

The Value of the Voice

Mark Fox



“Let me tell you how I really feel about my future”

What is the background to the project?

A desire and need to demystify the 1:1 personal guidance session, or 'careers interview'

- To let others hear Year 11 students talk about their future
- To ask how the careers programme needs to change
- To involve other school staff in planning joint support



How was this done?

- Voice recording over 50 personal guidance sessions
 - Playing tapes and highlighting key words and phrases
 - Noting emerging themes over time
 - Collecting 200+ unique questions asked by students
-



Cos I don't, like, I don't really have, like, an idea cos I've like, went through loads of different things that I want to do but it's, like, I just don't think I want to do it anymore, so I'm always changing my mind.



Er...I don't know...like...er...like, a bricklayer or an electrician or something like that. But an electrician you gotta be proper clever.



I used to be into engineering and stuff, but, like, I just didn't know how to get there and like, I did not really...understand stuff like that, so then I just forgot about that as well.



I know you can do, like, criminology at uni which is like a mixture of both cos the woman at the college was telling us...erm...but like it's thinking about whether there's jobs in it as well because I have looked into it and there doesn't seem to be that many jobs of criminology cos I know someone who, like, just graduated this year and she's finding it really hard to like find a job in it and stuff.



Do you know, like, when you start, start CVs, I don't know how I'd, like, start one, if you know what I mean?



I'm thinking about going to Newcastle College but it's just, I don't know what buses I'd need to get and that.



Like, come...last year I was just, I just didn't care. But this year I've actually, I've come to terms that it's a lot harder than, like you can't just apply for college even if, cos you need to get in. Like, you need the grades to get in, and that's what's starting to worry us; in case everything just goes wrong and then I don't get into college, don't get an apprenticeship and then, I'll not know where to go from there.



Well, the college I wanna get into, the only way I can get into it now would be to get a scholarship because I won't be able to get the grades because of how hard I didn't work when I was in the younger years, which I regret



Can you put the other website in my, er, plan, like, er, find out the salaries and hours and stuff like that?



My friends in the past have had, like, hard times, with, with their families and stuff, and, obviously, like...problems and stuff like that.

But not, like, mental, but like, problems like that, that I know that people really struggle with, and, it...it's really upsetting to know that they're like that. So it'll feel amazing to know that I'm helping them.



Most people won't even notice I've got ADHD until I'm off my meds. It....it keeps us controlled and that.



So, once you get apprenticeship, if...if the person, manager says that I'm allowed to...to have work as this job - as apprenticeship - then does that mean I can work as long as I can until that next person comes and I have to find another job?



What would you think's
the best if I just don't
know?





Value of the Voice: headline outcomes

Subject matters raised in 1:1 sessions

- **Occupational areas – different jobs**
 - **Apprenticeships**
 - **Going to college**
 - **Studying in the 6th form**
 - **Going to university**
 - **Differences between subjects**
 - **Job seeking techniques (CVs, interviews etc)**
-

Value of the Voice: underlying themes

Themes arising from analysis of 'the tapes'

- **Anxiety about the basics**
 - catching buses, earning money, living away from home
 - **Powerful influence of the family**
 - value of different options, networks, making promises
 - **Difficulties in articulating thoughts**
 - describing plans, explaining feelings, complex jobs
 - **Confusion about pathways**
 - multiple options, changes over time (parents), acronyms
 - **Passing exams and achieving good grades**
 - understand role of grades, want to do well, linking the two
-

Key influence on the research - 2016



Central YMCA – A World of Good
The Challenge of Being Young in Modern Britain

2016

ymca.co.uk
ESTABLISHED 1844

Registered Charity No 213121

Rank	Issue	Score on Index
1	Lack of employment opportunities	100
2	Failing to succeed within the education system (e.g. not being given support with studies when needed)	92
3	Issues of body image (e.g. am I too fat? Am I not attractive?)	86
4	Family breakdown (e.g. parents splitting up, siblings leaving home)	81
5	Substance abuse (e.g. regularly taking drugs)	78

Which issues are having most impact on young people today? (based on an index with the most commonly expressed challenge scoring 100)



Young people have spoken. #YouthVoiceCensus 2020

What are the challenges for future research of this kind?

- How to link the themes arising from these sessions with a holistic careers programme *and* as part of an even wider school support system
 - How to respect client confidentiality, safeguarding procedures and data-sharing regulations
 - How to be respectful of the developmental stage of adolescents and retain a sense of perspective
 - Where to draw the line between 'careers support' and wider counselling and pastoral support
-

END.

References

This research has been informed by the following:

- Blakemore, S-J. (2018). *Inventing ourselves: The secret life of the teenage brain*. Doubleday
- Everitt, J., Neary, S., Fuentes, M., Clark, L. (2018). *Personal Guidance: What works?*. The Careers and Enterprise Company
- Gottfredson, L. (1981). *Circumscription and compromise: A developmental theory of occupational aspirations*. *Journal of Counselling Psychology* 28: 545-579
- Institute for Employment Studies. (2020). *Supporting disadvantaged young people into meaningful employment*
- Percy, C. (2020). *Personal guidance in English secondary education: An initial Return-on-Investment estimate*. The Careers and Enterprise Company
- Pye Tait Consulting. (2020). *Secondary school and college leadership views on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on careers guidance*

