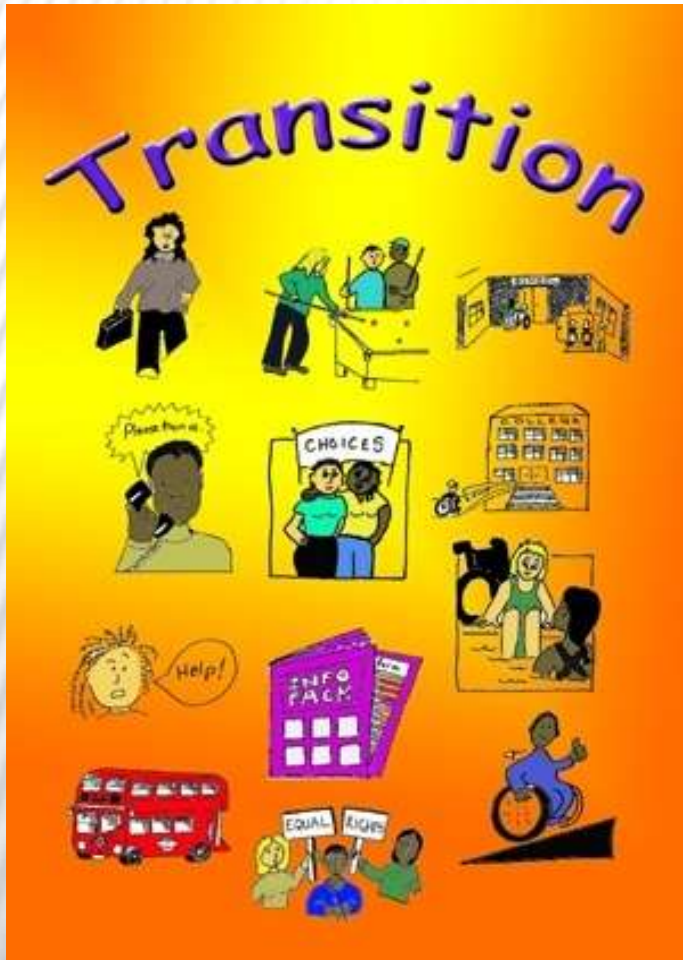


'MY LIFE WHEN I LEAVE SCHOOL' TRANSITION PROJECT



The Research Team

- Andrew Dever
- Caroline Quick
- Colin Gladstone



THE RESEARCH TEAM PROFILE



**Description/background of Co-Researchers
Andrew, Caroline and Colin**

A PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH PROJECT

A research team comprised of disabled and non disabled researchers who come together through a shared goal to understand what kind of life young people with intellectual disability want when they leave school

THE PROBLEM!

- Policy doesn't match the practice in New Zealand!!
- Young people with intellectual disability leaving school in New Zealand have:
 - very little if any work or paid employment
 - Very few tertiary opportunities
 - Few friends and wider social networks
 - The reality of living with parents/caregivers for many years to come

THE SITUATION DESCRIBED!

- “The experience of a young person with disabilities preparing for adult life is often one of a struggle with systems that seem only to lead to dependence and few choices. Families often consider the transition from school to adult life as a time of risk when the need to protect and care contradicts the feelings of wanting their loved one to be independent and free to experiment.”

(Dobson and Jay 2000: p 18)

TWO RESEARCH THEMES

1. To understand what kind of life young people with intellectual disability want?
2. How to meaningfully involve young people with intellectual disability as co-researchers?
3. We will talk about the second!

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ✘ What do young people consider to be valued social role?
- ✘ What control, choice and ability to self-determine do young people have over the transition process?

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Focus group participants:

- ✘ 12 students aged 16 to 20 years.
- ✘ 15 young people who have left school in the last 5 years.

Questionnaire participants:

- ✘ 57 students aged 17 to 21 years.
- ✘ 24 young people who have left school in the last 5 years.

METHODS

- ✘ Co-researcher training
 - ✘ Initial period of 6 weeks then ongoing training
- ✘ Focus groups held over one year
 - ✘ 3 focus groups for students
 - ✘ 2 focus groups for young people who have left school
- ✘ Questionnaires
 - ✘ Students and school leavers
- ✘ Report findings to NZ government officials group on transition
- ✘ Ongoing presenting at conferences, journal publication

THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

- Focus group protocol
- 3 interviewers Andrew, Caroline and Colin
- Graphic illustrator and word/symbol cue cards
- Note taker
- 2 support workers
- Digital recorder

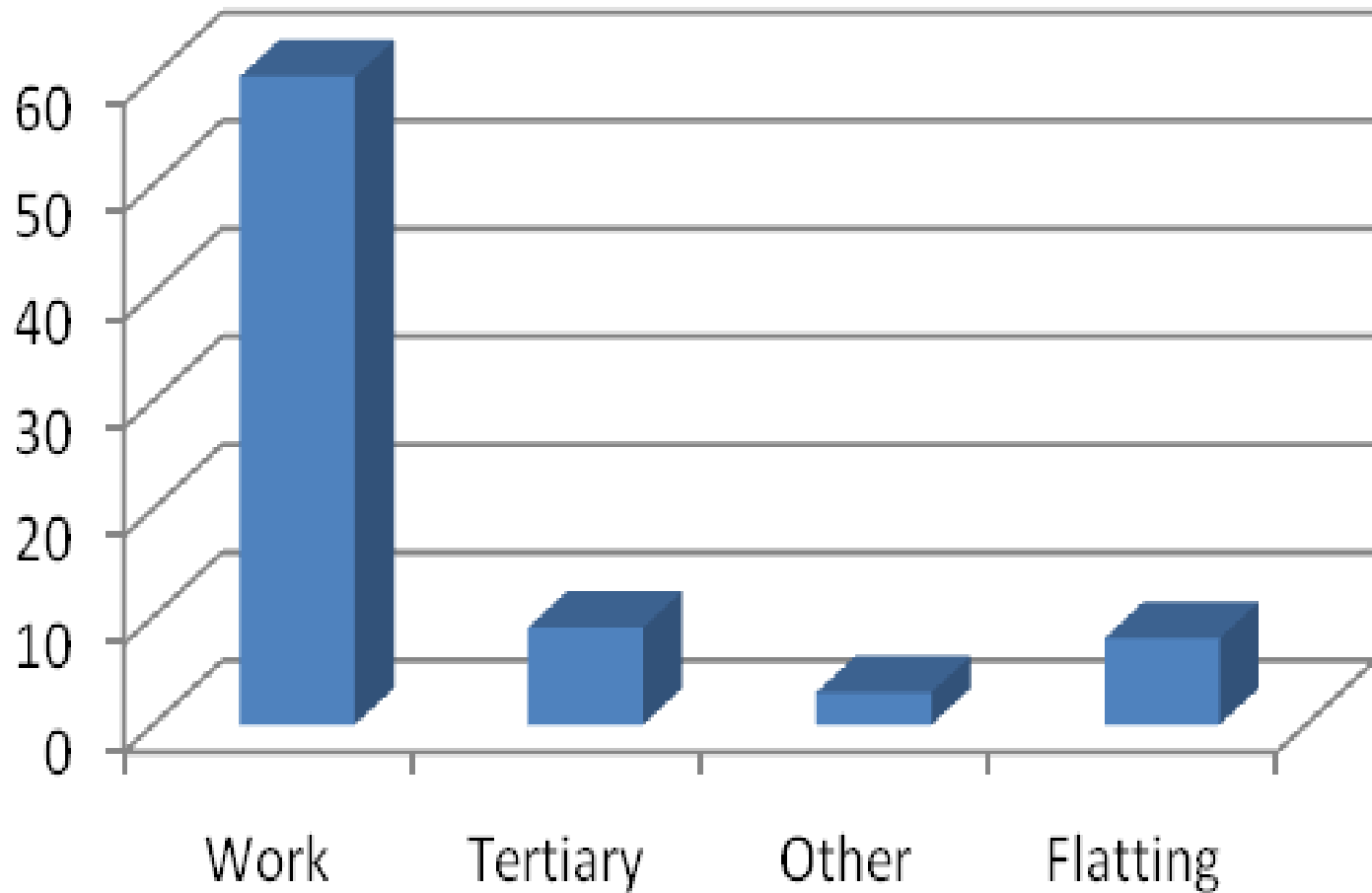
OUR FINDINGS

OUR FINDINGS

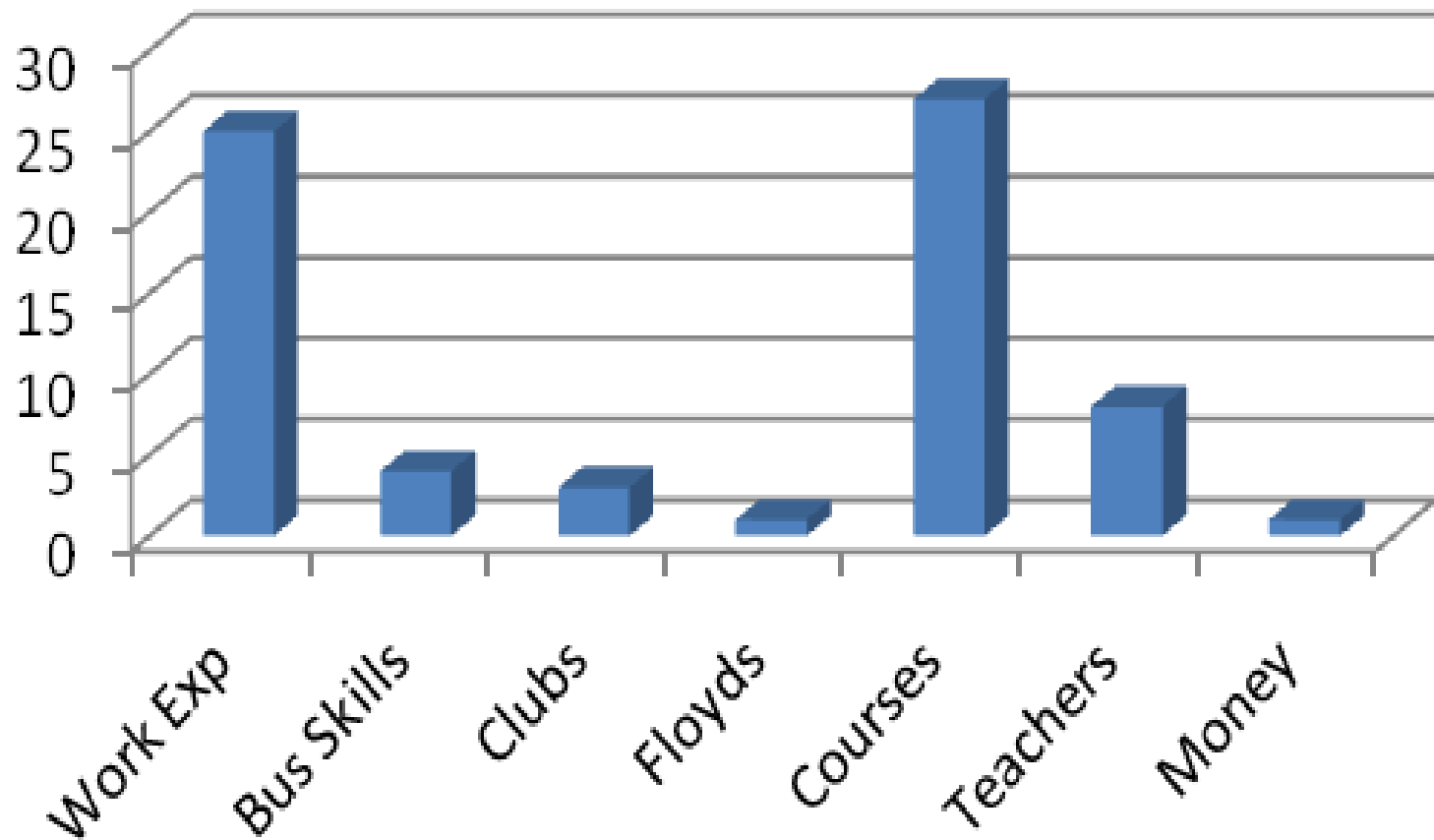
WHAT THE YOUNG PEOPLE WANT?

- ✘ Most want to work
- ✘ Most want to earn money
- ✘ Most want to have friends
- ✘ Most want work experience while at school
- ✘ Most want to do tertiary courses while at school
- ✘ Most want to go flatting later in life

Student Goals Post School - Across Ages



What will help to reach goals - across ages



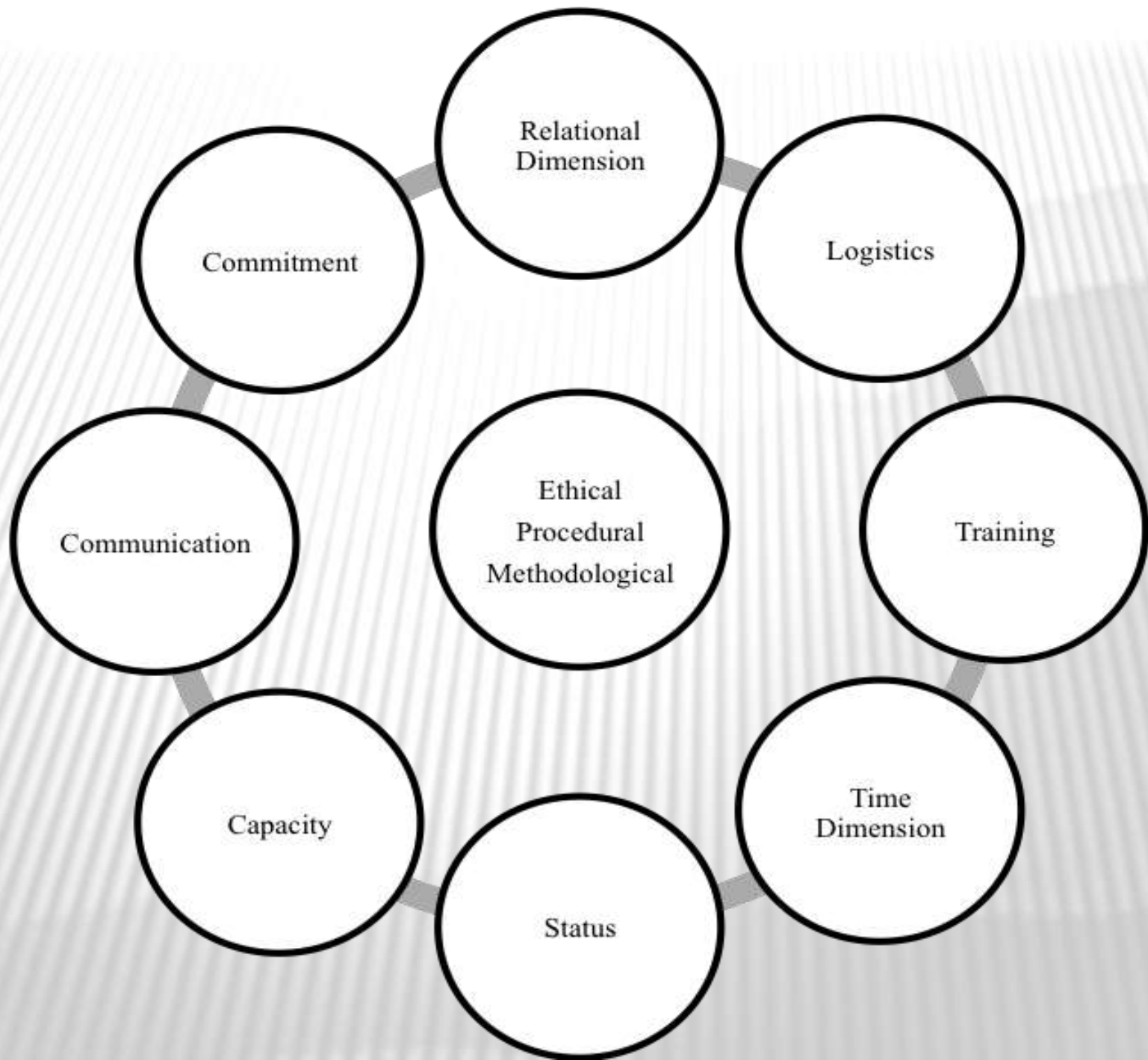
WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE KNOW?

- ✘ They know that friendships are important in future life
- ✘ They know that paid employment will give them the money to have ‘the good things in life!’
- ✘ They know that work experience and courses will help them get a job

This form of research is fraught with challenges ethically, procedurally and methodologically.

This is about a journey.

The following diagram illustrates some of the considerations in relation to the second research theme. And are interrelated.



The relational dimension

Personal
and
professional

Lead
researcher and
research
assistants

A shared
goal

Individual
roles/tasks

Mentor

Research
team
protocol

Supervisor

Long term
and
sustained

SOME TENTATIVE THOUGHTS OFFERED

- ✘ From our research journey the following factors are offered to support the meaningful and active participation of young people with intellectual disability as co-researchers within a team.

- ✘ The research process must be meaningful and ongoing to participants.
- ✘ Co-researchers must be involved from the beginning of the project.
- ✘ Co-researchers with intellectual disability should be given status by being engaged on a contract as research assistants by any supporting university.
- ✘ Co-researchers with intellectual disability should be paid for their time involved in the project, be ongoing and be non-tokenistic.

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- ✘ All co-researchers must have agreed roles and responsibilities within the team that promote individual strengths.
 - ✘ All co-researchers have the opportunity for ongoing development of skills and knowledge through training.
 - ✘ The research team approach must alter and equalize the power dynamics over time.

- ✘ The research process must consider what happens to co-researchers with intellectual disability after the project ends.
- ✘ The relationship between research team members must be professional but needs to recognize the social and emotional investment in working meaningfully and effectively with young people with intellectual disability.
- ✘ There should be independently measureable outcomes for all co-researchers against social, emotional and economical indicators.

Thank you for listening to our
presentation

