepreneur seeking to develop a new venture

"I guess I'm at the quarter-life crisis moment or something and, yeah, not sure about where I want to go and what I want to do so…

I think I might need to branch out or start my own business, and I guess that's why I came here because I have lots of ideas but I don't necessarily know how to implement them. I'm not necessarily a quintessential fashion person, so I struggle with that quite a lot, and I don't like the personalities in fashion, and I'm finding that hard because I think I would… I'm trying to work out where is the next step".

By describing their struggles, this entrepreneur is also helping to explain one of the more unusual results, where there is low scores on both autonomy and collaboration: Neither wanting to work alone but finding hard to align with the people around her.

Case D :

This client's role was to mount international design festivals in home country. She was therefore comfortable describing herself as a dealer: She secured participation and sponsorship deals for the event.

However, she felt that she had thus far worked in a rather isolated way, and wanted to work more collaboratively with others. This required a refocusing of time and energy from within herself into working with others.

Figure 23 Intrepreneur, project managing international events in large firm

"*I have a lot of, how to say that...like freedom, I can do whatever I feel like is the best for the project, I am still attached with this big organization that has their own models.*

I meet a lot of people who want to do things and would like to develop things, and I know I could help them, but I don't have the time or the, you know, the possibility to actually do that".

As this entrepreneur talked through her report, she seemed to become more aware that collaboration was a choice:

"*I guess I would love to explore what other people are doing and just be part of these communities, and not being like too...self-centred*".

The key learning pattern for Case D was to expand herself along the relational dimension, where at present the pattern looks compressed. There is also an interesting theme to combine the Dealer profile, which appears associated with autonomous ways of working, with collaboration.

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Case E :

Currently working on a big picture project, seeking to become a more creative entrepreneur, in touch with on the ground developments and able to work more collaboratively with others.

The profile shows a desire for significant development in the areas of emergent working and collaboration with others

Figure 24 Social Entrepreneur putting on music events for homeless people
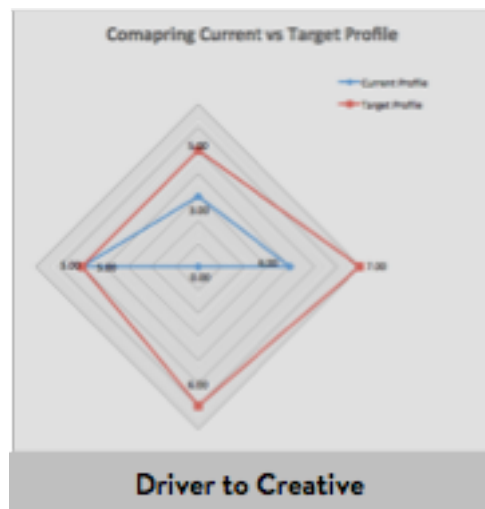
"Right now, actually, what we're working on for this project, I'm already talking to my friends, like because, em, for [punk] gigs for like the homeless, and since I'm already in that, em, little field already, with all my friends and everything like that, it's easy for me to do. I'm already doing — a couple of my friends have done events and whatnot, so I'm getting their input on who to talk to and everything like that. So, I mean like it's really helped me to open up my eyes to say like I can actually do what, you know, I can actually help people in my community and I can help like…So, I mean, that's…and of course…"

We also see clear evidence of a reflective mindset, indicated by the fact that they are considering options and being aware of limitations. There is also a tremendous pragmatism running through this entrepreneurs thinking:

"I mean, I'm…it's hard for me because, a lot of the time, most people are trying to go up to…like, you know, trying to make it a bigger thing than it is, and I'm going…we always want to narrow it down so you can actually help the people, you know what I mean. Like they're being like, em, ["Why don't you do] this instead or do this on top of it?" and you're going that's just too much to do, especially for a small gig. So, I'm having that, right…and everybody's asking me can you do this throughout, you know, I guess England and stuff like that, which, I mean, like it would be nice if that could happen, but realization, it probably wouldn't, you know what I mean, and…"

There were several key outcomes from the Central St Martins test . Some of these were quite specific. For example, in the model I changed the term Relational to Collaborative as the former was not really understood and in regular use. It was a code that I had used in the research, but it did not work as part of the model being used in a client context.

More generally, it was possible to see in the coaching transcripts the model being used by active entrepreneurial clients to understand their journey, which involved developing awareness about their current reality and forming a vision about where they were going to in future. Even though the questionnaire and report format did not quite work in respect of the future state, the combination of questionnaire, workshop and coaching session had been sufficient to convey a deep enough understanding the model to engage the clients meaningfully around these subjects.

One of the most valuable lessons that I had learned was how to be clearer in constructing questions for the questionnaire instrument. In later versions I made the following changes:
- Using a sliding scale, creating a broader range of more interpretive options.
- Using a simpler question form, which paradoxically increased the emphasis on the original codes. For instance, rather than using a question based on the codes, I used a simple statement, and placed the contrasting codes at either

end of the scale.

- Building into the report much more interpretive guidance, based in large part on the questions and discussion themes generated during the coaching conversations.

This can be seen in the illustration below:

5.12 Instrument Development and Deployment

Figure 25 Questionnaire Sliding Scale

5.12.1 Third Phase Testing

In December 2014, I was fortunately provided with an opportunity with a similar programme to follow up and further test the model and a later version of the questionnaire. As before, the sample group was a near perfect mix of design related entrepreneurs coming from all over the world. This activity was to further stretch the model and provide more rich material to support the dissemination of the research model.

The new workshop was an opportunity for a further eight more client users, and also an opportunity to test the new questionnaire format. I also revised and expanded much of the explanatory text and definitions based on feedback from the first Central St Martins workshop. But most importantly, by December, I had migrated the questionnaire onto a custom designed web site under the auspices of my own company Pivomo (derived from Pivotal Moments). This provided me with a great deal more flexibility to custom design the questionnaire and to

change the formats, reports, etc.

The test site went live on November 27, 2014, and so the workshop on December 6 was ideally timed to provide early ongoing testing for my research but also to some pilot testing before the full commercial launch of the site the following Spring.

Figure 26 Commercial Version of Dynamiqe

As can be seen, the questionnaire had undergone substantial evolution and this resulted in a stripping down and simplification for the question form. This had the effect of highlighting the very earliest codes from the original data collection exercise. Rather than trying to "dress up" the codes as questions, I found that the codes worked well and conveyed meaning to entrepreneurs .

The slider scale also elegantly minimized the ontological problem of how do I see myself in the future. Those with a very clear view that they need to change can demonstrate this by moving the cursor on the current scale to one extreme and then the cursor on the future scale to the other extreme. I also retained the comments box to prompt comments and explanations, rather as in the form of a journal.

The effect of these changes has been, I believe, a very substantial improvement in the data quality. For instance, it is clear that in the new batch of results from the December workshop, there was much greater variation between the current and future. Clients appeared to be using the future scale in a considered way. It

doesn't mean to say that the question is easy, but it is much more meaningful.

Below, I have included examples to illustrate the point:

Figure 27 Dynamiqe Results A
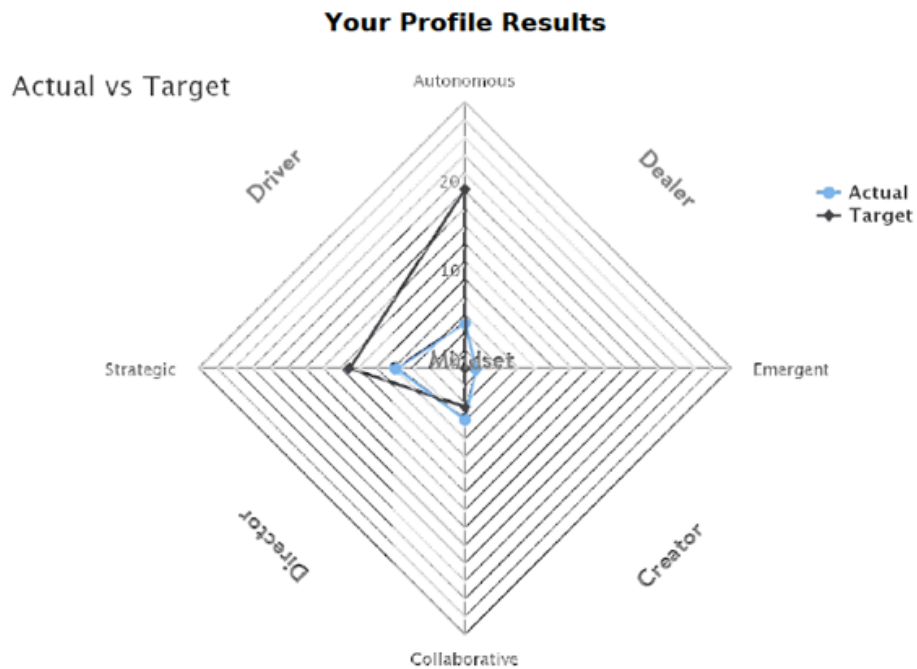
In this first example, we see the entrepreneur moving from a highly focused Director profile, with a high concentration on methodical planning, to a more reflective and expansive, and visionary, Driver profile. The shift in mindset that this entrepreneur identifies is a conscious choice and this is reflected in the change in size of the geometric shape.

In this second example, we see a reflective mindset being maintained, but with a shift from a predominantly Driver profile to a Dealer profile.

Figure 28 Dynamiqe Results B

Your Profile Results
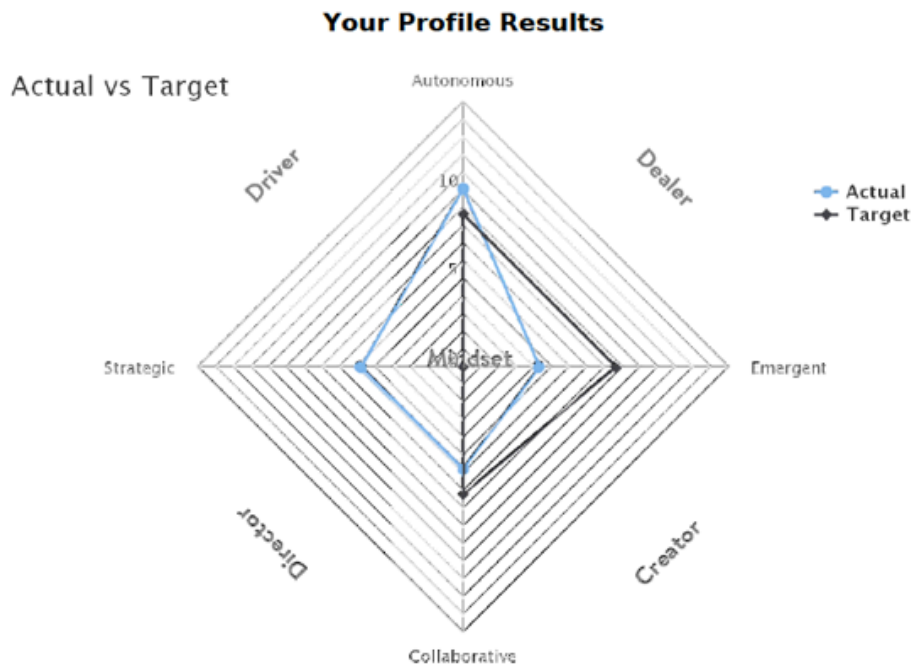
In this second workshop, it was quite clear that the clients were able to clearly understand and interpret the instrument and there were fewer questions and distractions about "What does "future" mean?" They were using the possibilities provided by the scaling to begin to design their future. In one case, a User experimented with four different versions of the report.

In stripping back the questions and relying more on the original codes, I also learned an important lesson about grounded theory that I had missed on the way through: The codes themselves were resonant because they captured something important about the entrepreneurial experience. The more I disguised this in long (and complicated) questions, the less connected the new clients would be to the original experience of the first nine entrepreneurs whom I had coached at the outset.

5.12.2 Commercialization and Dissemination

Buoyed by the success of the testing in the latter half of 2014, I was keen to fulfil one of the longstanding goals that lay behind my research: The development of

a viable commercial application that provided a useful and for early phase entrepreneurs.

January 2015	
Learning Theory	How do I find a way for entrepreneurs to learn about the model in ways that are relevant to them?
Model Development	How do I graphically show a model based on my theory, in a way that can be understood and interpreted by early phase entrepreneurs?
My Practice Application	How do I develop and test the model so that I can prove the concept and advance to a prototype?

I established a company, called Pivomo (shortened from Pivotal Moments) and from September to November, built a web site based on the questionnaire instrument, which I choice to call Dynamiqe. The site went live April 15, 2015.

Currently, there are 187 commercial users of Dynamiqe. There are users from all over the world and the instrument has now been adopted (and publicly promoted) by major institutions such as LSE Generate, UCL Advances and University of Hertfordshire.

On March 27, 2015, I posted a scrolling slide presentation that told the story behind pivotal moments, now Pivomo. The themes covered in the presentation really tell the story of the research findings.
You Tube:

https://youtu.be/KA8lP3ON-Mk

5.12.3 NACUE Entrepreneurship Awards

The insight gained at the December Central St Martin's Workshop relating to the resonance of the original grounded codes became an important basis for what was to become one of the final legs of this journey: An invitation to present a workshop for 80 of the UK's top University-based entrepreneur at the NACUE (National Association of College and University Entrepreneurs) national entrepreneurship awards. I was to run two workshops for 40 entrepreneurs each. All the entrepreneurs had been involved in award winning activities in some way at the respective Universities.

As well as proving an effective means to communicate and disseminate the Pivotal Moments research model, it also generated fresh stories and insights, as the student entrepreneurs combined and made connections. For example, there was a lively debate in the room over the combination of "Risk" (Emergent) and "Transparency" (Collaboration), and the extent to which a start up team member could be empowered to take risks whilst forming their partners about what they were doing. At a very pragmatic level, this generated discussions about how and when team members should either empower or rein in a "Dealer" within their team.

5.12.4 Response Analysis

There was one final analysis that I wanted to complete as part of my research before launching Pivomo as a fully commercial activity. This was the detailed analysis of the questionnaire responses to the revised and updated questionnaire. I wanted to return to the question of whether the users were responding to the polarities evenly, suggesting the polarities were real choices. If there was a high degree of bunching across a sample it would suggest that the alternative was not a viable option. Some natural variation is of course to be expected.

The following analysis was conducted on March 13, 2015, and represents 105 users:

- Based on 105 Users
- The two pie charts above show the current and target entrepreneurial profile
- Increase of creator entrepreneur to 31,96% and the decrease of dealer entrepreneur to 15,46%.

Firstly, I examined the overall distribution of amongst the profiles, which suggests that there is a reasonable distribution across the four profiles and also that users are making choices between the Current and Target. The data suggests that there is an planned increase in the proportion of Directors and Creators, these being the two profiles with the lowest representation in the Current state.

In the following analysis, I tallied the responses from each question under the Mindset category. Whilst there is reasonable distribution across the range, I notice there is a "tailing" off on the right hand side, with users reluctant to use the full 5 on the Driven polarity.

Figure 30 Response Distribution for Current & Target Mindset Questions

Response Distribution for Mindset #1
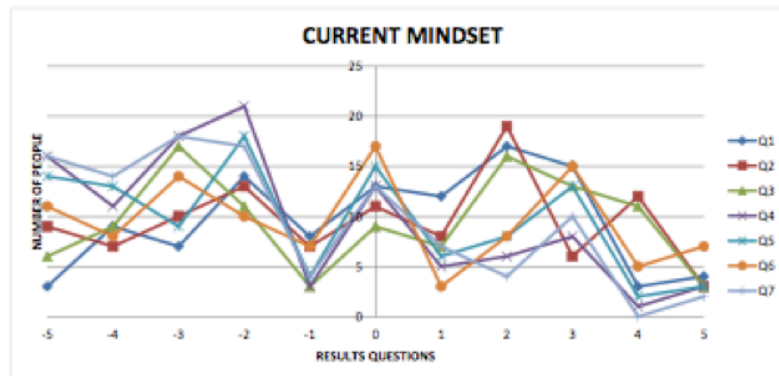
Response Distribution for Mindset #2
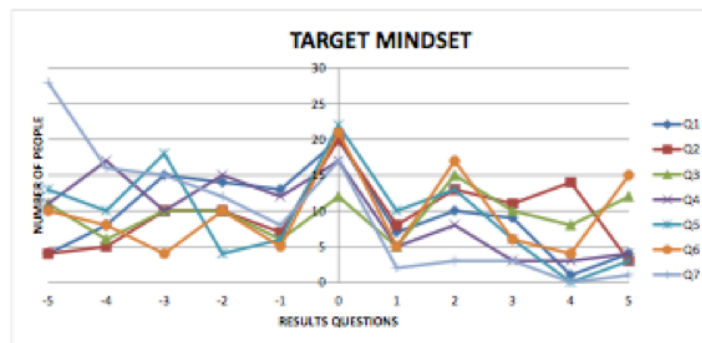
However, I was pleased that there were at least as many responses to the left or right as Zero, suggesting that the users were making definite indications of choice on either side.

It is also noticeable that the number of those "undecided" increases into the "Future," but this would be expected in my view and it is only marginal. There is a noticeable spike in Question 7, with a very large number of responses on the "Reflective" scale, but very few on the "Driven" scale. If we examine this specific

question in more detail, we can identify there is a problem.

There is a distinct low response in both the Current and Future states. This suggests that being motivated by "Fear of Failure" was not a meaningful choice for respondents. In the Current state, 69 users are driven by a positive self belief which rises to 79 in the Future state.

Figure 31 Detailed Item Response Analysis

QUESTION 7: Self belief or fear of failure?
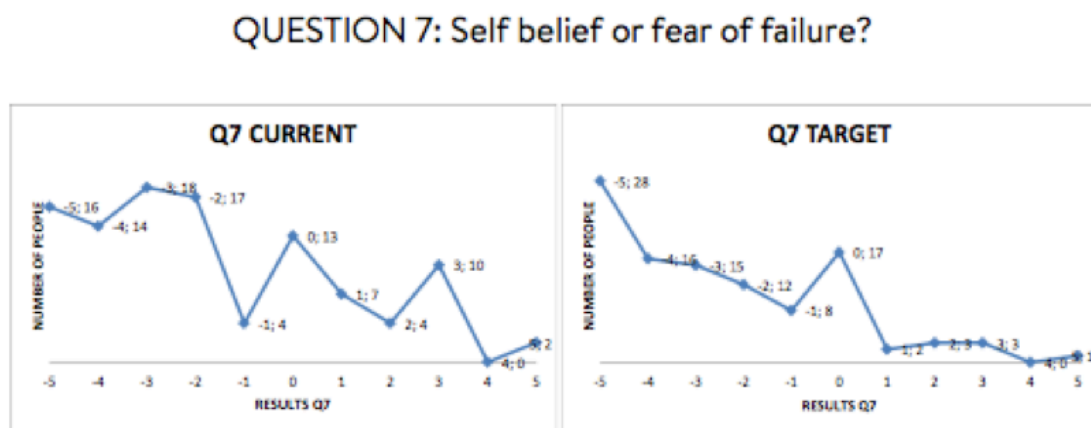
So whilst Fear of Failure was a code derived from the original grounded research, it did not work as a question form. This led me to revise the question in the latest version for he questionnaire. The new question reads as follows:

7.   **Do you have a positive self belief or a sense of realism about what you can achieve?**

Believe I will succeed   Recognize my limits

Fear of Failure, I believe, is still a valid code and influences the research base, but it perhaps does not deserve the prominence as a meta-code that I ascribed to it. I returned to the coding database and looked at the cluster of coders that closely related to Fear of Failure. The one that seemed close to it, and suggestive of a similar theme was "Recognize my Limits".   In the context of presenting a questionnaire choice, this seemed to work better and has featured in the latest version for he questionnaire published on April 9.

Items like Question 8, with exceptionally high distribution one way or the other were examined in detail and the questions reformulated.

I went through a similar exercise with both Social Preference and Work Style, see below

Response Distribution for Social Relationships

CURRENT SOCIAL PREFERENCES

Response Distribution for Social Relationships

TARGET SOCIAL PREFERENCES
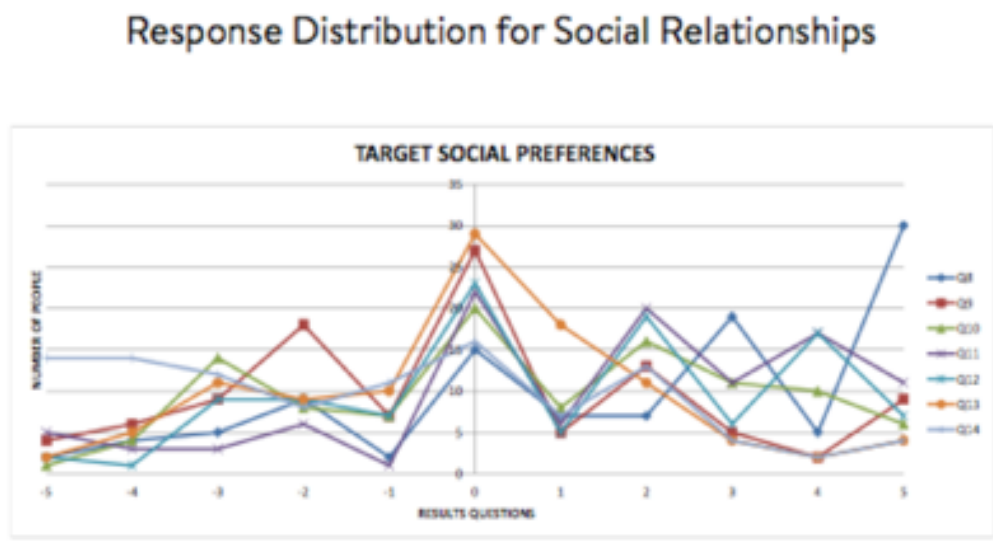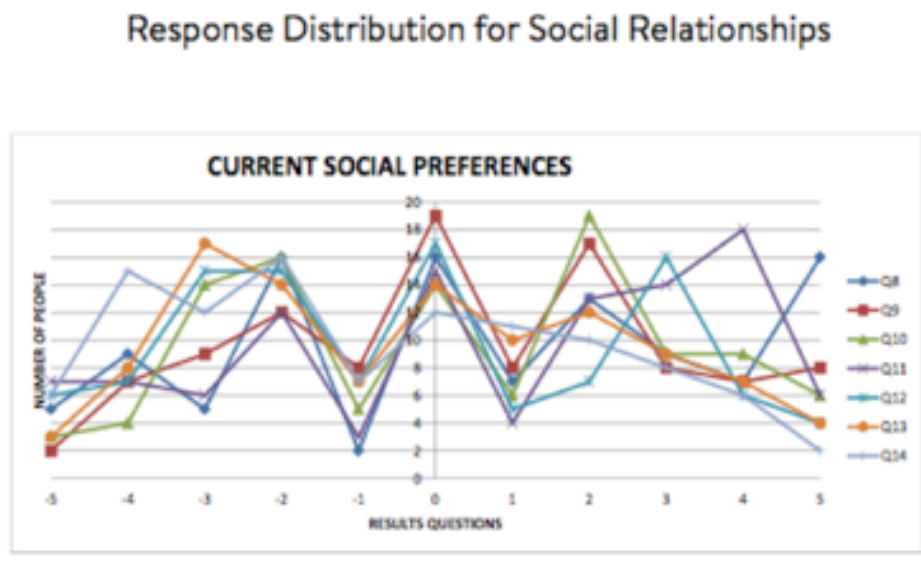
When I came to examine Work Style, I struggled with what looked like a peak in the zero responses in future. In discussions with users it might be the case that work style, which is highly contextual is hard to predict in future. In response to
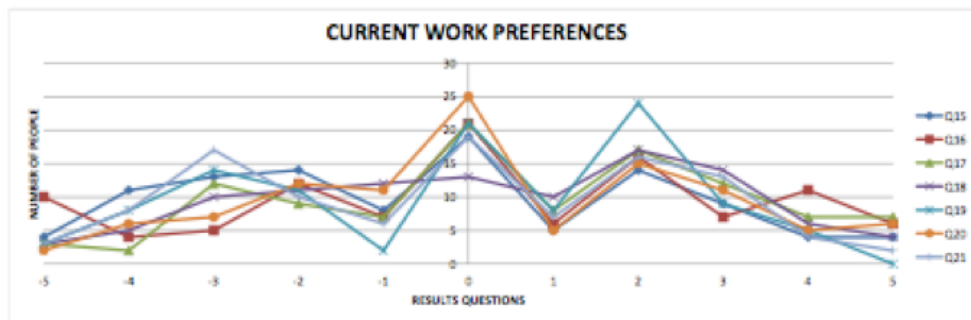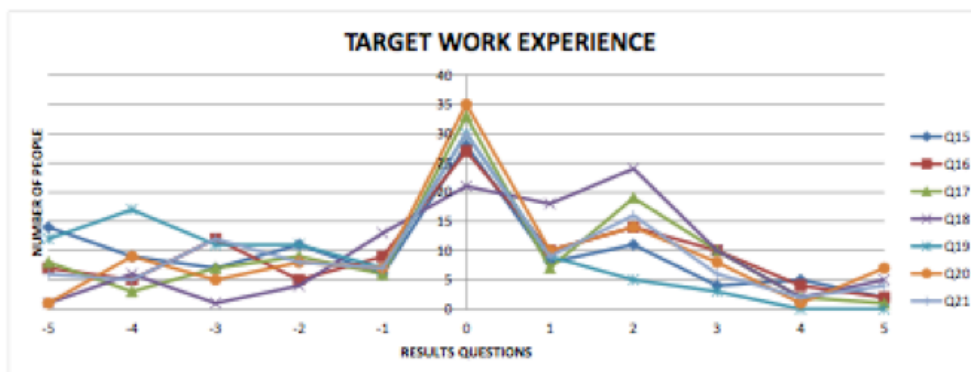
this, I have simplified the questions and also incorporated more guidance notes.

Response Distribution in Work Style

Response Distribution in Work Style

There seems a reasonable distribution of responses in Work Style in Current, as presumably the users are aware of, or can relate to, their day to day activities. In the "Target" however, there is a distinct "spike" around the mid zone or zero score. By itself, this does not necessarily mean the question is not creating value. This might be a difficult question to answer, and as one of the first users said "I learned by having to make a choice. "

I would also note here that in designing the questionnaire, I have also allowed Users to complete the instrument as many times as they like. This means that a user can complete a profile and then return to generate a different result or scenario. There are several users who have completed the instrument three or four times. They do this both because circumstances have changed over the weeks of elapsed time; or because they were not quite convinced of the initial result, or because they wanted to experiment with different scenarios, and even imagine what different outcome would look like.

Dynamiqe as a name was chosen to indicate the dynamic nature of the inquiry that the user is understand and to stress that the results might — and perhaps should — change depending on the context in which the entrepreneur finds them self. A fully revised version of the questionnaire was published on April 9 and is now in active use on the Pivomo site.

In this chapter, I have sought to show how I have both evolved and put into practice the goals of my research, and how I have taken advantage of emergent opportunities and findings to make a pragmatic difference to entrepreneurial learning and development.

While the specific outputs were not predefined at the outset of my research, I think nevertheless the result from my doctoral project has produced a model that is usefully contributing to the understanding of entrepreneurial learning and development. The tool that has been developed on the basis of the research has now been launched as a commercial project, and is in the process of being

adopted by Universities and Enterprise Hubs associated with student and graduate entrepreneurship.

6   Conclusion

In this conclusion, I would like to return to the core questions that I have been addressing in this research project. As I have tried to show, the questions have become more focused and specific as my research has progressed.

In June 2015, these were how the more focused project questions had become reformulated as I progressed my research:

Table 7 Project Questions

June 2015	
Learning Theory	How do I pragmatically support the growth and learning of early phase entrepreneurs?
Model Development	How do I express the model in ways that bring the theory to life and generate useful insights to early phase entrepreneurs?
My Practice Application	How do I gain wider acceptance of my new model?

I would now like to summarize my answers to each of these questions. I can now do so having had the model thoroughly tested in leading institutions, and having had the benefit of insights gained from various detailed case studies where the Dynamiqe model has been applied. As a result of the experience gained from this process of user testing and feedback from various sources, the original tentative findings from the grounded research have now been revised but ultimately reinforced.

6.1.1   How do I pragmatically support the growth and learning of early phase entrepreneurs?

Having worked with a number of live case studies with start ups, I now know with

greater certainty how the Dynamiqe Profiles function in real life. If we take the example of the sports app, sportr, for example, we can see the effects of two start up founders both having a "Driven" mindset and a "Dealer" profile. They were highly successful at dealmaking but faced uncertainty about the vision of the business for the future and experienced ethical qualms over having to attract tobacco advertising onto their site. The two founders engaged with Pivomo at a time when they were becoming more open and reflexive to these longer term questions. (See the write up of this case study https://pivomo.com/blog/sportr-drives-for-the-line/) .

6.1.2 How do express the model in ways that bring the theory to life and generate useful insights to entrepreneurs?

At the core of my theory is the idea that there are dynamic tensions between various common factors experienced by entrepreneurs, such as the distinction between working independently, or autonomously, or between being methodical and being agile. It is important to stress that I do not claim that these are logical contradictions, as they aren't necessarily. Nor are they polar opposites which cannot in any way be reconciled. My research has substantiated that these factors are thematic distinctions or choices which are hard to reconcile in practice.

For example, it is not impossible to reconcile a desire for autonomy with an enjoyment of collaboration, but it is hard to achieve in practice. We will most of the time prefer one state or another. We are likely to either want the freedom and flexibility that comes from being one's own boss, but at other times we enjoy the support and positive energy that comes from being a member (not necessarily the leader) of a team.

By expressing the theory as a set of dynamic choices that are likely to change over time, entrepreneurs have become actively engaged in the model. Furthermore, as the factors used originate directly in the grounded work with

various cohorts of entrepreneurs, the language and concepts are familiar and easy to relate to.

For example, I explored the question of mindset, which to me seems so fundamental to the field of entrepreneurship. Several of the young entrepreneurs in the sample were born into highly entrepreneurial cultures and family systems, whether it was Brazilian food trading or West African clothing importation. Entrepreneurship for them didn't really seemed to be a choice, it was just the way they were.

At the other end of the spectrum, were entrepreneurs who might not necessarily identify themselves at entrepreneurs at all but were pursuing a rationally defined goal, in situations where they had identified a business opportunity. In other circumstances, they might work in more conventional careers.

Through my research I now know that in the middle of the two are a great number of entrepreneurs who were influenced by their cultural environment and friendships and exploring entrepreneurship and the freedom and creative opportunities they provide.

My research indicates that it is vital to understand these different mindsets and develop a more varied and tailored methods of learning and development to support them. The dominant discourse around venture driven start ups has often left little room for understanding these varied entrepreneurial journeys.

The key to valuing the Dynamic Model is there to see the effect on building the awareness and self efficacy amongst the entrepreneurs and enhancing their ability to self manage their own entrepreneurial journey. This is in contrast to them being dependent on the feedback and affirmation from what are often remote and unavailable mentors who are not close enough to their specific time and place.

6.1.3 How do I gain wider acceptance of my new model?

The key to the success of my research project has been the design and development of a delivery mechanism, in the form of the Dynamiqe Profiling Tool. Not only has this tool made the research accessible, it is contributing to ongoing research by capturing increasing numbers of entrepreneurial profiles across the world. This is being achieved by forming a number of partnership across the world, where Pivomo (and the Dynamiqe Profiling tool) is being recommended for use with populations of early phase entrepreneurs, as follows:

- VC Nest FinTech Accelerator, Hong Kong, where all 15 of the cohort are using the Dynamiqe tool at the beginning, middle and end of their accelerator program
- NACUE (National Association of College and University Entrepreneurs) where Dynamiqe is being used with the Varsity Pitch winning candidates (https://pivomo.com/blog/start-up-your-summer/)
- Social Storm, a 24 hour hack-a-thon comprising 15 universities from a round the world, where Dynamiqe will be used to match the teams and encourage team learning (https://pivomo.com/blog/pivomo-welcomes-social-storm-as-a-new-partner/)

The other means to develop effective interventions is to transfer the knowledge that I have gained in developing Dynamiqe to a team of mentors around the world. To this end, I have developed DMAP, the Dynamiqe Mentoring Accreditation Program (https://pivomo.com/mentoring/), which is a modular online training and accreditation program targeted at entrepreneurial mentors and enterprise educators. I have recently completed the accreditation of the first cohort of six mentors around the world, in San Francisco, Manchester, Loughborough, Athens, Kolkata and Hong Kong.

Finally, I have submitted an application to have DMAP recognized by the Office

of Continuing Professional Development, the official body in the UK for those firms offering accreditation (http://www.cpdstandards.com).

This is one of the principle ways in which the research outcomes from Dynamiqe can be used to positively impact the whole entrepreneurial eco-system. By providing both valuable self coaching tools that can be accessed directly by entrepreneurs themselves, and by training and accreditation of mentors, it is possible that my research will over time will raise standards in entrepreneurial development and learning.

At the outset of my research, I sought to generate a long list of idealized solutions and supported by a complex abstract model. Later, when I realized I was getting stuck, I pivoted and sought to understand the reality of being an early phase entrepreneur directly by engaging in deep coaching dialogue with a sample purposefully chosen to represent different facets of the challenge. From this I have been able to build up a model of different entrepreneurial journeys, and descriptive profiles, that have been tested and revised in various user communities.

Furthermore, I have also sought to address this research question in a broader context of a rapidly developing eco-system of some 5.2 million small to medium sized enterprises (Young, 2015), encompassing independents, micro-businesses and also high growth "gazelle" style companies. Practically speaking, not all of these can receive mentoring and even those that do, securing the right mentor who can offer the right level of intensity is going to be difficult. It is clear from conversations within the industry that mentoring standards vary enormously and there is need to enhance standards and the experience delivered to entrepreneurs. We will never run enough workshops and panel events, and even if we did, this would require entrepreneurs to spend a lot of time sitting and listening to others rather than getting out and doing it for themselves.

For these reasons, I was led to develop a more radical user centered model of

entrepreneurial learning that attempted to meet entrepreneurs where they are - online. I have described in my research the change that I believe is already evident in the way the emerging generation will learn. I recognized that the only way to deliver the specific and timely resources was to utilize my research database and design a model that supported the entrepreneur to make choices about where they are and where they want to go. I felt that this was a more liberating and empowering means of learning that finding ways to deliver expert know how through pushing various content packages.

A key outcome is the design and deployment of Dynamiqe, which has emerged as a reflective tool for entrepreneurs looking to develop agency and pursue self affirming goals. The value being created was described best by one new entrepreneur, as follows:

"Dynamiqe provides me with the personal space to think and reflect, and then allows me to choose the level of support I need" a fashion entrepreneur, Sydney Australia.

Through my experience of researching and developing Dynamiqe, it is possible to see here the emergence of an innovative multi-tiered formula for entrepreneurial education:

- Use of a web and mobile application, enabling easy access to a reflective and diagnostic tool, that generates a substantial customized report to the User;
- Involvement in interactive and action orientated workshops which create a close-to-reality experience, and provide a forum for "working out" the issues raised in the reflective report;
- Involvement of mentors, not as "experts", but as coaching observers, able to identify patterns, share what they see, and prompt the entrepreneur (and the start up team) towards greater insight into their own journey.

7   Personal Reflection

Looking back over the past five years is quite daunting for many reasons. The first is that as I have alluded to in this thesis, I am all too aware of how memory plays tricks on us, and as I write this my mind's editorial function is working over time to recall, sort, delete, alter and highlight certain memories, and color them with the moods I am experiencing now. Yet through this I can discern a shape to it all, and I am reminded of the model I have used frequently with coaching clients, called the "J Curve," which seems to capture the essence of what I have been through.

Figure 34 The "J Curve" Effect

The J-curve effect

http://pearsonblog.campaignserver.co.uk/?p=8592
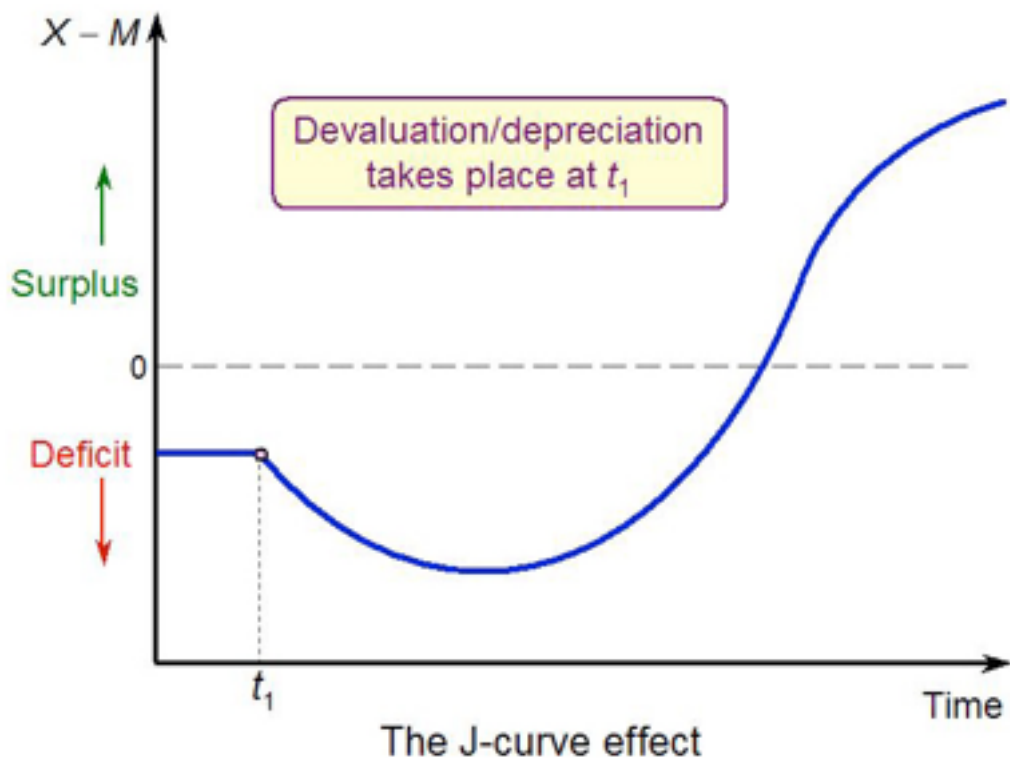
This is not that surprising as the J Curve describes the phenomena for any organism going through a normal cycle of change, be it a share price, flock of birds, or an aspiring doctoral student. Derived from economic theory,(pearsonblog.campaignserver.co.uk), the J Curve describes the journey from the initial optimism and euphoria that prompts action, through to a descent

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where everything familiar and reliable is shorn away, and the ascent when new capabilities are acquired and goals are achieved and even surpassed.

This broadly describes my journey, except that there have been mini cycles and undulations along the way. But this brings me to the second reason why reflection is proving difficult: There are painful feelings bound up in this journey, ones associated with failure, anxiety and loss of esteem. I recall my early optimism gave way early on to real confusion and frustration about writing in an academic fashion. The initial set back at the loss of the Board assignment compounded the sense of not being able to fix on a specific theme or subject that was to provide a stable platform for my research. Anything and everything seemed to generate new fascinations but also distractions.

Essentially, I realize now that my descent into the "pits" was not being caused by any demon or malevolent spirit, but because I was attempting to think my way through the research, rather than actually doing research. In the period 2010-13, I felt that if I read enough and connected enough dots, I would be able to develop a theory good enough to be testable, and publishable. This notion was part conceit, part impatience to get on with it, but also due to the stresses of conducting research whilst running my own professional practice (and being a parent), which imposed the pressure to be as streamlined as possible.

It took me a long time to realize that I was not saving time, but getting diverted. What I had failed to understand was that knowledge is co-created with others and cannot in my view be "invented" by one person in isolation of their context and environment.

Implied in the J Curve is the notion that the real change issue does not become apparent until well into the change process, and this was true for me. While I was struggling to find the right theme, I was also making major shifts in my life and career, including a relocation back to the UK and a significant shift in the focus of my practice from corporate work to start up work.

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In many ways then, my J curve was not just one curve, but many curves flowing at different cadence and amplitude, causing me a great deal of turbulence.

The ascent began in late 2013 when, having "dropped the baggage" on the way down, I was ready to look afresh at what research reality meant. I was humbler and more aware, and also intensely curious about a new world that was merging for me in the field of entrepreneurial education. This field enabled me to continue to explore themes around agility and also ethics, but also re-connected me to what I do best: Work with coaching clients. So, while this field was new in a sense, there was significant continuity.

However, what was new was the satisfaction I gained from applying the grounded theory method with a high degree of rigor. I began to enjoy the detail and the structure, and for the first time in the research journey I felt as if I was carving something of real significance. The ascent took me way beyond where I would have expected to have been. For example, the development of the Dynamiqe software platform was a real surprise; how quickly this emerged and how robust it seemed. This was a quite different outcome from what I had expected given its richness and broad applicability, even though I always had imagined at some point developing an application to support my own coaching work. What I had not foreseen is the possibility to create a platform that would be already in such wide use across so many University environments and offer genuine opportunities to do richly rewarding work.

Therefore, what I have learned most of all is that to engage in real research it is necessary to first become lighter and more aerated in order for flight to become possible.

8 Appendices

8.1 Document Inventory

		Process Key
	1	Research Questions
	2	Sampling
	3	Data Collection
	4	Initial Coding
	5	Focused Coding & Categorization
	6	Theory Building
	7	Writing Up & Dissemination

Date	Process Step	Process	Activity	Appendix	Document/ File Ref	Comments	
12 April 2012	1	Research Questions	Journal		Evernote/Journal Entry 15 April 2012	Refocusing on entrepreneurship	
23 July 2012	1	Research Questions	Journal		Notes/Methodology	Attempt to build project around A	Grounded Theory not mentione
02 November 2012	1	Research Questions	Journal		Notes/In the Beginning	First ideas on entrepreneurship	
08 January 2013	1	Research Questions	Proposal submission		DPS 4561 Jan 8 Re-submission		
15 January 2013	3	Data Collection	Transcription		Notes / Transcript 15 Jan 2013	First attempt to transcribe	Not GTM, but narrative innaccuracy
03 February 2013	1	Research Questions	Approval Letter		Letter from MDX Giving approval to proceed		
14 March 2013	3	Data Collection	Coaching		Coaching Session Audio Files / Case 2		
12 April 2013	3	Data Collection	Transcription		Coaching Seminar Transcript 23.10.12		
14 April 2013	3	Data Collection	Transcription		Coaching Seminar Transcript 14 April 2013		
16 April 2013	2	Sampling	Ethical Approvals		Case 1		
16 April 2013	2	Sampling	Ethical Approvals		Case 2		
16 April 2013	2	Sampling	Ethical Approvals		Case 4		
16 April 2013	2	Sampling	Ethical Approvals		Case 7		
16 April 2013	3	Data Collection	Coaching		Coaching Session Audio Files / Case 1		
20 April 2013	1	Research Questions	Journal		Notes/Reflections	Identified research problems with Enterprise Hub	
13 May 2013	3	Data Collection	Site Site		Evernote/ACE Meeting Notes with Mark Up	Meeting with Robert van Dorman & ACE	
15 June 2013	7	Writing Up & Dissemination	Dissemination		Andrew After Triple Helix Abstract	Practitioner focus	Generic and non direct Self justificati
06 July 2013	1	Research Questions	Reading		Evernote/Habermas	Emancipatory knowledge	
28 July 2013	1	Research Questions	Design		THA Presentation/Design of my research program	Attempt to design mixed method	Struggling with Complexity
29 July 2013	4	Initial Coding	Coding		Grounded Analysis of 15.01.2013		
29 July 2013	4	Initial Coding	Coding		Grounded Analysis of 23.10.12		
29 July 2013	5	Focused Coding & Categorization	Coding		Code clustering & Labeling	Imposing categories, not seeing patterns	
09 December 2013	4	Initial Coding	Template		Email from Brian (9.12.13)	Example of grounded coding	
13 December 2013	1	Research Questions	Reading		Notes/Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory	Deeper understanding of GTM	
29 December 2013	3	Data Collection	Transcription		Case Transcript		
29 December 2013	3	Data Collection	Data Analysis		Transcript Analysis Case 1	From Word transcript to Excel	
29 December 2013	3	Data Collection	Transcription		Case 2		
29 December 2013	3	Data Collection	Transcription		Case 5		
31 December 2013	3	Data Collection	Data Preparation		Transcript Analysis Database	When transcript sorted into colum Numbering system	
31 December 2013	3	Data Collection	Data Preparation		Transcript Analysis Database	When transcript sorted into colum Numbering system	
31 December 2013	3	Data Collection	Data Preparation		Transcript Analysis Case 2		
02 January 2014	3	Data Collection	Data Preparation		Transcript Analysis Case 5		
07 January 2014	3	Data Collection	Data Preparation		Coded Database	No coding; only sorting	
11 February 2014	4	Initial Coding	Coding		Case 1 Sort Code 3 11 Feb 2014	Completed coding	
26 February 2014	3	Data Collection	Coaching		Coaching Session Audio Files /Case 6		
10 March 2014	4	Initial Coding	Coding		Case 5 Data Sort 10 March 2014		
10 March 2014	5	Focused Coding & Categorization	Journal		Contrast Between Case 1 and Case 5	Comparison helped coding	
30 March 2014	4	Initial Coding	Coding		Renato Sorted Database 30 March	Colour coding	
30 March 2014	5	Focused Coding & Categorization	Journal		Evernote/Case 2	Memoing	
31 March 2014	3	Initial Coding	Coding		TA Sorted 23.10.12		
31 March 2014	4	Initial Coding	Email		Evernote / Email to Brian and David 31 March	I'm getting to grips with GTM	
03 April 2014	3	Data Collection	Coaching		Coaching Session Audio Files /Case 8		
07 April 2014	6	Theory building	Journal		Evernote/Model characteristics	Intro contradictions	
08 April 2014	4	Initial Coding	Coding		TA Sorted & Coded 16.01.13	Case 4 coding	
08 April 2014	5	Focused Coding & Categorization	Data Analysis		Master Coded File Sort & Ranked 8 April	6 Themes	Listed codes	Sorted
08 April 2014	6	Theory building	Journal		Evernote/Model Design	More descriptive	
08 April 2014	6	Theory building	Reading		Evernote/Zygmund Bauman	Struggle	
08 April 2014	3	Data Collection	Transcription		Transcript No 2 (16.01.2013) Case 7		
08 April 2014	5	Focused Coding & Categorization	Data Analysis		Master Coded File Sort & Ranked 8 April		
08 April 2014	6	Theory building	Journal		Evernote/Life Experience	Entrepreneurs making pivotal life decisions	
08 April 2014	6	Theory building	Journal		Evernote/Methodology	Based on enabling entrepreneurs to tell their own narrative; their unfold
10 April 2014	4	Initial Coding	Coding		Transcript Analysis 16.01.2013 Client Coded Only	Case 7 codes	
10 April 2014	4	Initial Coding	Coding		Case 7 Transcript Sorted & Coded		
10 April 2014	5	Focused Coding & Categorization	Data Analysis		Master Coded File Sort & Ranked 10 April	12 Factor Model	Processes	Contradiction
10 April 2014	6	Theory building	Journal		Evernote/Towards A Theory	Social process vs work process	
17 April 2014	2	Sampling	Ethical Approvals		Case 5		
18 April 2014	1	Research Questions	Journal		Evernote/Methodological considerations after read	Reflections on research topic	Political / contextual considerat
24 April 2014	3	Data Collection	Coaching		Patrice coaching session		
09 May 2014	7	Theory building	Writing		1st Draft Methodology	1st write up of data analysis and model	
10 June 2014	5	Focused Coding & Categorization	Journal		Evernote (August 2014)	Note on contradictions	
20 June 2014	3	Data Collection	Transcription		Case 6		
15 July 2014	6	Theory Building	Client Workshop		Central St Martins		
17 July 2014	2	Sampling	Ethical Approvals		CSM		
23 July 2014	2	Sampling	Ethical Approvals		Case 10		
14 August 2014	6	Theory building	Reading		Evernote/Colette Dazute: Narrative Inquiry	Implied and stated meanings	
05 September 2014	5	Focused Coding & Categorization	Data Analysis		Coding & thematic Summary 5 Sept		
01 November 2014	7	Writing Up & Dissemination	Draft Submission		1 November 2014 Formatted	1st full draft	
25 January 2015	3	Data Collection	Transcription		CSM Transcripts		
28 January 2015	3	Data Collection	Transcription		Case 11 Transcript		

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