

*“It is such a process of self-discovery, of finding and bringing out what people know, but didn’t know that they knew. It is an exciting process to witness.” (Tutor)*

*“...it stretched my thinking and concentrated my mind.” (Student)*

*“It’s focused, incisive and it triggers connection after connection – the lights go on like a pinball machine.” (Tutor)*

*“This was personally meaningful as I had to really work to create what was important to me and then to pick out two or three really key aspects of my practice, e.g. boundaries and coping under pressure.” (Student)*

*“It helps me to know what it is that’s important and how I want to be.” (Student)*

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Find out more about this project and the Practice-based Professional Learning CETL at our web site:

[www.open.ac.uk/pbpl/](http://www.open.ac.uk/pbpl/)

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# Enhanced reflection



Professional Identity and Values  
Organisation Tool

Barry Cooper and Maggie Pickering



Practice-based Professional Learning  
Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

# Capturing and organising self-generated personal constructs

## Charting awareness of professional values and identity

### Encouraging learner centred enquiry into practice and learning aims

#### Our aim

The Professional Identity and Values Organisation Tool (PIVOT) is designed to facilitate and enhance processes of critical reflection and self-directed learning. Our intention is to help students in professional practice become more aware of a developing sense of identity through exploration of their values and creation of their own learning aims. This project piloted the use of PIVOT with social work students, for evaluation and development.

#### What is PIVOT all about?

The tool has been developed from Personal Construct Psychology

and wider constructivist perspectives of teaching and learning. Through a series of activities within structured interviews, learners are enabled to:

- draw out their own personal observations and interpretations within their practice, by using comparisons between their own perceptions of examples of good and bad practice
- progressively refine these constructs to reflect and highlight their own core values
- systematically score these values as learning aims
- use these learning aims as a basis for an action plan to develop their own professional practice.

#### Methodology

The participants were offered two PIVOT meetings with their tutor during their professional training. Each meeting began with the student identifying a mix of 9 elements:

- 5 good and poor practitioners that they have known
- 1 supervisor that they have or have known
- 3 of self: as a pre-qualified worker, as a student practitioner, as the qualified worker the student would like to become.

Each participant was asked to reflect on various combinations of these elements, in terms of what is important in practice to them as an individual. By thinking about similarities between elements and also opposites to these similarities, each participant built up a chart of personal constructs.

Participants then focused on the three constructs most important to them personally. The most valued aspect of each construct was added to the bottom rung of a 'value ladder'. Then, at progressive steps up the value ladder, participants reflected more deeply on the values most meaningful to them. In this way, the student's own core values were progressively illuminated, allowing personal learning aims and action plans to be identified.

*"If you'd asked me about social work values at the beginning I wouldn't have known what to say – I've now said all this – it's brought it all out." (Student)*

