THE ROLE OF EMPATHY THROUGH STORYTELLING IN YOUNG DRIVER ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION

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### Contents

**Chapter one: Introduction to research study and portfolio**  
'Road Sense Common Sense'  
Introduction to this research

**Chapter two: Literature review**

Introducing the literature – spanning boundaries  
'A serious and societal problem'  
Road Safety Education  
Young driver road safety education – an historical perspective  
Brain in transition  
More than just a mode of transport  
Road safety initiatives  
The role of emotions in preventative health communications  
The use of fear  
The use of sadness  
Big budget productions  
Empathy  
The many definitions of empathy  
Types of empathy  
The nature of empathy  
Evolution of empathy  
What makes us human?
Chapter three: Methodology

Introduction

Philosophical perspectives

Reflections on knowledge production

Drawing metaphorical battle lines – interpretivism versus positivism

Operating as an insider researcher

Reflections on reflexivity

Research framework

Action Research

Design cycle

Data collection

Design research instrument

Recruit participants

Focus groups

Interviews

Ethical considerations

Make inferences

Analytical cycle

Develop codes

Describe and compare

Develop theory – an introduction to semi-grounded theory

The history of grounded theory

Paradigm wars

To read or not to read?
What is grounded theory, and what is not? 94

**Chapter four: Methods**
96
Action research approach 96
Evaluations 97
Focus discussion groups one and two 98
Further focus discussion group 100
Semi-structured interviews 101
Transcriptions 104
Approach to coding - developing codes 104
Key themes 105
Sub-themes 109
Counting of codes 114
Semi-grounded theory in conclusion 118

**Chapter five: Presentation of findings and discussion**
119
Summary of findings 119
Evaluations 119
Focus discussion groups 120
Semi-structured interviews 121

First main finding:

Emotional time travel – the use of empathy as a learning tool 123

Second main finding:

Challenging the mindset ‘it won’t happen to me’ 133
Chapter six: Conclusions

Limitations of study and future opportunities

Recommendations for road safety educators

Final words - A new paradigm in young driver road safety education

Appendices

Appendix one: Observation notes made during data gathering

Appendix two: Ethical statements for Schools X, Y & Z

Appendix three: Ethical statements for Speakers X, Y and Z

Appendix four: Ethical overview of study

Appendix five: Evaluation sheets

Appendix six:
Overview of audience preference to speakers and films

Appendix seven: Questions for focus discussion groups

Appendix eight:
Notes made during focus discussion group School Y

Appendix nine: Transcription of focus group School X

Appendix ten: Transcription of focus group School Y

Appendix eleven:
Outline of focus discussion groups with Schools X and Y

Appendix twelve: Questions for semi-structured interviews

Appendix thirteen: Transcript of interview with Speaker X
Appendix twenty-nine:

Coding totals for all semi-structured interviews  298
Appendix thirty: Coding totals - across all sets of data gathered  300

References  302

List of figures

Figure one: Qualitative research cycle (Hennik et al, 2013)  76
Figure two:
Work-based research cycle adapted from Hennik et al (2013)  76
Figure three: Sequences of action – reflection (Lewin, 1946)  78
Figure four:
Final layout of most commonly occurring sub-themes after coding  118
Figure five: Pie-chart demonstrating preference of audience towards speakers or films  120
Chapter one: Introduction to research study and portfolio

1.2 million people die worldwide on roads every year (World Health Organisation, 2013). The biggest ‘unnatural killer’ of young people, road death claims more lives than disease such as malaria and tuberculosis. In 2013 the World Health Organisation described the problem as an ‘epidemic’. In the UK, whilst road death accounts for only 0.5% of the mortality rate, 25% of these deaths are of 15 to 19 year olds, outweighing any other cause of death in this age group (Box and Wengraf, 2013). Those responsible for young driver road safety education range from law enforcement agencies such as the police, to local authority road safety officers, government organisations, for example THINK! and charitable bodies such as like BRAKE. The number of road safety education interventions available in the UK alone is testament to the problem, ranging from online resources, case studies and fictional stories shown on DVD and online video channels such as YouTube, to teacher led lesson plans and theatrical performances. The hunt to seek a solution to reducing the risk to young drivers through educational intervention by the road safety education community appears never ending. Indeed, in 2006 the European Commission urged, ‘to improve road safety is not an end in itself, it is an urgent social task’.

‘Road Sense Common Sense’

‘Road Sense Common Sense’ is an emergency services multi-partner young driver road safety presentation provided by police, fire and ambulance personnel, delivered to sixth form students in high schools and colleges in the Northumbria Police force area. Since July 2014, over 2500 students have watched the presentation in 12 educational establishments. It is a one hour long, short film and live speaker staged presentation. Introduced by a host, four short films based on real and local cases are shown featuring families bereaved by road collisions lasting between four to eight minutes. These films are interspersed with ten minute story telling pieces delivered in person by a police traffic officer, fire officer and paramedic who relive their
encounters with serious and fatal young driver collisions in person, on stage. The presentation is not unique in its nature and follows a format seen in other parts of the country. It aims to not only raise the profile of road safety amongst this vulnerable group, but also to promote better decision making through reflective accounts and authentic stories.

‘Road Sense Common Sense’ has not always taken this format however. As a project it began in 2013, when a small budget (£6000) was released from local road safety funds to launch a young driver initiative. At this time, I was studying on the BA Applied Investigation programme at the University of Sunderland and had encountered the concept of using critical incidents (Brookfield, 1995) as a means of reflection and Mezirow’s (Mezirow and Taylor, 2009) model of transformative learning as a means of educating others about public health matters. A group of sixth form students at a local high school were asked to write a short, fictional story about a life changing collision involving young people. The stories featured six main characters. Six further schools were invited to use one character from this fictional story and consider the ‘ripple effect’ of the incident on the lives of their character and that of their family and friends. They were asked to consider what their ‘meta-narrative’ would be and then retell their story in a creative form. Their artefacts would then be showcased at Sage, Gateshead during National Road Safety Week in 2014. The resulting artefacts were insightful, profound and imaginative. Some groups chose to depict their character’s story in a short film. Others told the story of the young girl who had become paralysed, utilising the medium of dance and using a mirror to depict both her current frustration and her former able-bodied life. Another group retold the story of a lorry driver, blameless in the incident, who was teaching his daughter to learn to drive. Using stage lighting and a TV screen, they depicted flashbacks and the traumatic consequences he was unable to leave behind. Altogether, 70 students were involved in this project from seven schools (see Item 1, Portfolio). The project provided Northumbria Police with an alternative concept to the otherwise classroom and assembly based, lecture style, road safety presentations based on the do’s and don’t’s of drinking and driving, drug driving and similar learning points. I was awarded with the High Sherriff
Cup at the Northumbria Police Excellence Awards in 2014 (see Item 2, Portfolio) as a result of the Sage project and subsequently asked to develop the Road Sense young driver project further but with the remit to include more schools.

In November 2014, a project which involved around 12 high school and special needs schools was launched as a new version of ‘Road Sense Common Sense’ and involved groups of students creating a short film of their choice, centred around a road safety topic which they felt was relevant to them. The short films were screened at a premiere event at Newcastle Civic Centre. This version of the project was logistically complicated as most schools struggled to utilise film making equipment and technology and, as a result, the majority of dedicated time was spent resolving these issues and supervising students who were struggling with creative ideas. The films produced were well thought out however, with learning points being explicitly outlined by the students. One of the most personally rewarding parts of the project was working with special needs students and their engagement with creative techniques such as comic strips and glove puppets was inspiring. Some, with severe communicative difficulties such as speech and movement, took great pleasure in seeing their creations come to life on a big screen. The event was visually spectacular, with a specialist company hired to provide a large film screen and accompanying extras such as a star studded backdrop. The students were clearly, and rightly, proud of their work (see Item 16, Portfolio). Once again, however, despite its successes, the project was hampered by being unable to engage a large number of students in one academic year, with venue hire and specialist IT equipment requiring a significant monetary outlay. By comparison to other police forces, Northumbria Police cover one of the largest geographical force areas in the UK, with over 700 educational establishments within their catchment area. As a result, it was felt that this version of ‘Road Sense’ had not reached enough students and it became more clear that another solution was needed to include further drivers. At this time, additional financial pressures were being placed upon many police forces in England and Wales and in the face
of significant budget cuts, a more financially viable and wider reaching version was required.

In Spring 2015, more established young driver projects in other areas of the country were explored and it was clear that the short film and live speaker concept was growing in popularity. Surrey Fire and Rescue were able to demonstrate a 20% reduction in their young driver fatal collisions, something which they sought to attribute to their ‘Safe Drive Stay Alive’ presentation. Visiting one of these presentations in Dorking Theatre, I observed short films that had been made by professional film companies documenting local cases, alongside very raw and honest accounts by emergency service workers and bereaved families, spoken to the audience in person. The theatre was filled with around 2000 students with sixth form establishments in Surrey attending every year using an automatic booking system. The project facilitators gave a significant insight into the foundations and growth of its success, and made an offer of the use of their short films at a predetermined price. Unable to meet the budget, but impressed by the very clear effect on the audience, ‘Road Sense Common Sense’ became Northumbria Police’s own version. Four short films were made about real cases involving child death, young driver actions which led to fatalities and the subsequent ‘ripple effects’ upon people’s lives. A selection of speakers from police, fire and ambulance were recruited to attend a ‘Speaker Workshop’. Here, I deemed it necessary to introduce the personnel to the vision of ‘Road Sense’. They were shown the short films made by myself and the Creative Department, featuring case studies from the local area. They also met with the families concerned and we discussed the importance of allowing the presentation to be authentic. I then guided them through a process of identifying their own critical incidents to use as the basis of the stories they would tell to the audience. The speakers were selected through recommendation and judgement, rather than auditions and a formal selection process. It had been clear, from Surrey’s example, that the speakers should be characters in their own right, holding a unique quality which would engage the young students who, by this point in my own research, clearly presented
a range of challenges in terms of their risk taking, biological and neurological stage of development, and perceived suspicion of public services uniforms.

The first staging of ‘Road Sense Common Sense’ took place at the University of Sunderland in 2015, with guests from partner agencies, teaching students and University staff invited to the David Puttnam Theatre to watch the films and hear the speakers for the first time. The Deputy Chief Constable of Northumbria Police gave his approval for the project to continue. Now operating with a very small budget, the ‘Road Sense’ presentation is offered to schools around the Northumbria Police force area and is in a constant flux of evaluation and development.

**Aim of this research**

As with many other road safety educators, finding a solution to effective young driver education initiatives is the ultimate goal. As the literature review unfolds, it will become clear that young people, due to their stage of development, are subject to biological and neurological changes which increase their tendency to take risks on the roads. Added to this complexity is their interaction with peers and the use of the car as a social space. In order to overcome these challenges, road safety educators seek to find the answer, in order to affect behaviour change and safer decision making.

**Objectives of this research**

Through the ‘Road Sense Common Sense’ project, students have taken part in focus discussion groups and have offered a unique insight into what aspects of the presentation they have engaged with. The speakers from the emergency services who retell their experiences in the presentation have also offered their experiences and own observations of interacting with the audience. Setting these findings against the backdrop of existing literature, this study will explore:
The use of empathy, amongst other emotions, in health care communications

The potential of using empathy as a learning tool

How empathy can be utilised through storytelling

The potential of empathy, through a storytelling approach, in young driver road safety education.

Vignettes, extracted from the data, by the participants will be presented as examples of the themes which have emerged.

Coding of data gathered, where ‘tags’ or ‘labels’ have been given to the data gathered to assign meaning (Bell, 2014), to them. These codes have then been counted (Silverman, 1993) to identify a hierarchy of codes. Using the most commonly occurring codes across the data, three main findings have emerged which form the basis of the theories presented in conclusion to this research study, in a method known as ‘semi-grounded theory’ (Charmaz, 2014). These findings are hoped to offer new potential to road safety educators worldwide, along with a series of recommendations as to how the use of these theories can be achieved, such as the potential of authentic stories as a learning tool, and the inclusion of empathy in the identification of stories to be told.

Chapter two will critically examine existing literature in relation to young driver road safety education and road safety communications. It will discuss the use of emotions, specifically the potential of the inclusion of empathy, in wider health interventions before briefly outlining the use of storytelling as a learning approach.

Chapter three will outline the philosophical and methodological stance taken for this study, as well as the specific methods used to capture and code data, within a semi-grounded theory approach.

Chapter four will address the specific methods used in this research study and the approach taken to coding the data gathered.
Chapter five presents the findings of the coding used in focus discussion groups and semi-structured interviews. Vignettes taken from the focus groups and interviews are provided, serving to contextualise the findings against the literature reviewed in chapter two. Three main findings are proposed which are hoped to be of interest to the young driver road safety education community.

Chapter six concludes the three main findings offered, providing an overview of limitations of the study and future opportunities for research. Recommendations are made, following the findings presented, as a practical guide for educators to use. A final word concludes this research, calling for a new paradigm in young driver road safety education.
Chapter two: Literature review

Introducing the literature – spanning boundaries

This literature review will investigate many subject areas considered relevant to this study. The role of empathy through storytelling in young driver road safety education, with which this study is concerned, means that literature does not naturally fall within a neat boundary of one subject area. The review will begin with a discussion of the wider existing research in relation to road safety education followed by an investigation of the more specific areas listed, touching upon the broader areas of education, communications, psychology and learning, with a consideration of complimentary themes which have emerged throughout this process, the most significant being that of empathy.

‘A serious and notorious societal problem’

Around 1.25 million people are killed on the world’s roads every year (International Transport Forum, 2017). Described by some as an ‘epidemic’ (Guttman, 2014), globally collisions kill more people than diseases such as malaria or tuberculosis. The economic loss of such collisions is estimated between two to five per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of many countries (International Transport Forum, 2017; Guttman, 2014). Such is the scale of the issue, the United Nations have set a priority to reduce global road fatalities and injuries by 50% between 2010 and 2020 (International Transport Forum, 2017). Indeed, Stipdonk (2013), widely cited in road safety research, employed by the SWOV Institute for Road Safety at The Hague, Netherlands, states; ‘road crashes are a serious and notorious societal problem’ requiring ‘perpetual efforts’ to overcome.

Reflective of the international picture, in the UK young deaths due to road traffic collisions outweigh any other unnatural cause, including substance abuse through drugs or alcohol and violent crime. In order to contextualise the problem, it is also widely agreed that young people (aged 15-19 years)
contribute disproportionately to overall road death numbers in this country, representing 25% of the overall 0.5% mortality rate of this cause (Box and Wengraf, 2013). This figure comes despite the fact that young people who hold full driving licences account for just 8% of the UK licence holding population (Box and Wengraf, 2013). In addition, the group tend to drive less than half as far as those aged over 25 years (Box and Wengraf, 2013).

**Road Safety Education**

Road safety education in the UK stems back one hundred years when, in 1916, the London Safety First Council was initially established (Department for Transport 2009). The sheer volume of research carried out since then from an international perspective is indicative of the scale of the problem, now recognised by many leading organisations such as the World Health Organisation and the United Nations as one of the ‘world’s most pressing and developing concerns, and a leading cause of death among young people’ (Guttman, 2014).

In 1924, George Graham, Chairman of the US Traffic Planning and Safety Committee of the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce, wrote an article in which he urged the use of media campaigns to ‘arouse an interest’ towards what he foreseeably recognised as the ‘emerging role of the automobile as a dominant mode of transportation’ (Guttman, 2014). Since then, together with advances in both the fast changing nature of society and leaps in technology and engineering, research conducted in this area is now mountainous. As such, the task of encompassing all of the literature in this study would be insurmountable and most probably never ending. It is welcome however that the UK Department for Transport regularly commissions reports into matters of road safety, summarising international findings on behalf of road safety practitioners. The reports combine policy documents and recommendations by the Department of Transport, whose role is to provide policy, guidance and funding and to oversee the work carried out by road safety professionals in the UK.
Current approaches to school road safety education in the UK focus through school Key Stages one to five, thus spanning pupil ages six to eighteen years. Rather than study this entire spectrum here, a task out with and less relevant to the boundaries of this research, efforts will instead be focused on those of young driver age in Key Stage Five, or sixth form students. However, it should be noted that publications in relation to road safety education differ in their categorisation of age group, with the majority tending to be between the ages of sixteen to nineteen years old. For the purpose of ensuring clarity in this study, literature has therefore been examined in relation to ‘young drivers’ in general, therefore not restricting any age category which may be relevant.

**Young driver road safety education – an historical perspective**

Acknowledging the volume of road safety education literature available, McKenna (2010) states likewise that the ‘sheer number of available [road safety] interventions is perhaps testament to the broad awareness of the problem’. Indeed, the World Health Organisation (2007) urged that ‘society needs to confront this growing challenge and coordinate its efforts to defeat this public health threat’.

The question of who is responsible for delivering road safety education in secondary schools is unclear, with the Department for Transport (2009) findings outlining the following groups and their delivery proportion; class teacher – 27%, local authority road safety officer – 46%, police – 36%, specialist teacher (not defined) – 9% and PHSE co-ordinator – 55% (nb, the totals equal more than 100% because respondents could give more than one answer).

In 2010 the UK Government road safety strategy ‘Tommorow’s Roads – Safer for Everyone’ set out a framework to improve the reduction of road casualties across all ages in the forthcoming ten years. Effective education was described as ‘integral' to achieving this target. In relation to secondary education, of significance here, it also recognised the importance of ‘age appropriate interventions’ but found that lack of curriculum time and
prioritisation by schools hindered any attempts by local authority road safety officers and other professionals alike. Indeed, findings by Box and Wengraf (2013) suggest that schools place higher priority on education of statistically lower risk activities such as drug and alcohol awareness and healthy eating. The report however does not make any tangible suggestions as to how educators and professionals could achieve this. In 2005 a European Commission Rose Report which brought together research by road safety experts from twenty-five EU member states, suggested that just ten hours of road safety delivery should be sufficient in order to be effective. Perhaps laying out a precursor for later findings, Box, now head of research at the RAC Foundation, and co-author Wengraf (2013), concluded their 2013 report into young driver road safety by stating that ‘school based intervention programmes have looked to address young people’s attitudes and behaviours on road safety, with little demonstrable effect’. A Government Green Paper on young driver road safety education was expected in 2013 but failed to deliver as the government wrestled with a decision over ‘making things safer, whilst not unduly restricting the freedom of our young people’ in relation to graduated driving licences clouded the issue (BBC, 2014). Following this, a manifesto was published in 2015 by the Royal Society of Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA, 2015) but comprised of just four pages, briefly outlining the statistical scale of the issue of young driver mortality rates in the UK before going on to discuss the role of graduated driving licences, ‘P plates’, minimum learning periods and the benefits of telematics. Again, the report failed to list any recommendations as to how to proceed as a community of practice but did hint at what was found not to work. Pre-driver practical driving skills sessions were given brief mention, outlining that such interventions can actually increase the likelihood of collisions. Findings by Box and Wengraf (2013) following an evaluation of the ‘Pass Plus’ practical driving scheme support this opinion, suggesting that drivers only had a marginally decreased likelihood of being involved in a collision, but not a likelihood of statistical significance. However it seems that practical interventions of this nature are not to be discounted, with a call by Box and Wengraf (2013) for further research into them in order to ‘help to
ensure that interventions bring real benefits and avoid unintended consequences’. Reports such as those produced by Box and Wengraf (2013) draw upon many pieces of research to provide an overview of the scale of the problem and outlined a series of suggestions for future consideration within the road safety education community;

- peer to peer interventions (Lang et al, 2010)
- attitude change initiatives which include active participation
- use of reflective thinking
- use of personal experiences
- sessions focused on risk taking and building resilience carried out over a series of sessions
- interventions created with an ‘understanding of the broader developmental changes and social reasoning’
- age appropriate communications
- the ‘depiction of life as relevant’
- initiatives which focus on the mindset ‘living in the moment’
- those carrying a message such as ‘don’t die before you have lived’ (Ratcliff and Bouchier – Hayes, 2007).

Once again however, there appears a failure to provide practical suggestions, detailed examples or ‘tool kits’ which may help guide road safety educators to solve this ‘age old problem’ (Stipdonk, 2013).

Later, in 2016, the Department for Transport (2016) carried out a review of educational resources available in the UK, analysing 50 studies of road safety education, policy, and psychology including consultation with large organisations such as RoSPA (Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents). In addition, the review, carried out by educational consultants, considered discussions with practitioners from a diverse range of sectors such as teachers and emergency service workers, to identify current gaps in delivery and existing practice. Also recognising the fast-moving developments made
in both education and communication since the launch of the last wave of resources in 2009, it acknowledged advancements in technology, trends such as interactive learning, more intense timetabling of core subjects in the classroom (meaning potential time to focus on road safety education in the classroom is reduced), and financial austerity as driving forces of the review. The findings were not encouraging – quoting words such as ‘patchy’, ‘fragmented’, ‘outdated’ and ‘opportunistic’, however particularly relevant to this study was the finding that virtually no road safety education takes place in secondary schools. In addition, it revealed that a ‘one size fits all approach’ is taken, with delivery not being woven into Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (OFSTED) criteria and core attainment outcomes, meaning less incentive for schools to actually take up any road safety education at all.

Amongst recommendations to take forward were ten minute sessions in Personal Health and Social Education (PHSE) or tutorial times, as well as ‘enhancement days’ for more in depth lessons. However, once again, the report did not go so far as to set out practical suggestions around how this could be achieved. The need for a national programme was called for, together with a clear demonstration of outcomes required at each school key stage. Whilst the review focused on all key stages of the curriculum, of relevance here was the thirteen to seventeen age group where road safety education was suggested to be linked to ‘wider and personal social skills acquisition’. The endorsement of ‘harder hitting’ messages and a focus towards preparing students to become young drivers were also called for. Perhaps encouragingly, in 2016 the Department for Transport review recognised the opportunity to link road safety education with emotional awareness, as well as decision making and problem solving, with one recommendation for the thirteen to seventeen age group being ‘learning through real life experience’.

In addition to young driver road safety education itself, research has also been carried out in relation to the unique stage of development of young people and how surrounding issues affect their driving behaviour. As this stage of physical development is complex, so are the many considerations
which go along with this, such as ‘biological characteristics, norms, values and competencies, impairments, hazard anticipation on the road…….neuroendocrine process……and physiological changes’ (Box and Wengraf, 2013), all forming pieces of a more detailed puzzle. Whilst some generalise the period of adolescence as between seventeen to twenty-four years (Box and Wengraf, 2013), once again it may be more prudent to consider a term by Spear (2000) who describes this stage as a ‘gradual period of transition from childhood to adulthood’ and therefore not restricting findings to a specific age group bracket. The unique stage of development of young people will now be discussed, serving as a backdrop to understand the complex stage of development of this group.

‘A brain in transition’

Changes in our neuroendocrine system, responsible for sending messages from the brain in order to release hormones into the blood stream during adolescence, can be termed ‘a brain in transition’ (Vermeersch et al (2008). The hypothalamus, found in the most central part of the brain if viewed in a cross section, is considered ‘critical’ (Spear, 2000) in influencing decision making skills. This area undergoes significant changes during the transition into adolescence (Box and Wengraf, 2013). For males, these changes mean the potential for greater risk taking behaviour, and for females, an increased tendency to socialise with higher risk peers (Box and Wengraf, 2013). It is estimated that risk taking behaviour and deliberate actions account for 30% of serious collisions (International Transport Forum, 2017) and whilst this statistic represents the overall group of road users, it is logical that adolescents at such a vulnerable stage of development display these tendencies more frequently.

The term ‘optimism bias’ (Guttman, 2014), referring to the susceptibility of adolescents to believe they are less likely to experience a ‘negative event’ than others, is often coined in layman’s terms as a belief that they are ‘indestructible’. The aforementioned changes in brain development have a direct influence on optimism bias, caused by sharp changes in mood, novelty
and attention seeking (Box and Wengraf, 2013). This therefore leads to more risk taking behaviour through sensation seeking, impulsivity and aggression (Box and Wengraf, 2013). Indeed, such behavioural traits have been found to directly correlate with both collision rates and incidents of road rage (Arnett et al, 1997). Skills which are associated with becoming a safer driver are undermined by a peak in optimism bias, generally at the age of 17 (Deighton and Luther, 2007), leaving more desirable traits such as planning and impulse control (Giedd, 2004) weakened in their wake.

Helpfully summarised, Box and Wengraf (2013) state that ‘more than at any other stage of life, there is a tendency for adolescents to believe “it won’t happen to me”. It is perhaps, then, reassuring to read others, such as Spear (2000), who claim that not only is ‘biology…. not destiny, and is modifiable by social behaviour and other experiences’ but also that such behaviour is considered ‘transient’ in most individuals. Indeed, researchers such as Vlakveld (2011 cited in Box and Wengraf, 2013) and Machin and Sankey (2008) have examined personality traits using characteristic indicators such as agreeableness and extroversion, correlating them with collision involvement, finding that such ‘positive’ characteristics improved as people moved into their mid-twenties.

Optimism bias can also be contrasted with the concept of ‘fatalism’, a term used by Guttman (2014) when people believe that no matter what activity they undertake, and how ‘risky’ this activity may be, the chances of whether they survive or not is purely down to fate. This issue is often discussed alongside optimism bias (Guttman, 2014) and adds to the complexity of cognition. Cultural beliefs, for example, have been used to explain actions by some as the reason they undertake high speed driving with an assumption they will be protected by God (Kayani et al, 2012).

More than just a mode of transport

It is also important to understand that the car is more than just a mode of transport for young people. In 2000, research suggested that the group spend ‘close to one third of normal waking hours with their peers’ in
comparison to just 8% with adults (Spear, 2000). More recent findings suggest that this proportion of time is now spent accessing social media (The Washington Post, 2015) suggesting that patterns are changing. However there still exists recognition of the importance of peer relationships in shaping individual social lives (Masten et al, 2012). For young people, the vehicle represents a somewhat different meaning than that of their adult counterparts. Rather, for this group, the car is considered a ‘private space’ (Christmas, 2008) as opposed to performing a more utilitarian function in more mature years. A status symbol, the car becomes a social space, where a driver is faced with increasingly ‘heightened emotions’, a ‘desire to impress’ (Arnett, 2002) and a place to define a self-image of an individual’s ‘driving self’ (Durkin and Tolmie, 2010). The car, during adolescence, takes on a more ‘personal significance’ (Strecher et al, 2007).

The influence of peers upon attitudes and behaviours is a consideration, with findings suggesting that for ‘those who attached a greater importance to their social group, group norms were as strong an influence on intention as individual attitudes’ (Terry et al, 1999). Indeed, in an Australian study (Carroll et al, 2009) young drivers were found to be motivated to drive at speed, amongst other less desirable driving habits, in order to ‘enhance their reputations among like-minded peers’. Whilst this behaviour is seen as generally risky by adults, it is viewed by adolescents as simply ‘fun’ in those striving acceptance within a social group (Spear, 2000).

**Road Safety Education Initiatives**

There is growing recognition of the deficiencies in road safety education and its effectiveness in making a real impact in terms of behavioural change. Some (Wilde, 1982) suggest that the design of interventions in road safety and wider lifestyle related disease prevention can ‘be rationally developed without an acceptable working theory of human behaviour’. Echoing this conclusion, Noland (2013) implies that the practical application of interventions is a pathway ‘filled with potholes’ with many of the debates around the subject ‘not clearly resolved’. Poulter and McKenna (2010) state
that the effectiveness of existing interventions are ‘at best short term… with some risk of unintended consequences’. They conclude that attempts to address the problem of over representation of young driver fatalities is one that has not been ‘met with unambiguous success’.

In taking a wider perspective and looking to the practice of more general health, Lopez et al (2009) draws a comparison between road safety and medical practice, suggesting that ‘designing an educational intervention with no guiding theory is like designing a medical intervention with no understanding of physiology’. Indeed, PACTS (2013) conclude in their report of young driver road safety, that ‘some education approaches….can encourage misplaced confidence and lead drivers to take more risks in later driving than they would otherwise have done’. Some, whilst they argue that there may be an improvement in knowledge of road safety by students, agree that there will be no change in behaviour (McKenna, 2010). The role of general health communications and their relevance to this subject will now be discussed.

The role of emotions in preventative health communications

The role of emotions to relevant health messages will now be considered, firstly in relation to wider preventative health communications and secondly, in relation to road safety communications.

In order to be effective, the psychology behind communications for health issues such as cancer, heart disease and alcohol are targeted specifically in their content (Myrick, 2015) with the diversity of adverts targeting cancer, for example, ranging from shocking; such as the ‘bleeding cigarette’, to more uplifting; snapshots of cheerful, pink tutu clad women running for the ‘Race for Life’.

Mirroring findings in road safety education, Myrick (2015) states equally that health communications should also be relevant to different audiences. Where humour, for example, may not be appropriate during communication about cancer diagnosis, it may serve a purpose in communications about recovery
stages for the disease. Myrick's book ‘The role of emotions in preventative health communications’ (2015) uses the overarching theoretical approach known as ‘appraisal theory’, pointing out that those responsible for influencing health messages should be aware of the effects of discrete emotional reactions in order to ensure they are effective in not only gaining and retaining the public’s attention – cited by Myrick (2015) as one of the major obstacles of health communications, but also in influencing behavioural change. In order to ‘foster perseverance’ (Myrick, 2015) in positive behavioural change, prevention can be increased, and ‘thus improve health outcomes’ for society as a whole. As Myrick (2015) summarises, ‘knowledge alone is not enough to motivate people to engage in positive health behaviour changes’.

Some authors are more inclined to exercise caution in their approach to this subject, however. Baumeister, Vohs, Nathan De Wall and Zhang (2007 quoted in Myrick 2015) point out that the approach to effective health communications should not be considered a ‘linear’ and neat process. Further research in relation to health communications using emotions is called for by Myrick (2015) and other well known researchers such as Nabi (2003).

One area which is widely agreed upon is the occurrence of ‘emotional shifts’ and the influence these have on the persuasiveness of health communications (Nabi, 2003). Certain formulae have also been found to be more effective in compiling a more effective health message, such as Nabi’s (2003) claim that invoking fear at the start and hope at the end of a message may leave an audience inspired to take action at the end conclusion of their ‘learning experience’. How a health communication is constructed is also relevant, for example narrative presentations have been shown to invoke more strong emotions than more dry, ‘information focussed’ messages (Myrick, 2015).
It is useful to understand some terminology at this point. When any health communication is delivered, a ‘reaction’ is invoked in the audience. Such reactions the like of fear, anger, hope and joy are referred to as ‘discrete emotions’ (Myrick, 2015). Emotions such as fear, discussed further below, anger, guilt and sadness are termed ‘negative emotions’. Relatable examples of guilt are cited, such as weight loss adverts which focus on the guilty feeling of indulging in cake (Myrick, 2015) and sadness (thinking of others who contract an illness for example – another example illustrated are the adverts which portray starvation in African countries). Similarly, emotions such as hope and joy are termed ‘positive emotions’. Where an audience are provoked into expecting something negative in future, these types of communications are so-called ‘loss framed’ – portraying what could be lost, such as the loss of one’s life. Where an audience invoke thoughts of gaining something positive, such as healthy skin through the avoidance of UV sun rays, these type of communications are so-called ‘gain framed’. Research suggests that gain framed communications have been found to be more effective in groups deemed of lower risk (Myrick, 2015). Conversely, evidence from Rothman and Salovey (1977, quoted in Myrick, 2015) suggests that loss framed messages are more effective amongst higher risk groups. It should be made clear at this stage that extremes of emotions such as fear have been found to present psychological harm, therefore the emotions to which are referred forthwith are typically of the less extreme nature.

The discrete emotion invoked in an audience when exposed to a health communication typically causes an autonomous response. Neural firing patterns, heart rate and facial expressions begin to ‘work’, manifesting a response in the spectator (Myrick, 2015). Nabi (2003) describes this as a five step process;

1. ‘Cognitive appraisal of a situation
2. Physiological arousal
3. Motor expression (such as a facial expression)
4. Motivation (behavioural intentions)
5. Subjective feeling state
As with the phenomenon of empathy later discussed, there is some overlap in the parts of the brain which are active during the formation of a response to a health message (Myrick, 2015). Discrete emotions which are invoked are not long lasting, ‘static states’ but are dynamic and fluid in response, therefore prompting a spectator to reappraise a situation whenever a message changes. Such a short lived reaction therefore is ‘too ephemeral’ to be of use to researchers calling for further work in the area (Myrick, 2015).

In order to make a health message communication successful in provoking some form of action by the spectator, one of the earliest, and considered the most important by researchers, appraisals made is their evaluation of ‘how personally relevant the situation is’. This subsequently makes a response, or ‘physiological arousal’ (as described above) possible (Myrick, 2015). In terms of shaping more long term views of personal health horizons, the use of positive emotions has been found to be more prosperous, motivating individuals to behave more appropriately to achieve a potentially healthy future. Specifically mentioned by Myrick (2015) in the context of this particular statement are behaviours with ‘strong social implications’ such as drinking and driving where such actions are more likely to cause the death of another than, for example, smoking. Fear appeals which lack such potential moral implications may not provoke a longer term motivation, after the message has been viewed, in the ways that positive emotional appeals do (Myrick, 2015). Once again, however, further research is called for (Myrick, 2015).

Whilst there is not enough scope to cover every emotion in relation to health communications, I shall discuss the use of fear and sadness, perhaps most relevant to this study, such is the tone of the ‘Road Sense’ presentation.
The use of fear

Fear is cited to be the most frequently used form of emotion in health messages (Hale and Dillard, 1995, Myrick, 2015), allegedly invoking a form of survival response (Cacioppo and Gardner, 1999; Frijda, 1988, Myrick, 2015) via ‘unconscious associative learning processes’, even being linked to increasing resilience (Perkins and Corr, 2014). Fear is known to be appraised with feelings of ‘low certainty and low control’, as opposed to other negative emotions such as anger, which are associated with appraisals of high certainty and high control. In contrast to empathy, discussed later, fear is also known to be an unconscious learning process based on an experience already lived (Esteves et al, 1994 quoted in Myrick, 2015) rather than that imagined.

The use of sadness

‘An irrevocable loss and a sense of helplessness about harm or loss’ (Smith and Lazarus, 1993) or a sense of absence in an individual’s life (Raghunathan and Pham, 1999) describe the emotion of sadness in relation to its use in health communications. Where an individual feels sad, there is a tendency for them to feel an immediate helplessness as to what they can do to change the situation, referred to as a ‘lack of situational control’ (Myrick, 2015). A feeling of resignation, rather than a struggle, means this ‘tendency towards inaction differentiates sadness from many other negative emotions’ (Myrick, 2015).

However, where sadness may manifest a short term lack of urgency to take action, its longer term prospects for an individual show promise. More of a slow burner, it can also ‘serve as a learning function’ (Myrick, 2015). The reformation or reassessment of a long term plan of action (Dillard and Peck, 2000) are prompted, bringing about a motivation to ‘change or rearrange goals….to avoid future failure’ (Myrick, 2015), as information issued using sadness as its discrete emotion causes a ‘systematic processing of information’ in an individual. The use of mirroring, discussed later, has been studied by researchers in the field of health communications with findings
suggesting that sadness, conveyed in the faces of a narrator causes audiences to feel sad also (Rizzolatti and Fabbri-Destro, 2008; Small and Verrochi, 2009).

Studies using the provocation of sadness have shown participants are less likely to make judgments about social stereotypes (Bodenhausen, Shephard and Kramer, 1994), and show an increased sense of ‘vulnerability to future health issues’ (Myrick, 2015). A motivation towards more positive goals has been revealed in advancements in the theory of health communications too, but more importantly here, audiences have been found to have a desire to find meaningfulness and connect with human experience (Bartsch and Oliver 2011; Oliver and Raney, 2011 quoted in Myrick, 2015). Indeed, taking the example of watching a sad film, studies have shown women to enjoy watching this type of film more so than men, despite the feeling such a movie invokes. Higher traits of empathy and femininity were found in people more likely to watch this type of film, but more so, an increased tendency to reflect and think about the content for a longer period of time afterwards (Bartsch and Oliver, 2011). Such a ‘deeper, cognitive reflection’ of human experience (Bartsch and Oliver, 2011) shows promise in invoking increased preventative behaviour change following a health communication experience due to the inclusion of ‘health information embedded in sad narratives’.

Myrick (2015) also suggests that the order in which audiences experience a range of emotions lays possibility for future research. In her example, beginning a health communication with a sad message and ending it with suggested change behaviours, shows potential.

**Big budget productions**

In times of financial austerity, the challenges of finding large budgets to compile health communications are more relevant now than ever before. Myrick (2015) reassures however that ‘flashy approaches’ or ‘expensive or ostentatious production practices’ are not required. Rather, ‘sad’ audiences are compelled more to take action with a ‘strong argument’ than by a ‘famous
face or professional-grade animated graphics’. This is a view shared by Guttman, who I shall move on to discuss, who cites findings by Donovan, Jalleh and Henley (1999) which suggest that using larger budgets to construct graphic videos ‘does not have more impact than less expensive formats’.

At this point, the review of literature will turn to the phenomenon of empathy. The use of fear and sadness have been discussed, amongst what are termed as ‘discrete emotions’ (Myrick, 2015) in the use of health communications, but it could be argued that empathy should feature among these also, as a typical reaction to something heard or seen.

The inclusion of empathy in this study came to the fore in a defining moment of the data collection. During one of the focus discussion groups, which shall be discussed in more detail later, one student made reference to a physical feeling he experienced whilst watching the ‘Road Sense’ presentation. He explained that he had felt a lump in his throat when listening to one of the stories told by a speaker, thus turning attention to the relevance of literature in this area.

**Empathy**

**The many definitions of empathy**

In examining the literature in relation to empathy, it seems that any definition is as elusive as the concept itself. Varying from author to author, there seems to be little agreement in the detail of understanding, perhaps reflective of its status as an emerging area of research, with some arguing that it is an inherent quality as opposed to an outward action.

Brunel and Cosmer (2012) define empathy as something one has, ‘a sixth sense: intuitive and instinctive’, claiming it to comprise of three dimensions: cognition, emotion and behaviour. Cagnon and Cote (2014) define it as an ‘attitude that allows us to consider the thoughts and feelings of another person and put ourselves in the other persons shoes’.
Some describe empathy as an ability to imagine, such as Cambridge Dictionary (2017); ‘the ability to share someone else’s feelings or experiences by imagining what it would be like in that person’s situation’, whilst Koppen and Meinel (2012) claim it to be an individual’s already existing understanding of ‘the world (social and cognition) and ability to feel connected with the emotional experience of others without living it (emotional construction)’.

Others view empathy as an outward action; Mirriam Webster (2017), ‘an action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts and experience of another of either the past or present, without having the feelings, thoughts, experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner’, whilst Gallese (2003) describes empathy as a ‘form of inner imitation’ allowing us to understand ‘not only the actions but also the displayed emotions and sensations of others’.

Eisenberg and colleagues (1991) claim empathy to be a response, ‘stemming from an understanding or apprehension of another’s emotional state or condition that is identical or very similar, to what the other person is feeling or might expect to feel in that context’.

Cooper (2011), views empathy as a quality ‘shown by individuals which enables them to accept others for who they are, to feel and perceive situations from their perspective and take a constructive and long-term attitude towards the advancement of their situation by searching for solutions to meet their needs’. Similarly, Decety (2012) describes empathy as a ‘near magical quality’ with ‘no apparent mechanism’ bridging two minds with one another.

It is no surprise to learn that researchers such as Cooper (2011) recognise that there is no consistent definition of empathy. Indeed, Decety (2012) acknowledges that its definition differs across many disciplines as well as within individual areas of research. Without listing every definition of empathy available, it can be recognised that these definitions all have one thing in common, that they involve some form of sharing of feelings, some form of
reciprocation from conveyer to receiver, a kind of ‘contagious ‘component (Cagnon and Cote, 2014).

Having briefly referred to the concept of ‘contagion’, recognised by Scheler (1954) as ‘emotional contagion’ the spectator can ‘literally catch the emotion in question….it becomes your own emotion’. Decety (2012) refers to this as providing an ‘inside view’ of someone's mind or experience. The term ‘walk a mile in my shoes’ is useful to consider here and is a concept coined by Decety (2012) as ‘the puzzle of other minds’. Decety (2012) goes on to quote Finch (1960) in the classic novel ‘To Kill A Mockingbird’ – ‘You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view….until you climb into his skin and walk around in it’, a helpful metaphor to assist in understanding this increasingly complex area. Indeed, Baker and Baker (2012) argue that the use of ‘role play can be used in conjunction with case studies to develop empathy’. Of course, it is recognised that there is no ‘direct causal connection between what happens in one mind and what happens in another’ and it is only ‘through the medium of the public and physical world’ (Decety, 2012) that we can access the minds of another through the phenomenon of empathy. It may be pertinent to remember that we may be able to be given a certain amount of empathy from someone through interacting with one another, but this does not examine in any depth why they feel that way. In order to give us this experience, we also have to interpret it and make meaning from it (Decety, 2012). Indeed, Barone and Eisner, 2012) claim that scholars increasingly strive to ‘engender a sense of empathy’, realising that ‘human feeling does not pollute understanding’ but in fact ‘may well require it’.

It may be pertinent to raise the question of the difference between empathy and sympathy here. Scheler (1954) distinguishes this clearly, stating that empathy is a ‘basic understanding of expressive others’ whereas sympathy has the ‘addition of feeling care for another’. Indeed, Decety (2012) goes on to say that to experience empathy does not necessarily mean to experience the actual emotion ourselves’ and that sympathy is ‘self-centred’, as opposed to empathy being ‘other-centred’. To draw upon an example, when someone is angry and another reacts to his friend’s display of anger with fear, this is
neither empathy nor sympathy but simply “standard mind reading”. However, if the reaction to another’s anger is anger too, the conditions of an empathic exchange are met (Decety, 2012).

Types of empathy

There are varying views regarding the different types of empathy. Cooper (2011) claims that there are three ‘types’.

1. Fundamental empathy

Fundamental, or what could be termed ‘every day’, empathy is defined as the ‘type of social interaction that most people use to engage in conversations and relationships with others in daily life’. Characteristics such as ‘being accepting and open’ and ‘taking a positive and affirming approach’ are quoted and are identified through types of communication such as body language and distance, language and tone of voice. In her study in classrooms of four to eighteen year olds, Cooper (2011) looked at the nature of empathy in relationships between students and teachers. Using semi structured interviews and observation of empathic behaviours, one noteworthy finding in the nurturing of empathy in student / teacher relationship, was that ‘real relationships and learning improved when teachers could get close to students’. Such close physical proximity ‘promoted caring and sharing’, with students being able to lean forward with their whole body and ‘emotionally connect’, promoting an empathic relationship between them.

2. In considering a ‘higher order’ of empathy, Cooper (2011) claims ‘profound empathy’ to be the second type of empathy. Showing ‘deeper levels of understanding which are associated with closer and longer lasting relationships’, profound empathy is more concerned with developing ‘positive emotions and interactions’ such as happiness and humour, ‘loving and seeing the good’ and ‘mutual respect’. In Cooper’s (2011) earlier mentioned study, teachers who were interviewed quoted such characteristics as ‘being me, being human’ and discussed how this promoted a wider culture of
empathy in the classroom, citing as an example talking to students about their own, real life experiences in a natural and relaxed fashion.

The closer and longer lasting relationships required to develop this form of profound empathy therefore raises the question of how long it takes to nurture an empathic relationship with another. It is relevant here as the ‘Road Sense…’ presentation only affords an opportunity of one hour with the audience. Noddings (1996) argues that it takes time for relationships to develop to such a higher (Cooper, 2011) level that interactions can take place to allow empathic learning to occur. Indeed, findings suggest that ‘face to face interaction is more likely to produce positive sentiments between people’. Cooper’s (2011) own findings were that ‘children revealed a great sensitivity to non-verbal signs, and identified empathic and inauthentic teachers’. It is interesting to note that the following factors were found to characterise these non-verbal signs in communication between teachers and students; body language, facial expressions, voice tone, good humour, friendliness and a personal knowledge of and sensitivity to students. Quoting one student in Cooper’s study (2011), the teachers who ‘behave more like ordinary people’ have the greatest interaction with their pupils.

Whilst much of the discussion around profound empathy relates to the relationship between teachers and students, it is relevant to this study as it draws comparisons to the similar, albeit more temporary, relationship that is formed between the narrators and audience in the ‘Road Sense…’ presentation, and raises the question of whether they, the narrators, can become the teachers for the hour duration. Whilst the fostering of long term relationships with students, referred to by Cooper (2011) as ‘profound empathy’ is not possible during the time our narrators spend with the students (one hour), perhaps the concept of ‘being human’ and metaphorically exposing what is underneath the uniform, is nevertheless relevant. Whilst this raises an interesting question as to the possibility of harbouring this type of relationship within such a short period of time, it is encouraging to learn that Cooper (2011) reassures that empathic approaches can have immediate effects, and that if grown over time this relationship can become even more profound, ‘multiplying’ its effects if you
will, and therefore, possibly even its benefits. On the other hand however, Decety (2012) appears not to entirely agree, claiming one must forge a personal relationship over a period with another in order to build ‘schemas’ upon which to infer thoughts and feelings, which will enable them to then imagine how this acquaintance ‘feels’ about the issue at hand. When a ‘spectator’ is not afforded such time to build a relationship, questions remain over whether the depth of feeling still manifests to such an extent.

The concept of imagination is suggested to be one of the features of profound empathy (Cooper, 2011). The ability of students to project their minds into imagined future experiences not yet lived, and its possible outcomes (Bryson, 1999) is claimed to be conducive to nurturing a more empathic student. As will be discussed in more detail later, this view is supported by findings in neuroscience that ‘human creativity may be nurtured’ by different parts of the brain working together during this type of experience (Cooper, 2011).

At this point, it may be valuable to briefly pause and consider who may be responsible for facilitating such experiences, in order to contextualise the discussion in relation to the ‘Road Sense…’ presentation. Whilst Cooper’s (2011) study refers to a more traditional classroom setting, it is recognised that other organisations also have a part to play in fostering empathy in educational settings. Indeed Cooper (2011) suggests ‘health and social services….humane organisations and governments’ who have the ‘vision to speed up the learning process through encouraging pleasurable and stimulating human interaction and learning’ (Alilimo-Metcalfe and Alban Metcalfe, 2005) may be well placed to take advantage of this opportunity.

3. The phenomenon of ‘functional empathy’ is listed as the third category of empathy. Whilst again Cooper (2011) discusses this within the context of teaching, it is useful to note that it is a type of empathy which ‘adapts to meet groups of specific contexts’ – hence the phrase ‘functional’ and is of particular relevance here given the large groups of students who watch the ‘Road Sense’ presentation together. Findings by Cooper (2011) suggest that ‘group empathy and whole class relationships’ are grown in the classroom by
teachers who have an awareness of their ability to ‘touch more than one person at once’. Students react and respond to such communications as a whole group, sharing their feelings collectively, rather than on an individual basis, leading to a more ‘empathic classroom’ (Cooper, 2011).

In addition to the three main types of empathy outlined by Cooper, Decety (2012) claims there are three ‘sub-types’ of empathy; empathic concern, empathic happiness and empathic cheerfulness. ‘Empathic concern’ is thought to develop later than more basic emotions such as sadness and joy and involves ‘multiple…or blends’ of emotions which are formed when a spectator responds to another’s distress, for example. The concept of ‘mirroring’, a neural response which will be discussed in due course, comes into play during this type of response. With ‘empathic happiness’, for those who elicit more ‘happy’ emotions such as pleasure and joy, the response is simply reciprocated in the expressions of the spectator.

‘Empathic cheerfulness’, however, has been found to have no element of mirroring or neural response, but instead involves a ‘higher order positive emotion such as goodwill’, tending to suggest that this sub type of empathy invokes some form of practical response by the spectator, such as doing something nice for another – or so called ‘prosocial behaviour’ (Decety, 2012).

Understanding the different types and sub-types of empathy allows us to appreciate that empathy consists of three aspects - cognition, emotion and behaviour (Gagnon and Cote, 2014) and all of these uncovered complexities fall within a wider discussion of the nature, evolution and science of empathy.

**The nature of empathy**

It could be argued from the review of literature so far that as a concept, empathy is complex. This view, which is agreed with by Cooper (2011), has at its core the belief that the intangible nature of empathy, causing researchers to struggle with how it can be used in relation to educational policy. In comparison to less ‘challenging domains’ which are
'concrete….measureable….and more easily understood’, empathy is not a ‘neat, concrete concept which permits highly objective’ (Cooper, 2011) means to recognise both its limitations and its approach with scepticism. Findings by Cooper (2011) outline that there exists an unwillingness to challenge more traditional classroom pedagogies ‘severely limiting’ future research opportunities in the area. Indeed, Cooper (2011) recognises that in terms of the development of a learning theory, dealing with such complex human emotions as empathy has so far posed too big a hurdle for theorists to overcome. Indeed, Cooper (2011) rightly recognises her contribution as broad and relevant to both researchers and practitioners in paving a way forward. Perhaps more importantly to this particular research however, are the implications for the place of empathy in ‘educational theory, policy and practice’ - which this dissertation seeks to influence. Cooper (2011) is very clear to point out that the arena of empathy is not ‘sentimental or woolly but is fundamental to every aspect of how human beings relate and learn from each other’. In addition, Decety (2012) states that more research to ‘test causal links’ between the fostering and effects of empathy through experimental designs is required. Reflecting this view, Cooper (2011) found the area to be ‘under explored’ and complex. However, amongst unexpected findings were links between ‘empathy, engagement in learning and educational achievement’, and the possibility of nurturing a more empathic culture through its inclusion in schools. I draw comparison here with a claim made by leading arts based educational researchers Barone and Eisner (2012) who claim that ‘it is precisely during the period in which quantification, prescription and formulaic practices are salient that we need approaches to research that we add to teaching, which exploit the power of vagueness to get at what would otherwise seem unrecoverable……we need to touch the souls of students as well as measure their sleeve length or hat size’.
Evolution of empathy

Empathy is well recognised as being ‘fundamentally’ rooted in our evolution (Capra, 1997), meaning that we have a shared ability to ‘feel at one with each other’. Indeed, it is thought to be so deeply rooted in our ‘brains and bodies’ that we take it for granted, barely conscious of its existence in the complexity of our everyday emotions, experiences and meaning making (de Waal, 2005). Nods to mammalian behaviour as far back as 180 million years before present day demonstrate examples of empathic behaviour in communications between mothers and their young who seek nourishment, as a survival mechanism (de Waal, 2005). Such a view of this basic instinct is shared by authors including Knafo et al (2008) and Decety (2012) who claim that we are ‘wired to respond emotionally’ from our earliest years of life in order to survive later outside the safety of a family environment. In as early as 1739, Scottish philosopher David Hume recognised that we have a ‘natural propensity to sympathise with others and to receive by communication their inclinations and their sentiments’. The emotional response, or ‘mirroring’ of feelings, discussed in more detail later, occurs ‘when we sense the feelings of others, mirror neurons in the brain trigger similar emotions within us, which is a possible mechanism of empathy’ (Preston and De Waal, 2002) and some initial evidence suggests that this ability actually increases with age.

What makes us human?

The discussion around the relationship between empathy and ‘humanness’ by researchers raises a more profound question of ‘what makes us human?’. This is a debate posed through various mediums in the current day for example a series of essays read in the lunchtime radio discussion ‘Jeremy Vine’ on Radio 2 and a short but moving film produced by Yann Arthus-Bertrand (2015) titled ‘Human – the movie’, a collection of reflective, real stories of ‘love and happiness, as well as hatred and violence’. Indeed, this film offers the viewer a challenging watch and ‘immersion to the core of what it means to be human’, touching upon Sandelowski’s (1991) claim that as a
race we have we a fundamental ‘impulse to narrate’ through storytelling, allowing lives to be ‘understood, revealed and transformed’.

But, as has been discussed, whilst we can ‘never see directly into the mind of another person’ (Holmes, 2014), the concept of how it is possible to communicate emotions with one another is relevant. How we ‘transfer’ such feelings as empathy between each other offers a platform of understanding to experience what another is thinking or feeling. The so called ‘theory of mind’ (Decety, 2012) debate is one which has divided ‘theory theorists’ and ‘simulation theorists’ (or so called ‘empathy theorists’ according to Stueber, 2006 cited in Decety, 2012). Where ‘theory theorists’ argue that such mental states as empathy are neurologically constructed and revised from early infant years onwards (Decety, 2012), ‘simulation theorists’ (such as Baron-Cohen, 1995) on the other hand argue that we simply use our own minds as a model to understand those of others. Making the distinction between what makes humans ‘human’ and animals less so, Decety (2012) discusses the concept of a ‘vision of human nature’, proposing an analogy of the human mind as a ‘motherboard’ or ‘theatre of self-awareness’. Ryle (1949) follows, explaining that it is not possible for there to be a direct causal link between one mind and another. Rather, it is through the ‘medium of the public physical world’ that access is gained to others. Indeed, the philosopher Hume (1748), referred to earlier, was troubled by the concept of the capacity to understand others by use of analogies and ‘resemblance’, where we relate to one another through similarities of experience. Concluding that such a phenomenon was ‘innate’, Hume was unable to finalise this theory, leaving the conundrum of the so-called ‘puzzle of minds’ unresolved, despite efforts of others such as Kant (quoted in Decety, 2012) to follow in his footsteps.

Following in Hume’s earlier footsteps however, three scientific revolutions took up the challenge of building the theory of human nature, paving the way for a ‘psychological revolution’, described by Decety (2012) as the ‘rise of the new sciences of the mind’. This revolution opened the door to the use of technology and greater understanding of psychology, posing a more recent question of the ‘puzzle of the mind and the brain’ (Decety, 2012).
Developments in neural imaging mean that we can now literally see the mind at work. Goleman (1996) recognises that there has been an ‘unparalleled burst of scientific studies of emotion, with new and innovative methods such as brain imaging technology now making possible what he suggests has ‘always been a source of deep mystery: exactly how this intricate mass of cells operates while we think and feel, imagine and dream’. Two types of neural imaging are currently being used; ‘structural neural imaging’ diagnoses possible disease and injury of the brain, whilst ‘functional neural imaging’, of concern here, scans the brain and produces an image using different colours to highlight parts of the brain at work. As different nerves fire, increases in metabolism cause different parts of the brain to ‘light up’, allowing neuroradiologists to understand what actually occurs when we think in a certain way. ‘Thought identification’, as it is more widely known, is controversial however.

A study by Jackson et al (2004) in which participants were shown a series of digital images and asked to imagine the pain of those depicted in them may shed further light on this discussion. The images included everyday painful situations such as trapping a finger in a door. The participants were asked to imagine their own pain, that of the other, and that of a plastic, artificial limb. MRi scans were conducted in addition to the response time for participants to indicate on a scale how much pain they felt. The results indicated that it took a shorter amount of time for participants to indicate a higher level of pain for themselves, than it did for others. Whilst these findings are complex and a more detailed discussion is far out with the boundaries of this research study, it nevertheless indicates that neural activity can be used, utilising the technology of MRi scans, to indicate empathic reactions to others experiences.

Neural imaging is an intrusive process however and some recognise a reluctance towards their validity but acknowledge their future promise. As Sahakian (Guardian, 2007) states "a lot of neuroscientists in the field are very cautious and say we can't talk about reading individuals' minds, and right now that is very true, but we're moving ahead so rapidly, it's not going to be that long before we will be able to tell whether someone's making up a
story, or whether someone intended to do a crime with a certain degree of certainty." Sadly, the use of such technology has not been possible in this particular research, but it would be remiss not to mention its potential for future studies.

So, the neurological pathway of the production of empathy can be understood as the transmission of electrical signals, ‘charged by our senses, to create feelings that are reinforced and strengthened by the brain’ (Cooper, 2011). Whilst we may be gifted a certain amount of empathy from another through an interaction, this does not go deep into the reasoning of why they feel can vicariously experience such similar emotions in this way. In order to understand such an experience, we must interpret it and make meaning from it (Decety, 2012). Indeed, such entry into another’s ‘private perceptual world’ through the notion of empathy is described by Rogers (1975, quoted in Cooper) as a changing, flexible and reactive process, of being ‘sensitive, moment to moment’. The fluid nature of this concept is appreciated here, but for the purpose of simplicity, I shall attempt to describe it in a more linear and understandable fashion:

‘The pathway of empathy’

It is known that empathy is both cognitive and affective (Decety and Jackson, 2004, Knafo et al, 2008). It is cognitive in the sense that it encapsulates an ‘ability to comprehend another’s distress and assume the other persons perspective’ (Decety, 2012). It is ‘affective’ in that it ‘reflects’ an emotional response to the other’s displayed feelings and subsequently a ‘feeling of goodwill’ towards them. In this way, emotions become ‘primary sources of motivations…they arouse, sustain and direct human action…..and provide individuals with information which shapes their judgements, decisions, priorities and actions’ (Salovey et al, 2008).

As with any social cognition process, the ‘cognition’ of empathy does not occur in one single part of the brain, but instead draws upon ‘sub cortical pathways’, brain stem, automatic nervous system and the endocrine systems which are well known for their function to ‘regulate bodily states, emotion,
and reactivity’ (Decety, 2012). Indeed, functional neural imaging shows activity in cortical areas that are pictured in isolation but do not necessarily operate in isolation to one another. Rather, they are a more ‘complex and largely unexplored connectional network in brain systems’. Findings in neuroscience are such that if one area of the brain is looked at in isolation to others, an ‘analogous effect is produced’ with a “hodge-podge of different processes” working together as one (Decety, 2010).

We know from the earlier discussion that the question of whether we can ‘read’ another’s mind is divided within neuroscience (Decety, 2012) however the view that this biological occurrence is connected by human mirror neurons within the brain system – where mirror neurons dual function as sensory and motor (by ‘preparing to perform the observed behaviour’) working to allow the ‘spectator’ to ‘passively experience someone else’s situation’ – either ‘observed or directly imagined’ is shared by many. Some scientists and scholars alike argue that special sensory neurons exist of their own identity and do not work in tandem with other parts of the brain, however this division is perhaps reflective of a rapidly changing and evolving field of research with no doubt exciting times ahead.

The concept of mirroring

Mirroring, or ‘mimicry’, has long been on the agenda for researchers concerned with empathy and something debated as long ago as 1918 by Gallese. However, prior to this, Lipps (1907 quoted in Decety, 2012) stated that when ‘I observe someone who is afraid, in pain, or happy, this somehow requires me to be afraid, in pain or happy’ and we know that others, more recently, such as Cooper (2012) have recognised the characteristics of empathic communication in mimicked and synchronised ‘facial expressions, vocalisations, postures and movements describing this as a ‘basic human interaction’, literally ‘allow[ing] one to feel oneself into the emotional life of another’ (Hatfield, Rapson and Le 2009). Decety (2012) questions whether or not it is a ‘preposterous claim’ that we can feel the same emotion to the same extent as the other, arguing that ‘they can never be given to me in the
same original fashion as my own experiences; they are not accessible to me through inner consciousness'. The concept of such 'experiential access' (Decety, 2012) to another's mind and feelings are relevant in understanding the concept of empathy here and it is precisely the word 'access' which is key.

‘Empathic time travel’

The concept of 'mental time travel' is outlined by Decety (2012) as the 'capacity to project oneself into situations in the past, future and subjunctive'. This useful analogy, akin to something from Dr Who, however, may be 'oversimplified' in Decety's view. Nevertheless it does allow us to understand how we can 'project ourselves' into future situations, and the possibilities that this concept may carry as opportunities for students to learn from future, imagined events. In one study carried out by Decety and Jackson (2004) MRI scans were examined to study the notion of pain, experienced by a spectator when watching another’s experience. This was used to investigate whether watching someone else's suffering may provoke the same kind (but to be clear here, not extent) of response in the person watching – or 'spectating'. It was found that the imagined situations did indeed 'mirror' those of the person displaying pain. To liken this to a more current and topical discussion amongst academics Young (quoted in Decety, 2012) cites post-traumatic stress disorder as the 'most widely known time travel syndrome'.

The question of presence is therefore raised. For example, does the experience of watching someone's ordeal on television provoke the same extent of feeling in a spectator as watching and listening to someone in person? Findings by Hoffman (2000 quoted in Decety, 2012) suggest that even when a so –called ‘victim’ is physically absent or ‘not providing distress signals’ empathy is still possible but through more ‘cognitively advanced modes of empathic arousal’.
‘Look into the eye of your mind’ - Imaginative inquiry in the classroom

“The imagination is the medium of appreciation in every field”

Dewey, 1944

The audience of ‘Road Sense Common Sense’ are actively encouraged to use their imaginations to ‘place’ themselves in the stories they hear. Briefly referring back to the many definitions of empathy discussed earlier here – Brunel and Cosmer’s (2012) suggestion that empathy comprises of cognition, amongst other aspects; Gagnon and Cote (2012) talk of placing ourselves in another’s shoes; Koppen and Meinel (2012) argue that it is an emotional ‘construction’ process and Gallese (2003) that it is an ‘imitation’. Described as “seeing with the mind’s eye” (Ganus et al, 2004), this form of mental imagery has been shown to play a part in the cognitive processes required to problem solve (Golonka, 2010; Ganus et al, 2004) as well as make meaning from stories.

The use of imagination in the classroom, known as ‘imaginative inquiry’ has long been in existence and is based on a ‘well-researched pedagogy’ (Taylor, 2013). Used in a variety of ways, it can be the focus of one single lesson, or the common thread throughout longer projects which touch upon various aspects of the curriculum. Taylor (2013), an Advanced Skills Teacher and lecturer in imaginative inquiry, recalls a visiting demonstration by education specialists with his Year 1 class. The lesson began with the imagined rescue of a village in danger of a giant sinkhole. Rather than the children working quietly with heads bowed at their desks, he describes his classroom being more akin to a ‘functioning workplace with people operating together...learning happening everywhere’. Even those children who were previously difficult to engage were actively involved in the hustle and bustle. The formerly traditional classroom had been transformed into an ‘imaginary place’ where several areas of the curriculum were tapped into – planning, questioning, literacy, geology, biology, physics and maths tasks were all at work.

Taylor (2013) and others in the field (Egan, 2013) argue that there is too strong a focus on traditional, cognitive tasks such as sheet based ‘logico-
mathematical skills’ and the use of the imagination in education should be ‘taken more seriously’. As a means to problem solve, mental imagery has been shown to play a part in the cognitive processes required.

**Emotional intelligence**

Shaping a more empathic society is also touched upon by a leading author in the field of Emotional Intelligence matters. In his book, 'Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ', Goleman (1996) raises the question of what can be done to provide children with an increased chance of ‘self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself’. Goleman (1996) argues that the answer lies in the development of emotional intelligence which, rather than being a genetic trait, is something which can be taught. This is a point closely made to Coopers (2011) call for a more empathic classroom, where better morals and sentiment can attribute to a more amiable world in which to live, something which younger generations can begin to contribute to now and for the future. Of course, the subject of emotional intelligence is complex and it is not possible to discuss its intricacies in length within the confines of this study. Suffice to say however, it is relevant to that of empathy and one’s ability to read another’s emotions. Goleman (1996) urges that self-restraint and compassion are required to shape a more peaceful society and it seems empathy is one tool which can be used to achieve this. As he puts it, ‘bringing together heart and mind’ in the classroom offers potential for a generation who are more self-aware, self-controlled, empathic and therefore able to resolve conflict. Goleman (1996) also rightly recognises that the mind is a complex ‘mass of cells’ and whilst we do not yet fully understand it’s complex workings, the research world is aware of its central part in the emotions we feel and express, and empathy is just one such emotion.
How can empathy be measured?

The question of how empathy can be quantified or given a value is complex and whilst this discussion will be progressed at a later stage in the methodology chapter in relation to the wider challenges of finding a rigorous and ‘scientific enough’ means to measure empathy, there is some literature which can assist at this stage.

One researcher, Humphreys (2013), has examined the strengths and weaknesses of utilising different methods of assessment in relation to emotional aspects of learning. Describing this field of research as ‘emergent’, Humphreys (2013) reflects on a review over 200 different types of assessment where all but 12 methods were discounted as being unreliable due to their lack of norms, and insufficient testing for validity, positing that the Emotional Dysregulation Scale (EDS) ‘provides a single, uni-dimensional indicator of a specific social or emotional skill domain’ and suggesting that this may be the most favourable option.

Reviewing five different methods of assessment of SEL (social emotional learning), Humphreys (2013) found the following;

Rating scales – using a set of tendency statements, respondents rate their level of frequency to feelings or reactions. These are a quick way of measuring, but can be subject to response bias.

Direct behavioural observation – considered the most objective and rich technique, some children’s behaviours may be difficult to attribute to certain aspects of social and emotional learning.

Projective expressive techniques – such as creative drawings, these artefacts are interpreted by experts. This activity is well received by the children themselves but can produce unreliable results without corroboration.

Interviews – in depth discussions provide opportunity to clarify information with the respondent(s) but responses may be skewed

Socio-metric techniques – for example where children are asked to ‘rate’ others in terms of their ability to socially interact with each other. These can
be ‘strongly predictive’ but schools are reportedly uncomfortable with this technique which is also subject to outside influences such as gender and perceived physical attractiveness.

The use of tendency based statements is also raised by Humphreys (2013) who discusses what he terms ‘typical’ and ‘maximal’ behaviours. A typical behaviour is one which can be described as a reaction or feeling that a respondent ‘usually’ has in a set of circumstances. Whilst these means may give an indication as to the scale of the social and emotional competence of an individual, whether in relation to a specific emotion or feeling or not, they are nevertheless designed to paint a picture of longer term tendencies or trait. In terms of empathy specifically, this difference between typical and maximal behaviours is referred to as ‘situational’ and ‘dispositional’ empathy. Stueber (2013) explains further - situational empathy is referred to as a person’s empathic reaction to a specific situation whereas dispositional empathy, on the other hand, is understood as a more long term, ‘stable character trait’. Here, we are concerned less with an individual’s personality trait, and more with a short term reaction to something they are exposed to – the ‘Road Sense’ presentation – and therefore to the concept of ‘situational empathy’.

**Situational empathy**

Stueber (2013) posits that situational empathy can be measured in a number of ways – asking subjects about their experiences immediately afterwards; studying the ‘facial, gestural and vocal indices of empathic related responding’ (Zhou, Valiente and Eisenberg, 2003), and is a view supported by Cooper (2011) earlier. On the other hand, more invasive methods of measuring heart variance or skin conductance in spectators can be used. Stueber (2013) posits that none of these means of measurement are indeed ‘perfect tools’, going on to explain that it is ‘widely known’ that self-reports such as the questioning of subjects can be influenced by expectations of their answers, and the ability to articulate or verbalise their feelings. Whilst the more invasive means of measurement such as heart rate analysis are
not to be concerned with such subjective variance, their validity is equally thrown into question also, through their inability to distinguish between empathy, sympathy or personal distress (Zhou, Valiente and Eisenberg, 2003).

**Dispositional empathy**

If we were to turn to dispositional empathy for lessons in validity, however, we may be equally disappointed. Stueber (2013) is critical of the use of questionnaires, which are logistically complex to distribute and in their identification of a suitable audience. They are also based on a ‘multiplicity of empathic concepts’ (Stueber, 2013) in the field of psychology (adding to this complexity is the earlier discussion of the many definitions of empathy). Such quantitative means of ‘measurement’ use scales (e.g. Hogan’s Empathy Scale, 1969), questionnaires (e.g. Mehrabian and Epstein’s questionnaire of emotional empathy, 1972), or indexes (e.g. Davis’ Interpersonal Reactivity Index, 1983). Each responsible for these varying methods view empathy in different ways. Hogan regards empathy as exclusively cognitive, Mehrabian and Epstein as ‘exclusively affective’ and based on the perception of the emotional experience of others, and Davis’ as a combination of both ‘in that they all concern responsivity to others but are also clearly discriminable from each other’ (Davis, 1983). Reflecting on the earlier chapter ‘the many definitions of empathy’, if the definition cannot be agreed, then surely it is questionable that we can agree on a means to measure it?

Stueber (2013) is also critical of the complexity of scales such as Hogan’s, which consists of sixty-four questions selected from a variety of psychological personality tests. Mehrabian and Epstein’s questionnaire focuses heavily on tendencies, such as “tendency to be moved by another’s emotional experience”. Whilst this may show some promise, and indeed be of interest in its own right, its basis on longer term personality traits may distract from the question of what we are concerned with, once again, the empathic reaction of ‘never before heard, stories in the ‘Road Sense’ presentation.
Conversely, Davis’s Interpersonality Reactivity Index, however, does show some further promise. Whilst it is once again concerned with a longer term measure of individual’s empathic tendencies, within the four separately scored subscales is ‘perspective taking’ referred to as the following situations; the tendency to experience feelings of sympathy or compassion for the misfortune of others; the tendency to experience distress or discomfort in response to extreme distress of others; the tendency to imaginatively transpone oneself into fictional situations’ and ‘the tendency to spontaneously adopt the psychological view of others in everyday life’. The mere mention of the word ‘spontaneously’ may trick one into believing this particular subscale could be used in this case, but it must be remembered once again that these are ‘tendencies’ which are being studied in relation to personality traits. In other words, that which already exists before the spectators watch this presentation.

In terms of the validity of such scales, questionnaires and indexes, Stueber (2013) claims that ‘no significant correlation has been found between the scores on various empathy scales and the measurement of empathic accuracy’. Davis (Davis and Kraus, 1997) however claims that any such lack of correlation is to be expected due to the failure of knowledge individuals have about their own empathic ability. That is, if they do not understand the concept or their ability to hold this trait, how can they answer such questions with confidence or validity?

Stueber (2013) finalises her discussion by concluding that the use of such tools to measure empathy and their related validity remains ‘open to question’. She suggests that recent development in the examination of neural activity, alongside questionnaires, indexes and scales, shows promise for future research however.
‘The brain in transition’ - again

As discussed earlier, the adolescent brain is one in transition. To compare this to an individual who has suffered a traumatic brain injury, findings of post trauma neurological regeneration cite the dynamic nature of the brain’s plasticity which helps to form new blood vessels and pathways (Cooper, 2011). Cooper (2011) also discusses the complexity of individual’s stage of life and the vastly differing issues which may motivate them. Such individual differences of course must be considered when reviewing findings in a more generalised manner. Indeed, the question of whether everyone has an ability to experience empathy is tackled by Hogan (1973) who believes that ‘children must have experienced empathic treatment themselves if they are, in turn, to develop empathy’. However, what is known is that such issues which motivate individuals are ‘complex and conditional’ and subject to their own ‘life experience’.

The role of the emergency services – can they play teacher?

Noddings (1986, quoted in Cooper) recognises that empathy can be experienced towards people whom we may have previously held less favourable feelings for, through the telling of a personal account, for example. Where students cannot possibly be expected to have lived the lives of a frontline emergency service worker, even when one has no previous similar experience of a situation of another, social cognition researchers have found that many people use strategies that are ‘extraneous’ of the person displaying the emotion (Decety, 2012). Moreover, it has been shown that imagination plays an important role here.

The issue of whether it is crucial for a spectator to form an acquaintance with another in order to experience their feelings is also touched upon earlier and Decety (2012) considers further what role ‘stereotypes’ play in this process. Based on a theory named the ‘hierarchical linear model’ or ‘HLM’, this model is used to test the degrees of empathic accuracy where spectators use stereotyping to perceive the feelings of another (Decety, 2012) and where the spectators had no personal experience to draw upon themselves. Where
a lack of personal acquaintance means we don’t have a pre-built ‘schema’ to upon which to draw, stereotypes are used to form ‘impressions’ based on their social category. This is a view supported by others such as Ames (2014, cited in Decety, 2012) who goes on to say that spectators, in this situation, ‘use stereotypes to infer the intentions of the general mental states of the imagined other’. Such views, however, states Decety (2012) ‘run counter’ to many beliefs of empathy in the research world. One further interesting concept here is that of ‘moral agents’ – researchers who in addition to their understood role, act as facilitators in the nurturing of empathy (Cooper, 2011), raising the possibility of emergency service workers performing the role of ‘moral agents’ in events such as the ‘Road Sense’ presentation.

Creating a culture of empathy

Researchers identify with the importance of harvesting a culture of empathy in our society. The Greater Good (2017) claim empathy to be the ‘building block of morality’ and Decety (2012) asserts that the notion of empathy has sparked interest throughout the years with philosophers and psychologists such is its ‘relevance to moral theory’. Cooper (2011) supports this view and adds that ‘in an era when differences of race and religion, the extremes of wealth and poverty, and the dilemma of global warming dominate our news headlines, never has it been so necessary to develop the quality of empathy to heal a fractured and fearful society’. In a wider and more long term objective of society, ‘moral and adaptive empathy of a higher order of emotions’ has been found to have an ability to affect more prolonged emotional development of individuals who can ‘continue to be aware of their history’ and ‘envisage their future’ (Decety, 2012).

It is possible, claims Cooper (2011), that individuals behave with more kindness and perceived better morals in their everyday actions and therefore contribute to the development of a more understanding, harmonious and peaceful society; ‘the ability to envisage long term consequences for another seems to involve combining the imagination with feelings and encourages a
person to act on behalf of the other, so creating the will to do good.’ Cooper (2011) touches upon the role that school environments play here, describing this as the nurturing of a more moral and inclusive culture as a ‘hidden curriculum…. ‘where young people spend so much of their early lives, [schools] have a powerful influence in this respect.’ Cooper (2011) rightly recognises that children should not receive ‘lessons’ in empathy, it is not something that can be taught, but rather ‘practiced’ through ‘emotional and social skills’. She goes on to suggest that these skills cannot be borne out of task orientated instruction giving, but ‘developed more explicitly’ (Cooper, 2011) through the sharing of feelings.

The education system itself sees many pressures placed upon it, politicians seeking both the ‘promotion of good citizenship’ whilst still requiring a structured and ‘intensive curriculum’ of ‘one size fits all’ teaching sessions (Cooper, 2011). Cross (1995) urges that mainstream education should house more responsibility for emotional development supporting Cooper’s view that there has been much talk and little action in relation to this. Relating the use of empathy in respect of road safety education, Durkin and Tolmie (2010) have already stated that road safety education cannot be approached as a ‘one size fits all’ issue, which poses its use in this arena as an increasingly complex issue.

‘Humanising education – a humane classroom’

The use of empathy in the classroom can be seen none more so than in drama. Hesten (1995) emphasises the importance of its role in ‘sharing of common human experiences and emotions’. Indeed, this view is reflected in the DICE Report (2010) which recognises the ‘powerful effects of drama’ on ‘empathy and tolerance and what it means to be human’ (Cooper, 2011) with the use of ‘story and narrative can develop empathy by engaging emotions to explain the moral’ (Cooper, 2011).

Extra-curricular programs in schools have a part to play too, encouraging diverse communities to come together with students, enabling them to ‘encounter other perspectives’ (Cooper, 2011). Such ‘humanising education’,
the work of Rogers (1975) is cited as being noteworthy and one of many possibilities in linking the personal, social, moral and academic together to develop ‘better human beings who feel valued….who could also value others’. In order to nurture a more caring and respectful culture, the term ‘humane classroom’ is also used here.

There are some, such as Purkey (1970), who claim empathy to be ‘vital’ to our education process in achieving a more humane classroom. The environments of traditional and formal classrooms were also found not to be conducive with creating empathy (Cooper, 2011). Indeed, key note speeches at education conferences (Cooper, 2011) called for further ‘research into values and learning issues’, again citing the immeasurable nature of value development for its lack of wider understanding.

This not only raises the question not of how relevant empathy is to our society, but how we can embody it into an already complex and crammed education system. Whilst research into moral values is out with the boundaries of this research, it is nevertheless presented in its inclusion of the topic of empathy in our classrooms.

‘Constraints on empathy’

The question of whether students can detect ‘inauthentic’ displays of emotion is also an important aspect of consideration. Coopers (2011) findings were that teachers who showed ‘minimal or negative emotions’ were recognised by students as being ‘unempathic’, considered by the students and regarded to be ‘acting out a part’, or ‘feigning’ empathy.

The use of language is important too, with findings suggesting that teachers who don’t value the level of understanding of the students, or who use ‘inappropriate, high level language’, make the subject impossible for students to grasp. This practice has been found to lower self-esteem, therefore inhibiting learning and is an important lesson to take on board. This is a consideration here, in the language used by emergency service workers.
The future of research into empathy

Cooper (2011) recognises the benefits of possible smaller scale research projects, amongst larger scale studies which may offer a wider view, in their contribution to research of empathy in education which may give ‘rich information on the effects of high quality human interaction across the caring services’. In a stark warning, Cooper (2011) urges ‘if these continue to be excluded from the equation, the significance of human relationships in learning and interaction will continue to be ignored’.

Overview of empathy

It can be seen from the literature that there is little agreement around the definition of empathy, however findings suggest that it is an evolutionary aspect of being human (Capra, 1997). Goleman (1996) posits that empathy is something that can be developed but questions still remain over how to reliably measure its presence. Advances in technology allow us to see empathy, or rather the parts of the brain responsible for creating it, at work. So, as our understanding of empathy in this emerging area of research grows, so too may a more consistent and widely agreed definition which takes into account the cognitive aspects of its action, and despite suggestions by some (Decety, 2012) that it comprises a near magical and perhaps invisible quality. Indeed, metaphors such as ‘walk a mile in my shoes’ give us a concept with which to relate our understanding in our day to day interactions with others.

Cooper (2011) submits a form of empathy which is perhaps most relevant to this study – that of ‘fundamental’ or everyday empathy. The amount of time that speakers spend with the audience of ‘Road Sense’ is limited to just one hour, therefore the nurturing of close relationships over a longer period of time, such as is required to reach the higher order of ‘dispositional’ empathy (Cooper, 2011), is not possible in this case. A third type of empathy suggested by Cooper (2011) is that of ‘functional’ empathy which occurs when a group of people react to an event or situation together. Additionally, Decety (2012) claims there also to be three types of empathy; empathic
concern, empathic happiness and empathic cheerfulness, again drawing reference to the discrete emotions discussed earlier by Nabi (2003).

Stueber (2013) outlines that there are two different reactions to empathy; situational empathy in relation to a specific situation or event and; dispositional empathy which is as it suggests – a longer term trait determining a likelihood that we might feel empathy throughout the wider course of our lives, in other words, throughout our disposition. From Stueber (2013) we may draw interest in situational empathy for the purposes of this study as we deal with the ‘event’ of the ‘Road Sense’ presentation, leading to the question of how its presence can be determined.

The earlier discussion around how to recognise empathy becomes more relevant here, with many suggested forms of measuring traits and tendencies (Stueber, 2013; Hogan, 1969; Mehrabian and Epstein, 1972; Davis, 1980) suitable for the assessment of dispositional empathy and a ‘multiplicity of empathic concepts’ (Stueber, 2013), but little choice in terms of the response to single events. This suggests that behaviour observations and the use of MRIs scans may prove an effective means of examining situational empathy in isolation.

Of course, all of these definitions build empathy to be a complex area and one where definitions and boundaries between one another are not easily drawn. What matters here, it is suggested, is that we know how to recognise empathy when it occurs. Decety’s (2012) theory of mind debate introduces us to the sphere of the scientific aspects of empathy. Through greater understandings in cognition, it is known that the brain acts as a ‘motherboard’ to our thoughts, actions and feelings, and something which is so complex that we may never fully understand the intricacies of every such thought and feeling we have.

Perhaps the most interesting and significant development in understanding how we relate to one another through emotions is the concept of ‘mirroring’ (Lipps, 1907; Gallese, 1918; Decety, 2012). Mirroring is something which can literally be seen in experiments using MRI scanning technology. This phenomenon opens a further door to the concept of empathic time travel,
drawing similarities to Nabi’s (2003) suggestions of the five step process which occurs when an audience watches a health communication;

1. Cognitive appraisal
2. Physiological arousal
3. Motor expression
4. Motivation
5. Subjective feeling state

Further research in this area would be required to form a plausible connection between this process and the occurrence of empathy specifically, but it offers possibility nonetheless.

Road Safety Communications

The research of Guttman (2014) is guided by four areas;

1. That ‘road safety is inherently connected with all aspects of contemporary life’;
2. That ‘communication campaigns are considered to be an important means to promote safer road practices’ – including a discussion over whether hard hitting and graphic images are ‘effective or morally appropriate’,
3. That the objective of such communications is not just about scaring people, but of a wider promotion of well-being in a culture which should promote caring for one another, and
4. lastly, that many road safety campaigns are not underpinned by academic theory.

In his research, Guttman (2014) summarises hundreds of examples of road safety media communications such as posters and television advertisements and whilst it is not possible to mention every one, the themes deemed more relevant to this study shall be drawn upon, but with a note of caution...
however. Guttman (2014) recognises that there are several challenges in the examination of using appeals to reason in campaigns. Eliciting the dominant type of method used, where multiple methods may be present in one advert, for example the use of hard hitting graphics alongside rhetorical questions, presents a challenge to researchers in this field, furthered by attempts to reach out to audiences on an individual level, whilst aiming at a sometimes global scale.

Guttman (2014) refers to the use of ‘framing’ in road safety appeals and campaigns, claiming that it occurs in one of two ways: episodic framing, which refers to the depiction of an event such as a road collision; and ‘thematic framing’ which refers to the road safety ‘topic’ or ‘issue’ which is presented, such as mobile phone use or tired driving. Further categories of are also used:

- ‘salience frames…emphasises the importance of certain topics and not addressing others’;
- ‘responsibility frames’ in which ‘certain entities are held accountable’, for example local authorities or parents;
- ‘human interest frames’ which ‘bring a human face or emotional angle’ – to which this study is primarily interested in;
- ‘Identification with victims’; ‘conflict frames’ – where the emphasis is on conflict;
- ‘categorising or labelling’ where ‘social labels are assigned, such as to ‘drivers who cause a crash labelled as villains’;
- ‘generalisation to a broader context’ which refers to ‘equity, health or environmental issues’;
- ‘morality frame’ in which ‘one is expected to morally behave’, and
- ‘economic consequences frame’ such as financial loss.
One clear example of the use of framing in road safety campaigns in the US, cited by Guttman (2014), regarding the power of media to increase awareness is that of MADD (Mothers Against Drink Driving). This group was formed in 1980 by a lady whose daughter was killed by a drunk driver. MADD attracted interest of the media and was credited with an 89% increase in press activity between 1981 and 1983 (although this is not fully explained). The campaign went on to ‘reframe’ the moral issue of drunk driving, its presence in society as a crime, and also the need to ‘stricter enforcement’. Its impact was such that it went on to include the use of experts, victim support services and the promotion of victim legislation. At around the same time in the UK, a similar group was set up by two fathers who had suffered losses of their children caused by drink drivers, inciting a similar response to victim services.

Appealing to people’s sense of reason is a common tactic in road safety communications (Guttman and Klar, 2009) where logic and science are combined to persuade people to adhere to a certain set of rules. Such a method is considered to be the first step in a ‘sequential process of behaviour change’, with an overall objective of keeping people more safe. How likely one is to comply is linked to how much they care about a certain issue, alongside their ability to think about the issue at hand. These factors are utilised in the Elaboration Likelihood Model (or ELM) which examines the ‘elaboration of thought processes in the persuasive process’. Guttman (2014) concludes that road safety campaigns which create room for individuals to elaborate on them, will have more long term behaviour change success. Conversely, where people do not have the means, or indeed the will, to ‘attend to argument’, or when the topic is less personally important to them, they ‘could be more susceptible to persuasion by heuristic cues, such as the perceived credibility of likeability of the presenters’ (Perloff, 1993, quoted in Guttman, 2014). Some researchers claim that visual cues assist in the cognitive processing and meaning making of information ‘with the capacity to structure, transform, create new knowledge, and to evoke emotions (Sopory and Dillard, 2002). In addition, findings suggest that when people believe they have reached a conclusion regarding their behaviour of their own
accord (rather than the conclusion being explicitly pointed out to them), they are more likely to adopt behaviour change (Guttman, 2014).

‘Blood and warped steel’

“We need to shock the audience into realising the horror of what can happen”. This is a phrase I have often heard spoken by parents and teachers, in considering the approach road safety educators should take to reach out to young drivers. It is sometimes followed by a counter argument that adolescents are ‘hardened’ by watching Hollywood films featuring car chases, playing video games such as ‘Grand Theft Auto’ and watching the online Youtube channel ‘where you can watch just about anything’. Such opinions are referred to as the ‘communication theory of cultivation’ (Gerbner et al, 1986) which claims that ‘cumulative exposure’ to such media ‘normalises’ fast and aggressive driving, making this a more culturally acceptable thing to do.

The use of hard hitting, graphic and shocking images of crashes, alongside ‘heart wrenching images of bereavement’ such as the example cited earlier by the Australian TAC campaign – now viewed over 19 million times since it was uploaded in 2009 - have been found to be ‘relatively prominent’ (Guttman, 2014) in road safety communications, sometimes raising criticism at their lack of acceptable boundaries and their graphic nature. Guttman (2014) cites an example of a response to the Australian Transport Accident Commission (TAC) advert, who claimed that it elicited a physical and emotional reaction when she watched it, giving her ‘chills’ and that it ‘made her cry’. The use of such approaches have been found to have increased in frequency since the 1990’s (Guttman, 2014) following the memorable adverts of the late 1980’s decade in relation to HIV awareness, which portrayed headstones in a dark and daunting manner. The use of these type of graphic images is widely debated amongst ‘researchers, practitioners and the public’ (Watson, White and Tay, 2007, Guttman, 2014) alike, and utilises the use of the ‘fear appeals’ approach discussed earlier. Indeed, organisations such as TAC, admit that their aim is to ‘shock and jolt viewers into adopting road
safety practices’ to avoid such consequences to themselves. In an example more close to home, a UK advert which depicted a dead man and woman in a car was claimed to grab the audience attention, with over half finding it ‘shocking’ (Guttman, 2014).

Whilst there is therefore evidence to suggest this elicits a desired response to (some audiences in a study following which claimed ‘most respondents found it effective’) (Guttman, 2014), there is no elaboration as to what ‘effective’ actually means here and therefore raises questions around the rigour of evaluation used. The original reference for this evaluative study can no longer be accessed.

There are some researchers (Guttman, 2014) who claim that the use of graphic images should be a ‘last resort’ where other methods may have failed to have the desired effect of behaviour change, but once again, there is no depth presented in this argument or mention of method used in the study. The use of such ‘loss framing’ is subject to criticism however, with some (Taubman-Ben-Ari, Florian and Mikulincer, 1999) claiming that the depiction of death can ‘elicit defensive reactions to the recommendation to adopt the [desired] safety practices’. Conversely, a study conducted by Castillo-Mazano, Castro-Nuno and Pedregal-Tercero (2011) in Spanish communications, found that such ‘bloody advertising’ was no more successful than cases that did not draw upon the use of graphic images. This view was shared by Donovan, Jalleh and Henley (1990) who concluded the same, but in addition, the high cost associated with production did not bring any benefits to the effectiveness of such adverts, supporting the discussion raised earlier in relation to big budget productions. Guttman (2014) raises further questions regarding the extent to which graphic images are used and in provoking a morbid fascination, or as she puts it, ‘reflects voyeuristic impulses, or even provides an aesthetic or cathartic experience (Hastings, Stead and Webb, 2004). Indeed, whereas some in an audience might experience ‘horror, revulsion, disgust, sadness, anger or helplessness; others might feel empathy towards those involved’. The use of actual death in road collisions can even be found in some examples in Asia (Guttman, 2014), where footage of real collisions is replayed, sometimes in compilation
videos. This approach is also subject to criticism, however, with those who suffer death in these tragic crashes found to be ‘dehumanised’ such is the anonymity of a person in a crowd, causing viewers to be unable to relate this to real life and drawing upon similar fictional experiences of video games or movies, as their point of reference. In her finding, Guttman (2014) states ‘anonymity was also a dominant feature in the UK videos, the depiction lacks the human dimension of a person who dies, and death was depicted as part of routine police work’.

The use of hard hitting images, however, is subject to debate among professionals. Several researchers (Taubman-Ben-Ari, Florian and Mikulincer, 1999, Guttman, 2014) claim their use may actually have the adverse effect, ‘instead of feeling threatened personally, their conception of their own invulnerability is enhanced’. Indeed, as early as the 1970’s, some were urging for their use to be stopped and a need for a wave of change was called for in the approach to road safety communications, with Mendelsohn (1971 quoted in Guttman, 2014) warning of the overuse of ‘blood-and-warped-steel’, ‘nerve bending police sirens’ and ‘varieties of human mayhem committed by colliding automobiles’.

Whilst they are cited to have a high rate of recall, the use of graphic images also raises ethical and moral discussions. One example highlighted by Guttman (2014) is when an individual, who is not intended as the subject audience, experiences anxiety caused by viewing such a depiction. Logically, this would only occur when the communication is utilised more widely, such as a road safety advertisement aired on television, rather than to a closed audience where the material is not generally made publicly available. This does raise an interesting point of note for more discussion however.
‘Subject matter experts’

The use of experts as resources is discussed by Guttman (2014) using the familiar example of the Australian TAC advertisements. These adverts are well known amongst road safety practitioners for their impactive and emotive approaches to topics such as speeding and drink driving.

In advertisements such as these, which are aired on Australian national television, scientists, law enforcement professionals, psychologists and medical professionals tell stories of death using their expertise and experience. Such examples usually end with tragic consequences. ‘Near miss’ approaches, however, spare audiences of witnessing an outcome and that a crash is more likely to occur next time round. These have been criticised for eliciting the ‘optimism bias’ (mentioned earlier in this literature review) in allowing people to believe the scenario is more likely to end favourably because it has been depicted that way to them on this occasion.

Personal testimonials are only discussed briefly by Guttman (2014) who cites examples from Australia (above), Ireland and the UK of videos which feature narrators recollections of grief when a loved one dies in a collision. Guttman (2014) questions their effectiveness beyond a ‘voyeuristic interest in seeing people in grief’. Aside from the potentially cathartic effect on those featured in such campaigns in coming to terms with their loss, ‘feelings of anger against those potentially responsible’ may not ‘serve to elicit self-reflection on one’s own commitment to adopt safety rules’. Of the three examples studied by Guttman (2014), the testimonials provided by emergency service personnel who talk of their experiences of ‘picking up the pieces’, noted by her as ‘evidently difficult experiences for them’, are followed by pleas to the audience to be safe when driving. Similar recollections of those related to people who have died in collisions ‘clearly elicit compassion and empathy’ for them, but also raises a question over whether this is enough to change people’s behaviour. Going further still, Guttman (2014) suggests this type of message may ‘service to change community norms and support more comprehensive road safety policies’, of reference to the earlier discussion around the creation of moral classrooms. Whilst there is recognition that
such insights into the personal experiences of emergency service workers and bereaved family members are a unique opportunity to hear from them, there is no further depth to this discussion. This type of storytelling approach will now be discussed.

**Storytelling**

Learning through the experience of others, touched upon earlier in relation to empathy and the role of emotions in health communications, involves viewing the world through the eyes of another. Because we can ‘never see directly into the mind of another’ (Holmes, 2014), the use of critical incidents in storytelling offers a platform upon which audience can draw their own interpretation from the experience of others. Defined by Tyler (2009) as a ‘narration of personal experience’, such ‘event centred approaches’ (Whittaker, 2009) recall past experiences of the narrator through the act of the storytelling of a critical incident.

Storytelling is viewed by leading researchers in the field, such as Alterio (2003), as a ‘powerful and enduring means of communication’ and its inclusion in our lives and indeed everyday learning, is likely to have been part of our ‘earliest learning experiences’. The roots of storytelling can be traced far back in history and spread among many cultures. Aboriginal societies, for example, recognise its use as a ‘very important part of the educational process’ where culture, customs and values are taught and shared. Some (Egan, 1989) claim storytelling to be ‘one of the most important inventions of human kind’ and it is a means by which we can make sense of the worlds in which we live, having the capacity to construct ‘new knowledge’, ‘value emotional realities’, ‘capture complexities’ and ‘reveal multiple experiences’ (Alterio, 2003). As well as the spoken word, stories can take the form of movies, books and artefacts such as paintings. Stories are, indeed, all around us.

The inclusion of storytelling as a learning process has also been recognised by authors such as Moon (2010). Their ability to capture a spectators ‘cognitive structure’ without them having to have been present during an
actual event, offers the opportunity to accommodate an experience both intellectually and emotionally (Flanaghan, 2014) and reminiscent of the earlier discussed concept of empathic time travel. Stories, claim Tyler (2009) are a ‘natural approach to communicative learning based as they are in language, which renders them highly symbolic’. Meaning making through another’s experience comes in the form of a plot, which involves a place, characters, and an event or events (Flanaghan, 2014). The spectator uses their imagination to interpret the narrator’s story. Reflection by re-examination of events (McDrury and Alterio, 2002) through story sharing offers the opportunity to consider alternative perspectives and develop a greater understanding of feelings (Flanaghan, 2014). The disruption of status quo within a storyline, along with the comfort of familiar references to everyday life, providing an insight into human activity, are all cited as ingredients of an engaging story (Flanaghan, 2014).

**Storytelling as a learning approach**

‘Road Sense Common Sense’ uses storytelling as its learning approach, acting as the ‘bridge of understanding’ between the student (spectator) and the experience of the emergency service workers (narrators) who tell them. It is through the participation of the student’s imagination that the narratives are accessed in a ‘created world’ where ‘empathic forms of understanding are advanced’ (Koch, 1998).

Indeed, storytelling has been recognised in education for a number of years, both as a research tool through narrative enquiry, and as a teaching technique (Coulter, et al, 2007). The use of storytelling to capture imagination and emotion is well cited in areas such as nursing education where ‘stories can make nursing practice visible’ (Koch, 1998). This access to a previously unavailable world of ‘intensely personal, highly emotional, often brutal stories’ (Koch, 1998) of everyday, frontline experiences of emergency service personnel, is delivered to the audience through narrative where emotional learning becomes ‘both transferable and reflective’ (Edwards, 2014), in order to ‘form new and meaningful connections’ (Moon,

Storytelling can also be used as a means of problem solving, where the framing of a problem or issue, in this case young driver safety, within a learning experience can widen student perspectives in order to reframe them. Major contributors in the arts based educational research field, Barone and Eisner (2012) talk of ‘verisimilitude’ – a way of ‘seeing, knowing and perceiving a problem’. Similarly, Baker and Baker (2012) argue that the development of the ‘capacity for empathy and enhance[d] problem solving skills ’ in students can be achieved through arts based education, which aims to ‘broaden and deepen ongoing conversations’ (Barone and Eisner, 2012). Such approaches, they argue, ‘exploit the capacities of expressive form to capture qualities of life that impact what we know and how we live’ (Barone and Eisner, 2012). It is within such forms that we find the narrative. It is in such forms that we find the stories.

Understanding another’s experience through the medium of storytelling as an ‘expressive form’, may allow a spectator to ‘secure an empathic participation’ in the lives of another. Just as empathic time travel is discussed earlier, so do Barone and Eisner (2012) urge that such expressive forms are like a ‘travel card, something one can use to get somewhere’. The use of literal language, however, argues Langer (Barone and Eisner, 2012) is ‘not helpful’, rather it is the ‘evocative and emotionally drenched expression’ that makes understanding another’s experience possible; ‘analogies will be drawn, cadence and tempo and the language will be controlled…..simile will be used to illustrate meaning’. Such expressive forms, argue Barone and Eisner (2012) should dislocate, disturb and disrupt the familiar, in order to strive such a level of meaningful interrogation required by students in a learning experience.
Fact or fiction?

The authenticity of a story is relevant to a student’s experience. A ‘virtual world’, argue Barone and Eisner (2012), ‘must be sufficiently believable, credible enough for a reader to recognise it as possible, if not actual.’ The use of fiction in arts based research is discussed by them further, summarising that for some researchers (Banks and Banks, 1998 cited in Barone and Eisner, 2012), straying from truth in academic discourse ‘remains a no-no, a mode of expression that is simply off-limits…..a bridge too far’. However, Barone and Eisner (2012) urge resistance against the disqualification of the use of fiction in narratives concerned with arts based research. They argue that such use has an ‘extraordinary power to disrupt the familiar commonplace’ in social issues. In conclusion, they add that the success in using fiction or non-fiction ‘ultimately depends on the interplay within an act of reading or viewing between a) features of text, b) its contexts of display, and c), the reader (or in this case, the spectator). Indeed, researchers into storytelling claim that a spectators belief, and therefore ability to make meaning, of a story is guided by its credibility rather than its truth (Moon and Fowler, 2008).
Chapter three: Methodology

Introduction

When considering the development of any research project, it is important to contextualise its objectives against a methodological framework (Fulton et al, 2013). Fulton et al (2013), outline that those undertaking the professional doctorate journey operate within Gibbon et al’s (1994) so-called ‘mode 2’ of knowledge production, which focuses on ‘real world’ problems reflected in practice within a workplace, rather than the more theoretical sphere of academic research. The position of research within professional practice means that not only is it sensitive to influences of ‘internal and external forces’, it may also ‘cross discipline boundaries’ (Fulton et al, 2013). As such, the researcher’s approach must remain dynamic and flexible in order to cope with this unique position between the workplace and academia.

Before framing the research question at hand, Grix (2004) suggests that one should firstly clarify the ‘philosophical, conceptual and contextual perspectives’ (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2010) taken, before working downwards into the principles of research and data gathering. Reflecting this advice, the philosophical perspective taken in this case will be discussed, before moving on to matters of reflexivity and the research framework used.

Philosophical perspectives

In order to understand the influences placed upon the philosophical perspectives of any study, it is important for a researcher to try to understand the connections between their own values, ideology and paradigm within which they operate (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2010). A paradigm, defines Costley, Elliot and Gibbs (2010) is a ‘deep-rooted set of perspectives that includes the ontological and epistemological position and set of values for operating in the world’. Kuhn (1962) first introduced the concept of the paradigm in 1962 when he suggested that different disciplines operate within different waves of thinking, producing new knowledge by ‘shaking up’
existing ways of thinking in order to give way to new waves of thought, known as paradigms. The nature of being and of one’s own reality within a profession, along with their position within the research world (ontological perspective), and ‘how we know what is to be known’ (an epistemological perspective) (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2010), mutually influence each other and come together to form a philosophical stance from which to begin.

To contextualise this position, I would briefly like to refer to the ‘I’ and draw upon some reflections regarding my own philosophical outlook, referring to the transition I have taken during this doctoral journey (Fulton et al, 2013) from police officer to researcher and touching upon the challenges this transition has presented along the way, calling into question my assumptions (Buckingham et al, 2011) about the way in which knowledge is constructed.

**Reflections on knowledge production**

Working in the sphere of roads policing, my day to day work is generally driven by statistics, tick boxes and what I perceive to be ‘hard’ facts - in other words things I know to have happened for certain. Having investigated serious road collisions for a number of years, the search for ‘the ultimate truth’ through the reconstruction of events which had led to someone’s death seemed a very logical, linear and policy driven process.

Typically, the early stages of an investigation would involve arriving at a collision scene, establishing what had occurred through the detailed collection and scrutiny of witness accounts, the physical presence and position of vehicles on the carriageway, the position of debris and injured persons, along with technological evidence such as CCTV, mobile phone data which may have recorded the last activities of the driver, i.e. texts or phone calls, or even vehicle data which may have recorded details of speed, braking etc. Evidential experts would be called to collision scenes involving a fatality or those who had suffered serious and life changing injuries. These experts would begin ‘reconstructing’ an incident by plotting and measuring debris against a straight line plotted in the carriageway, known as an axis. Scuff and scrape marks on the carriageway, even pedestrian throw
calculations which take into account vehicle speed and direction, body weight and landing positions, and the profile of a damaged vehicle would all be considered. A collision scene is typically made up of multiple, smaller scenes – where the deceased came to rest, each vehicle also being a scene in its own right. When a deceased is moved to hospital, the body is also considered a scene in its own right, post mortem evidence recorded in a medical statement of ‘facts’ and attributing injuries to a cause of death. All of these ‘mini scenes’ would inform a bigger picture which I would refer to as ‘pieces of a jigsaw’ when addressing an investigation team or a bereaved family. I found the jigsaw to be a useful metaphor, particularly in pertaining to the time it would take to delicately put these pieces together. In doing so, I would assure a bereaved family that we, the police, only dealt with ‘facts’ - in other words those pieces of information which we knew to be ‘true’. If we didn’t know the answer to a question, if the piece of the jigsaw didn’t quite fit, we would tell them so. That way, a family could be assured that any evidence would be presented only if we knew it to be true and to have happened. The final jigsaw, whether complete or not, would become the reconstruction of events and provide the coroner, judicial court or family with a factual recollection of events.

Of course, each piece of witness evidence, expert opinion, mark on a road, body or vehicle, can be subject to question and debate in a court of justice. It is the role of the investigation team and Crown Prosecution Service to defend these findings and convince a judge or magistrate that what we say had happened could be proven ‘beyond all reasonable doubt’. This evidential test is subject to much scrutiny before it reaches a court hearing of course. Evidential threshold tests now ‘weigh up’ the prospects of convicting a defendant before they can be charged with committing an offence, let alone appear before a court to defend their actions.

Before beginning this research and as I operated as an investigator, I was fairly confident I knew what a ‘fact’ was, and what was not. I was also fairly confident of the thought process by which it had been formed (the person was hit here by this vehicle, and landed here, therefore the vehicle must have been travelling at x miles per hour). I felt self-assured in taking the
methodical steps through the investigation to arrive at the conclusion of how these facts collectively influenced the professional world in which I operated. It has been during the journey from investigator to researcher that I now consider how ‘blinkered’ I had become (Fulton et al, 2013) within my professional perspective of what the word ‘truth’ actually meant. Baumard (1999) describes this blinkered approach as ‘territorialisation’ - that is ‘their knowledge, and therefore the strategic approach they take to their work, is bounded by the cognitive map that they have created’ (Fulton et al, 2013). Indeed, this type of knowledge creation through professional experience, known as ‘tacit knowledge’, forms part of a crucial tool kit which enables successful operating within the workplace. It becomes part of who we are, part of our ‘professional identity’ (Ibarra, 1999) and the sphere of policing is no exception.

**Drawing metaphorical battle lines – interpretivism versus positivism**

I first found the paradigm of interpretivism troubling, for the reasons I have discussed above. The ontological definition of interpretivism ‘assumes that reality as we know it is constructed inter subjectively through the meanings and understandings developed socially’ and where truth does not exist as a separate source but rather is ‘negotiated through dialogue’ (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). At first glance, the concept of reality existing of something other than facts seemed an impossible and illogical thought process to come to terms with. If an event had occurred, in order to ‘prove its truth’ in a police investigation, it would have to be shown on a collision report, statement of facts or a case summary. I recognise now that policing carries a predominantly (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2010) positivist perspective of viewing the creation of knowledge, holding that ‘every justifiable assertion is capable of being scientifically or logically verified’ (Buckingham et al, 2011) and creating a basis upon which was entirely influenced by the creep of my beliefs, experiential learning and professional identity.
In moving from police officer to work based researcher, it is noted as inevitable that ‘organisational... contexts will affect the way a piece of research is undertaken’ and ‘the culture and structure of your work situation and the actions and thinking of your colleagues are likely to shape your work’ (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2010). It is hardly surprising then that, after 19 years of policing, operating within this ‘territory’ (Baumard, 1999), that my stance towards truth had been shaped in this way. Indeed, I would argue that this type of knowledge creation and foundation of assumptions of policing led me to hold a similar stance to that of Hume, the 16th Century philosopher, who based his beliefs about truth upon the use of mathematics and logic (Buckingham et al, 2011). For Hume there were only two kinds of statement – those which were demonstrative and those which were probable. Where demonstrative statements could be ‘proven’ through logic and deductive reasoning, such as $2 + 2 = 4$, probable statements, he argued, required empirical evidence upon which to base them. If these statements were neither of these, this troubled Hume who claimed that they fell into a category of ‘meaningless’ validity. In fact, Hume once famously claimed that should any assertion of knowledge not contain ‘abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number.....commit it then to the flames; for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion’ (Hume, 1748). Indeed, in a court of law, the quest for such truth is only measured by facts and that which can be established ‘beyond all reasonable doubt’ of having existed or taken place. So, when I reflect upon my ways of thinking as purely an investigator, I see now that I was entirely comfortable with demonstrative statements, which could be proven beyond reasonable doubt. I would like to think I was open to the consideration of probable statements, but only if they met an evidential threshold test or what I had come to form and understand as ‘truth’.

Finding meaning in other people’s experiences through the interpretation of dialogue and text has consequently been a large part of this doctoral journey for me. It has been the leap away from scientific facts that has led to self-doubts along the way and I recognise now that these doubts have been entirely influenced by my previous ontological and epistemological perspectives. Indeed, I have frequently questioned how this particular
research could be held to be relevant or ‘true’ when it does not contain a plethora of numbers, quantitative ‘facts’ which were unquestionable, scientific and therefore logical and compatible to my way of thinking. Reassuringly, it seems I have shared these doubts with others, such as Paans (case study in Hennik et al, 2013), a medical researcher who, coming from a predominantly quantitative background of the sciences, also wrangled with the concept of finding meaning within the narratives of experiences and stories of nurses in a study he conducted. He explains, ‘chatting to the nurses about what they think did not seem academic to me’. His concerns echoed my own – is this ‘data’ scientific enough? How can I prove my findings? How can I ‘prove’ my theory ‘beyond all reasonable doubt’, just as I would be required to do in a court of law? Throughout the course of this research I have reflected on the advice given to Paans and found reassurance in his words - ‘be more open……let the respondents do the talking and let them feel free to talk….you need their story, not a story within your domains!’.

It is not suggested that positivist and interpretive perspectives are not both considered to be scientific, rigorous or valid approaches (Hennik et al, 2013) however. Rather, it could be recognised that they differ in terms of their ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives (Hennik et al, 2013). Where positivism looks to objectively measure, form and test hypotheses, it is has also been subject to criticism for its failure to ‘acknowledge the interactive and co-constructive nature of data collection with human beings’ (Hennik et al, 2013). It has been within the ‘humanness’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) that I have found the very rich perspectives of people. It is within the very ‘subjective meaningful experiences’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) told by the participants of this study, in their stories (Koch, 1998; Edwards, 2014; Abrahamson, 1998; Coulter and Poynor, 2007) that, for example, the theme of empathy, has been provided room to grow, drawing the conclusion that this study operates within an interpretive paradigm.
Operating as an insider researcher

In considering the position between researcher and professional, one must also be aware of their own situatedness as a work based researcher within an organisation, or ‘insider’ as it is termed by Costley, Elliot and Gibbs (2010). As such, it has become increasingly important along this journey to recognise that, as a student, the research conducted was to make an impact on my community of professional practice. So, for the purposes of gathering data this raised a question - was I to don a metaphorical researcher’s hat or a professional hat? Costley, Elliot and Gibbs (2010) outline that holding a position of ‘insider researcher’ affords the responsibility of being sensitive towards participants as well as the ‘values…..purposes and ways of doing things’ within my own organisation and those of the professional field to which I am contributing. It was at the stage of planning the data gathering phase of this research that I considered this position and the role that reflexivity played.

Reflections on reflexivity

In considering how I would interact with the students and speakers, the question of my position between the organisation, as a researcher, and the relationship with the students was addressed. Hall and Hall (1996) state that ‘the research relationship is between equals and is not exploitative…..there is a genuine exchange. The research is negotiated’. It was precisely this relationship and negotiation that would become an important aspect of the data gathering in order to allow research themes to emerge from these interactions. In planning my approach beforehand it was therefore pertinent to consider how the students and speakers would feel, which may be impacted by what I wore, where in the classroom or office I would sit in relation to them, and how I would introduce myself and the research study. Such ‘subjectivity and the need for reflexivity’ (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2013) have developed throughout the stages of my data collection and were catalogued in observation notes taken at each stage of data collection (found in appendix one). I noted how I perceived the participants to be interacting
with me, how I thought this influenced the outcomes of the data, as well as the surroundings and their impact this potentially had on the data gathered.

The importance of reflexivity in qualitative research is a view shared by Robson and McCartan (2015) who submit that, ‘an awareness of the ways in which the researcher as an individual with the particular social and identity and background has an impact on the research process’. So, just as my background in policing brought certain assumptions about the formation of knowledge, I was aware that my social and physical identity would also inevitably affect the way in which I interacted with the students during this process. Hennik et al (2013) state that ‘it is during the coming together of the researcher and the study participant that each will react to the background, characteristics and positioning of each other, and in this way each will contribute to the co-construction of reality’ during the process. As I became aware that my personal reflexivity in terms of my individual values, assumptions and self-identity, would all influence this process, I was also conscious of how my ‘interpersonal reflexivity’ would have a part to play (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006). I had to be sensitive to the ‘situational dynamics’ between myself, the researcher, and the participants, the sixth form students. I considered how to introduce myself – primarily as a police officer who was conducting research? I also considered what I would wear – would an operational police uniform with stab vest and utilities lead them to answer questions in a certain way? Would some students be ‘put off’ by the uniform having had a confrontational experience of the police in the past? Should I sit as part of their group around a table, or should I sit at the top of the table and therefore appear to be the dominant individual in the room? These were all considerations that would ultimately affect the outcome of the overall research study.
Research framework

In order to frame the methodological approach of this study, a research framework by Hennik et al (2013) has been adapted to reflect the approach taken here. Hennik et al’s (2013) research design cycle (shown below in figure one) takes into account the conceptual, ethnographic and analytical cycles within a wider qualitative research approach. Given the view that qualitative research is ‘not easy to define’ (Hennik et al , 2013), this particular framework has served to outline the various stages of a typical research project which sets out the beginning (the inner ‘design cycle’ in which ideas are formed based upon literature), the middle (the second ‘ethnographic cycle’ in which data is collected) and the end (the third ‘analytical cycle’ in which data is analysed and theory emerges). Several issues with the formation of this model have been encountered, however, which shall be discussed further.

Figure one. Qualitative research cycle (Hennik et al, 2013)

As outlined in figure 1, Hennik et al’s (2013) qualitative research framework (Hennik et al, 2013) consists of three ‘inner cycles’ – the first ‘design’ cycle, the following ‘ethnographic cycle’ and the final ‘analytical cycle’. Each inner
cycle within the wider qualitative research approach consists of four aspects which mutually influence and compliment each other as they move through the stages of a typical qualitative research study. This two way linkage, depicted by the dual direction solid and broken arrows, ‘accounts for the movement of the researcher between each stage throughout a constant process of design, data collection and analysis’ (Hennik et al, 2013). As such, reflective of the flexible approach any researcher must take (discussed earlier), each inner cycle, further refined at each stage, is far from linear and no clear boundaries exist between each.

The first ‘design cycle’ provides that the researcher begins with a research question in mind, informed by existing literature and theory, which is then placed within a conceptual framework, before a field work approach can be decided upon and so on. However, the start point of commencing with a research question does not take into account how it arrived there to begin with. In this particular study, a preliminary cycle of ‘action research’ (Lewin, 1946) informed this first design cycle. Following the collection of evaluations from participants in the pilot presentation of Road Sense, responses to the questions, ‘which part of the presentation had the most impact on you?’ and ‘why’ were collated. Revealing a slight preference towards the speakers, rather than the short films, this insight offered an opportunity to explain why this might be the case. The later outlined focus discussion groups began to inform the research topics at hand, for example the use of emotion, in particular empathy, which were prevalent in the Road Sense presentation. Practically speaking too, the Road Sense presentation was developed further using an action research cycle. Using Lewin’s (1946) model of action research, outlined in figure three below, the following stages took place;

Planning: what changes could be made to the Road Sense presentation, following the revelations of the evaluative questionnaires? How would these changes be implemented?

Acting: making these changes

Observing: whether these changes had the desired effect – did they engage the students equally, less or more?
Reflecting: upon the entire process, and what stages were next

Using action research as the beginning of an adapted research cycle therefore, Hennik et al’s (2013) model has been adapted to include this as the first stage, shown as Cycle One. Further adapted stages are outlined in the model below (figure two) and shall be discussed in due course. However the preliminary action research stage is discussed first in more detail.

Figure two: Work based research cycle adapted from Hennik et al (2013)

**Cycle One: Action Research**

Reflecting the positioning of an insider researcher, where several definitions of action research exist, Shani and Pasmore’s (1985) are perhaps the most appropriate to this study:

“Action research may be defined as an emergent inquiry process in which applied behavioural science knowledge is integrated with existing organisational knowledge and applied to solve real organisational problems.”
Often referred to as ‘practitioner led research’ or ‘practice based research’ (McNiff, 2013), action research is concerned with ‘research in action, rather than research about action’ and is staged by a ‘sequence of events and an approach to problem solving’ (Coghlan and Brannik, 2005).

First conceptualised by Lewin (1946), action research operates as a cyclical and staged sequence of planning, taking action, evaluating the action and further planning to refine the problem or issue until it is deemed to be solved. Lewin (1946) first developed this model which later became known as the action-reflection cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, shown in figure three:

![Figure three – sequences of action – reflection (Lewin, 1946)](image)

In the last 70 years, the use of action research has gathered momentum both within organisations and as a means of problem solving through collaborative inquiry to identify and change organisational issues. McNiff (2013) describes this as a ‘global epistemological shift’ in relation to how knowledge is produced, both due to changes in practice-based practical knowledge and its social development within groups of people and communities of practice through ‘collective endeavours’. More recently however, it has been subject to criticism by authors who argue that the now more common and wider use of action research exists in a ‘teenager form’ of its intended concept (McNiff, 2013). The ‘telling of stories’, she states, is as a now accepted form of action research which lacks academic validity if not approached in a rigorous enough fashion.

Butler (1999) states that action researchers ‘aim to disturb fixed ways of knowing through deliberately troubling ideas’. Indeed, as the adage goes, “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”. But it is precisely this kind of acknowledgement, through curiosity of how things operate, whether they actually ‘work’ in a
sense that they are good practice and are the best they can be, that leads to the beginning of an action research type inquiry such as this. Action research, suggests McNiff (2013), begins when ‘you feel your practice needs attention in some way’. An action researcher after all does precisely that – plans and takes action, makes improvements, reflects on these changes, and makes improvements once again, producing evidence to show how their practice has improved.

**Cycle Two – Design and Data Collection**

**Research questions (2.1)**

Returning to the research framework shown in figure one, where Hennik et al (2013) suggest that the first inner cycle is named the ‘design cycle’, and the second as ‘ethnographic cycle’, these two stages have been brought together to form the second cycle in this case – the design and data collection cycle. Hennik et al’s model posits that the first such stage of their design cycle begins with ‘research question’, indicating that only one such question is present. However, in this case and as discussed earlier, more than one research question was suspended in the early stage of the research, evolving from the evaluative questionnaires. The start of this new design and data collection cycle has therefore been adapted to reflect this.

**Literature and theory (2.2)**

In the case of this research study, existing literature and theory around empathy in education and the use of emotions in road safety communications guided the drawing of a vague set of research questions in relation to the data gathered at this stage:

1. Did the audience get more value from the speakers or the films?
2. If so, why was this?
3. What part did the use of emotions play in the learning of the students?
4. What was the value of conveying empathy to the audience, and would this have any longevity in their learning about the issues?

**Conceptual framework (2.3)**

The conceptual framework outlined by Hennik et al (2013) follows as the next stage, represents the merging of existing literature and theory, and the new research questions which have been formed.

**Data Collection**

Where Hennik et al (2013) suggest this second phase of research should be named ‘ethnographic cycle’ (see figure one), this label raises confusion with the theory of ethnography within research. As this cycle is concerned with the data collection stage of research it has therefore been renamed as such in this adapted model.

**Design research instrument (2.4)**

Barbour (2014) outlines that in designing the research instrument, in other words, how one will go about collecting data in order to achieve the desired outcomes, consideration should be given to the following: the purposes of the research, the nature of the research relationship, potential for engagement and the anticipated content of data. Whilst the outcomes of the study cannot possibly be known in the early stages, the perspective of the researcher can have an influence here nonetheless. Costley, Elliot and Gibbs (2013) outline that a ‘more grounded consideration of perspective leads to the development of an appropriate methodological approach’. Costley, Elliot and Gibbs (2013) argue that the way in which the data, or ‘methods’, are collected should fit within the context and purpose of the project. These methods should be effective and appropriate, as well as considering ethical issues (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2013).
It was discussed earlier that the philosophical position from which this research is operating, and touched upon the concerns its approach would not be ‘scientific enough’. The academic rigour, robustness and reliability in a work based research project of this nature are likely to be demonstrated by making this part of the decision making process, or ‘design’, visible (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2013).

**Recruit participants (2.5)**

The next step in the data collection cycle is to ‘recruit participants’, firstly by defining the appropriate study population and, secondly by ‘identifying strategies for recruitment’ (Hennik et al, 2013). Whittaker (2009) suggests that for focus discussion groups (as used in this study), 6 to 8 participants are optimum, with larger sizes being neither ‘practical nor beneficial’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Class teachers perform the role of ‘gatekeepers’ (Hennik et al, 2013) or ‘moderators’ (Whittaker, 2009) in the process to act as an intermediary between researcher and participants.

In a method known as ‘purposive recruitment’ (Hennik et al, 2013) participants are then selected to take part in a focus discussion groups because of their relationship with the study – in this case the students who took part in the focus discussion groups were chosen because they had attended Road Sense presentations in the preceding months. The prevalence of certain characteristics such as communication and willingness to engage in this type of activity is outlined by Hennik et al (2013) as an important ingredient to contributing a ‘greater understanding of the phenomenon studied’ and is known as a ‘non-random’ approach to participant recruitment.

**Collect data (2.6)**

In order to discuss the methods of data collection used in this study, a brief pause is permitted from the research model but returned to later.
**Methods of data collection**

**Focus groups**

Focus discussion groups are defined as ‘a group of individuals selected to provide their opinions on a defined subject’ (Whittaker, 2009), comprising of between six to eight participants (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Hennik et al, 2013; Whittaker, 2009). Led by a moderator, facilitator, or the researcher themselves, they aim to gain a range of views from the participants regarding a particular set of issues (Hennik et al, 2013). The environment in which they are held should be one in which the participants feel comfortable enough to be open about their views (Hennik et al, 2013) and have the opportunity to both ‘challenge and interact with one another’ (Whittaker, 2009).

There are limitations to be aware of however. A group environment such as this can lack confidentiality and some participants may be unwilling to share their views (Hennik et al, 2013; Whittaker, 2009). This limitation can be addressed by the researcher by ensuring the participants are allowed to speak freely. As Hennik et al (2013) go on to state – ‘even though some participants will share their stories, they do so of their own volition rather than an expectation of the researcher’. Indeed, Coulter and Poynor (2007) state that in becoming part of a group’s narrative in this way gives the researcher access to the participant’s voices.

As the name suggests, a focus discussion group is aimed to ‘focus’ on the issues at hand, in an interactive ‘discussion’ which ‘draws upon three of the fundamental strengths shared by all qualitative methods:

1) exploration and discovery;

2) context and depth, and

3) interpretation (Morgan, 1997).

Whilst they carry the potential to extract ‘large amounts of concentrated data in a short period of time’ (Morgan, 1997) they are not without criticism. Hennik et al (2013) recognise that focus discussion groups are not ideal for
collecting information on an individual level and may not ‘fully represent the individual perspectives of each participant’, nor be confidential. It is therefore necessary for the researcher to be competent in extracting the themes by creating ‘conversation among the participants’, allowing the ‘interactive discussion’ aimed to ‘gain a broad range of views’ sought (Hennik et al, 2013).

Whittaker (2009) suggests that using a combination of interviewing skills within the focus discussion groups can be productive in order to ‘access both forms of knowledge successfully’ and suggests that the following approaches are taken:

1. ‘Warm up questions’ – designed to allow the participants to feel at ease with the researcher and the environment.
2. ‘Key questions’ – ‘the principal questions that directly address your research question’ should be informed by the literature and theory you have formulated so far.
3. ‘Closing questions’ – designed to check the understanding of the researcher and provide an opportunity for the participants to add anything further. (Whittaker, 2009).

Additionally, a prompt sheet of questions for use by the researcher can help to keep the focus discussion group on track (Hennik et al, 2013).

**Interviews**

Interviews are defined by Hennik et al (2013) as a ‘one to one method of data collection that involves an interviewer and an interviewee discussing specific topics at length’. Similarly, Charmaz (2014) states that they are a ‘gently-guided, one sided conversation that explores research participants’ perspective on their personal experience with the research topic……the participant talks; the interviewer encourages, listens and learns’. The role of
the interviewer is not to overcome the interview with their agenda however, but more to ‘elicit the interviewees story’. This kind of ‘special kind of knowledge-producing conversation’ (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006) is described as the ‘gold standard of qualitative research’ by Barbour (2014) due to the ‘in-depth exchange’ that occurs between the researcher and participants. Indeed, Charmaz (2014) suggests that grounded theorists, discussed later, utilises interviews as their primary method of data collection.

In order to elicit a rich and deep set of data, the researcher should give the interview its initial direction (Charmaz, 2014). The planning process should involve consideration of the opening question, much the same as the opening statement in focus groups, which should ease the participant in to the process. Barbour (2014) also recommends that interviewers should start with the least threatening question and move gradually through to more probing questions. As this means of data gathering is viewed as ‘fruitful for more personal, biographical information’ (Whittaker, 2009), it is therefore not suitable for interaction with more than one interviewee.

Being aware that interviews can be a ‘sensitive and powerful method of investigating’ (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2013), the researcher should also be mindful of the power balance which inevitably exists between them and the participant. After all, the researcher asks the questions, exercising ultimate ‘control’ (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2013) over the direction of the interview and as such, in order to make the most of this opportunity, should be respectful and sensitive to the ‘voices and stories’ which are elicited (Hennik et al, 2013). This relationship can, however, work both ways. As Charmaz (2014) suggests, if the interviewee is of a dominant nature, this can prompt them to reverse the direction of the interview and satisfy their own agenda, whatever that may be.

An aide memoir or ‘schedule’ (Barbour, 2014) for use by the interviewer can assist with keeping to the issues at hand and provide a balance between focussing on the research topic and allowing room for the space that the interviewee utilises in order to think and express their insights (Hennik et al, 2013). This form of interviewing, known as semi-structured interviews, uses a
set of topics or questions that should be covered by the researcher, but by a less rigid means than working through a set list of questions in a step-by-step approach. Allowing the interviewee to feel that they can portray their reflections freely, can reap its rewards later in the process, as Barbour (2014) states, “interviewees often have a real need to tell such stories and it may be best to acknowledge this, reconciling ourselves to listening, at times, to accounts which may have little bearing on our research concerns, but, which, nevertheless, may clear the way for more focused questioning at a later stage”.

**Ethical considerations**

As a representative of Northumbria Police and of the University of Sunderland, it is recognised that I become an agent (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2010) of both. The position of an insider researcher (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2010) and a responsibility towards being sensitive towards the research study, my profession, the University and also of the students and speakers who have taken part in focus discussion groups and semi-structured interviews was earlier discussed but requires, at this stage, further detail. Robson (1993) touches upon the moral and ethical implications of any research project and it could be argued that these are one of the same. The research topics of road collisions, death and bereavement are sensitive and emotive, just as the content of the Road Sense presentation is, meaning that participants who kindly agree to discuss their thoughts and insights require handling with appropriate care.

Conducting focus discussion groups with young drivers raises questions over their backgrounds and their own previous experiences of death and road collisions. Operating on the assumption that it is not possible to know every individuals detailed experiences, Griffiths (1998) rightly points out that as an insider researcher, there is a risk of exploitation of being viewed as a police officer and not a researcher. Whilst the research wishes to contribute to the community of young driver road safety education, a balance between capturing the sometimes deeply personal stories of the participants and
contributing to this knowledge should be achieved in a considered fashion (Fulton et al., 2013). In order to address this concern, contact was made with each school before hand and all arrangements to carry out focus discussion groups were made by the teacher, including which students were to attend. At the beginning of each focus discussion group, the respective teachers read out a short statement prepared by me which outlined the reason for the research, that each participant would remain anonymous and that any participation was voluntary. The students were given an opportunity to leave the discussion at any time, but being mindful that some may wish to leave but feel unable to, I ensured I remained alert to any signs of discomfort displayed by them. A copy of each ethical statement was signed by the respective teachers and can be found in appendix two.

Ethical considerations towards the semi-structured interviews conducted with speakers from the emergency services were approached in the same way but as a relationship already existed between us, ensuring that this position was not abused remained a consideration. At the beginning of each semi-structured interview, each participant was handed a series of statements outlining the purpose of the research, their right to anonymity and that participation was entirely voluntary. Once again, each participant was handed a statement outlining ethical considerations (found in appendix three).

In addition to the statements outlined to the participant, no reference is made to individual names or schools throughout this research. Each school is referred to as School X, Y and Z, and likewise each speaker with whom an interview was conducted as Speaker X, Y and Z.

Transcripts from the focus discussion groups and semi-structured interviews were produced with some containing details of specific incidents discussed. In order that these incidents remain anonymous, every effort has been made to redact detail which may render these incidents or the people involved recognisable. Those focus discussion groups and semi-structured interviews that were tape recorded and subsequently transcribed have now been destroyed.
In order to further outline the ethical arrangements of this research, a further statement can be found in appendix four.

**Make inferences (2.7)**

In order to conclude Cycle Two as adapted in figure two, Hennik et al’s (2013) suggestion of ‘make inferences’ will now be discussed.

During the ‘collect data’ step, inevitably, submits Hennik et al (2013), ‘some analysis takes place in data collection’. Being able to make such inferences within the data collection phase means the researcher should be alert to the emergence of themes and remain flexible in order to allow this to occur. It is at this stage that the research questions should begin to emerge more clearly and take shape. Indeed, Robson and McCarty (2015) states that ‘all any study can do is approximate knowledge of phenomena as they exist in the real world’ and for this reason ‘the findings of a flexible method of research can be seen as no more or less legitimate than those of any other type of study’.

**Cycle three - Analytical cycle**

Hennik et al (2013) state that the analytical cycle can be ‘viewed as an inductive conceptual process, whereby the process of analysis leads to inductively derived concepts and theory about the research issues’. The activity of analysis begins to ‘raise……questions’ about the data and provides an ‘analytical handle’ (Charmaz, 2014) upon which to compare and describe themes which emerge. The analytical cycle can therefore be broken into further, smaller stages, which are concerned with the ‘how’ of data analysis, as Hennik et al (2013) submit in their qualitative research cycle. In this adapted model, the analytical cycle now represents the third stage of this research framework (see figure two).
Develop codes (3.1)

‘Codes’ can be described as ‘tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during the study’ (Bell, 2014). Codes can be attached to ‘chunks’ of the data, such as in phrases, sentences or even full paragraphs, or within individual words (Bell, 2014) and this method ‘takes the view that it is not the words themselves that matter but their meaning’ (Bell, 2014). The overarching reason for the development of codes is to take steps towards drawing some form of conclusion from what they say, in line with the focus of the research study (Bell, 2014).

Offering a set of guidelines to approach the stage of ‘developing codes’, the first five of these are relevant to this stage of the discussion:

1. Prepare verbatim transcripts (of the data gathered)
2. Anonymise data
3. Develop codes
4. Define codes and a codebook
5. Code data

(Charmaz, 2006)

The next step in the coding process is to form a list of main or ‘key’ (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2010) ‘themes’ by reading through the data and making notes on observations.

A first coding stage, known as ‘initial coding’ (Barbour, 2014; Saldana, 2016) develops a series of key themes, where labels are attached to extracts of the data and meanings are attached to the themes identified (Charmaz, 2014). The identification of key themes is also referred to by Seale (1999 in Barbour, 2014) as ‘indexing, as she explains this acts as ‘signposts to interesting bits of data, rather than representing some final argument about meaning’.
A second cycle of coding, or ‘focussed’ coding (Saldana, 2016) then follows, in which further analytical meaning is attached to the data through the emergence of ‘sub-themes’.

When the first stage of the coding of main themes has taken place, reading through the data once again identifies sub-themes or sub-categories in a second cycle of coding known as ‘focussed’ coding (Saldana, 2016; Barbour, 2014). This enables the researcher to ‘drill down’ more deeply into the potential issues that are uncovered, dividing the key themes into more detail. This can be carried out simply by highlighting the texts of the notes and transcriptions until the researcher reaches the point of ‘data saturation’ (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2010), in other words the point where no new sub-themes begin to emerge. It is at this point that the researcher should proceed with caution so as not to ‘squeeze’ preconceived theories into the data before them. Glaser (1978) advises, ‘data should not be forced or selected to fit pre-conceived or pre-existent categories or discarded in favour of keeping an extant theory intact’.

In carrying out this coding activity, the researcher will observe that the themes began to ‘engage in a dialogue’ between each other. The stories of the participants will begin to emerge from the narratives as a ‘coherent presentation of [the participants] experiences that reflect the grit, complexity and seemingly irrational nature of human behaviour’ (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2010). In this coding process, many authors (Barbour, 2014; Hennik et al, 2013) remind us that it is important to remain faithful to the individual accounts as well as using the categories to suit the purpose of the research and this can be a challenging balance to achieve.

One of the most important decisions the researcher will make, argues Barbour (2014), is whether or not to utilise a computer software package in the coding process. Software packages can assist by carrying out coding through identification of key words and themes, the parameters of which are set by the researcher. However, where a researcher may be tempted to believe using software will reduce the work required to carry out the coding, Barbour (2014) states that ‘there is a very real danger that your analyses are
driven by the properties of the package rather than the other way round’. She goes on to say that using computer assisted analysis is ‘not necessarily any more rigorous than manual analysis’ and the movement of the researcher back and forth between the texts within the data and the codes can assist the relationship between them both and allow for the building of themes and explanations. After all, ‘it is the researcher, not the medium of analysis that ensures analysis is systematic and thorough’ (Barbour, 2014).

During the coding process, there are points for a researcher to bear in mind (Braun and Clarke, 2006) as they move along the steps one to five outlined by Charmaz (2006) above. For example, what counts as a pattern or theme? How often does a theme have to reoccur in order to become a code? Barbour (2014) offers some solutions in this thought process. By asking the following questions, this can guide the decision which will ultimately result in the final set of codes:

- How useful are the codes?
- Can some codes be further broken down?
- Are different codes referring to the same concept?

**Describe and compare (3.2)**

The challenge facing the researcher is now to make sense of this ‘story’ of the data and ‘describe and compare’ (Hennik et al, 2013) the differing themes which have emerged. For example, how do the themes and key themes relate to each other? How often do they occur? And how do they relate to the literature and theory? It is at this point that theory begins to emerge.

**Categorise and conceptualise (3.3)**

It is during the process of comparison within the coding phase that the main themes or ‘concepts’ of a study begin to merge to develop a theory. In Hennik et al’s (2013) framework, the two stages of ‘categorise and
conceptualise’, and ‘develop theory’ are separated, but once again mutually influence each other.

Develop theory – an introduction to semi-grounded theory

When the data has been gathered, the researcher is now ready to immerse themselves in the findings of their data by a process of familiarisation, in order to identify meaning and interpret the experiences of the participants. One could argue that this process of familiarisation has already begun to take place during the coding process and even in the data collection phase. Interpretive data analysis, within the wider principle of grounded theory which I shall go on to discuss, is described by authors such as Patton (1990) and Corbin and Strauss (2008) as ‘science and art’, such is the balance between the logical process of coding, and the creative thought processes which arrive at the identification of themes. Referred to by Hennik et al (2013) as ‘creative…flexible…and involving chaos’, the method of coding within qualitative analysis involves balancing a method of acute observation of the themes which emerge from the narratives of the participants (art) and the logical allocation of codes (science). It is a method which stems from the differing epistemological backgrounds of Glaser and Strauss (1967 in Hennik et al, 2013) and later emerged as grounded theory.

Charmaz (2014) states that ‘grounded theory methods consist of systematic yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories from the data themselves’ and as such, researchers ‘ground’ themselves in their data. This activity involves the researcher moving ‘back and forth’ between the data collected and the analysis of it (Charmaz, 2014) in order to make sense of its meaning through interpretation. Simply put, ‘data form the foundation of our theory and our analysis of these data generates the concepts we construct’ (Charmaz, 2014). Indeed, this feeling and suggestion of flexibility is very much reflective of the plea by Hennik et al (2013) discussed earlier in relation to the way in which the researcher enters the two-way linkages between each stage of the research. As Hennik et al (2013) posit, the researcher begins to draw
inferences from the data collected at a very early stage, sometime not necessarily on paper, but sub-consciously as they listen and read what the participants have to say (Charmaz, 2014).

The history of grounded theory

The history of grounded theory emerges from the work of two theorists, Glaser and Strauss. Hence the earlier phrase ‘science and art’, Glaser derived from a quantitative background with a strong positivist approach to scientific research whereas Strauss, conversely, stemmed from an interpretive background with a penchant for symbolic interactionism where he proposed that ‘human behaviour could be understood by their agency and its influence on their social worlds’ (Hennik et al, 2013). Strauss’s ‘emergent approach’ and Glaser’s ‘rigorous, logical and systematic approach’ (Hennik et al, 2013) further developed grounded theory, bringing together the analytical interpretation of narratives and the logical allocation of codes, in order to construct a theory, or set of theories which emerge from the data. After its development by Glaser and Strauss in the mid-1960’s, subsequent variations of grounded theory have remained influential in the field of qualitative research today (Oktay, 2012). To further, Oktay (2012) states that ‘grounded theory was designed to create theories that were empirically derived from real world situations….and has the potential to produce theories that can be used to……guide practice’. As such, the use of grounded theory within work-based and action research are concepts which sit comfortably with each other.

Paradigm wars

The position of grounded theory within a single paradigm has troubled researchers for many years (Oktay, 2012). Referred to as the ‘paradigm wars’ by Hartman (1990), it has been subject to much argument as to whether theory is ‘constructed’ in a constructivist approach due its qualitative nature, or whether it is one of a positivist approach in which a theory is
‘discovered’ by the researcher who remains subjective to the research (Oktay, 2012). Such arguments however require more detail in order to lay the path upon which to set this study.

Glaser, as discussed, came from a quantitative background and in a position similar to that of Hume noted earlier, took the stance that everything that is discovered during data collection is ‘real’ in its existence and can therefore be later tested and ‘verified’ with the emerging hypotheses through quantitative techniques to demonstrate its rigour. Charmaz (2006), a student of Strauss who, as mentioned earlier derived from a symbol interactionism background, argued that a more constructivist philosophy is taken to grounded theory because a reality is ‘constructed’ between the researcher and their participants throughout data collection. The positioning and subjectivity, or otherwise, of the researcher, the data and literature begin to develop a further discussion.

To read or not to read?

Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasise that the researcher should have no preconceived ideas when collecting and analysing data within the approach of grounded theory. Echoed by Robson and McCartan (2015) it is argued that one should ‘seek to enter the field without a theoretical preconception’ as it is likely that the research question or questions ‘will be under developed and tentative’ in the early design cycle stage. Indeed, Glaser and Strauss (1967) move that the reading of literature in relation to the themes or topics to be explored should be delayed, so as not to ‘see the world through the lens of extant ideas’ (Charmaz, 2014). However, there is a problem with the statement made by Robson and McCartan (2015) in that, in order to claim that research questions are ‘under developed and tentative’ before data collection begins, suggests that there is at least some prior knowledge of the ideas or theories within them, giving the researcher a basis from which to begin conceptualising from and as submitted by Hennik et al (2013) in the first step of the research design cycle. Surely it is not possible to enter this pathway completely blind to what you may find? Indeed, Charmaz (2014)
agrees, claiming that ‘most researchers today cannot begin their research without prior knowledge of the scholarship about their field’. This is indeed a position which could be argued is indicative of a professional doctorate study, due to its inclusion of work based research, often action research based, and the study of a topic at hand.

In its most pure form, however, grounded theory is concerned more with the data which is collected and subsequently interpreted, rather than the relationship between the data and theory which already exists. As Charmaz (2014) implores, ‘we do not force preconceived ideas and theories into our data’ but rather, we follow hunches and ideas with a perceptive and flexible nature, and to draw a comparison, these are skills which also make a good police collision investigator.

Throughout the process of forming grounded theory, the research at hand is continually ‘negotiated’ (Hall and Hall, 1996) and remains flexible (Robson and McCartan, 2015; Hennik et al, 2013) throughout its entirety. This is conversant with a view held by Charmaz (2014) who believes that grounded theory now sits within a constructivist camp. Over the years, grounded theory has developed and morphed and now exists as a different version of its former self, now comprising of an ‘inductive, comparative, emergent, and open-ended approach of Glaser and Strauss’s original statement’ (Charmaz, 2014). The question of what constitutes grounded theory, and what does not, is now raised.

**What is grounded theory and what is not?**

The differing opinions regarding what makes grounded theory and what does not, all make for a confusing argument. In order to strive toward a conclusion, Charmaz (2014) offers us a life line in her statement:

“I see the major versions of grounded theory as constituting a constellation of methods, rather than an array of different methods”.

To further, she provides a check list as evidence of a grounded theory study:
1. Conduct data collection and analysis simultaneously in an iterative process
2. Analyse actions and processes rather than themes and structure
3. Use comparative methods
4. Draw on data (e.g., narratives and descriptions) in service of developing new conceptual categories
5. Develop inductive abstract analytic categories through systematic data analysis (Charmaz, 2014).

As Oktay (2012) points out, researchers may have difficulty in complying with all the requirements of grounded theory but their studies are still considered to be rigorous enough for their purpose. In comparing such a position to other research methodologies (such as ‘quasi-experimental design in quantitative research in Cook and Campbell, 1979), a study does not have to satisfy all of the elements of a particular theory in order to operate within its principles. To further, Oktay (2012) argues that researchers may have difficulty in complying with all of the ‘requirements’ of grounded theory due to the challenges it presents – how long should one continue to collect data before reaching saturation point? As the nature of theory has not yet been developed at the start of data collection, how is one to know when enough is enough? As even Glaser and Strauss (1967) point out, ‘you risk collecting large masses of dubious theoretical relevance’.

**Cycle Four – future opportunities**

Charmaz (2014) has introduced us to a check list regarding grounded theory, paving the way to utilise this effectively and rigorously in a research study. Later, in concluding this chapter, a further four steps within grounded theory are considered (Charmaz, 2014) which offer opportunities to not only test the theories which have emerged, but also to extend this new, adapted model of the research cycle. Such opportunities can be divided into short (4.2) and
medium / long term (4.3 to 4.4) objectives, seeking to bridge the gap between research and practice (Fulton et al, 2013). With reference to figure two above, these further stages are outlined below.

Utilise new theories (4.1)

Earlier in the ‘Methods’ chapter, Charmaz (2014) outlined that semi-grounded theory can continue beyond the emergence of its original findings. By testing new theories, or ‘engaging in theoretical sampling’ (Charmaz, 2014), the rigour of new theory or theories can be explored further. Within both an organisational context, and within the research sphere, the new theories can be developed and implemented further in both the short and medium / long term.

Short term: Dissemination to community of practice (4.2)

In the case of this research study, the new theories which have emerged are to be presented at the Road Safety GB conference in Manchester. Taking the form of a presentation, they will be presented alongside brief descriptions of their relationship to existing research and to the findings themselves. This offers an opportunity to share this qualitative based study to road safety professionals from many different organisational contexts, such as research organisations, commercial companies, local authority road safety educators, and those from the emergency services concerned in such matters. In addition, emergency service leads who conduct this type of presentation (short film and live speaker) form a ‘road safety presentation forum’ which meets quarterly to discuss best practice and new research which may be included in their programmes. The findings from this study will be presented to this forum at the next opportunity.

Journal papers and newsletter articles offer a further means of disseminating the findings of this research study and may prompt interest by organisations such as the Transport Laboratory to undertake further exploration of the use of empathy in road safety communications.
Medium / long term: Theoretical sampling (4.3)

In order to test the theories presented, theoretical sampling could seek to utilise various methods outlined in the earlier literature review to explore their validity further. For example, the use of behavioural observations in audience members (Cooper, 2011) could evaluate this as a means to identify whether empathy was shown in this way, once again linking in with Nabi’s (2013) suggestion of the five steps of appraisal by audience in a health communication (step four – motor expression).

Medium / long term: Change in practice / policy (4.4)

In the ethos of action research, as outlined earlier by Shani and Pasmore (1985), new theories, once rigorously evaluated, can bring about new organisational knowledge, in this case within the road safety education community. The findings, alongside a demonstration of further validity using theoretical sampling as discussed above, can eventually be adapted into newly written policy and procedure in this ‘practitioner led research’ (McNiff, 2013). The implementation of new theories more widely by road safety professionals, in this case by more emergency service-based organisations who seek to move to this format of young driver road safety intervention, casts a wider net within an operational context and offers opportunity for a more formal, evidence-based practice, structure to be placed around it. Changes to policy and procedure, documents widely used within the policing sphere, could include step-by-step guidelines to new and existing personnel within a road safety educational role. Embarking upon such a project, given that this type of presentation is relatively new, would benefit from an outline of underlying research and literature, as well as a practical guide as to how to approach this type of project. In my own experience, the biggest barrier to beginning a new project such as Road Sense, is the lack of existing knowledge around how to best go about it, and whether it is known to actually work.
Chapter four: Methods

Action research approach

‘Road Sense Common Sense’ was developed through an action research framework in order to improve the practice (Keeves, 1998) of road safety education delivery to young drivers in Northumbria Police. The presentation evolved through a typical cycle of action research, stated to take ‘every day, real problems’ and look for ways to improve them, often through experimentation (Brown, 2016). Referring back to Lewin (1946) discussed earlier, the first step of action research begins when a problem is identified. In this case, the approach to young driver road safety education within Northumbria Police was inconsistent and reactive to requests for interventions from schools. No clear strategy or intervention existed. As outlined in the introduction to this research, the first Road Sense presentation was planned in response to this problem, evaluated, reflected upon and further refined, resulting in the typical ‘change in …practice’ required to define it as such (Fulton et al, 2013). Addressing the four stages of Lewin’s (1946) action research cycle (see figure two, earlier);

*Plan*: I recognised that the approach taken to young driver road safety education within my organisation was not consistent and operated with no academic underpinning. I planned a course of action to change this by designing a new approach.

*Act*: I took action by developing a new short film and live speaker presentation named ‘road Sense Common Sense’. This consisted of four short films, each telling the story of an individual or family who had been affected by an incident on the road. The live speakers were selected from police, fire and ambulance and gathered together in a workshop to build their speeches to the students using stories they had lived through in their front line duties.

*Observe*: I observed how this presentation came together to result in its first performance and put together an evaluation to ask the students in the
audience at the first performance which aspects of the presentation had the most impact on them. The first performance of Road Sense was shown to over two hundred students, teachers and guests at the David Puttnam Theatre at the University of Sunderland in June 2014. The audience were given printed evaluations to complete after the presentation and before they left the theatre (found in appendix five).

Reflect: I reflected upon the feedback and what could be done to further improve the presentation. In this case, very few of the students fed back that one of the films had an impact on them. I reflected upon what could be done to even the distribution of the impact carried by the films and planned a new film to replace one which appeared to carry less impact – therefore entering the action research cycle once again.

Evaluations

The first presentation of Road Sense which took place at the David Puttnam Theatre in the University of Sunderland was attended by over two hundred audience members who were invited to complete an evaluation before leaving the theatre. The aim of this evaluation was to ‘assess [its] merits’ (Whittaker, 2009). Viewed as a method which is ‘popular within social work as part of the drive for increased accountability of public services and the evidence based practice agenda’ (Whittaker, 2009), in my experience evaluations are a common means within the police to assess the merits of practice. Whilst I was concerned with ensuring all aspects of the presentation were impactive to the audience and there was at least one aspect of the presentation that was relatable to everyone, the Public Insight Team within the police organisation were concerned with how ‘successful’ the presentation had been in order that they could promote this in press releases and to other educational establishments. As such, the data gathered in relation to the spectators rating as to its success, and the demographical information concerning age, driver status and gender, was of less interest to this research study.
What was to emerge from the responses, although unintended and unforeseen at the time, was the question of whether the audience found more impact in the short films or live speakers. This question was initially posed with the intention of identifying whether equal numbers of the audience found different parts of the presentation relatable, relevant and impactful. Overviews of these responses can be found in appendix six. I wanted to ensure that there was something for everyone, no matter what their background, demographic or experience. I observed the feedback from them which, by process of deduction, demonstrated that one of the short films had significantly less impact than others. Once again referring to an action research approach, after noticing this problem, a new film was planned to replace this, taking action to make this, and once again reflect on its merits.

**Focus groups**

Focus discussion groups, state Whittaker (2009), are defined as ‘a group of individuals selected to provide their opinions on a defined subject’, who goes on to suggest that they ‘provide an opportunity for participants to express a range of opinions and challenge and interact with one another in an open environment’. It was exactly this flow of information that could provide an insight into the deeper workings of what the students were thinking and how they felt during the Road Sense presentation.

In a method known as ‘purposive recruitment’ (Hennik et al, 2013) the schools selected to take part on the focus discussion groups were chosen because they had attended Road Sense presentations in the preceding months. Six students from School X and six students from School Y took part in two separate focus discussion groups, having been selected by the teachers based on their perceived responsiveness to questions and level of interactivity with their peers. Indeed, the prevalence of certain characteristics such as communication and willingness to engage in this type of activity is outlined by Hennik et al (2013) as an important ingredient to contributing a ‘greater understanding of the phenomenon studied’ and is known as a ‘non-
random’ approach to participant recruitment. This gave a total of six students with which to begin this phase of data collection. Whilst this number of participants was small in comparison to the earlier number of over two hundred who took part in the first wave of evaluations, it was reflective of opinions held by authors such as Glaser and Strauss (1967) who submit that a larger number of participants would be ‘neither practical nor beneficial’ in their theoretical principle of saturation.

The first phase of focus discussion groups at Schools X and Y were facilitated by the teachers, ‘gatekeepers’ (Hennik et al, 2013) – or ‘moderators’ (Whittaker, 2009). The teachers were given a prepared list of the warm up, key and closing questions as recommended earlier by Whittaker (2009) (found in appendix seven) consisting of an introduction of myself, the purpose of the discussion groups and some ethical points. The opening question was asked in such a way to prompt them to recall the Road Sense presentation and start the conversations off in a gentle manner. The key questions were then informed by the literature and theory previously read.

The first two discussion groups were not audio recorded and notes were taken but this was found to be restrictive (found in appendix eight and nine). Whilst every attempt was made to capture the discussions, inevitably some detail would have been lost. It was observed that the students appeared to be comfortable chatting with their teacher who they already had an existing relationship with, allowing the ‘interactive discussion’ (Hennik et al, 2013) aimed to ‘gain a broad range of views’ that were sought. The discussions lasted between twenty and thirty minutes and were both held in the respective schools, within the student’s classroom to ensure they felt more comfortable within their own environment.

One observation made was that during the discussion groups the students appeared to be reflecting (Mezirow and associates, 1990) and making meaning (Mezirow, 1997; Nairn, 2004 in Edwards, 2014; Coulter and Poynor, 2007) of their experience of the presentation and that of driving or being driven by peers through the telling of their own stories within the group.
(Tomkins, 2008). The discussion groups therefore allowed a greater depth of understanding of how they felt, as opposed to the evaluative method used in the earlier first presentation which was restricted to answering only a few questions with no opportunity to expand or tease out any more detail of their reflections.

It was during the second focus discussion group (notes found in appendix nine) that there came a defining moment in this phase of the research when one of the students reflected on the Road Sense presentation, saying that he had a “lump in my throat”. This insight into the part that emotions played in the presentation prompted an opportunity to learn more from them about this theme and suggested that the point of data saturation had not yet been reached.

**Further focus discussion group**

The first two focus discussions provided an initial insight into the reflections of the students after the Road Sense presentation. However, these were restricted by the limitations of note taking (as opposed to audio recording) and because the teachers facilitated the discussion groups (as opposed to being led by myself). Indeed, Robson and McCarty (2015) state that a researcher ‘can be expected to make several visits to the field to collect data’. A second visit to School Y was therefore arranged to carry out a further focus discussion group. This school had already given a brief insight into the emotions they had experienced in the Road Sense presentation – the earlier student saying he had a “lump in my throat”. This was an opportunity to delve more deeply into the experiences and reflections of the students and tap into their emotions (Moon, 1999) which they had already allowed a brief insight into.

On this occasion the focus discussion group was audio recorded, with the intention of producing a full transcription and was led by me (transcript found in appendix ten). This would ensure that I was able to react to the discussions and become part of their narrative (Coulter and Poynor, 2007) without the distraction of making notes. This form of access to the student’s
voices would build upon what had already been collected in the first focus discussion groups with a depth and flexibility which was not possible when facilitated by the teachers. Striving to learn more about the emotional effect that the presentation had on the students, this was an opportunity to discuss how they felt when listening to the emergency service narrators, how they viewed their stories and how they interacted with them.

The second focus group at School Y was held within the school environment once again. Some participants were the same as the first, but two were missing and replaced with different students and all had watched the Road Sense presentation. The room for flexibility being afforded by leading the focus discussion group allowed further questions to be asked. Such flexibility is, suggests Robson and McCarty (2015), an identifying factor of many aspects of qualitative research design and allows the research to continue to evolve and unfold. Overviews of all focus discussion groups can be found in appendix eleven.

**Semi-structured interviews with speakers**

In total there are five narrators in the Road Sense presentation, one police officer, two fire service personnel and two paramedics. In order to explore their feelings and emotions during their time speaking on stage and discuss why they had chosen the particular incident to talk about, how they thought they would relay this to the audience and what motivated them to carry their task out professionally, the next step was to carry out semi-structured interviews with the speakers. Having heard their presentations several times, I appreciated that their stories were deeply personal and sensitive (Whittaker, 2009). In order to explore whether there were any similarities in the emotions they felt during their storytelling and those experienced by the students, semi-structured interviews would try to ‘elicit’ their stories of their motivation using the in-depth exchanged discussed by Barbour (2014) earlier.

In this further phase of ‘purposive recruitment’ a police officer and two fire officers were contacted and interviews were arranged. Only three of the five
Road Sense presentation speakers were contacted as it was believed that three interviews would provide sufficient data. Additionally, one paramedic had taken an extended leave of absence due to ill health and I had recently experienced problems contacting the other due to the severe pressures placed on the NHS at that time. After contacting the three personnel, they were given brief verbal outlines of the purpose of the interview and arrangements were made to meet them individually.

Being aware that interviews can be a ‘sensitive and powerful method of investigating’ (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2013), it was pertinent at this point to consider the power balance which may exist between me, the researcher / interviewer and the interviewee. After all, I would be the one asking the questions, exercising ultimate ‘control’ (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2013) over the direction of the interview. Once again, reflexivity became a consideration. In the interview planning stage, consideration was given to allowing the interviewees to be comfortable in their surroundings so they would feel at ease enough to express their insights. Just as with the focus discussion groups, a list of questions were prepared as prompts to ensure the interview was kept on track (found in appendix twelve).

The first interview was conducted with Speaker X in a café, and having learned of the difficulties in taking notes without verbatim recording in the first focus discussion groups, the decision was made to audio record the interview with the intention of producing a full transcript (found in appendix thirteen). Before the interview, a sheet outlining ethical considerations was handed to Speaker X with the first question posed was intended to ‘warm up’ the conversation, as with the focus discussion groups.

Having reflected on the difficulties of conducting the first interview in a public space, arrangements were made to conduct the further two interviews at the respective workplaces. The second interview took place with Speaker Y in a quiet room within their workplace (transcript found in appendix fourteen). There were no interruptions and it was able to flow more freely. Once again, Speaker Y was handed a sheet of paper covering ethical considerations. On reflection, having already conducted one interview, I was able to be more
reflexive to the discussion and found that I was less reliant on the interview schedule.

The third and final interview was conducted with Speaker Z, once again in their workplace (transcript found in appendix fifteen). Save from one interruption, the interview flowed freely and once again with increased flexibility. Having learned from the previous two interviews that allowing the interviewee space and reflecting on the advice given by Barbour (2014|) discussed earlier, this would hopefully reap its rewards later in the process when reflected in the richness of the data gathered. On this occasion however, I was also aware of the advice issued by Charmaz (2014) in relation to the power balance once again. Speaker Z, a colleague and whom I carried the most familiarity with, is a powerful character. Indeed, he was approached to carry out the role of a speaker in the Road Sense presentation for this very reason. However, I was mindful that he did a larger proportion of the talking than in any of the other interviews, prompting me to give him the ‘interactive’ (Charmaz, 2014) space he needed to talk, but sticking to the questions that I wished to cover without allowing the interview to be taken in another direction. Overviews of all semi-structured interviews can be found in appendix sixteen.

Once again, interlinking with the stage of ‘making inferences’ and that of the analytical cycle as discussed earlier in the methodology, there was an opportunity to reflect on what the students had said during the focus discussion groups and the literature I had read. This reflexivity, as a result, prompted me to ask more probing questions as the interview continued without having to interrupt its flow. This skill of reflexivity and flexibility was increased with every step of data collection and afforded deeper insights into the participants reflections, I felt. An overview of the participant demographics can be found in appendix seventeen.
Approach to analysis

The following section will outline the approach taken to analysing the data collected in this study.

Transcriptions

The first two focus discussion groups which were not audio recorded were typed into legible notes, soon afterwards in an effort to capture the discussions as accurately as possible.

The third focus discussion group and three semi-structured interviews which were audio recorded were then transcribed by myself. Whilst it would have been a luxury to have someone else transcribe these for me, this nevertheless allowed an opportunity for me to familiarise myself once again with what had been discussed, very much reflecting the discussion earlier by Hennik et al (2013) regarding the making of inferences which occurs throughout the research cycle and not just restricted to the stage of analysis.

Approach to coding - developing codes

Earlier, the contrast between the scientific and logical approach taken in data analysis by coding was discussed, which prescribes a step-through and more linear method of identifying key or main themes, and then returning to the data to identify sub-themes which emerge. This form of ‘inductive analysis’ (Hennik et al, 2013), as opposed to the deductive processes which are argued not to be part of grounded theory development within research (Hennik et al, 2013), allowed for the provision of a ‘set of flexible guidelines and a process for textual data analysis that is well suited to understanding human behaviour’. As such, it was deemed that coding was a suitable choice to analyse and understand the human behaviour demonstrated by both the students and narrators in the Road Sense presentation through which their descriptions were uncovered and themes such as empathy began to emerge.
Following the first five steps outlined by Charmaz (2006) earlier, the data was made anonymous by ensuring any personal information which could identify a participant or an incident discussed was excluded. Any names or schools were given a reference (such as Speaker X, School Y) and any incidents discussed which were deemed to be identifiable were redacted. Reading through the transcripts and notes once again was an opportunity to familiarise with the contents and even before reaching the first cycle of coding, mental themes began to emerge.

Being mindful to remain true to the meaning placed upon the words, once spoken and now transcribed and in written form, by the students and speakers, it became a natural occurrence that in the coding process their voices could be heard once again. Their intonation and pauses came to the fore, reliving when the students and speakers looked back on their experiences and conveyed the same emotions described as they told their stories. The themes began to ‘engage in a dialogue’ between each other as this occurred and as a story emerged from the narratives, a ‘coherent presentation of [the participants] experiences that reflect[ed] the grit, complexity and seemingly irrational nature of human behaviour’ (Costley, Elliot and Gibbs, 2010) became evident.

**Key themes**

After the first cycle of initial ‘focused’ coding (Barbour, 2014; Saldana, 2016), key themes began to emerge. Writing these down on a separate piece of paper and reflecting upon the context in which they were written or spoken by the participants allowed an opportunity to attach meaning to each:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotions (E)</th>
<th>When a participant described a feeling they had felt, or which described an overall sense of the presentation or experience thereafter. Sometimes, participants made an assumption about a feeling felt by another person.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal connection</td>
<td>When a participant made reference to an aspect of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P)</td>
<td>the presentation or their speech to their personal circumstances, someone they knew or something they had experienced before.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence (PR)</td>
<td>When a participant made reference to the physical presence of a speaker in the room during the presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability (V)</td>
<td>When a student makes reference to a feeling of vulnerability they had experienced as a result of the presentation. A feeling of fragility, or susceptibility to their own or others mortality, or likelihood of involvement in a road collision. Also refers to when a speaker makes reference to this as a potential outcome of the presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jargon (J)</td>
<td>When a participant made reference to using plain and simple language, as opposed to technical jargon, used in a speech in the Road Sense presentation. This key theme was found primarily in the coding of the speakers semi-structured interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning points (LP)</td>
<td>When a participant made reference to a learning outcome of the Road Sense presentation, a lesson they had learned, or a point which was made in relation to an aspect of driving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposing their souls (EX)</td>
<td>When a participant conveyed a feeling of their inner feelings being exposed to other people in the Road Sense presentation, or a recognition that a speaker had taken steps to do this. Indicates a metaphorical stripping of an ‘outer armour’, to expose a human underneath.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Professionalism (Prof) | When a participant indicated the importance of appearing professional to the audience, or recognition that an aspect of the presentation or a
speech was conveyed in a professional manner. Also indicates that a speaker had considered their conveyance of professionalism to the audience, and whether this may have been undermined due to the personal stories that were conveyed, as opposed to a more clinical, step by step account of the role of the emergency services at a road collision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resilience (Res)</th>
<th>When a participant makes reference to their personal resilience in order to carry out their role in the emergency services, or an assumption made by an audience member about how much resilience is required by them to do so.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental pictures (MP)</td>
<td>When a participant makes reference to mental pictures which were conjured in their minds during their story, or when they heard a story being told.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective of life (PL)</td>
<td>When a participant indicates an overall feeling of perspective, a profound feeling of life in general, whether in reference to their own or others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation from reality (S)</td>
<td>When a participant makes reference to the act of separated their inner selves or thoughts from the reality of something that has happened, in response to an emotionally demanding experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story selection (SS)</td>
<td>When a participant makes reference to how and why they selected a certain story to use in their speech, or why they discounted others in favour of their final choice(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine culture (M)</td>
<td>When a participant makes reference to being tough, or an expectation that they should act in this way, as a result of a culture of masculinity in their profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty (H)</td>
<td>When a participant makes reference to the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection afterwards (RF)</td>
<td>When a participant indicates that they have reflected on an aspect of the presentation afterwards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency services (ES)</td>
<td>When a participant discusses or makes reference to the role of the emergency services or how they have been conveyed in the presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ripple effect(RE)</td>
<td>When a participant makes reference to the 'ripple effect' of road collisions. This describes ‘situation in which one event produces effects which spread and produce further effects’ (Cambridge Dictionary, 2017).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect(E)</td>
<td>When a participant indicates an overall effect of the presentation, similar to the key theme 'learning points' but more of a general indication, as opposed to something they have learned (not an emotional effect).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama (D)</td>
<td>When a participant makes reference to a sense of drama within the presentation, whether through a physical aspect of it, such as lighting, or an overall ambience in the room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagination (I)</td>
<td>When a participant makes reference to their use of imagination during the presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity (C)</td>
<td>When a participant indicates that they experienced curiosity about an aspect of the presentation afterwards. A feeling of wanting to know more about an aspect or story within the presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions / consequences (AC)</td>
<td>When a participant makes reference to the actions of people on the roads, whether in general or a reference made during the presentation, and / or the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sub-themes

Following the initial phase of coding, a second ‘focused coding’ (Saldana, 2016; Barbour, 2014) cycle was carried out. Once again using a highlighter pen, reading through the data, making observation notes and reflecting on the context of the data, ‘sub-themes’ were identified which depicted where further explanation could be given to some themes. Some key themes did not need to be broken down further.

The following sub-themes were identified:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion (E)</th>
<th>(E1) Physical signs by the speakers – indicates a physical feeling or symptom of an emotion experienced by a speaker, either during, before or after the presentation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(E2) Physical symptom by the students – indicates a physical feeling or symptom of an emotion experienced and described by a student participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(E3) When the student feels the same emotion as the speakers – refers to a student describing the same emotion as they assume the speaker to be feeling or describing during the telling of a story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(E4) Feeling sorry for them / empathy / sympathy – when a student indicates that they feel or felt sorry for a speaker as a result of an experience the speaker has described.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(E5) Emotion - a feeling, not physical by the student: refers to when a student indicates they have experienced a specific emotion during or after the presentation, in relation to a certain aspect of it, without describing how they physically felt at that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal connection</td>
<td>Relating what they have heard to someone they know – refers to when a participant relates an emotion or feeling to someone they know, either explicitly or implicitly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Time | When the student makes an assumption about how the speaker feels – indicates when a student describes an emotion they assume to be experienced by a speaker, without this being explicitly explained by the speaker at the time, to the audience. |

| Emotion – a general feeling in the room | Refers to when a participant indicates a more general emotion or feeling with reference to the presentation. Termed a ‘discrete emotion’ (Myrick, 2015), it refers to a feeling expressed in relation to the overall presentation such as ‘sad’, without making specific reference to an aspect of what the participant has seen or heard or a physical feeling they have felt in response. |

| Emotions the speakers feel when talking about their story (not necessarily physical symptoms) | When the speaker indicates a certain emotion or physical feeling as they tell their story to the audience. |

| Experiencing the same emotions as the incident itself | Indicates when a speaker experiences the same emotion as they did when they were present at the original incident upon which their story is based. Can be a word to ‘label’ the emotion, or a physical symptom they have experienced when they reflect back on their story. |
aspect of a story or part of the presentation to someone that they know, for example a family member, whether that other person may have been involved in a collision or not.

(P2) A physical similarity of the speaker that the student relates to – when a participant relates a physical characteristic of a speaker to someone that they know personally, or to themselves.

(P3) Between the speakers and the audience – an emotional, not physical, connection between the speakers and the audience during the presentation, whether through sight or otherwise.

(P4) Relating something in a story to themselves – indicates that a participant has identified an aspect of a story to something that has happened to them personally, not to someone that they know.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presence (PR)</th>
<th>No sub-themes required.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability (V)</td>
<td>No sub-themes required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions / consequences (AC)</td>
<td>No sub-themes required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity (C)</td>
<td>No sub-themes required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagination (I)</td>
<td>No sub-themes required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama (D)</td>
<td>(D1) Music or silence – when a participant makes reference to a piece, or the use of, music in an aspect of the presentation, or to a silent part of it, adding to the drama created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(D2) The ambience of the room – when a participant refers to the overall ambience or dramatic feeling they experience in the room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect (E)</td>
<td>(doesn’t refer to an emotion).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ripple effect (RE)</td>
<td>No sub-themes required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency services (ES)</td>
<td>(ES1) Breakdown of perceptions – when a participant describes a feeling of surprise or revelation in relation to the role of the emergency services, or to the character of a speaker, or something about the emergency services that has defied their expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ES2) They are human – when a participant refers to the humanness of the emergency services, revealing the person, or ordinariness of a speaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ES3) Respect for their role – when a participant refers to the respect they have for a difficult aspect, or overall challenges, of the role of the emergency services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ES4) How other people (not the participants) view emergency service workers – when a participant refers to the perspective of someone they know, rather than their own, in relation to the role of the emergency services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection afterwards (R)</td>
<td>No sub-themes required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty (H)</td>
<td>No sub-themes required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine culture (M)</td>
<td>No sub-themes required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation from reality (S)</td>
<td>No sub-themes required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story selection (SS)</td>
<td>No sub-themes required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jargon (J)</td>
<td>No sub-themes required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Learning points (LP) | (LP1) Actions have consequences – when a participant indicates the fact or phenomenon of the occurrence of consequences as a result of the actions of a person on the road. This differs from the earlier code of Actions / consequences (AC) which describe a particular consequence of an actual event having occurred.  
(LP2) Change in their behaviour – refers to a participant describing a change, or potential change, in their own or another’s behaviour as a result of what they have heard in the Road Sense presentation.  
(LP3) Split second decisions – refers to a participant making reference to the phenomenon or occurrence of a split-second decision which affects an outcome in a driving situation. This refers to the short time it takes to make a potential decision, and the effect this can have to an overall outcome, as opposed to the more general phenomenon of actions which have consequences.  
(LP4) It can happen to you - refers to the realisation of a participant that incidents, such as those discussed in the Road Sense presentation, can happen to anyone at any time. |
| Exposing their souls (EX) | No sub-themes required. |
| Professionalism (Prof) | No sub-themes required. |
| Mental pictures (MP) | No sub-themes required. |
| Perspective of life (PL) | No sub-themes required. |
Counting of codes

Following the coding of all sets of data into key and sub-themes, the occurrence of each sub-theme was counted through each data set so as to establish the frequency of their occurrence and help draw out the main themes of this research. This process, referred to by Silverman (1993) as ‘simple counting’ (Silverman, 1993), was a means of beginning to sort the data into an order of importance or hierarchy. The counting exercise was carried out by individual data sets gathered and according to types of data (such as all focus discussion groups, all semi-structured interviews).

Codes were counted using the following steps;

1. The occurrence of key and sub-themes were counted by type of data collection method, for example, counting the occurrence of themes in all of the semi-structured interviews.

Code tables can be found:

- For all sets of evaluations (carried out at School Z, University of Sunderland and School X) in appendix eighteen to twenty.
- For all sets of focus discussion groups (carried out in School X, Y and further discussion group at School Y) in appendix twenty-one to twenty-three.
- For all semi-structured interviews (carried out with Speakers X, Y and Z) in appendix twenty-four to twenty-six.
- For all evaluations can be found in appendix twenty-seven.
- For all focus discussion groups can be found in appendix twenty-eight.
- For all semi-structured interviews, code tables can be found in appendix twenty-nine.

2. The occurrence of key and sub-theme codes were then counted across all sets of data, giving a total for each key and sub-theme across the entire data
collected. Code counts across all sets of data can be found in appendix thirty.

3. The totals for each sub-theme were organised into a hierarchy (Saldana, 2016), in order of their frequency of occurrence simply by writing each sub-theme on a sticky note and placing it on a large sheet of paper. This approach is similar to Gordon and Langmaid’s (1988) ‘large-sheet-of-paper approach’ where the researcher divides a large sheet of paper into sections, transferring the codes into each as the data is coded, which they argue ‘brings reassuring order to chaos’. The total number of codes for each key theme and sub-theme were written on the relevant sticky note.

4. The sticky notes were then rearranged onto two sides of the large sheet of paper, the right side depicting the most frequently occurring sub-themes, and the left side depicted the less frequently occurring sub-themes. It was at this juncture that I felt uncomfortable about some of the more commonly occurring themes and sub-themes which, when I reflected back to the coding exercise for each set of data, had only been prevalent in one piece of data. One key theme in particular, that of ‘resilience’ stuck in my mind. The interview with Speaker Y, I reflected, had been littered with references to the sub-themes of ‘resilience’ and ‘exposing their soul’ and, in the name of rigour and validity, this fact could not be ignored. Barbour (2016) refers to these occurrences as ‘exceptions’, whereby a particular code is found only in one aspect of the data collected. Whilst this would not be entirely dismissed and would warrant some discussion, as it was not reflective across the entire set of data, it appeared to slightly skew the simple counting results, inevitably making the final totals less reliable. In an effort to eradicate any further ‘exceptions’, I returned to the code tables once again in order to identify more. By referring back to the original collections of data at the same time, a handful of exceptions were identified.

5. Some key-themes or sub-themes which were present on the left side of the paper, I felt, were more reflective of an evaluative outcome of the presentation, such as ‘learning points’ and ‘effect’. These were discounted as
a potential development of theory, but once again would warrant some recognition through brief discussion later.

6. With the ‘exceptions’ now identified, the large sheet of data was returned to and the sticky notes were rearranged, placing these to the right side of the paper. A final lay out of themes and sub-themes was made, reflective of their hierarchy of occurrence and any exceptions which could be discounted in the development of theory.

7. All the while being mindful that ‘data should not be forced or selected to fit pre-conceived or pre-existent categories or discarded in favour of keeping an extant theory intact’ (Glaser, 1978), the building of a theoretical framework could now begin. In a practice known as ‘trinity configuration’ (Solkadiris, 2009), the sticky notes were reorganised once again into overlapping groups, based on the concept of a Venn diagram (Soklaridis, 2009) in which categories are plotted together to attribute to a main theme of the data. To further explain, Saldana (2016) suggests that at the point at which theory begins to emerge in the mind of a researcher, ‘categories of categories’ are created, transcending the ‘particulars of a study, enabling generalisable transfer to other comparable contexts’. Relationships are formed between the categories, in this case referred to as themes and sub-themes, in order to ‘develop assertions, propositions, hypotheses, and theories’. Urquhart (2013) makes some suggestions as to the ‘criteria’ required to link these categories together, including, ‘is affected by…….is necessary for……reconciles…..results in……triggers’. With these in mind, a final layout of sticky notes on the large sheet of paper made way for the interpretation of the data gathered into a final set of theories. These are shown in figure four below.
Figure four: final layout of most commonly occurring sub-themes after coding

Semi-grounded theory in conclusion

Arguments surrounding the pure and non-pure forms of grounded theory were discussed earlier and suggest that this research study has not utilised the concept in its original form as intended by Glaser and Strauss. Charmaz (2014), as also referred to earlier, suggests that in order to operate within grounded theory in its most pure form, one must adhere to the five steps offered earlier in the discussion in which the researcher conducts data collection, analyses actions, uses comparative methods, draws on data to develop new conceptual categories and develops categories through systematic data analysis, but adds a further four steps;

1. Emphasis on theory construction rather than description or application of current theories
2. Engage in theoretical sampling
3. Search for variation in the studied categories or process
4. Pursue developing a category rather than covering a specific empirical topic.

(Charmaz, 2014)

Here, the participants have not been returned to in order to test hypotheses which has emerged (Oktay, 2012), but this does offer an opportunity for further studies in future. It therefore demonstrates that a semi-grounded theory approach has been used here and whilst it is not wished to undermine the rigour of this research study, reflecting criticism of authors such as Suddaby (2006) who issue concern that the use of grounded theory is ‘often used with rhetorical sleight of hand by authors who are unfamiliar with qualitative research and wish to avoid close description or illumination of their methods’, one could look to Oktay’s (2012) conclusion of her argument against using the most pure forms of grounded theory. As Oktay (2012) states, ‘I want to encourage researchers to use grounded theory techniques to develop theories, even when they cannot incorporate all the elements of the grounded theory method. Otherwise, the social work field risks losing the opportunity for theory development to guide social work practice’.

Chapter five: Presentation of findings and discussion

Summary of findings

In total, data from one University, three schools and three emergency services speakers were gathered.
Evaluations:

Evaluations from the University of Sunderland, which hosted the first presentation of Road Sense in 2015, School X and School Z were all asked to complete questionnaires which were initially aimed to evaluate the presentation. The participants, mainly of sixth form age, were fairly evenly balanced in terms of gender. No audience count was carried out, but in total four hundred and sixty three participants completed this questionnaire. Two questions and their answers were extracted from these questionnaires.

The first asked, ‘which part of the presentation had the most impact on you?’. Most participants answered this question, about a quarter answering that both speeches and films had an impact on them. Again, about a quarter provided answers which could not distinguish between a speaker and short film, for example saying, “the stories about the horrible accidents”. A few did not answer the question directly but referred to an aspect of the presentation, such as “the structure of the performance - interspersive, victims and emergency services stories”. These answers indicated a very slight preference towards to the speakers than the short films shown in the presentation – shown below in figure five;
The second question, following the first, asked, ‘why?’. A space was provided for participants to explain their preference towards an aspect of the presentation. Their answers were then coded.

**Focus discussion groups**

Three focus discussion groups were carried out, with students from Schools X and Y. These were transcribed and coded. The participants in these focus discussion groups were again fairly evenly balanced in terms of gender and were all of sixth form age. From the focus discussion groups emerged a series of insights into the students thoughts and reflections of the Road Sense presentation, reflected in the coding outlined earlier.

**Semi-structured interviews**
Three semi-structured interviews then took place with the speakers from emergency services – one police officer and two fire fighters, all of which were male. These were transcribed and coded. Again, these interviews produced a series of insights into the motivations and observations of the speakers, resulting in the sub-theme codes outlined earlier.

Between the focus discussion groups and the interviews, the most frequently occurring themes, counted using the ‘simple counting method’ (Silverman, 1993) earlier discussed, were drawn out. Having set these onto the sheet of paper shown earlier in figure four, each sub-theme was placed into a group where they bore similarities to each other in terms of their topic and the reviewed literature. From these sets of sub-themes, three main findings have emerged. Each finding and their relevant sub-theme are set out below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main finding one: Emotional time travel – the use of empathy as a learning tool</th>
<th>Relevant sub-themes identified in coding process:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotions – a general feeling in the room</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotions – a feeling, not physical, by the student</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotions – physical signs by the speakers either described by the speakers or observed by the students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emotions – described by the speakers as they spoke</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotions – physical symptoms described by the students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emotions – feeling sorry for them /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main finding two:</td>
<td>Relevant sub-themes identified in coding process:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Challenging the mindset ‘it won’t happen to me’</td>
<td>Vulnerability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal connection – relating what they hear to someone they know</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Perspective of life</td>
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<td>Ripple effect</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main finding three:</th>
<th>Relevant sub-themes identified in coding process:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Using real stories over fiction is key</td>
<td>Honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emergency services – they are human</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story selection</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The three main findings which have emerged from this research study will now be presented in turn, supported by the relevant research outlined in the earlier literature review.


## Discussion

As outlined earlier, the three main findings of this research are:

1. Emotional time travel – the use of empathy as a learning tool.
2. Challenging the mindset – ‘it won’t happen to me’.
3. Use of real stories over fiction is key.

Each main finding will be discussed in turn, provided with an outline of the sub-themes used to group each finding together. An explanation of each sub-theme is set out once again as a reminder of the criteria used to identify each extract of data.

In order to contextualise each main finding, the relevant sub-themes are presented and discussed with vignettes from the focus discussion groups and semi-structured interviews, serving to provide examples of the insights of the participants within each sub-theme. These findings are presented alongside literature earlier reviewed. An overview is provided to conclude each main finding.

### First main finding: Emotional time travel – the use of empathy as a learning tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding drawn from the most commonly occurring sub-themes and grouped together</th>
<th>Emotions – a general feeling in the room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotions – a feeling, not physical, by the student</td>
<td>Emotions – physical signs by the speakers either described by the speakers or observed by the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emotions – described by the speakers as they spoke

Emotions – physical symptoms described by the students

Emotions – feeling sorry for them / empathy / sympathy

**Emotion – a general feeling in the room:** refers to when a participant indicates a more general emotion or feeling with reference to the presentation. Termed a ‘discrete emotion’ (Myrick, 2015), it refers to a feeling expressed in relation to the overall presentation such as ‘sad’, without making specific reference to an aspect of what the participant has seen or heard or a physical feeling they have felt in response.

One of the ways in which this study has sought to grasp the use of emotions in the Road Sense presentation has been through the identification of these emotions by the audience. Indeed, some students even used the word ‘emotional’ to describe their experience. Others elaborated by describing how they were emotionally pulled in to the stories, “I was definitely drawn into it”.

The intensity of the presentation is also made reference to, “it was quite tense, everyone was on edge”, “intense” and “very intense”, and “hard hitting” and “powerful”. Other students described their surprise at how shocking the presentation was, “quite shocking – all of it comes at once”. A student from School Y used the phrase “heavy hitting”. For one student from School Y, the use of emotion, they said, “made it more real”.

The role of emotions in preventative health communications, as discussed in the literature review, suggests that ‘knowledge alone is not enough to motivate people to engage in positive health behaviour changes’ (Myrick,
2015). The students demonstrate with these statements that the role of emotions does have a part to play in this presentation.

**Emotion - a feeling, not physical by the student:** refers to when a student indicates they have experienced a specific emotion during or after the presentation, in relation to a certain aspect of it, without describing how they physically felt at that time.

In addition to the overall presence of emotions within the Road Sense presentation, students elaborated by describing what feelings they experienced. “*It made me feel quite emotional*” said one student from School Y, in recognition of a feeling they had not only experienced but had acknowledged its presence too. Others described feelings they had personally experienced, “*it hits you hard*”, with some expressing a mixture of emotions at the same time, “*sad and scary*”, “*personal and emotional*”, “*impactful and emotional*” and “*the story was very shocking, carried a lot of emotion*”. Some students made the connection between the content of the presentation and how it made them feel, with one student saying they were “*quite upset as well ‘cos what they have to go through*”. Some students described a feeling in addition to recognising the perspective of someone in the story, “*I was quite shocked because I had never thought of it that way*”.

Students from School Z, in answering why they had found a certain aspect of the presentation impactful, used words such as “*moving*” in addition to an explanation as to why they had felt that way, “*the story was very moving, plus they were a similar age*”, and “*they were upsetting and put life into perspective*”.

Such terms of recognition as described by the students are reflective of findings by Myrick (2015) in that when any health communication is imparted onto an audience, a reaction is invoked. Such emotions, described as ‘discrete emotions’, can differ in their categorisation, being negative or positive. It is interesting to note here that the students have recognised what could be termed as negative emotions, such as ‘sad’ and ‘scary’ and those which are neither clearly negative nor positive, such as “*moving*”, “*personal*” and “*impactful*”. 

129
We also know that the use of fear in health messages is the most frequently cited form of emotion (Hale and Dillard, 1995) and one which allegedly incites a survival response (Cacioppo and Gardner, 1999: Frijda, 1988) via an ‘unconscious associative learning process’. The use of words such as “scary” by students suggests that at least some have felt this emotion during the Road Sense presentation, indicating that this learning process has been present. These discrete emotions, as stated by Nabi (2003), are of course responsible for beginning an autonomous response where audiences firstly and cognitively appraise a situation, before producing a physiological response, manifesting in a motor expression (which in this case and in the absence of using observational methods of their reactions, the students may be unaware of), before forming behavioural intentions and finally a ‘subjective feeling state’. Here, the students are describing this final step of their ‘subjective feeling state’ by forming conclusions as to how they felt in response to the presentation.

The presence of the feeling of sadness is also indicated by the students here, with one student using the word “sad” to describe how they felt. The use of sadness has been found to lead to a ‘lack of situational control’ (Ellsworth and Smith, 1985) meaning that audiences may resignate themselves to being unable to do anything to correct a situation in the short term. However, the longer term and more reflective qualities of the emotion of sadness have been found to show promise as a ‘learning function’ (Myrick, 2015) where audiences are prompted to reassess their behaviour through a cognitive pathway of processing information they have heard in order to systematically conclude that they will behave in a way as to avoid ‘future failure’. Of course, it is also known that previous studies (Rizzolatti, 2008; Small and Verrochi, 2009) have found that ‘mirroring’ occurs when the emotion of sadness is present, where audiences convey the same feeling of sadness as the narrator in their faces.
Emotion - physical signs by the speakers either described by the speakers or observed by the student: indicates a physical feeling or symptom of an emotion experienced by a speaker, either during, before or after the presentation.

In some cases, students identified physical signals or symptoms of emotion displayed by the speakers in the Road Sense presentation saying, “[the] police officer started crying because he had to explain one of the family had died” and “the firefighter who was in tears after what he witnessed at the accident”. Some went into detail about what symptoms these emotions manifested, “he was quite emotional, he was standing and was a little bit shivery, his eyes were getting red”. Some students relayed their surprise at the emotions conveyed by the emergency service speakers, “a big 20 stone bloke said he cried his eyes out”.

Indeed, the presence and displaying of emotions was recognised by the speakers themselves, who, in their interviews, described how they felt as they delivered their presentations. Speaker Y recalls, “I don’t think I got more than three lines into it and all of a sudden I could hardly speak……I could just feel the tears and the kind of emotion gripping me inside. Like, you know, you go to a funeral. It was that kind of feeling……I took a few breaths and tried to go on and another couple of sentences later and it just welled back up again”. This explanation is perhaps reflective of the earlier discussion regarding empathic time travel (Decety, 2012). In as much as the presentation strives to take the students back in time with the speakers to their experience, in order to relive it, it also forces the speaker to relive the story once more. Barone and Eisner’s (2012) concept of a ‘travel card’ is a helpful analogy to draw here, making the trip back to original experience through the medium of the story told an ‘evocative and emotionally drenched’ one.

Speaker Y’s reflections are shared by Speaker X who also relayed, “there were times when I had a lump in my throat and I think it was quite apparent as well. There were times on other occasions….where I might have had a tear in my eye.”
Emotions – described by the speakers as they speak: refers to emotions the speakers feel and describe when talking about their story (not necessarily physical symptoms).

This sub-theme differs slightly from the last in that it is found exclusively within the interviews with the speakers and refers to emotions they experienced, rather than physical symptoms displayed or felt by them. In his interview, Speaker X discusses coming to terms with ‘exposing his soul’ when he was asked to be a speaker in the Road Sense presentation, something which he said he found “difficult”. Speaker Y similarly describes how the presence of emotions caught him out in the delivery of his first presentation to the audience, “it really caught me out when I stood up for the first time and spoke about it, because I did get emotional about it”. He described how this differed from how he felt during the actual incident itself, “I just felt 100% more emotionally invested in the incident that I had done at the time and any point since the incident”. Speaker Z’s recollections were also similar, “I got upset, I got upset reading that story”.

The concept of emotional time travel, rather than uniquely empathic, is once again prevalent here, as the speakers are describing their emotions in reflecting back to the original incident as they relay it to the audience. Speaker X describes how he relives the emotion, “it takes it back to how authentic the tale is because you can….I could certainly feel when I was delivering, the emotion in your voice”.

For Speaker Y, the experience was very similar, “talking about it like that made it really, really kind of emotional for me. I don’t know why that is….it was like someone kicking you in the backside”. He expands on how this feeling caught him off guard, “I had no expectation of that happening, of the way I was so involved in it and the way it hit me, because I’m not an emotional sort of person”.

For Speaker Z, the displaying of emotions was a more considered aspect of his speech and interaction with the audience, “I wanted to make sure that when I told the story to those people in the auditorium, that they understood
what was going through my brain, but what was going through here, in my heart”.

**Emotions – Physical symptoms described by the students:** indicates a physical feeling or symptom of an emotion experienced and described by a student participant.

In addition to the recognition of physical signals of emotion shown by the speakers and observed by the students, some students described how they experienced their own physical symptoms of emotion, going one step further than naming the emotion they felt. Indeed, a significant point of this research came when one student from School Y described, “You know when you get that funny feeling in the back of your throat? Kind of made me feel like that.” This revelation indicated that some students were experiencing the same physical feelings, indicative of their associated emotion, during the presentation.

This is a situation recognisable as ‘mirroring’, also identified by the speakers as they addressed the audience, with one speaker saying “you can see the audience and you sort of pick up the emotions from people in the audience”. This affirmation that the students take on some of the emotions appears to be part of the experience for the speakers, “some that are actually watching very intensely and you know it’s had an emotional impact”. Speaker Z describes one such moment in his interview, “what I did remember was the look on the student’s faces, and their jaws dropping half way through”. Speaker Z, here, describes the physical reaction, touched upon earlier in the description of Nabi’s (2003) stage of motor expression in the autonomous response of an audience in such a situation, after they have appraised the situation in which they find themselves. Speaker Z goes on, “But what I also knew as well….was the reaction of the crowd….to see the change in their eyes, to see the change in their mannerisms, to see them start to lean forward, going, ‘bloody hell’”. 
It is worthy to note that Speaker Z is able to recall detail in these motor expressions as he goes on, “I can see their faces change…you see smiles. And you can see the smiles disappear to a line. You then see the mouth open…..”. Indeed, once again to refer to the cognitive pathway described by Nabi (2003) in this learning process, forming behavioural intentions is cited to follow the showing of motor expressions in the audience. As Speaker Z continues to describe seeing evidence of these, “I can see people nodding heads as if what I’m telling them is starting to register with them”. Whilst some of these expressions of emotion by the audience may be subtle, some are more obvious to the observations of the speakers, “I’ve seen people in tears. I saw one lass….second row, third from the right, I can even tell you where she was sat. There was tears Hoying down her neck”.

The phenomenon of ‘contagion’ is also referred to within literature by Decety (2012) who describes this as a concept by which a spectator can ‘literally catch the emotion in question…it becomes [their] own emotion’, and demonstrated by Speaker Z who recalls witnessing an audience member crying as he spoke.

Emotions and physical symptoms described by the speakers and those recognised by the students are all topics touched upon in the concept of mirroring, manifesting in what some researchers term as ‘mimicry’ (Hatfield, Rapson and Le, 2009). It is shown here that not only do the speakers recognise that they themselves show signs of emotion - Speaker Y being barely able to speak, Speaker Z recognising that he “may have had a tear in [his] eye” but also that the students also identify this. Speaker Z makes the connection between what he is speaking to the students about, and their reactions, shown in his descriptions of the girl in the audience who was crying. These are the motor expressions, referred to by Nabi (2003) and Hatfield, Rapson and Le (2009), as perhaps being more extreme examples of the ‘basic human interaction’ to which they refer, but which also allow them to indeed ‘feel oneself in the emotional life of another’. Whilst others, such as Decety (2012) may argue that these feelings cannot be transferred like for like, the speakers have provided the very access which is required to at least begin this interaction.
Emotions – feeling sorry for them / empathy / sympathy: refers to when a student indicates that they feel or felt sorry for a speaker as a result of an experience the speaker has described.

As is referred to in the earlier literature review, empathy carries many definitions and aspects to it. Identifying the presence of empathy within the coding of the data collected has taken various forms as I have been mindful not to look for the word ‘empathy’ specifically, but to recognise that the students, given their stage of development, and indeed all of the participants, given that they are not expected to be experts on the concept of empathy, may have expressed its presence in many ways. I referred earlier to the issues regarding measuring empathy and touched upon the concept of situational empathy, that is the questioning, by various means, of participants after an experience. Whilst Stueber (2013) argues that participants can be influenced by expectations of their answers in these scenarios, their validity can also be affected by limitations of their language and expressions (Zhoue, Valiente and Eisenberg, 2003). So, whilst the participants are not expected to be experts on identifying when they feel empathy, they should be equally less expected to be able to articulate this using the word ‘empathy’. Indeed, the earlier discussion presented in relation to the difference between sympathy and empathy (Scheler, 1954; Decety, 2012) is indicative of just how complex this nuance can be.

Whilst some students did indeed use the word empathy, such as in their answers, “the degree of empathy”, “just empathy really” and “I felt empathy for the parents”, some students were less specific, saying, “I felt sorry for him”, or, “sympathy, the biggest one” and “sympathy towards those who have suffered and imagining if myself, friend or family were to be affected”. Indeed, this statement, in making reference to the use of imagination, touches directly upon Koppen and Meinel’s (2012) definition of empathy in claiming it to be an ability to feel connected with the emotional experience of others without living it.

Cambridge Dictionary’s (2017) definition of empathy as not only ‘the ability to share someone else’s feelings or experiences’ but by being able to do this by
'imagining what it would be like in that person’s situation’. A student from School Z, in answering why an aspect of the presentation had the most impact on them, identified the concept of empathy indirectly and added why they felt this way, “it made me feel sorry for their loss and how their lives were affected”.

The reference to empathy was not directly referenced in any of the semi-structured interviews with the speakers, perhaps because they were not the ones to experience it as a result of the presentation but rather, were the ones who created it.

Overview of first main finding: Emotional time travel - the use of empathy as a learning tool

Despite the possible lack of developmental understanding around the detail of emotions the students experienced, it is apparent that the presence of empathy and discrete emotions such as sadness was a large part of the learning experience for the students. Not only did the students recognise and were able to label these emotions, they also related the content of what they saw and heard to it. They felt physical symptoms of sadness and grief. Some were moved to tears and the concept of ‘mirroring’ was evident.

The recognition by the speakers that their delivery, pace and intonation carried the students on an emotional journey with them, back in time, as they relived their stories, was not only evident, but a motivating source for them. The willingness of the speakers to visibly show how their experiences affected them, and of the students to become part of their story, heightened the impact of the presentation further.
**Second main finding: Challenging the mindset ‘it won’t happen to me’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding drawn from the most commonly occurring sub-themes and grouped together</th>
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<tbody>
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**Vulnerability – ‘it can happen to me’**: When a student makes reference to a feeling of vulnerability they had experienced as a result of the presentation. A feeling of fragility, or susceptibility to their own or others mortality, or likelihood of involvement in a road collision. Also refers to when a speaker makes reference to this as a potential outcome of the presentation.

The creation of a sense of vulnerability in the students was an aspect of the presentation found peppered within the reflections of students. We know from the existing literature that the prevalence of risk taking increases in young drivers (Box and Wengraf, 2013) as the brain undergoes a significant transition into adolescence. Perhaps the most significant statement made in existing research is that of Elkind (1967) who posits that ‘more than at any other stage of life, there is a tendency for adolescents to believe “it won’t happen to me”. Therefore, if presentations such as Road Sense are to have any chance of creating behavioural change amongst this group, of challenging what is termed as ‘optimism bias’ by Guttman (2014) and to support the notion led by Spear (2000) that ‘biology is not destiny, and is modifiable by social behaviour and other experiences’, one of the roles of these types of presentation should be to create the realisation that it indeed can happen to them.
Students from School Y made reference to their sense of vulnerability as an outcome of the Road Sense presentation in their focus discussion group, stating “If I mess up once, it could happen to me” and, “it makes you think that actually happens”. Echoed by a student from School X, “how easy it could happen to me” and School Z, “makes you realise it could happen to anyone”. Some students went further, making a connection between their sense of vulnerability through their actions as a driver and that of others they are responsible for, in School Y, “impacts my dangerous driving can have on them”, “I was frightened I would make a mistake” and in School X, “it makes you realise you’ve got people in the car that can die”, and, “it’s not just a piece of metal, it can kill you”.

Some students made a concerted effort to talk about their potential future behaviour in recognition of this vulnerability, once again indicating the cognitive pathway outlined by Nabi (2003) in which step four manifests a motivation or behavioural intention may be present. One student remarked, “say if I cause a mistake if I was learning to drive, I’d think before I done anything, in case my action affects someone behind me”, and ,“you realise how much doing something affects other people so you have to keep yourself safe just to keep other people safe as well”. This sense of willingness to take action is also reflective of findings by Decety (2011) as an affective attribute of empathy. As outlined earlier by Decety and Jackson (2004) and Knafo et al (2008), the response by the student to the emotions displayed is to be aroused into taking appropriate action as their judgements in relation to ‘decisions, priorities and actions’ (Salovey et al, 2008) are prompted.

The creation of a realistic point of view, based on the experiences of others, is demonstrated by the speakers to the students who have identified that this type of incident does occur. As earlier discussed, in comparison to the concept of ‘optimism bias’ (Deighton and Luther, 2007), the incidence of ‘fatalism’ (Kayani et al, 2012) by which students resolve themselves to think that there is little they can do other than to trust fate that road collisions will not affect them. Perhaps the student’s identification of this, alongside the speakers will to get this point across, shows some promise.
The presentation instilled a more general sense of vulnerability in some students, not necessarily in relation to their driving, or being in a car with someone, but perhaps more with reference to their own, individual travel behaviour, with a student from School Z answering in their evaluation regarding why an aspect of the presentation had an impact on them, “made me realise that walking home after a night out can be dangerous”.

**Personal connection – relating what they hear to someone they know:**

*refers to when a participant relates an aspect of a story or part of the presentation to someone that they know, for example a family member, whether that other person may have been involved in a collision or not.*

‘The depiction of life as relevant’ is a concept discussed by Box and Wengraf (2013) in their list of suggestions in relation to young driver road safety education. Relating what students hear to someone they know was identified by some participants in this study. Students from School Y identified directly with some of the speakers from the emergency services, “my dad is a police officer as well, so it’s quite relatable in that sense, to think that my dad has to deal with that, that made me more personally aware, it makes you a lot more aware of everything, just to keep yourselves safe”. Another student’s father was a fire fighter, “my dad is a fire fighter…it reminded me of what my dad had to do, because there were times when he would come home and be distraught about what he had to do”. This student went on, “him being a fire fighter and the story he was telling us, it just reminds me of my dad and what he used to go through. It just gets to you a lot, knowing that you’ve actually had family that have gone through it and have to deal with, especially the fire fighters, they’ve got to clean up bodies from the roads and cut people from cars. Knowing that my dad has had to deal with talking about it, it just hit me further.” It was perhaps the closing part of this excerpt from this student which demonstrated a sense of vulnerability, going one step further than a general sense, in relation to her own, personal situation, “it’s closer to home than you think”.
Students from School Y, when asked if there was any particular person with whom they felt more of an emotional connection with, answered, “for me it was the mum, ‘cos I’m learning to drive, if something happened to me, if she had to deal with me, the stress that would put on her, just thinking about it. It would have been horrible having to care for me all the time”. Some students related what they had heard to actual incidents concerning members of their family, “‘cos my step dad, he was in a car crash a couple of years ago and snapped his neck”.

In response to why an aspect of the presentation had more impact on them, students from the University of Sunderland made reference to a personal connection relating what they heard to someone they know, “I have a younger brother”, “It made me think about my 23 year old brother and how much it would scare me if that happened”, “it affected me because my family are very important to me and I kept thinking ‘what if’?”.

The use of personal connections was also an important aspect of the presentations made by the speakers, referenced in their interviews. Speaker X stated that he wanted students to “just have a little think, think about what you might do, how you would feel if it was your sister, how you would feel if it was your parents killed by someone”. Speaker Z also touched upon this in relation to his own perspective, despite being the person telling the stories, he considered his own personal connections and vulnerability, “and I think, sh*t, if that was my family, how would I deal with that?” He goes on, “I thought to myself, can you imagine what I’d have done if that was my little’un. Someone walking into my living room and saying, you know, he’s dead”.

**Personal connection – relating an aspect of the story to themselves:**
indicates that a participant has identified an aspect of a story to something that has happened to them personally, not to someone that they know.

This sub-theme is similar to that of relating an aspect of a story to someone they knew as discussed above, but instead to themselves. Audience
members from the University of Sunderland who were older than the younger students, related to stories which involved family dynamics similar to their own. In response to why they found an aspect of the presentation more impactive they said, “I relate to her as a parent”, “I have two young daughters” and “I have 7 year old daughter”.

The younger students of target audience age, however, also identified with similarities to their own family make-up, “relates to own life”, “it hit home how much it would effect my family” and “because it makes you think what if that was your family”. Students from School Z said, “because he spoke about family and friends which was relatable” and “because I can relate to them”. One student from School Z stated, “I could relate to it as I’m young too”.

By combining these two sub-themes together they can be related to findings by Guttman (2014) who refers to the ability of one to think about an issue that is being presented to them during a health communication message. As his findings suggest, how likely one is to comply to a behavioural issue, transforming a potentially dangerous action into a safe one, is referred to in the ‘Elaboration Likelihood Model’ which indicates that in order for individuals to elaborate on something they have viewed, such as this presentation, the aim of the presenter is more likely to have a longer term effect if the audience have both the will and means to do so. This view is also shared by Myrick (2015) who suggest that in order to make a health message ‘successful’ in provoking some form of action by the audience, one of the first appraisals they will make in viewing such a message is ‘how personally relevant the situation is’, striking similarities with the cognitive steps to taking action as suggested earlier by Nabi (2003). In other words, if a topic is not important to them, they are likely to care less about it and therefore not take the required action. As the students demonstrated above, they identified aspects of the Road Sense presentation which were similar to their own lives, and those close to them.
**Perspective of life:** *When a participant indicates an overall feeling of perspective, a profound feeling of life in general, whether in reference to their own or others.*

An overall perspective of life was examined as a sub-theme in order to explore the consideration of students to this, in what could be described as a more profound sub-theme than relating the contents of Road Sense to their specific relationships with others. In their focus discussion group, students from School Y relayed their thoughts, “*it made me think of how they feel from their point of view*” and “*they’ve got different stories, everyone’s been through something different*”. These statements demonstrated a willingness by the students to consider the point of view of not only the people they had directly heard from, but the value of life in relation to others, not necessarily those who were close to them. One student went further and recognised that what they had heard was “*not even a story, it’s real life*”.

Similarly, students from School Z, in answering why they found that one aspect of the presentation had more impact, answered, “*it put everything into perspective and emphasised that it does happen to real people*”. Once again the issue of vulnerability and mortality was touched upon, “*it made it more human, like it’s something that could happen to anyone*”.

**Ripple effect:** *When a participant makes reference to the ‘ripple effect’ of road collisions. This describes ‘situation in which one event produces effects which spread and produce further effects’ (Cambridge Dictionary, 2017)*

The term ‘ripple effect’ is one I have often heard in relation to road safety education, describing the reaching of impact to a wider circle of those other than directly affected, such as a victim or close relative. Students from School Y recognised this as an outcome of the presentation saying, “*how much it changed everyday lives*, “*it has an effect on a lot of people*”. Students from School X had similar perspectives, “*it’s not just you that can be affected*”.

142
The further discussion group with students from School Y was a chance to explore this theme further. In relation to the emotion of the presentation, one student remarked, “with the emotion it just kind of helps outline that there is consequences for multiple, more people than just families of a crashed car or whatever”. Some students even identified the phenomenon of a ripple effect and remarked their surprise at how many people one incident can affect, “it has more like a ripple effect so to speak. It affects a lot more people than you’d realise” and, “I saw how it can affect other people, not just people involved”.

Another student acknowledged their understanding of the wider reaching effects, saying, “I understand those ripple effects that could have”.

Audience members from the University of Sunderland also touched upon the wider impact of collisions they had heard about, stating, “it showed the impact road traffic collisions can have on a variety of people”, “it showed the impact for everyone, the family the individual and emergency services staff”, and from School X, “because it showed the effect one incident can make”.

Overview of second main finding – Challenging the mindset – ‘it won’t happen to me’.

The assumption that ‘it won’t happen to me’ has challenged road safety educators for decades. Coupled with young person’s tendency to take risks are complexities around their neurological and biological stage of development, meaning that countering this ‘optimism bias’ (Guttmann, 2014) is a main objective of the Road Sense presentation. By making the point that it very well may happen to them, presenting a perspective that their lives are vulnerable is demonstrated through the use of real stories, where students are free to choose for themselves which aspects of each story relate to their own, personal lives and circumstances. Their lack of life experience presents a lack of developed ‘schema’ (Decety, 2012) within their minds, so the experiences of others are lived vicariously through the stories and voices of the speakers.
The far reaching outcomes outlined to the students in the Road Sense presentation, the ‘ripple effects’ are not shied away from, and the students are left in no doubt that the actions of drivers have many consequences to many lives, not just to those directly affected.

**Third main finding: Using real stories over fiction is key**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding drawn from the most commonly occurring sub-themes and grouped together:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency services – they are human</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story selection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Honesty:** *When a participant makes reference to the importance, or otherwise, or being honest to the audience.*

The theme of honesty was touched upon by students in their responses to why a certain aspect of the presentation had more impact on them than another. They stated, “*they were there and you could tell they were sincere*, “*the speakers were honest about their accounts*, “…*it shows people that it is not a fantasy where everything will be ok*”. Some made the connection between the honesty of the accounts they heard and what they took away from them, “…*it makes you realise how real the experiences are*, “*they showed true stories*”.

A desire to come across as credible and honest was a view that all three speakers shared too. Speaker X stated, “*I didn’t want to just make something up. If you do that, it doesn’t sound real. It doesn’t sound genuine, when you’re talking of personal experience*”, later adding that his story was “*personal and genuine*”. As the discussion moved on with Speaker X in his
interview, I asked him how important it was that the story was authentic in its
telling, to which he replied, “it’s got to be a true story to get that
emotion…..because you draw upon the emotions you felt at the time and it
brings it back to you……you try to come across as genuine as possible. You
try to make them see beyond the uniform”.

Speaker Y discounted the use of a fictional story in his part of the
presentation, or indeed one which did not involve his own experience,
saying, “I wanted it to sound honest”, he explained, “I could have stood up
there and told a story, and had no involvement in it at all. I could have taken
someone else’s incident…..it would have been pointless….I just wanted it to
be as honest as possible”. He went on to discuss another road safety
presentation that he delivers where he uses someone else’s story,
comparing, “you try to get those emotions across and that isn’t my story. It
isn’t my story but you try to tell it like it is my story….I could have used that,
would have fit, but it didn’t seem appropriate because I wouldn’t have been
emotionally involved.”

Speaker Z also relayed how important an authentic story was to both he and
the audience, in particular of that age group, “I personally found, I’m not
going to lie to these bairns….what I did was, I’m telling you this is the effect it
had on me….I don’t need a piece of paper to do that”. I asked Speaker Z
how he would feel if he had been given a story already written for him to read
out, and I can recall his insistence when he replied, “No….You don’t lie. They
can see it in your face. They can see it in your body mannerisms…..kids are
clever. They’re clever little b*ggers, they know when you’re taking the piss.
They know when you’re sensationalising something……..they’re clever
people. They would know if it was a load of b*locks in a heartbeat. And I
think the reason it was so effective and I think one of the reasons it had such
a profound effect on them is because it is real. And what they see is what
they get. Warts and all”.

This viewpoint, apparent across all types of participants in this study, is
consistent with the earlier argument presented by Barone and Eisner (2012)
who posit that, in academic discourse, straying from the truth ‘remains a no-
no’. And whilst they do not discount the use of fiction altogether, their balanced viewpoint is concluded by a dependency on the conditions upon which the truth or fiction are presented. It is useful, at this point, to turn to the point of the students here, however. As demonstrated above, they state that truthful and authentic accounts of the experiences of the emergency service workers in this presentation are, in some cases it appears, essential to the experience. In line with findings by Moon and Fowler, 2008), research into storytelling shows that the story is guided by its credibility rather than its truth. As has been discussed, the speakers all agreed that they could not have portrayed an equally as authentic tale had it not contained their truth.

**Presence:** *When a participant made reference to the physical presence of a speaker in the room during the presentation.*

The question of presence is therefore raised. For example, does the experience of watching someone’s ordeal on television provoke the same extent of feeling in a spectator? Findings by Hoffman (2000) were that even when a so–called ‘victim’ is physically absent or ‘not providing distress signals’ empathy is still possible, through more ‘cognitively advanced modes of empathic arousal’.

The theme of presence was used to identify when a student recognised that an important aspect of the presentation was the physical presence of a speaker in the room, as opposed to a projected film on the screen. In answering why a certain aspect of the presentation had an impact on them, students from the University of Sunderland answered; “because their stories were in the moment, no editing like the videos”, “they were able to talk to you personally”, “hearing personal experiences from the person themselves, seeing how it impacted on them”.

In the presentation delivered to students from School X, one student remarked, “it made it seem real because she went from the video to being in front of us in real life”, making reference to a family member whose film was played and was followed by her talking to the audience in person. Others
from this school said, “it wasn’t an actor, it was an actual person”, and “it made it more real when she actually came in”. Students from School Z relayed similar opinions, “felt more personal / emotional”, “it had a very tangible emotional effect” and “easier to relate to”.

Students from School Y discussed this is in more depth in their focus discussion group, remarking, “I think it was the people actually being there, speaking to us in person rather than the video. It was them alone, being there in the room, telling everyone their story, I think it made it a bit more, like, for everyone paying attention. They were there and they were speaking about it.” They followed, “it was a lot more realistic compared to a video”.

When I asked these students if they thought having someone tell you their emotional side has more of an effect than watching a clip and seeing the whole thing happen, they answered, “someone telling you in person, definitely”. This also linked in with using their imagination, with one student agreeing, adding “definitely, yeah. Because then you’ve just got to picture it all”.

The preference of the audience to engage with the speakers, over the short films, links closely into this theme. As outlined in the analysis, appendix six shows a slight preference towards the speakers (one hundred and fifty-seven participants who responded), as opposed to the short films (one hundred and fifty-seven participants who responded). Whilst this difference may not be significant, taken with the findings from the coding of the discussion groups, the students have demonstrated that they reacted to the physical presence of the speakers on stage, with articulating this preference very clearly, as above. This refers back to the existing literature by Cooper (2011) who discusses ‘fundamental empathy’, a type of social interaction which exists in everyday lives. In her study, Cooper (2011) examined the relationship between students and teachers, relaying findings such as close physical proximity in which students are observed to lean forward with their whole body and ‘emotionally connect’. Whilst these findings do not explicitly rule out that this type of empathy can be harboured between a person and a screened film, it nevertheless suggests that a physical presence is required.
Indeed, in his statement regarding the causal links between one mind and another, Ryle (1949) suggested that it is through ‘the medium of the public physical world’ that access is gained to others. De Waal (2005) earlier pointed out that the ability to feel empathy is somewhat of a mammalian and evolutionary function, stemming back to early years of feeding from our mothers and once again merely suggesting a physical presence between two people.

In the earlier discussed experiment using MRI scans (Jackson et al, 2006), where participants were asked to imagine the pain of another person using prompts in the form of digital images, empathic reactions were found to be present despite a lack of physical presence. Similar findings were reported by Decety and Michalska (2010) who showed video images to participants. Whilst it is recognised that these experiments did not seek to explicitly compare empathic reactions between participants shown images and having a real person before them, it does suggest that a physical presence is nevertheless not required. This concept of mirroring is discussed by researchers as far back as the early 1900s (Gallese, 1918; Lipps, 1907) so it can only be assumed that the use of images, and certainly not the medium of television screens, was not relevant here. This is a view supported by Hoffman (2000 in Decety, 2012) where a so-called ‘victim’ despite not being physically present, prompted an empathic reaction through a more advanced cognitive mechanism.

**Emergency Services – they are human**: when a participant refers to the humanness of the emergency services, revealing the person, or ordinariness of a speaker.

This sub-theme identified when a participant referred to the humanness of the emergency services, revealing the person, or ordinariness of a speaker. In their focus discussion group, students from School Y remarked their surprise at how dealing with incident such as those discussed had an emotional effect on emergency service personnel, “normally you don’t think
that it would affect the emergency services”, and a student from School X stated, “the ambulance guy sees it first hand. They’re just normal people”.

In the further discussion group with School Y, one student explained more, “it was like one of those things when you think someone is really tough and they were basically breaking down when they were telling the story to you”. There discussion progressed, “seeing him differently, he’s been through so much. You can’t really tell that with people, you look at them and think ‘it’s a human, the same as me’. Others agreed, “it definitely humanises them”, and, “it shows how human they are”.

The semi-structured interviews also revealed some insights into the perspectives of the speakers themselves. Being seen as a person, rather than someone standing in uniform was one of the learning points Speaker X wanted to draw out of his presentation, “I didn’t want to talk about what I do, what I’ve done, what I’ve seen. It’s more about the impact it has on someone….I wanted to come across as a family man, a dad”.

This view was shared by Speaker Y who said, “I wanted to get across to the audience that we’re not robots….I put across the point that I’m a human being and this does affect me.” Speaker Y reiterated his point further, “We’re everyday human beings who had got friends and family and dogs and cats. I really wanted to get that across, I think it’s important and think it helps deliver the message.” He goes on to say, in conclusion to his point, “I was thinking this is kind of showing that you’re not this fire fighter robot that cuts people out of cars……we’re all human. The people that turn up at the accident to wipe you off the road…we’re human as well and our emotions are affected”.

What struck me in particular when I discussed this topic with the speakers was how unashamedly they admitted to their human sides. Speaker Z also discussed this topic at length, “you know, we do go into work mode, switch on and we’re good at what we do and we’ve got to do it, but there are times when the humanity side comes through.” He followed, remarking upon one student in the audience who showed her surprise at the way he spoke, “and I could see it…..I actually heard one lass say, ‘but look at the size of him, he’s a monster’ to go ‘look at the way he’s talking’. Speaker Z explained more
about why he felt conveying his human side was important, “I want them to understand where I am. I want them to understand how it affects me…and I think it’s the reality of, inside that monster of a horses arse, there is a heart.” He also recognised a shift in his tone at one part of his presentation, saying, “I think it’s when I started talking quietly and talking about how it made me feel. It was a shock for them to think, ‘Christ, he’s a human being’.”

The relationship between the audience and the speakers is brought to the fore by these observations. On the one hand, students remark their surprise at how revealing their stories are and appear to embrace this as an important, albeit unintended, aspect of the presentation. In the earlier discussion regarding whether the emergency services can ‘play teacher, Noddings (1986 quoted in Cooper) suggested that even though we may have held less favourable feelings towards another or have held a lack of previous understanding about their role, the imagination of the audience begins to play a part in filling in the gaps. So, whether the students hold a negative stereotype of emergency services personnel or not, seems not to be of significance to them. As long as the students are allowed room to use their imaginations, they will build new schemas where none have existed before, in relation to knowledge of the emergency services roles. Where they have held a stereotype, they may well use this to base their feelings upon regarding what they hear. If these are negative stereotypes associated with previous, bad experiences, perhaps there is room to break down such barriers and the speakers may become the ‘moral agents’ which Cooper (2011) later discusses.

SS – story selection: When a participant makes reference to how and why they selected a certain story to use in their speech, or why they discounted others in favour of their final choice(s).

When a participant makes reference to how and why they selected a certain story to use in their speech, or why they discounted others in favour of their final choice(s) was a theme prevalent in only the semi-structured interviews of the speakers as it was a discussion only unique to them.
Speaker X discussed what had made him choose the particular incident he had to speak about, and spoke of the need to demonstrate to the audience that ‘it could happen to them’. He said, “it was a case of showing that this is what happens….you’re not invincible. It can happen to anyone.” Speaker X discounted other stories to talk about which, whilst they were memorable, had no deeply personal connection. He recalled one such incident as being “a difficult extraction. Very, very difficult”.

By coincidence, one of the stories relayed by Speaker Y to the audience was an incident that I also attended and I made this connection during the interview with him. When I asked him how he had selected this story to use, he explained, “all three of us had done our training at the same time so we were all inexperienced from that point of view….That kind of struck me because it was the first one [road collision] I’d done. I thought it was a good place to start….it was quite an unusual situation…the reason I chose the others was the outcome and how it made people feel”. He had discounted some stories because he felt they just didn’t feel right to talk about, perhaps because it wasn’t appropriate or didn’t carry the same learning point and had considered the type of audience he would be presenting to in making his selection. He recalled another incident he had dealt with when he came across a man at the side of the road and gave him CPR, “I couldn’t tell that story, because they wouldn’t understand…..incidents I’ve been to, and I’m sure incidents you’ve been to, you wouldn’t want to tell other people. You can tell it to the other, what I would call, professionals, because they understand.”

During the Speakers Workshop at the start of the Road Sense project, Speaker Z had attended and been surprised with what I had asked of him. He had assumed that he would be asked to talk to students about his role in the police, in a more clinical fashion, describing the actions he would take at a collision scene. He found this difficult to deal with at first, remarking in his interview, “when I walked out that room in [the workshop]….the only one I can even consider, I mean, I’ve had double fatals, I’ve taken bodies out the footwell of a car, they were mush. That wasn’t what hit me straight away. What hit me was how it affected me as an individual.”
Overview of third main finding – Use of real stories over fiction is key.

Using honest and authentic stories is an aspect of the Road Sense presentation which cannot be underestimated. Not only are the students ‘on the lookout’ for credible accounts, they take value from the fact that they have happened to other people and that the speakers from the emergency services are willing to share them. It could be observed that the students almost forget where they are during the presentation, such is their engagement with what they are drawn into. Indeed, we have heard the speakers talk about students ‘leaning in’ and the emotional connection between them is evident through this physical motion.

Whilst Hoffman (2000) argues that a so-called victim need not be present for this empathic exchange to take place, we know that more ‘cognitively advanced methods of arousal’ are required. As the storyteller is present the students need not exercise such deep cognition and, such is their preference, the students like the fact that they could engage in the physical presence of the speakers in front of them. Cooper’s (2011) findings that an emotional connection can take place through a close proximal presence of teacher and student to one another supports this view, allowing fundamental empathy to take place and supports the view that this type of reaction cannot be replicated through the medium of film.

The mere suggestion that the speakers could use the stories of others, or indeed fictional accounts, is met with resistance by them, reflecting findings by Barone and Eisner (2012) who suggest that straying from the truth in academic discourse remains, as they say, a ‘no-no’.

We have heard from others (Ricoeur, 1990; Moon and Fowler, 2008 in Flanagan, 2014) that stories should be guided by their credibility rather than their truth, but the speaker’s ownership of their own deeply personal stories are their truth. The insistence of the speakers that their stories are real appears to mirror an equally strong opinion by the students that this authenticity is key. The fact that the speakers choose their own stories to tell is a natural part of this process and becomes part of an extended journey for them in continuing in this speaking role.
The willingness of the speakers to display their human side and allow the students access to their personal lives, to see beyond the uniform, was not intended but was an aspect of the presentation which was embraced by speaker and audience alike. The idea that the speakers become ‘moral agents’, as referred to by Cooper (2011) perhaps adds to the ownership and pride they take in their role.
Chapter six: Conclusions

The three main findings which have emerged from the data presented, in focus discussion groups consisting of age relevant subjects, and in the semi-structured interviews of narrators and subsequent coding are:

1. Emotional time travel – the use of emotions as a learning tool.

2. Challenging the mindset ‘it won’t happen to me’.

3. The use of real stories over fiction is key.

We know from Decety (2012) that we cannot directly access the minds of other people, but what has emerged from this research is that, through the sharing of their personal experiences using the medium of storytelling, a recognised learning approach, situational (Stueber, 2013) empathy is nurtured when injected with enough human feeling by a narrator who is not afraid to express their own emotions. Any lack of personal experiences by young drivers in the audience, meaning that they also lack their own ‘schemas’ (Decety, 2012) as a foundation upon which to build their future decisions and therefore actions, is replaced by the real, authentic and lived experiences of the narrators and becomes a shared experience upon which to build new schemas and therefore opportunities to make better future decisions.

The school hall, in this instance, becomes the ‘theatre of self-awareness’ proposed by Decety (2012) however I propose a different phrase be used here – a ‘theatre of opportunity’, in which an empathic travel card is exchanged, from narrator to audience, containing their stories and gifted to the students during this ‘evocative and emotionally drenched’ (Barone and Eisner, 1957 in Barone and Eisner, 2012) shared storytelling experience. Empathic concern (Decety, 2012) takes place during this exchange as the stories relived through ‘episodic’ (Guttman, 2014) and ‘loss’ framing (Taubman-Ben-Ari, Florian and Mikulincer, 1999) act as this metaphorical passport. As they both enter this private and perceptual world where the students utilise their imaginations (Cooper, 2011; Bryson, 1999) and project themselves into their own possible stories, not yet lived (Decety, 2012).
Road safety educators should not shy away from what some may perceive to be ‘sentimental and woolly’ (Cooper, 2011) methods of storytelling, but should instead embrace it, not only as an opportunity through the willingness of emergency service workers to share their experiences, but also in the hope of shaping a more empathic society more inclined to keep one another safe.

There are lessons to be learned from the arena of wider health communications, whose examination of discrete emotions, such as sadness (Myrick, 2015; Dillard and Peck, 2000), through the physiological arousal (Myrick, 2015) of the minds of the audience, may help shape more long term individual goals and subsequently reduce young driver fatalities. If the students utilise their own reflections of what they have heard from others, calculating their own future horizons and that of a more healthy and long life, as a community of practice, road safety educators may take one step closer to achieving their goal.

How likely one is to change their behaviour (Perloff, 1993; Guttman, 2014) depends on how personally relevant a situation is to the audience member. There is no way of knowing the sheer variety of backgrounds and experiences of the audience, so road safety educators are best to serve a varied menu of stories from which the students can choose, according to what relates to them. As long as these stories are real, there will be no room for suspicion on their behalf, and a shared view of credibility allows them to meet half way in their exchange. The reflection (McDrury, Alterio, 2002; Moon, 2009) of these stories creates opportunity to share more ‘empathic forms of understanding’ (Koch, 1998) – after all, a story is guided by its credibility rather than its truth (Ricoeur, 1990; Moon and Fowler, 2008 in Flanagan, 2014), and its truths are what are made by the students in this intellectual and emotional (Flanagan, 2014) learning process. Selecting the narrators is a crucial step in the construction of presentations such as these. The empathic reactions by the audience are based on many factors, such as use of language, tone, body language and the displaying of genuine emotions. The students relate to the humanness of the narrators, and their story selection is just one part of this process.
We know from the evidence presented in relation to the biological and neurological changes, or the ‘brain in transition’ which the group undergo in this chapter of their lives also makes them more susceptible to risk taking. This is a complex arena and many educators around the world continue to seek the ‘holy grail’ in solving this problem. Box and Wengraf (2013), amongst their suggestions as to approaches which hold promise, state; ‘use of reflective thinking’; ‘use of personal experiences’; and ‘depiction of life as relevant’. I propose that approaches such as Road Sense Common Sense satisfy these calls. Whilst it may not be possible to interfere with nature, we can give the young people a greater chance of making more informed, safe decisions, by carefully constructing road safety presentations such as Road Sense, ensuring they are guided by research and evidence, thus avoiding criticism that they lack any theoretical foundation.

**Limitations of study**

The use of coding as a method and the triangulation of results set against the literature reviewed has provided an in-depth analysis of the features of the Road Sense presentation. There are limitations which have been recognised along the way however. For example, the literature reviewed discussed the use of MRi scans in studies of empathic reactions and evidence to show that ‘mirroring’ is present - when one subject tells of a painful experience, the areas of the brain which ‘light up’ in a metabolic process are strikingly similar to those who listen or watch their recollections (Decety and Jackson, 2004; Jackson et al, 2004). Other scientific methods offer further potential also but have been out with the confines of this particular study. Similarly, the use of observational methods (Cooper, 2011), which requires a significant amount of expertise, would have brought another perspective to the findings outlined.
Future opportunities

As authors such as Sahakian (Guardian, 2007) suggest that scientific methods are considered invasive but are being tentatively explored in the field of neuroscience, and given that the research of empathy is considered relatively emergent (Cooper, 2011) it may not be too long before we can consider bringing these two fields together to create some very exciting and forward thinking research into the use of empathy in road safety presentations. Methods to be used in future studies could include;

- MRi technology
- Observational methods (Cooper, 2011) such as ‘facial, gestural and voice’ (Zhou, Valiente and Eisenberg, 2003; Myrick, 2015)
- Skin conductance (Stueber, 2013)
- Heart rate (Myrick, 2015)

Informing evidence-based practice

This area of research shows future promise for road safety presentations such as Road Sense. Those who deliver short film and live speaker presentations may seek to examine what similarities, if any, in neural activity occur between audience members and narrators, further strengthening evidence that this type of approach can invoke an empathic response and therefore the desired behaviour change in young drivers.

The use of scientific methods, outlined above, offer an opportunity of a three-pronged approach to analysis:

Approach one - using the backdrop of existing research,

Approach two - the use of coding following data collection, such as used in this study, and

Approach three - the use of methods such as body language and facial observations, heart rate analysis and MRi scans.
To leave on a final word regarding how these methods could offer support for previous findings (as outlined in the literature review), Nabi (2003) suggests that the use of emotions in any health communication invokes a five-step reaction in the audience, leading to potential motivation to change their behaviour. These five steps are outlined below alongside suggestions as to how these could be explored:

1. **Cognitive appraisal of the situation** – asking audience members how they feel at an early stage of the presentation.

2. **Physiological arousal** – see below of issues around this.


4. **Motivation** – asking audience members what, if any behaviour change, they intend.

5. **Subjective feeling state** - returning to audience members to seek their views on how they feel about the subject at a later date. In the true intention of grounded theory, this would test the theories suggested.

Assessment of physiological arousal (2, above) could be done in a relatively simple way by using a respiration or heart rate monitor, but a better way would be to use MRI scans to examine similarities in brain activity between audience and narrator. It is acknowledged, however, that the significant equipment requirements could obviate this approach in practice and including it would change the context of the presentations significantly.

There are also possibly prohibitive ethical requirements if this approach were to be included in a standard research protocol. With either approach (simple respiration and heart rate monitors or MRI scanning) there is a use of physical equipment directly applied to audience and presenter which could change the whole nature of the research protocol.

Of course, the arguments presented in relation to the above methods should rightly be recognised in terms of their rigour and validity but could seek to compliment the use of evidence-based practice, both in the sphere of policing and the wider road safety education community.
Recommendations

Reflecting the three main findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to the road safety community, particularly those concerned with young driver education:

1. Embrace the experiences of others, such as those from the emergency services, and identify the uniqueness in their stories. Jargon and procedure littered accounts are not necessary – the students engage with their authentic and memorable recollections.

2. Identify narrators who, through a guided introduction to presentations such as Road Sense, have an ability to be themselves and are not concerned with lecturing or finger pointing. The narrators should not be afraid to express their emotions. Tone and body language should be authentic and they should not be encouraged to overact. Natural public speakers are not always the best choice, but depicting a vulnerability beneath the uniform is key.

3. Value the reflective ability of young students who, despite the fast changing nature of their development, remember the stories long after they have heard them and recall the fate of others in order to avoid danger in their own situations.

4. Hard hitting images and blood are not necessary to prompt behaviour change and in fact the evidence suggests these types of interventions are not effective.

5. Offer a broad menu of stories from which the students can choose from, depending on how relevant they are to their own personal situation. These need not be task orientated messages such as ‘don’t drink and drive’ but focus instead upon personal cost to family life. Depicting life as relevant is key.
6. Big budgets are not necessary to compile a short film and live speaker presentation. The value lies in the content of real stories told in a meaningful and personal way, not in flashy images or Hollywood sets.

**Final words - A new paradigm in road safety education**

Taking the three main findings, through a semi-grounded theory approach, I submit that a new paradigm is required within road safety education to make more effective use of what we know best and, indeed, what costs us least – our stories. Large financial budgets, particularly in a time of financial constraints, and advanced technology are not needed here. What the students find most valuable, most credible and most engaging are the recollections of those who tell honest, authentic tales of their experience, connecting speaker and student empathically with their content. Storytelling has been shown in this study to be both a viable and valuable learning approach. The road safety community need look no further than those who have lived them and tell them best.
Appendix one: Observation notes – focus discussion groups and semi-structured interviews

Observations: focus discussion groups – School Y

This was the first focus discussion group conducted. All students present were male and aged between 16 to 18 years old. They had been selected by their teacher because they had attended the Road Sense presentation in November 105 in Northumberland, some ten months prior. All students were part of a Uniformed Services class, a module run by the school. No students had yet passed their driving test although some were undertaking driving lessons.

The discussion group was facilitated by the teacher who was provided with a list of questions that I wished him to cover. The first questions (warm up questions) were designed to get the students talking and prompt their memories of watching the presentation.

The students appeared comfortable talking amongst themselves with the discussion being led by the teacher. I tried to capture as much detail as I could when taking notes but inevitably, some detail would have been lost.

Observations: semi-structured interviews with the speakers

Speaker X:

This was the first interview conducted and as I entered into it I wanted to ensure I asked all the questions I had prepared. I allowed Speaker X to expand on the elements that he seemed to wish to talk more about, being careful not to interrupt his flow. Speaker X appeared to want to come across as being very professional and there was little sense of our personal relationship during the interview., but at the same time he appeared comfortable answering the questions. Where he didn’t understand a point or a question, he ensured he clarified it before answering or moving on. There were occasions when I felt he was becoming upset by the topics we talked
about, much the same as his behaviour in the presentations themselves. He
would take a few seconds to compose himself by breathing deeply and I
could tell that he felt a little choked when talking about his friend referred to
in the presentation. The setting of the interview was quite noisy and I was
aware that we both had to speak in hushed tones on occasion as there were
other people in close proximity to us. There were also occasions when we
had to edit what we said slightly, skipping over some detail so as not to say
names or incidents which might be overheard.

Speaker X appeared to want to answer all the questions as thoroughly as he
was able to, something which I felt was reflective of our close working
relationship formed over the years and perhaps of his higher rank within the
fire service.

**Speaker Y:**

This was the second interview conducted so I didn’t feel the need to structure
it quite as rigidly as the first. Whilst I had the list of questions I wanted to
follow, I was more comfortable about having a discussion and following my
aims, than of following a list of questions. The setting was very different to
the first interview with Speaker X, in a private room within the fire service
headquarters. It looked a little like a counselling room. There were a couple
of chairs and a table with flowers and tissues.

Speaker Y is ex-military and he very much came across as well presented,
with polished boots and a ‘can-do’ attitude. He is pleasant to talk to and likes
to get the task done. Speaker Y had come into the project later than the
other speakers and was happy to follow the request for a script containing
personal stories. He has delivered road safety presentations before to young
drivers and he explained that these rely on photos of crashed cars and
graphic images.

As Speaker Y began recalling his story, which I asked him to do for the
purpose of the research study, I could tell that he displayed some of the
same reactions as he does when he talks at the Road Sense presentation.
He became quite choked and his eyes began to fill up as he recalled the incidents once again. He dealt with this in the same way as he does in front of the audience by taking a few deep breaths in and out, in such a way that it cannot be mistaken for him losing his lines. His physical emotions were quite clear, but such is his attitude to completing a task, he just got on with it and told me all he could.

**Speaker Z:**

This was the third and last interview to be conducted and took place in a private office in the police station where both Speaker Z and I work. We were interrupted a short time after we began as we had borrowed another office due to lack of space and quiet. This didn’t seem to interrupt the flow however, and much like Speaker X and Y, Speaker Z was very helpful, wishing to answer all the questions he could and in as much detail possible. Speaker Z is a very outgoing and larger than life character and very dedicated to his job. He speaks very eloquently and my observations are that he is a very skilled communicator with an adaptable style. Also ex-military, he very much wishes to get on with a task at hand. He is very free and forthcoming with his thoughts and as such, this interview was much less structured than the first two because it didn’t need to be. Speaker Z seemed to answer the questions I had in front of me without being prompted or asked directly for many of them. His language is very informal and he swore a lot. Whilst this was a little unnerving at first (although I am used to his demeanour and wasn’t offended), I did worry that when it came to transcribing what he had said, it might not be suitable for the research study. However, I realised that if I asked him to temper his language or word things differently, I and the reader wouldn’t obtain the richness of his experiences and stories, and this would have potentially undermined the findings.

When the Speaker Workshop was held, he struggled to grasp the concept of what was being asked of him. Making an assumption that he was being asked to present a recollection of procedure at an accident, he hadn’t realised that he would be asked to tell deep and personal stories of his
experiences. He took some time during a break to think about whether he wanted to be involved and whether he was prepared to expose an aspect of his personal life and feelings to others. He needed no persuasion and once again, the ‘can-do’ attitude of the military came through.
Appendix two: Ethical statements from schools obtained prior and following focus discussion groups

This statement was handed to Schools X, Y and Z and signed by the relevant teachers for each.

Road Sense Common Sense

Name of researcher: Jami Blythe

For University of Sunderland and Northumbria Police

Please take the time to read through this information carefully. If anything is unclear, please feel free to query it with me. The school or any individual student(s) may withdraw their consent from this research at any time and withdrawal will not affect any future work with Northumbria Police. The participation in this research is purely voluntary and no incentives have been offered.

- The purpose of this research study is to explore the impact and role of empathy in the Road Sense Common Sense presentation that your students have seen.

- The presentation is intended to raise students awareness of road safety and any research undertaken is secondary to this purpose.

- The questionnaire was intended to evaluate the impact of the presentation and identify any areas which could be improved. The comments made by the students will be used as part of the University research into the role of empathy.

- Your students have been identified to take part in this research because they have watched the Road Sense presentation.

- It is noted that bereavement and road collisions can be emotive subjects. Prior to the presentation, the school contacted parents to outline its content and theme and students were given an opt out. All students who attended did so voluntarily.
- The questionnaire was sent to the school electronically and the activity of its completion took place within the school timetable with no participation with the researcher.

- No students were placed under any duress to complete the questionnaire.

- No students under the age of 16, or who were incapable of understanding its content took place in this activity.

- The contents of completed questionnaires are anonymous – the only identifiable information collected was in relation to sex, age and driver status. Students could not be identified from this information alone.

- The name of the school will remain anonymous within the completed research and will be referred to as School A etc.

- No student names were collected at any point during the arrangement of the presentation or in the questionnaire process.

- The questionnaires will be retained for a period of 12 months after the completion of the research, in case scrutiny of collected data is required.

- You can contact Jami Blythe for further information at 8675@northumbria.pnn.police.uk

Signed
Appendix three: Ethical statements from speakers obtained prior to semi-structured interviews

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. The answers you give will be used as part of my Doctoral research into the role and impact of empathy through storytelling in young driver road safety education.

You may withdraw consent to use this data at any point. If you feel uncomfortable about being interviewed then please feel free to tell me. If you feel uncomfortable about answering any of the questions, feel free to say so. You do not have to answer them all.

I will make every attempt to make the data gathered in this interview anonymous. However, as there are only a few staff who deliver during the Road Sense presentation, this may not be possible. I don’t intend to publish any names but reference may be made to the emergency service that you represent. Please let me know if this is a problem for you.

If you would like to know more about the research I will be happy to tell you more.
Appendix four: Ethical statement – overview

Ethical arrangements

The research adheres to the tenets, guidelines and requirements of educational research as described by BERA (2011). Involvement of young people was purely secondary and passive, and as part of standard school lessons led by the teachers of the schools concerned. Students and parents/guardians were informed by their teachers of the purpose of the evaluation that they were carrying out.

The research adopts an approach which collects evaluative data from the schools that were part of the road safety initiative. At no time was the research collecting data directly from children, young people or teachers within schools. Similarly, at no time was the researcher making direct contact with the children or young people mentioned in the study – all the data from this part of the study were collected by the school in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the sessions. This study made secondary use of those data. The schools organised the sessions, and informed students and their parents and guardians what the content would be. The sessions were not varied as a result of the research – they were completely standard sessions provided by the road safety initiative whether the subject of evaluation or not.

In practice, the team of professional police officers (of whom the researcher was one) and other staff employed by the police service were invited by the schools to provide a presentation to raise awareness in road safety. These were part of a regional road safety initiative which itself was part of a wider campaign. The presentations were made as part of the normal school timetable and were led by the schools’ teachers. Following the presentations students were asked (but not required) by their teachers to anonymously complete a “pledge card” which, following discussion between teachers and students, were passed to the researcher to evaluate the sessions for the
school. Students were told by their teachers beforehand that this would be so. Also following the presentations, teachers held a discussion as part of their normal lesson activities. In some cases, the researcher in her position as group facilitator of the session, led or assisted with the discussions. In all these cases, the researcher did not know the identity of the people in the room. All this part of the data collection was carried out as part of normal classroom practice forming part of the standard teacher “reflective practitioner” practice that all good teachers carry out as part of their duties. In this part of the research, the researcher sometimes had a “dual role” (BERA, 2011) but in most cases she was merely an observer, not a facilitator.

Interviews were then carried out by the researcher with the presenters and facilitators of the sessions. All facilitators and presenters were adult and not vulnerable. All the participants were informed through an information sheet and consent form what the research was intended to achieve, how the data from them was collected and how the results will be used. Interviewees were assured that data collected from them through the interviews, whereby individuals could potentially be identified, is subject to the Data Protection Act and that the researcher anonymised any personal data. Confidentiality was explained and interviewees assured that only the researcher would have access to the raw data and only those with a direct connection to the research (the supervision team and examiners) would have access to the anonymised data. The interviewees took part voluntarily and could withdraw at any point. It should also be noted that there is no uneven power relationship between the researcher and any of the participants in the study – the researcher is not their line manager, nor is she line managed by their line-managers.
Appendix five: Evaluation forms used at University of Sunderland and School Z

ROAD SENSE COMMON SENSE

Please complete this form without conferring with anyone.

1. Overall, which part(s) of the performance had the most impact on you?

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

2. Why?

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

3. Which film or speaker could you relate to the most?

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........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

4. Why?

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
5. What will you take away from what you have seen today?

6. Do you think you will change your driving habits?
   Yes / No / Don’t know

7. Overall, how would you rate Road Sense Common Sense?
   excellent / Good / Fair / Poor / Don’t know

8. Would you recommend others attend this event?
   Yes / No / Don’t know

9. Are you:
   Male / Female

10. Age:
    .................................

11. Are you:
    Student / Guest / Teaching staff

12. Are you a driver
Yes / No

Thank you for taking the time to help us develop Road Sense Common Sense. Your evaluation will allow us to improve upon what we have started.

This data will be stored in accordance with data protection requirements and is anonymous.
Appendix six: Preference of audiences – films or speakers

In response to the question: ‘Overall, which film or speaker had the most impact on you?’

Comparison of preference to speakers and films – School X, University of Sunderland and School Z.

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<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Both</th>
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<th>Declined</th>
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<td>47</td>
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<td>157</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>58</td>
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</table>
Appendix seven: Key questions to be asked in focus discussion groups

Road Sense Common Sense Focus Group - questions

1. What elements of the presentation do you remember the most?
2. Which speaker do you remember the most?
3. Is there anything they said which sticks in your mind?
4. Which film do you remember the most?
5. Is there any part of the film that sticks in your mind the most?
6. Is there an image of the presentation you remember clearly?
7. *When you think back to the presentation, do you remember how you felt during it?
8. *How did you feel afterwards?
9. *Did it challenge what you thought of road safety presentations?
10. Did any of the films leave you wanting to know more about the stories?
11. Which film or speaker could you relate to the most?
12. Did you tell your friends / family about it afterwards?
13. What did you say?
14. *Have you used any of what you saw / heard to inform decisions about driving or being a passenger?
15. Do you think what you saw / heard in the presentation has helped keep you more safe on the roads?
16. If you were in charge of the content of the presentation, what would you change?

17. *Did you read the supporting material afterwards?

18. *Did you use your imagination to fill in any of the gaps that were left by the films?

*These questions have been highlighted to the teachers facilitating the sessions to ensure they are not missed. They are considered to be the essential questions to ask in order to gain the most from the students.
Appendix eight: Notes taken in first focus discussion group with School Y

Road Sense Common Sense Focus Group

School Y 6th July, 10.10am

Present: class teacher

6 students (all males aged between 16 and 18 yrs)

No students within this group have passed their driving test

The ethical form was summarised by the teacher before the start of the session and all students were given the opportunity to leave if they felt uncomfortable.

Q1. What elements of the presentation do you remember the most?

‘Things people had actually witnessed – police service, fire service’

‘Fireman who spoke – he was really distraught’

‘Police officer who started crying because he had to explain one of the family had died. I was quite shocked because I never thought of it that way’

‘The mum who had to care for her son afterwards’

‘The fire fighter who was in tears after what he witnessed at the accident’

Q2. Which speaker do you remember the most?

‘All of them’

‘The fireman’

‘Police’
‘Mum’

‘Fireman- I thought the way the fireman spoke was genuine emotion’

**Q3. Is there anything they said which sticks in your mind?**

‘The effects of driving at speeds can have – the guy that crashed into the tree’

‘The mother who had to take care of her son – the impacts that your dangerous driving can have’

‘The impact it has and how much it changed everyday lives. The boy who was doing college and had to learn everything again’

‘Cleaning the scene – has an effect on a lot of people’

‘Normally you don’t think it would affect the emergency services – the fireman who drove down the road where the fatal accident was’

**Q4. Which film do you remember the most?**

‘Can’t remember the films as much – the witnesses’

‘The mum talking about her son’

‘The old lady – her husband was going to work and didn’t come back’

‘Not too much’

**Q5. Is there any part of the film that sticks in your mind the most?**

‘No’

**Q6. Is there an image of the presentation you remember clearly?**

(NOT ASKED DUE TO RESPONSE TO Q5)
Q7. "When you think back to the presentation, do you remember how you felt during it?

(THIS QUESTION WAS CHANGED BY THE TEACHER) – HE ASKED:

Did you feel the same at the end as you did at the start?

'I was definitely drawn into it, it made me think about the consequences’

'at some point, it made me feel emotional. It was quite tense, everyone was on edge'

'You know when you get that funny feeling in the back of your throat? Kind of made me feel like that. If I mess up once, it could happen to me.’

'A bit tense’

'The degree of empathy, it made me think of how they feel from their point of view’

'Before hand we were taking the mick, on the bus on the way there, “what are we doing this for? On the way back it was silent’.

Q8. "How did you feel afterwards?

'Kind of glad I went, it changed my stand point’

'In deep thought about who it affects’

'Thought a lot deeper about it, analysing it all, on the way back’

Teacher: ‘Did it play on your minds?’

'Yes, I thought about it’

Q9. "Did it challenge what you thought of road safety presentations?"
'Haven't had one before. During the presentation I realised why we were there'

'Never been before – it was quite shocking – all of it comes at once'

'It’s the first one I’ve been to'

'It’s the second one I’ve been to – the last one was at middle school. It was quite dummed down'

Teacher: Out of ten, ten being the most impact and one being the least, how impactive would you say it was?

'10'

'9'

'9 or 10'

'9'

'9 or 10'

Q10. Did any of the films leave you wanting to know more about the stories?

'Yes, it made me want to know more'

'At the time, I wanted to know more'

'Wanted to know if they were ok now'

'The mum caring for her son – would like to know how she is doing 6 months later'

'You’re left thinking what quality of life did that person have? I’ve got to try and work that out myself'

Q11. Which film or speaker could you relate to the most?

'The public services. The son with the serious injuries'
‘The mum and fireman’
‘The mum and fireman’
‘The mum and son’
‘The mum and fireman’

Q12. Did you tell your friends / family about it afterwards?
‘Yes, my mum. I was telling her because I was rethinking of getting a
different motorbike’

Q13. What did you say?
‘Someone in the presentation said they changed their super bike’
‘My mum and dad. The stories, impacts my dangerous driving could have on
them’
‘My mum and dad and grandparents. Dad used to be a lorry driver. My
grandad is a bus driver. When I told them the stories, they took it all in like I
did and said they would be responsible as well.
‘my dad – he thought it was worth me going.

Q14. *Have you used any of what you saw / heard to inform decisions
about driving or being a passenger?
‘I’ve thought more, thought things through, changed my decisions about my
first car. Changed my decisions into sensible decisions’
‘A little bit I guess. If I see them speeding and I’m a passenger’
‘I didn’t want to drive for a couple of months after the presentation. I was
frightened I would make a mistake’
‘It put me off driving, don’t want to be unsafe because I’m just learning’
‘I’m changing what kind of motorbike I get. When I’ve been drinking with friends and they wanted to go for a driver, I’ve said no.’

Q15. Do you think what you saw/heard in the presentation has helped keep you more safe on the roads?

‘As being a passenger, definitely’

Q16. If you were in charge of the content of the presentation, what would you change?

‘Nothing’

‘Nothing’

‘Nothing’

‘Nothing’

Q17. *Did you read the supporting material afterwards?*

(the students didn’t receive the supporting booklet)

Q18. *Did you use your imagination to fill in any of the gaps that were left by the films?*

‘Yep’

‘All of them’

Teacher: ‘I think that’s a unanimous yes’
A short discussion about learning to drive developed between the teacher and students. One student said ‘I'm learning to drive. I have the fear now. It’s made me think twice’
Appendix nine: Transcript of focus discussion group with School X

Road Sense Common Sense Discussion Group

School X, July 15th 9.15am

Present: teacher

6 students (3 males, 3 females)

All aged between 16 to 18 yrs

Before the session began, the teacher outlined the ethical form to the students. They all agreed to take part in the session.

Some questions were strayed away from at the request of the teacher. I agreed to this as the session was not meant to be formal and the objective was to gain the maximum insight from the students.

No direct discussion took place between myself and the students.

Q1. What elements of the presentation do you remember the most?

‘There were loads of personal stories, and videos – they were quite touching’

‘That woman who came in and described how she lost her husband.’

Q2. Which speaker do you remember the most?

‘The lady at the end’

‘The little kids – the mum with the grandparents. The child who was in the car with the grandparents’

Q3. Anything that they said that sticks in your mind?
‘Not particularly – just the general film’

‘The couple – the little girl in the car with the grandparent’

‘The little boy on his bike – they had him in a Sunderland strip’

‘I remember Mrs XXXX when she got the news’

‘When Mrs XXXX came on – it wasn’t an actor, it was an actual person’

Q7. *When you think back to the presentation, do you remember how you felt during it?*

‘Sad and scary. How easy to think it could happen’

‘Just empathy really’

Q8. How did you feel afterwards?

‘If someone had done something differently, it wouldn’t have turned out that way’

‘Just changing one small thing can have that effect’

Q9. *Did it challenge what you thought of road safety presentations?*

‘That was a lot more intense, it was real stories and real people’

Teacher: ‘Was that more powerful?’

‘Definitely’

Q10. Did any of the films leave you wanting to know more about the stories?

‘A little bit – how they are doing now and if they’ve moved past it’
Q11. Which film or speaker could you relate to the most?

‘Dorothy and the little boy because he was local’

‘The local lad’

‘Yeah – the local lad’

Q12. Did you tell your friends / family about it afterwards?

‘Told my mum and dad about the woman who actually came on the stage’

‘It made it more real when she came in’

‘Nobody was really speaking about it afterwards’

Teacher: ‘Do you think they could relate to it?’

‘They were quite shocked that she actually came to the school’

Q14. *Have you used any of what you saw / heard to inform decisions about driving or being a passenger?

‘We are being a bit more cautious’

Teacher: ‘Do you have any flashbacks of the presentation?’

(male student) ‘I had Charlie in the car and he was blasting the music. I was saying “howay man, turn it down”

(male student) ‘I remember the first time I had all the lads in the car. I didn’t want to crash and kill them’

(female student) ‘I didn’t get in the car with a boy racer – they are[he is] really reckless. Without knowing it has changed my decision, not consciously’
Q15. Do you think what you saw / heard in the presentation has helped keep you more safe on the roads?

‘Yeah, it makes you realise you’ve got people in the car that can die’

‘It’s not just you that can be affected’

‘It’s not just a bit of metal, it can kill you’

‘The boys in the car that crashed into the tree, I remember. The ambulance guy sees it first-hand. They’re just normal people’

Q16. If you were in charge of the content of the presentation, what would you change?

This question was changed by the teacher to: ‘Is there anything you would change about the presentation?’

‘Probably not’

‘It was pretty good’

‘I wouldn’t tone it down – that’s what made it so powerful’

Teacher: ‘As Head of Sixth Form, we have to decide whether to do it again’

‘Yeah, definitely’

‘Yeah’

‘Yeah’

‘Yeah’

Q17. *Did you read the supporting material afterwards?*

‘Just flicked through it’

‘As we were going to lessons, didn’t have time’

‘People remembered the presentation’
Teacher: ‘Would you scrap that then?’

‘Yeah’

‘The presentation did the job it needed to’

**Teacher: shows students booklets**

‘I think I would read it now. To refresh my memory’

‘Use it in PHSE maybe?’

Teacher: Is there a better format for that to be in? Is print format dead?

‘No, I think it’s ok’

‘It’s quite big – could be smaller’

‘Pictures of people would help’

Q18. *Did you use your imagination to fill in any of the gaps that were left by the films?*

‘Yeah, how they are living with it now’

‘I imagine how they first felt when they heard the news’

**Teacher: ‘Is there anything you want to add?’**

‘It was different, in a good way’

‘Usually when we have presentations you get students talking through it. Everyone was quiet, nobody was talking’

‘Yeah, I can’t remember anyone talking’

‘The dark room and the spotlight made it better’
Appendix ten: Transcript of second focus discussion group with School Y

Discussion group – 28th September 2016

5 students – one female, four males, all learning to driver 17-18 years old

Ok, if you can cast your minds back to nearly a year ago when we asked you to sit in that freezing cold aircraft hangar at [place] for an hour. Just to prompt your memories, we had a big back drop on a HGV with a white curtain and we projected short films on that. In between the short films you heard from a variety of speakers. So you had somebody from the Police, somebody from the ambulance, somebody from the fire and then a lady whose son who had the traumatic head injury at the end. So that was the basic structure of the presentation. The short films that you watched, one of them was a young lad who had been knocked off his bike in Sunderland, his parents and his younger sister talked about that incident. I don’t know if you remember but he had leukaemia when he was young and he had to have a series of operations on his spine, and he had a cleft palette so they talked around the challenges he faced when he was younger as well. Then the second film you watched was about a lady whose husband was knocked over by a young driver in [place] and he was sentenced to imprisonment for causing death by dangerous driving. And then you heard from a man whose son was learning to drive and he talked about his concerns about him learning to drive. Also he happened to be a sergeant in the traffic section. And then the final film was about a young girl who was killed with her grandad a few years ago near [place]. [name] parents spoke in the kitchen. They had a conversation, most of the film was of them having a conversation about the police coming to their door and then you saw some footage of [name] when she was younger, home video that was taken of her and some photographs. Everyone happy with that? can vaguely remember?
So as we’ve said I want to look at the link between emotion conveyed by the speakers and in the films to yourselves. In order to get the ball rolling, I wanted to ask you, was there any particular person who you felt more of an emotional connection with than anybody else in that presentation?

“police officer, I’ve forgot his name, my dad is a police officer as well and he talks about how he is on a regular basis, he’ll be at crashes and things like that. So it’s quite relatable in that sense, to think that my dad has to deal with that, to knock on other people’s doors and tell them that a family members has passed away in an accident or something. That made me personally a lot more aware, as a learner driver as well, it makes you a lot more aware of everything, just to keep yourselves safe.

Was there any, could you summarise why in particular you felt more of a connection to that person, is it as you’d said because of your family connection?

Yeah, probably just being more relatable with both my dad and my step mum are police officers and they said they deal with the same sort of stuff, it makes it heavy hitting in that sort of sense.

Anybody else?

Somewhat relatable to [him], my dad is a firefighter, so hearing what I think it was [firefighter] who came down from the fire – he’s my cadet instructor too – you’d never think it, but when he was explaining what he went through, what he had to deal with, it reminded me of what my dad had to do, because there was times when he would come home and be distraught about what he had to do. He would never speak about until years later when he wanted to let
everyone know what he was dealing with. Its trauma that he’s dealing with, it makes you think that actually happens.

It’s interesting that you knew [firefighter] before hand – how did you feel when stood up and started talking?

It was strange, it was like one of those things when you think someone is really tough and they were basically breaking down when they were telling the story to you. It’s not even a story, its real life and you’re just like, it hits you hard.

Did it make you feel differently about [firefighter]?

It did, actually yeah.

Did it change your impression of him?

Hmm mm.

In what way?

Seeing him differently, he’s been through so much. You can’t really tell that with people, you look at them and think, ‘it’s a human, the same as me’, but they’ve got different stories, everyone’s been through something different.

Anybody else?
For me it’s just like she said, I remember when he was up talking, he was quite emotional, he was standing and was a little bit shivery, his eyes were getting red. You could see his eyes were getting quite red and there were probably a few tears as well. Also, as [he] said, you can remember the firefighter getting up as well. He was also getting quite emotional, it would be quite hard to tell people what they go through. For me, I have a lot of respect for that kind of people cos it’s not easy.

When you’re talking about [firefighter] showing some emotion in particular, you both referred to him showing some signs of emotion. What physical effects did it have on you when you were listening? Can you remember any change in how you felt?

I felt sorry for him, quite upset as well ‘cos what they have to go through, it’s not easy having to come out and tell a large group of people.

You know when you’re sitting and you sort of like in this situation, everyone’s fairly calm and you’re in control of the situation. You go through most of your normal day being in control of what you’re doing, and how you’re feeling, how you’re relating to people. Sometimes something happens in your mind that changes how you feel, and on an emotional level you can consider physical changes. The last focus group we had somebody that you felt that lump in your throat that you start to feel sorry for somebody or you start to feel sad, can you remember feeling any of those physical signs?

Yeah

Can you describe more about that?
It’s just, when everyone stands up to speak they’re all confident to begin with, but then when they actually have to think back at what happened, look back and think about what happened on that day, it’s just like all the memories that they’ve had on that day, it floods them with emotion and you can see when they started with confidence, to half way through, cos they remembered what happened. You can tell it still hurts them, it affects them to this day. You can tell, it’s really emotional.

Was it somebody in there that talked about the lump in your throat?

Yeah, it was me.

Can we talk about that? Do you feel comfortable doing that?

I’m trying to remember what I said. It was when [firefighter] got up and he was getting quite emotional, it affected me as well. You can picture what he had to do, you’d have to be in that situation yourself, it got me thinking.

Do you think in some ways, when somebody of that stature, cos there’s a number of people there. Particularly [police officer], he’s really big and tall and kind of stocky, has all of his equipment on and he’s larger than life. When somebody like that shows emotion. I found it quite surprising when I heard him talk for the first time, it kind of catches you by surprise.

It definitely humanises them. I know it sounds silly. I have this problem obviously, but some people see a police officer and think, they’re almost synthetic. I don’t see why people are like that, but some people do but it shows them how human they are, when they get up and talk about that.
That's what makes it quite good as a presentation. It shows you how impactful it is.

What were your, it's really hard to break this down, when you're listening to a story like [firefighter], he’s showing that emotion, his eyes are quite red and you're describing, what are your responses in your mind, what were you thinking?

Sympathy, the biggest one.

I was kind of thinking, jeez, how do you do this, how do you go through this all the time for a living. It was more shock.

Then later on, did your thoughts change? From shock to perhaps more reflective?

I was kind of more respectful, more respectful for what they do, it’s difficult for them.

Can any of you remember thinking of your own family situation when people were talking? I know you mentioned that your family are in the police.

The police officer, he looks quite similar to my dad, he had that shaped head and quite big, tall as well. Just the way he talked, he was just like my dad. That was quite weird.
Can I just go back to the lump on the throat, the last time we spoke you were talking about when you got back on the bus, saying everyone was quite quiet when you got on the bus to come back….can you remember how you felt during that time?

*Kind of reflective, having a good think about what you’d heard, when you had all that information, you had time to think about it. That’s what made it a good presentation, there was all that emotion, taking it away and having a good think about it is a good thing to reflect on.*

Afterwards, when you’ve been in the car or maybe in a situation when danger is starting to present itself, I’m talking about on the roads here, could you remember thinking about something you’d seen or heard during the presentation, almost like flashbacks?

*I wouldn’t say flashbacks but I’ve kept it in mind, like sometimes. When I’m on the road, I won’t have a flashback, but I’ll keep it in mind, it’ll pop back in my head. Like I say I’m just going along in the car with my Mum. I think when the police officer was talking about the car crash. I remember driving to [...]one time and there was a crashed car. It was at the road, it was deserted at the side of the road.*

Was there anything specific you thought about when you saw that?

*To be fair, I thought someone had died in a car crash.*

*There’s been a crash here recently [explains details of crash]. My dad was the first officer there. And then again, that brings you back to the*
presentation, it’s the same thing. You go to these horrible accidents and you have to deal with it.

Guys, are you mulling over any thoughts?

Not really, the main thing I remember is definitely the fire fighter and just kind of, how emotional he got just with one situation. Just that one situation and he could have went through multiple of them in his life and just how hard hitting it could be to someone. That’s pretty much it.

Did you feel like any kind of connection with them, do you know what I mean?

Not really. It just kind of, with the emotion it just kind of helps outline that there is consequences to multiple, more people than just families of the crashed car or whatever.

Is that something that you’d thought about before?

I didn’t really know what I was going to before the presentation started.

Sorry, I mean, when you think of a typical accident, where someone might have died, I’m just thinking of the one you’re talking about up the road there a few days ago. You automatically think of the person whose died don’t you. Not necessarily the people on the outside. Was there anything in this presentation that changed that for you?
It did outline more of how it affects just the person there, not family or loved ones etc, but that’s obviously some people’s jobs to deal with that as well. It shows how a person at an accident like that, it has more like a ripple effect so to speak. It affects a lot more people than you’d realise. Anyone that saw it as well. You could see it happen. I know someone, a cyclist got knocked over next to [...] and he’s died and there’s quite a lot of people round there that had to see that as well. It’s quite shocking in that sense.

It kind of affects how people are driving as well. You hear on the news, you might be a little bit more worried driving round that area. In case something similar happens. It might affect how they react to certain things.

It sort of brings it closer to home doesn’t it? How does that change, or does it change, your decisions out there?

You kind of learn to, I’m going back to learning as a driver now, you really try and keep yourselves safe because you know the consequences. If you put yourself in danger, or others in danger, then something fatal can happen. I understand those ripple effects that could have.

One of the main things I think about is literally just keeping yourselves safe and being aware of others cos again, all the negative effects it has if you don’t, it’s pretty bad.

Were you necessarily aware of that before the presentation?

A little, yeah, again with, it’s just like, not common sense. I guess you’d kind of think not to do anything stupid I guess, if you know what I mean. It did go
into a lot more detail and depth emotionally. It stood out if you know what I mean. It really sticks in your mind with you all the time.

When you're listening to the speakers and watching the films, they're very personal accounts aren't they? We asked them to dig quite deep into their memories and their emotions to think of something memorable to talk to you about and everything that they talk about is true. That's quite an intrusive process for me to do that, on one level, but then for them to talk to audiences in their hundreds. Did you feel that you’d intruded into their worlds in any way, even though we’d invited you there and asked you to sit and listen to them, did you feel any intrusion into their private thoughts?

Not really, it was actually quite good to hear. It outlines the, just kind of, it puts more depth into it. It makes you think.

When we had the last discussion, somebody said that they were wondering how the lady with the son was with the brain injury was getting on. Was that somebody in here?

I don’t remember asking that, no.

Do you wonder about any of the people that you saw now, a few months on? On a personal level?

In full honesty, sometimes you can forget the individual stories. It happens so often. Theres so many occasions when that stuff happens, everyone is more than aware, but it’s hard to remember individual stories.
Of course, I appreciate that.

Guys, any thoughts?

I wonder how the mum is getting on because she has to care for her son, 24/7, the stress and pressure that must put her under. I think he’s paralysed from the neck down so she as to do everything for him, she doesn’t really have a life any more. She’s just caring for him.

He’s actually getting much better now, he did have a nasty head injury [talks of details of incident and individual – left out for anonymity]. We have to strike quite a fine balance between telling you the story and reassuring you that he is getting better. One of the things that we consider are for you to have a follow up, update, on our website, so you can kind of click on and read about him making progress.

A website would be quite a good idea, but if it was like an assembly or something, some people might not know who they are, It might not be as impactful for them, but a website, who’d want to go and see how people are doing.

Yeah, cos its sort of like an open story isn’t it? Because he’s alive and he’s still got progress to make and his families are still having the struggles. In some respects, the others you heard about, that had some closure. They’re still having to live with the grief, those people are no longer around and they don’t face the physical struggles that […] does. Was there anything about the presentation set up that you remember, it was kind of dark, but not completely dark and I know it was freezing cold. Was there anything that we did that heightened the drama around it, can you remember?
It was quite dark, it added a bit of drama to it, just where we were, in the hangar, which is somewhere quiet military. It makes you feel more serious.

It’s not in a school hall, there were some people we didn’t even know.

It makes you feel quite serious.

It was quite secluded, it was quite separated from anyone else, it made everyone else going there feel, like, wanted. Instead of a bunch of people coming in, we’d been selected to come to this. So it had a bit more effect, you don’t know what you’re going into and you don’t know what you’re going to see.

Do you think it was good that you didn’t know what you were going into?

Yeah, because I guess if you told what you’re going into, I guess you can mentally prepare yourself and like you wouldn’t show as much true emotion. I guess that brings out the actual real effect of it.

I hadn’t really thought of that to be honest. Was there any point in the presentation that you think you became more receptive to the emotions that were being shown by either the speakers or in the films, so for example at the start, I’m just guessing, the first few minutes you think, right what’s all this about? You need to get a measure about what’s going on and it either annoys you because its not very good or you start to feel relaxed or you start to feel engaged., was there any point in the presentation that you started to feel differently about what you were seeing?
I think it was the people actually being there, speaking to us in person, rather than the video. It was them alone, being there, telling everyone in the room of their story. I think that made it a bit more, like, for everyone to pay more attention. They were there and they were speaking about it.

Did [name] talk at your presentation? No. Just going back to what you’re saying did you feel that you interacted more with the people who were there in person?

Yeah.

In what way do you think?

Yes, the people in the videos, they had emotion to what they were saying but it was just them people being there in person telling us of their stories and seeing their emotion, like I said before how they went from being confident to breaking. You could just see it casually happening. That hit me harder.

For me I guess, since it’s a video, they’ve had lots of time to prepare. But when you go to actually talk in front of people, nerves can hit you. It was a lot more realistic compared to a video. It’s been given time to set up.

I think I might have asked you this before, just thinking back to the films, on their own, some of them had music in them, some of them didn’t, and music can sometimes play a really important part in how we feel about some things. Do you have any thoughts on that?
This is just me, but sometimes it depends on the song choice, sometimes it can be a bit cheesy. When its silent it can be more impactful, it makes you feel more serious. I feel sometimes when you put music on top of it, in some cases, it feels kind of like, I dunno, in the back of my mind, I think ‘that’s been put there to make you feel it more’ but since I kind of know that in the back of my mind, that’s just me, I’m weird like that.

No, no, no, I’m interested to hear more.

It just feels more serious that way.

I’m a bit like him, cos I feel like music adds effect more. Say, when there’s a quiet scene, like a few little notes in the background, there’s a few little ‘dings’ or the sound of a bell, it adds a lot more effect and gets people thinking. That’s just me obviously.

Yeah, do you think we might have been trying too hard with the music in some parts?

Not trying too hard.

I can’t remember exactly when the music was.

Yeah, I know. It’s been a long time. Its, no, it was good. It was good having the music.
It would have been perfect without the music. I think the music spoiled it a little bit. People might have started listening to the tune, not actually listening to the true stories. When it was silent you could hear a pin drop. There were two people talking and that was the only thing you were thinking about.

Are you thinking about one of the films in particular?

The only one I can remember was the old lady with her husband. That’s the only one I can remember.

That was the only one that didn’t have music too it (everyone laughs).

Oh well.

It’s not a test of what you’ve remembered, it’s not, I promise.

Just a complete coincidence?

The last film, [name of film] was set to piano music. And I’m just wondering if we have maybe got that wrong? Should we be making that more silent?

Is that the one about the boy?

The one about the girl.
I think music is really important if it’s really quiet, so it’s just kind of subconsciously, it’s there and you can only hear it, it doesn’t become a distraction but it’s still there to have that slight impact, that layer of impact.

That’s useful for us to know because we don’t want to look like we’re trying too hard. Definitely don’t want it to be cheesy.

Any thoughts? So, one of my questions was, what do you think of – take one memorable person from the presentation, so if you could each have someone in your minds, don’t necessarily tell me who it was, what do you think connected you to them as a story or a particular person? It’s quite a hard question.

Probably the show of emotion, it just makes it more real.

For me it was the mum, cos I’m learning to drive, if something happened to me, if she had to deal with me, the stress that would put onto her, just thinking about it. It would have been horrible having to care for me all the time.

Are your parents still around?

Yeah.

So when [name] was talking about her son, were you relating that to your own family situation?

A little bit, if that happened to me, and like all the stress that they would have to go through.
Yeah, cos that’s a natural thing to do, isn’t it? You hear a story, stories are around more than you’re aware of. You try and find a connection, like a receptor to somebody talking about a particular situation and you try and apply it to your own life and your own relationships. If that has a personal connection then you can sometimes take more away from that. And one of the, I suppose, criticisms that we had when we put the presentation together, in particular [film]. We showed it to a lot of adults as well as young drivers. The adults said that they could relate to that because they’ve got young children of their own and we felt more of an emotional connection who haven’t got children of their own and how are they going to take something away from that. Does that make sense? What were your thoughts about that?

Well, mine has still got to be [firefighter]. Him being a firefighter and the story he was telling us, it just reminds me of my dad and what he used to go through. It just gets you a lot, knowing that you’ve actually had family that have gone through it and have had to deal with, especially the firefighters, they’ve got to clean up bodies from roads and cut out people form cars. Knowing that my dad has had to deal with that and with [firefighter] talking about it, it just hit me a bit further. Its closer to home than you think.

Did you feel that it went too far, for you, in your situation?

No, it was just right.

And have you taken anything away from that that you’ve thought about afterwards in your situation? So, I don’t know if you’ve ever been in a situation where you’ve been a passenger with somebody.
In all honesty, not really.

We want to make that connection between what you’ve seen and your decision making afterwards. If you haven’t then…..

The police officer was definitely the one I felt more of a connection with. He was the spitting image of my dad. He came out with the same sort of stories, not in the same details, I don’t imagine he comes home and will want to talk about it all the time cos that would be quite depressing. But it’s quite funny because I’m quite interested at the same time. You know, he tells the same kind of stories and stuff so it was really relatable in that sense and made it impactful.

I’d say the closest one for me would definitely be the police officer when talked about the crash and what he would all deal with. Obviously he would speak to the parents. It actually reminded me back, cos my step dad, a couple of years ago, he was in a car crash, he snapped his necks. I don’t know how he is still alive to this day. He injured his head and that gave me a thought, how the police officer would deal with that and go and have to tell his parents. Saying that your son is in hospital majorly injured and it got me thinking, it would be a horrible feeling for the parents, definitely, know that their son’s got a high chance of passing away. It flashes back to what the officer has to do every day and the emotions he has to go through. Going home to his family, how it would affect his family, their friends etc.

Do you think it’s important to have a personal connection to a story you hear about, by which I mean, if you read something online or in the paper about an accident that’s happened, say in [place], you know, they’re sixty miles away and you don’t have anything to do with them. You don’t have a
connection to them you might read it and move on to the next article. Do you think it’s important to have a connection on a more local level?

I’d say it would be good to have a mix because if you have more local stories and stuff, you would think, you would find that more relatable, again having ones that were maybe further away, a different scenario or incident, that would open your eyes to that as well so you kind of have a knowledge of everything if you know what I mean.

Guys any thoughts?

I mean, it is, it definitely helps if you can relate it but for me, it was more of the emotion that helped me kind of remember it and stuff like that. It wasn’t really necessarily relatable bit of it. Just having the emotion there was good enough I thought.

Ok.

Don’t name any names here. But was, there, was there anyone you can think of that presentation wouldn’t have got through to?

Definitely not, I think it got through to everyone.

Yeah

Yeah
Yeah

Yeah.

(teacher) I think on reflection on the bus back, going –were quite giddy. Our class is quite different. The rest of the sixth formers, half of them didn’t want to come. They were very ‘what’s this all about?’ The return trip was a different kettle of fish. There was quiet on the bus on the way back and that’s because individually it had an impact on them. They didn’t realise it at the time, but it did have an impact.

I’m just wondering if there’s anybody who is particularly, how do I put this? Challenging, that you’re aware of maybe outside of school, that maybe is in trouble quite a lot and nothing seems to get through to them.

Teacher – can I rephrase it?

Yeah, go on.

Taking it from another perspective, we talked about the emotional side of it, we spoke about it afterwards, how you remembered, because you didn’t know how they ended did you? Nine times out of ten you didn’t know how they ended. You didn’t see the crash, you just saw the after effects. You never actually saw the images of the crash. That’s normally what you get isn’t it, you see images of a car. You never saw that, it was left to your imagination wasn’t it. What you were left with was just raw emotion from the people and how they deal with it. Do you think, having that raw emotion, someone telling you what’s happened to them, is more effective? If you’re the sort of person that can’t concentrate on stuff, do you think that having
someone tell you their emotional side has more of an effective than watching a clip and seeing whole thing happen. Which has the more effect?

Someone telling you in person, definitely.

Definitely yeah. Because et then you’ve just got to picture it all.

Teacher – we were saying afterwards, what actually happened there? None of us were bothered about trying to find out. We didn’t go and look up the accidents or look at those images. We just thought about what people said, so to me, that was probably the biggest thing of all. It was left to the imagination. But not the imagination you think. You’re not thinking the gore and all the bad stuff, you’re actually thinking about what those people went through?

Is there anything that would have liked to do after the presentation to follow up your thoughts? So, I’m just thinking, for example, we’ve started to ask student to write pledge cards. It’s as simple as ‘my road sense common sense pledge is to….’ Then they’ll write ‘stop using my mobile phone while I’m driving or whatever. Sometimes it’s useful to consolidate your thoughts somehow, somewhere. Is there anything that you would like to have done, or had us ask you to do, to put those thoughts together?

I feel like being with, since we were all together, we had each other to talk to. Because we all found it impactful on a different level so we could all talk about it quite easy.

And that’s the benefit you’ve got of going as a group I suppose, that you have that, after that time on the bus when you get back to school to chat
about it. One of the other groups had said that they went straight into a
lesson afterwards and they came out, and they didn’t have time to digest
what they’d seen. They’d gone straight into a maths lesson and had to start
doing their work. They didn’t have that space that they needed to gather their
thoughts. It’s interesting, for us, to make sure we can fit that into your day.

If you’ve changed your behaviour as a result of what you’ve seen and heard,
who have you changed it for? So, I’m not asking you to tell me that you have
drastically changed anything, but if you have made one tiny change, if you’ve
thought, hang on a second I don’t feel safe here. Who have you made that
change for?

I’ve kind of done it, not only for myself but also for other people who could be
affected by something I actually did something wrong there. So, say if I
cause a mistake if I was learning to drive id think before I done anything, in
case my action affects someone behind me. So it’s just like the safety of
people in passenger seats etc. for others, as well as myself.

I was kind of like the same thing to be honest. As a learner driver you kind of
think after that keeping yourself safe is embedded in you better because you
realise how much doing something stupid affects other people so you have
to keep yourself safe just to keep other people safe as well. And then be
aware of others, keeping yourself safe, that’s what it comes down to.

I can’t really add anything to that in all honesty.

Mostly just for your family, keeping yourself safe and not doing anything
stupid because it could have massive emotional effects.
It kind of goes back to what you were saying before, about [names], doesn’t it.

Nothing really more to add there.

Anybody want to say anything before we close? Thanks.
Appendix eleven: Outline of focus discussion groups

Appendix eleven shows the location, method of recording the focus discussion group and duration according to Schools X and Y.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Method of recording</th>
<th>Duration of focus discussion group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School X</td>
<td>School classroom</td>
<td>Notes by researcher</td>
<td>Approximately 30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(student’s own)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Y</td>
<td>School classroom</td>
<td>Notes by researcher</td>
<td>Approximately 30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(student’s own)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Y (further focus discussion group)</td>
<td>School classroom</td>
<td>Tape recorded then transcribed verbatim</td>
<td>46 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(student’s own)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Appendix twelve: Key questions to be asked in semi-structured interviews

Questions for speakers

Can you remember when we held the workshop to start you thinking about how you would deliver your presentation?

1. What were your expectations before you came to the workshop?

2. Was it a surprise to you to find out that we wanted you to talk honestly about your experiences?

3. How did you feel about this?

4. Can you tell me briefly what your story(ies) were?

5. Why did you choose the story(ies) that you did?

6. What did you hope the students would learn from your specific story(ies) – not the presentation overall, but specific to your story(ies)?

7. How did you feel when speaking?

8. Did you experience any emotions when you spoke?
9. Do you remember visibly showing any emotions when speaking?

10. Did you try and suppress these emotions?

11. Were any of these emotions similar to those which you had experienced during the actual incident(s)?

12. When you recounted the story(ies), could you picture any of the actual scenes in your mind?

13. How did you want the students to feel when you were speaking?
Appendix thirteen: Transcript of semi-structured interview with Speaker X

Transcription of interview with Speaker X of Fire and Rescue

Monday 5th December 11.30am

Ethics form handed to Speaker X and then discussion begins………………

You were saying when we went to headquarters, there was a bit of apprehension and it was nice to hear what the other speakers were going to say.

Yeah, to put it into context of what they were going to deliver and what I was potentially going to deliver.

Do you think that was important to hear what the other speakers were going to say?

It was more reassuring to know that I was along the right lines, it was good to see how long they were going to deliver for because you gave us a little bit of a blank script. I wanted to try and give you something that was slightly different because it was a personal experience as opposed to an incident I dealt with, albeit it did happen at work. Something that happened to a friend.

Ok, just going back to what you said about having a blank canvas, would you rather it was more structured or were you happy with it being more ‘free reign’?
From a personal perspective, I was quite happy to do that however, I maybe would have had to go back to it and think ‘was that what you were after?’

So am I right in thinking that before you even came along you knew what was expected of you? From the first discussion that we had?

An honest answer, no. I was a bit of a stab in the dark from myself. It was something I could relate to. As I say in the presentation, I was absolutely lost for words. When he dropped the news at me. It was one of those moments. There was a guy who was in charge of the station said to me, ‘you never know what’s going to walk through the door. You suddenly just go ……totally lost.

Do you think that changed because it was a more personal issue you were having to deal with? Do you know what I mean? Because in a professional capacity you can deal with things quite clinically.

Very, very different to going to an incident where you’ve got some information and you’re starting to build up a picture in your mind – what am I going to be dealing with, what am I going to need. You’ve got a bit of an idea and you’re starting to formulate, dare I say it, a bit of a plan. What I need to do, you go through a step by step process which is instilled in you by training. But it was bam, through the door, think on your feet. It was difficult for me, but it was unbelievably difficult for X.

What were your, I suppose you might have already answered this a little bit, what were your expectations before you came to headquarters and you sat and listened to what you were going to be doing, the kind of things you were
going to be talking about. I think you’d already given me a bit already in terms of we need somebody to stand up and present from the emergency services. That was the simple bit to get your head round. That was the Surrey presentation?

I didn’t get to see that.

Ah right, ok.

So I was a little bit in the dark but I dare say it was nice to not be lead that way as well. It was sort of my own perception of what you wanted from the fire service.

I just remembered, you didn’t come to headquarters did you?

I did, when you had the session.

Was it a surprise to you when I wanted you to talk honestly about your experiences?

No, and I didn’t want to just make something up. If you do that, it doesn’t sound real. It doesn’t sound genuine, when you talking of personal experience. Can I use an example? I don’t know about what it’s like for your interview process but for us we do personal attributes. They ask you – give me an example of – sometimes you struggle, you might think well if I make something up……… It was personal and genuine. I think it gives a bit of emotion to it as well. That gave me an idea of what you wanted in the presentation.
Oh definitely, yeah. I just wondered if you’d thought of that yourself. I did wonder how I would be, some of the other speakers, they can be quite emotional. I think when we did the first presentation, at Sunderland (confidential). That was me, I was really choked before that. We’ve had this conversation before, you become hardened to it……

Well you’ve got a job to do haven’t you and until you come away, some of the people that are there, it’s a life changing experience for them. They’ll only come across something like that once in a lifetime. We come across it, not on a daily basis but on a frequent basis. It gives it that little bit of time for you to know how you’re going to react to it.

Did you think it was going to be therapeutic?

No, I didn’t.

So when did you realise it had been?

I’m going to go off on tangent here. We did a water safety campaign in the summer. It wasn’t until I listened to the tape and it was about the two girls (confidential). Listening to the tape there, I thought – I haven’t boxed that one away, neatly. And I thought I need to have a think about that one. It was like ok, I’ve put that one to bed but you now when something just pops up. So, that’s when I realised how therapeutic it can be. Does that make sense?

Yeah, it does. It wasn’t an intention of what we were doing. The intention was purely to educate and inform the student. As a spin off I suppose, it has happened.
Yeah, very much so.

(confidential)

So can you describe briefly what your story or stories were – without mentioning names.

*It would be easier to just go through the presentation Jami? My presentation in respect of the Road Sense Common Sense, from a fire and rescue service perspective but it wasn’t about an incident that I attended. It was about a very close colleague of mine and a friend. He came into my office one day and he said he needed to see me. He said I think, and those were the words he used – I think, my son’s been killed in a road traffic collision. Now, you go, what do I say to him, what am I going to do. I have to think on my feet, come in, and shut the door. What do you know, as it transpired it happened (confidential) where his son had been involved in a road traffic collision with four of his friends. His son was one of two fatalities where the vehicle had left the road, clipped the kerb, and hit a tree. Get him some information and it was a case of making some phone calls, start speaking to control, gain some further information because what he had at that time was very, very sketchy. Subsequently it transpired his son was one of the fatalities. In a way it was like watching the impact on the individual but also how that impacts someone who has possibly has had the experiences of attending a road traffic collision, through his training, knowing what would happen at the scene, the injuries, get them out, obviously, the potential injury to the individuals. But also the impact, from my own point of view, feeling a bit useless because you’re not at the incident to do x, y and z. You can do it in conjunction with others. I was feeling a little bit lost myself. I can’t imagine what it did to an individual.*
Ok. So why did you choose that particular story, over and above probably the countless others that you could have chosen from your career.

Quite possibly, I think it was to show people, the audience, that you might think you come from, you can in still as much information into people, your own kids, you know – you shouldn’t do this, you shouldn’t do that you know. Think about this, think about that. It was a case of showing that this is what happens, it happened to him and his son. You can’t take into account what somebody else is going to do. You try to get across, I think I say in my speech, you’re not invincible. It can happen to anyone. It’s just to say, take that little bit of time, like I say, my own kids, particularly my son whose driving, alright you might want to get past someone and you’re going to save yourself 30 seconds.

If you hadn’t chosen that particular story, so if you can image that particular story didn’t exist, what would you have thought of do you think?

I think I might go back to one of your earlier questions, and take it back to someone else. When you initially asked, do you know someone? I thought, I’ve potentially got this. I wanted to run it past you in the enclosed room and if it wasn’t acceptable. I would have gone to someone else in the organisation and I’m sure you would have had countless offers and different scenarios.

So could you have thought of another incident that you’d been to in a purely professional capacity that you could have talked about?

I could of, yeah. And that was a multiple fatality (sensitive), a few years ago. Another one happened just recently in the dip, where there was again
teenage driver, a male driver, two females. One of them was killed and that was another incident with a tree which was, you look at the scenario, you got there and you could see that it wasn’t going to end well. You could see by the injuries and the trauma on the individuals and the state of the vehicle. It took us over an hour to get them out and we were thinking, we’re past that golden hour. I thought, ‘we’re starting to struggle here’. It was a difficult extraction. Very, very difficult.

So, I suppose, what I could as is, had you not had that incident where your friend was involved, why didn’t you use that one? What ingredient was missing?

I wouldn’t say there was in ingredient missing Jami, it was more that I knew it was a very personal experience. I think other would people would have had something very, very similar to what I’d attended to. I think it, I didn’t want it to seem like I was high jacking. You come into the organisation and I didn’t want it to be about me. That’s why I wanted to run it past you and ask, ‘is this what you want from me?’ and if not, we’ll sort someone else.

So, that personal element was presumably important to you in it being right for that presentation. So what, learning points were there in your story that you wanted the students to draw out of that?

I think it was trying to do it from a, standing in a uniform and they see I’m talking from the fire service and I know when I start I say, I’m from the fire service. I didn’t want to talk about what I do, what I’ve done, what I’ve seen. It’s more about the impact it has on someone. I tried to angle the story around as it was a friend of mine but I wanted to throw in that he was a fire fighter. I was also doing it from a father’s perspective. In the presentation I looked at between my son and my friends son, there was about 6 months
difference in age. I thought, I know how I would feel but I tried to understand how he felt, the impact on him – how would I feel? My son, when we started doing this was a very similar age to the audience. It was to say, think about it, think about the impact that it has. Very similar messages to what the other presenters had. But it was to get that point across that I’m talking more from a friend’s point of view. The impact it has, but also standing there in a uniform. Also to say that it does have an impact on us from a personal perspective from outside the job, as opposed to it having a personal perspective from me inside the job.

So why was that in particular, why was your requirement for it to demonstrate that it has a personal impact on you outside the job important?

It was to kind of build up a bit of an affinity with the audience. They think, there’s somebody standing up and doing this and doing that (points finger), don’t do that. It was try and show the other aspect of it and to try and compliment the rest of the presentation.

Why did you feel that a personal story was better? I suppose you’ve just answered that. And you could use the word ‘authentic’. Was it important for you that it was authentic in the telling of it?

It’s got to be a true story to get that emotion. It’s got to be a true story because you draw upon the emotions you felt at the time and it brings it back to you. It had to be authentic. Can you ask that question again?

So, well I was going to ask why do you feel that a personal story was better but why was it that authenticity was the key?
I think it’s got to be. Particularly when you hear the other speakers and the impact that it has on them. If you just stand up there and you could talk about the blood and the guts and we could do that to death, excuse the pun. They can pick up stuff like that on the internet now. You think to yourself, that’s not going to have an impact. They see crashed cars and they think, ah right ok. Then they get it from a personal perspective and it’s to hit them from the emotional side. It’s to pull their heart string, you’re not invincible. I don’t think it was the intention from yourself because this is what can happen. I think we need to get away from that. From the other emergency services, for them to experience that so I think I picked up from what you’re saying. Let’s have it from a personal point of view but without the mangled mess and associated injuries and mayhem that comes with it.

So, you were talking before, before you went into the presentation at Sunderland about you having to compose yourself. Why do you think you needed to do that?

You look at the other presenters who were all apprehensive about it. I’ve done the instructors role and I was very happy to stand up in front of a big audience, that wasn’t the problem. When I came to the headquarters I hadn’t seen the films. When I saw the films I thought that pulls another tug when you see how raw it is for the family members. You think they’ve ben brave enough to stand here and do the presentation. They’re sitting in the audience. They are talking about a loved one they’ve lost and A, look professional, B, represent the organisation and C, I’ve got to have the bottle to stand here and do this. I’ve got to do a good job for them and for the audience.

How did you feel when you were speaking?
Funnily enough, once you sit there and the boots tapping and I'm getting shoved across one chair at a time. I have a drink of water, I'm happy, I know what I'm going to say. Stand still, I've got a terrible habit of moving around. Stand still, go slowly, focus and just get the emotion without losing it. That's what I was thinking.

So, getting the emotion without losing it is a bit of balancing act isn’t it? How did you sort of talk yourself. You kind of coach yourself when you’re doing presentations. You’ve got the two voices going at you. You’ve got the one that says, you can’t do this. You’ve got the other one that says, don’t be daft of course you can.

What I tend to do and it’s a technique I use for interviews. I go and sit in the car somewhere., on my own and talk out loud. I use it as a bit of a warm up. You maybe know yourself that if you go in for an interview, you don’t feel comfortable at first. So I thought let’s get into this, hearing my own voice and talking and outside that. I spent four of five times going through it.

When you were talking about the stories, can you remember experiencing any emotions as you were talking?

No. You became a little bit switch back into work mode. It wasn’t until the last little bit where you think, I’ve just done that and I actually went for a run that night. I remember dropping off my daughter that night and that was all I could think about was the day and that we were done.

When you say that you want some of the emotions to come through and not lose it, how do you think you physically demonstrated those emotions to the degree that you wanted to?
I think coming across, A, it’s a true story. You come across as genuine as possible. You try to make them see beyond the uniform. Like I said, been there, done this, seen that. I can deal with it. This was something different albeit it was in a professional environment. Someone had come to me as a personal friend.

So do you think that came, or did you try and make it come out even when you were rehearsing in perhaps the tone of your voice?

Definitely, definitely. It’s a bit like when you’re rehearsing and you’ve got words on a page. It didn’t feel like I was going to give a power point presentation about x, y and z.

When you rehearsed it, how did you decide when your pauses were going to be? What sort of tone of voice you were going to use? What parts were you going to make more clear?

I think I know what you mean. The bits that got to me, the bits that had an impact on me, the bit where I watched him crumble in front of me. The bit I talked about when he often asks about my son, and he says I wish I could take my son for a pint now. All of those bits, just to emphasis the impact. So there was maybe about three of four bits in there that I would emphasise.

How did you decide on your use of language in telling the story?

I think I had to make it, I couldn’t come out with jargon, acronyms, anything like that you couldn’t do. You cannot talk about what we do at an incident because they don’t really understand, other than how it integrates with the
other services. We’re going to have to cut you out and get you out and get you to A & E. Obviously there’s more to it. Can you repeat the question?

How did you decide on your use of language?

*It had to be audience appropriate, but something age appropriate as well but I didn’t want to sound condescending to them as well, like I’m this, I’m that. None of that. I’m someone who has three kids, very similar ages to you. I have the same emotions your parents have, the same worries your parents have. However I can sometimes switch that off. It was a unique experience and that, I dealt with it away from the incident. I wanted to say, this is what happened, this is how I felt and this was the impact but more so what it had on my friend.*

Do you think there was any point in the presentation that you put in pauses on purpose?

Yeah.

So how did you choose those and why?

*Again I’ll take you back to those four points. From here, always think and emphasise that point with something after it. I think that’s where the emotion came out. In the last minute or so. To say, think about this, the impact it has on you. You’ve got all of this to look forward to. Stop, have a pregnant pause, and then carry on. It don’t know whether it came across that way Jami.*
It did but I just wondered if you had purposefully thought to put them in. Because we never really talked about how you put it together in this much detail before.

*But I think that takes you back to it being an authentic tale. It doesn’t matter how you put it together because this is how it actually happened.*

And you feel that’s when your credibility comes in?

*I wouldn’t say credibility. I hope the credibility came through.*

That’s what you’re aiming for?

*Yeah. Don’t get me wrong, I wasn’t standing there thinking this is the best presentation in the world but this was a genuine tale and I hope it assists in getting the message across with the other messages.*

Was there any, don’t frightened of being honest about this – it’s not a trick question, was there any point where you were tempted to act a little bit, or were you entirely 100% Graham in what you were saying.

*Somebody said to me a good few years ago when I gave a presentation at the Centre for Life, they said, when you’re stand up you’re Graham Smith from the fire service. After a couple of minutes you’re Graham Smith and I think I was conscious of that prior to giving the presentation. I wanted to come across as a family man, a dad, as well as. That’s what I wanted to get across.*
Did you pick up on any feelings from the audience? I know that’s difficult, as you were talking? What did you feel the atmosphere was like in the room?

*It’s varied from location to location, very much so. It’s more emotive when it’s totally black and you cannot see the audience from a presenter’s point of view. You see the audience and you the sort of pick up on the emotions from the people within the audience. It depends on the location Jami.*

So, when you’re talking about the dark rooms. That sense of drama………

*I think it’s a better experience from the presenters point of view, but I don’t know what the audience experience is like.*

Compared to when you’re able to see some people in the audience and you say that you pick up from them – what sort of things do you pick up?

*It ranges from I cannot be bothered and they pick their phone up and they don’t want to be there to some that are actually watching you very intensely and you know it’s had an emotional impact and they’ve had to leave, so it goes from one extreme to the other.*

And does that change how you address them?

*No.*

So you just stick to………..
You’ve got to, otherwise I think it would have an impact on the presentation.

Definitely, yeah.

When you, I’m sure it was you who said this on a couple of occasions, we, collectively used to do things a little bit differently in schools and go into assemblies. Have you referred to one in particular that you felt wasn’t very good?

I thought the (confidential) one was awful. Purely from the organisation from the school.

No, sorry, before we even started doing the road sense presentation – so way back.

I thought they were very disjointed. This is going to sound like the collaborative thing but it’s a case of, down to individuals in each organisation. When you’ve got that, a lot of acquaintances so you can put a name to a face, you know how they tick. We know how to work together to get what we want. Once we start to do this, and I know they are doing something very similar for the water safety now. They are working to do something similar. I think that is beneficial but it’s difficult. I wouldn’t say it’s difficult when you have the individuals in the organisation that want to maintain that and have that relationship. Without it we do become, we get on with it.

Have you ever been involved in doing road safety presentations?

Not really.
Have you ever been to any that other people have done.

* I would say no, other than the one that you did at the school at Whitely Bay. With the younger kids. But I knew this is a different age group. *

Can you remember experiencing any of the same emotions when you were talking as you had done at the time of the actual incident?

* Yeah, definatley. *

Can you elaborate?

* Yeah, one of, I'll go back to what I was talking about before. It took me back to, what am I dealing with here, what am I going to do, how am I going to help him, what he was doing, the impact on the individual. A little bit of, not despair, I'm trying to find the right word, not despair, just what am I going to do, lost. I going to do this, I'm going to do that, he's going to have to go home on his own. What can I do. There was a lot of stuff to put in place, like occupational health, and watch over the period of time and watch what a dark place he went to (confidential). *

Do you remember as you were speaking in the presentation feeling part of those same emotions again?

* Yeah, very much so and it brings it out. And that takes it back to how authentic the tale is because you can maybe, I could certainly feel it when I
was delivering, the emotion in my voice. I don’t know whether the audience did, but you’re thinking, keep a hold, keep a grip of yourself.

Why did you think it was important to get a grip of yourself as you put it?

*Just not make an arse of yourself. Excuse the French and I understand the impact it has on the other speakers because everyone is different but I didn’t want that to happen.*

That’s important that you’re honest about that. I was going to say, other people are different, the kind of rules they set themselves. When you recounted the story could you picture any of the same scenes in your mind as if you were maybe there again?

*Oh, aye. As I was telling the tale, I was in the canteen making breakfast. It’s like the step by step process and that’s how I manage to recall the tale. That happened, I went to there, went to there, turned the computer on, looked up, you know.*

In a visual way you mean?

*Yeah, so it’s all been played in my head while I’m telling the tale. So I’m seeing all that in my head.*

How did you want the students to feel as you were speaking, maybe in its entirety at certain points, what emotions did you want the students to experience as you went through?
I think to consider how their parents felt. I think it’s very, very difficult to get the message across, this is going to happen to you. I don’t think until they actually witness it first hand as in you see the scene, not a photograph, but see the scene first hand. You can see as many pictures as you want. I don’t think that has the effect. Just have a little think, think about what you might do, how would you feel if it was your sister, how would you feel if it was your parents that were killed by someone? Just to tie in with what everyone else is doing. I wasn’t going to give the ‘be and all and end all’ presentation to say this is what happens, this is all emotions, this is the whole presentation. But just a little part to say, here’s a part from here, here’s part from there.

So, when you talked about despair, I think that’s the word you said a few minutes ago. What are we going to do, how are we going to deal with this, and I suppose the realisation that this had happened to someone you were close to. Did you want some of the students to experience that despair on your behalf?

I wouldn’t say despair on my behalf, I don’t know whether that came across. I was lost for words, I didn’t know what to say to him. I didn’t know what to say to him and I said that to him. It’s coming back to me now and I don’t know what to do. You’re presented with some really, really unusual circumstances and you have to start thinking on your feet (confidential). You go back and it’s just to be as genuine as possible. This is what does happen.

End of interview
Appendix fourteen: Transcript of semi-structured interview with Speaker Y

Transcript of interview with Speaker Y Fire and Rescue

6th December, 1pm

So are you happy with the sheet that you’ve just read through that covers the ethical points. If you feel that you don’t want to answer any of the questions at any point, just say. If you feel that you’ve had enough and want to stop, just say, it’s entirely up to you. So, when we first started putting road sense together we held a workshop at headquarters and I don’t think you came to that. Northumberland weren’t involved heavily at that time, were they? What we did was got all of the speakers together and watched the films. We had a discussion about how it should look and what the content of people’s speeches should be. We sent people off to think of their own ideas and then we came back together. People had thought of a bit of a script or a rough outline of what they were going to say and we sort of built it from there. Can you remind me about how you started to get involved?

I just remember my boss to see me one day and asking me if I would be prepared to talk because the person from Tyne and Wear Fire Service wasn’t available at one of the talks. She gave me, the only thing I had to kind of work off and I don’t know if you could ask her, she gave me a copy of his script and I looked at that. It’s something that I’m kind of involved in with my work with Northumberland anyway so I was quite comfortable with doing it. I work with that age group a lot, it was something I was quite comfortable doing so I just said yes. Again I don’t know whether you were going to ask me this, I was a little bit concerned about what to write. You’d had the workshop that I missed, so I didn’t know whether what I was putting down was going to hit the mark. I just thought of my own experience of what I’d done to talk about, although I hadn’t delivered anything like that before, in that way.
So when you say you’ve got previous experience and that you hadn’t delivered anything like that before, what sort of things had you been involved in?

We do, aside from my, rather complicated. I have two jobs within Fire. I’m a retained fire fighter in Alnwick and I also work full time here in the community safety department. Part of my role in Alnwick is that we deliver young driver awareness to schools and youth groups and things like that. And there we have put a presentation together purely focused on a road traffic collision. It’s about the statistics and adverts from different parts of the world, Northern Ireland, Southern Ireland, sorry, because of their censorship, their watershed is a lot lower than ours. I’ve delivered that quite a lot. I’ve also delivered youth engagement programmes quite a lot here. I was very comfortable with that but not really talking about, kind of following a slide show and not really talking about anything personal. So they were like ‘this is a picture of a road traffic collision, this is kind of what’s gone on’, what the fire service is involved with, but never to the point where I’ve specifically talked about incidents I’ve attended. I mean that does come up in conversation with groups of young people when we’re talking about road traffic collisions and young driver awareness. It does come ‘have you ever been to anything like this’ but they tend to always want to know about the gore and the guts and to me, that’s not what it’s about. When I wrote my little speech thing, I kind of tried to steer away from that. I could talk about blood and guts and gore all day, every day but I don’t think that’s what it’s about. I think that’s too personal. They don’t need to, if I’m telling you about an incident, a professional incident then yeah, I would probably go into it. But if you’re just trying to talk about you becoming a better driver, a safer driver, you don’t need to know the ins and outs of the people’s injury or whether they died. I think it’s irrelevant. It’s just a bit, I don’t know what the right word is, it’s just a bit gory I think. So I tried to steer away from that.
So when you go Speaker X’s script, what were your initial thoughts when you first read it?

To be perfectly honest, I didn’t like it because I didn’t think it was, it really wasn’t about him. I think it was a legitimate story but I don’t think it was hard hitting. I can’t remember all of it actually. I don’t think it was hard hitting enough and I don’t think he was open enough about what had happened. I don’t think it really related to young people. From what I remember, it was a story about somebody coming to him at work who’d been involved, or whose family member had been involved in an accident. I think he maybe, with his experience, probably had something more relevant to the young people to talk about.

So when you got that script, what was the kind of pattern you went about doing your own, putting your own together?

I think I talk about this in my script. These incidents, I’ve talked about them to other members of the fire service, other professionals, loads. I’ve never, ever, you know talked to my wife. You come home from some sort of incident and you’ll be the same. We have a, if we go to a serious incident, we have what we call a ‘Critical Incident Debrief’ afterwards. That’s normally about 24 hours after the incident has happened. You get the crew together and everybody sits round and it’s kind of just, right, this is what’s happened, how does everybody feel about it? And also, if something hasn’t gone according to plan, what can we do to make sure it does? It just means that everybody has an opportunity to talk about it. I’ve been to loads of those. I was in the military when I joined the fire service so it’s not something I’m not used to. You’ll know yourself, you’ve seen me, talking about it like that, really really kind of made it really emotional for me. I don’t know why that is because I’ve never, it’s never, the first time I did it, I was like ‘woah, what’s going on here?’ and this isn’t me. This isn’t how I normally react to these kind of situations. I
just don’t know why that is. That’s why, when I was asked to do it again, I was like ‘yeah, I want to see how, from my own point of view I wanted to see how this plays out’. Do I deal with it better? I think I did, I didn’t get quite as emotional about it the second time but I still as like, I could tell you the story now, and I’ve told the story loads of times before and you know, I don’t know. It seemed to be a lot more personal.

When, sorry, can I just go back one step. When Helen has asked you to be part of the presentation, was that at the same point that you got Graham’s script?

I think it was at the same time, or it might have been a very short period of time afterwards. After I’d sort of said, yeah, I’m available, I can do it.

I just wondered if you had any expectations of what you were going to be doing beforehand?

Yes, I think, purely from what I’d done in the past. One of the days I did at Berwick actually, had all of the sort of, 15 to 16 year olds in their different classes and they were doing lots of different little sessions. One of mine was the young driver awareness. I did that one maybe ten times in the day to the different groups. That was my reference, that’s where I got that from.

So, did it come as any surprise to you that that’s what you were going to be doing? To sort of be more personal about it?

I don’t think it did really. When I read through the story and I thought, oh right ok, so what they’re after is something directly from my point of view. I need to make sure I don’t put any of the technical stuff in, away from the blood, guts
and gore. Try and keep it honest to how people felt, not just myself, how it makes everybody feel. When I talk to young people about this. They don’t have an understanding of the ramifications of their actions. If you do this, then five places down the line, this is what happens. You’ll see it in your job, people don’t think, ‘oh well, if I break into this house, this is what’s going to happen’. In five years time, I won’t be able to get a job because I’ve got a criminal record. It’s not what they’re thinking, they just think, ‘I want whatever is in the shop’. They don’t have that, what we try to bring across is what you do here now has much more reaching than people think about. Even people like ourselves don’t think about what’s going to happen in five years time.

How did you feel about being, what was your sort of reaction when you realised it was going to be personal. Were you dreading It or did you just think, right, ok, I’ll get on with it then?

Again, that’s not they way I react. That’s just not me. The thing that really hit home was when I got so emotionally involved. I was like, ‘woah’. In my head I was like, ‘what’s going on’, this is just not normal. And before I’d stood up to do it I was just nervous. If you’re not nervous about something, you’re not doing it properly. The way I look at it is, if I’m not nervous about standing up in front of X amount of people then I shouldn’t be doing the job because I’m not doing it properly.

Was the first presentation at Albermarle?

Boulmer.

Yes, Boulmer.
Can you, I can you, I mean I can obviously remember what you were talking about but can you summarise what you talked about in your speech, just so I can have some dialogue?

I talked about the first fatality I went to after I joined the fire service, and then I talked about a motor bike incident that had a direct effect on me because I changed – I’ve ridden motorbikes since I was 16 and it really, really had an effect on me as it was like, right I need to not, not that I ever rode – the way I looked at it, I would have never been in a situation to have had that accident but, riding a motorbike, if you ride that type of motorbike, this is like when you get pulled over by the traffic officer and he says, ‘do you realise you were doing 105 miles an hour?’ and you’re like, ‘well, no, the motorbike made me do it’. But, if you ride a motorbike that can do 150 miles an hour, you’re not going to be doing 60 or 70 miles an hour. You drive a car that does 150 miles an hour, it’s very easy to have a lapse of concentration. It’s very easy to put your foot down and be away because you don’t realise, in tow and half seconds you’re doing 100 miles an hour. Not that I ever really rode like that but the bike was so capable of doing that. That really made me sit and think. My wife nearly always comes with me on the bike and I was like, yeah, I don’t need to stop riding motorbikes, I just need to enjoy them in a different way.

What happened in the motorcycle accident again?

Just outside of Alnwick, towards Rothbury, probably two thirds of the way, there’s a lovely sweeping right hand bend and the road straightens out and goes into a couple of blind dips. So, motorbikers from Gateshead, out for a ride on a lovely day and an old lady and an old man coming in the other direction but obviously in the dips. From what I can understand, I didn’t really speak to the guys but from what I can understand they were just overtaking and overtaking and getting faster and faster. This guys has just been
overtaking and coming out of the dip and head on. The first bit of the, well,
this isn't in the speech, but the first part of the biker I found was a leg, a leg
in the jeans and I thought, this is like. The driver of the car had loads of facial
fractures, his femur was broken because the rider had partially gone into the
A post of the car and the roofline had gone in and hit the driver in the face.
He hit the car, pushed the engine back and hit the driver’s legs and the
female didn’t have a mark on her, just splash of his blood on her face. I
was sitting holding the drivers head and I looked down and there was an ear
in the well and I kind of looked at the bloke and thought ‘that’s not one of
yours’.

You just wouldn’t, it’s so unbelievable isn’t it? You don’t go into that much
detail when you’re talking do you?

There’s no need. Because if I stood in front of a room, whatever age group,
and said exactly what I’d just told you, that’s what makes me human.
Because I can kind of like, that’s not one of his. And that’s how I can deal
with that kind of situation and it’s the black humour and a kind of, I’m not
being disrespectful to anyone.

It’s sort of like a separation thing isn’t it?

Yeah, I don’t know this bloke, if I did know him. I felt sorry for him because I
knew he was in a really bad way and we worked on him, the air ambulance
came and we were doing traction on his legs and this kind of thing. At no
point was I thinking about the motorbike because there’s nothing I can do.
The way look at it, it’s not my fault he died. I didn’t play any part of that.
When I go to incidents, we’ve got lads on the crew that are desperate to
know how people get on. You know, we put them on the ambulance, the next
day they think ‘I wonder how he is’ and I’ve done my bit. I’ve got him out of
that car and if he’s probably a little bit more alive, job’s a good’un. If at some point he dies. Like I was saying before in the critical incident, maybe there is something I could have done but I didn’t put him in that situation. All I’ve done is try to help him. I think, some people get very emotionally involved in the, this bloke’s critically ill, I wonder if he’s still alive. Personally it probably never crosses my mind again. One of the things I do mention in my speech. I drive past, one of the first incidents I went to, I drive past there everyday when I come to work. It’s on the A1, so every time, it’s on the A1, I drive right past. I don’t think about it 99 times out a hundred but occasionally, it’s at the end of the dual carriageway and there’s always arseholes overtaking it’s seven miles of dual carriageway with about three overtaking opportunities, if you’re lucky. Decent overtaking opportunities and you’re constantly, you know. When somebody does that, I think that’ll maybe trigger, oh I remember that.

But you don’t really talk about that incident specifically.

I talk about the first one and the fact that it was a, we dealt with, the guy who hadn’t caused the accident as it turned out, he died. The guy who had caused the accident, he died later. He was alive when we got there.

Is this the white van?

Yeah.

Yeah, I was there. But I didn’t know that was the incident you were talking about because you don’t describe it. I remember you saying you go down the road and you don’t talk about it 99% of the time but I didn’t realise it was that one. It was Friday morning, first thing, mid-morning.
The bloke who was a local lad, from us, from my point of view, probably wasn’t my very first code one but that’s the way I talk about it in the thing. The kind of dramatic effect for me, when we get to the incident its like all hands to the pump, get this bloke out. It was the first time we were like, ok, we just have to sit here and wait for the police to do their investigation and we’re going to cut this dead guy out of here. And, he was so broken, he was just like a bag of mush. He was really, because it was such a tiny lorry and the lorry was right in front of his legs, he was all kind of entwined in it. It took us quite a long time. All three of us had done our training at the same time so we were all inexperienced from that point of view. Just having to do that for the first time, it was the kind of, the pause between, te action of the incident and then just sitting around waiting. And all that adrenaline has gone. And all you’re thinking is, Jesus, I’ve got to get him out with as much dignity as possible, get this bloke unentangled. When it’s somebody whose alive and kicking and you’re thinking like you’re doing this because you need to be out, again you like separate it. But it wasn’t and you kind of like, you need to get him out as much in one piece. I’ve dealt with more than two or three of those and you think, right he’s dead and you sit around for two hours while the collision investigation come from the other side of nowhere. You just sit and wait and wait and wait. That kind of struck me because it was the first one I’d done. I thought it was quite a good place to start the kind of story I was going to tell. If that had happened in the middle of nowhere and not somewhere I passed but it was quite an unusual situation.

And you’ve got a third story, haven’t you? You’ve got that one and the motorcycle and the young lad who died at Alnwick?

That story was quite particular in that we had two new drivers that were driving red Corsas literally one weekend after the other. What happened with that was, he was quite a well known lad within his age group. We had the initial call and it was a regular rtc, a single car through a fence and
everybody was out but him. Nothing unusual about that, but it was the call at half past 5 the next morning from the police to say the relatives were wanting to go to the scene. There was blood, guts and gore all over the road and it was like, ‘can you come and tidy it up so that they can come down?’ That was the bit that kind of, it’s a road just outside of Alnwick and I never think about that. I thought that would just kind of hit the target audience, it was their age group. Like I say it was the second part about people coming to, I don’t think anybody thinks about that, visit the scene of an accident. I just thought that would be appropriate.

I was going to ask you why you put them in that specific order, the incident on the A1 first?

I don’t think they happened in that order. I had these three little segments, in my own mind that’s how they kind of fit together. How they play out, how they affected not just me but other members of the crew. I thought they kind of fit.

How did you go about kind of putting a script together? Was it as soon as Helen asked you or did you take a bit of time to think about it?

To be perfectly honest, writing something down is something I’m diabolical at. I could probably have stood up and told those stories much easier than writing down. Writing them down was really really difficult. It really caught me out when I stood up for the first time and spoke about it, because I did get emotional about it. Writing it out beforehand, I wrote it out and I kind of delivered it to my boss. We did make a few wording changes, taking out the technical jargon although I really tried to stay away from that anyway, even delivering it to my boss was no dramas at all. Then I delivered it to my wife and I could feel myself kind of, I was thinking, hmmm, is this going to happen, no it’s not going to. But I did kind of feel myself kind of getting
involved. When I stood up and did it for the first time I was kind of like, wow. But I don’t remember, like I say, writing stuff down I’m absolutely diabolical and it’s something I hate doing. I would do this all day. I’ve just done a teaching qualification and the actual writing down the answers to the questions and what I ended up doing was getting one of my colleagues and we sat down at the desk like this, she would read the questions out and she was kind of typing it out for me. I don’t know what it is, it’s just the way my brain works. I find it really difficult to put into words what I’m thinking without speaking them out. Once I’ve spoken them out, it’s kind of too late, ‘that sounded really good, what did I say again?’ It doesn’t work. Yeah, I struggle with that.

I cannot remember, did you have a piece of paper to work off while you were talking?

Yeah, no I did because I wanted to make sure that I didn’t deviate. It’s so easy when you’re telling a story like that to get side tracked and go down a route that you really didn’t want to go down. I wanted to really steer away from the blood, guts and gore and the technical jargon. I think if I hadn’t written it down, with hindsight, knowing how emotionally involved I got I would have really struggled. But my thinking was, if I’ve got that written down and I go off track, I can bring myself back to where I want to be, and where I think this needs to go.

What did you think the students would learn from the stories, so not the presentation as a whole but your three stories, what learning points did you pick out from those?

So the learning points was that their actions have far reaching ramifications on not just the, but other people but be aware of who they are and what they
want to do. And hoping that, in some way, would alter their behaviour. The whole idea of that presentation is to alter their behaviour. When I delivered young driver awareness in the past, that’s what it’s all about. It’s not about making you drive at 30 mile an hour in a 30 mile an hour limit, having your car MOT’d, having insurance. It’s about making you think, right, before I try to overtake this car on this dodgy bit of road on a blind bend, what’s going to happen if it all goes horribly wrong. That fraction of a second will make you think, right, I’ll just wait a little bit.

Did you feel that those stories demonstrated those more than any others you could have picked out? Because when you’ve got a wealth of experience you’ve almost got a menu to pick from, haven’t you?

Yeah, I think they did. That’s why I chose those particular ones and in that particular order because they were very different incidents. Really only one of them involved the age group that I knew I was going to be talking to. But the others, the reason I chose the others was the outcome and how it made people feel. I wanted to get across to the audience that we’re not robots. After the incident is done and we’re all done and dusted, and I’m sitting at home with the wife. Again, this is a little bit difficult because I don’t dwell on things. But I know people do. That’s what I try and get across was the fact that other people, it’ll have an impact on probably hundreds of other people. Not just for today but for tomorrow – we wouldn’t be sitting here today, would we, if we hadn’t been to that very first incident we probably wouldn’t be sitting here today and nobody could have thought about that.

Yeah, it is strange – it does linger on for years and years and I mean, the reason that you remember things, you remember it because of some way it affected you, don’t you. Like you say, you don’t remember it because it affected the people involved, but I remember that one because I was (confidential). I remember it was a Friday in February. I remember it was first
thing in the morning because of standing in the cold. It touches certain sort of memories for you.

I don’t remember what time of year it was, I just remember it being the morning, a sunny, cold crisp morning. So it probably could have been any time from October through to Easter.

So, when you set out to choose the stories to talk about and put your script together, am I right in thinking and I’m sorry, I kind of summarising what you’ve just said there. You chose the stories more because of the personal touch points of them, rather than what story can I talk about to demonstrate that you shouldn’t speed, that you shouldn’t use a mobile phone, you shouldn’t drink and drive, the main themes that we use.

I didn’t think about that at all. I didn’t think, right I need to tell a story where somebody’s used their mobile phone and had an accident because a lot of the time, we don’t know know that. You know what I said about the motorbikes? That’s kind of what I thought he would be doing. He was obviously on the wrong side of the road so I just put that story together in my head because it seems logical to me that was what was happening. I’m sure the guys that did the collision investigation and probably interviewed all those big riders and the lady was in the passenger side probably got to the bottom of it. As far as I was concerned, it didn’t really matter how the incident had occurred, that wasn’t relevant to the group of people I was going to talk to at the time. From the fire service point of view, we turn up at an incident, we deal with it, and then we go. Whilst we’re dealing with the incident it just seems like the police are standing around waiting for us to get out the way so they can do their part. The ambulance guys are waiting or busy, but they’re really waiting for us to release the casualties. So we do, a lot of the time we’re very rarely first to an incident unless it happens in the middle of nowhere. We’re very rarely first. Normally, the police and or the ambulance
are there first. Then they realise, hold on a second, we might need the fire service to get this person out. Like I say, we normally turn up, you kind of pull up in the wagon and you look and you think, yeah, he’s pulled out, that’s what’s happened. Unless it’s, a couple of times I’ve had the police come and talk to me afterwards when someone has been critically ill and has died as a result. They’ve come and interviewed you afterwards and they ask is there anything that you’ve got and you kind of find out this was, they’ll know a little bit more because they’ll have done the initial investigation. Driver A was doing 80 miles an hour and was going the wrong way up a one way street or whatever. A lot of the time, we don’t, it looks like they’ve just come that way, you can see the skid marks and they’ve pulled out there, they’ve tea boned him. You could be totally wrong, you know yourself when you go to an accident and there’s a car over there and a car over there and it’s like, how did that happen? He’s actually been coming that way and it’s completely the opposite to what it looks like.

Going back to Boulmer, how did you feel in yourself before you started speaking, before you stood up?

Just a little bit, kind of, ‘right I’m going stand up and give a talk’ nerves – cold. It was freezing. Which didn’t help because when you are a little bit nervous that cold makes you not necessarily more nervous but I think it makes your nerves be a little more obvious. So you’re probably a little bit nervous and you’ve got a little bit of a shake. And when it’s cold you’ve got a little bit more of a shake. Just from a kind of usual, when you stand up in front of 200 people.

When you stood up, how did those feelings change as it went on?
It was like somebody kicking you in the backside. I don’t think I got more than three lines into it and all of a sudden I could hardly speak. It was really, really bizarre. Like I say, I’ve never had to do that before, if you know what I mean. It was very unknown territory, telling that story like that, you know. I had no expectation of that happening, of the way I was so involved in it and the way it hit me, becoming so emotional, because I’m not an emotional sort of person. I’m kind of just like, well, that’s the way it is.

When you say you’ve never had to do that before, what do you mean?

I think you’re kind of baring your soul a little bit. It wasn’t all true – no, that’s not really right. You know I was saying about, I don’t think about that incident. It’s very very rare that I was think about that incident. But I kind of wanted to kind of over emphasise that. I could have put somebody different in my place to tell the same story who probably thinks about it a lot. He’s one of these kind of people that kind of becomes very emotionally involved in the incident, always wants to know, I wonder if that guy actually, you know, we put him in the back of that car and he was in a really bad way, I wonder if we could actually ring the hospital, speak to the paramedics and say ‘do you remember that incident we were at?’ Generally the paramedics do because they go to the hospitals. I’ve got friends who are paramedics and ambulance techicians. I dealt with a – getting completely off the subject here but it’ll come back – I was out with a group of students in the mini bus. We were just about to drop them off. We were just about to drive into Newbiggin, you know where the mini roundabout was at Newbiggin? There was a car, a bloke lying next to the road where there’s a cycle path, and as were coming towards it, it looked like he’d been knocked over by the car and I was like, ok, I think we’re going to need to stop here. I’ve got a bit of a reputation for finding things, but I think it’s because I do so many miles with students in mini buses. Anyway, so we were driving along and I said to my mate, we’ll have to stop here because there’s a bloke lying next to the road. So we pulled up and we got out and we walked up to the car. There was this elderly bloke, 50 – elderly boke, I’m 50 myself. Late 50’s lying on the floor kind of on his side with this
great big puddle of vomit next to him, and this much older lady, probably 20 years his senior standing next to him on the phone. I said, ‘are you alright, is there anything we can do to help?’ and she said, ‘ah, this is my mums gardener and he’s taken bad at work. I was just taking him home and we stopped because he said he felt ill, so we stopped and I got down next to him and asked him how he felt. I started checking his pulse and his breathing, you know, all the kind of usual stuff. I said, oh, I think we need to call an ambulance. I said to my colleague, ‘right, ring 999 and ask for an ambulance to come’. So he’s on the phone to the ambulance and they were asking if the guy was hot. I was like, ‘we’re lying at the side of the road, we don’t have a thermometer, he’s asking all these really stupid questions. Then a police car turned up, just driving the other way and he got out and was asking the bloke if he’d taken drugs, and I’m thinking, well, whatever. So I’ve turned the guy over on his side and we got him in the recovery position. He’s kind of half conscious and the copper comes across and says, ‘is there anything I can do?’ And I said, well, you can ring the ambulance and ask how long they’re going to be, because if you ring 999 you’re just a punter but if you ring, you know, from the emergency services we might get a ‘it’s going to be ten minutes’. We’re just round the corner from the Wansbeck and the new hospital and they might say they’re going to be half an hour. And then this bloke stopped breathing. So, I can’t even remember where I was going with this story now. So, the guy stops breathing, and I said ‘ring 999 again’ because this is much more serious. The copper was like, ‘I’ll do compressions’ and I was like, great, I’m stuck with mouth to mouth with vomit and a beard that was all full of bacon sandwich so I started giving this bloke CPR. We did two or three rounds, not long, and maybe a couple minutes worth of CPR and the bloody thing came back. And all of a sudden, you know how they say, you know, you hear all this talk and people say they’ll just take this big breath. I’ve done that loads of times and it’s never happened and he did, he was lying there and all of a sudden he goes ‘gasp’ and he kind of half sat up, eyes wide open and I was like, ‘woah, he’s come back! That’s never happened before! Then the paramedic car turned up and she came over. I was like, ‘just thirty seconds ago we were giving this bloke CPR’ and she was like, ‘are you sure?’. We got him in the ambulance, I can’t remember
where I was going with this. I said I’d go back to where I was going but I’ve lost myself. What was the question again?

I’d asked you how you felt when you were speaking, and then you were talking about….

How I’d got emotionally involved. Yeah, that kind of like, that story there, I’ve just told you that story there. I’m not emotionally involved with that. I find it quite funny. All I remember is the bloke covered in, actually I do remember and this is like, again, I couldn’t tell this story to a group of people but all I could remember is that next to the big pile of vomit I remember there was a cycle track. On the cycle track there was the biggest dog sh*t I’ve seen in a long, long time. It had been run over two or three times so all I could smell was vomit and dog sh*t. Anyway, we got back in the van to drop the rest of the kids off, this probably took 30 or 40 minutes and me and my mate are sitting there and I was like, ‘can you smell dog sh*t?’ and he was like, ‘yeah I can’. So we both got out and both kind of looked at our shoes, and I’d been kneeling on the floor and I could just smell it. All the way around the rest of the route, for about another 40 minutes, it must just have been not on us, but just the smell, you could just smell it. But I couldn’t tell that story to, because they wouldn’t understand and I wouldn’t want them to understand, does that make sense? It wouldn’t have been relevant anyway. But incidents that I’ve been to, and I’m sure incidents that you’ve been to, you wouldn’t want to tell that story to other people. You can tell it to other, what I would call, professionals, because they understand.

They understand why it’s funny………..

Yeah, and why you remember it. And I remember it because all I could smell was dog sh*t and vomit. That’s one of the reasons I picked those stories
because I could tell that hey have an emotional involvement and I think I was saying about how it wasn’t entirely true, it was entirely true, it just might not have been all about me. And I thought, well if I tell it, from like a robotic way, from the way it mostly made me feel then it probably wouldn’t have been any good.

Yeah, it’s interesting that you and all of the other speakers have chosen to tell stories that are relevant but that you’ve also chosen stories that try and break down people’s perceptions of the emergency services. That was never an intention of the presentation and that’s not something that I said to yourself or Speaker X or Speaker y or (name) or (name), ‘and one of the aims of the presentation is that we want people to see beyond the emergency services’. That wasn’t one of the things we spelled out but everyone has chosen to do that. It’s not a criticism because it’s been a kind of secondary result from talking to the students that they’ve said, you know, ‘we’ve never thought of that before, we’ve never thought of you going home after your day of shift and you know, the more human side of the emergency services because it’s not a presentation about how human about how human the emergency services are, it’s a presentation about road safety. What’s interesting to me is that you’ve already kind of chosen that as a prerequisite, does that make sense?

Yeah and that really was one of the things that guided the story and tell them in the way that I did because I thought it was really important. I said this earlier, I wanted it then to understand that what they do, at that point in time has an effect on, not just them, they get killed, they go to jail, spend the rest of their life in a wheelchair. That’s fine, I don’t really care about that, if I wanted to be brutally honest, I don’t really care because it doesn’t affect me. When I leave this incident and you’re in wheelchair for the rest of your life, I’m not going to know that. But what I’ve done at that incident I’m going to potentially remember and it’s going to potentially affect me and that’s what I
wanted to try and get across. And like you say, the other speakers have kind of done the same thing.

When you were putting together your story, sorry, I’m going back a step again, it’s relevant, when you were putting together a story did you relive them in anyway?

_No more than telling you now. It was such a shock._

So, moving on to what you’ve said there. When you stood up and talked, were you experiencing some of the same emotions that you had at the time of the incident?

_No, because I don’t. At the time I don’t have that. Even at that, this probably doesn’t come across very well, but afterwards I don’t think about it. Because, I don’t see the, it’s not going to be of any benefit to me to mope about the fact that somebody has lost their life. I don’t know these people. I’ve been to incidents, living and working in the community I do as a retained fire fighter in Alnwick, I’ve been to numerous incidents that have involved crew members, family and friends, wives car crashes, sister upside down in a ditch, children, those kind of thing. I’ve been to house fires of not my family, because my family aren’t from there, but crew members and you think, ‘Jesus, that’s such and such ‘s house’ but it doesn’t have an effect on me. In that way, because I’m not emotionally involved with those people to begin with. So I don’t know whether that makes me a cold person but_

Well, it’s honest. So, what emotions do you remember experiencing as you were talking, if you were to, I don’t know, put it into words, which is difficult.
Put emotions into words? I don’t know. I don’t know. It’s probably not my strong point. If I’ve got any strong points. I just felt 100% more emotionally invested in the incident than I had done at the time and at any point since the incident.

And you can’t explain why that is?

No. Not at all.

And, do you, did you have any awareness of the emotions you were showing visibly to people at the time?

Yeah, I just thought I was being a bit of a wimp. And in my head, I was just like, ‘just stop doing this, there’s no need’, but I couldn’t.

So in terms of the physical symptoms, if you like, do you know what you were displaying as you were talking?

Not really, I could just feel the tears and the kind of emotion gripping me inside. Like, you know, you go a funeral. It was that kind of feeling. When you go to a funeral, a close friend or relatives funeral. That’s kind of what I was feeling inside. And all the time I was thinking, just get a grip of yourself Shaun. There’s no need for this at all. I took a few breaths and tried to go on and another couple of sentences later it just welled back up again. I have no way of explaining that because that’s never happened to me before. And that’s one of the reasons why, when you ask me to do this, I thought, ‘yeah, I’ll definitely agree to that’. Right at the beginning I think I did get a little touch of, when we first started talking, I thought, I could feel myself, but then it just went.
When you were going through the moments when you were composing yourself, when you were speaking, were they planned pauses in your script?

_No, I just thought there’s no point in me trying to stumble on with this. Nobody is going to understand a word. I need to take a breath and just get on with it the way it needs to be delivered. But then I was thinking, hopefully, in my head, at the same time I was thinking ‘get a grip of yourself Shaun because you’re just a big girls blouse, hopefully this is showing exactly what I’m trying to show. So actually, has this kind of subconsciously, worked?

Because, not only are we telling the story about how we are emotionally involved, we’re showing it. Probably, like now, talking about it now, I’m not emotionally involved if you know what I mean.

So when you had practised your script, had you practised showing any emotions?

_No, I just practised delivering it in a professional way, obviously, but kind of dramatics not the right word, but kind of put across with a bit of emotion and feeling into it, without expecting to be that emotionally involved. I put across the point that I’m a human being and this does affect me but I don’t want to be a sobbing mess in the corner.

So, how did you intend to put that emotion across if you had gone to the plan that you’d had at first, when you were saying that you were wanting to show some emotion?

_I think I was just hoping that what I’d written down and the way I was going to talk about it would have been enough. At the time I was thinking that’s all I had. Because I’m not a particularly emotional person.
So when you say the way that you were going to talk about it, what do you mean? I’m being a bit mean here, I think I know what you’re trying to say but I don’t want to put words into your mouth.

_I know you are, I just wanted it to come out naturally. I wanted it to sound honest and I’ve definitely said this a few times, it was the truth, it just might not have been all my truth._

Why did you feel it was important for it to be honest?

_I could have stood up there and told a story, and had no involvement in it at all. I could have taken someone else’s incident. That would have been like me delivering another guys speech. It would be pointless. I said I didn’t think it was very good but maybe when he told it, it was very good. But when I read it, it would be like me giving my speech to someone else and then going, I don’t see the, where is the involvement in that. How is that relevant to them? Maybe it would and maybe someone could deliver it, but I just wanted it to be as honest as possible because I think, you said that people have picked up on the fact that they wanted the audience of the emergency services, not just being, you know, we’re just a policeman, or we’re just a fire fighter, or we’re just a paramedic, whatever. We’re everyday human beings who have got friends and family and dogs and cats. I really wanted to get that across, I think it’s important and I think it helps deliver the message._

Is that something that you’ve found from your experience before, that you think it helps deliver the message. Is that something that you were already aware of?
I think it was, that was why I chose those particular stories. In the young drivers presentation I deliver, in the very first slide, it’s the opening slide, there’s a picture of an rtc on the 697. Just two cars together, one’s got all the roof peeled back. I tell that story, and it’s somebody else’s story but I try to tell it from a personal point of view. If I tell this story you might see what I’m going on about. So, car crash with two people I work with directly involved. It was the father of one of the lads I work with and it was the other lad’s first fatality. The lad (confidential) his dad was a police officer. His dad was involved in the accident. He’d been driving along the road and a guy had pulled out on him. From what I remember of the story and how I tell it. His dad was sat injured but not critically injured. And in the other car was the guy who was dead and there was the guy who was critically injured. And I kind of explain to the audience, right well our priority is with the guy who is seriously injured, and I kind of go through the, well, the guy’s dead, he’s not going to get any worse, so, you know. And then I try and say, look, what I’m trying to get across her, my friend’s dad had to sit in this car for about an hour waiting for another fire engine to come, because I’m trying to get across that we haven’t got 50 fire engines in Northumberland and had to come from wherever. He had to sit and watch this guy get extricated from the car as well as, there’s a dead body in front ofhim. You try to get those emotions across and that isn’t my story. It isn’t my story but I try to tell it like it is my story if you know what I mean. I decided that wouldn’t have been any good for what I wanted to do. I could have used that, it would have fit, but it didn’t seem appropriate because I wouldn’t have been emotionally involved. Not that I had any idea that I would have been emotionally involved and that’s not what I was going for but I don’t think, like you said, from all the incidents that I’ve been to, why did I choose those? Why did I pick those three? And I don’t really know other than I discounted lots of other ones because they didn’t fit.

Ok, yeah.
I don’t think they gave the message I wanted them to give or they weren’t my story. If that makes sense?

Yeah, it does. Did you, when you were doing your script at Boulmer, could you visualise being at those incidents again. What was sort of playing in your head as you were talking?

I think I’ve probably said this already. I wasn’t thinking about the incidents. Obviously, probably subconsciously, something was having an effect on me that, I don’t know, maybe it was just because I was openly telling the story and trying to be as honest as possible. Maybe you’re not, maybe when you’re telling the story, you try and put a bit of, when I’m telling a story I try and put a bit of humour, I use humour as a bit of a defence. Maybe when I’m telling stories to other people I’m kind of playing it that way. But in that incident I was telling it and playing it like it was meant to be emotional, maybe that’s why I became so emotional about it. In my head I was just saying, stop, just stop, because this isn’t, you know, other than in my head I did say that partly I was thinking this is kind of showing that you’re not this fire fighter robot that cuts people out of a car but the other side of me was thinking, just get a grip of yourself, there’s no need to be doing this.

Why did you feel that it was important for you to get a grip of yourself, in your words?

Because it was, it was kind of spoiling the delivery. Because I was having to stop and I wasn’t getting the words out properly. I was kind of thinking, I’m not delivering this properly, people aren’t going to get the message that I’m trying to give. They would just think, well, I don’t know. I don’t know what I was thinking really, just kind of, this isn’t going according to plan, the message isn’t going to come across.
But what were you hoping the students would take from what you’d talked about?

Well, firstly that, you’re going to be bored listening to this tape – it’s that their actions, their actions are more than just – I’m just going to overtake this car, or I’m just going to use my mobile phone, or I’m just going to whatever it might be. And that I’m, and you said it, we’re all human. The people that turn up at the accident to wipe you off the road or do whatever it might be. We’re human as well and our emotions are affected. Even if we don’t realise it.

Can you remember being able to see any of the audience when you were talking?

Not as individuals, and I think that’s something that I’ve become accustomed to. I remember there being a lot of policemen in the audience at first. There seemed to be loads of people, like professional people there. I don’t know whether that’s because it was just at Boulmer but there seemed to be loads of people from the police, loads of people from the ambulance. I just remember seeing loads of day glow jackets from the police. I don’t think so, I wasn’t focussing on anybody in particular.

Could you get a sense of how the people in the audience felt, as you were talking?

Other than cold?

Other than freezing cold.
No, it was quiet. There didn’t seem to be anybody chit chatting. A lot of the times when you deliver these kind of, that kind of thing, there’d be someone not paying attention, but everybody did seem to be paying attention.

Could you kind of feed off that in any way, but which I mean, was there any sort of, kind of vibe in the audience, that affected how you………

Other than the fact that everybody seemed to be paying attention, it wasn’t disrupting me that there was people paying attention that weren’t. if there had been a group of people that should’ve been paying attention that weren’t, that would have had an adverse affect on me. But I don’t think the fact that everyone was paying attention had a positive effect on me. I think it was just that there was no negative, there was nobody making a noise, I didn’t notice any distractions or anything like that, nobody in the students, maybe was because I was kind of focussed on what I was doing. You deliver stuff all the time and you think, those two at the back aren’t paying any attention at all. I’m not bothered. The 80% of the audience who are paying attention or the 50% or the 20% or whatever it might be, I don’t care about them. If they’re not going to pay attention then, as long as they’re not affecting everybody but there was definately none of that.

Would you have rathered the students were in the front row rather than the professionals?

Yeah, there seemed to be a lot. The other ones, at Albermarle, Albermarle was a bit weird. You’re there because you’re told to be there. I know the kids from the schools were but to me it was much more relevant to them. I’ve been to so many of those military, right its Christmas, they tell you not to drink and drive, they put a crashed car outside the guard room and all this
kind of thing. I had 25 years of those and getting progressively more and
more hard hitting. Towards the last 5 or 6 years of my military service, we’d
have your department Christmas do, your squadron Christmas do, your
regimental Christmas do, your sergeants mess Christmas do, the officers
against the senior NCO Christmas do, there’d be ten events before
Christmas. It got to a point where not only would they put transport on for you
to get there and back but in the morning, they’d transport to get to wherever
you worked. You know, there was so many people who would be over the
drink drive limit. It wasn’t to stop people drink driving it was to stop people
being convicted of drink driving, does that makes sense? They didn’t want
the administrative burden and they also didn’t want them, look at that, there’s
been another ten soldiers arrested over Christmas, it wasn’t politically correct
for soldiers to be involved in that kind of thing and that’s why they started
doing that. I just felt at Albermarle, if we were lucky, maybe 1% of the people
paid much heed to what we were talking about.

Out of all of them you had done, what was the most effective one you’d
done?

I’d have to say Boulmer because it was such a big audience. If we’re talking
about, if we’d had an effect of the 1% of population who have attended then
Boulmer, it has to be because that 1% is 3 people compared to Albermarle,
which probably wasn’t 1% or the last audience. I think the presentations have
the same effect and I think they’re going to have the same effect on the
same percentage of the group so if you can talk to a thousand people then
you’re going to get more people.

Do you think the way that the room is set up, things like the darkness and
your proximity to the audience, do you think they are important elements to
it?
Yeah, I think, we are just talking about how cold it was in that hangar. That’s got to have affected some people, because it affected me, I was freezing. There would have been people in that audience who weren’t listening because they were too cold, definitely. But I think the ambience, the dark and the slides and the guy standing at the beginning, that was really important. It sets the tone. We’re not messing about. It’s not going to be funny, this isn’t some kind of comedy show, it’s going to be, we’d like you just to listen, it’s effective.

Those first minutes, you’re right, are so important, the presentations for me that have been the most effective have also been the most dramatic if that makes sense. I would agree, Albermarle wasn’t the strongest one we’d done. It wasn’t dark in the room, you just didn’t get that same kind of vibe from it. I don’t know what the magic solution is to kind of get it right, but you just sort of know don’t you. The audience have a big part to play in that.

I think, like you say, nobody’s being disruptive, I think that has to help, the Albermarle one, who’ve not been there, seen it and done it, but you know, they’ll have, they’ll have been to traumatic incidents themselves. They’ll have been involved in traumatic incidents. I think from that point of view it lost a bit of its effect. It would be like me going downstairs and telling my story to 50 fire fighters, they’d be like yeah, ive done that, it’s what I do every day.

I don’t think ive got anything more to ask you. I’ve gone off script a little bit as I was interested to know what you thought. Anything else that you want to add?

I don’t think so.
Appendix fifteen: Transcript of interview with Speaker Z

Transcript of interview with Speaker Z

Friday 6\textsuperscript{th} January 2017

Ethics form handed to Speaker Z and then discussion begins……………..

Right so, initially you approached me to assist with the road sense common sense presentation/ My initial thoughts were to come and do a presentation on being a family liaison officer role, of what a family officer is. When I came to first meeting I was all up for, yeah yeah, I'll come and help you out. Until we sat down at the meeting. And then all of a sudden I think the enormity of what you were asking hit me like a ton of bricks. I didn't realise that the role itself would be initially what you were after. You were more after how it affected me (interrupted)…. So yeah, so the enormity of it. I didn't expect to be, I go to a crash, I do something useful. I didn't realise it was going to be personally to me. Initially, as you well know, I took that quite hard. I wasn't 100% happy with what it is I needed to do because I need to delve into my world. What I do initially when I go to jobs is switch off and go into work mode. After listening to everyone in the meeting and listening to the families, I didn't want to let anyone down, I didn't want to let you down. You'd ask me because I'm daft as a brush and id help you as much as I can, but I also wanted to make sure that my defence mechanism wasn't messed about, because I have to have one, sometimes. So, yeah, we had a break, I had a chat with you, I had a chat with Helena, I had a chat with the families, Becky as well. I thought, right, stop being a horse’s arse. Get a grip of this and get it sorted. We got a general idea of what it is you were after. You explained how it would make me feel, you explained how it would make me, the affect it has on me as an individual, the effect it has on my family and on my role as a family liaison officer. So I went away and initially I sat down and thought, this is going to be difficult for me to understand. However, ironically, I dealt with a job, it hit me like a ton of bricks. It’s never happened to me before. I go to
jobs and I would go into work mode but this one really really touched me because of the circumstances around it. As you well know there had been a road traffic collision where a young man had been killed. The fence post had gone through the door, took the side of his head off and in the investigation it came out that it was his own fault, he was the orchestrator of his own demise. However, the circumstances leading after that to get a hold of the family was something that was really, really difficult because I had to try and find him for one thing. This kid was out of nowhere and as you well know you have to go into the investigation side, you’ve got to go through the identification, you have to go into the checks, you know what you need to do, and I just got to the point where there was nobody initially jumping at me, to say this is where the family is. From the enquiries, I had two numbers. And what I didn’t want to do was tell someone over the phone that their loved one had died, because I think personally, and from the training as well, it’s the worst thing you can possibly do. Invariably though, when you speak to someone on the phone they’re 90% already aware of what’s going to happen, aren’t they? I went to his address, it was in complete darkness, you’re moving into the realms of 3 or 4 o’clock in the morning. I then couldn’t find anybody, there was no trace on the CIS, there was nobody at all. And then we found these telephone numbers. GS checks came back and I think one of them was in the Newton Aycliffe area. Again, I went there. That was the first one I picked. I always do that, I always go with the gut instinct, let’s go and see that one, either negate it or you never know, you might be onto a winner. Around about four, half four in the morning, banged on this poor b**ggers door, kicking the hell out of it. There was no answer and I’m saying to my gaffer, I’ve got nothing, this is the next one. And I made the dilemma of, do I leave a message, don’t I leave a message? But the investigation was rolling. We needed to make an executive decision. I spoke to the SIO. We came up with a plan. We had no other avenue to go down. So that executive decision was made, in total agreement between me and the SIO. I rang it, left a message. The message was very, very sceptical. It was, hello this is the police, can you confirm are you such and such? If so, please ring me back, in need to come and speak with you. I would say probably on the journey back, we got a phone call to say that the mother had been on the phone, we
identified where she lived, and I was the only person available. Normally you would go to a house and there would be two of you. I went to the house initially, and then luckily enough one of my colleagues was released thankfully and got to the door. I can even see it now. We walked up to the door, hats on, I always put hats on. It’s an official thing for me, I always put hats on. As soon as I opened the door, the very first words out of her mouth were, ‘he’s dead’. And I just said, ‘yes’. Sh*t. I’ve had to, I couldn’t put cream on it, I couldn’t put strawberries on it, I couldn’t make her feel any better. I had to just be open and up front with her. And she just, as you would expect, collapsed. Which has happened many times before. That normally doesn’t affect me. You know, I’m expecting enormous grief....

A reaction.....

Yeah, a reaction. And her husband who sometimes you look towards to give you some help in making this message easier, was even worse. And he just broke. And she became the person who was actually the strongest in the room, but the worse for me. It’s a very difficult situation to explain. It was more she was worried about him, but she was just lost. I thought, right ok, you just need to let things settle down because the information has gone in one ear and out the other. They’ve heard ‘death’, they’ve heard ‘gone’. They haven’t heard anything else. And I must have said it six times, that he’d died, and that he’d been involved in a road traffic collision because it just wasn’t registering with him. You then have to go through the process of getting them to identify the body, again you go through the CID 27, you go through the bits and bobs, you get messages on your phone, you’re trying to get it done, you know, ‘are you there? Have you done it?’, it’s all time critical. And I thought, no, I’m not rushing this, it’s probably going to be one of the worst things in the world for this lady to do. And then she came out and said, ‘refuse to do it, I refuse to go and see him’. And I just looked and thought, ‘sh*t, what do I do now? Where do I go from here?’ So I turned to the dad. ‘I cannot do it, I cannot do it’. And then you have to go into the explanation about why you’re
there. And then you tell them the coroner, and you tell them about why you’re doing what you’re doing. It’s a very important time. And they point blank refused. And I thought, I’m lost here, I don’t know where to go from here. I then thought about the DNA route and I started to explain that to them, I started to explain the severity of the injuries and that potentially what they were going to see was catastrophic. Because I think it’s important that you tell these people the truth. They will never ever forget the words that come out of your mouth. The second, I always remember from the training, the words that you use and what you tell that family will be the words they remember until the day they die. Right. But they’ll also remember how you dealt with them. They also remember the questions that you ask, because those are the questions that keep going over and over in their mind. So, I went down the DNA route, and I’m getting in my ear, we need this sorting sooner rather than later. So I change my plan a little bit. And I asked if there was any other family member that could potentially do this. And I think as soon as I said that, the mam and dad situation kicked in.

Right ok.

The ‘I don’t want someone else to identify my bairn’, which worked very well for me.

That kind of parental responsibility?

Yeah, it was a no, no, no, all the way through. Honestly, it was like, carte blanche, ‘you can piss off, I’m not doing that’. It was just the grief. I cannot explain it, it was just overwhelming, I’ve seen them crash, I’ve seen them drop down, I’ve seen them cry, and then an hour later, they’re like ‘we need to get this sorted out’. This was constant. This went on for days and days. Anyway, we get confirmation they’re going to do it, dad’s going to come with
her. All the way in the car they were just broken, We got to the RVI, and as you do, you check the body. And weirdly enough, I’d been to the scene and I’d done the blue light run from the scene to the RVI. I’d seen the catastrophic injury to the side of his head. He was lying in the side room and he looked as peaceful as hell. What had happened was, the nurses had filled the cavity with blotting paper. They’d put his head onto a pillow and faced his head towards the wall, so the unaffected side of his head was clear. But the pillow covered the injury. And I went and I checked and I thought, that’s fine. And I took her into the room and he swore blind that he hadn’t crashed.

‘Why’s my son asleep?’ and I’m saying ‘he’s dead darling. He’s died, you know he’s dead don’t you’. And then the doctor came in and explained about the catastrophic injuries. And she’s saying, ‘he hasn’t got catastrophic injuries’. There’s nothing wrong with him. I’m sat in this room and I’m thinking, ‘do you want me to turn him over?’. These are the things that go through your mind. I don’t want to lie to you, but if I don’t do something here that makes you understand that your son has gone, you’re never going to believe that he’s gone. You’re never ever going to go through the grieving process. You’re never ever going to be able to say to your family, ‘I was there. He was dead’. There was something not right. And a nurse came in. There was me, the dad, there was her, there was the doctor. The doctor was a very confident fella. But the nurse came in and she absolutely had this family in the palm of her hand. And she told them, probably for the tenth time, how he’d died. And it clicked. And it totally clicked. Somebody completely independent, who hadn’t been to the scene, who wasn’t wearing a tac vest, who wasn’t wearing a yellow jacket, someone who wasn’t in ‘authority’ in adverted commas, she was there to help. And it was amazing to see. And I actually gave her a hug when I left. I said, ‘mate, you’ve no idea how much help you’ve given me’. Then we drive back and all the way home she was just distraught, like, it’s difficult to explain. It was like, she was going through the grieving process in the back of my car. Angry, dismayed, no it’s not happening, it’s not my son. Eeh, you’ve been really lovely, you’re nice, it’s all your fault…….
So sixth months worth of grief in one go?

Yeah, in the space of a trip from the RVI back to Ryton. And I was like, my head was bashed. And her daughter turned up. To then be told that he had a two year old son. The whole room broke down again. ‘You’re going to have to tell him’. And I thought, sh*t, how on earth am I going to tell this bairn that his daddy is never coming home again? Luckily, it clicked in my brain, what about the pamphlets we’ve got. And I thought, what about the schools, they must have some sort of support, with the family members. They can all go together and support each other. And we can explain that daddy’s has gone now. He’s gone to heaven. And all this is happening in the first six or seven hours. Normally that’s a week down the line. It just kept going and going and going. And I said, I can’t do anything more for you at the minute. Being here is upsetting you. I’m asking, is it ok to come and see you tomorrow? Things will settle a bit. I said you’re going to have questions, and I’ve told you before, I’ll come back and tell you all of it again. So, we agreed on that. The dad had been in the kitchen. He’d never left the kitchen. And I could see him getting angrier and angrier and I thought, I’ve got to see him before I leave because what I didn’t want to happen when I leave was for him to lose the plot and have somebody else on the case. Because you know as a FLO you’ve got to safeguard the family. Some people are ill, some people have got mental health problems, you’ve got to work out all of it. He was quite happy, once I’d spoken to him, he shook my hand, bless him. I left. And I was drained. I was properly, batteries ended, game over. I was starting to get upset. Luckily we had two cars. And the other cop I had with me had gone. I pulled over and I just broke down. I had fifteen minutes. You bastard, what have you just done? And I’ve never done that before. You know, oh right, back to the office, I’ve got paperwork to do, get this form done, it’s got to go to the Coroner before I go off shift. It wasn’t like that. Holy sh*t, I’ve just destroyed an entire family. And it hit me hard.
So, at what point did it become clear to you, you were talking before about the realisation about what I was assign you to do. At what point, do you think, oh right I know what story I’ll tell.

I think it was because of what you were wanting. Not massive pictures of crashed cars. You wanted to the reality of what it does. That to me was the one and only incident that kicked me in the teeth. Literally. It knocked me for six. The six foot, twenty stone monster that I am. I was broken at the side of the road. And I thought, if that doesn't get people to understand what we have to get across to these people. Nothing will. Because I can go to a sudden death at the side of the road where somebody had crashed and I told someone that they had died. We had a situation where he’d done it himself. It was an opportunity where he could have changed that day. It was his decision making process, he was the orchestrator of his own demise. It was the most difficult thing I’ve ever had to do. Trying to explain that to a two year old is the most difficult thing I’ve ever had to do. But it was just the whole scenario. I wanted to make sure that when I told that story to those people in that auditorium, that they understood what was going through my brain, but was also going through here, in my heart. You know, we do go into work mode, switch on and we’re good at what we do and we’ve got to do it, but there are times when the humanity side comes through. And I think, sh*t, if that was my family, how would I deal with that? And from what you were asking me, and what Helena was asking me, and what the families were asking me was to get that across in such a dynamic way, is that right? To put it that way? Warts and all, boys and girls, warts and all.

So, there’s the process of you choosing that story, out of all of the others. I think, that choice, from what you’re saying came pretty easily. You didn’t have to pick it out of ten others.
No, no. When I walked out of that room, in Ponteland. That was going through my brain. Literally. Because I’m thinking, sh*t, they really want me to pour this on. The only one I can even consider, I mean, I’ve had double fatalities, I’ve taken bodies out the foot well of a car, they were mush. That wasn’t what hit my straight away. What hit me was how it affected me as an individual, and then subsequently you go on to how it affected my family. Because as you know, I went home that morning, went to bed. I was down, I was quiet. My little lad, bless him, he came in and he made me a cup of tea. And the little git never makes me a cup of tea, right, ever. It’s a non-entity. He’s 14 going on 46. He just doesn’t do it. When he first knew that I’d had such a crap day and that I’d dealt with something that had affected me. That eh just cracked on of his own volition and I love him, the little git, and there’s times where I’ve thought ‘I could probably punch you all over this room’ the little git, I love him to death. But, he got the biggest hug ever. And I thought to myself, can you imagine what I’d done if it was my little’un? Somebody walking into my living room and saying, you know, he’s dead. It just all hit me like a ton of bricks. But the good part about it is that I’ve got a wife who’s a cop, she gives me twenty minutes, to do whatever I want, to say whatever I want. I can vent it, I can hoy my teddies out the cot, I can talk absolute b*llocks as she puts it. But, I get that twenty minutes. And then she says, right, you’ve had your twenty minutes, back to reality now, back to the house, doing as you’re told. Get the washing done. But that for me, helps me.

So what did you, how did you, translate the story in your head, into a script to talk to people about?

Do you know the funny thing is, I didn’t make the script. I just told the story. I wrote it down, purely for me, I wrote it down because I wanted to just have a structure. I didn’t need to write it down word for word because I explained how when I first started I’d been in the military, I’d been to horrible places, I’d seen horrible things which I thought I’d educated myself enough to deal with this situation quite easily. And to be fair, 99% of the time I can. I’ve seen
some horrible things, I've seen some amazing things, but I thought I'd prepared myself. This one job totally blew that out of the water. When I came back after I thought, I cannot write it down for you as such. I did because you needed to know, what the hell are you talking about ****. Is this what you want? Is this going to have the benefit of what we need. I'll always remember, I had that piece of paper in my hand and I never looked at it once during the presentation. What I did remember was looking at people’s faces, and their jaws dropping half way through and it was pure bloody silence.

This is when we came to rehearse?

Yeah, when we were rehearsing. And Helena must have been concerned for me because she thought, he doesn’t know what we’re asking him to do here. She wanted to keep me right, what we’re asking him to do here. And I said, well, at the end of the day, we need to do this. I wanted to do this for the families. They had the bravery to come in and do this thing. What I was doing was cock all. It was nowt. I was just telling them about something had affected me, which technically wasn’t my family. Their families had been destroyed and I thought, there’s no way I’m not going to help. That was my thought process. And if I had to drop my guard, and I did drop my guard. I've never ever spoke like that in front of anybody, ever.

That was going to be my next question. So when, some of the speakers have written down word for word what they were going to say. And you could see the pauses in their writing were the same as the pauses in their…

They gave when they were speaking?
Yeah. But with you, I remember when we came back together at headquarters and you gave your speech for the first time. You weren’t reading from it. You were reliving it.

_I was reliving it._

Yeah, you were reliving it but those kind of pauses and things were already there, and that, when you deliver it now it hasn’t really deviated from that.

_The circumstances never change. The story has never changed, it never can change. It is what it is. When you deliver it you can’t say word for word. But I don’t think you get the personal touch reading from a piece of paper. Now I’ve found, me personally, watching other people whose speeches are fabulous by the way, and they’re still as impactive as mine, if not more in the circumstances because of what they’ve had to go through. But I personally found, I’m not going to lie to these bairns. I’m not going to go away and if sat down and wrote something, so they can sit down and say, you wrote that, you’re a bloody good writer, or somebody like yourself whose good at writing, or just because you’re big and daft and you’re happy to stand up in front of people and you read it off verbatim, that’s not the case. What I did was, I’m telling you was what the affect it had on me as an individual. I don’t need a piece of paper to do that. And ironically, I’ve never had a piece of paper, not even on the very first day. I just refreshed my memory of what I had, that’s what I did actually: hello, military, crash, what went wrong, road sense common sense, that’s the only thing I had to remember. Whatever you do, don’t forget that young’un, there’s a geet big sign behind you. That was the only thing I used that piece of paper for. The actual content and the thing I’d sent you to write on, I didn’t need._
So what if I’d said to you, right, I don’t want you to use that story Derek, I’ve written one for you, can you read it out?

No.

No. So, how important was it for you to use your own real story?

You don’t lie. They can see it in your face. They can see it in your body mannerisms. I got upset. I got upset reading that story. There were times when I had a lump in my throat and I think that was quite apparent as well. There were times on other occasions when I’ve done it and I’ve gone over it again, probably a third or fourth time where I might have had a tear in my eye. Because I’m there. I’m literally there and to have the situation where it’s dark. You know there’s a crowd in front of you but you don’t see them. And they’re getting you to relay that information. I have a picture in my mind of that scene. I have a picture in me getting into the car and driving to (confidential). I have a picture of me walking up to that bloody door, with my hat on, remembering to put my hat on and knocking on that door. I have a picture of that woman sat on the floor in bits and I need to get that across to people. Kids are clever. They’re clever little b**gers, they know when you’re taking the piss. They know when you’re sensationalising something. It might not be that you’re lying. You’re just trying to like, this is a road safety campaign, oh you bad people, don’t jump in the car and do this, no. This is reality. This is what you need to understand. You people, in front of me, need to understand that what you’re seeing here is bloody hard, it’s difficult.

So when you’re talking through the story, you can see that you’re reliving it. You can see the pictures in your mind. You mentioned that you had a lump in your throat, sometimes you’ve had a tear in your eye, do you relive all of the same feelings you had at the time?
No. I don’t, because if I did that I’d probably go bang. I’d be on a completely and utter basket weaving course. I get to the point where I’m like, oh, you’re just stepping over the mark son, and I put a little funny in. That’s my defence mechanism kicking in, saying I’m back here, you know, this is important guys and this is what I’m trying to get across to you. But what I also knew as well is, which was making me choke up sometimes, was the reaction of the crowd. Because you can see the first three or four rows. You know yourself when you go into a room with sixth formers, and there’s no disrespect to sixth formers, but they’re b*ggers. And they’re like, god, we’re sat here, blah blah blah, whatever, aye, show the pictures young’un, I’m going on the lash tonight. To see the change in their eyes, to see the change in their body mannerisms, to see them start to lean forward, going, bloody hell. And I could see it. I could see them coming towards me and going, ‘sh*t, really? Look at the size of him’. I actually saw one lass say, ‘but look at the size of him, he’s a monster’ to go ‘look at the way he’s talking’. And I’ve got all this kit on, and we’ve mentioned before, I’ve got all this kit on and I’ll quite happily smash someone’s head in and it’s all free. But I think I’m also quite good at being a human being. Sometimes, not all the time.

So what other, what physical mannerisms do you see in their reaction?

I see their faces change.

In what way?

You see smiles. And you see the smiles disappear to a line. You then see the mouth open. Weirdly, honest to god, I can only explain what I see.
Well I don’t see that.

Exactly, because you’re facing forward. And I think, then I see people nodding heads. As if what I’m telling them is starting to register with them, as something that may have been involved in. I’ve seen people in tears. I saw one lassy at the one at (confidential), second row, third in from the right, I can even tell you where she was sat. There was tears hoing down her neck. I then get concerned for her. Because I actually at the end, I went over and made someone spoke to her to make sure she was ok. It was the same at (confidential), at (confidential) there was a lassy in bits because one of her friends had been killed in a road traffic collision. It wasn’t the fact that she was there, it was the fact that they way I was expressing myself in those circumstances and the way I was going along, started to hit the button. Started to get her thought process going. Sh*t. It was their decision making process that caused this to happen. It was unavoidable. It didn’t have to happen. I’ve lost a friend. They’ve lost a daughter. It just started to kick in and I don’t feed off it. I don’t feed off that grief. What I try and do then is I try and make a positive out of a negative. I don’t know if you’ve noticed in some of the presentations I might go down a line that I might say the same thing again, it’s avoidable guys, it’s avoidable. I say something and I say, it’s avoidable and they’re all nodding their heads. You know, they’re all nodding their heads and right up the top of the gods you see a head nodding. You’ve got that bloody spotlight on you, which is a fantastic idea by the way, thanks. But the whole set up works. The no clapping scenario. It puts me on the back foot. It puts me on that level. And as soon as that, the second that, the videos, for me, put me in that place. As soon as I see that video come on, I’m starting to think about what I’m going to say. I hear the people behind. That video comes on, and the Sunderland accent, yes, sometimes it’s funny, and you hear the odd little mutter and yes, it’s funny. Until they start talking about the day. When they start talking about the bairn being killed and how they walk up to the scene, it literally like, you could hear pin drop. And then the light goes on, I stand up, I take a deep breath because it’s affected me. I’m probably emotional at that point and I think to myself, bloody hell, here
we gan. And I turn round and I see their faces and you’re there. I’m going to tell you what happened.

And how do you want them to feel when you’re talking? What feelings do you want them to experience?

Personally? Shock and awe. I want them to realise that it will happen to them. Potentially. They realise that it’s not just an hour that you’ve got to fill the curriculum in and go in and have a cup of tea. It’s real life. A beautiful, bonny lass in front of me, a handsome lad. You know, tomorrow, I could be picking them out of a car. If you make the wrong decision making process. So I want them to have that shock and awe. I want them to understand where I am. I want them to understand how it affects me. I want them to understand I take strength from my family, I take strength from my colleagues, I take strength from doing what I’m doing. Because doing it, has helped me ten fold, ironically. Being able to talk about it, especially when I go and see my Aunty Sarah (occupational therapist) and have some hob nobs, even telling her before she left. It’s mint, this. It helps me. But it also helps that we’ve broken down their barriers. Their barriers of Nintendo, PS4, I’m going out on the lash, I’m 16, 17, 18, whatever, it’s not going to happen to me – those barriers were broken. It’s quite apparent. For even, rufty tufty, I’m with the big lads, sitting there when the lights go on. With their mouths wide open going, sh*t.

What do you think is in the way that you tell it that makes them so engaged?

It’s not because I’m a section 3 mental health patient?

I don’t mean any other aspect of the presentation, I mean you, in particular. What do you think engages them with you in how you come across to them.
I’ve got a little’un. I know how to talk to him. I know how to get annoyed with him. I know how to tell him off. I know hopefully how to communicate with people. Hopefully that my style of communication is, well it is, it’s acceptable. ‘Woah, look at this monster, he’s going to come on and tell us about how he smashes people’s head in’ and then all of a sudden they’re thinking, ‘sh*t, he’s standing in front of a mam telling her to go and identify her bairn. Going from that to what he’s talking about. And I think it’s the reality of, inside that monster of a horse’s arse, there’s a heart. You know yourself, you don’t have a heart when you become a traffic officer, but I do when I become a FLO. I put in back in the box.

So that difference between what they see physically standing in front of them, and the I suppose, difference in the way that you come across to them, it’s not what they expect, is what I’m trying to say.

Basically, it’s a totally different scenario from what they’re expecting. They’re expecting me to be a military instructor, hands out, indicate, which is what I did. It’s what I did for years. And I can instruct people all day. I can be a confident fella, and I can bark, and I can shout and I can do all of that kind of stuff. I think it’s when I started talking quietly and talking about how it made me feel. And it was a shock. It was a shock to them to think, ‘Christ, he’s a human being’.

And do you want them to relive the story with you?

No, I don’t want them to relive the story with me because I’d never want my worst enemy to go through that. What I want them to understand is that their decision making process is what they need to understand. This is what’s gone wrong. I don’t want you to relive it, it don’t want you to have nightmares
about it, I don’t want you to think, ‘oh, that police said to me that he had half his head missing’. What I want them to understand, is I want you to think, every time you get into a car, where am I? What am I doing? I remember that police saying how it made him feel. I remember that police saying how his family felt, how it affected them, my family. So if that makes them think before they get into a car, I’ve done my job. I don’t want them to remember the blood and guts and the blue lights, and the fleeing up and down to hospital. I don’t want anyone to remember that because it’s something I’m never going to forget. I wouldn’t want that on my worst enemy and I don’t want them to think that the reality of it is that, but it’s avoidable.

When you said that you had a, I’m going to go back to the lump in the throat again, I think you said that you were trying to compose yourself on a couple of occasions so that you….

*It was quite apparent.*

It was quite apparent to you?

*I don’t know if it was to them, I could see their eyes, I could see their faces change but I don’t know whether they could work out whether it was having an affect on me.*

How do you think it demonstrated that it was having an affect on you?

*I paused. I took a deep breath, I had a minute. I had a couple of seconds where I just went (breathes out). I might have looked up at the light, you know, just to compose myself, and just to say ‘get a grip of yourself, you’re there again, come back’. It might have only been ten seconds. I don’t know*
how long I was because I’m not looking at the clock. To be fair, out of all those things, you told me twenty minutes presentation or ten minutes. I wouldn’t know if it was five or ten minutes for every single time I’ve done it. I couldn’t tell you. You get what you get. I don’t think it has changed.

It hasn’t. And I don’t think we would, even if you were into fifteen minutes, I think I would rather risk it running over time than stopping you because exactly what you’ve said. The honesty and authenticity of it is the key to it, and you can’t mess around with that.

And they’re clever people. They’re clever, clever people. And they would know if it was a load of b*llocks in a heartbeat. And I think the reason why it was so effective and I think of the reasons why it’s had such a profound effect on them is because it was real. And what they see is what they get, warts and all.

Have you done, beforehand, had you done road safety presentations before?

I wouldn’t class it as a road safety presentation in that context. I’ve been to some schools and I’ve had a bit crack with kids and all that. Where walking across the playground, with the military police I did all that with the military kids who went to military school. Nothing like this. Never ever have I stood up in front of an auditorium of people and put me warts and all on a plate. I’ve never ever done that. And I never thought I would. I never thought I would have the gumption or the balls to be fair, because you are opening yourself up to unknowns. You know, you open yourself up to pushing yourself back to where I am going to be affected. That’s something that I need to be aware of. Is it going to have a detrimental affect on my career? I don’t mean as in, am I going to get sacked, I mean as in am I going to be able to operate outside, finish this on Wednesday morning, walk out of this,
jump into my traffic car and go to a five car fatal on the A1. And then have to do it all again. Luckily for me, touch wood (touches wood), I've been quite fine, we have loads of different jobs that we go to. It keeps you, varied occupation. It hasn't affected me in any way shape or form. If anything, this has been a beneficial thing for me. It's helped me, understand my role, how I feel and it gets me to talk about it. Another thing it helps me is not to be shy to talk about it, because what I have found over the years and with experience, traffic cops sometimes hold it in, and hold it in, and then they go bang. The good thing about what we have here, is we have a structure where supervision have been brought up to speed with that. And it's not wrong to hoy my teddies out the cot or have a cup of coffee if you need to in a quiet, controlled situation. You know you sit and have a chat with someone, you know I'd quite happily have a chat with you now in the other office because it's something that I've been able to accept, you know.

On a slightly different note, I was listening to the radio today and the lady who had done all of the campaigning for the rape victims, I can't remember her name......

Is it the Reverend?

The Reverend's daughter, yeah. She's just died. They were playing some previous interviews with her today. She was telling someone today that retelling the story made it die for her. She was quite specific about those words, and she said that if you tell a story enough times, you kill it. And then you can start to live with it. It's very different thing that we are talking about...........
You don’t kill what’s happened, you kill the way that you feel about it. I’m in that house, how I had to deal with that lady and that gentleman, yes, I’d accept that.

It’s interesting that you and the other speakers, and the families that made the films, have all, off their own backs, said to me. I remember that after the first presentation in Sunderland in particular, two of the families, I thanked them again, because you can never thank them enough. It’s frustrating that you never feel that you can repay them, never feel like you can do enough to show your gratitude for what they’ve done, we’ve actually found it really useful. And at no point, did I say to them, ‘by the way, when you go through your story a dozen times with them, and then we make a film about it, it’s going to make it a little bit better for you, it’s kind of a cathartic process’. I’ve never said that to them. I suspected that might be the case but they’ve all said that. So there’s something in that retelling.

That’s something that my Aunty Sarah says, when you do your assessment (psychological), talking about it is the best way to deal with it. And I tell people that. I did that post traumatic stress form because I was concerned that people weren’t doing it. I was concerned that people weren’t doing that, being involved in these horrendous things, dealing with these horrendous things, and we as the police go ‘thanks very much, all the best’. Whereas, we have a safeguarding issue, you did a fantastic job in getting them involved in that, the safe guarding situation, even if it’s just getting them a cup of tea. I walked into that room confident in your skills, making sure that everything was done and dusted. To make me feel comfortable.

Do you mean at headquarters?
I mean every time. When (confidential) turns up, it’s like, you feel confident in this, your bit is important as well as everything else, but it doesn’t take away how amazing those people are.

So you feel valued?

Yeah, valued, but you also feel that you need to make sure that the product that we are giving, is good for them, is credit to them. The last thing I wanted to do is stand up and talk a load of b*llocks for ten minutes and then go ‘look at me, I’m mint’. I don’t want anything, I’ve been very lucky to get a lovely award out of it thanks to you. I don’t look for awards, I don’t expect awards but it was very nice to get. It was something that, I think the whole package has been done extremely well. That’s why I’m pleased and extremely proud, if I can say that word, but I am very proud. I’ve got to be honest, I’ve been over the whole country doing presentations for Dragoon but the one thing that obviously the Dragoon system which I hoy down their necks, which I do – trust me I do, is the Road Sense Common Sense. I’ve dropped your name all over the country. I apologise for that, but I have. Which is why your emails are so bloody huge. I think it’s unique. I’ve seen things on you tube but I’ve never actually seen them talk about their own experience. I’ve seen them talk about what happened when they got to the car and they did this and that, they closed the road and they have to go investigate this. It’s very monotone, it’s methodical, it’s very investigative powers sort of. And PS, it absolutely destroyed me. I’ve gone away and I’ve had a word with myself twice. I’ve gone to the gym, I’ve smashed the hell out of it for four days because I’ve thought I’m going to go bang. I went and saw my Aunty Sue and had some hob nobs. I had to. It’s not because I’m weak. Its not because I’m soft, it’s because it’s the only way that I as an individual, deals with it. Everybody’s different. Everybody deals with grief in a difficult situation differently, but I think they all do the same thing out of it as you’ve explained. It dampens the harshness out of it. The situation never changes, it cannot, it is what it is. But your explanation of it, I’ve been in conferences where people have said, ‘I’ve
just listened to you talk for the last twenty minutes about that job and I'm enthralled with it. But how do you do it? How do you keep your composure telling that story?’ And I say, ‘because it’s work, I’ve got my back up. I’ve had a lot of help, I’ve had people explain it to me, I’ve seen the help that the families get. Me? I’m immaterial here. I’m right down in the pecking order. Them poor b*ggers are there, they’ve had to deal with the worst thing in the world because their bairn’s gone, or their loved one’s gone. So my side of things is immaterial really. But then they say, but it isn’t. You’ve just explained that whole situation to us and you’ve got fifteen people who you’ve never met in your life with mouths wide open. And I’ll go, well I’ve done my job and that’s what I need to do. And that’s the good part about the Road Sense Common Sense.

Ok.

End of interview.
## Appendix sixteen: Outline of semi-structured interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of interviewee</th>
<th>Interview location</th>
<th>Method of recording / transcript</th>
<th>Duration of interview</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker X – Fire officer (male)</td>
<td>A busy café</td>
<td>Tape recorded then transcribed verbatim</td>
<td>47 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaker Y – Fire officer (male)</td>
<td>Interviewee’s workplace, in a quiet room with no interruptions or noise</td>
<td>Tape recorded then transcribed verbatim</td>
<td>78 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaker Z – Police officer (male)</td>
<td>Workplace shared between interviewee and researcher, borrowed office with one interruption at the beginning in a noisy corridor</td>
<td>Tape recorded then transcribed verbatim</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
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### Appendix seventeen: Participant demographics

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<tr>
<th>Data collection method</th>
<th>Total participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
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<th>25-34</th>
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<th>45-54</th>
<th>55-64</th>
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In response to the question, why? (following the first question, overall, which part of the presentation had the most impact on you?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme / sub-theme</th>
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<tr>
<td>Emotion - A feeling (not physical) by the students (E5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perspective of life (PL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actions / consequences (AC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal connection - Relating an aspect of the story to themselves (P4)</td>
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<td>Effect (EF)</td>
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<td>Presence (PR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency services - They are human (ES2)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Emotion - Feeling sorry for them, sympathy, empathy (E4)</td>
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<td>Emotion - physical signs by speakers (E1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotion - when students feel the same emotion as the speakers (E3)</td>
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<td>Emergency services - breakdown of perceptions (ES1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drama – the ambience of the room (D2)</td>
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<td>Ripple effect (RE)</td>
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Appendix nineteen: Breakdown of codes - University of Sunderland evaluations

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<td>Emotion – general feeling in the room (E7)</td>
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<td>Presence (PR)</td>
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<td>Emergency services – respect for their role (ES3)</td>
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### Appendix twenty: Breakdown of codes - School X evaluations

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<td>Emotion - A feeling (not physical) by the students (E5)</td>
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<td>Ripple effect (RE)</td>
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<td>Emotion – When the students feel the same emotion as the speakers (E3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotions - feeling sorry for them / empathy / sympathy (E4)</td>
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<td>Presence (PR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actions / consequences (AC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effect (EF)</td>
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Appendix twenty-one: Breakdown of codes - School X focus discussion group
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<td>Emotion – general feeling in the room (E7)</td>
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<td>Effect (EF)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actions / Consequences (AC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency services – they are human (ES2)</td>
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<td>Emotion - Feeling sorry for them, sympathy, empathy (E4)</td>
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**Appendix twenty-two: Breakdown of codes – School Y focus discussion group**
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<td>Ripple effect (RE)</td>
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<td>Vulnerability (V)</td>
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<td>Perspective of life (PL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotion - physical signs by speakers (E1)</td>
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<td>Actions / consequences</td>
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**Appendix twenty-three: Breakdown of codes – School Y further focus discussion group**
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<tr>
<td>Emotion - physical signs by speakers (E1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drama – music or silence (D1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection afterwards (R)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion - when the student makes an assumption about how the speaker feels (E6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotion – general feeling in the room (E7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effect (EF)</td>
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<td>Ripple effect (RE)</td>
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<td>Presence (PR)</td>
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<td>Emergency services - breakdown of perceptions (ES1)</td>
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<td>Emergency services - respect for their role (ES3)</td>
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**Appendix twenty-four: Breakdown of codes - Speaker X semi structured interview**
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<tr>
<td>Drama – ambience in the room (D2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal connection - between speakers and the audience (P3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Story selection (SS)</td>
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<td>Jargon (J)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resilience (R )</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Pictures (MP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professionalism (Prof)</td>
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<tr>
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Appendix twenty-five: Breakdown of codes - Speaker Y semi-structured interview

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<tr>
<td>Emotions - described by speakers when talking (E8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masculine culture (M)</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honesty (H)</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Story selection (SS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency services -they are human (ES2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resilience (R)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion - physical signs by speakers (E1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jargon (J)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning points - actions have consequences (LP1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotions - physical symptoms by students (E2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning points - change in students behaviour (LP2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning points - split second decisions (LP3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exposing their souls (EX)</td>
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Appendix twenty-six: Breakdown of codes - Speaker Z semi-structured interview

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<td>Honesty (H)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotions - when students feel the same emotion as the speakers (E3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal connection - relating what they hear to someone they know (P1)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakdown of perceptions (ES1)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story selection (SS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning points - change in students behaviour (LP2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotions - physical signs by speakers (E1)</td>
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<td>Personal connection - physical similarity between speaker and someone student knows (P2)</td>
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<td>Count</td>
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<td>Drama – general ambience in the room (D2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning points – it can happen to you (LP4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exposing their soul (EX)</td>
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<td>Masculinity (M)</td>
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**Appendix twenty-seven: Coding totals for all evaluations - University of Sunderland, School X and School Z.**

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<td>Personal connection – relating something in the story to themselves (P4)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Perspective of life (PL)</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actions / consequences (AC)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty (H)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotions – feeling sorry for them / sympathy / empathy (E4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal connection – relating what they hear to someone they know (P1)</td>
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<td>Emergency services – they are human (ES2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imagination (I)</td>
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<td>Theme / sub-theme</td>
<td>Effect (EF)</td>
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### Appendix twenty-eight: Coding totals for all focus discussion groups – School X, School Y and School Y further focus discussion group
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<td>Curiosity (C)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presence (PR)</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Perspective of life (PL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotions – when the student makes an assumption about how the speaker feels (E6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drama – music or silence (D1)</td>
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<td>Ripple effect (RE)</td>
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<td>Reflection afterwards (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotions – physical signs by the speakers (E1)</td>
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<td>Emotions – feeling sorry for them / sympathy / empathy (E4)</td>
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### Appendix twenty-nine: Coding totals for all semi-structured interviews with Speaker X, Speaker Y and Speaker Z

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<tr>
<td>Emergency services – they are human (ES2)</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>Emotions – described by speakers when talking (E8)</td>
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<td>Resilience (Res)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story selection (SS)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine culture (M)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotions – physical signs by speakers (E1)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal connection – relating what they hear to someone they know (P1)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental pictures (MP)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning points – split second decisions (LP3)</td>
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<td>Drama – ambience in the room (D2)</td>
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<td>Jargon</td>
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<td>Learning points – change in their behaviour (LP2)</td>
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<td>Emergency services – breakdown of perceptions (ES1)</td>
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<td>Learning points – actions have consequences (LP1)</td>
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### Appendix thirty: Coding totals - across all sets of data gathered

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<tr>
<td>Emotions - feeling sorry for them, sympathy, empathy</td>
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<td>Emotions – a feeling (not physical) by the students</td>
<td>E5</td>
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<td>Emotions - when the student makes an assumption about how the speaker feels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal connection - relating what they hear to someone they know</td>
<td>P1</td>
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<td>Personal connection - physical similarity between speaker and someone student knows</td>
<td>P2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal connection - between speakers and the audience</td>
<td>P3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal connection - relating an aspect of the story to themselves</td>
<td>P4</td>
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<td>Vulnerability</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actions / consequences</td>
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