

Job Club Experience

October 2010

Executive Summary

Job Club participants' experience was explored using a longitudinal design. Survey data were collected from 63 participants from six job clubs offered between April and August 2010. Overall finding supports group-level effectiveness of job club at increasing the learning and the positive attitudes of the participants. In addition, the current finding suggests that job club may be especially effective for those who started out with poor self-confidence in job search.

Participant Characteristics

Demographics

Age

N = 62	Mean = 59.8	Range = 48-77
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Gender

N = 63	Male = 19	Female = 44
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Ethnic Background

N = 63	White = 41	Black = 22
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Marital Status

N = 63	Married = 25	Single = 28	Other = 10
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Highest Education

Some High School = 1	High School Diploma = 14	Some College = 21	Associate's Degree = 11	Bachelor's Degree = 14	Master's and Above = 2
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Career and Pension

Retired from Main Career

N = 62	Yes = 22	No = 40
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Primary Work History

N = 62	Blue Collar = 16	White Collar = 46
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Social Security

N = 62	Yes = 26	No = 36
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Pension

N = 63	Yes = 22	No = 41
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401k or Other Defined Contribution Plan

N = 61	Yes = 16	No = 45
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Job Search

Reason for Job Search

N = 62	Career Change = 17	Lay-off = 24	Other = 21
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Work Preference

N = 63	Blue Collar = 12	White Collar = 50	No Preference = 1
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Preferred Work Schedule

N = 63	Full-time = 34	Part-time = 13	No Preference = 16
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Length of Job Search

N = 62	Mean = 7.55 Months
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Job Club Experience by Group and Participant Characteristics

Average job club experiences were compared by group characteristics (location) and by participant characteristics (gender, ethnic background, marital status, educational level, retirement status, and work history). Job club experience was measured by 7 questions on a 7-point scale:

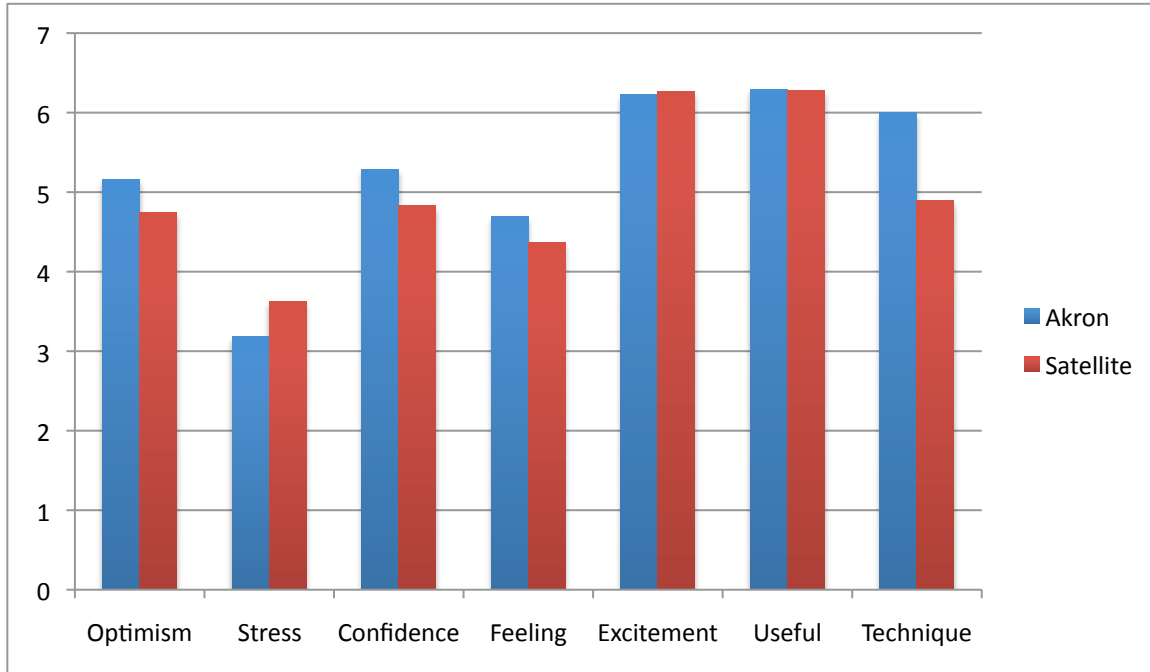
1. How optimistic do you feel about your job search process today?
(1=Not optimistic, 7=Very optimistic)
2. How stressed do you feel today?
(1=Not stressed at all, 7=Very stressed)
3. How confident are you that you can successfully search for a job?
(1=Not confident at all, 7=Very confident)
4. When you think about your job search, how does it make you feel?
(1=Very bad, 7=Very good)
5. I am excited to learn new things about job search process.
(1=Strongly disagree, 7=Strongly agree)
6. The things I learned in job club so far are useful for my job search.
(1=Strongly disagree, 7=Strongly agree)
7. So far, I have learned new techniques about job search process in job club.
(1=Strongly disagree, 7=Strongly agree)

For those participants who provided responses to the above questions across time, average scores were used for this analysis.

Overall, participant experience did not differ by job club location or participant characteristics. Only statistically significant difference was found in average stress-level reported by male and female participants. Female participants were more stressed toward job search on average. The figures summarizing the findings by characteristics are presented below. These findings support that job club assures consistent experience regardless of location or participants with different demographic and work background.

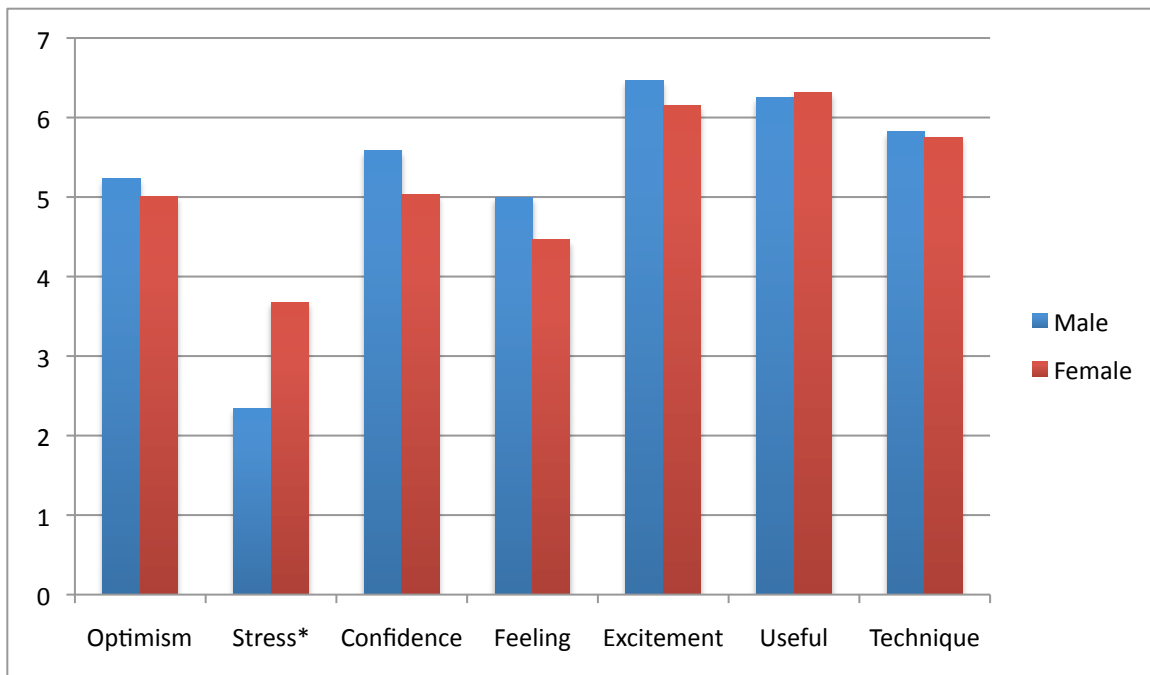
Location

Job club participants' experience did not differ by locations (Akron vs. satellite offices)



Gender

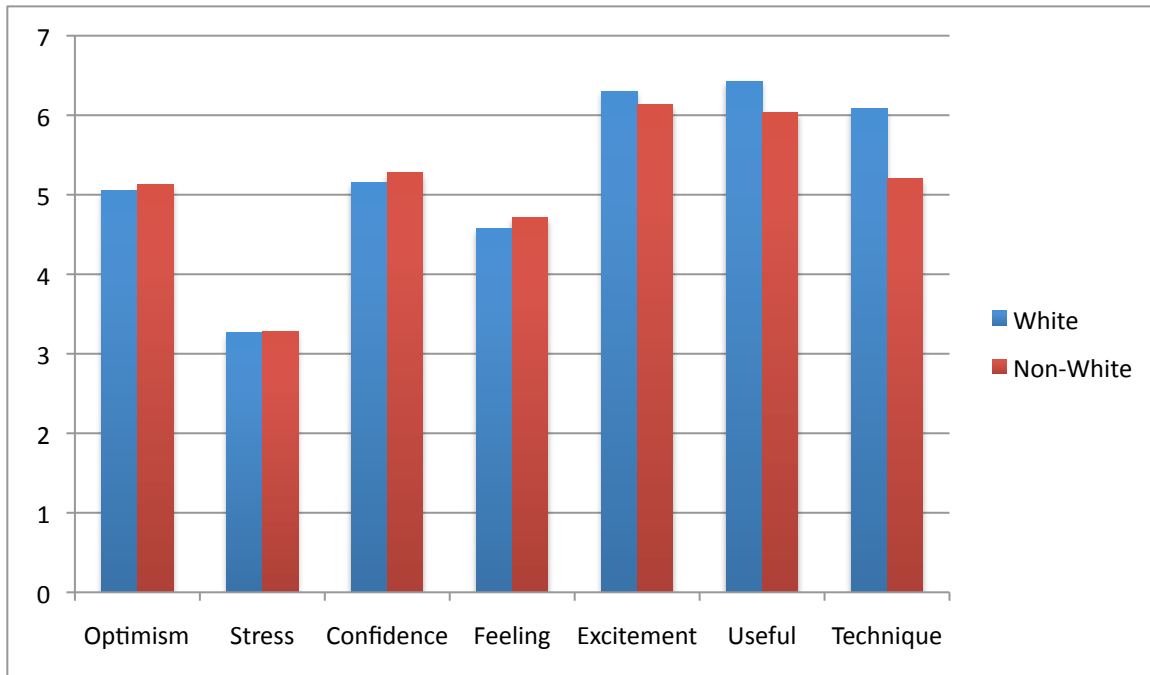
Overall male and female participants' experience was comparable. Female participants reported higher level of stress toward job search than male participants.



*Statistically significant level of difference between average scores

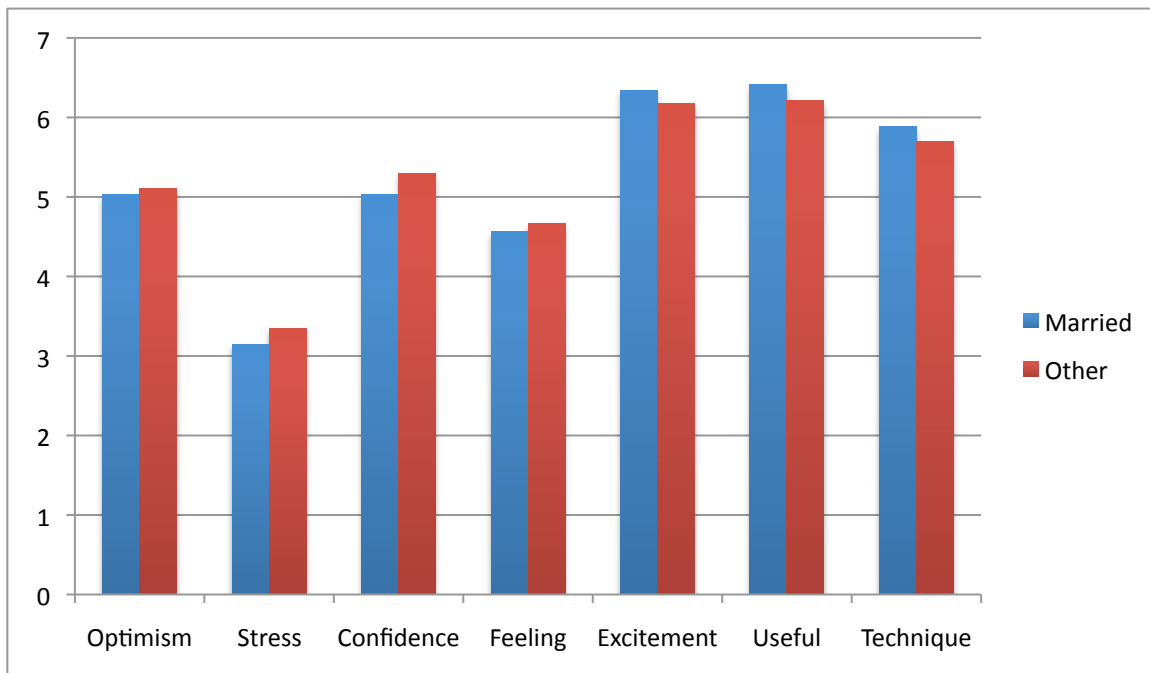
Ethnic Background

White and non-white participants did not differ in average job club experience.



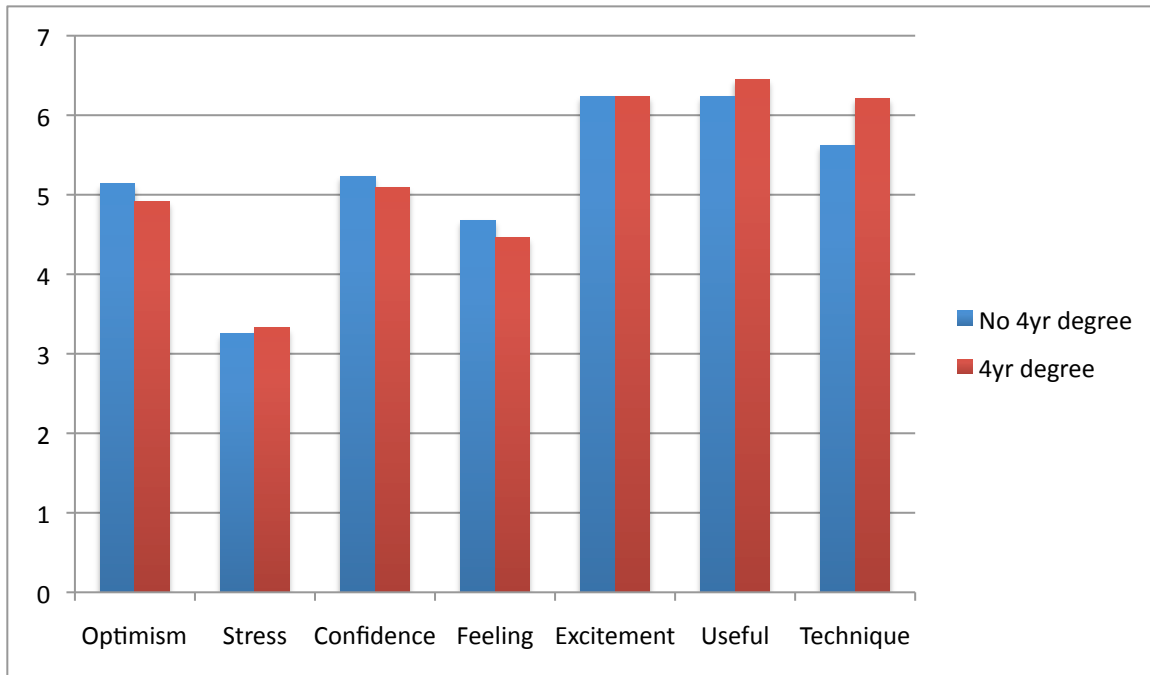
Marital Status

Participants who reported married or not-married (Single, Other) did not differ in average job club experience.



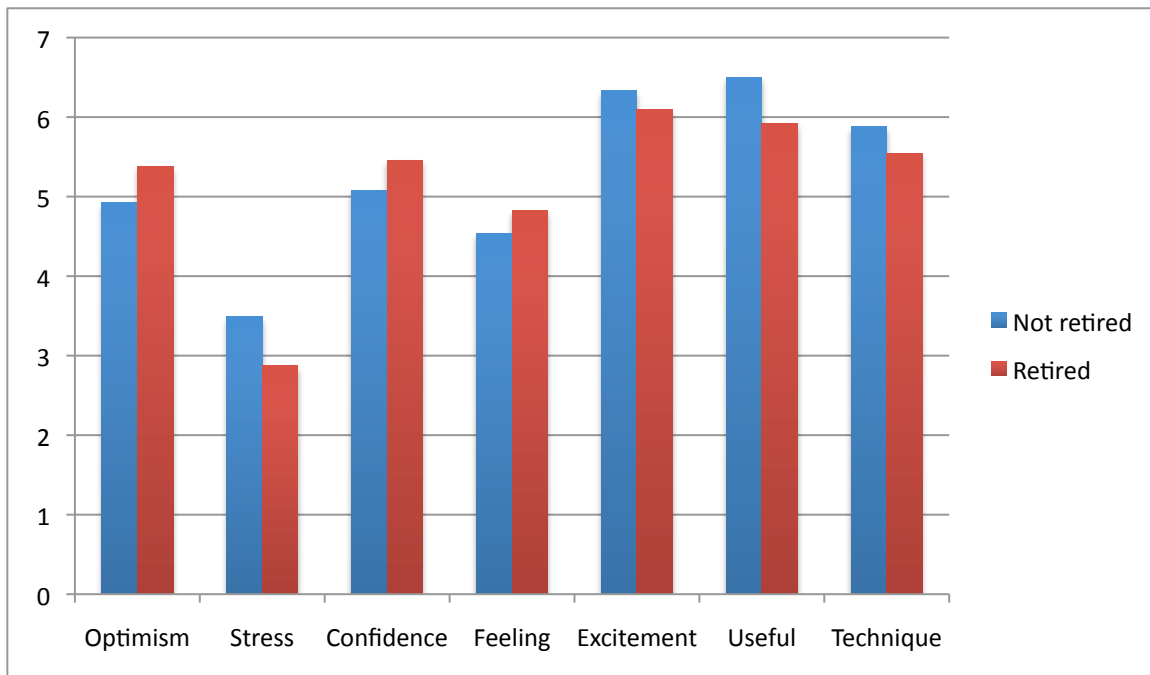
Education

Participants' experience did not vary by their educational level.



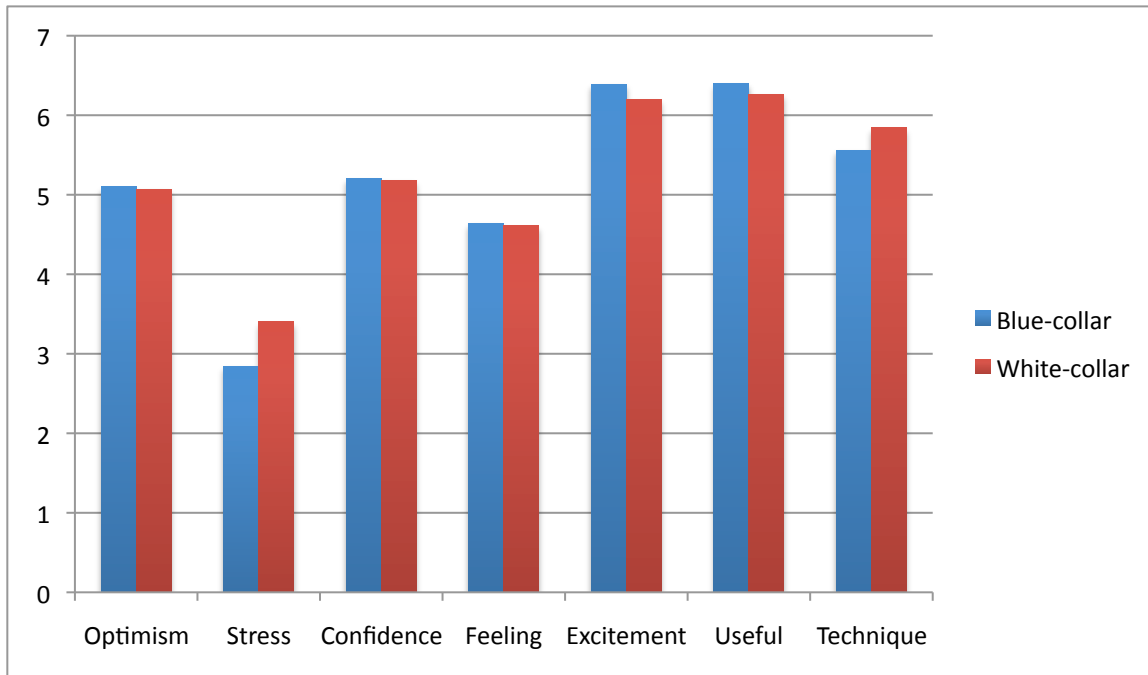
Retirement Status

Job club experience did not vary by self-report retirement status.



Work History

Participant experience did not differ by their blue-collar and white-collar work history.



Job Club Experience Over Time

Participant's job club experience across 3-week period was explored in two ways. First, average scores at Time 1, 3 and 5 (out of 6 survey occasions) were compared. Second, individual participant's changes in reported scores over time were examined.

Comparison of Average at Time 1, 3 & 5

Method

Participants' experiences at three survey occasions were compared using a repeated measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). This method was employed as opposed to simply looking at the means from the different times for 2 main reasons. First, it would only use the data from participants who stayed in the job club through the first 5 surveys, as opposed to people who did not complete the job club. Second, this method allowed us to search for significant differences between the means of questions at different times in the analysis.

Results

The findings were summarized in the table below followed by narrative:

	Time 1	Time 3	Time 5
How optimistic do you feel about your job search today?	4.54*	4.98*	5.37*
How stressed do you feel today?	3.27	3.36	3.59
How confident are you that you can successfully search for a job?	4.63*	5.16*	5.58*
When you think about your job search how does it make you feel?	4.17	4.33	4.69*
I am excited to learn new things about the job search process.	6.30	6.14	6.26
The things I learned in job club so far are useful for my job search.	6.25	6.23	6.41
So far I have learned new techniques about the job search process in job club.	5.62	5.78	5.91

Note: * = Significantly different from other means

The current results suggested numerous important findings. The first is that optimism levels for participants, with regards to their job search, increased steadily from the T1 to T5 surveys. This

showed that participants were more optimistic about their job search as job club progressed. The levels of confidence in the job search for participants also increased significantly throughout the job club. In terms of general feelings about their job search, participants felt significantly more positive in their job search at T5 than they did at either T1 or T3, again showing a positive effect of job club on the participants.

Four of the questions did not have significant difference over time. There was no differences for stress levels among participants at different times, meaning the job club did not have a major effect on the levels of stress felt by participants. The other three questions including excitement towards learning new things in job club, the usefulness of the job club in the job search, and the learning of new techniques during the job did not differ between T1, T3, and T5. This result can be explained that participants all started at such a high level on these items, there ultimately was not much higher they could go on the scale. This suggests the problem is likely due to a ceiling effect on the answer choices.

Overall, based on the data, we found the job club to be a very positive experience for the participants, especially in terms of their optimism, confidence, and the valence of their global feelings about the job search process.

Individual Participant's Development Over Time

Difference in initial status

That is, at the beginning of the job club, participants were found to differ in their optimism, stress-level, confidence, and general feeling toward job search. In addition, participants varied in the extent to which they perceived the information and techniques covered in job club as new and useful for their job search.

Overall change over time

Participants demonstrated significant changes over time for four out of seven experience items (Optimism, Confidence, Usefulness, Techniques). The direction of change was positive, thus the participants became more optimistic, more confident, and were more likely to consider the learning during job club as new to them and useful for their search. Consistent with the findings from the previous section, reported excitement did not change over time. Again, it can be potentially explained by the high initial score not allowing adequate room to increase significantly.

Difference in individual development

In addition to individual's overall change across time, participants differed in patterns of change for three out of seven items. How individual changed over time on stress-level, confidence, and general feelings toward the job search throughout job club varied. Particularly for confidence in the job search, the results suggested that those participants who initially reported lower levels of

confidence showed the steepest increases over time. For excitement, perceived usefulness and learning new techniques, there was no variation in development by participants.