

Using twin lenses from psychodynamic and sociocultural theories to investigate what facilitates learning on psychodynamic psychotherapeutic courses

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Abstract

This paper arises from recognition that the psychodynamic approach to psychotherapy has no intrinsic theory of learning and teaching. Research has demonstrated how the introduction of Vygotskian socio-constructivism psychodynamic ideas, as the second of twin research lenses, can be applied in many diverse and radical ways. The author also shows how such an approach can be challenging both for students and teachers. In writing this paper, the author disagrees with those theorists who want to isolate psychotherapy from education, asserting as they do that 'educational therapy' involves a somehow lesser notion of the subject, that it does not warrant a theory of learning. Instead, suggested is that entering the margins between therapeutic and educational processes can be deeply rewarding as well as empowering for teachers, researchers and students alike. The originality of this research lies in its use of elements of the two paradigms to create lenses in an innovative way. A sociocultural constructivist framework has been used through which to understand psychodynamic psychotherapeutic learning and training.

Keywords: *Constructivist, Psychodynamic, Twin Lens, Synthesis, Two Paradigms, Learning Theory.*

Introduction

The psychodynamic approach has no intrinsic theory of learning. In a recent study of students' views (Papé, 2015) of what facilitates learning on psychodynamic training courses, a sociocultural theory of learning was therefore introduced as a conceptual framework within which to conceptualise and analyse the learning process. This enabled the data, that were collected across four years of study, to be analysed critically from an understanding of Vygotsky's activity-based socio-cultural theories of constructivism (1934; 1962) and also later constructivist thinking including Karpov (2003; 2006) Stetsenko (2005), Mayo (2010); and Vassilieva (2010). Use of the twin lenses of socio-cultural constructivism and psychodynamic psychotherapy enabled the emergence of an over-arching theme related to the tutor-student relationship, seen in sociocultural terms as enabling learning within a zone of proximal development¹ (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986; Wood et al, 1976; Wells 1993) and in psychodynamic terms as provision of a secure base (Bowlby, 1988; Callan & Obegi, 2008; Feeney & Thrush, 2010), from which students journeyed towards autonomous learning.

¹ Shown as ZPD throughout this paper

This article first briefly outlines the methodology for the research study and goes on to highlight aspects of the two paradigms that are particularly salient both to the study itself and also to an understanding of how different theoretical paradigms may be used coherently and with authenticity in the same study. It will offer examples of the analysis of data in the study, using both lenses and conclude by offering a critique of such use.

Research

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews of eight students at various points of their learning across the four-year learning cycle of the courses in two different UK universities. The ontology of the research was constructivist, and the epistemology Interpretivist with methodology conceptualised through a phenomenological perspective. Hermeneutic philosophy (Gadamer, 2006; Arthur *et al*, 2012) was reflected in the methodology (Stern 1991).

Hermeneutic phenomenology is appropriate for this research because it concerns the situated human being in her world². Gadamer (2006) advanced a philosophical hermeneutics that proposed an interpretation of what he considered to be the apposite process of understanding, which rejected any attempt to found understanding on a method or set of rules, perhaps historically found in the teaching and learning of the psychodynamic approach to psychotherapy. This is not ‘...a rejection of the importance of methodological concerns, but

rather an insistence on the limited role of method and the priority of understanding as a dialogic, practical, situated activity...’ (Malpas, 2014:2.2).

Interpretation is an advanced psychodynamic skill as well as being critical to the process of understanding in hermeneutic phenomenology and in a socio-cultural constructivist theory of learning. Heidegger (1927) proposed that every encounter between individuals affords the chance of an interpretation, which is influenced by the individual’s background and state of ‘being’. Polkinghorne (1983) suggested the individual’s past experiences have a cumulative effect on individual development and it is this aggregation that can be seen clearly in the process of reflective interviews of participants in this study. Kyale (1996) posited that hermeneutics has an aim of finding intended meanings which Vygotsky (1987) considered was central to constructivist thinking and therefore fundamental to this study.

The link between constructivism (Butt, 2006) and psychotherapy on the one hand to hermeneutic thinking on the other (Holroyd, 2007), can be understood in terms of the circle of language (Gadamer, 1976), that is

² Heidegger’s focus was on ‘Dasein’, which is translated ‘the situated meaning of a human in the world’ (Lavery, 2006)

closed in dialogue but open to reflection and influence. This understanding is central to the choice of methodology in the current study. Data analysis involved co-construction of participants' meanings as they enter the hermeneutic circle of understanding (Gadamer, 1976; Rose, 2005). In the current study, both the researcher and participant worked together to bring life to what was being explored, through the use of imagination, the hermeneutic circle and attention to both meaning and sense of the language used. Koch (1995) further elaborated this as

'...hermeneutics invites participants into an ongoing conversation, but does not provide a set methodology. Understanding occurs through a fusion of horizons, which is a dialectic between the pre-understandings of the research process, the interpretive framework and the sources of information...' (Koch, 1995: 835).

Enabling material to emerge from the pre-conscious to conscious is an important outcome of psychodynamic psychotherapy and hermeneutical reflection plays a fundamental role in this process. However, for Gadamer (2006), it is 'fact' that determines how the individual applies thought and feelings to a particular situation, perhaps reminiscent of Freudian superego unconscious behaviour in which the individual fears parental condemnation. He further postulated '...human sciences are not just feelings and the unconscious but it at the same time a mode of knowing and a mode of being...' (Gadamer: 2006:15).

Twin Paradigms

Throughout this study comparisons and contrasts between the two paradigms, are emphasised and discussed through selected literature. This gave an opportunity to recognise and highlight the major influence of understanding human (student) development of both Freud and Vygotsky. Use of elements of these analytical approaches appears to be unique, as the author has found no mention of this two-paradigm use in research of psychodynamic and sociocultural constructivist literature. These were the significant issues of the study.

Psychodynamic theory enables understanding of human development and how theoretical concepts inform the practitioner (Heller & Northcut, 2002), on which psychotherapy training depends. Pedagogy associated with sociocultural constructivist theory enables learning in the presence of the more informed other (Berk & Andersen, 2005).

To understand the enabling process associated with psychodynamic theory, through sociocultural constructivist lenses, is the reason the two paradigms have been chosen. This study brings together elements of both paradigms which lend themselves to the tutor enabling students to learn autonomously to become cathartic counsellors (Tønnesvang *et al*, 2010). The social constructivist viewpoint suggests the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1927), in which sedimented knowledge related to psychodynamic training is mediated by the tutor for the student to construct learning and the psychodynamic viewpoint suggests the

tutor enables the student to connect with strengths and weaknesses through past experiences, aided by tutor modelling (Folkes-Skinner *et al*, 2010).

The authors recognise the student is the expert in the student's life (Neimeyer & Raskin, 2001). Pedagogy associated with sociocultural constructivist views of learning suggests that the tutor, as the more informed other in the teaching relationship (Tynjälä 1993; Tynjälä *et al*, 2003; Youell, 2006; Attwood, 2010), understands the next steps in students' learning and scaffolds (Dodge, 1998; Helle *et al*, 2006; Van Rooij, 2009) and models (Wynne & McAnaney, 2009) the basic concepts of psychodynamic theory in the ZPD, in which the student constructs learning and understanding.

Psychodynamic and Psychoanalytic Paradigm

The theories of attachment and objects relations, particularly the aspects or concept of a safe or secure base (Bowlby, 1968) from which to develop and interrelationship in the psychotherapeutic dyad (paralleled by the researcher/student relationship), are particularly salient in psychodynamic psychotherapy courses. It is for this reason they are selected for specific mention in this study.

The author is aware of the significance for the student of transference^{3/4} (Burton, 1964; Cutler *et al*, 2004; Borbely, 2009), a core concept of the psychodynamic approach, from present or earlier relationships (Weiss *et al*, 1973; Heyman, 2001, 2009; Watkins & Dryden, 2008; Ayala & Hinojos, 2010), and, psychodynamically, this transference could have a high importance in which tutors could work for the benefit of student learning (Loewenthal & Snell, 2006). Some consideration is given to the implication for students and their relationships (Christensen & Heavey, 1990, 1993; Mitnick *et al*, 2008), participating in this study

Tension might exist when there is an attempt to limit questions and interventions solely to the researcher role (Dalzell *et al*, 2010). Being conscious of other roles (tutor, therapist) of which the students are aware, the students could respond in transference (Ulman, 2001), transferring a figure or part-figure (Klein, 1946) from their past. The psychodynamically trained tutor, could also be aware of the countertransference phenomenon (Little, 1951; Gelso & Hayes, 1998; McCarthy, 2004) stimulated by student transferences (Ferenczi, 1926, 1927; Schamess, 2006; Watkins & Dryden, 2008). Sharing of feelings in countertransference and appropriate disclosure (Bridges, 2001; Davis, 2002) are some of the many difficulties lying in store

³ The relationship between therapist and client is theoretically widely explored in the psychodynamic approach. We know about the crucial effects of this relationship for the development of the therapeutic process. These effects are mainly described by the

terms 'transference' (phenomenon of projections of the client onto the therapist).

⁴ '...What are transferences? They are new editions or facsimiles of the impulses and phantasies which are aroused during the progress of the analysis; but they have this peculiarity...that they replace some earlier person by the person of the physician [therapist]...' (Freud, 1905).

for therapist trainees. At some point, however, in order to fulfil their potential, trainee therapists must learn to accept the insignificance of their anxieties and let them go⁵ (Freud, 1915).

Psychodynamic psychotherapeutic education typically utilises a tripartite model of training (Eagle, 2008), including classroom teaching, providing psychotherapy (Paul, 1978) under rigorous supervision (Ladany *et al*, 1999; Moncayo, 2006; Riess & Herman, 2008) and personal development (Cozolino, 2006; Harris, 2008) and analysis on the part of the trainee (Doehrman, 1976; Moldawsky, 1980).

During the interviews for this study there was an awareness of the boundaries (Payne *et al*, 2006) around the dual roles (Borys & Pope, 1989; Loewenthal & Snell, 2006) of researcher and tutor (Dalzell *et al*, 2010), as well as students' expectations, which required mindfulness of core psychotherapy conditions originating from the humanistic tradition⁶ (Mearns & Thorne, 2007).

It should be acknowledged that psychodynamic and psychoanalytic approaches emanated from a time of gender inequality and sometimes in the context of homophobia. Care has been

taken in the application of original thinkers' ideas in the present time and context. Psychodynamic theory was originally Eurocentric and acknowledgement is made of the possible difficulties, for people from different origins, in understanding and accepting the original context.

Psychodynamic⁷ psychotherapy is concerned with how individuals sometimes deceive themselves as to purposes, wishes and beliefs and how these deceptions create conflicts between expressed goals and actions (Sturdee, 1995). In application to this study, students might deceive themselves by using defence mechanisms and other unconscious processes as coping strategies (Collie, 2008). A definition of the term psychodynamic is '...of/or pertaining to the laws of mental action...' (Palmer, 1999:236) and its use pre-supposes that there are some principles that determine the relationship between mind and action and that these can be formulated as a basis for therapeutic intervention. One of the most fundamental tenets is that clients are unaware of many of their motives and that if these were known they would be able to make better, less conflicted choices. However there is often resistance (Denietolis & Miller, 2008) to or defence against recognising these hidden motives, termed unconscious (Erdelyi, 1992; Sturdee, 1995) by most psychodynamic theorists; hence,

⁵ '...Every beginner in psycho-analysis probably feels alarmed at first at the difficulties in store for him. When the time comes, however, he soon learns to look upon these difficulties as insignificant...' (Freud, 1915:37).

⁶ Carl Rogers (2004) proposed the six core conditions of the person-centred approach which include congruence (genuineness), unconditional positive regard and empathy (Basch, 1983); some might consider these three core conditions have been hijacked by the psychodynamic and other approaches to psychotherapy.

⁷ Traditionally, the principles underlying psychodynamic psychotherapy are presented as derivations of the ideas of the psychoanalytic school founded by Sigmund Freud, a doctor, neurologist and psychoanalyst. Current psychodynamic psychotherapy draws from a considerably wider and developed range of theoretical influences.

many clients are unable to change; indeed there seems to be a compulsion to repeat past behaviours (Freud, 1922; 1949). The 'Self-Sabotage Cycle' (Rosner & Hermes, 2010) is descriptive of the natural tendency of the human to repeat which, Freud (1922) postulates, infants learn during their formative years by what he terms 'repetition compulsion'. This tendency to repeat is deeply rooted in the unconscious (Freud, 1922) and, even though there is conscious awareness that repetition is not in the individual's best interest, repeating past behaviours still happens.

Trauma might cause the individual to act in a known way (Bonomi, 2004) and, in order to survive, the individual unconsciously represses associated feelings. Rosner & Hermes (2010) suggest that only by understanding the source of trauma and how it manifests, that the therapist can begin to enter the world of the client and start the process of enabling material to emerge into the conscious from the unconscious (pre-conscious). This trauma is encoded in the unconscious and maintained by associated repressions of feelings that protect the individual (Boag, 2010). Humans have a basic need to feel safe and secure (Maslow, 1954) in a world that is stable and predictable. Early exposure to trauma could shatter the wish and need for a benevolent environment (Harris, 2008).

Repetitions are thought to arise because of earlier experiences (Shabad, 1993) where behaviour successfully enables coping

mechanisms by ignoring or repressing difficult feelings. If this is not possible, not only is the memory of the trauma buried in the unconscious but also the feelings and emotions attached to it, resulting in distorted memory of the event itself (Boler, 1999; Uttl *et al*, 2006). The severity of the event causing trauma decides whether it is experienced as traumatic and individuals have different tolerances to traumatic events. Those who have a high tolerance to trauma are distinguished not only by a more developed memory, but also because they remember '...in different manners, by different methods; they use memory to a different degree...' (Vygotsky, 1929: 45).

Within the psychodynamic approach to analysis and therapy, post Freud, the objects relations theories of Ferenczi (1926, 1927, 1988) and developed by Kernberg (1980), describe the capacity for mutually satisfying relationships, are primarily concerned with the equilibrium between the individual and his changing environment⁸ (Ferenczi, 1926). Objects relations theories have been developed by Fairbairn (1944), who described the libido as being object-seeking rather than the pleasure-seeking drives of Freud, with the emphasis on individual relationships. Kernberg (1980) further developed objects relations theories by rooting them in ego-psychology as an understanding of patients' mental health.

From the psychodynamic paradigm, Freud (1922) postulates the mind (or the psyche)

⁸ This reference to environment can be considered as having resonance with the sociocultural theories of Vygotsky

has three separate component parts: the conscious, preconscious and unconscious. He posits the psyche comprises three structures as mapping onto this model. Firstly, the id⁹ is completely unconscious and represents the instinctual force towards immediate gratification of biological drives, that is sex, thirst and hunger (Van Haute & Geyskens, 2008). The id is present at birth (Badcock, 1988) and is the source of libidinous impulses. The second structure is the ego, which Freud (1922) argues is not always conscious, or even preconscious¹⁰. The ego is that part of the personality which functions according to the 'reality principle'. The ego is without energy and has to steal its energy from the id by means of what Freud terms 'identification'.

Through identification, the ego fulfils its basic function, which is to act as an intermediary between the id and the outside world. The ego develops throughout childhood and mediates between the child and the outside (social) world and superego. The third structure is the superego, which spans the unconscious and the preconscious. Freud (1922) postulates that the superego develops later and it represents the child's internalisation of the demands of the society in which it lives. These concepts are central to psychodynamic training in all four years.

⁹ 'The id is an impersonal, chaotic inferno of primitive drives, and dynamically repressed material which constantly agitates for expression. It goads the ego with pain and seduces it with pleasure' (Badcock, 1988: 111).

¹⁰ Freud found that many of his patients were unaware of how their egos operated to help them to function as social beings

Current research (Schore 2010, 2013) re-configures Freud's seminal topographical postulation of three layers of (un)consciousness containing the id, ego and superego structures, as a three-dimensional hierarchical model comprised of amygdala, cingulate and orbitofrontal areas of the right cortex of the brain found to be responsible for exteroceptive sensory input, which comprises visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory and olfactory functioning¹¹ (Schore, 2011, 2013).

Melanie Klein and objects relations theories

Research (for example Burgner, 1985) shows the deleterious effect on the child's development of an absent father, quoting a relevant formulation by Laplanche & Pontalis (1973)¹². There are other differences between Freud and Klein including the nature of the death instinct (Mills, 2006), which Klein suggests is innate or intrinsic to human nature. Indeed, this belief was eventually to distance Klein from the objects relations school.

John Bowlby and attachment theories

Now, with the advent of neuroscience, there is empirical evidence of the significance of

¹¹ Schore's Right-Brain Dual Corticolimbic-Autonomic Circuits (Schore, 2013)

¹² '...We are led to assign an essential role in the constitution of a given Oedipus complex to the other poles of this relationship, the unconscious desires of both parents, seduction and the relations between the parents, as well as to the subject and his instincts.... It is the different type of relationship between these three points of a triangle which... are destined to be internalised and to survive in the structure of the personality...' (Laplanche & Pontalis (1973: 286).

attachment and relationships in the child's development. Therapists can more freely accept and use this understanding to inform their clients' issues and development. Equally tutors can begin to understand how students' familial experiences play their part in students' construction of learning and that this understanding is part of what students describe as their relationship with the tutor being a facilitating factor in their learning.

The theories of attachment (Bowlby, 1971, 1980, 1988), including the concepts of secure base and attachment types (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991), are central both to this study and indeed to psychodynamic psychotherapeutic training courses in general. Throughout training on psychodynamic psychotherapy courses, acknowledgement is given to Bowlby for his seminal work on the importance of attachment.

Both Freud and Klein consider babies are born relatively undeveloped. Understanding the baby's development from a neurobiological perspective has substantial learning for modern attachment theorists (for example including Holmes, Steele, Scroufe, Schore, Muir). Clarke & Clarke's (1976) research finds early experiences of the baby affect growth, and now as neurobiological research evidences, the brain is also affected (Bauer, 1996) as well as physiological systems, particularly stress responses (Schore, 2013). At this early stage in development feelings evoked are

very basic, including distress (Emerson *et al*, 1994) or contentment but the baby relies on the caregiver to manage these states (Scroufe, 1988). The baby builds images of what it associates with them, for example, pleasure or pain. Some babies are more reactive than others, but the outcome depends more on parents than on the baby '...even the most difficult babies do fine with responsive parents, who adapt to their needs...' (Gerhardt, 2004:20).

Gerhardt (2004) postulates further that 'problem' parents are either neglectful or too intrusive. If the caregiver blocks her feelings or if she is preoccupied with them, she is unlikely to notice or regulate her baby's feelings. If the caregiver does not manage her own 'negative' emotions and becomes upset or annoyed with the child who cries or becomes angry, the child learns to hold back feelings or tries to switch off feelings because there is no help with learning how to regulate them. This is considered as being representative of an 'avoidant attachment' (Bowlby, 1971).

If the caregiver is inconsistent and offers irregular response to the child, the child learns to watch the caregiver very closely and keep emotions near the surface so that attempts can be made to attract attention when there is chance of success. This is recognised as 'ambivalent attachment'. In disorganised attachment '...so much has gone wrong that...[parents] are unable to provide the most basic parental functions of protecting the child and creating a safe base from which to explore the world...' (Gerhardt, 2004:27).

The way the higher functions of a baby's brain develops is dependent on that infant's experiences with people and in particular the caregiver. Here might also be considered the importance of the sociocultural context for the development of the child (Vygotsky, 1933, 1967). Research (Bowlby, 2000) with Romanian orphans shows the existence of a 'black hole' (Schore, 2000) where their orbitofrontal cortex should be. If the child does not experience social relationships during the period in which the orbitofrontal cortex develops (up to age three years) then she is unlikely to be able to develop adequately this part of the brain in any social context. On the other hand if there is good interaction between mother and baby, love is experienced as pleasurable and the baby has a good chance to develop and manage problems in a non-traumatic way.

When the relationship is boundaried and experienced as reliable and especially when the caregiver is consistent and able to manage the baby's stress, modern attachment theorists believe that '...it is the repeated and typical experiences that structure the brain...' (Gerhardt, 2004:45). Babies do depend on the caregiver to manage their stress, as do students rely on tutors. If done insensitively, the baby's stress response is activated and she becomes flooded with cortisol and cortisol receptors shut down. In this case in future, there is high sensitivity to stress, as the cortisol is not taken up by the receptors and remains in the brain.

Much is written on the linking of anxiety and depression, no better described than by the psychoanalyst Harry Stack Sullivan (1953), who theorises anxiety is a key pathological factor in shaping the self (Brinich & Shelley, 2002) and regulates interaction with others, suggesting '...the outline of the child's personality is sharply etched by the acid of the parents' anxiety...' (Mitchell & Black, 1995:70). The importance of attachment and understanding the internal working model (Bowlby, 1971) is central when considering how nurture considerably impacts the child's development.

Current research (Schore, 2011), building on the pioneering work of Bowlby, Stern, Winnicott and others, highlights the importance of empathic interaction between the mother and child for the development of that child into a loving human being. Schore, paraphrasing Gerhardt (2004), asks the questions:

'...The babies who are born now and in the years to come will be the adults who nurse us in old age, who manage our industry, who entertain us, who live next door. What kind of adults will they be? Will they be emotionally balanced enough to contribute their talents, or will they be disabled by hidden sensitivities?' (Schore, 2013)

Schore (2013) suggest the answers to these questions can only be determined with an understanding of the part played by how babies experience being loved and valued during infancy. Presently, neurobiological research (Schore, 2011) provides evidence of brain activity stimulated by the mother's verbal and non- verbal responses, involving chemical manufacture (particularly oxytocin, dopamine and noradrenaline) and released

in both mother and baby, which affects the centre (amygdala) (Schore, 2000) of the right-hand brain. This is the area of the brain found to be involved in the baby's ability to establish the '...maintenance of long-lasting social and emotional attachments...' (Schore, 2013).

Entering an age when neurobiological research evidence confirms the importance of the early postulations of Bowlby's attachment theories, provides material for increased understanding of the importance of the attachment process for future generations of student counsellors.

Critique of psychoanalysis and the psychodynamic approach

A brief critique of psychoanalysis and by derivation, the psychodynamic approach to psychotherapy, naturally starts with initial recognition of the founding part played by Sigmund Freud, who in turn acknowledges the part played by the pioneering work of his collaborator, Josef Bruer. From Bruer's cathartic method of hypnosis for treating repressed traumatic experiences, Freud developed psychoanalysis (Stark, 2005).

Particular importance for the development of psychoanalysis and hence the psychodynamic approach to psychotherapy, are the object relations theories of Otto Kernberg and Melanie Klein, the self-concept theories of Heinz Kohut and psychosocial theories of Erik Erikson (Grünbaum, 1990). The objects relations theories propose that

'...under conditions of low affect activation, reality-oriented perception controlled

cognitive learning took place, influenced by temperamental disposition, that is the affective, cognitive and motor activity of the infant, leading to differentiated, gradually evolving definitions of self and other...' (Kernberg, 2005:40).

In high-level affective relationships specific memory structures are emplaced in which are found powerful motivations to interact with significant others. The drive is for increased conditions that generate high positive affective states and decrease the conditions that enable negative affective states (Kernberg, 2005). Self-concept theories propose that the therapeutic relationship has an essential part to play in a diagnostic approach to client's problems in the development of self (Kohut, 1971).

Perhaps as much publicity has been given to the works of Jeffrey Masson as any other critic, who wrote several books, particularly 'Against Therapy' (1988) which counter the benefits of psychotherapy. The central contention seems to be the belief that any person can learn some psychotherapeutic skills and be as cathartic as a qualified therapist in enabling the client towards achieving developmental goals. This seems to counter the idea of the importance of the work and expertise required in building and maintaining the therapeutic relationship, so prevalent in post-Freudian thinking. In an earlier publication Masson (1984) attacks Freudian thinking of the Oedipal complex, the very foundation of psychoanalytic theory, as having nothing to do with being a driver of personal development and that sexual fantasies and libido-driven

development has no relevance to resolution of client problems. Masson writes that reports of historic sexual abuse, particular that between father and daughter, are themselves childish fantasies, much to the chagrin of those who suffer such abuse.

A problem sometimes encountered with psychodynamic psychotherapy, is its anecdotal and individualistic nature: that is some clients need considerably longer than others to access unconscious material. In today's society, with pressure for value for money and need for empirical evidence before resources become available for such therapy, this is problematic. However this has now being addressed by the development of Dynamic Interpersonal Therapy [DIT], based on the historical concepts of the psychodynamic approach but substantially more structured (Malan & Osimo, 1992)¹³ with a target sessional therapeutic longevity of twelve to sixteen sessions (Blatt & Luyten, 2009; Lemma *et al*, 2011).

The DIT programme has been developed in response to the criticism that the psychodynamic approach does not produce standardised verifiable results and therefore might encounter problems in attracting government funding for its use in the NHS. Students report a preference for working with underlying causes as well as presenting issues or effects, the goal of the psychodynamic practitioner. This new model would certainly challenge freshly

trained students. However, they would be able to benefit from DIT training once they become fully-fledged counsellors. This new model (2010) is developed for use in the NHS within the IAPT¹⁴ services, as results suggest it is promising in its acceptability and effectiveness (Lemma *et al*, 2011).

Critique of the psychodynamic approach might include the inappropriateness of long-term therapy when short-term psychotherapy could be shown to work for presenting problems. Here I mention CBT¹⁵ with its focus on goal-setting and achievement. Certainly, results are recorded and statistics produced to show this therapy is effective for short-term results but traditionally CBT is not designed to address clients' causal issues via working in the phenomenon of transference (Cutler *et al*, 2004). Again current DIT developments, as detailed above, can be shown to use the psychodynamic approach in a model that allows for shorter-term work.

Since the turn of this century, there can be considered the current drive by Higher Education establishments to focus on the therapeutic relationship with movement away from previous historic analytical thinking. Indeed, tutoring psychodynamic courses now has the central focus on interaction with the therapist, perhaps highlighted by the paradigm shift to relational psychology '...to understand attachment origins of the capacity to receive, feel

¹³ David Malan (1992) was amongst the first to tailor the psychodynamic approach to short-term work.

¹⁴ Improving Access to Psychological Therapy

¹⁵ CBT: Cognitive and Behavioural Therapy. Aaron Beck was particular instrumental in linking cognitions with behaviour to create CBT.

and express the emotions of love for another, utilise relational perspective of interpersonal neurobiology [as] structural and functional development of the early bonds of mutual love...' (Schore, 2013).

In summary, events have overtaken those who wish to maintain purism of historic analytical psychodynamic thinking and practice, with a marked move to relational psychology encompassing and furthering the original Bowlbian attachment processes. This is no better illustrated than by postulations of the importance of the mother's gaze in the development of the baby's parasympathetic 'quiet love' and sympathetic 'excited love', two concepts originated by Kohut (1971) and further developed by Schore (2013), who proposes that the '...mutual gaze 'gleam' is an overt biogenetic expression of the mother's love. Her excitement resonates and amplifies the infant's 'excited' love...' (Schore, 2013). On this is predicated Schore's research providing empirical evidence that mother-infant mutual love is the neurobiological source of all forms of adult love as well as the capacity to form long-lasting mutually satisfying bonds in later adult life.

Sociocultural constructivist paradigm

The second main paradigm for this research is a constructivist view of learning (Grier-Reed *et al*, 2009) and in particular the sociocultural constructivist theories of Vygotsky, who draws freely on the work of such international contemporaries as Sigmund Freud (Vassilieva, 2010).

As further evidence of connection is Vygotsky's publication 'Crisis in Psychology' (1927), claiming that the '...crisis stems from the sharp contradiction between the factual material of science and its methodological and theoretical premises; a contradiction deeply rooted in history of knowledge, revealing a dispute between the materialistic and idealistic worlds...' (Vygotsky, 1986:13). In his investigation into the crisis of arriving at and understanding a definition of psychology, Vygotsky (1927) also considers how the wide base of psychoanalysis and by implication, its derivation, the psychodynamic approach to psychotherapy, is problematic in the sense that the libidinal drives of Freudian psychoanalytic theories '...became a metaphysical principle amidst all other metaphysical ideas, psychoanalysis became a world view, psychology [became] a metapsychology...psychoanalysis has its own theory of knowledge...' (Vygotsky, 1927; 1982). Vygotsky considers these two domains irreconcilable and yet attempts to understand the two and somehow bring them together.

Vygotsky (1986) approaches consciousness as problematic whereby he attempts to prove some legitimacy via his conclusion that there are two forms of consciousness, thought and speech. The word, he concludes, is a '...microcosm of human consciousness...' (*ibid*, 1986:256). Vygotsky's (1925) hypotheses attempt to explain what he considers are the major questions pertaining to consciousness.

Vygotsky (1986) distinguishes between two forms of experience, the scientific and the spontaneous and by implication questions the perspective of Freudian thought as being positivistic. This division, that is the difference Vygotsky makes between what is being studied and the principles that explain the process '...is central to his methodological oeuvre...' (Daniels, 2001:86).

Vygotsky (1986) attempts differentiation of students' personal or 'everyday' concepts from those learned at school, which he designates as being scientific. He uses the term 'scientific' to describe systematic learning. He suggests the processes of everyday concepts originates in the child's own experiences and academic concepts, in which learning is achieved in the presence of a more informed other, are different (Kozulin, 2003).

Thus, for Vygotsky, psychology is the means of uncovering the origins of higher forms of consciousness (see above) and cannot be limited to direct evidence; it is this enquiring nature of human beings that is fundamental to Vygotskyan thinking (Bodrova & Leong, 1996; Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000). It is working with unconscious material that this study highlights is the difference between the psychodynamic and other processes.

There is recognition (James & Coleman, 1998) that many students might learn most effectively through collaborative methods (Wyn, 1990; Blumenfeld, *et al*, 1994). Indeed, the importance of the culture, which immerses the learner and the role of others

in assisting learning (Vygotsky, 1978), is becoming increasingly acknowledged (Billett, 1996). How the more experienced other facilitates the student learner in the ZPD is known as scaffolding, which is a focus of my research. Vygotsky did not propose the term 'scaffolding', which Wood *et al* (1976) introduced some decades after Vygotsky's death.

Scaffolding is the process of describing the '...gradual release of responsibility from the expert to the learner...' (Bodrova & Leong, 2001:11) by decreasing assistance, thus enabling the student to become fully responsible for performance (Van Rooij, 2009). Simultaneous with this time the unchanging nature of the learning tasks increases the level of responsibility the learner requires to achieve goals (Elliot, 1999).

That the student's belief in self, or self-concept (Shaw *et al*, 1960), is acknowledged as both a functionally restrictive and facilitating factor (Roth, 1959; Davidson & Lang, 1960; Payne & Farquhar, 1962), in academic performance, is investigated throughout this research. Further research concludes that lack of '...a sound theoretical framework with which to interpret empirical results...' (Payne & Farquhar, 1962:187) as being fundamental for establishment of self-concept (Shaw *et al*, 1960) as well as failure of many investigators to make their self-concept referents even plausibly relevant to the behaviour under study (Wylie, 1961).

It is this reflexive use of self (Sluijsmans *et al*, 1999; Rowan & Jacobs, 2002) that

enables students in this study to understand how they integrate and apply components of each paradigm to their own development in their vocational contexts (Billett, 1996), perhaps without fully understanding the significance of considering learning from different paradigms. Students, at research interviews, report their belief that reflexive learning is likely to withstand the test of time (Mishler, 1986).

The unlearning¹⁶ process is central to psychotherapy training and highlighted in research (Salomon *et al*, 1998) in which there are clear findings that support the ability for adults (to use IT as a ZPD) to reconstruct knowledge supported by a more informed other (Vygotsky, 1978).

Critique of Vygotsky's work

Literature highlights debate concerning the application of Vygotskyian theories outside the original time and context (Rowlands, 2000). Vygotsky promulgates theories from an entirely different context, nevertheless the sociocultural theories and concept of ZPD, in his work, provide a very useful framework for analysis for the research (Pap  , 2105), against which to reflect about the way students interpret their construction of learning on psychodynamic psychotherapy courses, in their relationship

with the tutor. Rowlands (2000) lays down the marker that Vygotsky is heavily influenced by Marxism and implicitly warns of its possible consequence, suggesting the ramifications in pedagogy can be viewed only in this context.

Rowlands (2000) claims that Vygotsky has been completely '...turned on his head' in order to justify a sociocultural relativism at the expense of his objectivist approach...' (Rowlands, 2000: 537). This stimulates the question, what credence can be given to a non-objectivist approach? Is the 'tail wagging the dog' in the claims that Vygotsky tried to make his theories fit the sociocultural school rather than let this emerge in the psychodynamic or constructivist sense of enquiry?

There is the claim that '...contrary to the relativism of the sociocultural school, Vygotsky's perspective was wholeheartedly objectivist in nature...' (*ibid*, 2000:538) and for me this is the essential dilemma. Vygotsky's theories do seem to be intrinsically objectivist, heavily weighted by Marxist traditions and clearly contextual in nature. The point that the ZPD can become a '...dynamic research methodology because it could enable us to understand in practice the cognitive processes involved...' (*ibid*, 2000:550) is poorly made as the ZPD is a zone and not process (Wearmouth, 2002).

Concepts from both paradigms

The concepts from both paradigms are aspects of the theories I have included in my analysis and interpretation of the students' transcripts.

¹⁶ The unlearning process for students on psychotherapy courses can be anxiety- provoking, especially as students might have trained previously in other disciplines which required specific ways of thinking and reacting.

Vygotskyian thinking encapsulates three major concepts. Firstly, that genetic analysis has importance in learning, in that the origins and history of phenomena can only be properly understood in interconnectedness and how and where they occur in human development (Vygotsky, 1978). This has resonance with Freudian thinking in that regression as a defence occurs if psychosexual stages are not completed (Freud, 1963), which postulation Erikson (1980) underscores by proposing that resolution of psychosocial tensions¹⁷ is the driver of human development. The focus on social factors, an important focus in this study, is linked in that Vygotsky (1978) theorises that learning and development take place as a result of experiences of cultural influences and in societal contexts. As the learner's context changes, so does learning opportunity, hence there can be no blueprint describing the changing dynamics between external and internal aspects of development, as this is an individualised process.

Spontaneity is included in Eriksonian psychosocial theories of development, based on Freudian libido-focussed stages of development, which suggest the early learner can be encouraged to take initiatives and try out new ideas. The learner can imagine a future situation, one that is not immediate reality. Initiative is the attempt to make that non-reality a reality (Erikson, 1965, 1980). Fantasy, curiosity and imagination leading to initiative-taking

(Stern, 1997) can be encouraged; often this manifests as creativity and play, which psycho-dynamically has high importance. The importance of play is researched by Vygotsky from many perspectives. In connection with imagination he proposes the representation of

'...children's play is imagination in action which could be reversed; we can say that imagination in adolescents and schoolchildren is play without action...' (Vygotsky, 1978).

Representation has significance psychodynamically when considering objects relations theories (Klein, 1946, 1971; Ferenczi, 1926, 1927; Fairbairn 1944; Kernberg, 1980), which generally espouse the relationship between people and particularly mother and child and use of an object in a transitional sense (Winnicott, 1965), again an important concept in this study.

Freud (1922) describes development whereby each stage is a progression towards adult sexual maturity, characterised by a strong ego and the ability to delay gratification. With increasing maturity, the infant overcomes illusions of omnipotent control over objects (Grand, 2002) and there is a decrease in projection and introjection and a rise in more accurate projection (Klein, 1946, 1971) found in Year 4 students in the study. The co-existence of these concepts can be understood in terms of quantitative ratio, with one sublimating to the other. From the psychodynamic paradigm the unconscious defence mechanism of

¹⁷ Erikson (1980) proposed resolution of psychosocial tensions was the means by which humans developed period

sublimation¹⁸ (Freud, 1963) is viewed as an unconscious process to understand metaphorical representation, often connected with the libidinal drives of Freudian thought (Wisdom, 1992; Heller & Northcut, 2002). The Kleinian concept of splitting is a defence mechanism, as is 'projective identification'¹⁹ (Waska, 1999), which is the imaginatively splitting off part of self and attributing it to another in order to control the other. This often includes splitting, in the form of externalisation of inner anxiety and anger, concepts understood and reported by students in this study.

The second of Vygotsky's concepts is the idea of different levels of mental functioning. Vygotsky (1978) makes the distinction between lower mental functioning which encompasses perception, memory, attention and will and higher or cultural mental functioning, which is specifically human and develops gradually from radical transformation of lower functioning. Vygotsky (1987) uses the term 'supersede' to designate this transformation, yet on deconstruction the higher mental functioning comprises elements of lower mental functioning.

¹⁸ The defence mechanism of sublimation is described as allowing acting out of unacceptable impulses by converting these behaviours into an acceptable form. Freud believed that sublimation was a sign of maturity that allowed people to function normally in more socially acceptable ways (Kahn, 2002).

¹⁹ Melanie Klein introduced the term 'projective identification' as '...much of the hatred against parts of the self is now directed toward the mother. This leads to a particular form of identification which establishes the prototype of an aggressive object-relation. I suggest for these processes the term 'projective identification...'' (Klein, 1946:102).

The third main concept Vygotsky (1978) postulates is that there are two different types of memory. One is based on lower mental functioning and is characterised by retention of actual experiences accessed by mnemonic traces (Reisberg, 2001), which is generally understood to be 'natural memory'. The other is mediated memory and is found in higher level mental functioning in which the inter-functional relations enact to connect memory with other functions. It is this process that occurs through social interaction which the tutor facilitates by mediating learning with the learner, which is highlighted in this study.

Vygotskyian constructivism (Atherton, 2005; Mayo 2010) encompasses radical, social and sociocultural theories (Karpov, 2003, 2006). Each learner individually and socially constructs meaning (learning) as knowledge is acquired and produces twofold consequences. Firstly, the learner can think about the process of learning (that is meta-learning) as well as the subject being taught and secondly there is no knowledge independent of the meaning attributed to the experience (that is learning through experience as constructed by the learner) (Hein, 1991) or making interpretations.

Interpretations have resonance psychodynamically (Glucksman, 2001; Tabin, 2006) because they are examples of advanced therapeutic skills (Crits-Christopher *et al*, 2005) explored in this study. An interpretation repeats something and might be considered to drain that something from the unconscious into

consciousness, via symbolic and language formation (Erdelyi, 1992; Moncayo, 2006).

Vygotsky (1978) proposes the child's earliest speech is social progressing to 'inner speech', which is a later developed stage of transformation from communication into individualised thought. Within this 'inner speech' Vygotsky makes the distinction between 'word meaning' (reflecting a general concept) and 'word sense' which depends on the context of the speech, with a predominance of sense over meaning (Rose *et al*, 2005). In the phenomenon of inner dialogues or speech, Vygotsky (1986) reflects on the problem of the personal senses of words, especially important for a student where English is a second language, as discussed in this study.

Foregrounded in Vygotskyian theory is the relationship between interpersonal and intrapersonal communication (Richardson *et al*, 2007) and here there is a relevant cross-paradigm reference and connection to psychodynamic theorists, for example Winnicott (1965) and Bowlby (1971, 1980, 1988). This cross-paradigm connection, involving interpersonal and intrapersonal communication, is particularly significant in the work of Lemma *et al* (2011), who are developing brief dynamic interpersonal therapy [DIT] for use by clinical practitioners as a part of Improving Access to Psychological Treatments [IAPT] service within the NHS. The interpersonal and intrapersonal planes help form the framework through which data is analysed in Papé's (2015) study.

Vygotsky highlights the tension of how the external and inner dialogues combine to acquire a psychologically individualised form (Kozulin *et al*, 2003; 2007). Vygotsky (1986) considers these two important processes were interwoven, that is the transition from external communication to inner dialogue and the expression of intimate thoughts in linguistic form, thus making them communicative.

Influence of Freud and Vygotsky

Thus, it can be noted both Freud and Vygotsky have an influence that far surpasses their original contribution. That Freud '...provided the undisputed starting-point of the modern psychodynamic study of the human personality...' (Guntrip, 1973: vii) is generally accepted by psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic thinkers. That Vygotsky's theories turn out to be instrumental in shaping the learning processes in '...understanding that human cognition and learning as being social and cultural rather than individual phenomena...' (Kozulin *et al*, 2003:1) is universally accepted when considering knowledge as information rather than the product of concept-formation. Where the development occurs is in the application of Freud's and Vygotsky's postulations by theorists and practitioners who discover areas that original propositions have not visited. This can be considered the strength of development, which happens on a continual basis by theorists and practitioners who apply original thought to changing circumstances and contexts.

Students' perceptions

The constructivist paradigm rests on an understanding that the tutor needs to know exactly where the student is in the stage of learning. Some important findings emerge from research into students' perception, for example Dochy *et al* (2005) show that, in general, students value having their views considered when designing learning activity (Stetsenko, 2005).

Students' understanding of facilitative factors, including stated preferences (Smith, 2006) for how they learn, do matter (Struyven *et al*, 2008). Use of portfolios (Segers *et al*, 2008) and learning aids, including worksheets which are used widely in psychotherapy training courses as shown in this study, is highlighted in Doppelt & Schunn's (2008) research as being enabling for students and therefore beneficial. Portfolios and worksheets are psycho-dynamic course resources and assessment tools (Sobral, 1997).

Seeking students' perceptions (Stones, 1987) and how these might change (Gottman, 1996) throughout the life of the course (Postlethwaite & Maull, 2011) is important because of the Vygotskyian framework under which this research is completed. What is important is the act of finding out students' perceptions, rather than the perceptions themselves (Freeman, 1993).

The idea that psychotherapy training is based in universities²⁰ because it requires the depth of understanding and analysis, which is the hallmark of university study, has direct pertinence to this research, as the eight student interviewees are attending or have attended university (Werring, 1987) or Higher Education courses (Middlehurst, 2001; Anderson *et al*, 2003; Ramsden, 2003).

I use integrated psychotherapeutic skills (Sanders, 2002), particularly of listening, in a manner that facilitates the student to tell her²¹ story or narrative²². Student narrative is taken to mean students' own words and meanings attached (deRivera & Sarbin, 1998; Shacklock, & Thorp, 2005), encouraged by my questions and interventions posed in such a way that the student feels free to respond openly.

In constructivist terms Wearmouth (2002) notes there is recognition that

'...at the centre of each account 'dwells a protagonist' (Bruner, 1990) and turning points are important because they result in change in protagonists' orientations to the world. They represent crises points brought about almost invariably by an access of new consciousness. It is at these points that the canons of logical consistency are 'violated' and the 'engine of drama' (Bruner, 1986) is built...the depiction of reality not through an omniscient eye that views a timeless reality, but through the filter of the consciousness of protagonists in the story...' (Wearmouth 2002:280).

²⁰ This is the title of Michael Jacobs' journal article (2002) in which he proposed very eloquently and pragmatically that psychotherapy training should be held in Higher Education universities, an idea originally promulgated by Freud (1956) and Kernberg (1980).

²¹ See footnote 5 (use of female pronoun to identify students participating in this research)

²² Vygotsky discusses narrative as being understood and representative of student world-views.

Students relate their stories in their own idiosyncratic and individualistic ways, termed 'subjectification'²³ (Bruner, 1986). They use their own lenses, which they form from their sociocultural experiences and as such are the central characters in their stories. There is no universally accepted truth to students' stories, only their representation, clearly postulated as others '...see only the realities of the characters themselves...viewing only the shadows of events we can never know directly...' (Bruner, 1986:25). When learning is deconstructed and reconstructed new understanding emerges, which might challenge previously unconscious defence mechanisms of coping strategies, a concept from the psychodynamic therapeutic paradigm.

There is evidence that many students find talking about their course experiences to be affirming and enabling (Middlehurst, 2001, Tabin, 2006). To ask questions in a detached way, from the aspect of solely interviewer, can counter the importance of the relationship and be detrimental to understanding and utilising the process (Wheeler, 2010).

In research terms the question of the ability of students to give valid judgements on teaching is commonly formulated as an examination of whether factors beyond the

control of the teacher, from a psychodynamic perspective, influence or contaminate the student ratings (Kember & Wong, 2000). Some student interviewees seem to show a built-in resistance when offering critiques of a tutor's performance. Some students show loyalty and others do not wish to appear critical.

Choice of paradigms

The constructivist approach to learning (Vygotsky, 1925, 1986; Atherton, 2005) is chosen as one of the two paradigms from which I have included elements into one conceptual framework for this research, the other being from the psychodynamic approach to psychotherapy (Delmonte, 1987). I believe social constructivism is compatible with my psychodynamic practice as a tutor in supporting students to develop into autonomous learners. In this sense there is congruence between the two analytical paradigms of Vygotskyian sociocultural constructivism and psychodynamic approach to Freudian analysis and psychotherapy. To my knowledge there has been no other research which marries elements from these two approaches to create a framework for constructing research and lenses through which to view data. I have outlined Vygotskyian theories of learning to enable the reader to understand the analytic framework used to analyse the data.

To understand the enabling process associated with psychodynamic theory, through sociocultural constructivist lenses, is the reason the two paradigms have been

²³ 'Subjectification' is a word originated by Foucault to describe the construction of an individual subject or how an individual turns himself into the subject (Foucault, M. (1984) *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, ed. P. Rainbow, 3rd edition, London: Penguin)

chosen. This study brings together elements of both paradigms which lend themselves to the tutor enabling students to learn autonomously to become cathartic counsellors (Tønnesvang *et al*, 2010). The social constructivist viewpoint suggests the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1927) in which sedimented knowledge related to psychodynamic training is mediated by the tutor for the student to construct learning and the psychodynamic viewpoint suggests the tutor enables the student to connect with strengths and weaknesses through past experiences, aided by tutor modelling (Folkes-Skinner *et al*, 2010).

Critique of choice of paradigms

To offer critical analysis of paradigm choice (Barnett, 1997) for this research gives an opportunity to consider conflicting interpretations (Piper *et al*, 1993) of the application of postulations of historic theorists in a modern context. Freud and Vygotsky are the two 'founding fathers' of the two paradigms through which I construct this research. Theorists following the two original thinkers offer more modern interpretations acceptable to students who have reservations about applying historic thought to modern circumstance. However this does not lessen the impact of leading thinking of Freud and Vygotsky but places it in historical context. Some of the practices of early theorists are certainly taboo today, including for example sexual relationships with patients, drug abuse and using mentally challenged patients as 'guinea-pigs'. These practices, without the controls and boundaries (Bridges, 1999, 2001; Sinsheimer, 2007) of modern day thinking,

if not widespread, were found during the time and in context of the two theorists,

Freud^{24/25} and Vygotsky.

Contribution to knowledge

A particular contribution to knowledge (Engel, 1965), which is very clear in this research is, I believe, using lenses from elements of the two paradigms of psychodynamic and sociocultural constructivist thinking into a framework for analysing data which has illuminated findings (Moulding, 2010) in this research. By employing elements of these two paradigms, I have produced a framework of analysis (Payne & Farquhar, 1962) that could be used in many areas of research in the fields of education and psychotherapy. This framework of analysis, in which I have used dual lenses from elements of two different paradigms, might be useful and help to illuminate other research in appropriate fields, including psychotherapy, especially as the psychodynamic approach

²⁴ Dr Tylim offers commentary on Freud's seemingly incongruous behaviour as an analyst '...Freud allowed the Rat Man access to his private life, violating technical principles he was in the process of formulating. The Rat Man must have elicited a strong countertransference pull on Freud. How else can we understand Freud's gratifying his hungry patient by inviting him to a meal? What about Freud's financial support to the Wolf Man? Freud often disregarded his own recommendation that analysts avoid taking into treatment patients they have met before either socially or in medical settings. The analysis of his daughter Anna was certainly an unorthodox one. In the process of creating psychoanalysis, Freud took a few side trips into forbidden territory. Today's Freudian analysts may classify these incursions as loaded with unethical potentials. How do psychoanalysts reconcile the tendency toward stretching the frame with the ethical demands of their profession? When does a humane act or a kind gesture become a crossing over or a violation of boundaries?' (Tylim, 2004: 610).

²⁵ Further evidence of Freud's pro-bono activities is offered in literature which recognised examples of him offering free clinics to patients in Vienna (Cresci, 2010).

to psychotherapy does not have a specific theory of learning.

This could be looked on as a way of using pre-existent theories from the two paradigms to utilise a framework for analysing learning within a psychodynamic approach to psychotherapy training in an innovative way and one which emerged from my analysis and reflections. Ultimately, this has the potential to inform further research for those interested in creating a learning theory for the psychodynamic approach to psychotherapy, which is an exciting prospect.

From this structure there emerged an understanding of how students developed in each stages of the course and any appropriate research that considered similar structure could use this framework.

Considering the dynamic interplay between process and content, through the two-paradigm lenses, was a major contribution to knowledge of this research. Supervisory input has, in a constructivist sense, enabled me to reflect intramentally and understand that utilising elements from the two paradigms is best envisaged as holding both lenses at the same time, going from one to the other, as well as applying each to the other. The dynamic application of this internal and external reflection, from a detailed understanding of psychodynamic and constructivist thinking, is what made this research original and provided original findings from which implications, as described below, were drawn.

Irreconcilable paradigms

The two paradigms came from a history of tension and contradiction. Vygotsky labelled this divergence a 'crisis' as he considered the paradigms were irreconcilable. In Vygotsky's time the debate existed between the positivistic thinkers who addressed behaviour and those who worked with unconscious material, between external and internal worlds. This article has not attempted to find a solution to the problems of irreconcilable difference. Particular relevance to this research, is to find out how Vygotsky's claim of the tension between psychodynamic (structured) thinking and constructivist (unstructured) thinking, has application to this study. The specific part of the argument that has been considered here has focussed on one area of the discussion Vygotsky and other educational psychologists had within that debate, which was understanding learning about psychoanalytic (psychodynamic) theory from the perspective of constructivist thinking.

One of the issues that Vygotsky grappled with was working with psychodynamic theories and constructivist cognitive theories, which culminated in a belief that psychotherapy was structured and constructivist theories were unstructured and depended on societal and cultural influences (Vygotsky, 1927). When applied to the context of this research, it is the tension effectively between Vygotskian ideographic phenomenological constructivist thinking and the relatively nomothetic paradigm of psychodynamic

understanding, albeit including material dwelling within the unconscious.

Synthesis

This study acknowledges that synthesising aspects of the two paradigms and moving from one to the other, for this research cannot be complete, as there remained discordance in many aspects of nomothetic psychodynamic and ideographic constructivist thinking.

Vygotskian sociocultural constructivist theories assume that all people construct their own interpretations in learning and psychodynamic theories assume a rule-based structure in the sense that there are definite concepts applied and stages through which the individual develops and to which he or she regresses. On the surface it seemed the two paradigms are incompatible, even though Vygotsky tried to understand psychology within constructivist thinking.

What I have discovered was perhaps that there were elements of each paradigm that could be developed alongside each other successfully, some of which I have highlighted in this article. This is the metaphorical understanding of the process of standing on the outside (externally), looking at the students' data and using the constructivist lens to think what has been going on in process and then step back again inside and make interpretations through a psychodynamic lens. This of course has resonance with and is informed by the Vygotskian concept of reflecting intermentally and intramentally. Much useful material emerged in the research

(Pap  , 2015) as a result of the aspects that have been used in the lenses and the integrity of the two paradigms remains.

The research has located and utilised those parts of the two paradigms which, although they considered different domains, did overlap and did not suffer from the contradictions of nomothetic and ideological thinking.

Future research

My hope and expectation is that future researchers take forward the challenge of developing and creating the lenses through which to inform learning of the psychodynamic approach to psychotherapy and develop them into a clear theory of learning, underpinning psychodynamic teaching in the future.

The framework that structured the original research could in the future inform research into the theory of learning for teaching the psychodynamic approach to psychotherapy, underpinned by the knowledge that methodologically, realist ontology is nomothetic and related to general laws. On the other hand interpretivist epistemology is hermeneutic (Gadamer, 2006) in nature and related to constructivist ontology (Arthur *et al*, 2012).

These concerns shaped Vygotsky's thinking about the nature of sociocultural constructivism and psychoanalysis and he considered that a synthesis of the different paradigms incompatible with maintaining the true nature and integrity of each. Vygotsky (1927) dismissed heterogeneity as an attempt to respond to a question raised by one paradigm with an answer

from another. This research took a somewhat different view, although acknowledging discrepancies between the two paradigms remained, as noted above

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