

DESIGNING LIFE: STUDIES OF EMERGING ADULT DEVELOPMENT

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF

EDUCATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON

GRADUATE STUDIES

OF STANFORD UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Timothy S. Reilly

April 2013

© 2013 by Timothy Scott Reilly. All Rights Reserved.  
Re-distributed by Stanford University under license with the author.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 United States License.

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/us/>

This dissertation is online at: <http://purl.stanford.edu/xt225kd5463>

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that, in my opinion, it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

**William Damon, Primary Adviser**

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that, in my opinion, it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

**Brigid Barron**

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that, in my opinion, it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

**John Krumboltz**

Approved for the Stanford University Committee on Graduate Studies.

**Patricia J. Gumport, Vice Provost Graduate Education**

*This signature page was generated electronically upon submission of this dissertation in electronic format. An original signed hard copy of the signature page is on file in University Archives.*

## Abstract

Emerging adulthood often includes a number of important transitions, moving out of the parental home, and transitioning from life as a student to work. Much research on this period of life focuses on work development; however, the present studies instead focus on self-development more broadly. In order to understand such development, these studies are integrated with a course on life design. Three methodologies are brought to bear, a survey study drawing on measures of well being and goals examining participants and non-participants, an interview study focusing on emerging adults conceptions of morality, and an observational and repeated interview study examining course activities and course participants experiences of and reflections on those activities.

The survey study relies on a quasi-experimental design, examining course participants and non-participants. This study analyzed several potential models of meaning and of perceived competence in self-development. These analyses indicate that participation in the course is related to the presence of meaning for students who are searching for meaning. They also indicate that participation in the course contributes to perceived competence in self-development, and that change in work development striving competence is an important factor in this.

The study of conceptions of morality utilized an adapted version of the youth purpose interview protocol (Damon, 2008). This study examines a new theory of moral frameworks, focusing on moral sources, moral influences, and terminal and instrumental ends. It also considers the prevalence of each of these components of moral frameworks, and their interrelations, using two case studies to elucidate

particular arrangements and their relation to moral frameworks. These interrelations are then used to develop three different forms of moral framework, intentional, context-adaptive, and reactive.

The final study presents a case study analysis of participation in the course, based on lines of practices (Azevedo, 2011) and research on opportunity to learn (Gresalfi, 2009). This study considers deliberative and reflective activities, in addition to implemental activities, as an important means of understanding life practices. This research extends the work on opportunity to learn through recognition of the value of cognitive apprenticeship as a dimension of opportunity to learn. It also helps to understand the way in which deliberative and reflective activities influence preferences and support the adoption of deliberative and reflective activities in lines of practice.

## Acknowledgements

I want to thank the faculty who have supported and guided my work, Bill Damon, Brigid Barron, John Krumboltz, and Geoffrey Cohen. My thanks to Bill focus especially on the encouragement to try new ideas and gentle guidance he provided throughout my graduate career. I also want to thank the creators and instructors Design Your Life, Sheri Shepard, Bill Burnett, and especially Dave Evans, who provided me with an opportunity to study such an innovative course, along with those who facilitated the course with me.

I also want to thank other colleagues who have contributed to my thinking in this work: Lindsay Oishi, Matt Bundick, Matt Andrews, Anne Colby, Tara Chiatovich, Daniel Stringer, Shayna Sullivan, Enrique Lopez, and Neema Moraveji. I want to thank Neema especially for his encouragement to teach my first course on the eventual topic of my thesis, Tools for Designing a Fulfilling Career. I also want to acknowledge those who have supported me outside of academics as I worked: my family, Chris Kark, Marilie Coetsee, Tori Petersen, Ali Diercks, Jason Lewallen, Isaiah Molano, Katie Strausser, Anna Lonyai Harbison, Michelle Munoz-Durk, Bertrand Schneider, and Heidi Maldonado. Lastly this work is dedicated to those who are no longer with us, but to whom my work owes an enormous debt, particularly my aunt, Jeannette Brinkos, and friend, Daniel Strickland.

I want to thank Lance Choy and the Stanford CDC for their support of my research and contribution to my own prior work in the area. I also want to thank the others who have funded my work in my time at Stanford, particularly the Templeton and Thrive Foundations.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	
Introduction	1
Meaning	2
Emerging Adulthood	4
Research Questions	11
CHAPTER 2: STUDY ONE: A QUASI-EXPERIMENT EXAMINING MEANING AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT	
Introduction	13
Methods	21
Results	25
Discussion	30
CHAPTER 3: STUDY TWO: DEVELOPING PREFERENCES THROUGH DELIBERATIVE AND REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY	
Introduction	36
Methods	46
Results	50
Discussion	68
CHAPTER 4: STUDY THREE: MORAL FRAMEWORKS AS THE CONVERGENCE OF MORAL ENDS AND MORAL FOUNDATIONS	
Introduction	75
Methods	83
Results	85
Discussion	100
CHAPTER 5: GENERAL DISCUSSION	
General Discussion	104
Conclusion	113
APPENDIX A: Survey Measures	114
APPENDIX B: Interview Measures	116
APPENDIX C: Course Materials	119
REFERENCES	127

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Means, Standard Deviations, Range, and Reliability of Scale Scores across the sample	26
Table 2	Group Level Means and Between Group T-tests for intervention participants and non-participants	27
Table 3	Regression Models for Personal Growth Initiative at Time 2	28
Table 4	Regression Models for Presence of Meaning in Life at Time 2	30

## Introduction

Students are often asked what they are going to do with their lives. Commonly, the answer expected of them, particularly in late college, revolves around their intended major and career goal. Perhaps, however, a broader perspective on what college students are doing with their lives is called for. Such a perspective might best focus on meaning, rather than on more typical markers of success, such as satisfaction and status. This is not a new claim; it is one made perhaps most clearly by Frankl (1970), and one which is, as will be shown later, gaining ground in a variety of fields.

Meaning, according to Frankl (1970), can be gained through realizing transcendent ends, environmental, social, or spiritual (religiously derived or not). The stable and generalized intentional pursuit of such meaning has been called purpose (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003). Purpose rarely develops on its own, and in fact seems to be best served by a variety of contextual factors (see Moran, Bundick, Malin, & Reilly, in press). College students, though striving for goals, are as often striving after status or hedonic goals as after self-transcendent ones (Damon, 2008; Smith & Snell, 2009). This can lead to a lack of meaning, which likely contributes to the undirectedness or undecidedness of emerging adult life more broadly.

This is a historically new phenomenon, as adolescence emerged only within the last century, and emerging adulthood even more recently (Arnett, 2004). While this does not mean that the transition from childhood to adulthood has always been smooth, it does suggest that with the changes in social structure that have occurred, the contextual factors which might lead more emerging adults toward purposeful pursuits can be improved. While there are a variety of promising avenues for this to occur, one

straightforward approach is through activities incorporating reflective exploration of meaning or other activities supporting not just disciplinary expertise but self development, an approach often neglected in universities (Ehrlich, Colby, Sullivan, & Dolle, 2011). This thesis seeks to examine college students as a way of understanding how such activities may influence development, through a number of lenses.

In doing so, the dissertation focuses on meaning, utilizing a model in which meaning can be realized unintentionally and intentionally. In this model individuals can build recognition of personal meaning through developing self-understanding and through sociocultural influences, both of which play a role in ontogenetic self-development. This model recognizes that not all meaning is intentional, instead recognizing the importance of meaning exploration and pursuit as related and individually important processes. First, it is important to be clear what is meant by meaning in the context of this study, and how it will be measured. It is also important to understand the developmental period of interest, emerging adulthood. The study focuses further on vocational development, the relation of meaning and work, and career and vocational development will be addressed as additional background. Meaning and its pursuit and exploration will also be described, examining past theory and research along with the ways in which the present work may shed additional light on the construct.

### *Meaning*

Meaning has been researched in a number of ways, nearly all tracing their roots to Frankl's (1970) theory. To explain that theory more fully, meaning can be discovered in three ways, by creating a work, experiencing or encountering something

or someone, and through the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering. Early research into meaning utilized the Purpose in Life measure (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1964), based directly on the idea of the existential vacuum, or absence of meaning (Frankl, 1970). Since that time, a number of other measures have been developed and tested, emphasizing different aspects of meaning. Two of the most prominent are the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (Steger, Frazer, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006) and a measure of purpose in life included in a model of psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989). More recently, theorists have begun to consider meaning as it is embedded in activity (e.g. Bundick, 2009; Emmons, 1999; Steger, Kashdan, & Oishi, 2008).

The measure of purpose in life includes items emphasizing the extent to which one feels their life is goal directed and meaningful. While these are valuable, they are more focused on sense of meaning than on pursuit of meaning, which is less than ideal for the purposes of the present study. There are two ways in which the MLQ is superior for the present research, first it is more focused on intentional pursuit of meaning, and second it includes searching for meaning as an important component of an individual's meaning system, which is particularly important in emerging adulthood.

At the same time, the MLQ is limited in its focus on identified meanings and in emphasizing global meaning over meaning specific to particular engagements. There is preliminary evidence that it is sensitive to engagement in meaningful activities (Steger, et al., 2008). Other measures, such as strivings which are discussed in more detail later, help to examine activity bound up in particular engagements in ways that the MLQ cannot. This ipsative form of measurement, similar to measurement in

experience sampling, allows for greater precision, particularly when focusing on meaning within a particular domain (see Dik, Sargent, & Steger, 2008). This is valuable in assessing meaning, which is a phenomenological construct, and one which may be less well assessed by broad-based measures.

Given the phenomenological nature of meaning, the other studies in this dissertation will address how individuals pursue it and the relevance of the intervention course. One of these studies will examine meaning generally in emerging adulthood, through exploring the moral ideas and goals of emerging adults. In addition, the final study will consider how participating in the intervention course supports the clarification and articulation of pursuits and the changes in meaning or its perception which result.

### *Emerging Adulthood*

Transitioning into adulthood requires adopting a system of meaning, including new goals and self standards; at the same time, those transitioning to adulthood increasingly delay a commitment to long-term goals and self standards (Arnett, 2004). These self standards can be, though they are not always, systems of meaning. Canonically, research on the adoption of goals and self-standards in the transition to adulthood has been studied in identity status theory (Marcia, 1966), emerging from Erikson's (1968) theory of development. More recently, a number of innovations and alternative approaches have been developed. These include novel interpretations and expansions of identity status theory (Meeus, van de Schoot, Keijsers, Schwartz, & Branje, 2010), identity capital and individualization theory (Cote & Schwartz, 2002), and emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004).

Identity status theory (Marcia, 1966), began a two part mapping of identity, focused on exploration and commitment. More recent research has added to this model, finding a general progression from identity diffusion, moratorium, and searching moratorium to early closure, closure, and achievement in later adolescence (Meeus et al., 2010). Three aspects of identity selection are emphasized in this most recent iteration of identity status theory: exploration, reconsideration, and commitment. Identity diffusion occurs when an individual has not made a commitment regarding a developmental task (e.g. marriage, work, or education), while identity moratorium is active exploration without commitment. Searching moratorium is commitment to an identity while also exploring potential alternatives and considering them as possibilities. Early closure is committing to an identity with little exploration and no moratorium. Closure is committing to an identity with some moratorium, but no in-depth exploration. Finally, identity achievement is commitment to an identity after having engaged in deep active exploration. This research establishes a normative trend, from identities in flux, to identities under consideration, and finally a commitment to identities. Based on the findings of this research, identity achievement is most likely to correspond with commitment to a meaningful identity, though it is entirely possible that closure and early closure also represent meaningful commitments, and that searching moratorium and moratorium can include some meaning. Meaning has not been directly addressed in this research, making it difficult to identify.

A recent area of research closely related to normative identity development is emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004). Emerging adulthood designates the period from

the end of secondary education through subjective assumption of adult roles, typically extending from age 18 to the mid to late twenties in the United States. The subjective aspect of this phenomenon is crucial, given the potential appearance that an individual has begun a career or committed relationship, though such engagements, for emerging adults, are often seen as exploratory. This period is central to identity development because of its structural position within development, at the transition between life at home with parents and an independent self-sufficient lifestyle. It is characterized by its individualism (Arnett, 2004; Smith, Christoffersen, Davidson, & Herzog, 2011) and general distance from traditional systems of meaning (e.g. religion or other forms of spiritual community). Given the transcendental aspect of meaning, it seems likely many emerging adults are not deeply engaged in meaningful pursuits, though some clearly are (see Damon, 2008; Smith & Snell, 2009).

Sociological research, in contrast to exploration, reconsideration, and commitment, which are favored by psychological researchers, considers other aspects of identity formation. This research examines developmental individualization as opposed to default individualization and identity capital (see Schwartz & Cote, 2002, for a more detailed comparison of approaches). Developmental individualization is an agentic selection of identity and life course, while default individualization is the acceptance of norms or circumstances serving to provide identity without such agency. Identity capital includes those means by which individuals can assert agency in selection among possible identities and life courses. This has been measured using the identity stage resolution index (ISRI) in the course of a longitudinal study (Cote, 1996). The ISRI is an indirect measure, and additional means of assessing identity

capital would be valuable, both objective measures and subjective measures. Further, developmental individualization and default individualization are agnostic in regards to meaning. Default individualization may mean either successful assimilation into an existing system of meaning or being co-opted into accepting meanings which are not one's own. Developmental individualization may come in the form of strong individualism and independence, or it may mean intentional engagement and agency in community. This relationship between self and social world is key, and will be addressed in more detail later in this thesis.

One key aspect of emerging adult identity formation is career selection (Arnett, 2004). This research describes several approaches to choosing a career, most prominently career exploration and 'falling into' a career. Exploration, in line with general theory of identity development, is generally seen as preferable to falling into a career. One highlight of emerging adult career development, however, is the importance of non-career commitments to career decision-making, a factor often overlooked in traditional career development theory, which will be discussed in more detail later. For instance, the importance of economic self-sufficiency is a common feature of emerging adults' work values, and such self-sufficiency differs depending upon one's expected standard of living. The fit of work with the self and the world is also important, rather than just the capacity of the self to do work. This is a move toward transcendental motives for work, though an incomplete one.

The process of seeking specific work is an important one for many emerging adults. This is part of the reason they are so deeply invested in education, which offers the opportunity to explore various career related possibilities and to develop skills and

knowledge which may be useful in a future career (Arnett, 2004). Even after emerging adulthood, work is a central feature of American life, and, for most adults, is an important facet of how they define themselves (Bellah et al., 1999). A number of models for this process exist, placing considerable emphasis on career self-efficacy. One of these models, the Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994), emphasizes career self-efficacy, goal representations, and outcome expectations. Self-efficacy in this model is drawn from general social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977), which describes self-efficacy as an individual's confidence in their ability to behave in ways which lead to desirable outcomes. More recently, models have begun to include both self-efficacy and calling or vocation as important considerations in understanding career related outcomes (Hall & Chandler, 2005).

Calling is a topic of growing interest, emerging out of research on purpose (e.g., Steger et al., 2006) and other spiritual or transcendental motives for career involvement (see Hall & Chandler, 2005; Bellah et al., 1999). The calling model of career development combines both self-efficacy and calling as factors in career development (Hall & Chandler, 2005). In this model, one aspect of a calling is its 'protean' nature, the alignment of a vocational calling with one's values and self-directed engagement with it. Additionally, callings reflect purpose in the sense described earlier in this paper. This sense of purpose is particularly important as a source of meaning in life, as work is one domain through which the search for meaning can be productive (Steger & Dik, 2009). Callings serve an integrative function theoretically related to moral identity and self-understanding, topics to be discussed in detail later. At present, it is sufficient to note that a calling helps to align

work with an individual's values and goals, which is likely related to the ability to derive meaning and pursue growth through work.

Outside of calling, two other forms of work engagement which may dominate: career motives and job motives (Bellah et al., 1999). Career motives tend to be focused on the status conveyed by work and by progress and competition within a work environment or field, whereas job motives are motives focused on the utility gained from particular aspects of work, economic security, flexible hours, and so forth. This three part taxonomy of motives for work also indicates that work development, rather than career development, is a more appropriate title for this domain for the present purposes.

Calling models, however, lack any rich account of intentional development. In these models calling is 'received' from self-awareness or religious or spiritual discernment (Hall & Chandler, 2005). It is possible, even likely, that many individuals who develop a calling are actively seeking such a calling. Developing self-awareness and self-efficacy is a central feature of work development, as in the case of happenstance learning theory (Krumboltz, 2009). Personal growth initiative, a relevant aspect of psychological well-being, has been tied directly to work processes and outcomes (Robitschek, 1999). Personal growth initiative is 'an awareness and control of intentional engagement in growth-enhancing cognitions and behaviors in all areas of life' (Robitschek, 1998). This dovetails with an intention to be protean in one's work development, and is likely to support maintenance of a better fit of work with personal goals and values over time than a less intentional approach.

### *Context Summary*

While the approaches described above provide considerable insight into emerging adulthood and career and vocational development, they do so at an often general and normative level, with little consideration of the differences between emerging adults and the impact these differences may have on their development and systems of meaning. The remainder of this thesis seeks to elucidate various means of understanding these individual differences (e.g., varied goals, values, histories, and personalities). It will do so by utilizing strivings, self-understanding, and sociocultural theory, in addition to normative survey measures, in order to specify how they can be utilized to heighten an understanding of emerging adulthood and emerging adults themselves. Two aspects of the development of emerging adults are emphasized: subjective perceptions of development and emerging adults developing self-understanding and self-development.

### *The present study*

Developmental individualization, through agency and identity exploration and reconsideration from adolescence to adulthood is particularly important to life adjustment. A clear sense of self during individualization is invaluable and the process for attaining such a sense of self poorly understood. The research described above provides some insight into how these aspects of the self might be supported and developed. The present research seeks to examine such support and development in a particular context, a university course situated within a design school.

### *Research Questions*

Prior interventions with emerging adults have focused on academic outcomes, which are not considered in this study. The present study instead focuses on meaning and well-being. The following questions ground the study:

- Does an intervention utilizing proximal goal setting, reflection, modeling, mastery experiences, and peer discussion support psychological well-being, particularly meaningfulness and intentional capacity for self-development (i.e. personal growth initiative)?
- Are these differences related to change in individuals' striving systems?
- Are there differences in self understanding among emerging adults?
- What is the process of change in individuals engaged in the course?

The intervention is hypothesized to improve participants' personal growth initiative, which is their sense that they effectively adjust and pursue their goals, in ways which may continue well past the conclusion of the intervention. In addition, the intervention's reflection component of may contribute to perceptions of enhanced well-being, reporting greater life meaningfulness. Lastly, the intervention is hypothesized to spark changes in individuals' striving systems which mediate changes in psychological well-being.

In addition, a conceptual change analysis will be undertaken in parallel to this survey analysis of individual change. This conceptual analysis will utilize repeated and artifact based interviews and participant observation to examine changes in self-understanding and conceptualization of work and life which occur as a result of participation in the course. These interviews are intended to support both an

understanding of the sociocultural impacts of the intervention (e.g. new and more fully elaborated lines of practice, goals, and preferences) and of the nature of individuals' moral frameworks at the beginning and end of the course. This analysis will be supported by course observations as well, in order to examine first-hand the intervention and to explore how it might contribute to change.

## Meaning and Self Development Change Related to Course Participation: A Quantitative Analysis of Early Term and End of Term Data

Developing the capacity to engage a desired adult identity is a central feature of emerging adulthood. Studies of such development have often focused on career selection and preparation, and are often observational rather than interventional. However, given the numerous tasks of emerging adulthood a broader perspective on development may be beneficial, with two important considerations. Emerging adulthood is a time when individuals have the capacity to grow and commit in a number of domains, not just work, for instance in relationships, particularly romantic relationships, and spiritually, whether in a secular or religious context. Following from this, emerging adulthood is typically also a time during which individual's system of meaning is established and negotiated on a broader scale than at earlier points. The present paper examines an intervention which is designed to support both the articulation and negotiation of a system of personal meaning and the development of practices and capacities to support growth and commitment.

The growth and commitment aspect of this intervention can be captured, generally, in the construct of personal growth initiative (PGI: Robitschek, 1998), exactly that capacity to grow and pursue one's goals broadly. Given the relation of PGI to work development (Robitschek (1999) and to well-being more generally (Robitschek & Keyes, 2009), this seems an appropriate target outcome for such an intervention. The presence of meaning in life, as indicated by the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006), may serve as an indication of an

individual's sense that they have established and negotiated a tenable personalized meaning system.

### *Agency and Well-Being*

Agency in emerging adulthood is ideally exerted toward the ends of developing a healthy present and future, that is toward well-being. While there are several kinds of relevant well-being, emotional, physical, and subjective, the most pertinent to the present investigation is psychological well-being. Psychological well-being has been conceptualized and measured in a number of ways among adults and youth, particularly in the life-span development (e.g., Wiese, Freund, & Baltes, 2002) and positive psychology literature (e.g., Sheldon, 2009), the most inclusive of which has six components: environmental mastery, positive relationships, self-acceptance, purpose in life, personal growth, and autonomy (Ryff, 1989). Purpose in life is an individual's sense that his or her life has direction and meaning from the past into the future. It also involves the degree to which individuals have important life goals. Personal growth is an individual's sense of positive personal change, comprising growth, realizing potential, improvement over time, and changing in ways that reflect increasing self-understanding. Autonomy is the internalized regulation of behavior, as opposed to accepting norms and conventions as determinants of one's behavior. Autonomous individuals evaluate their own behavior and are able to resist social pressure and have less need for social approval. These aspects of psychological well-being are most central to the present research.

Two conceptualizations of well-being are emphasized in the present study, both of which are theoretically related to Ryff's model: personal growth initiative

(PGI) and meaning in life, both presence of meaning in life (PML) and the search for meaning in life (SML) (Steger, et al. 2006.). PGI is an indicator of the capacity of an individual to intentionally generate growth and to pursue goals, serving both as a predictor of well-being generally (see Robitschek & Keyes, 2009) and to foreground the portion of well-being under an individual's conscious control (as opposed to non-conscious and circumstantial influences) (Robitschek, 1998). Meaning, on the other hand, is the experience of understanding one's place in the world as well as what one is trying to accomplish with their life (Steger, et al., 2006).

Research on the development of agency, stemming in large part from social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) emphasizes several processes through which agency can be supported and developed. These are modeling, mastery experiences (in which individuals experience their own increasing capacity to perform a behavior). It is important to note here, given the academic context, that mastery experiences differ from appropriate knowledge of mechanism in one key way. While knowing what to do to achieve an outcome is important, an individual is unlikely to attempt to achieve even a desired outcome unless they are confident in their ability to effectively perform appropriate behaviors. Many different forms of modeling and mastery experiences are utilized as part of the intervention context in the present study. However, most quantitative measures are insufficient to note the effects of any singular process, and instead aggregate across all activities.

Stemming from this, a preliminary model of PGI change can be developed. This model is loosely related to the model implicit in a set of Life and Career Renewal courses examined in prior research (Robitschek, 1997). These courses included

challenging physical and psychological situations, in the presence of a context in which exploration is encouraged and support is provided. This is hypothesized to lead to a broadening of individual's capacities, as typical coping mechanisms are overwhelmed and others develop. The relevance of this model to the present intervention is, as was noted before, that the intervention includes mastery experiences and modeling which have been shown to support and develop agency. In addition to these activities, following each mastery experience and exposure to modeling, course participants debrief with others in their group or with the class as a whole. The course utilizes informational interviews and role playing to create mastery and modeling experiences. Coping mechanisms are also developed through the course, using a technique quite similar to empirically validated coping planning techniques (Sniehotta, Scholz, & Schwarzer, 2006). Mid-career adults and recent graduates also visit class sessions to share their thinking and provide accounts of their experiences of life after college. Lastly, junior and senior students, the target population of this study, generally face psychological stress with regard to their upcoming life decisions in the transition from college, anticipating that their coping mechanisms may be overwhelmed. Given the components of the intervention and their relation to prior work on PGI change and prior work on agency more generally, the intervention is expected to support the development of PGI.

Understanding emerging adult meaning may be more complex. For one, meaning can be both reactive and intentional. In addition, far less is known about the development of meaning than the development of agency. Few studies have examined change in meaning, most prominently research showing that seeking meaning supports

the efficacy of interventions for finding meaning (Steger & Dik, 2009). However, this research relies on a population which could be quite different from the norm among emerging adults, students at a private Catholic university. In addition, the context of this study is likely to emphasize particular meanings in ways quite different from a university not affiliated with any particular religion.

Nonetheless, the present intervention includes aspects similar to the calling seminar used by Steger and Dik (2009). This seminar focused on discerning vocation, based on the premise that vocation is relevant in all areas of work, that traditional career development practices are useful to vocational discernment, and that considering vocation in work decisions means relating one's work to how it promotes the common good. The current course attempts to achieve similar ends with an intervention more adapted to a non-religious institution, through reflection activities such as writing a worldview, writing a worldview, and reflecting with peers on how one's worldview and worldview are related and might be more closely aligned. The calling seminar resulted not in a direct effect of the intervention, and not even in change in global meaning, but change in meaning in the domain of work in interaction with searching for meaning. This may be the result of the brevity of the treatment, but it may also arise from the career focus of the intervention. The broader emphasis of the present intervention, as well as the exposure to a longer intervention, is expected to support changes in global meaning. Bringing the above together then, a preliminary model of meaning change begins to emerge. In this model, searching for meaning and participation in the course are both factors in change in the presence of meaning, with

searching for meaning possibly interacting with course participation rather than either having an effect in isolation.

*Personal Action Constructs, Meaning, and Well-Being in Development*

A number of lines of theory and research on personal action constructs (PACs), those pursuits which individuals are engaged in on a regular basis, have emerged, most notably for the present research: possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), personal strivings (Emmons, 1999), and personal projects (Little, 1984). Each concept aids in understanding individual differences in seeking and finding meaning among emerging adults through attempting to grapple with the active self, an important consideration in emerging adulthood and in the pursuit of meaning. PACs are also idiographic, distinct to individuals, rather than normative, enabling them to serve as conduits to meaning in ways typical goals do not. While these goals have been studied longitudinally among college students (e.g., Sheldon & Kasser, 1995), they have not been studied in the context of a course intervention.

PACs serve a number of functions for individuals by providing standards for behavior, supporting resilience in the face of obstacles, and offering a means of evaluating and attaining meaning and happiness (Austin & Vancouver, 1996). PACs are particularly important to understanding individual agency and development over the time, as they can contribute to long-term well-being (Brandtstadter & Rothermund, 2002) as well as current well-being (McGregor & Little, 1998). They also have an important role in understanding the seeking and finding of meaning (Emmons, 1999).

Research on PACs provides a number of opportunities: collective goal measurement, analysis, and personalization. Idiographic measurement allows the

assessment of goal integration and conflict, as well as other features of particular goals, such as ambivalence (see Emmons & King, 1988). This allows for an understanding of the value of particular PACs, and particular kinds of PACs. For instance, past research has found negative effects of avoidance strivings (Emmons, 1986) and power strivings (Emmons, 1991) on life satisfaction.

PACs are an effective means of understanding psychological well-being (McGregor & Little, 1998; Emmons, 1999; Sheldon & Kasser, 1995). Despite this, there is only indirect evidence of PACs contributing to positive development (Bundick, 2009, 2011; Yeager, Bundick, & Johnson, 2012). The mechanism for PACs to impact well-being varies, in part based on the form of well-being under examination. Spiritual strivings, for instance, correspond with psychological well-being (Emmons, 1999), that is, living a meaningful and good life. At the same time, such strivings may have a negative effect on subjective well-being, happiness, and life satisfaction, when they are abstract and difficult to pursue (Emmons, 1999). On the other hand, PACs can also be used to predict physical well-being, such as health, as well as emotional well-being, positive affect without depression (Emmons & King, 1988).

In the present study, strivings measures will be used in concert with more general measures. This measurement will complement these more general personality measures, as an indicator of individual differences relevant to the pursuit of course goals. Work development strivings are a domain of action particularly relevant to the meanings and goals of many emerging adults (Arnett, 2004, Dik, Sargent, & Steger, 2008). As such, these strivings can provide some insight into the process of change in

PGI and PML in emerging adults. For instance, individuals who are initially low on work development striving competence may build such competence through the course, and this may contribute to a confidence in their ability to cope with other challenges, both because of anticipated work challenges and because work challenges will require fewer resources, leaving more attention to focus on other challenges.

Given this, the preliminary model of personal growth initiative presented above is expected to be strengthened by including work development strivings competence, a measure of agency in work development, a central feature of emerging adult development. The complete model then is that both intervention participation and work development striving competence are expected to predict final PGI. Considering emerging adulthood and the centrality of work development to this period of life, anything which indicates greater progress in such development is likely to be perceived by emerging adults as meaningful, as meaning stems in large part from movement toward a valued end. While striving importance and conflict may also be factors in meaning, these are more likely to be bound up in emotional experience, and as such to reflect life satisfaction rather than meaning. Bringing the above together then, a more complex model of meaning has developed. In this model, searching for meaning, participation in the course, and striving progress are all expected to predict change in the presence of meaning.

#### *Research Questions and Hypotheses*

- Do course participants differ from non-participants in initial personal growth initiative, career development self efficacy, search for meaning in life, presence of meaning in life, or related strivings indicators?

- Following the course do participants in the course have different PGI, CDSE, and PML than non-participants?

These differences are expected correspond to the models above. The hypotheses are that final PGI will be predicted by participation, striving competence, and initial PGI. Final PML is expected to be predicted by initial SML, initial PML, participation, and striving progress.

### Method

Drawing from Sheldon & Elliot (1999), this study uses a method pre and post intervention measurement. The course “Designing Your Life” offered at Stanford University will serve as the intervention. The control group consists of surveys taken by full time students not enrolled in the course. The intervention course teaches a number of skills and practices relevant to work decision making, such as networking and informational interviewing (see Appendix C for course materials). It also includes a number of activities closely related to those used in psychological research: the Gallup StrengthsQuest and related activities (shown to relate to positive outcomes for college students in prior research (Hodges & Clifton, 2004)), a gratitude journal (similar to counting your blessings (Emmons and McCullough, 2003)), and a block journal (similar to coping planning (Sniehotta, Scholz, & Schwarzer, 2006)). These activities are discussed in more detail below.

### *Context*

The study was conducted in an introductory level course in design. This course is focused on life design and is instructed and facilitated by faculty, undergraduate, and graduate students. According to the syllabus the course, “offers a framework,

tools, and most importantly a place and a community of peers and mentors where we'll work on these issues through assigned readings, reflections, and in-class exercises. The course employs a design thinking approach to help students from any major develop a constructive and effective approach to finding and designing their vocation after Stanford.” The course admits only junior and senior undergraduates.

The development of agency is supported by the class through lectures, role-play exercises, speakers, informational interviews, and assignments. Lectures foreground inbound and outbound networking strategies and possibilities, while student role-play includes both interview and career fair scenarios, as well as role-play of a ‘future self’. The Gallup StrengthsQuest is a questionnaire and related activities founded on the premise that building strengths is more valuable than attempting to limit weaknesses. The questionnaire is designed to identify five core aptitudes an individual has, while the activities are designed to enhance awareness and use of those aptitudes, for instance, having a conversation with a friend about or actively seeking to use a particular strength.

The gratitude journal is a daily activity that students complete for two weeks, reflecting on their day and focusing on three things for which they are thankful. This involves first a mental ‘scanning’ over the experience of the day, with acceptance of all the experiences of the day encouraged. In addition, it emphasizes a particular awareness to those events which elicited gratitude or other transcendent emotions (e.g., peace), and these events are focused on in the scan. Then brief notes are taken based on any and all transcendent experiences recalled.

The block journal is an activity wherein students consider obstacles to their successful pursuit of goals which occur during the day and write a reflection on these obstacles. The class also includes a number of design activities to support creativity and divergent thinking. Other activities in the class include various readings related to relevant work in positive psychology and business, as well as more general topics which are related to career decisions. This includes reading about flow, self-management, and personal decision making. Students also compose poetry, attend required office hours for counseling, and write reflections on what has been learned and developed as a result of participation in the course.

### *Sample*

Two groups of students are used in the study, one group is participants in the course (n=53), the second group is comprised of students who applied for but were not selected to take the course and other students who did not apply for the course (n=53). The last group is a sample of respondents from a number of student groups throughout the university. All participants are junior and senior undergraduates, and course participants, the treatment group, were selected by course instructors to ensure a breadth of representation in majors and a roughly even mix of genders. The non-treatment group had more female than male participants, in line with the undergraduate population at the university as a whole.

### *Survey Collection*

Surveys were completed at two times, once prior to the intervention and immediately following the intervention period. The initial data collection occurred at the start of the winter term of 2012. The first follow-up occurred at the end of the

same term. Surveys were administered online (see Appendix A for survey items and scales used in this analysis).

### *Measures*

Goal elicitation will utilize an adapted career decision strivings inventory (Dik, Sargent, Steger, 2008), retitled the work development strivings inventory and using novel items and adapted items from Sheldon and Kasser's (1995) work and the person level. The personal growth initiative scale (PGIS: Robitschek, 1998), Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS: Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985), Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ: Steger et al., 2006) and an adjusted career development self-efficacy scale (WDSE: Oishi, 2011) were also used.

### *Striving Variables*

Strivings were elicited using an adapted version of the career decision strivings inventory (Dik et al., 2008). Following completion of the strivings inventory, participants rated each striving on a number of dimensions. The dimensions used in the present study are striving competence and striving progress.

### *Person Variables*

Dimensions of well-being are measured as person variables, including subjective and psychological well-being. Subjective well-being was measured using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, et al., 1985), and presence of meaning in life (PML) and search for meaning in life (SML) were measured with the MLQ (Steger et al., 2006). These scales are appropriate for individuals from adolescence through adulthood and have been widely used in past research. In addition, personal growth initiative was measured using the PGIS (Robitschek, 1998)

as well as an adapted version of a CDSE scale used in prior research on the intervention course, adjusted to focus on work development (Oishi, 2011).

### *Analysis Plan*

Analyses proceeded in several steps, beginning with ascertaining whether the present data corresponds to findings in prior research, particularly in examining goal pursuit. This served primarily as a validity check, given the novel use of work development strivings in this study. In addition, attrition analyses were conducted to determine if there are systematic differences between students who participate throughout the study and those whose data is not collected at one time point.

Subsequent analyses focused on the effects of the intervention, as well as on the relationship between striving pursuit, PGI, and PML. They also examined the extent to which changes in goal pursuit and SML (the posited mediators) predict changes in well-being, especially PGI and PML. Group level differences between intervention participants and the control group were also examined in order to provide insight into any effect of the intervention.

## Results

### *Data Screening*

Removal of cases with insufficient data (three or fewer strivings) and box-plot checks for outliers were conducted. Missingness for remainder of data was limited and scales are constructed from averages of the data present without imputation. Final analyses included 89 participants, with 17 participants removed from analyses, 15 for reporting 3 or fewer strivings in one or both surveys, 2 for not reporting any responses on either the striving competence or the striving progress scale. Sample retention from

Time 1 to Time 2 was 69%, with 106 of 153 participants responding at both time points.

*Descriptive Statistics and Mean Comparisons*

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations (SD), ranges, and internal consistency statistics for each of the dependent and independent variables in this study. Table 2 shows the notable mean differences and similarities in these variables across intervention participants and non-participants, particularly initial personal growth initiative (PGI) and initial presence of meaning in life (PML), initial work development striving progress (SP), and final PGI. Most notably intervention participants show lower initial PGI and PML than non-participants. Table 2 also shows that there are no significant differences between final PGI and final PML across groups.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, Range, and Reliability of Scale Scores

Variable	Mean	SD	Range	Alpha
Initial PGI	4.07	0.71	2.22-5.67	0.840
Initial PML	4.71	1.33	1.80-7.00	0.897
Initial SML	4.92	1.29	1.00-7.00	0.904
Initial SC	3.84	0.66	2.20-5.00	0.803
Initial SP	3.66	0.69	1.80-5.00	0.666
Final PGI	4.55	0.63	2.89-6.00	0.861
Final PML	5.09	1.08	2.80-7.00	0.823
Final SML	4.98	1.31	1.60-7.00	0.904
Final SC	4.21	0.56	2.40-5.00	0.846
Final SP	3.91	0.58	2.40-5.00	0.604

Notes: PGI= Personal Growth Initiative; PML= Presence of Meaning in Life;

SML= Search for Meaning in Life; SC= Work Development Striving Competence; SP=

Work Development Striving Progress.

While suggestive, these results provide little insight into the mechanisms of change or into selection factors that may influence the sample. All of these tests rely

on concurrent differences between groups, rather than assessing change. The following set of regressions aims to address these longitudinal differences in more detail, focusing on PGI and PML.

Table 2. Group Level Means and Between Group T-tests for intervention participants and non-participants

	PGI, T1**		PML, T1**		SP, T1†		PGI, T2†	
	Test	Control	Test	Control	Test	Control	Test	Control
M	3.84	4.30	4.30	5.11	3.53	3.79	4.55	4.43
SD	0.65	0.71	1.33	1.22	0.74	0.61	0.63	0.62

Notes: PGI= Personal Growth Initiative; PML= Presence of Meaning in Life; SP= Work Development

Striving Progress.

### *Regression Models*

The regression results are presented in two sections: the first section addresses the modeling of Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) and the second section addresses the modeling of Presence of Meaning in Life (PML). In both sections initial and final models will be presented, noting differences in these models. In addition, both standardized and unstandardized coefficients will be reported for predictors, along with adjusted R-squared statistics for full models.

#### *Regression Models of Personal Growth Initiative*

The results of the t-tests in the previous section indicate that there were initial differences between participants and non-participants in PGI. This suggests that the final model of Time 2 PGI should account for this initial difference in addition to other factors discussed in the introduction. Three models to account for PGI at Time 2 were developed (see Table 3). The factors for Model 1 are initial PGI, class participation, cohort, and gender. In this model, the intervention and initial PGI were significant

predictors of Time 2 PGI, indicating an effect of intervention. Model 2 includes all of the factors from Model 1, adding initial work development striving competence (WDSC) and change in WDSC, thereby examining the effect of personal action on the intervention. In Model 2, there is trend level significance for cohort, and participation in the intervention, initial PGI, initial WDSC, and change in WDSC are all significant predictors of Time 2 PGI. This indicates that work development strivings are an important factor in predicting PGI longitudinally. Model 3 includes all of the factors from Model 2, adding an interaction between change in WDSC and intervention participation. In Model 3, initial PGI, initial WDSC, and the interaction between change in WDSC and participation in the intervention are all significant. This indicates that the likely mechanism for the effect of the intervention is change in work development striving competence.

Table 3. Regression Models for Personal Growth Initiative at Time 2

PGIT2	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	Standardized B	B	Standardized B	B	Standardized B
Cohort	0.194 (.126)	0.143	.208† (.120)	0.153	0.190 (.117)	0.140
Gender	-0.121 (.124)	-0.093	-0.099 (.118)	-0.076	0.100 (.115)	-0.077
Intervention	.376** (.128)	0.299	.301* (.123)	0.239	0.178 (.131)	0.141
Initial PGI	.421*** (.088)	0.474	.314*** (.095)	0.353	.333*** (.093)	0.375
Initial SC			.300* (.128)	0.313	.311* (.125)	0.324
Change in SC			.386*** (.113)	0.419	0.199 (.137)	0.216
Change in SC x Intervention					.369* (.160)	0.320
Model Fit	0.298	0.265	0.385	0.34	0.423	0.373

Notes: PGI= Personal Growth Initiative; SML= Search for Meaning in Life; SC= Work Development Striving Competence.

### *Regression Models of Presence of Meaning in Life*

The results of the t-tests in the previous section indicate that there were initial differences between participants and non-participants in PML. This suggests that the final model of Time 2 PML may account for this initial difference in addition to other

factors discussed in the introduction. Three models to account for PML at Time 2 were developed (see Table 4). The factors for Model 1 are initial PML, class participation, cohort, and gender. In Model 1, both initial PML and initial search for meaning in life (SML) are significant predictors of Time 2 PML, showing no clear effect of the intervention. Model 2 adds an interaction term between intervention participation and search for meaning in life. In Model 2, initial PML remains a significant predictor and the interaction of participation in the intervention and initial SML is also significant, indicating that the intervention effect is moderated by initial SML, with those searching for meaning and participating in the intervention finding it. Model 3 mirrors Model 2 with the addition of initial striving progress and change in striving progress, in order to examine the effects of personal action on the presence of meaning. In this model, initial PML remains a significant predictor, as does the interaction of participation in the intervention and initial SML. In addition, initial work development striving progress (SP) and change in work development SP are also significant predictors of Time 2 PML. Additional analyses indicated that these effects were independent of the intervention, providing evidence that work development striving progress is perceived as meaningful by participants.

Table 4. Regression Models for Presence of Meaning In Life at Time 2

PML2	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	Standardized B	B	Standardized B	B	Standardized B
Cohort	0.105 (.163)	0.045	.113 (.160)	0.049	.142 (.155)	0.062
Gender	-.315* (.157)	-0.143	-.300 (.154)	-0.136	-.267 (.151)	-0.121
Intervention	0.244 (.161)	0.114	-.979 (.613)	-0.457	-.977 (.594)	-0.456
Initial PML	.631*** (.059)	0.781	.612*** (.059)	0.758	.557*** (.060)	0.69
Initial SML	.156** (.059)	0.186	.062 (.073)	0.074	.046 (.071)	0.055
Intervention x Initial SML			.245* (.119)	0.597	.249* (.115)	0.607
Initial SP					.434* (.165)	0.278
SP Change					.324* (.130)	0.261
Model Fit	0.603	0.579	0.622	0.595	0.655	0.62

Notes: PML= Presence of Meaning in Life; SML= Search for Meaning in Life; SP= Work Development Striving Progress.

## Discussion

The results support the hypothesis that the intervention course fosters change in personal growth initiative. The analyses indicate that this change may occur in part through increasing competence in pursuing work development strivings. This is perhaps unsurprising, but important inasmuch as it indicates the relevance of work development to personal growth among emerging adults, particularly undergraduate upperclassmen. This extends upon prior work on the relation of PGI and work development, which finds strong relationships between PGI and career decision self-efficacy (Robitschek 1999). However, it is also possible, particularly given the population in this study that participants may have behaved in ways that would increase their PGI regardless of the intervention. Research designs which may help to address this possibility will be addressed below.

The results provide less direct support for the hypothesis that the intervention course fosters change in presence of meaning in life. The analyses indicate that this change is dependent upon searching for meaning, and that in the absence of such searching intervention participants show no differences from their peers. This demonstrates the resilience of PML to change while also indicating the centrality of work development to meaning in undergraduate upperclassmen, given the main effect of work development striving progress on PML. An alternative explanation of these findings is that finding meaning may result in the perception of progress in work development, as the regression used cannot distinguish the directionality of the effect.

Prior interventions to support change in personal growth initiative were extensive, including eight to fifteen day, full day interventions (Robitschek, 1997). The present research highlights the value of targeted and distributed interventions. In roughly 20 hours of in-class time and out-of-class assignments which may have at, at most, doubled the time spent with the intervention, well-being was supported. This intervention was targeted specifically toward the needs of the participant group, junior and senior undergraduates, rather than the diverse range of ages and life circumstances of the prior study. It also overtly connected intervention experiences to everyday experiences, which may have heightened the effects of the intervention, allowing participants to test skills and attitudes from the intervention outside of the intervention space.

Prior research on meaning has shown effects of interventions on domain specific meaning (specifically meaning in work) and trends toward effects on general meaning (see Steger & Dik, 2009; Dik & Steger, 2008). This work does provide some

insight into the mechanism of the present work, including the techniques used in the prior intervention, particularly the combination of self-disclosure and a focus on calling, as well as insights into individual activity which may contribute to or detract from meaning (Steger, Kashdan, & Oishi, 2008). This research on activity found that activities like writing goals, listening to others points of view, and persevering in the face of obstacles, among others, were related to greater meaning in life. All of these are activities encouraged by participation in the intervention course. The current finding of an effect of intervention on general meaning is important because finding domain specific meaning, in the absence of changes in general meaning, may lead to changing investment in various domains. For instance, finding meaning in work may lead to increasing investment in work and reduced engagement in other potential sources of meaning, like family and relationships. These changing investments may lead to negative outcomes in these other domains or at least inhibit growth and exploration.

### *Limitations*

The present research also bears resemblance to other research on psychological interventions, particularly those most similar to the activities and experiences included in the present intervention. It hints at possible uses for the StrengthsQuest (Hodges & Clifton, 2004), coping planning (Sniehotta, Scholz, & Schwarzer, 2006), and gratitude journaling (Emmons & McCullough, 2003) in an integrated context. However, given the integrated context, independent effects of these and other aspects of the present intervention cannot be disentangled.

It is important to interpret study in light of the methods and sample. Having data from only two points in time restricts the ability to determine participant trajectories. This may mean that while immediately following the course differences were apparent, these differences could fade with time, as the intervention effect fades. On the other hand, the intervention may yet to have had its full effect on some participants, and additional data from a later time point may illuminate this. Follow-up data collection is planned to examine these possibilities. Similarly, data from a period before the study began may provide a useful background for stability and change in the participants. Perhaps, for instance, many students may have periods where they experience a low sense of PGI and PML, and take appropriate steps to compensate. If the students in the course fall into this group at the time of the study, they may have adjusted with or without the course. The survey also limits the interpretation of results as important variables which are not measured may influence results, in particular socio-economic and context variables.

The sample of the study is important to consider in interpreting the results for two primary reasons. First, study participants self-selected into the intervention, and while an effort was made to recruit applicants to the intervention, only a small number were retained for the final study, leading to groups with initial differences and an imbalance in gender. Secondly, the study is relatively small and focuses on students from an elite private university, who are unlikely to be representative of others their age at other institutions. The intervention course itself also maintains a strong reputation at the university, with consistent oversubscription by students. While this may mean that course applicants are more similar to other students at the university, it

could also lead course participants to have more motivation and less resistance to the course.

### *Suggestions for Future Research*

The present study could be profitably expanded upon through examining students at different ages, at different institutions, in different majors or with different work goals. Each of these considerations may contribute to the results. It would also be valuable to perform a study with a randomized controlled treatment at a public university, in order to distinguish the effects of particular aspects of the intervention in addition to accounting for selection and sample effects which may be present in the current sample.

The present study also relies on a large intervention by psychological standards. Future research may benefit from examining components of the present intervention for their individual effects as well as the importance of various combinations of the intervention activities. For instance, in order to test the necessity of physical co-presence, an online version of the intervention may be compared to the present intervention. As a further example having students complete just a worldview or a worldview, rather than all course activities, may allow the delineation of their unique impact.

### *Conclusions*

The present research draws from and extends recent work on meaning and self-development, particularly as it relates to vocational development. As few interventions have been demonstrated to support the growth of PGI or increases in PML, an intervention that supports both is a promising finding. Increasing life meaningfulness

means that participants see greater value in their recent activities and experiences, which can serve as a source of resilience. Increasing personal growth initiative means that participants feel more ready to adjust to life transitions and changes, which are common stressors throughout emerging adulthood. On the basis of prior psychological research, some mechanisms for these effects are proposed, and, further, the present data provide some evidence for the mechanism of such effects through work development striving competence and search for meaning in life.

## Supporting Deliberation and Reflection for Self Development: Case Studies of Intervention Participants and Activities

Placing emerging adults within their developmental context, the relative indeterminacy of their life course relative to that of other adults, is an important consideration. Sociocultural and life-span theorists have begun work that might help to understand this indeterminacy and to provide a sense of the means through which individuals come to resolve it in their own lives. In sociocultural theory, new work helps to understand the way in which interests interact with context to support more or less stable engagements, under the title Line of Practice (Azevedo, 2011). In life-span psychology, a long-standing theory helps to understand the dynamics of resolving such indeterminacy, particularly the interplay between goal selection and goal pursuit (Gollwitzer, Bayer, Scherer, & Siefert, 2006).

This helps to frame some theoretical tools to guide empirical exploration of the transitional processes exemplified by emerging adult development. Before turning to these theories in more detail, it is important to consider the particular circumstances of emerging adults (see Arnett, 2004). For instance, given the moratorium presented to emerging adults, they may set goals to decide upon future goals, metagoals, if you will, such as selecting what kind of work to pursue after college graduation or defining features of a desired partner. Even within a goal to which an individual is committed subgoals often remain indeterminate, for instance selecting a focus within a degree program.

*Life-Span Research*

Much life-span research to this point treats goal pursuit and goal selection as related but separate processes, an understandable practice for large scale studies of adults of varying ages. At times, however, the pursuit of goal selection may be quite different than a more internalized process of goal selection, like the one described by the theory of optimization in primary and secondary control (Heckhausen & Schulz, 2006). This in no way discounts the theory; instead it helps to understand the conditions under which the theory is more likely to hold. Optimal goal selection is not a given, rather, as suggested by life planning research and theory (Smith, 2006), it is a continual process of recalibration. Given this, optimal life planning likely requires consistent access to and participation in a deliberative mindset in addition to an implemental mindset (see Gollwitzer et al., 2006).

Self-completion theory (Gollwitzer et al., 2006) describes typical features of an individual's personality and the social situation that contribute to the application of an implemental mindset or a deliberative mindset. Implemental mindsets are heightened by situations in which an identity is disconfirmed or threatened. This leads to increased effort and motivation, but also to resisting new information that might be relevant to decisions regarding that identity. Deliberative mindsets, on the other hand, are supported by indeterminacy and confirmation of identity, when an individual has yet to settle on an identity or to fully decide how to take it up (for instance not yet selecting a therapeutic strategy for a clinical psychologist). Individuals engaged in a deliberative mindset demonstrate significantly less bias in interpreting information that might be relevant to their decision.

All of this sets the stage for considering situated goal processes that are beyond the scope of most life-span research. These processes involve dynamic transitions between goal pursuit and goal selection and between implemental mindsets and deliberative mindsets. These processes also require the consideration of goals not just as that which an individual is actively pursuing, but that which an individual chooses to consider at all.

### *Sociocultural Perspectives on Self-Development*

This analysis stands to benefit considerably from the lens and tools of sociocultural theory, which provides means for examining in-vivo activity. For instance, ‘lines of practice’ is a theoretical model that views interest as a temporally distributed process in which individual’s preferences along with the contexts of practice constrain some goals while affording others (Azevedo, 2011). Lines of practice are valuable in understanding developing interests and capacities at an individual level, particularly in describing idiosyncratic pursuits and their persistence over time. Through individualization, lines of practice may give insight into intra-individual change across settings and practices. Most relevant to the present research, engagement with deliberative and reflective activities may enable individuals to establish trajectories more consistently aligned with their preferences, rather than acquiescing to normative standards or persevering in poorly aligned activities.

A number of theories play into the development of lines of practice, theories of interest (Hidi & Reninger, 2006; Krapp, 2002), theories of disposition development (Gresalfi, 2009), communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), observation of new activities (Rogoff, 2003), and activity theory generally (Engestrom, 1996). Most

important to the present research, theories of interest (e.g. Hidi & Reninger, 2006; Krapp, 2003) focus on interest content as motive is challenged by lines of practice, instead emphasizing characteristics of the relationship of the individual to the practice as important for sustaining motivation. The present research seeks to consider an additional aspect of this process, individuals' action toward the self, rather than the external domains often emphasized by prior research (e.g., astronomy). This requires a consideration of the term practice as typically used in sociocultural research to address collective activity. Practices are generally considered with respect to a relatively clearly bounded community (e.g. weavers or Alcoholic's Anonymous (see Lave & Wenger, 1991)); however, this boundedness may not be essential to consideration of a practice.

Philosophers have suggested that 'being human' can also be treated as a practice (see MacIntyre, 1999), though it is undoubtedly a practice that differs from others, inasmuch as it subsumes all practices in an individual's life. To put it quite briefly, being a good human being, on this account, means advancing (no differently than an individual participating in any other practice seeks to advance the ends of that practice) the common cause of humanity. The present paper takes this suggestion seriously, examining participants' engagement with the entirety of their lives, rather than focusing on a particular field of collective endeavor. In many ways, this focus is similar to the identity work done in Alcoholics Anonymous, with a change in self-perception as a central focus of participation. This does not mean that individuals necessarily view being human as a practice, however, and the ends to which they put their existence may be quite divergent from the furtherance of any common cause for

humanity, just as individuals may participate in any practice for reasons or to ends detrimental to the practice itself. Nonetheless, consideration of practice at this level (which I will call life practice) entails examining not just individuals' engagements with a variety of practices, but also their process of determining which practices are worthy of their efforts and relevant to the particular way in which they desire to live.

### *Lines of Practice*

Azevedo's (2011) theory focuses on four aspects of activity: lines of practice, contexts of practice, conditions of practice, and preferences. Lines of practice are closely related ways of participating in an activity system, for instance rockets of a similar style, while contexts of practice comprise the social and contextual milieus in which a practice is enacted (i.e., a basketball court, with different courts being used differently or a group of friends with whom one typically discusses certain topics). Conditions of practice are those aspects of an individuals' life that play some part in their way of engaging a practice, either creating opportunity or preventing possibilities. Preferences are features of an individual that contribute to adopting activities and lines of practice in idiosyncratic ways, including values, prior skills and experiences, ways of using material resources or constraints, or any other personally relevant features.

Examining lines of practice during the course, in addition to more in-depth interviews at the beginning and following the course, is intended to support an analysis of the effectiveness of the course in achieving the ends toward which it aims. Lines of practice are anticipated to shape the meanings individuals make through providing feedback on the means through which individuals seek meaning, exposing

them to the meanings of others, and through encouraging them to examine their own meanings. Lines of practice are necessarily embedded in contexts of practice, the topic that will be addressed next.

Contexts of practice are crucial for a number of reasons. They set the stage for particular interactions and activities. There are two important dimensions of a context, the physical and the social. The physical aspect includes the features of the space, artifacts present, surroundings, and location relative to other locations of interest. The social dimension includes the history of a practice at a location, the activity in that location, the individuals present at any given point in time, and the relationships those individuals maintain. Contexts of practice can support certain activities by providing resources and material opportunities along with sets of norms, while restricting others that may not be socially sanctioned or enabled nor materially feasible. One example of the way contexts of practice may affect learning is by providing more forceful opportunities to engage with a practice in particular ways (Gresalfi, 2009). For instance, teachers may encourage interaction by creating and describing student roles and reinforcing these roles with groups as they work. Similarly, they can encourage certain forms of interaction with content by emphasizing them and creating tasks and activities that require them.

Another dimension of lines of practice is the conditions of practice, those aspects of an individual's life that impinge on their participation, either constraining or affording involvement in particular ways. In the present study, each participant shares some conditions of practice- status as a university undergraduate, having declared a major, and enrollment in the intervention course, for instance. On the other hand,

participants' histories, living conditions, and fields of study may vary considerably. These varying conditions of practice, such as the academic and temporal dimensions of student life, may impinge on their participation in the course and their lines of practice in important ways.

Lines of practice elucidate an individual's current projects, and can extend across multiple contexts. They can also contribute to an individual's experiences in a domain, potentially shaping their trajectory. There are a number of dimensions to any line of practice, such as their dominance in an individual's repertoire (i.e., the likelihood that a line will be taken up given the opportunity). Lines of practice may be backgrounded if dominated by other lines of practice, or residual (latent) if they cease to be taken up with any regularity. Developing or novel lines of practice are emergent, and it is possible to consider lines of practice that are not taken up, such lines are potential lines of practice. It is perhaps most helpful to emphasize not only current lines of practice, but an individuals' history of lines of practice, as in Barron's (2006) work on learning ecologies. This history can capture latent lines of practice as well as providing some sense of potential future lines of practice, given current knowledge and interests.

Preferences relate most closely to potentially enduring psychological characteristics of individuals across lines and contexts of practice. Preferences are developmental or emergent orientations of an individual to activity in general or to specific activities, and are instrumental to comprehending individualization in goal pursuit. For instance, some individuals may utilize socialization as a primary preference in selecting activities, while others rely on design or construction

(Azevedo, 2011). There are a number of criteria that inform the identification of preferences; examples relevant to the present research are corroborating informants, depth of knowledge, invariance when developing new lines of action, and intentionally contrasting behavior with that of others in a domain.

Preferences also manifest in a number of ways, some on a global level that encapsulate a number of lines of practice. Others are local, and thus much more specific to particular lines of practice. Along with this, preferences have varying priority in structuring lines of practice, meaning that one preference may be primary and another secondary within any given line of practice.

#### *Emergent Identity*

Individual's identities are not static, but are instead negotiated socially and can be elicited by contextual factors. This implies that individuals are influenced profoundly by social interactions in which they participate and that awareness not only of the interactions occurring, but of the historical situation that gives rise to and imbues them with meaning is important (Nasir & Saxe, 2003). Furthermore, individuals actively pursue certain identities, out of an affinity or interest in certain domains or roles (see Gee, 2000). Of equal importance is an awareness of the variety of different experiences and values that individuals bring to a situation and that lead to different interpretations of and responses to it. In the present research, this highlights the importance of intersubjectivity and other processes in supporting individual's recognition and intentional selection of perspectives and recognition of preferences.

#### *Deliberative, Reflective, and Implemental Activity*

Initial work on lines of practice has focused on hobbies, examining engagement with amateur astronomy and with rocket building (Azevedo, 2011, 2012). It uses three closely related words to describe this, lines of practice, practices, and activities. Lines of practice are individualized temporally extended engagements in the practice. The term practice has been described above, as life practices or activity within a domain or field of engagement. Activities, then, are instances of engagement with a practice. Prior work on lines of practice focused on implemental activities, activities that mark one as a certain kind of person, through stating an intention to do something or taking action to do or facilitate doing that thing. This includes building a number of rockets of a certain type, engaging in conversations to share one's plans for designing new rockets, or acquiring a new telescope that allows for different forms of observation. Implemental activities can help others to understand an individual's interest, can support an individual's development of the capacities necessary for their pursuit, and can aid in the creation of relationships that sustain participation in a context of practice. Each of these is a potentially valuable outcome, and the integration of these outcomes is an important reason to examine implemental activity.

Deliberative and reflective lines of practice are less well understood, in part because they are likely more often internalized. Deliberative activities include those activities that support one's decisions about the kind of person they will seek to be or become. This includes decisions to select a new hobby, decisions around when it is appropriate to begin a new relationship, and even decisions within an existing goal, as with a decision to focus on a particular therapeutic model that a student training to be a therapist may make. Deliberation can also relate to closing off an identity, such as

giving up a hobby, relationship, or therapeutic model. While deliberative activities often include others- parents, peers, mentors, or knowledgeable others- in seeking to come to a decision, the cross-contextual nature and varied input from these sources makes any analysis of deliberative activity difficult. The context of practice for deliberative activities is, at least in part, internal to an individual. Reflective activities may not involve others at all, after they have been internalized. Reflective activities include activities that heighten an individual's awareness of some aspect of themselves. Examples of this are meditation, feedback from close friends, and journaling. Given their often internalized nature, reflective activities are likely to be the most difficult form of activity to observe as it occurs. Prior research on lines of practice has used journals to support analysis, particularly analysis of activity that the researcher was not present to observe, but it has not examined the process of journal creation.

Given the theory presented above, two separate but equally important analytical foci present themselves. First, the analysis of individuals and their change and evolution in preferences, activity, and selection of contexts, particularly as it relates to participation in the intervention course. Second, the analysis of specific activities and their differential influence on individuals emerging preferences and lines of practice, as a result of each individual's particularities as well as the different ways in which individuals engage an activity. For instance, completing an activity several days before class or the night before class, or seeing an activity as more relevant to one's situation for seniors seeking work than as juniors more distanced from such concerns.

In examining the activities, Gresalfi's (2009) work on constructing opportunities to learn is valuable. This work highlights the potential of different instructional language and practices to support different forms of student engagement with instructional materials, peers, and class-related activities. This is particularly important given the capacity of such opportunities to learn to promote certain kinds of behavior, most importantly for the present research, the exploration and articulation of personal meanings. Through providing effective opportunities, individuals may develop new preferences and perspectives on potential practices. Particularly important in this work is the idea of 'forcefulness' of opportunities to learn described earlier, comprised of prompting individuals to act in specific ways, providing on-line guidance during activity, and the establishment of relevant norms.

From this, the analysis will move on to consider how these activities influence participants extant and intended lines of practice. In this, particular attention will be given to explicit practices and ideas derived from course participation and implicit changes that may be a result of the unconscious internalization of these practices and ideas, rendering them unavailable for articulation.

## Method

### *Selection*

Participants were solicited through emails to course participants. An attempt was made to ensure variety in field of study, cohort (junior or senior), and gender. Five (n=5) participants were interviewed at the start of the term, but only four (n=4) were able to participate throughout the term. All but one of the participants was born in the United States. One American-born participant was raised abroad and another

was the children of immigrants. The participant who was unable to participate during the term was facing considerable stress and deemed himself unable to make time for repeated interviews. The continuing participants claimed a variety of Asian and Pacific Islander ethnicities on survey measures and in interviews. Participants were provided a twenty dollar gift card for their participation.

### *Study Context*

The study was focused on participation in a second term university course which accepted only junior and senior participants. The course met on Friday mornings for a period of one hour and fifty minutes weekly during a 10 week term, totaling eighteen hours and twenty minutes. At the beginning of the term there were 63 course participants, two instructors, and six facilitators. The role of facilitators was primarily to support the discussion and activity of the group in line with course objectives.

Course participants were distributed across 7 groups, led either by an instructor or by one or two facilitators (only one group was led by two facilitators), for a total of ten or eleven members in each group. Each group included students from a variety of majors and a roughly equal split of male and female students. During the term, some students dropped from the course, leaving the smallest group with 8 members, including the group leader. Each participant in the present study was in a separate group.

In addition to the out-of-class activities and materials which will be described in the data collection section, in-class activities included videos, lecture led by instructors, discussion in groups, a visiting mid-career speaker, recent alumni speakers, discussion in threes, design activities, and role playing. Each class session

involved several modes of interaction, within and between groups and between students and instructors and facilitators.

### *Data Collection*

There are three primary forms of data for the present study, interviews, course observations, and course materials. Each participant who continued in the study throughout the term was interviewed five times, once following the first class meeting and three additional times throughout that term, with at least two class sessions between each interview (see appendix B). These intermediate interviews were conducted within 24 hours following class. Lastly, each participant engaged in a closing interview, mirroring the initial interview with additional questions regarding course participation, after completing the course.

Course observations were limited, as the observer was serving to facilitate a group of students and could only record observations after the class session ended. These observations primarily help to indicate differences between groups within the course, discrepancies between course plans and materials and actual events, and to verify the implementation of instructional techniques. As each participant was in a different group within the class, observations of individual participants were not possible.

Course materials include lesson plans for each week of the course, out of class activities (see appendix C), and readings from a variety of sources. Lesson plans include instructions for course instructors and section facilitators, of particular note, questions and guidelines for facilitating group interaction. Course facilitators also engaged in roughly 30 minutes of group preparation prior to each class session. Out-

of-class activities include worldview and workview assignments, completing the Gallup StrengthsQuest questionnaire (Hodges & Clifton, 2004), completing a ‘block journal’ (similar to work on coping planning (see Sniehotta, Scholz & Schwarzer)), a flow reflection (based on Csikszentmihalyi, 1991), course learnings and unlearnings, composing an ode poem, and generating three five-year plans. Reading assignments included reading of academic writing like sections of William Bridges (2004) *Transitions*, quotes from various intellectual and literary figures, and journalistic articles like *What are you going to do with that?* (Deresiewicz, 2010).

### *Analysis*

The case study methods of the present study are informed by the prior case study research and theory (Eisenhardt, 1989; Colby & Damon, 1992). This method focuses on relevant constructs, which are individual pursuits, characterizations of self and motivation, and descriptions of interactions relevant to course topics, in and out of class, in the present research . This method of analysis is intended to support the generation of new theory, through examining novel contexts or circumstances.

Examining the data included several phases in order to refine these new theoretical ideas in a way which respects the participants’ interpretations and understandings. The initial phase was repeated examination of the interview data, focused on individuals’ initial stated preferences and descriptions of conditions of practice. Following this, the intermediate interviews, course observations, and course materials were examined.

Here, particular attention was given to the ways in which participants made use of and made sense of their participation in the course and its relation to their life beyond the course. Then, closing interviews were examined with an eye to assessing change since

the initial interview, focusing on the adoption of course ideas and practices as well as on shifts in preferences and intentions attributed to course participation. These analyses were conducted, in line with Eisenhardt's (1989) recommendations, first exploring within-case and then examining patterns across cases.

When patterns within and across cases began to emerge, analysis moved to another pass through the data, seeking information to further highlight these patterns, either noting exceptions or finding additional evidence. Finally, this data was compared with existing literature, in order to consider both limitations of the present analysis and methods and to sharpen its focus and heighten the relevance of the present findings to existing research. These various passes through the data and related research were intended to move toward new theory and possible extensions of prior work.

## Results

### *Initial Accounts*

#### *Lee: Rethinking Everything*

Lee is a junior who has just come back from a term abroad in Latin America. He is majoring in political science and had been interested in pursuing a career in political theory or law. Lee, however, had his eyes opened by his time abroad and has decided to make the current term a time of exploration and reconsideration. He is currently considering new possibilities in social entrepreneurship and technology. He describes what is most important to him at present as deciding what he wants to do rather than doing what he 'should' do, according to others.

As such, he is in transition, taking the intervention course as well as a computer science and product design courses as he considers whether to remain on his current track or to adjust his plans. Despite this, Lee is unable to currently commit to any new plans, as he doesn't feel competent in fields outside of political science. He has also adopted a more general inclination toward novelty, spurred by relationships he had while abroad. These have led him to prioritize building more diverse relationships in order to continue having novel experiences.

*Victoria: Realizing an Ideal*

Victoria is a senior international student, born in the United States but raised in a developing country. Her parents are well enough off to support her for a period of time after her undergraduate studies and have encouraged her to pursue graduate school. The central experiences that have brought Victoria to her life goals at the beginning of the term were service and international development experiences, beginning when she was nine years old in her home country. Through these experiences she developed a passion for service, though the expression of that passion has differed over time, from running summer camps to political activity and lobbying for new laws. Victoria's current focus within service and development was education, and she was working in non-profit consulting to build skills for her future work.

Despite this clarity, Victoria has a number of decisions which she is not prepared to make. She is conflicted about how to begin her career in international development. She has a clear set of ideals and changes she believes most organizations in her field should adopt: embracing technology, financial possibilities, and partnerships with for-profit enterprises. At the same time, she is unclear what the best

way for her to move toward this ideal future would be. She wants to have a family, but isn't sure if she should do so soon, given her work goals. She is also unsure how much education to pursue, resisting extended time in graduate school, while acknowledging that it may be necessary to enhance her credibility. All of this, in addition to her status as a senior, leads Victoria to be unsure of her near future. She is seeking work for the time after she graduates, but has yet to receive any job offers. She is also considering a master's degree in a business field.

*Ben: How to do it All*

Ben is a highly motivated junior, the son of immigrant parents, who grew up in a low income neighborhood. Academically, Ben has a number of interests and was majoring in human biology, with a focus on regenerative medicine. He also has an interest in economics and a new interest in the possibilities of design. He is also involved in a number of activities on and off campus, helping to streamline organizations in which he participates. He dedicates most of his weekends to service, out of 'guilt' that he can't help his parents, who live far away.

Ben also has a strong sense that he wants to do things that leads him to both be useful to society and to feel useful. His service work contributes to this and helps him to maintain what he calls the 'human connection', which he uses to describe developing and maintaining a capacity for empathy and a focus on what is most important. He discusses this empathy, which is also valuable given his adherence to Buddhism, as initially problematic in his research, as he was opposed to killing animals. Nonetheless, Ben is excited about the potential of that research, and hopes to continue it, while recognizing the haziness of ethics in the new field of regenerative

medicine. The only concerns noted in his initial interview which may serve as motives for participation in the intervention course are his lack of awareness of middle and upper class norms and the difficulty he has spending long hours studying without being distracted.

*Carrie: Which Path?*

Carrie is a junior studying materials science and engineering. She is in the process of making a number of decisions about her future work, attempting to decide if she wants to pursue a graduate degree and which subfield of materials engineering she wants to enter. Carrie is torn between her current focus on bio-medical engineering and an emerging interest in alternative energy. She is also not yet sure whether or not to enter academia. Her current plan is to work in industry for a few years and possibly to join the Peace Corps.

At the time of her first interview, making these decisions, while continuing her active lifestyle, was important to Carrie. Carrie was involved in an ethnic dance group and regularly participated in outdoor activities like hiking. She wanted her work to benefit others, and the different benefits of bio-engineering and alternative energy work presented her with a dilemma. Bio-engineering, in her mind, would allow her to see the effects of her work more clearly. Alternative energy, on the other hand, might have a larger effect, but one which is harder to see.

*Intervention Analysis*

*Course Setting and Norms*

The first class session of the course took place at 10AM on a Friday morning in a room with a modular seating configuration. Students had already been assigned to

one of seven groups, and on entering they met their group leaders. Groups were arrayed in a horseshoe to begin the class, with the instructors and projector image opposite the midpoint of the horseshoe. The course began with several orienting activities: reading William Bridges (2004) *Transitions*, watching a video on developmental studies of young adulthood, prominently featuring Harvard students, and presenting images comparing life stages in the recent past to life stages in the more distant past. These activities comprised the topical orientation to the course, a methodological orientation to design was begun through two activities: (1) students were each given a sheet with thirty identical circles arranged in rows and columns and given roughly three minutes to ‘turn the circles into something’, (2) students joined groups of four or five asked to create a free standing structure of spaghetti in order to hold a marshmallow, in 15 minutes. The activity with thirty circles was used to encourage creative practices, specifically the use of multiple schemas, and to build awareness of one’s response to being ‘stuck’ in attempting to solve a problem, with a focus on how to respond to such blocks. The spaghetti towers, most of which failed to stand at all, were used, along with data collected on past attempts at the exercise, to emphasize the design mantra ‘fail early to succeed often’, a mantra which supports a norm of exploration common throughout the course, in phrases such as ‘you’re not broken, you’re 21’. Students were explicitly and repeatedly reminded that the purpose of the course was to support their goals and decision-making and that they should decide what from the course is helpful to them and what to disregard. This further reinforced a norm of personalization that was central to the course, in which activities and course content were intended to be provocative of different responses from

students and that these varied responses were desirable. There were also restrictive norms, most noticeably repeated instructions not to evaluate the ideas or beliefs of others.

In addition to the components of the first class session, other features of note include: the form of course assignments and their use in class, a focus on various epistemologies, both rational largely cognitive epistemologies and emotional epistemology, and the substantial similarity of many assignments in the course to extant psychological interventions (e.g. ,gratitude journaling (see Emmons & McCollough, 2003)). As an example of a course assignment, consider the workview (see appendix C), which asks students to describe their general view of work, providing 7 questions to guide student writing, such as ‘what defines good or worthwhile work’. In the class after completing the assignment, students were provided an opportunity to discuss intellectual and literary texts pertinent to workviews in their groups, with guiding questions like “which text caught your attention and why?” Later, students shared their workviews verbally, one at a time, in groups of three, with listeners given prompts to guide non-evaluative responses focused on providing constructive feedback to the reader, prompts included “when did the reader seem most authentic?” Prompts were posted on the projector and reiterated by group leaders throughout the activity. To close the activity, full groups came together to discuss what they had heard and to describe the experience of listening and hearing in that way. With regard to epistemologies, journalistic and academic perspectives were presented to highlight the importance of various epistemologies, including videos of authors, discussing *The Social Animal* (Brooks, 2011) and

discussing work on emotional intelligence (see Goleman, 1995). Students were also asked to engage in activities to cultivate these ways of knowing, such as poem writing and a gratitude journal.

#### *Intermediate Activity Analysis*

In considering each of the cases, it is important first to note the widely varied intentions of the different participants noted above. Lee has a very open-ended goal for the course initially, while others have more specific aims. Similarly, Victoria is a senior, positioning her very differently than the others, particularly as both Ben and Carrie intend to spend two more years in the university prior to graduation. Each of the participants also has a different background, coming from a different region and with different educational experiences.

#### *Workview and Worldview*

Among the opening out of class assignments for the course were writing a workview and a worldview (see appendix C). These are intended to be conceptualizations of the relevant concept, and are shared in groups of three, as described above, before a full class discussion. Students described a number of experiences in generating, sharing, and reflecting on these assignments. In speaking of writing their workview, for instance, Ben noted that writing was “a really nice way for me to consolidate my ideas of what I want to do. So in that sense it let me put things in perspective.” They also discuss insights gained from sharing and hearing others workviews. Carrie describes peer affirmation, “You say that you don’t know (what you want), but you do.” Ben notes insights from the views of others, “a couple of other people brought up the idea that work is something that exists in your mind rather than

a physical entity. Work is what you make of it, that sort of anti-deterministic nature of work, highly personal nature, much more than just a job. (Work) fulfills you or helps fulfill someone else". Victoria shared an experience similar to Ben's, "(I thought) 'people would have a similar worldview' (but instead I saw) how people took it so differently. There are things that I want to put in that I didn't think about." Reflecting on the activities later participants noted a variety of responses. One response was different priorities in work and life decisions, "Now my sense of job is that I want to be on a small team." Participants also spoke of an increased salience of important values, "After doing my worldview, I realized that this field is what is most important to me and what I think I should contribute." Carrie describes a shift in focus, "Prior to the worldview I was thinking in terms of what am I good at, and really focused on school, rather than how what I am studying will apply to the greater sense."

### *Block Journal*

Students completed a 'block journal', taking notes on experiences they had throughout a week in which they were stifled or distracted from what they intended to accomplish. They then brought this journal to class, shared their insights with classmates, after an introduction to the topic by instructors, and then listened to and participated in a class-wide sharing of particular strategies for overcoming common blocks. While Lee noted that this was not a particularly productive activity for him, he saw its importance nonetheless. The other participants noted more personally relevant responses. Victoria notes that after the activity she "understood (her) emotions more". Ben described doing the activity as "interesting" and found that a common 'block' was "not doing it because I want it to be perfect". Carrie emphasized two distinct aspects

of this experience, recognition of blocks and patterns of blocks and ‘tools’ for responding to blocks more effectively. “They mostly had to do with the fact that I was embarrassed about something. It made me realize that I shouldn’t always feel embarrassed.” “Talking about ways to overcome roadblocks was helpful. You talk about ways that others overcome roadblocks like exercising, music, or just recognizing that you’re in a roadblock. I like having those tools.”

### *StrengthsQuest*

Following the Worldview and Workview assignments, students completed the Gallup StrengthsQuest (Hodges & Clifton, 2003), a commercial personality assessment commonly used in professional and career development settings. In class, students were given interpretive advice by a career counselor in addition to completing an activity focused on three recent accomplishments, emphasizing their use of strengths in these accomplishments and discussing them with peers. Students were then asked to complete additional ‘strengths engagements’, activities which might highlight and increase the salience of their strengths, such as discussing them with peers, journaling, or doing a new activity to try out a strength. Stemming from this, students described reactions to the immediate completion of the activity, to subsequent engagement individually and with peers, and later reflections on their interpretations. Immediate reactions include: acceptance, “One of my strengths is being positive and my ability to connect with others, which I think I can use on a day to day basis. At first I was kind of disappointed that I didn’t have more diverse strengths. It is also good to know that my strengths are consistent with my character,” and ambivalence, “(The StrengthsQuest inventory) describes me as, maybe as who I am, but more recently

what I've tried not to be". In describing sharing her strengths with peers in class, Carrie said, "It was good to hear other people's feedback because they pointed out how I used strengths in different ways that I didn't realize that I was." Describing later reflection on the activity participants noted a variety of responses. Carrie talked about her interpretation and application of the 'strengths', from, "This gave me ideas for things I could do as a career in the future, (perhaps) consulting of some sort," to, "(Strengths) don't have to define what type of career (I have), but how I perform it." Ben spoke of a heightened awareness of the risks of a strength, "It is my strength but it's also my greatest weakness, because now I know what I'm good at, it shows me what I have to improve on and an anchor to weed out the negative aspects of (my strength)". Finally, Victoria notes the experiences as a trigger for action, "I wouldn't have applied to launchpad (an entrepreneurship incubator) if I hadn't read that (about my strength in developing ideas)."

#### *General Experience of Course*

Participants also noted general responses to the course, as it was ongoing and after its conclusion. These included descriptions of the structure it provided to their attempts at career and personal development, an acknowledgement of the importance of peer interaction to their developing understanding, changes in self concept, as a space to gain perspective, and a greater tendency and capacity for relevant action.

Regarding structure, participants said:

- "(it is) nice to have a framework to put things into order," Ben.

- “I do value reflection. This class provides more of a structure to do that, provides a good framework (for) the job search, career fairs and everything like that,” Victoria.
- “More structure and more framework, setting really concrete milestones, (and thinking what do I need to (do to) achieve that,” Victoria.

With respect to peer importance, they said:

- “It’s good, very interesting because our group has a lot of different perspectives, other people from other areas are approaching their lives (differently),” Ben.
- “I see how much these other people want what they want. (That makes it okay for me) to want what I want,” Ben.
- “The class really provided the opportunity to meet like-minded people who love what they are doing,” Victoria.

Participants also spoke about themselves as changing:

- “This designer in me is starting to peak out, starting to combine all these different aspects of my life, aside from the stuff I mentioned before. How I fit in the world, and how I read myself and what I want for myself, is really different. I’m pretty introspective, but now I’m actually applying it and that is really important,” Ben.
- “I’m getting a better sense of how to create, rather than just analyze what exists,” Lee.

- “I’ve gotten better at self-analyzing and being more open with people. (I am) writing a journal (to) keep thoughts and important notes,” Lee.
- “I used to think of work as a prestige thing having that big corner office (and) I am high up or at the top of the corporate ladder, but now I don’t care (about that), now wanting to be there is more of a factor,” Lee.

Participants also speak of the value of the course space in gaining perspective:

- “It’s almost like a nice little meditation break, a break and look at the big picture, helping me to calm down, focus, re-evaluate, for the next week,” Lee.
- “I really think that the Stanford schedule and not being able to look inward. I’m always like ‘I need time to reflect’. I think the class is perfect because it is an assignment that you want to do,” Victoria.

Lastly, in describing the shifts in their behavior they said:

- “Before was a lot of drifting, (this class) forced me to get back on the ball. While preparing for the future, don’t forget the present,” Ben.
- “I’ve made less of an effort to hang out with the same people, going with the flow more, instead who is around. That has been good and rewarding actually,” Lee.
- “(I have more conversations about this topic) on my balcony with different people or over Skype,” Lee.
- “In the beginning it was reflecting. And it’s always like practice then go (do it in the ‘real world’),” Victoria.

- “I pitched a startup idea, and he (one of the instructors) was really helpful. He said ‘this is exactly what you should do’ and I did it,” Victoria.
- “This class changed how I’m going about (finding work). It’s turned out to be pretty fun. I’m enjoying it,” Victoria.

### *Intermediate Case Analysis*

Each of the participants describes development in their lines of practice through course participation, speaking to the general applicability of the context of practice and activities used in the course to their life situations. In fact, there is a rather typical trajectory for all of the participants, shifting from a broadening of possibilities and considerations early in the course, to selecting a filter near the middle of the term, to a focus and intention to hone one’s efforts as the quarter drew to a close.

Different course practices and activities trigger these changes for each participant, as they present their stories. For Lee, this trajectory is shaped by a combination of his growing disillusionment with the possibility of technological fields supporting a career and an increasing awareness and capacity to take up novel opportunities in his environment, as noted in his quote above regarding creation. For Carrie, this results from articulating a workview and worldview, and the increased salience of her latent environmental values through these activities. Victoria speaks more generally of the structure and reflective space provided by the course as useful. Particularly helpful for her is the focus of the course on ways to take action toward her goals and to set concrete milestones on the way to meeting them. Ben, on the other hand, considers a number of different strategies for ‘doing it all’ and finally selects

one which is appropriate for the circumstances of his life, though it remains tentative. Perhaps more importantly, Ben has recognized in this the challenge of appreciating those experiences he does have rather than feeling a need to ‘do it all’.

This leaves open the question of how the course contributes to these changes, changes which involved experiences outside of the classroom for each participant, as much, if not more, than in-class experiences. This reverses the general emphasis of prior research on lines of practice, which considered outside influences on the focal practice, instead considering how a local activity contributes to an individual’s lines of practice. The primary mechanism for this effect seems to be an intentional focus on preferences through course activities. This focus supports a growing salience of an individuals’ preferences, through their initial articulation, through a greater awareness of others’ preferences as shared during class meetings, and through intersubjectivity, positioning each participant to both try to better express their own preferences and through an increasing appreciation of alternative preferences. Lastly, this awareness is supported by reflection on articulation and social interactions. In many senses, this creates a complementary understanding to Azevedo’s (2011) work, emphasizing not the relation of the individual to the activity but instead the relation of the activity to the individual, highlighting the insights into self which might be gained from attentiveness to these experiences.

Reflective and interactive activities described above present data seem to support various strategies for intentional self-development. They support the acquisition of a greater variety of coping strategies (described most clearly by Carrie above), the elaboration and clarification of preferences, a greater awareness of

normative standards, and experience with free fantasies and preparation for expected obstacles (similar to Oettingen's (2006) work and described most clearly by Victoria when she spoke of "concrete milestones").

Many of these changes share some features: they are described as being derived, at least in part, through externalizing some aspect of the self. Several also stem from the social interaction facilitated by the course. Lastly, many of these changes are described as reliant on the engagement of a reflective or deliberative mindset in contrast to an implemental mindset.

Taking Carrie's insight into her intended career field as a case in point, this insight relied upon the externalization and requisite (for the course) articulation of beliefs and values which Carrie held but which were not, prior to articulation, salient to her in her work decision-making. However, the externalization of these values and beliefs was only the beginning of this insight. Verbalizing this externalization and reflecting on the relationship between two externalizations, the workview and worldview, afforded Carrie a new perspective which strengthened the insight. It is doubtful whether unassisted introspection would have afforded a similar outcome, as it lacks several features generated by this action sequence: artifacts to scaffold reflection, instructions for the creation of these artifacts, which are too complex to be held readily in working memory, and the engagement of intersubjectivity and reflection to support clarification.

These aspects of the context of practice can be seen to aid in the mediation of changes, even those which are not necessarily completed, in extant lines of practice and the selection of new potential lines of practice. In addition, even when lines of

practice remain stable, lines of practice focused on deliberative or reflective activity may emerge. These lines of practice are most clearly differentiated in Ben's account, which we turn to next.

As a first example, in writing a block journal, Ben built an awareness of some typical blocks he faces. This is a result, as Ben describes, of externalizing the blocks and subsequent reflection, which help him to overcome an aversion to risks, such as in applications for internships and seeking to meet new professors. Through sharing his workview and hearing the workviews of his peers, Ben was prompted to recognize how impersonal his workview was in comparison to his peers and to begin reflecting on the relevance of his personality to his workview.

Later in the course, activities began to influence Ben's decision-making more directly, as he adopted new preferences. These preferences include a resolution to avoid work that is a 'stepping stone' to the work he really wants to do, more actively seeking creative tasks, and adopting the idea of a 'bias-to-action' in the face of unclear decisions. Ben also recognizes in himself preferences which he would like to change, most notably his idealistic preference to 'do it all' which results in a fear of missing out on some opportunities and experiences and dulls his appreciation of what he does have time to do.

The changes resulting from the course, though largely internal, also include adjustments to Ben's deliberative practices. For instance, Ben describes his use of brainstorming in deliberation on work and life decisions. In addition, Ben has begun engaging doctors and entrepreneurs in conversations about their work as he seeks to better understand what they do in order to better decide on his own work trajectory.

Lastly, Ben intends to adopt a re-evaluation practice, taking stock of his life regularly. In describing each of these changes, Ben references course related experiences which prompted them.

All of these experiences inform preferences and practice. Further, they are self-relevant, serving as complex examples of the phenomenon of mediated internalization long ago described by Vygotsky (1978). At the same time, this mediated internalization itself is afforded by the norms, instructional techniques, and activity of the course discussed above. Similar processes took place for each participant, though they differed considerably as to the course experiences which served to trigger change and the relevance of that activity to their particularities and circumstances.

#### *Final analysis*

Having described the experiences by which the interview participants suggest change has occurred, it is time to turn now to the changes participants describe. The changes in Ben's preferences and practices are described above. Ben also changed, to some extent, the content of his goals, specifying more clearly the path he hopes to take in his work, from a masters degree and work in finance to a dual-degree including an M.D. prior to a medical career, and noting that he doesn't see himself as likely to start a family until he is over 40. The changes for other participants are described below.

Lee's change is perhaps best described as a shift, begun before the course through his experiences abroad, from doing what he 'should' do to what he himself 'wants to do'. Lee is the only participant to have no clear work content for the time after his graduation, instead planning to travel for a few years, seeking novel experiences which he can draw on for the rest of his life. Lee also describes having a

family and being able to dedicate considerable time to that family as central goals for his future. In the near term, Lee was enrolled in several courses focused on the social sector. He had also secured an internship for the summer working in social entrepreneurship, about which he was excited as it had seemed an unlikely possibility. He intends to continue exploring a career in social entrepreneurship, but is not yet prepared to commit to the field. In his decision-making process Lee describes a number of changes which have taken place for him, some of which were noted above: a greater capacity for self-analysis, a greater readiness to be open about his life, an active orientation to life decision-making, engaging in more conversations with peers about life decisions, and, like Ben, an intention to continually re-evaluate his decisions. Lee also notes that while he had previously focused his decision-making on seeking 'prestige' in the past, he is now much more focused on enjoying work and work relationships than on other aspects of work.

In addition to the change in focus noted earlier, Carrie has accepted a summer internship abroad in the field of alternative energy. This shift, resulting from the heightened salience of a preference, has brought Carrie's work pursuits into alignment with her values in a way which her prior emphasis on medical applications for her work did not. Through this, Carrie has confidently planned the next several years of her life, including a co-terminal Masters degree and two years of work prior to another transition, either pursuing a Ph.D. or taking time to travel. Beyond the content of her goals, Carrie notes that she is attempting to continue a daily gratitude journal, that she is now focused not so much on her present skills in deciding on work, but rather on the impact that she wants to have through that work, and lastly that she regularly discusses

course topics in her daily life and has taken to using a notepad to record insights she gains as she goes through her day. Carrie's learning from the course was most focused on activities, particularly engaging the worldview and the StrengthsQuest.

Victoria focuses on the structure which the course has provided her for reflection, decision-making, and action. Victoria still didn't have an exact picture of the work she wanted to do after the course. She had, however, developed a community with classmates with whom she intended to continue discussing the topics of the course. She also described changes in how she set and pursued goals, tempering her initial idealism with a need to set "concrete milestones", supported by the greater structure and confidence she feels in her capacity to move toward her desired work. As for the content of her goals, Victoria intended to work for three or four years outside of the social sector to build skills to bring back to the social sector when she feels more prepared to enter it.

### Discussion

The results described above demonstrate some promise for the present methodology in examining deliberative and reflective activities. They also consider practice in a broader form than is typical in sociocultural research and retain relevance to participants, despite their varied interests beyond the context studied. Stemming from this, an examination of the two lines of analysis in this paper will be presented. First, describing the ways course activities relate to individuals' emergent practices and changing preferences. Second, describing how the present analysis sheds light on lines of practice, particularly on the novel distinction between implemental, deliberative, and reflective activities.

Course activities are almost entirely novel to students, as students describe them. Some students note an awareness of the object of activity (for instance Lee noted that he was aware of his ‘blocks’, rendering writing the block journal less useful to him), but this was rare. This novelty is emphasized by the participants need for time to process their responses, with long pauses during interviews and more than one noting that they anticipated continuing consideration of what they had experienced and how to make sense of it for months following the course. Another indicator of such novelty is the ‘surprise’ which participants noted at recognizing their own experiences and beliefs, such as Carrie’s surprise at noticing the importance of the environment to her and its absence in her work goals. Such novelty, from the perspective of lines of practice, indicates that, though they were juniors and seniors in college, the form of life practice they were engaging in was one in which they were still developing expertise.

Despite this, the forcefulness of instructional techniques supported students in moving toward expertise, leading them to continue engaging with course topics and ideas beyond the course. This seems to result from a combination of norms, such as the norms of personalization and exploration described above, and activity specific instructions, for design activities, self-sharing, and so on. At the same time, given the novelty of these ways of engaging for many participants, it often took several experiences for students to feel comfortable participating in them fully. An addition to the previous work on supporting the development of dispositions is also suggested by the present data, guidance after an activity in considering how one might best think of the activity, a form of cognitive apprenticeship (see Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989).

Turning to lines of practice, the present research is most relevant to preferences. Participants entered the course with a number of goals and plans for their lives. Many of these goals and plans remained in place following the term, but in each case the reasons for pursuing these ends has been elaborated or clarified. In terms of lines of practice, participants note a heightened salience of their own preferences, noting some that they had previously been unaware of, and the adoption of life practices intended to continue clarifying and elaborating preferences as well as ensuring their capacity to enact those preferences.

Hence, the central focus of life practices seems to be preferences, those internal motives which one uses to guide deliberative activity and which reflective activity can help to make salient. Life practices are those which assist individuals in developing and maintaining deliberative and reflective activity, toward the end of ensuring appreciation and benefit from their implemental activity. This draws out a tension with prior work addressing preferences (Azevedo, 2011), as that work treats preferences as phenomena to be gleaned largely from behavior and intentions rather than personal construal. The present work instead supports a more dynamic notion of the relation of preferences to practice. Preferences noted through observation might best be called apparent preferences. In addition to these, individuals may have avowed preferences, that which they claim to be motivated toward or by. It is important to note that most of the participants in the present study (Lee is an exception) did not question their own avowed preferences prior to participation in the deliberative and reflective activity of the course. It can be inferred that actual preferences exist as a third level of preference, and that each of these levels of preference is dynamic.

Stemming from this, mismatches can and do exist between apparent preferences, avowed preferences, and actual preferences. Lee said as much, noting that he saw himself quite differently at the end of the term than he had at its onset, but that he didn't expect others who knew him to be aware of this change. Another way in which a mismatch between apparent preferences and avowed preferences might arise is in engagement in unintended behavior or behavior with unintended consequences. For example, an individual may regularly participate in Alcoholics Anonymous, but though they fully intend to maintain sobriety and participate to that end, they in fact engage with other alcoholics and often meet them for drinks elsewhere, perhaps even to the extent that this behavior contributes to social rumination about events which triggered the individual's initial alcoholism. Thus this individual could avow a preference for sobriety and maintain an apparent preference for alcohol and social rumination. Distinguishing between these levels of preference has important consequences for lines of practice, in differentiating an individual's intended behavior, actions, and goals.

Differences between actual and avowed preferences are also possible, and may have consequences for well-being, as indicated by research on goal pursuit (see Emmons, 1999; Sheldon & Kasser, 1995). This research indicates that pursuing some kinds of goals is associated with to negative consequences for subjective well-being, physical well-being, and even psychological well-being, despite individuals' overt intention to pursue such goals (indicating a preference for them over potential alternatives). This work indicates two dimensions which are candidates for universal actual preferences- coherence and congruence- coherence is the level of integration

across goals, in addition to lack of conflict, and congruence is the extent to which goals meet organismic needs (for more see Sheldon & Kasser 1995). Participants in this study indicate that they perceive a greater alignment of their avowed preferences with their actual preferences following course participation. Each of the changes described above was in part an effort to achieve such alignment.

The present analysis also sheds some light on the process of beginning to engage in life practices within the examined setting. This process seems to contain three stages, a foundation stage, a filtering stage, and a focusing stage. The foundation stage involves the accumulation of different possible preferences, through course activities. These possible preferences are generated by the StrengthsQuest, worldview, worldview, block journal, and other activities in and out of class. The filtering stage typically began at roughly the midpoint of the term, with participants working to select preferences to utilize on in their deliberations. Lastly, the focusing stage begins the movement of attention from now avowed preferences, to potential lines of practice. This model is tentative, given both the small sample in the present study and the relatively short time course of data collection.

The present research combines both observation and interviews, but still relies heavily on self-report. This may reduce the validity of the results, as participants may not report accurately on their activity in and out of class, nor have complete insight into all of their motives. In addition, the study was conducted over the course of a period of only three months, a relatively short time for transitions in lines of practice or life span pursuits. It would benefit considerably from ongoing validation through

additional interactions with participants, which is planned but incomplete at the time of writing.

Future research on life practices would do well to examine life practices in other settings. For instance, examining the practices of various spiritual traditions might shed light on more long-term participation in life practices and on a variety of practices not included in the present research. It is also important to consider the capacity and interest of people of various ages to engage in life practices. Young children may not be able to describe a worldview or worldview, while mid-career adults may not wish to engage in life practices that encourage reconsideration of their long-term commitments. The present research gives a view of the life practices of collegiate upperclassmen, and the dynamics of these practices over the life span are undoubtedly complex.

### *Conclusion*

The present study serves to provide evidence for the existence and potential importance of life practices, in addition to practices within particular domains. It further extends prior work on lines of practice, noting the relevance of deliberative and reflective activity, in addition to implemental activity, to a full account of lines of practice. The present work also provides empirical and theoretical evidence for a complex model of preferences within lines of practice: apparent preferences, avowed preferences, and actual preferences. The present work also notes norms, activities, and instructional techniques which may support the effective use of deliberative and reflective activity in supporting preference clarification and elaboration as well as life

practice selection. Suggestions for future work, examining life practices at other ages and in other settings are also presented.

## Circumscribing the Moral Sphere: How Do Students Conceptualize Who and What Influences Their Work Decisions

Growing up is, in part, a process in which individuals make decisions about who they want to be. Despite this, relatively little is known about the ways in which emerging adults arrive at and use criteria in making such decisions. Elucidating this process is an important goal if scholars are to provide better resources to emerging adults. In addition, examining ways in which emerging adults may be prepared to accept influence from their context in these pursuits is valuable, both to provide support and to avoid potential negative influence.

Building on this, this paper examines the processes underlying self-understanding and its relation to meaning and action. In particular, the aim of the study is to examine the development of several components moral frameworks as they relate to self-understanding, an analysis not only of the developmental outcomes of intentional self-development, but of its underlying processes. One focus in this is the different ways participants consider the interconnectedness of the self and the world.

In broaching self-understanding, a theory of the self is necessary. The classical framing of this is James' 'I' and 'me' (see Damon & Hart, 1988 for more). The I and me are the self-as-subject, the I, and the self-as-object, the me. Self-as-subject refers to the experiencing self, which is in time and aware. The self-as-object is the experienced self, developed through reflection and self-categorization. Given the phenomenological nature of the I, it is difficult to study, and most research on self-understanding emphasizes the me. The me can be productively separated into two

primary dimensions, mirroring the I and the me on a reflective level. Thus, there is self-understanding of the self-as-subject and self-understanding of the self-as-object.

Adolescent self-understanding and identity development follow a general developmental trend. Adolescents tend to shift from categorical to systematic understanding of the self (Damon & Hart, 1988). In particular, they shift from seeing themselves largely as reflected by social comparisons and the social utility of their traits to seeing themselves in terms of self-standards, beliefs, and desired selves. These standards, beliefs, and selves tend to manifest in the form of personal goals. Using this paradigm, little is known about emerging adults, though within the moral domain, some relevant research has been done (e.g. Frimer & Walker, 2009). This research will be discussed later, in describing moral identity.

Goals, then, can become organizing frameworks for an individual's conception of the active self, integrating an individual's sense of agency, continuity, and distinctness. Agency here means a perception of self as actor and decision maker, and continuity understands the self as possessing a past, present, and future. Distinctness is an individual's understanding of themselves as separate and different from others. In emerging adulthood, it is possible that the recognition of continuity may lead to a number of challenges in identity formation. Individuals recognize a number of possible futures without always having the resources to select meaningfully between them. They are positioned to be in need of means to pursue and sustain an identity prior to entering 'self-sufficient' adulthood.

Distinctness, as described above, is perhaps seen more usefully as the perspective an individual has of their relation to the world. Of three models

examining the relation of self to the world proposed in prior research (Frimer & Walker, 2009), the synergy model, the interference model, and the reconciliation model, the reconciliation model is most robust. Put succinctly, the synergy model assumes that the self is naturally aligned with moral concerns, eschewing concerns for conflict between individual interest and common interest. In this model, even seemingly selfish pursuits, such as status-seeking within a community are to serve communal ends. The interference model posits the opposite by treating individual interest and the common good as necessarily in an irresolvable opposition. A case in point is the persistent belief that pursuing career self-advancement goals is inimical to familial concerns. The reconciliation model avoids the dichotomous nature of either, instead emphasizing the dynamic nature of an individual's relation to the world and recognizing the potential of individuals to bring coherence to the conflicting demands of personal and communal motives. This model meshes well with other research on the multiple levels of goals (e.g. Carver & Baird, 1998). It also provides a foundation for considering morality as it relates to self-understanding. Transcendental concerns are realized to the extent that synergy is achieved, in part through successful integration- the internal perspective mirroring the external feedback, in the presence of universal considerations. Thus, in describing such development more dynamically, Colby and Damon (1992), use the term integration processes to describe how reconciliation is achieved. A static process is not enough, as an individual's environment is constantly changing, in ways that demand adjustment of beliefs and goals. It is also important to note that, even in the absence of transcendental concerns, local or interpersonal concerns, can ground moral understanding. Morality can be

derived from relations with the world and others that are not based on universalistic beliefs.

Either of the previous examples, of synergy and interference, could just as easily exemplify different positions within the reconciliation model. An individual at an intermediate point in the reconciliation model may instead pursue both, for instance pursuing a position of authority both for the personal privileges it provides and in order to serve the community better. In fact, there is evidence that such a mixture of motives toward agency may be adaptive (Yeager, Bundick, & Johnson, 2012).

To understand moral development more fully a theoretical conceptualization, moral frameworks, for interpreting responses is necessary. This conceptualization is based in part upon recent moral development research (Frimer & Walker, 2009; Colby & Damon, 1992). It is valuable to consider what an individual is engaging with, actually and conceptually. Particularly in the domain of work, do they see work as morally related to family life or morally separate from it? How universal are they in considering those to whom they are responsible in their work? These, and other questions like them, are important questions which inform on the process of moral pursuits as much as the ends.

More recent work by the Walker group (SRA 2012) emphasizes the terminal ends of moral goals, in addition to the proximal ends of moral action, as an important consideration in understanding moral identity. This distinction will be addressed in detail later. The present paper adds to this a consideration of moral foundations, the factors from which individual's moral ends emerge. This is an addition closely aligned with MacIntyre's (2007) philosophical critique of ahistorical moral theory and with

the virtue ethics framework he and others espouse. MacIntyre claims that any denial of the historical basis for morality must fail, and that all philosophically valid morality must emerge not only from appropriate engagement in present concerns but from the embedding of an individual within a historical context. This resonates deeply with developmental systems theory and a focus on individual-context relations (Lerner). At the same time, the present work allows for moral frameworks to come in a number of forms, adopting Kantian, Nietzschean, or other ethics. It seeks not to proscribe a particular form of moral framework, but instead seeks to describe the varieties of moral framework individuals adopt and to gain some understanding of their relation to moral concerns and decisions.

Moral frameworks, it is expected, can play a central role in identity formation. They can do so through both limiting the scope of what is considered relevant to identity and decision making or opening identity up to extensions. Perhaps the most relevant study to the current consideration of moral frameworks is *Some Do Care* (Colby & Damon, 1992), which considers moral exemplars. This study examines 23 particularly moral individuals, and in doing so, notes several aspects of their moral understandings relevant to their moral frameworks. For one, the idea of integrity and honesty is important to the exemplars, helping them to act in ways which are consistent with their beliefs. An area where exemplars differ, in a way that may relate to their moral frameworks, is with regard to forgiveness. Those who show a particularly encompassing capacity for forgiveness tend to create and work with organizations to serve the poor or otherwise work directly with those in need. Those with greater anger and difficulty forgiving tend to be engaged in issues of justice, such

as civil rights activism. Of particular interest, Colby and Damon (1992) note that some of these more angry and less forgiving individuals also have limited belief in a divine or transcendental power. Thus, belief in God or a transcendental trust in human goodness may support different moral development than the absence of such trust or beliefs.

This paper is also intended to shed some light on the conditions, both internal and external, through which moral identity is established and sustained. Colby and Damon's (1992) study is retrospective, and so while they describe a process of transformation of goals, this transformation has already occurred. This paper examines not the end point of moral identity, but rather the individual's conception of their distinctness, as a key facet of moral development. This includes considering the moral foundation of an individual, in addition to the moral ends they seek, as important factors in moral formation. Three aspects of the world external to the self are worth particular consideration: moral sources, moral influences, which together comprise the moral foundation, and moral ends.

Moral sources are the experiences, individuals and groups from which an individual derives their values and which serve as a foundation for moral understanding. The combination of moral sources establishes cumulative continuity, an important aspect of moral identity development (see Colby & Damon, 1992, for more). This foundation need not be entirely positive; instead experiences may serve as an indication of negative morality, as in cases of perceived discrimination, directing an individual in another way. Similarly a group may be rejected, for instance when a Republican or a Democrat rejects the ideas of the opposing political party. A

particularly clear example of negative morality can be found in Fritz Oser's (1996) example of a 60 year old man recalling a second grade experience. This student had been selected by the teacher to monitor the classroom in her absence, and did so honestly, at first. However, other students then offered to pay him to erase their names from his list of transgressors. He accepted this payment, thinking well of himself until he shared his triumph with his mother that night. His mother was appalled and rebuked this behavior, leading him to recognize its faults and to avoid anything similar in the future. Regardless of whether a source is seen as a positive source, indicating appropriate morality, or a negative source, indicating immorality, sources are the historical groundings for an individual's morality. It is also important to note that moral sources may be externalizations of the self, such as statements of belief or prior actions related to a cause.

Moral influences, in contrast to sources, are ongoing and dynamic in the role they play in an individual's life. Again, in Colby and Damon's (1992) terms, moral influences combine to generate interactional continuity. They can have the same positive and negative forms of impact on an individual's moral views as moral sources. Peers helping an individual to decide between alternatives can serve as a moral influence. Parents also often serve as a moral influence on their children. Here it is important to note a temporal distinction between moral sources and moral influences. Moral influences are not entirely determinate in their effect on an individual. For instance in the time soon after the death of a loved one, even if in the past, the event may not have crystallized in its impact on an individual. Moral sources are crystallized interpretations of relationships. Moral influences, in contrast, are still

fluid and negotiable. This does not preclude an experience, group, or individual being at once a moral source and a moral influence. For instance, a mother may be a moral source in her past honest behavior and a moral influence in her current advice regarding a career decision. Similarly, a religious community may be a moral source of values at the same time an individual is reconsidering their relationship with that community, perhaps in favor of another community or even of eschewing religious belief altogether. Thus a religious community could serve as a positive source and a negative influence simultaneously. Moral influences serve to support moral dynamism, a dynamism which is constrained and given shape by moral sources.

Lastly, moral ends are the future oriented aspect of a moral framework. Considerably more focus has been devoted to ends than to moral sources or influences in much research and philosophy on morality. It is important to note two kinds of ends which are particularly important to the present research. These are terminal and instrumental ends (Rokeach & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). Terminal ends have to do with the ultimate outcomes of a behavior, as an example desiring to contribute to one's family or community. In discussing outcomes of behavior then, the focus of terminal ends isn't on the behavior itself, but on the desired effects of that behavior. Proximal or instrumental ends, on the other hand, relate to the reasons for the means by which those outcomes are accomplished, for instance an emphasis on acting honestly or treating colleagues fairly. Thus instrumental ends are focused on the behavior regardless of its efficacy in achieving any particular outcome. It is important to note that the distinction between terminal and instrumental ends may not be content related- wanting to build relationships, for instance, can be both a terminal and an

instrumental end based upon the meaning this has for an individual and their focus on the process or the outcome in describing the content of the ends.

### *Research questions*

Based on the three external aspects of morality described above, moral sources, influences, and ends: what moral sources, influences, and ends do emerging adults call on to make sense of their work decisions? What varieties of moral framework do individuals adopt with regard to work? Do these forms of moral framework relate to the consideration of potential moral change? In particular, are participants or applicants to the intervention course more likely to espouse certain kinds of moral framework or to include particular features in their moral framework?

### Methods

#### *Sample*

End-of-term interviews from each of the participants interviewed were used. These participants include 9 students from the course and 8 non-participants. Non-participants were evenly split between course applicants (n=4) and non-applicants (n=4). Each group is roughly evenly divided by school cohort (juniors (n=9) and seniors (n=8)) and gender (male=9, female=8). Participants opted in to interview participation through a related survey. Interviewees were then chosen with a focus on selecting students with a variety of majors for both course participants and non-participants and a balance across cohort and gender. Participants were provided a \$20 gift card as an incentive for participation.

#### *Measures*

Participants participated in an interview, lasting from 30 to 70 minutes. These interviews were based on the youth purpose interview (Damon, 2008) and also used questions from the Good Work Project interview protocol (Damon, Csikszentmihalyi, & Gardner, 2001). The interview included 3 primary segments, an introductory segment focused on the individual, their values, activities and general self understanding, a segment focused specifically around work and work decisions, and lastly a number of prompts emerging from prior statements by the interviewee (see appendix). Interview questions in the initial segment include: what is important to you and how do you spend your time. Interview questions in the work and work decisions segment include: what is your ideal work for and who are you responsible to in your work. Interview questions in the final segment include: who do you have conversations with about the kinds of things we have discussed in this interview, and what are your plans for the next few years.

### *Analysis*

Participant responses throughout the interview were analyzed in order to consider foundations of moral values and decisions: moral sources, such as relationships, experiences, and ideas or beliefs, and moral influences, such as conversations, opportunities, challenges, and so forth. Participants' moral ends, both proximal and terminal were also examined.

The analysis will focus in particular on responses to the following questions: what is your ideal work for? Who are you responsible to in your work? What is the relation of work to the rest of your life? What are your personal ideas or beliefs about

work? Where do those ideas and beliefs come from? Who do you have conversations with about the kinds of things we have discussed in this interview?

The analysis considered consistency and coherence in responses in addition to content, examining the scope of what an individual said rather than considering statements separately. Particular attention was paid to whether ends are transcendental or local in nature. The breadth of sources, influences, and ends is also considered. Lastly, interrelations between sources, influences, and ends were explored.

## Results and Discussion

### *Sources*

#### *Parents*

Perhaps unsurprisingly, parents are an important moral source for many (n=11) of the college students in the present sample. Further, parents are generally described as a positive moral source, rather than as a moral source from which children seek to distance themselves. This includes acceptance of parental spiritual beliefs, religious or non-religious (n=6), and parents interest in social concerns, such as women's rights (n=1), free speech (n=1), and poverty (n=1). One exception to this is a participant who rejected her parents' compartmentalized idea of work in favor of her own view of work as integrated into life.

#### *Past Contexts*

Several participants note the influence of different places they have been in the past, from travel to foreign countries to growing up in a working class area. Long-term contexts were mentioned in 7 interviews, and travel or internship contexts were mentioned in 5 interviews. These contexts are noted as the root of certain values or

ideas which have continuing importance. Some also note that ongoing connection to these contexts serves to support their continuing awareness of concerns which arise there, indicating a connection between sources and influences. In addition, one participant notes that they prefer to avoid the small town context they experienced in the past. Instead, having experienced collegiate life and other new contexts, she has established a preference for some qualities of these new contexts, while asserting her own personalized idea of community.

### *Past Experiences*

Experiences of discrimination, toward oneself or others, of a field or activity, or other embodied encounters can also help to root moral values and decisions. Such experiences are mentioned as moral sources by 10 participants. Experiences in the work domain, for example, are mentioned by one participant as essential to ensuring their continuing interest in their work. For others, these experiences help to highlight important values of which they had previously been unaware. These cover inclusiveness and also a valuing of personalization, resisting one-size-fits-all solutions. Lastly, one student notes a negative experience, an existential crisis of sorts, for triggering reflection and affirmation of religious values which he had accepted but which he did not act on consistently. Fuller examples of such experiences will be presented in case studies below.

### *Other*

A number of participants (n=6) note non-familial relations as important moral sources. These include adults who provided for the education of one student in ways his parents were unable to do, as well as past teachers and professors. Religious

communities are also noted as moral sources by 5 participants, including both Jewish and various Christian communities, Mormon and evangelical being noted specifically.

### *Influences*

#### *Parents*

Even in college, parents are commonly discussed as influential career decisions and development (n=9). In this, fathers are discussed as particularly important, perhaps because of their greater work experience. There are important differences between participants in this however. Three participants whose interviews indicate that they come from immigrant backgrounds or from families with less education focus on emotional support provided by parents, but note that their parents are unable to provide them with appropriate suggestions and advice for work development and work decisions. In contrast, three participants whose interviews indicate their parents are college educated have benefited from more specific support, including networking, financial support, and information about their fields.

#### *Companies and Mass Media*

These are relatively rare sources of moral influence, but, in at least one case are important. In particular, one individual mentioned the Google motto “First do no evil” as an important value. While this value had emerged from his experiences growing up in working class neighborhood, a moral source, having a label for this value is important to how this student organizes their life and makes sense of decisions he is presented. The motto emerges repeatedly in the interview as part of a moral framework recognizing and seeking to limit negative side effects of actions at the same time as it espouses the virtue of positive good. Ongoing experiences of work

exert a similar influence on at least two other participants, helping them to develop a fuller understanding of their own interests and values.

### *Peers*

The importance of peers to work decisions and values varies among participants. A variety of peer groups and involvements serve as influences, including peers within a major or class, who share values and interests. Four participants mentioned peers in their major explicitly, and every participant (n=9) in the intervention course mentioned relationships with peers in that course as an influence. Boyfriends and girlfriends can also be same-age peer influences (n=3), both through interaction and as influencing possible pathways given the anticipated future of the relationship. Peers also influence students in their living environments, with roommates, teammates, and others serving as partners in conversations about future work. In addition, religious community (n=3), through peer fellowship, is noted as an important source of peer influence.

### *Other*

Participants note a number of other moral influences, from recent tragic or traumatic events, such as a death in their family (n=2), to responses to their own recent decisions, as the consequences of those decisions become apparent. Non-work goals are also mentioned as an influence on work decisions, such as a desire to travel (n=1) or to have a family in the future (n=2). Lastly, religious community is mentioned as an ongoing influence over and above peer community, though this influence was discussed in any depth by only one participant who had recently completed a religious

retreat. These influences cover a broad range across participants and may provide particular insight into personality in ways that more normative influences do not.

### *Instrumental Ends*

#### *Interest*

Most participants (n=14) noted that an interest in or enjoyment of the content of their work was important, for sustaining motivation, for work satisfaction, and/or for aiding in selecting a means of working toward terminal ends from among possible alternatives. Nonetheless, the way in which this interest and enjoyment was valued differed across participants, some noting it as essential to work, others noting it secondary to other instrumental or terminal ends, and others describing it as primarily useful in narrowing their work decisions.

#### *Challenge, Variety, and Growth*

Most participants (n=15) mention seeking challenge, variety, and growth work. This is not to say that they are not confident in their ability to do their work, but instead that achievement within a work setting of difficult tasks is more motivating or a more valuable use of their time than routinized tasks. In addition, the variety is imagined to impact the possibility for developing new skills at work and for making the most of what each participant brings to their work.

#### *Social*

Most participants (n=14) mention some aspect of the social climate and culture of their desired work. This includes an interest in working with colleagues who are highly skilled and intelligent, who share one's interests and goals, who respect and appreciate one's work, who provide different perspectives, and who may be personal

friends as well as professional colleagues. Three of these participants note more than one of instrumental values with regard to the social environment of work.

#### *Other*

Participants note a number of other instrumental ends as well, for instance, a desire for the process of work to be transcendent (specifically glorifying to God) and a desire for autonomy in work.

#### *Terminal Ends*

##### *Family of Origin*

Many participants (n=11) note their family of origin as important to them, though the relation of this value to work pursuits is not always elucidated. One participant places substantial value on providing for his family, seeking, through his work, hoping to allow them to emigrate to the relative security of the United States from his troubled home country. Similarly, another participant notes that he intends to sideline his personal goals for several years in order to pursue finance, so that he can provide for his family.

##### *Impact*

Many participants (n=15) talk about their work in terms of 'impact' or contribution to a vision of the social or environmental good. These desires for impact though often unidimensional, considering only the good that one might do, Two participants also focus on potential negative impacts as well, and for these two, the avoidance of such a negative impact is a priority at least on par with achieving valued terminal ends.

##### *Achievement of Positive Impact*

A number of kinds of positive impact are discussed by participants. One focuses on the attempting to engineer a way around what he calls 'level setting' in as broad a way as possible, which results in the hedonic treadmill. Others focus on other means of helping others, solving social problems, supporting a stable society, the environment, and the desire to change local communities and support others who do the same.

#### *Avoidance of Potential Negative Impact*

The avoidance of negative impact was a rarer theme in interviews. It was particularly powerful for an individual mentioned before, who espoused the Google motto "Don't be evil" as a manifestation of his own beliefs. Another participant sharing the same general perspective, notes that many attempts to do good may interfere with others attempts to do good (using examples from international development), and that this requires a degree of diligence and circumspection in one's own attempts to do good.

#### *Future Family*

The presence or absence of the intention to have a family in the future differentiates many of the interviews. This intention is important both to women, who often recognize the potential consequences to their work of having a family, and men who demonstrate less ambivalence toward the prospect of having a family in the future. Nonetheless, for males and females, family considerations help to establish the priority of work. Both men and women note that they expect their future family to take priority over work in their lives, though generally not until several years after they graduate from college. Some participants take a very different view, for instance, one

male indicates that, given the intensity of his career plans he doesn't foresee being married until he is roughly 40 years old. Similarly, one of the females in the sample notes that she sees the work she intends to do as more important than having children and takes seriously the notion that having children may in fact interfere with her capacity to do the work she believes is most important. Thus the centrality of the intention to have a family, particularly children, may be an important factor in understanding the priority which individuals place on their work.

#### *Other*

Participants also note a number of other terminal ends relevant to their work pursuits. They seek to provide value to customers, humanize others, both through the recognition of personhood of consumers and through the application of humanizing policy. They also seek transcendence, both in religious terms and through the idea of legacy, and they seek personal and collective happiness.

#### *Relations between Sources, Influences, and Ends*

There are definite relations in participants' conceptions of sources of morality, influences on morality, and moral ends. In part, this is, no doubt, an artifact of the interview technique used, explicitly asking for sources and origins of belief as well as how an individual's concerns influences their work goals and plans. Nonetheless, these conceptions were often presented independently of such questions, and shed additional light on why individuals choose a particular terminal end for their work as well as how they select the instrumental ends through which to pursue the terminal end. Perhaps unsurprisingly these relations are most entangled between moral sources and influences, which are often mentioned simultaneously, noting both the historical

and internalized values or differences from parents and the impact of current interactions with them. Relations between moral sources and ends tend to take a more explanatory mode, with the source indicating the reason for the internalization of a particular moral end. The relation of influences and ends is presented as more dynamic, often focusing around potential change, future decisions, and so forth. I will now present examples of each of these relations.

Examining the relation of moral sources and moral influences shows that there may be continuity between these two aspects of a moral framework, though this is not always the case. Parents are often mentioned both as a source of values and moral understandings and as continuing providers of support, either through advice or encouragement. Other past relationships also have ongoing importance continued through interaction, for instance, one participant speaks of her relationship with a teacher from her early teens which is foundational to her values and who continues to provide advice.

#### *Moral Sources and Terminal Ends*

The relation of moral sources and terminal ends is occasionally clear cut. Some participants note that their primary terminal work goals are primarily a result of their moral sources, for instance wanting to ‘give back’ in gratitude for what non-familial adults provided, supporting involvement in gifted programs. Others are negative responses to others values, for instance rejecting the small town lifestyle of one’s parents.

#### *Moral Sources and Instrumental Ends*

Instrumental ends are sometimes, though less often than terminal ends, mentioned as related to moral sources. In these cases it is often the case that participants explicitly mention the way in which moral sources relate not only to the outcomes of work but in which these desired outcomes necessitate certain means of doing work. For instance one participant notes that her ‘privilege’ necessitates her engagement not only in helping others, but to work in ways that help her to understand the experiences of those without the same privilege and encourages her to seek work in which she can seek to understand others perspectives.

#### *Moral Influences and Instrumental Ends*

The relation of moral influences and instrumental ends is often close, with ongoing experiences informing values and developing skills to address facets of how one wishes to work. Similarly, some participants sought out influences, through courses and activities like informational interviews and internships, which might help them to better align their work with their instrumental values.

#### *Moral Influences and Terminal Ends*

The relation of moral influences and terminal ends are varied, they are relatively rarely mentioned in interviews. While terminal ends are generally described as final and expected to persist over time, several participants nonetheless noted the importance of moral influences to sustaining the salience of terminal ends, for instance family and peers reminding one of the importance of religious faith. In addition, several participants noted likely shifts in terminal end hierarchies through future influences, such as shifting priorities from work to family. Several participants noted the importance of relationships in providing direction and clarifying particular ends,

such as elaborating on freedom and other central moral concepts with a significant other. Lastly, as will be noted in a case study later in this paper, some individuals maintain a continual practice of seeking moral insight, reflecting on their experiences with the intent of more fully understanding terminal ends.

*More complex interrelations*

The above notes one-to-one relationships of moral sources and influences and instrumental and terminal ends. However, there are also, for some individuals, deep interconnections across three or more of these aspects of moral frameworks. Rather than providing generalizations about such interconnections, which seem bound to be partial and misleading, I will provide two examples:

The first of these examples is a young man, Karl, who calls his life ethic 'Flow', explicitly referencing Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's (2008) theory, though not clearly describing the connection of his philosophy to that theory. Karl began to develop an explicit life ethic in high school, recalling that the process leading to its current iteration began in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. In explaining the etiology of this ethic, Karl notes that his parents were raised Christian, but both became atheist. Further, he was raised over a thousand miles from any other members of his extended family and was encouraged by his parents to develop his own views on life. The importance of this philosophy to Karl was evident from the beginning of the interview, when he described himself, rather than by year and major as most participants, as a philosopher. Further, Karl noted the dramatic effect of changes in philosophy on his life, referring to them as crises.

Karl's process of developing an ethic is tied, at least temporally, to the central terminal end of his life, to "have a substantial lasting impact that avoids level setting". Karl's idea of level setting is drawn from psychology, particularly focused around hedonic adaptation (e.g. Diener, Lucas, Scollon, 2006), adjusting to improvements or decrements in objective life circumstances without any change in overall happiness. Further, Karl is not satisfied to have this effect on a small scale, hoping to reach billions through his work.

In attempting to achieve this goal, and to develop an appropriate ethic through which to do so, Karl has engaged a number of moral influences. He intends to work at a large tech company and to cultivate relationships with peers who can help him continue to hone his ability to achieve his goal. He also maintains some instrumental ends, particularly a desire to enjoy work, that he sees as inseparable from his terminal goal of creating a means to improve others quality of life. Karl is not unique in this sample in having a pervasive ethic of life which he has intentionally sought to develop, though his ethic is far more personalized than others who have developed such an ethic, most notably a young Christian woman. It is worth noting that these two participants also maintain the strongest transcendental terminal ends in the sample.

At the same time, other participants also demonstrated integration across moral sources, influences, instrumental ends, and terminal ends, without the intentionality which Karl has brought to his self-development. Lucy, who had a particularly important experience doing a marketing internship, is one example. Lucy, through her experiences in this internship, a moral source, came to value lifestyle and observation based marketing and product design, an instrumental end of work. She sees these

techniques as important to marketing generally, and as particularly important to developing products and solutions in developing countries, a terminal end and an area of interest to her prior to her internship.

Lucy is less clear about the importance of this experience as leading to engaging with moral influences. It undoubtedly affects her decisions, but it seems, at least in her conception, untethered from any ongoing development of moral understanding writ large. Instead it is seen as a kind of moral culmination, clearly an improvement upon her prior moral understanding but not leading to any need or desire for intentional moral change at present. It does lead to the idea that local culture should be deeply understood if you are attempting to intervene in it in order to be sure that your work actually empowers those you are seeking to serve. This reveals a desire to seek a particular kind of moral influence, a desire which Lucy intends to actualize through her future work in Asia. Another participant interested in international development shows a very similar conception of the need for contextualized moral understanding.

Following from the two cases above, consider a more typical conception of morality, that of Winston, a senior. Winston intends to pursue a career in finance, but has strong doubts about his capacity for moral judgment. Winston described his shifting view on the death penalty as undermining his confidence in disentangling many moral dilemmas. This has led Winston to focus on things ‘most everyone agrees on’ as moral, providing food, water, and education to those in need. He was very articulate in describing that his worldview is not necessarily better than that of others, and that he should, as a result, avoid imposing it.

As graduation approaches, Winston has deferred his employment at a firm he expended considerable effort to find, to attend a prestigious masters program abroad. He has done so at the advice of his future colleagues, friends, and family, without evincing any conviction of his own about the decision. Winston recognizes a potential moral hazard in finance, a hazard which became quite clear to him early in his undergraduate career as a global recession developed from financial mismanagement. This led him to seek widely for work which matched with his values and in which he felt he might resist moral decline. Despite this, unlike Kyle and Lucy, Winston doesn't describe himself as intending to grow morally; rather he has a tightly circumscribed view of morality, focused on static and general terminal ends, providing food, water, and education, as mentioned above.

*Differences between course applicants and participants and non-applicants*

While it is difficult to make strong claims from such a small sample, trends in similarities and differences across participant groups did emerge in analysis. No non-applicant participants indicated having a sense of uncertainty with regard to their capacity to find work or their capacity to decide what work would be good for them. Three of these non-applicants note a religious grounding for their morality, the other two both speak extensively of social impact and interactions with family members or significant others about terminal ends. All of this indicates individuals who perceive themselves to have the necessary assets to navigate the transition from college to work.

Applicants and participants were more likely to note obstacles to this transition. For instance at least one participant noted each of the following obstacles

with regard to their parents or other adults who they turn to for advice: that they did not understand the choices and opportunities provided by a college education, that they lack a knowledge of the careers available in their field, or that they did not know how to provide meaningful work advice given their own backgrounds. One of these participants noted his intention to delay his own entrance into a medical career in order to provide for his family of origin through time in finance. This is a stark contrast to one of the non-applicants whose parents informed her that they would provide for her for an entire year after her graduation, in order to give her the opportunity to start her desired work, which would provide little if any income during that time.

A deeper examination of these differences hints that dissatisfaction with one's system of support may have triggered a desire to participate in the intervention course. Most course participants (n=8) noted that through their participation they felt more equipped to engage in conversations outside the course or that they had developed a community in which to have such conversations through the course, conversations and community which were less a part of their lives prior to participation. One applicant had begun taking the course the following term at the time of her interview and noted an impact even following the first week of the course in her discussions with peers. Other applicants (n=2) noted their engagement of other resources, parents or former teachers, in their attempts to make better work decisions, with one noting a continual dissatisfaction with her networking and the other noting that she is trying to find a purpose for her life.

Course participants also noted the importance of specific course activities to their developing conceptions of work. These activities included several forms of writing: a ‘workview’, a ‘worldview’, a gratitude journal, quotes from class sessions, and a notebook for relevant thoughts. In addition, at least one participant noted each of the following: that creating a five year plan was important and something they intended to continue doing, that the course helped to provide a structure to think about life decisions, particularly work decisions, and that continual re-evaluation of decisions is important.

#### General Discussion

The present results indicate a variety of moral sources, influences, and ends relevant to emerging adult work decisions. A reactive form of moral framework is most common in the present sample, though at least two participants demonstrated a more intentional form of moral framework, for instance Karl. Lastly a context-adapting form of moral framework, in which one seeks to understand what is most appropriate for a new setting is present in some participants (Lucy is an example of this). These varieties of moral framework are demonstrative of different conceptions of moral change as well as practices and attitudes relevant to such change. There is no clear indication that participation in the intervention is related to varieties of moral framework in the present data.

In fact, the present data provide little indication of substantial differences in outcome between intervention participants and non participants. Some evidence lends credence to possible differences between participants and non-participants, that participants may be more confident in making decisions after course participation,

particularly with regard to competing values and concerns. However, the evidence for this is inconsistent, showing only that some participants note particular course experiences or practices to have been particularly helpful in making a decision. In addition, there is little if any evidence for differences in universal or transcendental conceptions of morality for course participants as opposed to non-participants. Differences between the groups instead emerge, where at all, in their initial confidence in their capacity to pursue their ends well and their sense of support in those pursuits. The tendency of course participants to seek and find opportunities for discussion and community through participation in the course seems to be an attempt to generate such support and to move toward greater confidence.

*Relation to prior theory- Moral and self understanding*

Returning to prior work on moral identity, the present research highlights some of the content of moral ends in ways left out in recent research. First, each of the participants pursued terminal ends which were benevolent, whether toward social, family, or environmental concerns. These ends were generally seen as related to fulfilling the self, indicating some level of reconciliation, and they were generally universal (with family and customers as the only non-universal terminal ends which any participants described in the absence of universal terminal ends). It goes on to extend this work through hinting at the personal historical origins and continuity of these ends. In many ways, the concept of moral sources is straightforward, if potentially important. Morality, as noted in *After Virtue* (MacIntyre, 2007), is unlikely to arise from a vacuum and doubtless emerges from past experiences. More complicated, though similarly conceptualized by virtue ethics, is the importance of

moral influences. These, in the present data, seem account for much more of the difference in a moral framework's relevance to change than differences in sources or ends, though sources and ends often motivate the acceptance or adoption of moral influences.

It is perhaps more productive to consider moral influences and different moral frameworks in light of self-understanding. Three types of moral framework, are proposed, as noted above, reactive, context-adaptive (espoused to some extent by Lucy), and intentional (demonstrated by Karl). Reactive moral frameworks, to simplify greatly, focus on the connection of continuity and agency with recognition of the importance of non-continuous distinctness. The relation of self and world is seen as unchanging, with only one's status (e.g. student or spouse) in that world affecting one's actions and decisions. Context-adapting moral frameworks move beyond this through emphasizing a distinctness in which the self-context relation is locally dynamic, leading to a conception of desirable change in the relation of self to the world in both the self-to-context and context-to-self directions. This desirable change is likely to be most salient at the time of transitions between contexts. Finally, intentional moral frameworks embrace a continuous and dynamic relation of the self to the world, with new understandings of the relation of self and world leading to potential transformations in agency. This framework seems to lend itself to transcendental aims, based on the present data. All of these different forms are most clearly explained by different conceptions of moral influence, the most relevant proximal determinant of moral change.

*Limitations, Future Directions, and Conclusion*

The above results are tentative, describing as they do a self-selected sample of students from an elite institution. Further, with only seventeen interviews at a single time point, it is premature to draw strong developmental conclusions. Perhaps, for instance, those who describe in their interviews a reactive moral framework are nonetheless making dramatic strides in their moral understanding, even if they are currently unaware of or unable to fully articulate these changes. In addition, intentional moral frameworks may be self-deceptive, a way of articulating one's own 'open-mindedness' while resisting actual moral growth or change. Further investigation is needed to examine these and other possibilities.

On the basis of the present research, future research may benefit from additional emphasis on moral influences in understanding moral identity development. Such research may also begin to develop a clearer model for articulating why individuals choose to adopt one form of moral framework over another and the consequences of different forms of moral framework.

### *Conclusion*

The results of this paper lend support to the value of understanding moral development through moral sources and moral influences as well as moral ends. They demonstrate that these help to distinguish qualitatively different moral frameworks and suggest some important differences between these forms. This elucidates developmental factors previously missing from much work on moral identity and relates these differences to differences in self-understanding, particularly the integration of distinctness and continuity.

## General Discussion

The previous studies provide some insight into emerging adulthood, such as a general overview of the moral frameworks they adopt and some evidence of actions which may generate meaning and capacity for intentional self-development. It also includes analysis of the way an intervention course supports development, through influences on moral frameworks, fostering intentional development and meaning finding, and supporting the clarification of preferences.

They indicate the variety of moral sources, influences, and ends which emerging adults call upon to generate their moral stories. They also indicate the centrality of work concerns and pursuits to meaning and self-development in early emerging adulthood. Specifically, there is evidence of the importance to meaning of work development striving progress. There is weaker evidence of the relevance of work development striving progress in supporting personal growth initiative. Lastly, the studies highlight the dearth of research on life practices and begin to address life practices relevant to emerging adulthood.

The present studies also provide evidence that the intervention course supports emerging adult development in important ways. It does so, in part, through the use of activities very similar to existing psychological interventions (e.g. Emmons & McCullough, 2003). It also uses techniques similar to those of prior career (Steger & Dik, 2009) and self development (Robitschek, 1997) interventions. Further, these studies examine the application of these activities and techniques and the responses of participants to these techniques. They provide evidence that these techniques are forceful in ways that support the development of relevant dispositions and that they

assist participants in clarifying preferences and developing lines of practice utilizing deliberative and reflective activity.

### *Meaning*

Both the moral frameworks study and the lines of practice study provide some insight into the experiences and perception of meaning by participants. In both cases, this meaning focuses on the pursuit and clarification of meaning, often aligned with purpose. Focusing first on moral frameworks, the differences in reconciliation processes can also be interpreted as different ways of seeking meaning. Changes in preferences and practices can be understood as an attempt to align the self with meaning, meaning in this case stemming from increasing alignment between apparent, avowed, and actual preferences.

Finding meaning, in light of moral frameworks, it is important to consider transitions and changes as important sources of potential meaning. This includes the inclusion of new influences in one's moral framework and shifts in emphasis from one terminal end to another. Action in pursuit of meaning, engaging influences to sustain meaning, and making sense of threats to meaning are all important facets of finding meaning which an analysis of moral frameworks shine light on.

Understanding personal meaning and increased confidence in making decisions to align ones goals and actions with such meaning seems to be a consequence of course participation, based on the lines of practice. Meaning in practices, as described above, can be understood as the confluence of increasing alignment between apparent, avowed, and actual preferences, and progress toward fulfilling the goals of those preferences. This work avoids reducing meaning to any

pairing of apparent and avowed or avowed and actual preferences, instead considering the integration of these preferences (an integration bearing strong resemblance to successful reconciliation of the relation to the self and world). This alignment of preferences can occur both internally, through changes in alignment of avowed preferences with actual preferences, and through context-to-individual relations, through events, actions, or experiences. This alignment occurs, on the basis of the present research, through the engagement of appropriate reflective and deliberative activity. Finding meaning in the fulfillment of preferences takes place largely through engagement in implemental activities.

### *Emerging Adulthood*

Continuing from these findings, it is valuable to consider the ways in which the studies relate to each other. Each study uses a methodology varying considerably from those of the other two studies, one entirely quantitative, one focused on individual differences at a single time point, and the last focused on individual change over time on the basis of interviews. These studies provide convergent evidence from each methodology relevant to emerging adult development, and may also provide some insight into areas for further study. In order to avoid overwhelming the reader, a discussion of these convergences will be provided in the following order, with study 1 related to study 3, study 1 related to study 2, and finally study 2 related to study 3.

In the survey analysis and the analysis of moral frameworks two primary convergent findings are present. The first of these is the relevance of the intervention to changes in perceived competence in pursuing one's ends, in and beyond the domain of work. The second is evidence that course participants initially expressed greater

concerns about their ability to secure meaningful futures for themselves than non-participants. Taken together, these findings indicate that the intervention course may serve to support relatively at-risk students in their seeking to prepare for life after college. This risk may stem, according to the interview data, from the inaccessibility of the relevant cultural models to many students, particularly those from international and lower class backgrounds.

Examining these studies in concert, there is evidence that quantitative measures may be sufficient to begin assessing interest and appropriateness of interventions such as the intervention course. Such measures may help universities to locate such students and to provide appropriate resources to support them during their time as undergraduates and in their transition from college. What is not clear is the extent to which students not interested in applying from the intervention course might benefit. These students may not be motivated to participate in the course, and may even distract those students who are motivated. On the other hand, such students may benefit from the intervention through the diverse relationships it provides. These possibilities would be most readily disentangled through a enlarging the size of the intervention, thereby including students less strongly motivated to participate.

The overlap of the survey analysis and longitudinal case studies provides some insight into the process of the effects of each. The survey analysis provides additional evidence of the meaning change which is hinted at in the case studies, most prominently Carrie's focus on alternative energy. The survey also highlights gains in confidence and heightened progress toward personal growth initiative and meaning which students described in interviews. The combination of these findings can even be

interpreted as preliminary evidence that the course supports a developmental shift from default individualization toward developmental individualization (see introduction or Cote (2002) for a description of these terms), most clearly seen in the case of Lee, who had begun such a shift, as he describes it, prior to the course. The case studies and analysis of course activities also strengthen the claim that the intervention contributed to the effects noted in the survey, through providing insight into the course activities and students' responses to them.

The relevance of these studies to future research is that they support the use of mixed-methods in assessing qualitative and quantitative outcomes in concert. On the one hand, given the resources necessary to conduct large scale qualitative research, the ability to conduct a survey to provide evidence that case studies capture larger trends is important. On the other hand, conducting such a survey, particularly to examine a complex intervention such as the one studied here, gains considerably from qualitative support. The case studies, for instance, highlight some activities which were particularly salient to participants and also differences in interpretation of activities by different participants. Each of these can help to direct future research toward relevant activities and can also support refining the activities used to align them with intervention goals.

The moral frameworks and case analyses shed light on each other in a very different way. These analyses highlight, in part, the potential benefit to sociocultural and Piagetian methods of contrasting these forms of analysis. The Piagetian methods, used to elicit and interpret moral frameworks, take individual's conceptualizations seriously and often treat them as the central focus of analysis. This allows for an

understanding of personality in a way that is, at least to an extent, independent of the local context. This allows the depth of analysis necessary to understand moral sources and other features of an individual's psychological 'context' which may be missed with a focus on local context and activity. This view is complemented well by the contextual and interactional analysis supported by lines of practice, which gives some insight into shifts in individual's conceptualizations of their activities. At the same time, the repeated interviews used in the case study analysis also indicate the potential for shift in psychological context. The framework analysis provides some insight into the ways in which preferences may shift through a variety of experiences. The case studies, in contrast, highlight those pieces of a moral framework which may shift into the background, such as Lee's changing emphasis on relationships, seeking to diversify his connections rather than maintaining his long-term friendships.

These analyses develop complementary perspectives on life practices, with both moral sources and moral influences indicating some relevance to preference development, which show considerable theoretical overlap with instrumental and terminal ends. Thus, an individual's practices, in addition to contextual factors acting on the individual undergird an individual's preferences. In addition, the moral framework participants, particularly those who maintained intentional moral frameworks, provide examples of ways that individuals engage in life practices beyond the context of the intervention course. Most notable in this is the way in which these participants build and maintain relationships to support their pursuing moral ends. The case studies also help to shed some light on moral frameworks, as hinted at above in describing possible shifts in psychological contexts. In particular, activities

like the interviewing Ben engaged in can serve to generate moral influences and to impact ones understanding of instrumental and terminal ends. All of the changes in preferences described mirror some change in instrumental and terminal ends, either varying the salience and priority of these ends or clarifying their meaning.

All of this presents ripe ground for future research, revising the intervention, examining life practices and self-development as supported by other contexts and as relevant to other ages, within and beyond emerging adulthood. Each of these possibilities for future research will be addressed in turn, beginning with an exploration of changes to the intervention. Research on life practices and self-development in other contexts will be considered next. Then, the specific concerns around adolescence and emerging adulthood and life practices will be addressed, focusing on differences by individual circumstance. Finally, life practices beyond adolescence and emerging adulthood will be considered.

The intervention itself has several valuable features, most clearly pointed out in Study 3. Despite this, a number of possibilities for refinement exist, though most of these changes would serve as additions to the current course curriculum and setting rather than revisions to existing practices. These possibilities are derived in part from work on hobbies (see Azevedo, 2012). First, the course might be more clearly integrated into the structure of the university as a whole, connected with resources and centers on campus which would provide alternative contexts for engagement with life practices. In addition, the course might create a space for students to share activities from life practices outside the course, perhaps inviting other students to join them in these experiences. The course might also do more to support not just decision-making

about the future but structure for the integration of life practices into students' lives, for instance integrating a one year 'life practice plan' into the Odyssey Plan capstone assignment. Along similar lines, the creation of additional after course activities, perhaps analogs to the workview in domains of relationships and health may be beneficial. Parallel to all of this, it would be valuable to examine means of engaging and sustaining a similar intervention outside of a course context, for instance through residential education, orientation activities, or other co-curricular and extra-curricular collegiate programs.

Outside of collegiate and university contexts, a number of settings related to life practices exist and may provide useful sites for study, most prominently, centers for spiritual formation, such as religious schools, yoga centers, and cultural practices related to spiritual formation (e.g. the Japanese Tea Ceremony). In each of these contexts the shared spiritual beliefs of participants may be particularly important, in a way that is absent in the largely spiritually pluralistic context of the intervention described in the present studies. Each of these settings may also contain a mixture of communal and personal life practices and varying structures for social relationships to sustain such practices. Participants in these settings may also engage in any particular spiritual activity differently from others, more or less frequently or with variations in style, such as using a different focus for meditation. There is potential benefit from understanding this variety, particularly as it may support a number of different outcomes of life practices.

Adolescents and emerging adults may be at an important transitional point in developing life practices. Younger children may have little agency and insufficient

self-understanding to benefit from the activities used in the present studies.

Adolescents and emerging adults, as they develop an identity and commit to a future may benefit considerably from life practices. Such practices may play an important role in supporting developmental individualization and reducing the likelihood of default individualization. There are a number of transitions within adolescence and emerging adulthood, transitions into and out of middle school and high school, from living with parents to living at a college or moving into one's own apartment, from school to work, and new relationships, particularly with romantic partners. Each of these transitions may be better prepared for through the use of appropriate life practices. While the present research suggests some practices which may be appropriate for undergraduate upperclassmen, varied activities could be examined in other contexts, for instance activities to support development within college for freshmen, or activities to support work adjustment for those no longer in school.

Children and other adults may also benefit from life practices, despite the relative consistency of their life contexts. Life practices for children are a challenging topic, given their self-understanding, which is likely insufficient for most of the activities used in this study. Nonetheless, examination of early experiences with spiritual practices is possible, for instance in religious schools, religious services, or religious instruction. Cultural practices may also serve as early indicators of later life practices. For adults, life practices to sustain and reinvigorate current involvements are worthy of observation. Practices to sustain relationships and build new relationships could also be important, particularly for older adults. Practices to support transitions, for those considering work transitions, children leaving home, or other life events,

may also be important to adults and very different from those for younger people. All of these varieties of practice merit some study, particularly with regard to how they work together to support self-direction and self-understanding.

### *Conclusion*

Given the lines of potential research described above, it is clear that the present studies are just the tip of the iceberg in research to support emerging adult development and to support the development of life practices more broadly. The current studies indicate that temporary engagement in life practices is related to two laudable outcomes, increased personal growth initiative and presence of meaning in life. It is likely that, as with other practices, these outcomes are best maintained through sustained involvement with the practices (see Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006). The moral frameworks study helps to build a preliminary understanding of how emerging adults make sense of their moral worlds, complementing sociological work in this area (e.g. Smith, Christoffersen, Davidson & Herzog, 2011). The lines of practice study begins to examine ways in which students take up deliberative and reflective activities, using them to clarify and refine preferences while establishing new lines of practice which help to continue this process. All of this lays begins to lay a foundation for future work on life practices, including revising the present intervention, examining life practices and self-development in other contexts and at other ages, work which is considered above.

## Appendix A. Survey Measures

### Meaning in Life Questionnaire (P= Presence, S=Search)

1. I understand my life's meaning. (P)
2. I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful. (S)
3. I am always looking to find my life's purpose. (S)
4. My life has a clear sense of purpose. (P)
5. I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful. (P)
6. I have discovered a satisfying life purpose. (P)
7. I am always searching for something that makes my life feel significant. (S)
8. I am seeking a purpose or mission for my life. (S)
9. My life has no clear purpose. (P)
10. I am searching for meaning in my life. (S)

### Personal Growth Initiative Scale

1. I know how to change specific things that I want to change in my life
2. I have a good sense of where I am headed in my life
3. If I want to change something in my life, I initiate the transition process
4. I can choose the role that I want to have in a group
5. I know what I need to do to get started toward reaching my goals
6. I have a specific action plan to help me reach my goals
7. I take charge of my life
8. I know what my unique contribution to the world might be
9. I have a plan for making my life more balanced

## Work Development Strivings Inventory

Please now consider the activities you are currently engaging in to help you to make successful work decisions. We are interested in the things that you are currently trying to do in your work development. We might call these types of activities “work development strivings.” Here are some examples of work development strivings:

“I am trying to talk to my parents about what they think I’d be good at.”

“I am trying to network with people in my chosen field.”

“I am trying to avoid information that might cause me to doubt my choice.”

“I am trying to take tests or assessments to help me understand myself.”

“I am trying to get help from a counselor.”

“I am trying to avoid people who pressure me to enter a certain line of work.”

“I am trying to reflect or pray on what I should do with my work.”

“I am trying to locate internships/jobs to apply for.”

\*Note that these strivings are phrased in terms of what people are currently “trying” to do, regardless of whether they are actually successful. For example, a person may be trying to get information about types of work without being successful. \*These strivings may be fairly broad, such as “trying to get information about jobs” or more specific, such as “trying to get information about summer internships.”

\*They can also be positive or negative. For example, you might be currently “trying to surf the Internet for information,” or you might be “trying to avoid people who pressure me to enter a certain line of work.”

Please keep your attention focused on yourself when you consider your work development strivings. Do not mentally compare the things that you typically do with what other people do. Think of yourself and your purposes alone. Be as honest and as objective as possible. Do not simply give socially desirable strivings or strivings you think you “ought” to have. Please write down up to five of the most important work development strivings in your life. As you do so, please do not include any identifying information.

## Work Development Striving Competence

I am capable of pursuing this striving effectively (for each of 5 strivings elicited through the inventory).

## Work Development Striving Progress

I have made progress on this striving in the last month (for each of 5 strivings elicited through the inventory).

## Appendix B. Interview Protocols

### **TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF.**

- What matters to you?
- What are some of the things that you care about?
- What is really important to you?
- How do you spend your time?
- What do you do well?
- What kind of person are you?

### **THEORY OF WORK**

- What kind of work do you expect to do?
- What kind of work do you hope to do?
- What should work be like? (for you/in general)
- What is your ideal work environment?
- What is your ideal work for?
- What do you hope to offer/contribute through work?
- Are you doing anything to move toward that?
- How (else) could you move toward your ideal work life?
- What personal beliefs do you have guiding your work?
  - Where do these come from?
  - Are these beliefs the same or different from others in your field?
    - Do these beliefs conflict with those of others in your field?
    - Are these beliefs different at other universities?
    - Are these beliefs different outside the university?
- Who are you responsible to in your work?
- What is the place of work in your life?

### **RANK**

- You've mentioned several things that matter to you, which are most important?
- Rank 1-3
- Why is X more important than Y or Z?
- Is there anything else more important?

**You have now mentioned \_\_ and \_\_, Is there anything else that you consider meaningful or important to your work?**

### **PROBES**

- How does X influence your work goals and plans?
- You have also mentioned Y and Z, how do they relate to X?
- How does your participation in X affect others?
- How does X relate to the “ideal world” you described earlier?
- How do you feel when you are engaging in X?
- How long have you cared about X?
- What do you do that shows X is important to you?
- Do you see your participation in X ending at some point?
- Why are you excited about this? How do you keep yourself excited?
- What were the obstacles?
- How did you overcome them?
- What will you need to do to maintain your involvement in this?
- How did X become important to you?
- When did it become important to you?
- Why do you think you care about/got involved in this particular cause rather than a different one?
- Picture yourself at say, 40 years of age. What will you be doing? Who’ll be in your life? What will be important to you?
- What are your plans in the immediate future, say the next few years?

**Is there anything else we have missed that you think is important?**

### **INTEGRATION**

- You have mentioned, \_\_, \_\_, \_\_, how do these fit together?
- Why is (top ranked item) more important than X, Y and Z?
- What part does (top ranked item) play in your life?
- How does (top ranked item) influence your goals?
- How do you deal with conflicts within (top ranked item)?
- How do your friends and/or family feel about (top ranked item)?
- Do you see (top ranked item) as being part of your life forever? Explain.

### **EXPLORATION**

- You have talked about.... Are there other possibilities?
- How committed are you to ....?
- What will you do if ... doesn’t work the way you plan?

### **Change in thinking or action**

#### **Environment**

#### **Memorable Experiences**

### **Intermediate Interview protocol**

What have you done in class in the last couple weeks?

Did that give you any new ideas?

Did anything that happened outside of class influence how you think about work or life?

Has that changed what is important to you

Has that change your views of work and life in any way?

How?

What do you do differently as a result?

Can you show me examples of your work from class?

What influence has this had on your ideas about work or life?

How has this changed how you see yourself?

Can you give me examples from your day to day life?

What influence has this had on your ideas about work or life?

How has this changed how you see yourself?

## Appendix C. Course Materials

### Block Journal

This exercise puts action behind the reading from Jim Adams' *Conceptual Blockbusting* excerpt. In that reading, Adams identifies 4 classes of "blocks" - Emotional, Perceptual, Cognitive, and Cultural. Blocks are just experiences of getting "stuck" (we encountered and discussed getting stuck during the 30 circles exercise in Class #1).

Each evening this week, write down when you got blocked during the day, what it felt like, and where and how you felt that feeling in your body. If you can easily identify which of Adams' 4 types of blocks it was - note that too, but don't get bogged down on categorization (and his 4 types aren't comprehensive). Keep it simple - you're just logging some blocks. At the end of the week, read over your entries and reflect on any trends, learnings, insights that you notice (if there are any). Upload your notes to this assignment.

## ME104B - Write your Worldview (150-200 words)

Please write a brief summary of your worldview, remember to bring a hardcopy to class and to upload yours to the Assignment here.

There are many approaches to worldviews and various prescriptions of what they need to include. Below are some questions which are classically addressed in a worldview, though which are the important questions is a matter of choice. The key thing is to address those highest order values and perspectives that provide the ordering basis for your life that create the platform that interprets and organizes how you see and understand the world and assign order (or disorder) to it. Your worldview is that which provides your definition of "matters of ultimate concern."

You may wish to consider the following questions (and no - of course not comprehensively):

- Why are we here?
- What is the meaning/purpose of life? of death?
- What is the relationship between the individual and others? - between persons and the rest of life (and perhaps inanimate) and reality?
- What is good or worthwhile?
- What is the meaning of time, of eternity?
- Is there a higher power, transcendency, God and if so - of what nature and to what import for your life?
- What of joy, sorrow, justice, injustice, love, peace, strife, good & evil?

If you wish to delve further into the definition of worldviews, there is an optional article in the Materials folder, *Worldviews - from Fragmentation to Integration*, which you may find useful (keeping in mind this is a highly debated topic).

*A word about the confidentiality in our class: As should be clear by now and is made unavoidably evident by this assignment, this class involves engaging material with your classmates on very personal and substantive matters. In order to help you in your pursuit of a coherent and authentic life, we need to relate to these important questions. We do so recognizing that they are intensely personal and matter deeply - and our responses and positions will vary widely. Among us are people of every stripe and all are welcome. We will respect and regard all points of view and work to help everyone in growing closer and clearer on their own best insights in such matters. We hold your worldviews, and all your personal material, in confidence, and hope you will feel free to be candid in order to obtain the most from the experience.*

*Thank you all for the supportiveness and openness you have already displayed to one another and will continue in as we progress through the course.*

**Write your Workview (150 words - or so)**

*Write electronically and upload to Courseworks using .doc, .docx, .rtf, .txt, or .pdf file format - .pdf preferred. Bring a hardcopy to class or be prepared to read from your laptop or phone*

A workview would address the critical issues related to what work is and means to you. It is not just a list of what you want from or out of work, but a general statement of your view of work. Schumacher's definition of a "theory of work" is one example. A workview may address such questions as:

- Why work?
- What's work for?
- What's it mean?
- How does it relate to the individual, others, society?
- What defines good or worthwhile work?
- What does money have to do with it?
- What does experience, growth, or fulfillment have to do with it?

If you have questions - contact your Section Facilitator or Dave E.  
(djevans4@stanford.edu)

## FLOW Exercise – A Reflection on Optimal Experience

### Individual Instructions

- Make a list of Flow Moments from any past situations; it doesn't matter what or when.
  - Refer to summary definition of flow below, plus articles (ref. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi).
  - Don't overdo thinking up your list. Just quickly ask yourself "When did I experience this state?" It can be from any time in life, as long as you remember it as being *in flow*, an optimal experience. Jot down a list.
- Review your list and *briefly* re-image yourself in those moments, re-entering the experience.
- Pick one that has energy and accessibility. Again – it can be any experience, but if you have one that is more recent, and especially one with fairly complete memory, that will help.
- Let your mind fully recall that experience – spend a few minutes getting back into it. Then write a detailed description of the experience, what was happening and what it was like for you in the midst of it. Your write-up should be around a page more or less, not over two.
- Read it over and reflect on both the past flow moment itself *and* your experience of reflecting on it.
- THAT'S IT!

### Mihály Csikszentmihályi - Flow

In his seminal work, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, Csikszentmihalyi outlines his theory that people are most happy when they are in a state of *flow*—a Zen-like state of total oneness with the activity at hand and the situation. The idea of flow is identical to the feeling of being *in the zone* or *in the groove*. The flow state is an optimal state of *intrinsic motivation*, where the person is fully immersed in what he or she is doing. This is a feeling everyone has at times, characterized by a feeling of great freedom, enjoyment, fulfillment, and skill—and during which temporal concerns (time, food, ego-self, etc.) are typically ignored.

In an interview with Wired magazine, Csikszentmihalyi described flow as "being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one, like playing jazz. Your whole being is involved, and you're using your skills to the utmost." [2]

To achieve a flow state, a balance must be struck between the challenge of the

task and the skill of the performer. If the task is too easy or too difficult, flow cannot occur.

The flow state also implies a kind of *focused attention*, and indeed, it has been noted that mindfulness meditation, yoga, and martial arts seem to improve a person's capacity for flow. Among other benefits, all of these activities train and improve attention.

In short; flow could be described as a state where attention, motivation, and the situation meet, resulting in a kind of productive harmony or feedback.

## **Gratefulness Exercise**

### **BACKGROUND**

This exercise in recent years has gained a refreshed advocacy by the positive psychology movement, but has roots in various complementary forms in many ancient wisdom traditions. The fact that modern statistical psychological analysis is in alignment with longstanding tradition is just further indication that this sort of thing may well be beneficial.

The intention is simply to take a dedicated short time daily and reflect on what you're grateful for from within that day. The goal is to be able to better savor our own lives, to become more attentive to what is producing gratefulness, and to attune our faculties to better attend to our own best experiences and recognize our own most trustworthy inner voice. If we become practiced in recognizing gratefulness, our ability to exercise discernment in decision-making is enhanced.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

Try to do the exercise daily and at least 5 times within 7 days, as instructed below. At the end of the 7 days, look over your weeklong collective experience and reflect on the whole experience. If you are finding it nourishing, or even intriguing, try continuing for a full 30 days, which is what is generally recommended in order to begin actually acquiring "results" from the practice.

### **PROCESS:**

1. Set aside 10 minutes at the end of the day. Try and find a time that will work each day - just before or after dinner, or right at midnight as a study break, or .... You may want to avoid just before sleep as you'll wander or snooze.
2. Find an undisturbed place where you can sit and quiet yourself for a brief reflection.
3. Sit in a comfortable chair, upright, feet on the floor so you are relaxed but not falling asleep.
4. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Put your attention on your breath as a way of keeping your mind occupied, but slowing down. Use your breath as a way to bring your attention inward and be grateful for your life.
5. In the next step, you're going to recall your day slowly searching for times that evoke gratefulness.
6. Now comes the actual examining of the day - this is the essence of the practice. Allow the video tape of your day, beginning from arising from bed in the morning, to play slowly before the movie screen in your head. As you review the day, ask "What am I grateful for from this day?" Don't "think" about the question or try to go right to particular moments. Don't rush it. Let the day play out and try not to leave anything out - it's all part of your day. As the movie plays, note where you most experienced gratefulness. (Note that you can substitute other enlivening attributes for gratefulness if you wish, such as aliveness, peace, etc.)
7. Jot down 2 or 3 moments that grab your attention, and focus in on one of them. Linger in that particular moment and savor it fully, as you perhaps were unable to do at the time. Don't analyze it - re-enter it. Don't attempt to interpret the

experience, or draw lessons - just notice and note. Write a brief journal entry on your reflection, but less is more - don't overdo it.

8. After some time doing this (at least a week, preferably a month) - read over your notes and reflect on them collectively looking for "What do I notice here? What if any threads can I pick up? What if any current seems to be flowing underneath all of this that may be worth noticing?"

### Write a Poem (and "ode")

- Please start with the "warm up" exercise of reading:
  - Neruda's, *Ode to Things*
  - Dillard's, *Living Like Weasels*
  - Frost's, *Two Tramps in Mud*
- The assigned readings are examples of seeing deeply and speaking from the heart. While Neruda's, Frost's, or Dillard's particular style may or may not be to your appetite, the idea here is to encounter evocative writing rooted in profound and concentrated noticing and attending.
- Your job is to speak from the heart in a poetic voice.
- Write your poem about or to something related in some way to the world of work or vocation that you are hoping to enter after Stanford. This can include a wide range of themes - the who or what you care for or want to work on, your feelings about this next step, your aspirations, the object of your work (the "it" as well as the "doing it").
- The form should be a poem, not prose, but any poem form is fine (you needn't model on Neruda's form). Not more than one page, 1/3 to 3/4 page recommended.

## References

- Arnett, J. J. (2004). *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Austin, J. T., & Vancouver, J. B. (1996). Goal constructs in psychology: Structure, process, and content. *Psychological Bulletin*, *120*(3), 338–375.
- Azevedo, F. S. (In press). The Tailored Practice of Hobbies and Its Implication for the Design of Interest-Driven Learning Environments. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10508406.2012.730082>
- Azevedo, F. S. (2011). Lines of Practice: A Practice-Centered Theory of Interest Relationships. *Cognition and Instruction*, *29*(2), 147–184.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Barron, B. (2006). Interest and Self-Sustained Learning as Catalysts of Development: A Learning Ecology Perspective. *Human Development*, *49*, 193–224.
- Bellah, R. N., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W. M., Swidler, A., & Tipton, S. M. (1985). *Habits of the Heart*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Bridges, W. (2004). *Transition: Making sense of life's changes*.
- Brooks, D. (2011) *The Social Animal: The Hidden Sources of Love, Character, and Achievement*. New York, NY; Random House.
- Brown, J. S., Collins, A., & Duguid, P. (1989). Situated Cognition and the Culture of Learning. *Educational Researcher*, *18*(1), 32–42.
- Bundick, M. J. (2009). *Pursuing the good life: An examination of purpose, meaningful engagement, and psychological well-being in emerging adulthood*. (doctoral dissertation). Stanford, Stanford, CA.

- Bundick, M. J. (2011). Extracurricular activities, positive youth development, and the role of meaningfulness of engagement. *Journal of Positive Psychology, 6*(1), 57–74.
- Carver, C. S., & Baird, E. (1998). The American Dream Revisited: Is it what you want or why you want it that matters? *Psychological Science, 9*(4), 289–292.
- Colby, A., & Damon, W. (1992). *Some Do Care: Contemporary Lives of Moral Commitment*.
- Cote, J. (2002). The Role of Identity Capital in the Transition to Adulthood: The Individualization Thesis Examined. *Journal of Youth Studies, 5*(2), 117–134.
- Cote, J. E. (1996). Sociological perspectives on identity formation: the culture-identity link and identity capital. *Journal of Adolescence, 19*, 417–428.
- Cote, J., & Schwartz, S. J. (2002). Comparing psychological and sociological approaches to identity: identity status, identity capital, and the individualization process. *Journal of Adolescence, 25*, 571–586.
- Crumbaugh, J. C., & Maholick, L. T. (1964). An experimental study in existentialism: The psychometric approach to Frankl's concept of noogenic neurosis. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 20*(2), 200–207.
- Damon, W. (2008). *The Path to Purpose: Helping Our Children Find Their Calling in Life*. New York: Free Press.
- Damon, W., & Hart, D. (1988). *Self-understanding in childhood and adolescence*. Cambridge Studies in Social & Emotional Development. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Damon, W., Menon, K., & Bronk, K. C. (2003). The development of purpose during adolescence. *Applied Developmental Science, 7*(3), 119–128.

- Deresiewicz, W. (2010). What are you going to do with that. *The Chronicle Review*.
- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larson, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, *49*, 71–75.
- Diener, E., Lucas, R. E., & Scollon, C.N. (2006). Beyond the Hedonic Treadmill: Revising the Adaptation Theory of Well-Being. *American Psychologist*, *61*(4), 305–314.
- Dik, B. J., Sargent, A. M., & Steger, M. F. (2008). Career Development Strivings: Assessing Goals and Motivation in Career Decision-Making and Planning. *Journal of Career Development*, *35*(1), 23–41.
- Dunlop, W., Walker, L. J., Frimer, J. A., Weins, T., & Matsuba, K. (2012). A Tale of Two Schemes: Hierarchical Integration of Agency and Communion among Young Moral Exemplars. Presented at the Society for Research on Adolescence, Vancouver, British Columbia.
- Ehrlich, T., Colby, A., Sullivan, W. M., & Dolle, J. R. (2011). *Rethinking Undergraduate Business Education: Liberal Learning for the Profession*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Emmons, R. A. (1986). Personal Strivings: An Approach to Personality and Subjective Well-Being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *51*(5), 1058–1068.
- Emmons, R. A. (1991). Personal Strivings, Daily Life Events, and Psychological and Physical Well-Being. *Journal of Personality*, *59*(3), 453–472.
- Emmons, R. A. (1999). *The Psychology of Ultimate Concerns*. New York: Guilford.
- Emmons, R. A., & King, L. A. (1988). Conflict Among Personal Strivings: Immediate and Long-Term Implications for Psychological and Physical Well-Being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *54*(6), 1040–1048.

- Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*(2), 377–389.
- Erikson, E. (1968). *Identity: Youth, and Crisis*. New York: Norton.
- Frankl, V. E. (1984). *Man's Search for Meaning*. New York: Beacon Press.
- Frimer, J. A., & Walker, L. J. (2009). Reconciling the Self and Morality: An Empirical Model of Moral Centrality Development. *Developmental Psychology, 45*(6), 1669–1681.
- Gardner, H., Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Damon, W. (2001). *Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gee, J. P. (2000). Identity as an Analytic Lens for Research in Education. *Review of Research in Education, 25*, 99–125.
- Goleman, D. (1995) *Emotional Intelligence*. New York, NY: Bantam Dell.
- Gollwitzer, P. M., Bayer, U., Scherer, M., & Seifert, A. E. (2006). A Motivational-Volitional Perspective on Identity Development. *Action and Self-Development: Theory and Research Through the Life Span* (pp. 283–314). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gresalfi, M., Barab, S., Siyahhan, S., & Christensen, T. (2009). Virtual worlds, conceptual understanding, and me: designing for consequential engagement. *On the Horizon, 17*(1), 21–34.
- Hall, D. T., & Chandler, D. E. (2004). Psychological success: when the career is a calling. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 25*, 1–22.
- Heckhausen, J., & Schulz, R. (2006). Selectivity in Life-Span Development: Biological and Societal Canalizations and Individuals' Developmental Goals. *Action and Self-*

- Development: Theory and Research Through the Life Span* (pp. 67–104). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hidi, S., & Reninger, K. A. (2006). The Four-Phase Model of Interest Development. *Educational Psychologist, 41*(2), 111–127.
- Hodges, T. D., & Clifton, D. O. (2004). Strengths-based development in practice. *Handbook of positive psychology in practice*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Krapp, A. (2002). Structural and dynamic aspects of interest development: theoretical considerations from an ontogenetic perspective. *Learning and Instruction, 12*(4), 383–409.
- Krumboltz, J. T. (2009). The Happenstance Learning Theory. *Journal of Career Assessment, 17*(2), 135–154.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 45*, 79–122.
- Little, B. R. (1983). Personal Projects: A rationale and method for investigation. *Environment and Behavior, 15*(3), 273–309.
- MacIntyre, A. (1999). *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues*. Chicago, IL: Open Court.
- MacIntyre, A. (2007). *After Virtue* (3rd ed.). Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press.
- Marcia, J. (1966). Development and validation of ego identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 35*, 551–558.

- Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible Selves. *American Psychologist*, 41(9), 954–969.
- McGregor, I., & Little, B. R. (1998). Personal projects, happiness, and meaning: On doing well and being yourself. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(2), 494–512.
- Meeus, W., van de Schoot, R., Keijsers, L., Schwartz, S. J., & Branje, S. (2010). On the progression and stability of adolescent identity formation: A five-wave longitudinal study of early-to-middle and middle-to-late adolescence. *Child Development*, 81(5), 1565–1581.
- Nasir, N. S., & Saxe, G. B. (2003). Ethnic and Academic Identities: A Cultural Practice Perspective on Emerging Tensions and Their Management in the Lives of Minority Students. *Educational Researcher*, 32(5), 14–18.
- Oettingen, G. (2006). Free Fantasies About the Future and the Emergence of Developmental Goals. *Action and Self-Development: Theory and Research Through the Life Span* (pp. 315–344). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Oishi, L. (2011). *Enhancing career development agency in emerging adulthood: an intervention using design thinking*. Stanford University.
- Oser, F. (1996). Learning from negative morality. *Journal of Moral Education*, 25(1), 67–74.
- Robitschek, C. (1997). Life/Career Renewal: An Intervention for Vocational and Other Life Transitions. *Journal of Career Development*, 24(2), 133–146.
- Robitschek, C. (1998). Personal Growth Initiative: The construct and its measure. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 30(4), 183–198.

- Robitschek, C., & Cook, S. W. (1999). The Influence of Personal Growth Initiative and Coping Styles on Career Exploration and Vocational Identity. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 54*(1), 127–141.
- Robitschek, C., & Keyes, C. L. M. (2009). Keyes's model of mental health with personal growth initiative as a parsimonious predictor. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 56*(2), 321–329.
- Rogoff, B., Paradies, R., Arauz, R. M., Correa-Chavez, M., & Angelillo, C. (2003). Firsthand learning through intent participation. *Annual Review of Psychology, 54*, 175–203.
- Rokeach, M., & Ball-Rokeach, S. M. (1989). Stability and Change in American Value Priorities, 1968-1981. *American Psychologist, 44*(5), 775–784.
- Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57*(6), 1069–1081.
- Saxe, G. B. (2002). Children's Developing Mathematics in Collective Practices: A Framework for Analysis. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences, 11*(2&3), 275–300.
- Schwartz, S. J., Cote, J., & Arnett, J. J. (2005). Identity and Agency in Emerging Adulthood: Two Developmental Routes in the Individualization Process. *Youth & Society, 37*(2), 201–229.
- Sheldon, K. M. (2009). Providing the scientific backbone for positive psychology: A multi-level conception of human thriving. *Psychological Topics, 18*(2), 267–284.
- Sheldon, K. M., & Elliot, A. J. (1999). Goal striving, need satisfaction, and longitudinal well-being: The self-concordance model.

- Sheldon, K. M., & Kasser, T. (1995). Coherence and congruence: Two aspects of personality integration. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68(3), 531–543.
- Sheldon, K. M., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2006). How to increase and sustain positive emotion: The effects of expressing gratitude and visualizing best possible selves. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1(2), 73–82.
- Smith, C., Christoffersen, K., Davidson, H., & Herzog, P. S. (2011). *Lost In Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, C., & Snell, P. (2009). *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, J. (2006). Life Planning: Anticipating Future Life Goals and Managing Personal Development. *Action and Self-Development: Theory and Research Through the Life Span* (pp. 223–256). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sniehotta, F. F., Scholz, U., & Schwarzer, R. (2006). Action plans and coping plans for physical exercise: A longitudinal intervention study in cardiac rehabilitation. *British Journal of Health Psychology*, 11, 23–37.
- Steger, M. F., Frazier, P., Oishi, S., & Kaler, M. (2006). The Meaning in Life Questionnaire: Assessing the presence of and search for meaning in life. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 53(1), 80–93.
- Steger, M. F., Kashdan, T. B., & Oishi, S. (2008). Being good by doing good: Daily eudaimonic activity and well-being. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 42, 22–42.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Walker, L. J., Frimer, J. A., & Dunlop, W. L. (2010). Varieties of Moral Personality: Beyond the banality of heroism. *Journal of Personality, 78*(3), 907–942.
- Wiese, B. S., Freund, A. M., & Baltes, P. B. (2002). Subjective career success and emotional well-being: Longitudinal predictive power of selection, optimization, and compensation. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 60*, 321–335.
- Yeager, D. S., Bundick, M. J., & Johnson, R. (2012). The role of future work goal motives in adolescent identity development: A longitudinal mixed-methods investigation.