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**The British Dental Association
Regional Group
Guest Lecture**

9th March 2021

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**University of
Kent** | Digital
and Lifelong
Learning (DaLL)

Aim, Objectives and Outcomes

Aim: to provide delegates with a deeper understanding of the role that education, in all its forms, has had on the professional journeys of those who go on to achieve elite positions in the dental sector.

Objectives:

Identify: the link between on-going study and the key features of the professional evolution of dental occupations.

Apply: the principle of Higher education, research, to the context of an evolving professional journey of dental professionals.

Linking to
GDC Outcomes
B, C and D

As a result of this presentation/session, the delegates will have a broader understanding of....

How positions of influence within the dental sector are achieved and are maintained.

**Doctor Reed...and a story of education,
empowerment, autonomy and power...**

Prompted By...

- Interest in the practice of dental professionals
- **Who is claiming what...**
 - Knowledge and 'territory'
 - for their own...
 - and why..
 - and what does that say...

Best way
to explain
is to tell
you a story
– the
story...

Context...



Doctoral Research



Sociology Of The Professions



Basil Bernstein – Educationalist



Narratives established through story telling

Purpose Of The Research



?

- To demonstrate how professional journeys within the dental sector are restricted or enabled by educational strategies and tools



?

- Professions and the position of occupational groups within them are always in flux; dentistry is no exception.

Background



Increasingly, there are occupational groups within the dental professions, who pursue professional parity and an equivalent opportunity to influence the dental sector.



The research focuses on understanding the elites' positioning within the dental sector from the perspective of theories of professionalisation and knowledge acquisition.

The Profession...

The sociology of
the professions
provided a
background



which shows how
occupations
differentiate,
some acquiring
professional status
and others not.

Professionalisation

The term **'professionalisation'** is defined as the processes an occupational group undertakes when determined to achieve professional status



[1] Collective Cohesion and Patronage

[2] Epistemic Controls and Claiming Knowledge

[3] Exclusion and Closing the Market

Background



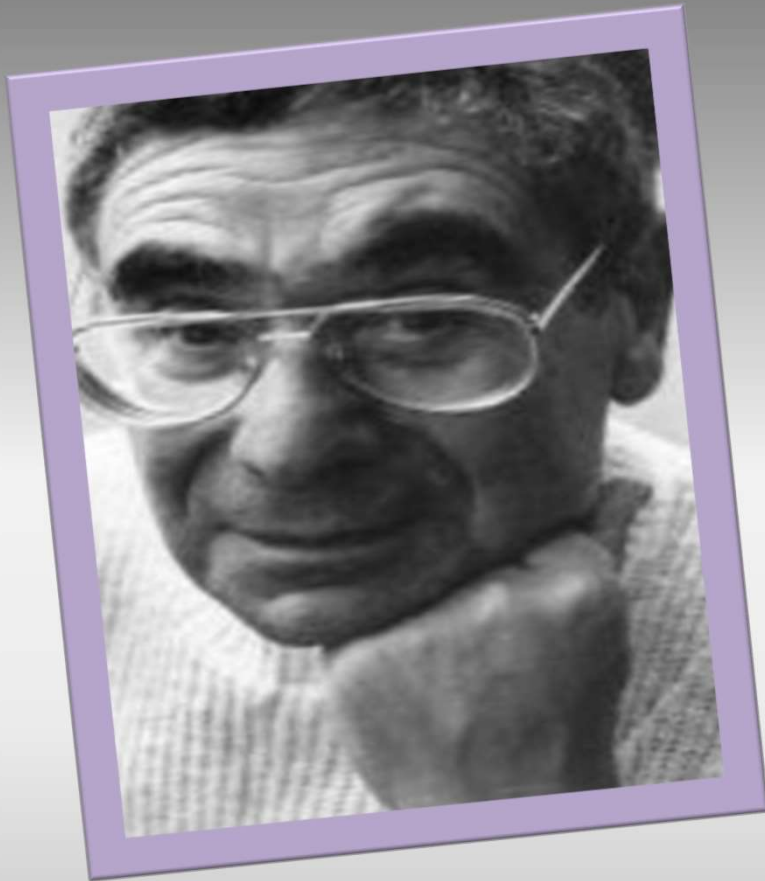
The research was located within the sociology of education, using the concepts of Basil Bernstein to analyse professional enculturation...



...in terms of what is transferred during exclusive dental-elite professional educational exchanges, with peers and superiors, and which steers knowledge gathering over the course of a professional lifetime.



Basil Bernstein



.

Bernstein's theory proposes
that *what* knowledge is selected
for curricula
(termed '*classification*')
and *how* it is transmitted
(termed '*framing*')
shapes, and can change, society...

Aim of the Research

...to inform the professional journeys of other aspiring dental occupations seeking to achieve elite, that is to say, influential positions in the future.



The 3 Research Questions

1

- How are the professional journeys of influential dental sector elites characterised?

2

- What typifies the relationship between powerful and dominant agents/ agencies that influence the formation, distribution and communication of professional knowledge in dentistry and those who go on to establish elite professional positions within the dental sector?

3

- What are the implications of a Bernsteinian analysis for the emerging professionalising dental occupations?

Process Overview



The questions were addressed by qualitative exploration of the educational and professional lives of **nine influential elite** professionals working within the dental sector.



Influential elites who have held positions of **national influence** within the National Health Service, the Department of Health or other government office,



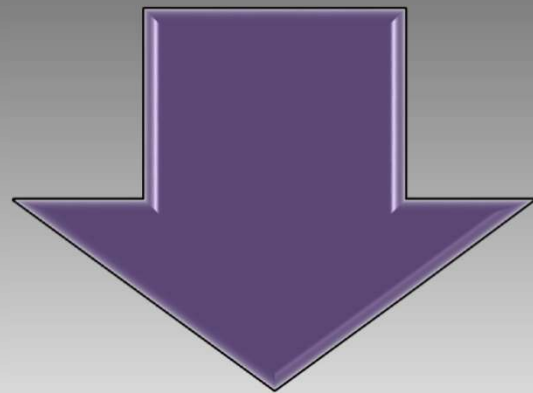
or who had been the national representative of one of the registered dental professional bodies in a role related to the development of the dental workforce and dental workforce strategy.

Table 5.1

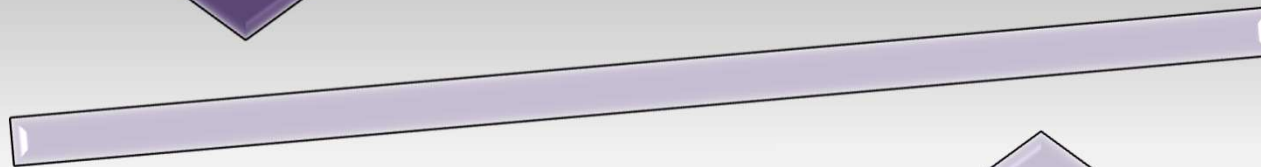
Introduction To Dental-Elites

Pseudonym	Key Influential Roles	Brief Narrative Appendix 15
St Clair	Ex-Dean of the Royal College of Surgeons Faculty of General Dental Practice.	a.
Angus	Academic and ex Chair of General Dental Council and British Dental Association.	b.
Walter	Ex-NHS Postgraduate Dental Dean and member of COPDEND. Committee member of Royal College of Surgeons Faculty of General Dental Practice.	c.
Nigella	Department of Health, past deputy Chief Dental Office and a committee member of Royal College.	d.
Andrew	Civil Servant – Department of Health.	e.
Robbie	Academic and past Chair of the Dental School's Council.	f.
Cathy	Ex-NHS Postgraduate Dental Dean, Chair of COPDEND and invited member of Royal College of Surgeons Faculty of General Dental Surgery.	g.
Evan	Ex-Associate Dean of Royal College of Surgeons Faculty of General Dental Practice and committee member of the General Dental Council.	h.
Wayne	NHS Postgraduate Dental Dean, member of COPDEND and a lead in the current NHS Advancing Dentistry Project.	i.
Casey	The composite narrative of the fictional character.	.

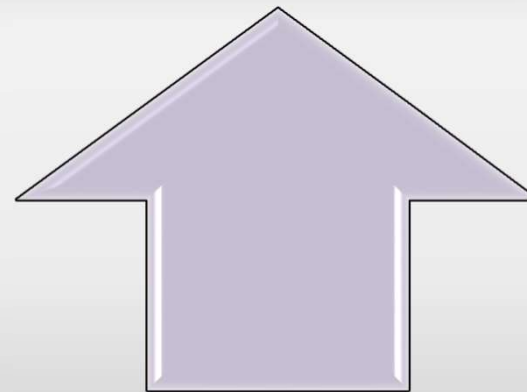
Methodology and Methods



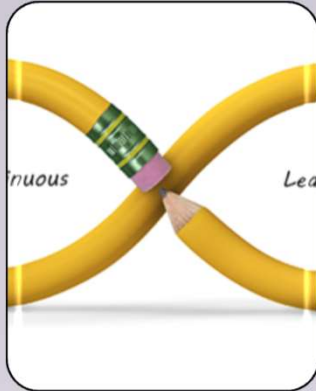
Narrative
Methodology



Methods: interviews
& life grids
Plus, historical and
policy documents



Findings ...Dental Elites are...



Continuous
Learners



Adding to
the
professions
reservoir of
knowledge
by building
their own
repertoire



Committed
to a
*'pedagogised
career'*



Fit together
fragments of
knowledge
into a
coherent
scheme,
which
constitutes
a curriculum
which...



...transmits a
range of
deeply-
embedded
messages
which are
both open and
concealed,
accessible to
some but not
others.

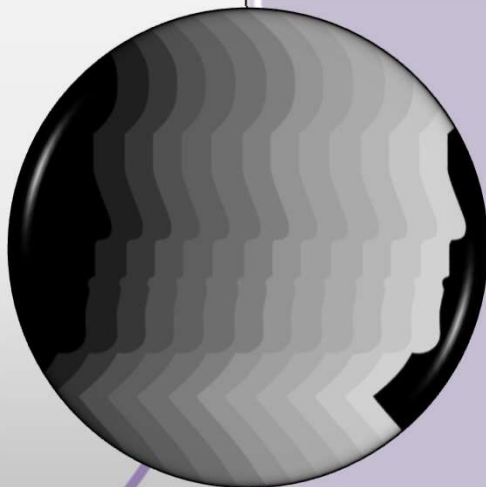
Findings



The findings showed that such messages influenced the receiver of education:

[1] a sense of who they were;

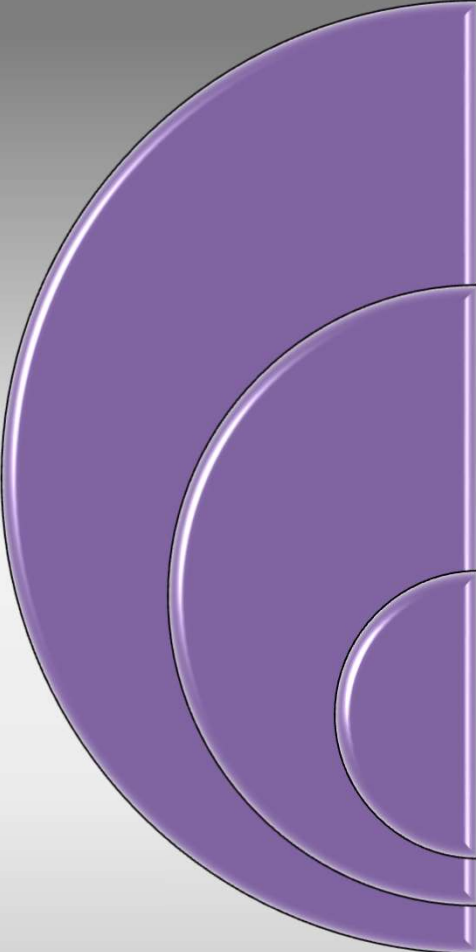
[2] their limits in terms of options as to what they were permitted to do



Knowledge might fade or be replaced, but **relationships were enduring** and relied upon by the influential dental-elite to gather further knowledge in the future

- This is how a system of practices, norms, values, and worldviews that the professional curriculum conveys, are presented.

Research Argued



<p>Those who transmit knowledge exert powerful influence</p>
<p>It is through repeated and prevailing educational interactions and encounters that relationship groups form.</p>
<p>These groups are intentionally pervasive, functioning to ensure the group's mutual interests and influence are projected and preserved, to the exclusion of others outside the group.</p>

The lesson for others

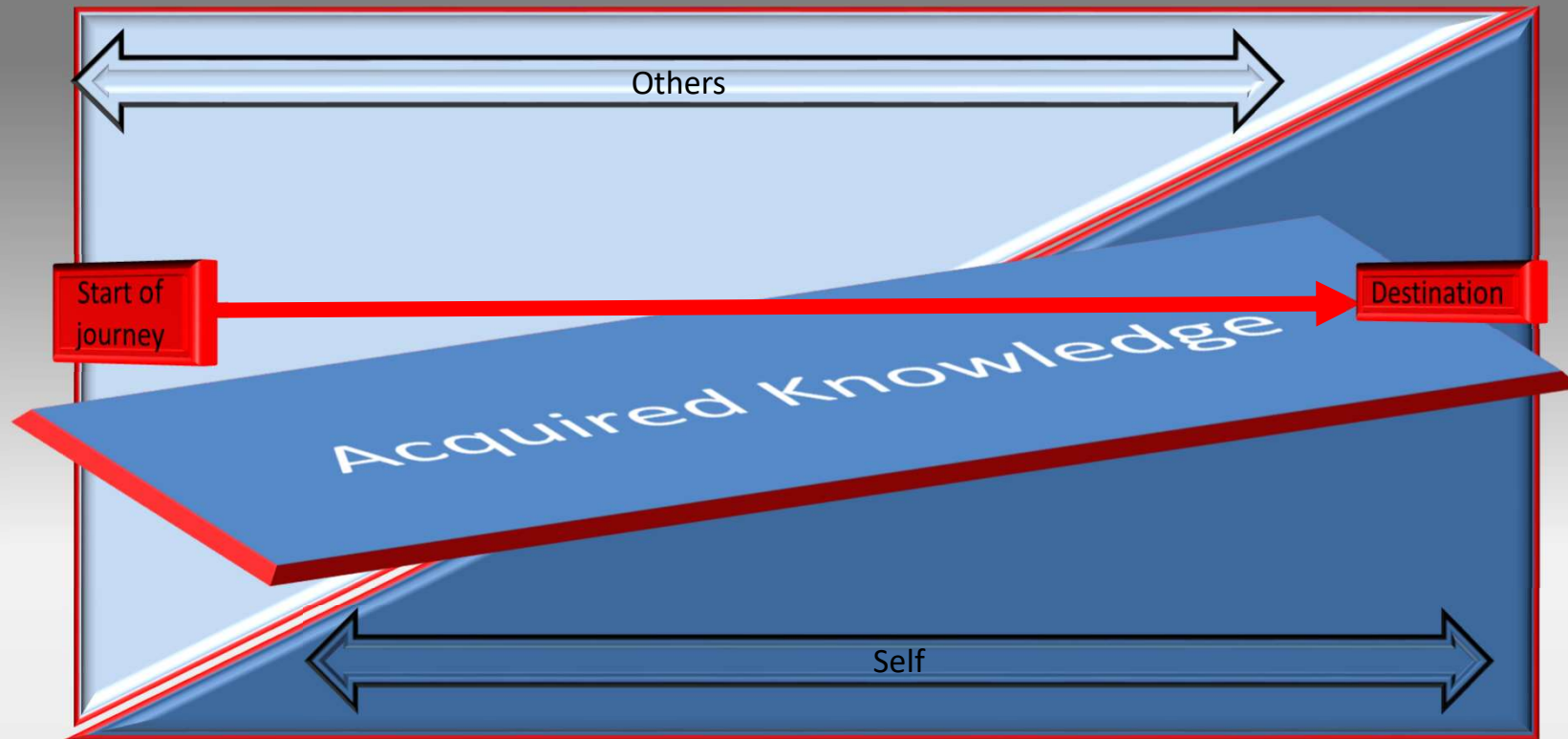


A model
against
which your
own
pedagogic
structures
might be
evaluated.

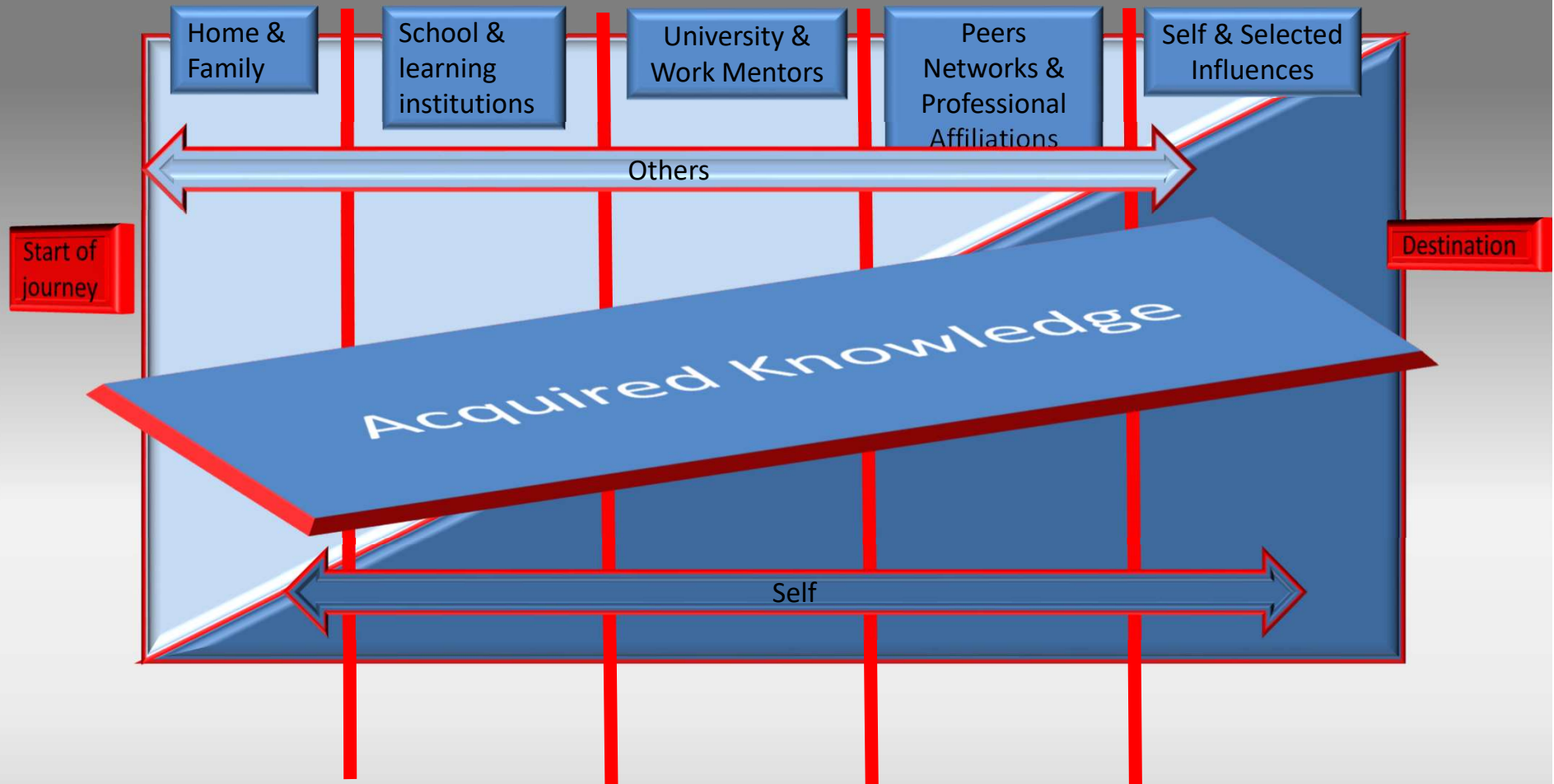
...with a view
to identifying
how these
structures
might be
strengthened
to support
those who
wish to achieve
positions of
influence
within the
dental sector
of the future

Model of the Journey of Dental Elite Acquisition of Knowledge

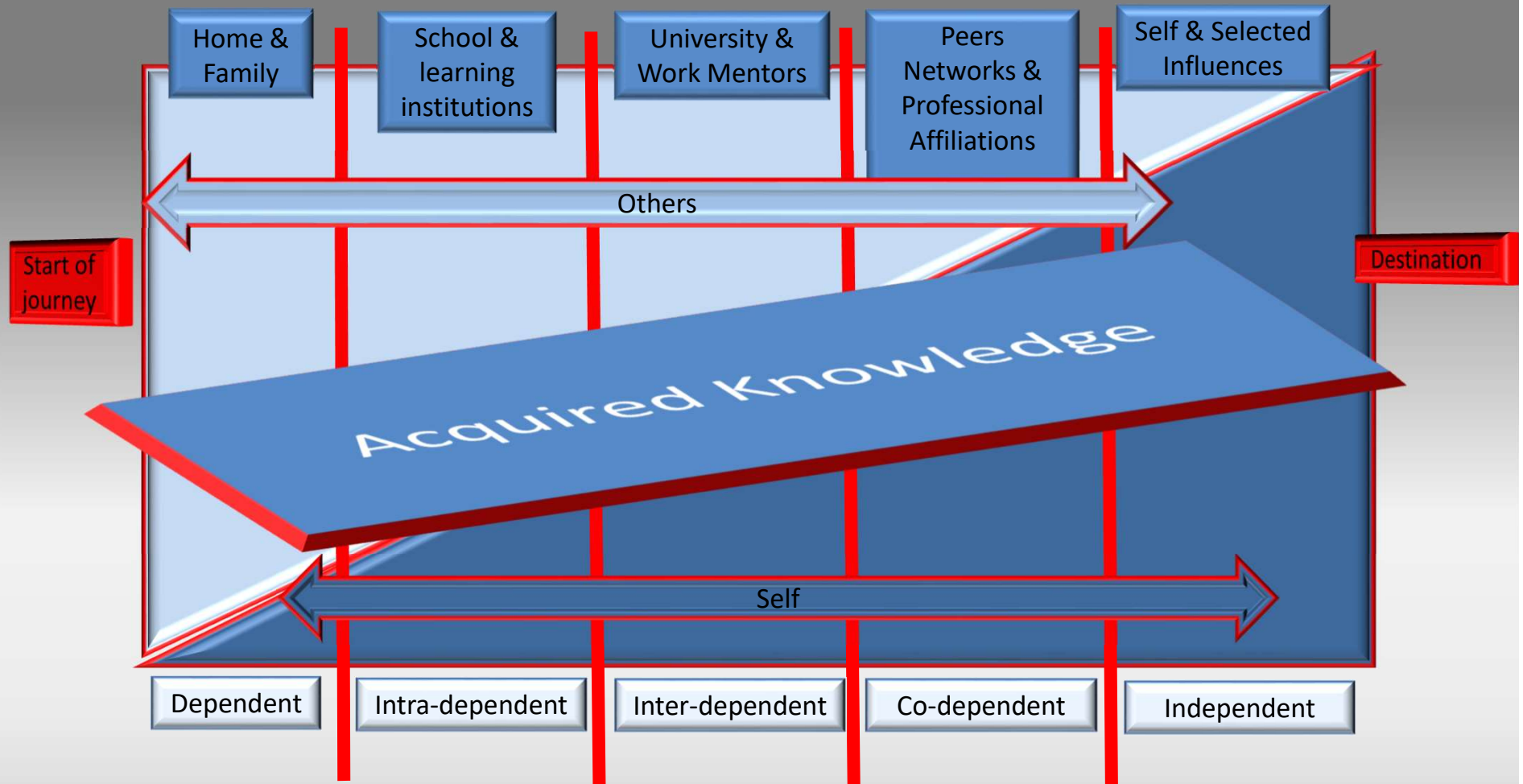
Figure 6.2



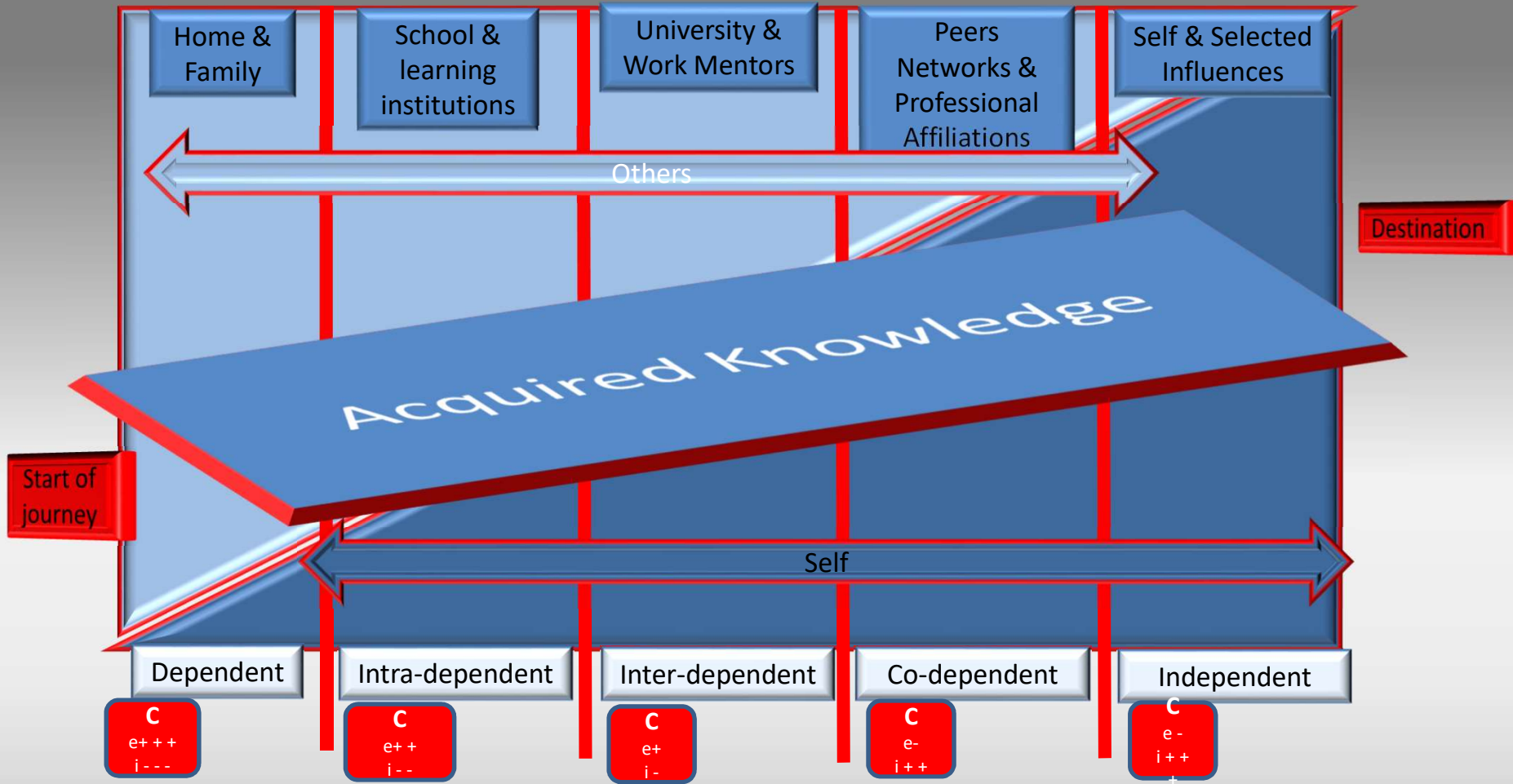
Model of the Journey of Dental Elite Acquisition of Knowledge



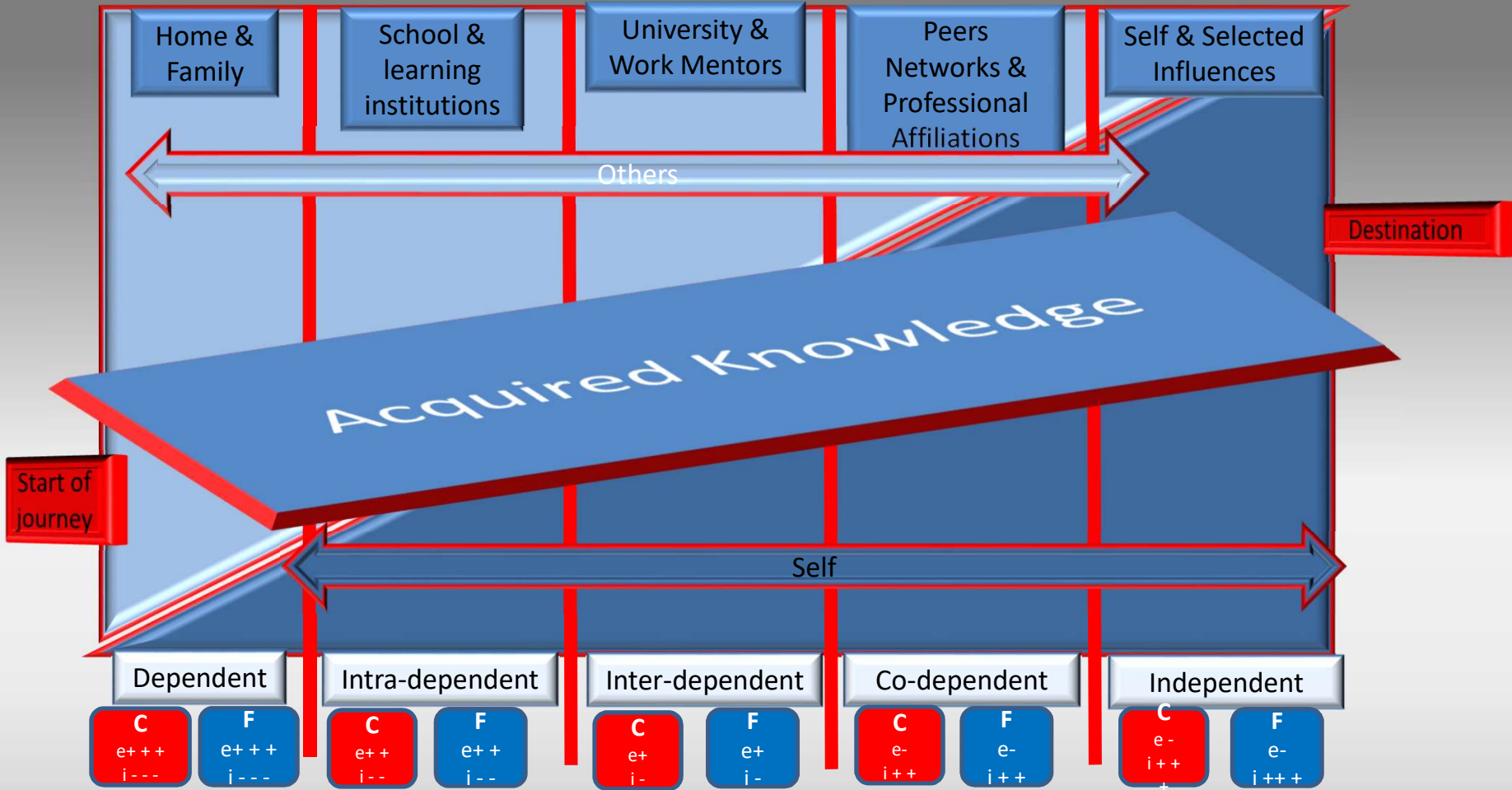
Model of the Journey of Dental Elite Acquisition of Knowledge



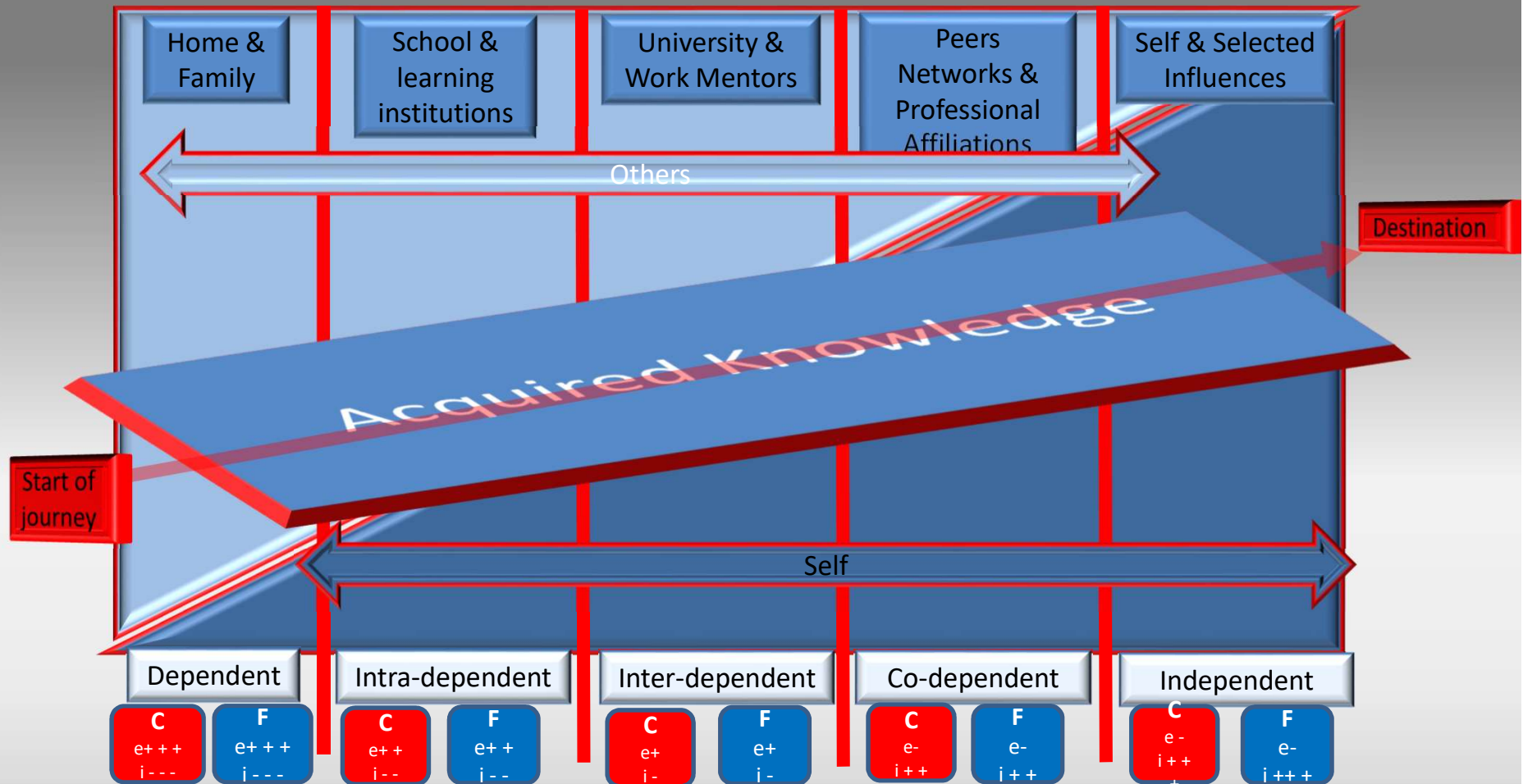
Model of the Journey of Dental Elite Acquisition of Knowledge



Model of the Journey of Dental Elite Acquisition of Knowledge



Model of the Journey of Dental Elite Acquisition of Knowledge

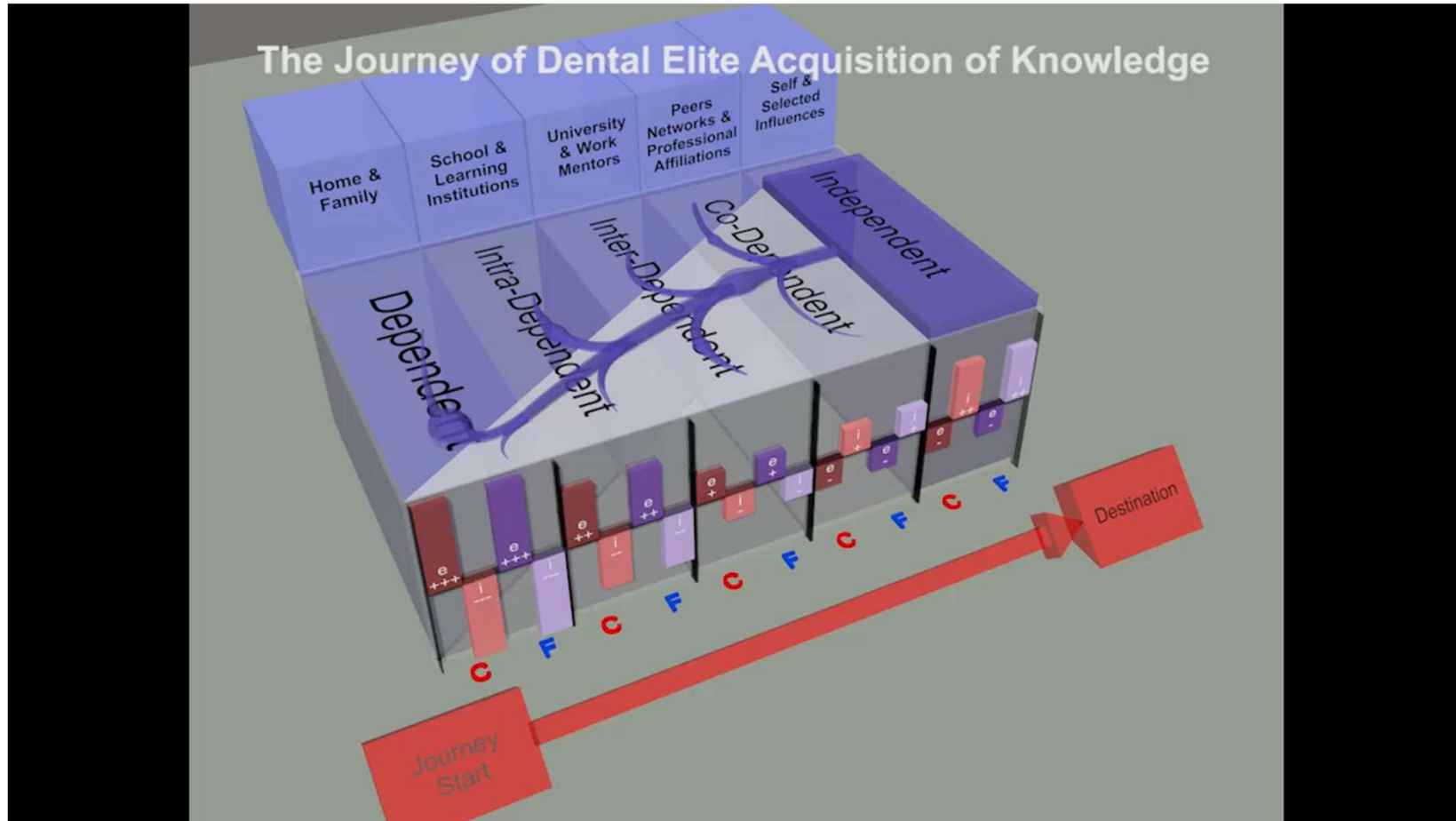


Animated Model

11 minutes in length

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zYqt1pfORTA>

The Journey of Dental Elite Acquisition of Knowledge



Implications: Micro (Practitioner) Level

Understanding of Professionalisation

The study furnishes practitioners with a foundation for understanding key information and direction to locating evidence sources and historical insight...

Tool for Reflection

The study offers practitioners a tool with which to punctuate their day-to-day activity ...

... conversational spaces for deeper reflective consideration of how development and educational opportunities...

... specifically related to postgraduate study and professional credentials, have advantaged others in the past.

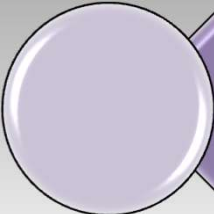
Implications:

Meso (Organisational) Level

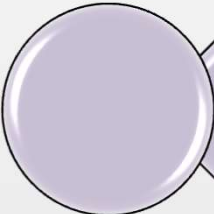
- Model of *Journey of Dental-elite Acquisition of Knowledge*
- As a model for professional organisations and educational stakeholders.



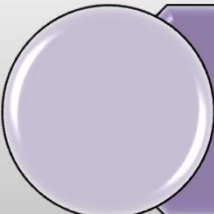
What is the current nature of the organisation?



What are the organisation's positions, both strategic and operational?



What position does the organisation need to adopt to ensure members' interests are represented going forward?



Are the vision, values and strategy enough to reflect the purpose of the organisation and its relevance in the future?

Implications: Macro (National) Level

- The transformation of the dental workforce is an ongoing project.

First , identify and understand 'who' (organisations, positions and individuals) controls and transmits knowledge ...

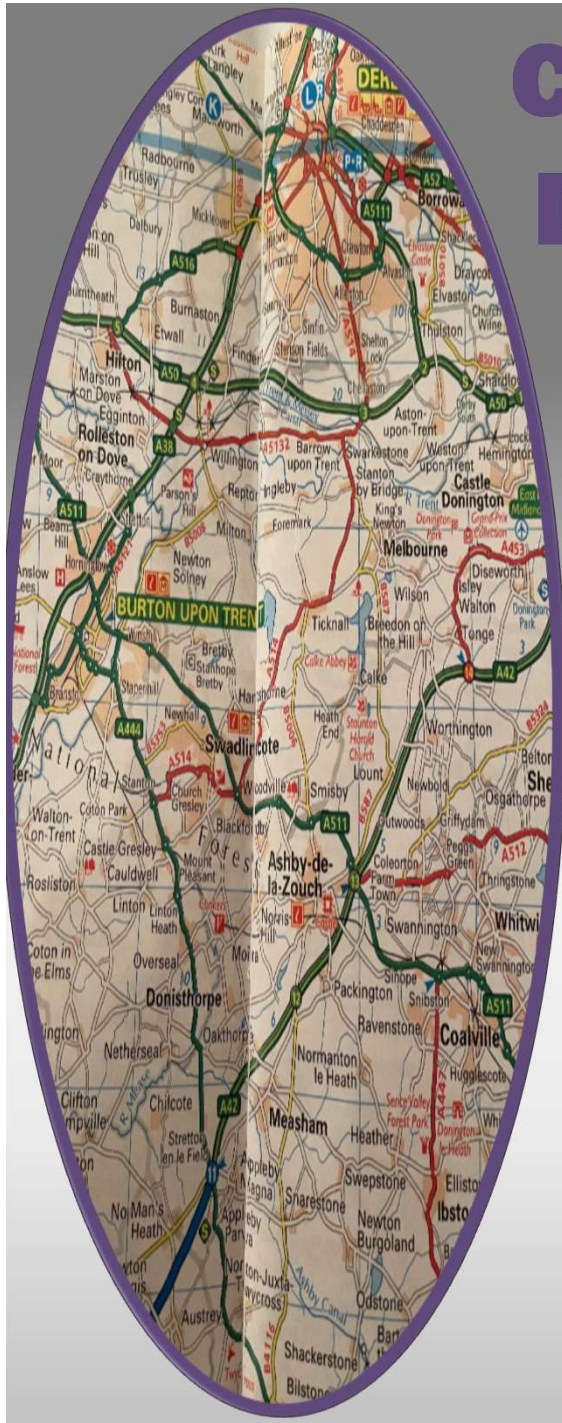
de facto those who exert powerful influences on those with whom they come into frequent and prolonged contact. Then...

- For those seeking to bring about workforce transformation in terms of future dental sector influencers

Second, develop a strategy (and associated policies) that aim to establish routes to ensure that these arenas are 'opened up' so that all occupational groups...

....enable a presence, with legitimate rights to be part of decision-making and to contribute to powerful, multi-professional dental arenas.

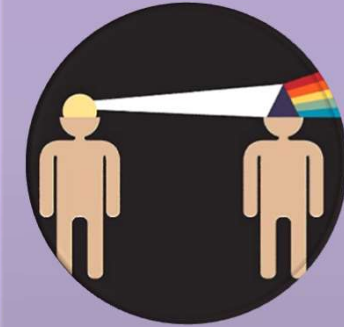
Contributions to the Dental Professions



The role of influential knowledge, which binds the dental-elite together



How that knowledge is acquired



How influence is sustained

The research has generated understanding about...

Contribution to Professions



...illustrating how one (dental) profession has established control through professionalisation.



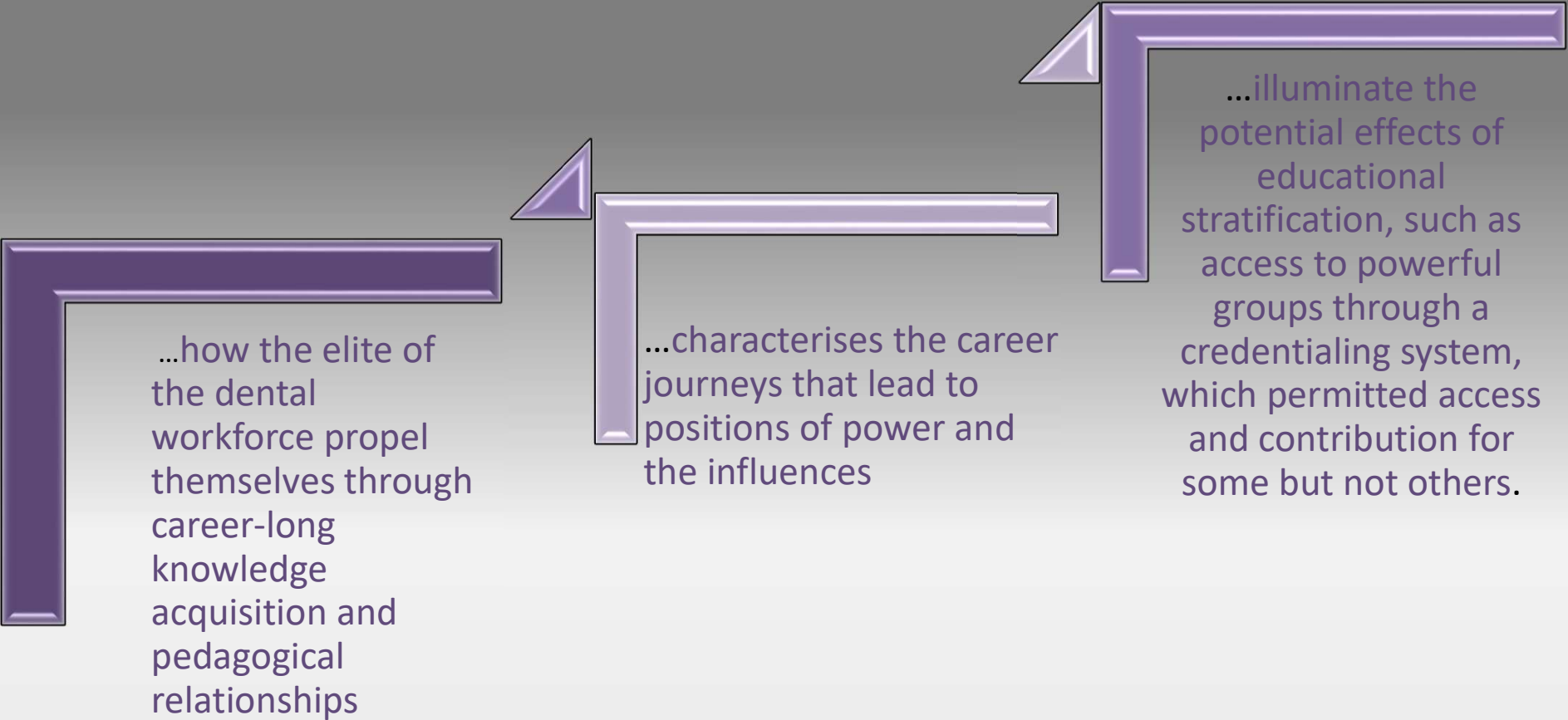
...if inequalities in knowledge and educational distribution continue, there will be a resultant continuation in stratification within the (dental) professions.



...illuminated the potential effects of educational stratification, such as access to powerful groups through a credentialing system, which permitted access and contribution...



Theoretical Contribution



...how the elite of the dental workforce propel themselves through career-long knowledge acquisition and pedagogical relationships

...characterises the career journeys that lead to positions of power and the influences

...illuminate the potential effects of educational stratification, such as access to powerful groups through a credentialing system, which permitted access and contribution for some but not others.

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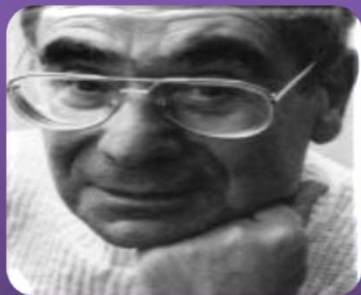
Finally....Contribution to Knowledge



the acquisition of sacred knowledge from certain 'others' through pedagogic devices, produces a dental-elite professional.



Although located within the context of dentistry, this approach could be applied to any occupation seeking professional standing.



...the struggles occupations experience to gain professional status
...what is transferred during exclusive elite professional educational exchanges, with peers and superiors...
...which steer knowledge-gathering over the course of a professional lifetime



Questions?

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Digital
and Lifelong
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Research Gate



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Senior Lecturer
Head of Digital and Lifelong Learning



Survey question/s

- To what extent were you previously familiar with the content of the webinar?
- To what extent did the webinar add to your appreciation of professional practice within the dental sector?

References

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