

what are we going to do about careers?

CPI - a Coverage-Processes-Influences Model for Career Development

People are changing the way they manage career. The structures of working life are changing, people are gathering information and checking out possibilities in new ways, stress and anxiety levels around career management are increasing, the kinds of commitment they now feel able to make to their work are being re-balanced, and people are engaged in this negotiation life-long and life-wide.

All of this, in many different ways, presents new challenges to our work. And we are changing the way we help. We need a professional model for our work, which can provide a framework for all of the possibilities we now envisage. The old models - ones that have, over several decades, become so familiar to us - will not accommodate what we now need to do. They are bursting at the seams.

That is why the question 'what are we going to do about careers?' is the running header for an on-going project in The Career-learning Café'. It is developing an extended model for contemporary careers work.

in brief

The model is an extension of the long-standing DOTS analysis of career-development learning. It looks at career development from three vantage points – C, P and I:

- C - coverage:** is an update of what is set out by DOTS – taking account of learning concerning 'self', 'opportunity', 'decision' and 'transition';
- P – processes:** sets out the ways in which people take that learning on board – to the point where they can make fulfilling and sustainable use of it;
- I - influences:** disentangles the social-and-emotional pressures that people must deal with in effectively managing contemporary career.

This is work in progress. New work, now in hand, includes a version of CPI for the Higher Education Careers Service Unit's innovation project – 'Putting Research Outcomes into Practice'.

ideas for action

CPI is based on what we now know about career development. It suggests how that understanding can be used to enable our clients and students:

CPI-1: coverage – referring to both 'hard' information and 'fuzzier' impressions of what people need to know – learning about 'self' and 'opportunity', and also about how people, individually and socially, balance work and other life roles;

CPI-2: processes - taking account of the how people find out, sort out, check out and work out what they will do about working life – this is a narrative set off in the toddler years, but refined and developed for life-long use;

CPI-3: influences – pointing to how people come to sustainable and fulfilling resolutions of what feelings urge and what other people want - dynamic social-and-emotional pressures which too often crystallise into the stereotypes that most damage people's life-chances;

CPI-a: new thinking explaining how we can draw on a broadly-based scanning of what is known of both changing career-planning needs and changing patterns of help.

CPI-z: thinking ahead – showing how supporting reform comes, not by discarding earlier thinking, but by extending it and applying it to the emerging interests of key stakeholders – learners, their communities, researchers and policy-makers.