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work in progress...  
citable, but seeking feedback

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*career development - career management - career coaching*

future careers work  
distinct or extinct?

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## abstract - with tags

Helping people with work-life management, known here as **careers work**, is at the threshold of a new start. It brings careers worker into usefully congenial contact with students and clients. It strengthens links with its **stakeholders** in their various **community** groups. And it expands careers-work's relationship with mainstream **education**.

This means more than re-aligning past practice for future use. It needs a re-imagining of what it is to start from scratch. That is necessary because a **neo-liberal** policy reliance on **private-sector** solutions has fatally damaged **public-sector** careers work. And, as importantly, the fit between professional career-development expertise and day-to-day career-management experience are seriously askew. This is because we face changing, confused and disputed demands on working life. The causes and the effects are **economic**, **technological**, **political** and **cultural**.

A significant effect is the use made of all of this by a global **career-coaching** industry. A multi-billion dollar enterprise, it is displacing public-sector careers work. The public sector's twentieth-century past is irrecoverable, but a twenty-first-century future is within reach.

It calls for a **distinctive** careers work - better **connected** to contemporary working life, and with a more in-touch **theory**. It adds to conventional **matching** theory, which links personal characteristics to work-life opportunities. This has been the **expertise** that policy, commerce and most people assume is needed. But a new and distinctive start can develop careers work with a fuller grasp of today's **experience**. At the heart of that thinking is what people do about **career-management**, rather than what experts know about **career-development**.

The management of experience is a **narrative**. Storytelling is how we give **voice** to the **meaning and purpose** a life can offer. Careers work has its own distinctive take on that. It is that no narrative should influence anybody about anything until it has been probed. An interrogated story can inform action which is fulfilling and sustainable. What makes that so is **critical thinking**. It enables people reliably to tell themselves what's going on. And also to tell anyone who **depends** on them. And that sets each story in a social location. All of this is experienced differently in different locations. Narratives are situated in a **place-and-space**.

Such thinking is less a defence of expertise, more an enabler in experience. It meets people where they find things out, and takes them to where they figure out what is worth their time and energy. It is not about **information**, **guidance** and **placement** - that can be left to career coaching. It is about **reflective learning** - readying people to navigate their way through change, confusion and dispute.

It is radical, arguing that public-sector careers work should let go of discredited commitments to **employability**, **competitiveness**, **market forces** and **targets**. It expands thinking...

- > seeing learning as readiness for **assessment** and **selection**  
but distinctively as **learning-for-living**
- > working with **individual** perceptions  
but distinctively in their **social** and **cultural** contexts
- > taking on-board careers work's expertise in **economics** and **psychology**  
but distinctively expanding it into the disciplines of the **arts**, **sociology** and **ethics**
- > calling on **bi-lateral partnerships**  
but distinctively forming **multi-laterals** across **curriculum** and among **community agencies**
- > producing some basic how-to-do **lessons**  
but distinctively integrating them into **stage-by-stage learning programmes**
- > working with the well-**connected**  
but distinctively seeking out the many who are **disconnected** from any stake in society

This is addressed, as much as to anybody, to the **Career Development Institute**. It has unified a scattering of careers-work associations. The task now is to move on. In current conditions it will not successfully compete with careers coaching. It needs to step across the new-start threshold and grasp a distinctive narrative. That is within reach - and is too useful, relevant and fulfilling to be ignored.

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## what went wrong

The signs in the UK are that public-sector careers work has been seriously marginalised by government policy - some would say pretty-well abandoned. Neither does it seem to be getting reliable support from employers. With a labour economy in crisis, surely a service that helps people into work should be a star turn. What went wrong?

There's more going on here than blame and complaint can help with. This argument is that careers work needs a new start. Its extinction is not inevitable; but its new start needs to be distinctive.

**versions of recovery.** Careers work has more to offer than policy, commerce and its competitors show any sign of appreciating. That offer can put careers workers into a new relationship with students and clients. As well as with its stakeholder and community groups. It needs an expanded relationship with education. And that would be new - conventional careers work has not been in much of a position to set up progressive learning programmes. It needs to now.

It is not that there is any shortage of ideas about what education is for. Dominant claims are for equipping people for employment in an increasingly competitive global economy. But there's no future for education here. This examination shows that employability fails both as a measure of readiness for working life and as an indicator that anything useful has been learned.

Some argue that falling for easy assumptions concerning the economic significance of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) fails to grasp the value to economy of the arts and humanities. And that is true enough, but - at heart - it's no more than an alternative push towards another version of some instrumental but unreliable pursuit of employability.

Education has a bigger pragmatism, rooted in a culture of the society we all inhabit. This is not a rehash of Matthew Arnold's élitist plea for 'the best that has been thought and said'. That is the kind of aloofness that still appeals to some politicians for whom conservative means reaching back. Careers work reaches forward. And, in the UK, we may have stumbled over a starting point. During 2012, as a society we found what all kinds of so-called ordinary people can enthusiastically carry forward. It is about who we are, what we can do, and why we value it. The opening ceremony of the 2012 Olympics gave the Brits quite a jolt - and in a good way. The arguments here show that such a realisation needs to be, and can be, discovered in any nation, in any society, in any locality.

In all cases it is to be ready to tell any citizen, visitor or competitor what we-the-people can be counted on to conceive, to organise and to deliver. That does not mean doing what you're told, it means knowing what you're doing. It is not passing-on a past, but reaching for a future. But there is also this: anything that can be discovered can also be neglected, obscured and distorted. Which is why education must be at the heart of anything we do to help people realise their stake in their society.

**the question.** Despite its neglect by the powers that be, there is no movement in any society more involved in these issues than careers work. At first sight careers work looks as if it is here to implement government policies for the maintenance of a competitive economy. But to look closer is to find that such talk masks the search for another answer...

*'who gets to do what in our society?'*

It's not a comfortable question. But it is one which careers workers share with all educators independent enough to avoid inveiglement as agents of commerce or policy. The argument here develops and examines those possibilities

It is addressed, as much as to anybody, to the Career Development Institute (CDI) which needs to step across a new-start threshold and grasp a distinct story. It is within reach - and too useful, relevant and fulfilling to be ignored.

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## careers-work clamour

**diversity to unity.** One of the problems for careers work is its messy vocabulary. What is now called 'career guidance' has been known as 'vocational guidance' and 'career counselling'. The movement has outfits working on what is variously called 'careers education and counselling', 'guidance and counselling', 'guidance studies' and 'career development'. We'll unpick the tangle as we go along.

But the term 'careers work' was coined to speak of all these activities in the public service - and it's the term used here. But now there is also 'career coaching' - a relative new-comer, much of it operating in private-sector enterprises. These terms do not clearly map a territory - boundaries are breezily crossed and signposts nonchalantly re-aligned. A person can get lost. But it can be a happy hunting ground for any careers-work clamour to capture a more enticing mission statement.

The CDI has had some success in assembling much of the careers work scattering into a single professional group. There are two drivers. The one is to lay claim to expertise in employability. It is set out in training and qualifications, and appears in textbooks as 'career development'. The other is to examine how that expertise translates into help for clients and students. And this is set out as the skills and practice which can be recognised in professional qualifications. The total package, drawing heavily on economics and psychology, has been characterised as the 'science' of career development.

**context with connections.** But well-trained qualifications, based on expert knowledge, is not the whole careers-work story. There is a yet-more clamorous scene documented in day-on-day news of economic, technological, cultural and political change. It challenges much of what we call professionalism. Indeed, it shows trust in professions to be irrevocably low. Past deference is being discarded. People have their own ways of finding out what's going on, and figuring what they can do about it. It nourishes a culture of not doing what you're told, but knowing what you're doing. It's argued here that the CDI - and any such outfits world-wide - need to take account of this global, volatile and radically re-aligning scene.

There is a way forward. But it needs a more distinctive response than pushing employability on behalf of economy and policy. It calls to people's claim to their own stake in their own society. The people with the most immediate stake in how careers work is offered are students - with their families and in their communities.

While the business world is capable of acting, not just in narrowly shareholder interests, but in wider stakeholder interests - better connecting them to their work-force and customers - and in relation to their environment. Also, although governments have been seriously weakened by the monetary and technological leverage of global commerce, the constitutional role of politicians is to represent stakeholder interests. And we need people to do that all levels of both national and local life.

And a complete stakeholder network extends into civil society. It is populated by people acting for the well-being of others - often local groups, sometimes informally and maybe voluntarily. Their concerns extend to people whose lives are made better or worse by how we answer the 'who-gets-to-do-what?' question.

The argument here is that, in a clamouring past, some of those stakeholders got little attention from careers work; but, in a new-start future, careers work will find greater connectivity.

**and now, career management** All of this means adding yet another term to the careers-work vocabulary. If 'career development' is how we refer to careers-work expertise, then what do we call the experience of people whose lives are made better or worse by how the 'who-gets-to-do-what?' question is answered. The missing term is 'career management'. We need it because what people do about working life they do with and without careers-work help. The CDI has been pushing the expertise, the new term acknowledges the experience. This monograph will make frequent references to career management. It belongs not to careers workers, but to their clients and students. It may be less vulnerable to clamouring capture.

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## starting points

**careers-work voices.** All of the above maps territory and signposts issues. This section points to recent events where careers workers from all over the territory voice the issues...

- > **an ESRC-sponsored of seminar**  
concerning the future development of careers work
- > **a meeting of the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling**  
examining private-sector career-development practice
- > **an on-line conversation**  
probing professional responses

What was said at the time is listed in the following sections, as 'what careers workers say'. Across the events, they come from academics, researchers and practioners<sup>1</sup>. They voice what careers workers believe, value and expect. Their cases range from a defence of past professionalism, to a search for other possibilities.

**from scratch.** A distinctive new start means more than re-aligning past practice for future use. Too much is changing, confused and disputed. Part of the trouble is in the way policy sees public-sector careers work. But some of it is in how public-sector careers work sees itself. Two things are going wrong...

- > **neo-liberal policy's reliance on private-sector solutions fatally damage public-sector careers work**
- > **the fit between career-development expertise and day-to-day career-management experience is seriously askew**

The question this pose for careers work is...

*'can public-sector careers work re-imagine what it is to start from scratch?'*

**facing and hiding.** Talk of 'defence', 'going wrong' and 'new starts' is argumentative. What is welcomed as fair and reasonable by some will be dismissed as dangerous and misleading by others. Such dispute often has to do with the focus - a focus on the up-close-and-personal does not always accord with a focus of what is out-there-and-pervasive. Commerce, policy and professionalism all have an interest in favourably refocusing their case - prepared to face some things, trying to hide others.

And so, in careers work, what we agree and disagree can change according to what is taken into account. That might be what goes on in an interview, or the learning-programme alongside it, or the neighbourhood and its culture, or that region's societies and their work-life, or how a society is positioned in a global economy. Staying in the up-close-and-personal box can reassure. A new start needs to get out more.

How careers work re-imagines its future depends on where it hides and what it faces. It is what this monograph calls 'evidence, ideas and argument'.

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<sup>1</sup> The following sections collect the event quotations into five phases - each opening with a few paragraphs summarising the argument. This is followed by quotations setting out the issues. And then by evidence, ideas and argument. You can overview by sticking to the opening paragraphs in each section - coming back to the detail by using the contents page.



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## inside the box

This section examines how conventionally-established careers work is rooted in a defence of its professionalism. The argument shows how some of this is theory based - largely imported from psychology and economics. It argues this to be too narrow a basis for contemporary careers-work, and it points to the particular usefulness of both ethnographic sociology and the philosophy of ethics.

The section also examines how conventional theory is important in both private-sector career coaching and public-service careers work. Much depends on how much of the economics of market forces is imported into that thinking. To some careers-workers and teachers such influences appear irresistible. If they are right the test of effectiveness is how many people are stably placed in work. The argument shows why that, for what it's worth, is as good a concept of 'employability' as any. But the term is practically meaningless.

Nonetheless, alongside career theory, such thinking has led to the acceptance of business and policy interests - reinforcing claims for economic gains and market forces. Such influences have also been followed in some schools and colleges. The section shows how this kind of agreement leads to bi-lateral partnerships between 'careers education' and 'guidance'.

This inside-the-box thinking curtails careers work. And not all careers workers have conceded to it, neither have all educators. The evidence shows why market forces on career management can and should be resisted. It goes on to show what the consequences are for expanding a multi-lateral partnership, calling on a wider range of thinking, and serving a wider range of stakeholder interests.

## what careers workers say

Some of the event quotations express concerns about the expansion of private-sector career coaching. Some recognise a different role for public-sector careers work. There is no single dynamic inside the careers-work box...

*'all public services are expected to show their impact in economic value'*

*'one of our jobs is to look to the needs of the work-force'*

*'the CDI will have clout at the highest level'*

*'it will demonstrate comparability between public, private and third sectors'*

*'are more ex-public-sector people working in private practice?'*

*'a unified, professional, forward-thinking body learns from mistakes and fights for better recognition'*

*'the CDI is the only independent voice of the career professional in the UK'*

*'we need a rethink - little or nothing is convincing anyone that careers work makes a difference'*

*'what difference would it make considering how little anyone in government listens?'*

*'employability is determined by the opportunity structure not careers work'*

*'there has, from the beginning, been a tension between placement and guidance'*

*'some will leave education with an understanding of their discipline - they will be high flyers'*

*'there is something about graduate-ness which is the exact opposite of employability'*

There is no consensus here. In whatever way it is resolved, there must be some letting go of what some careers workers are trying to save. But suppose we were to find that clinging to the conventionally-established position meant that careers guidance mostly needs saving from itself?



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## evidence, ideas and argument

**coaching and convention.** There is a diverse, even dissonant, range of reasons for supporting careers work. Some support a conventionally-established position which seeks business and policy support for enabling employability. It enables people to look good in selection and recruitment. Careers coaching ([David Clutterbuck and David Megginson, 2008](#)) is explicitly set out to meet that need. It is openly allied to commerce. It accepts evaluation by how efficiently it gets people into jobs. It sees that success as a gain for both recruiter and candidate.

Conventionally-established thinking for public-service careers work rests on a series of [OECD reports](#) on world-wide guidance policies. They argue for bi-lateral partnerships between what they call 'careers-guidance' based in public-service agencies, and 'careers-education' attached to a school curriculum. The thinking inhabits a tightly-focused and clearly-bounded area of careers work. It envisages a readily-definable range of outcomes, derived from career-development expertise. These support the diagnosis of what a person offers to working life, and relate that to what working life seeks.

But the reports have been overtaken by events. In particular they predate the emergence of careers coaching. In a badly-signposted territory boundaries are not fixed. Not all who use the term 'coach' hold to conventional priorities. Some public-sector careers workers are comfortable as careers coaches. Either can bring coaching expectations to a bi-lateral partnership.

But private-practice is a widely spread careers-work industry. And there is no reason to expect it necessarily to seek partnership with public-sector education. Nonetheless both private-sector and public-sector educators are free to call it in. And some people calling themselves career coaches will seek CDI support. Fast moving events, out-date ideas and muddled terms means that you are entitled to some confusion. And the OECD reports can't help.

**about economics.** The expertise underpinning conventionally-established thinking draws heavily on economics. But a long-standing insider ([Amitai Etzioni, 1991](#)) shows economics to have a talent for discrediting itself. It attempts to position itself as though it were science - capable of quantifying cause-and-effect, risk and prediction.

Yet, as a predictor of the most dangerous of monetary crises, economics ranks no better than astrology and considerable worse than meteorology. And claiming to be a science, it seems to have given itself permission to say nothing about the morally hazardous effects that much of its thinking and some of its most able functionaries have caused.

There is an oft-repeated difference between the sciences and the arts. Scientific enquiry pursues knowledge - where if one person doesn't find it, then another will. Its processes are agreed, much argument is invited, and resolutions are shared. Economics is not like that. It is a deeply personal process, argument is tendentious, and protagonists stand apart from each other. Nowhere is the resemblance of economics to an art more dramatically demonstrated than in the exchanges between neo-liberal and Keynesian thinking ([Robert Skidelsky, 2009](#)).

The Keynesian argument is largely philosophical - with no scientific pretensions. It rejects the measurable calculation of behaviour, drawing instead on social and historical understanding. The neo-liberal claim is to liberate people to do what they will,. Keynes's thinking locates people in an uncertain world where risk needs to be shared rather than off-loaded. Keynes sees economics, not as external to society, but as part of the way in which a society manages the mutual dependence of its people.

Economics' scientific pretension do not stack up - neo-liberalism is no less a performance than a not-bad movie. Its dilemmas are unresolvable, arguments persist and recur, nobody expects peace or wants it, and praise and blame are personalised. There's nothing necessarily wrong with this, but it is not science.

As it happens some other behavioural studies have proven better predictors of economic crisis, notably social anthropologist [Gillian Tett](#). She attributes the banking crisis to a culture of

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unthinking risk-taking, in pursuit of competitive advantage. Her work opens a question about how far any of these positions are about genuine enquiry and how much we need to ask whose interests they best serve. There is nothing wrong with arguing a cause - as Keynes does. But if that is what is happening, not being honest about it is to invite suspicion. Commerce, politics and professions all have interests other than the well-being of the people that their press releases say it's all for.

**an integrated commitment.** This is not to deny to economics its usefulness as a commentary on the human condition - but like a movie, an installation or a graphic novel. And there is plenty to go on. There are many different ways in which careers work can expand its professionalism ([Bill Law, 2009](#))<sup>2</sup>.

We have seen how sociology, which is also not a science, offers an account of the collateral damage of an alliance between the pretension of economics and the needs of policy. But history is better equipped with an explanatory methodology. And geography can more meaningfully map and signpost the significance of locations.

Furthermore, and outside all of this, there is an increasingly-useful neurology of learning - which gives biology a genuinely scientific place in the growing commentary. Together their focus can range from the up-close-and-personal to the out-there-and-pervasive. It is not fatuous to look for connectedness between the arts and sciences. But it does make economics look rather small.

The OECD report is in no position to appreciate the range of such thinking. Its interests are in documenting careers work expertise, rather than tracking what is going on in contemporary culture. It would be a mistake to use this fifteen-year-old thinking to understand the future of career management. That future speaks of what people do with economy, rather than what the economy does with people.

All societies have educators in command of these and other relevant fields. Some are equipped to use that knowledge as an enabler of learning for living. Conventional careers work has relied too much on an alliance between psychology and economics. A wider ranging understanding of the human condition will enable integrated learning for integrated lives.

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<sup>2</sup> Each of the 'Bill Law' citations is a meta-analysis of original sources. You can find the sources by following the links.

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## out of the box

This section wonders if any social movement can be understood wholly in terms of its own claims. Careers work can certainly be understood in other-than-careers-work terms - examining what careers work does not much look at itself. In particular it means understanding the leverage on much of our lives now exerted by global commerce. That influence reaches into neo-liberal government policies. And those policies take private-sector markets to guarantee both the volume and quality of any service. The evidence here shows how careers work is on the receiving end of these trends.

Careers work inhabits a world, also documented here, in which an increasingly wealthy sector finds that global markets are an opportunity, and neo-liberalism is an ally. That same world is inhabited by low-waged workers in low-growth economies. The argument shows this to be a zero-sum reality - one person's gain is another's loss. When some life chances are purchased, others are curtailed.

A responsible and independent careers-work commitment cannot ignore how access to opportunity is increasingly polarised. It needs to pose a who-gets-to-do-what question. Students find answers in their own experience - and in other people's. The evidence is that they want to take account of the impact of labour markets on other people and their communities. And this is a social, not an economic, commitment. Moreover it is situated both locally and world-wide. Indeed, the trends work differently in different locations. Those places can usefully be characterised as 'enclaves'. They are sometimes small but always significant - home-made bases for connectedness, and voice.

These trends have not prominently appeared in the careers-work literature. Inside-the-box preoccupations can mask outside-the-box realities. But they are urgently important to careers-work. In particular, they make the case for a more developed programme of education. Conventional careers work has not often needed to draw on an in-depth understanding of how curriculum is constructed. It needs to now.

## what careers workers say

The event quotations reflect the range of issues which come out of this, stretched between to reviewing existing interests in careers work, and reaching for what else it can do for who else...

*'we must satisfy client expectations'*

*'policy has sought to introduce a wider range of providers operating in market conditions'*

*'how do political and organisational issues impact public-service careers work?'*

*'send us solutions that we can put in front of a minister'*

*'careers work is based in occupational psychology'*

*'employability is a function of supply-and-demand in the labour market'*

*'employers see careers work as a nice-to-have - better to have it than not'*

*'mixed messages to policy, parents, friends, colleagues, managers - any wonder we're sidelined?'*

*'we fail to communicate our worth outside our community - we're easy picking for this government'*

*'the CDI is a commitment to the individual not to commercial targets'*

*'the only freedom that is given to schools is the freedom to drop careers work'*

*'our strategy should focus messages to parents and schools rather than our own conferences'*

*'the school-autonomy agenda overrides everything'*

*'it is not possible to show impact in the economic value of what we do'*

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Resolving the issues raised by the event quotations needs a broader appreciation of psychology, a more critical examination of economics, a wider grasp of social forces, and a sharper appreciation of ethics. Not all branches of careers work will take the trouble to do this. But whichever does so will develop a distinctive voice.

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## evidence, ideas and argument

**enclaves.** There is a feature of career management not readily traceable among the careers-worker quotes. It is about career management being dependent on other people's influence, and accepting responsibility for other people's well-being. The omission may reflect a pervasive feature of contemporary culture: the professionalism analysis documents a widely-reported tendency for society to fragment around individuals and their immediate contacts ([Bill Law, 2012a](#)). It happens in neighbourhoods - social structures can be mapped by post-codes. But the word 'enclave' speaks of a more useful idea, because each enclaved post-code speaks of the attachments grown from shared culture-forming experiences. And that makes it's lived-in locations better indicators of life-chances than abstractions of social class.

Each enclave reflects the shared attitudes of other inhabitants - their beliefs, their values and their expectations. These attitudes are often positioned counter to people outside the group - sometimes with hostility. Either way, people place more trust in each other than outsiders...

*'people like us against...'*

*'...people not like us'*

In this way enclaves can be thought of as home-made cultures of social connectedness. They connect in a family, on the street and increasingly on-line. In all, feeling that you are among people you know and can trust has survival value. Trust is critical where anything is at risk.

This tendency for society to fragment sets careers work in culture where, at the extreme, people are supported by beliefs in their own self-sufficiency. It is a sense that they can access all that they need to know, and feel all that they will ever feel. It feeds an often much-needed confidence in their readiness to deal with whatever crops up. Such a feeling is sometimes sufficiently unshakeable to be worn as a logo or tattooed as an icon - sometimes with commercial or political imagery. It is a drive to express priorities which are immediately recognisable for responses that can be enacted straight away. Such now-or-never attitudes persist because of their survival value.

It all resonates with promises of liberation - the word 'empowerment' crops up a lot. And it accords with neo-liberal politics. It also accords with conventional careers work, coaching individuals for short-term gain which reflects immediately recognisable priorities.

But the 2012 analysis also shows how enclaves can entrap. Cosmopolitan enclaves may be connected for advantage. Others for survival. Everything depends on the who-and-what connections people are in a position to make - and disposed to make.

**other people and finding meaning.** There is a potential inner conflictedness here. Career management is movement between one set of attachments and another. Work life is a connection to other people - most of whom you do not yet know. Work is entered on the influence of those people; it is carried out with yet other people; and it responds to yet more people. Here's the conflictedness: an enclaved culture can set up distrust of some of those other people - maybe all of them...

*'I want the opportunity...*

*'... but I don't want its people'*

It's worth examining what underlies this, and some of that is set out in an analysis leading to community-interaction theory ([Bill Law, 2009](#)). It proposes a 'midrange' dynamic - anchored between the two dominant ideas of conventional careers work. On the one hand there is the relatively remote structural business of economics. On the other the psychological drives that

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attract or repel the individual. The mid-range argument is that neither that economics nor that psychology can say enough about what is going on in the social-and-cultural space from which that want-don't-want cry comes.

The evidence on which community-interaction theory draws is, again, largely ethnographic. It originally shows how in thinking about work people take account of the social models, expectations and feedback that they gather from the people that they know best. That thinking first shows how family and friends figure. An update shows how such influences are also encountered on-line and in neighbourhoods. In all cases a positive conclusion is that career management horizons can be expanded where new and constructive links are taken into account. And so the enclave need be no more than a starting point for career management. It need not predict the end point - not in gated sequestration, nor in village or tenement.

Recent evidence shows how widely that search for meaning in other people can reach ([Jen Lexmond and William Bradley, 2010](#)). Global communications allow for people to learn from the lives of people they will never meet, living in localities they will never inhabit, dealing with environments that they can only try to imagine. The evidence also shows some people taking such awareness into account in their assessment of whether a career move is worth considering. The want-don't-want cry re-asserts itself in a new context.

We are looking at how community interaction can reach from the up-close-and-personal to the out-there-and-pervasive - from personal to planetary. And there is much to be hopeful about in the way that trend constructs new career-management meanings. But everything depends on finding encounters, links and imaginings that are constructive. And - claim what they may - the construction of new meanings is what conventional matching, or careers coaching, is in no position to do.

**conflicts and complexities.** Enclaves and post-codes, economics and psychology, trust and risk, ethnography and culture, individual and group, personal and planetary - if you are not confused you are simply not paying attention. We shouldn't be surprised by confusion - why would we suppose that what people do about career management is less puzzling than what they do about everything else?

Puzzling for careers workers, and puzzling for their students. Here's another version of the want-don't-want cry. The working world encourages people-as-customers to see themselves as free-standing individuals capable of ruling their own lives. And the working world encourages people-as-recruits to understand that it is managers, customers and shareholders who rule. Career development moves a person from a commercially-sponsored individualism into a commercially-demanding group. It would not be surprising to find that some confident and empowered person, entering some scripted and controlled workplace, might back away. And if the work were low-paid and routine that person might prefer to stick with the people he knows and can trust. An economist and a psychologist might agree with an ethnographer in expecting....

*'a not-me opt out'*

In the past commercial, political and careers-work professions have worked out what to do about this. Our opted-out-discontent might be won over by their nudge, or their inspirational story. These techniques are based on behaviourist theory - they are forms of conditioning. Rewards, reinforcements, flattery and applause all feature in advertising, canvassing and careers work. But are they what a professional educator would recognise as education?

The major premise of education is that students have not yet understood all that they need to understand. It's no more negative than saying that well-being needs nourishment.

Education is predicated on student well-being, The premise is embedded in career-learning theory ([Bill Law, 2012b](#)) which sets out how it might be that students have not yet gathered all the learning-for-living that they can use. It sets out a stage-by-stage curriculum progression:

*'find out what's going on, getting ready to...'  
'...sort out how it got this way, getting ready to...'  
'...check out what is important, getting ready to...'  
'...figure out what to do about it'*



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This is not education for examinable compliance. It is critical thinking shaped to pragmatic action. It invites students to engage with what they do not immediately recognise, to try out what they say they don't like, to be curious about what might seem pointless, to learn from failure - and to question everything. It invites our opted-out-discontented to question himself. It's not a comfort zone.

Career learning is neither for competition nor for cooperation. As a species we need no encouragement in either - evolution has embedded both as unthinking survival instincts. But taking on the discomfort of probing is not instinctive - it lives in other areas of our neurology, which instinct by-passes. On the whole we are readier to go with an instinctive impulse than to ask ourselves awkward questions. But when awkward questions need to be asked, it is education not instinct which serves us best,

Why is career learning a priority now?. There may never have been a time when what people think they know can be so misleading - outdated, challenged, exploited and distorted, and within seconds of its appearance. Dealing with that needs a process which takes on surprise, finds interest in the unfamiliar, and gets a kick out of the unexpected. It cultivates a ready-for-anything resilience.

**the way to ethics.** The term 'critical thinking' crops up a lot in philosophy. It belongs to an enlightenment commitment to the value of independent thought. And there is a strong link between philosophy and economics. Economics was at first informed as much by ethics as by observation. Despite some pretensions as a science, both neo-liberal and Keynesian protagonists speak of what is fair - and fairness is value-laden concept. Aside from the suspicion that interests are at stake, it is worth asking how much of the disagreements may also have to do with ethics.

It is said ([Bill Law, 2011b](#))<sup>3</sup> that philosophy stems from a persistence in asking the question 'why?'

*'...why is that such a good idea?...'*  
*'...yes, but why do you justify it that way?...'*  
*'...and so why are you so sure of that?'*

It sometimes needs a child-like persistence - and is none-the-worse for that. Getting right down to it means reaching the irreducible - a commitment concerning which no further argument seems possible

*'...because we all need all of our people to be educated'*  
*'...because it reflects where we are now'*  
*...because people have a right to have their well-being protected'*

There is more than one ethic. Philosophy therefore comes up with a range of terms such 'pragmatic', 'post-modern', and 'humanist'. They are spring-boards for action. And they explain how action can be justified. They also point to how that justification is different for different people. And they make it possible to appreciate why any group would applaud or contest any particular claim.

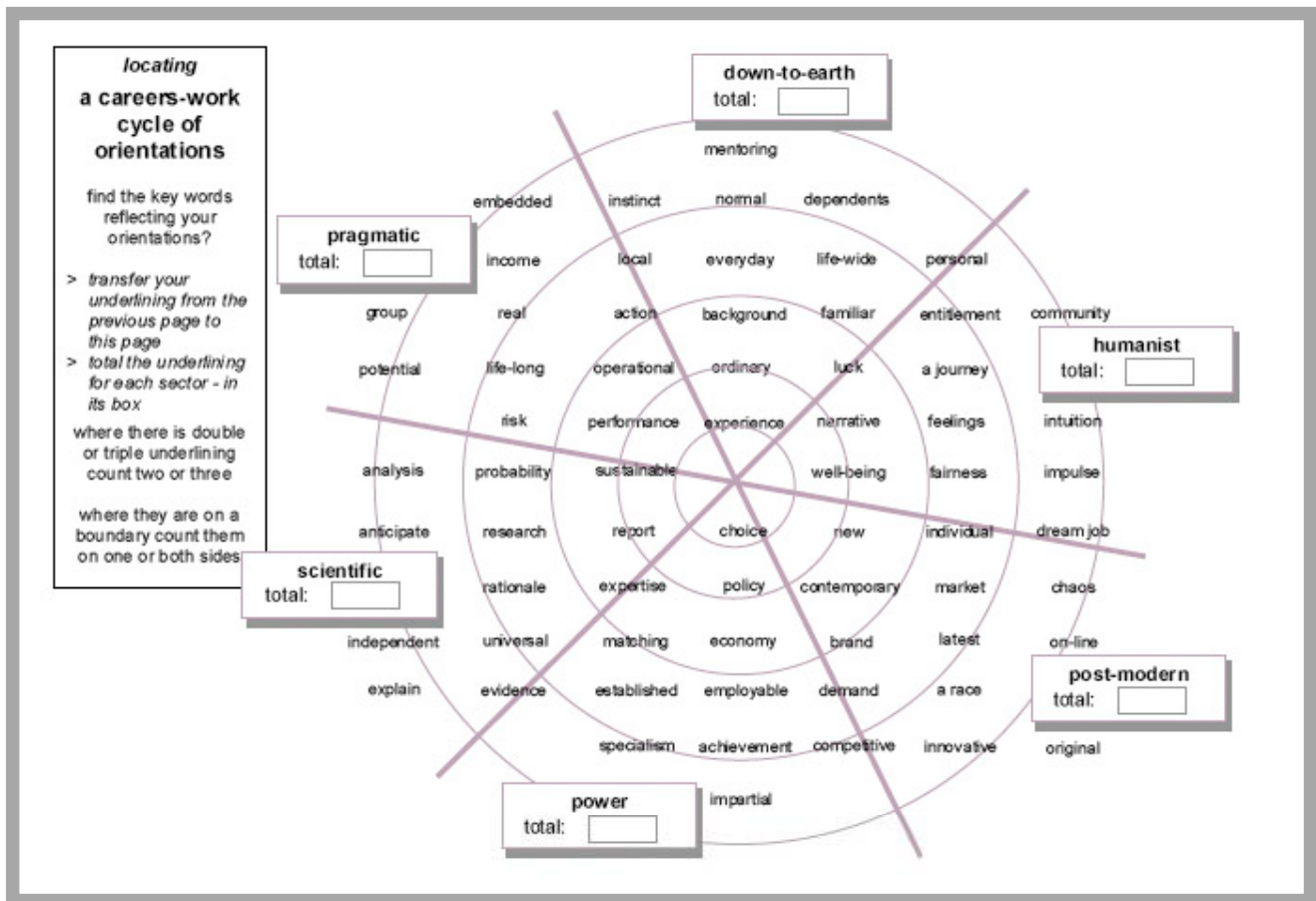
This applies to careers-work. Careers-work professionalism needs to probe a range of ethical positions. Without that understanding we can't know what directions can be conscientiously taken. There would be no basis for evaluating anything we do. Ethics gives careers-workers a reason to persevere. It might give a clue as to how it needs to be adapted.

A notable example of an occasion for such thinking concerns the widely-reported tendency to blame the poor for their plight ([e.g. TUC, 2013](#)). If we all need all of our people to be educated, then there can be no justification for taking against any of them - least of all the opted-out and discontented.

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<sup>3</sup> A screen-shot is on the following page. The layout and language of the device is experimental. Updates will respond to feedback. The purpose is to engage careers workers in comparing and scrutinising philosophical assumptions for careers work

**figure one**  
**philosophical bases for careers-work action**



No careers-work leadership is obliged to agree with the TUC about this. But if the CDI intends to maintain some other position, its stakeholders need to hear why some other position is more justifiable.

**facts and values** Not all careers-work rationales are ethical. As figure one illustrates, evidence also counts in philosophy. An enquiry into current labour-market trends ([Editorial, 2013](#)) re-balances the ethics and evidence concerning contemporary labour markets. The report is technical, but it is infused with an ethical anger. It finds that cheap labour encourages employers to hold on to existing workers rather than invest in plant. As capital investment falls, labour markets increasingly become low paid for some. But they also widen differentials. At the high end improved productivity makes it possible to go for quality - leaving workers on low-cost volume to cope as best they can. This is where the not-me-discontented opts out.

The evidence also sets out a long-term re-alignment of commercial priorities, dating back to the 1980's when focus was shifted from wages to profits. The report estimates that a person's average earnings have been depressing by around £7K annually. It also shows that a recent acceleration in the trend explains why, in a stagnant economy, there is a rise in employment levels, with little improvement in quality of life. Some people, many of them able, are penalised by work which is underpaid, under-functioning and low-tech.

The study illustrates how a careers-work commitment needs a fact-and-value appreciation of psychology, a more critical examination of economics, a wider grasp of social forces... and a sharper appreciation of ethics. A narrowly-focussed guidance movement has negligible scope for working on such issues. It means standing back for long enough, and looking deeply enough, to see things as though they have never been seen before. Not all careers workers will take the trouble to do this. But whoever does so will develop a distinctive voice.



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## a distinctive voice

This section starts from the position that no educator can assume that students know nothing about what's going on in the reported world. Indeed, students often know something significant that their helpers don't know - particularly about the locality. Learning-for-living starts with educators finding out what that is. And it is usually complicated.

But the issues it raises are more pervasive than student-with-teacher. We all need all of our people to be educated. And this section shows how an enlarged careers-work commitment engages with all who have a stake in how people manage their careers. Those stakeholders also have a sense of the trends, people's experience of them, and their consequences for economic and social lives. They need to know how careers work help them to deal with what's going on now?

What we know about the economics and politics of these trends does not encourage public-sector careers work to compete with private-sector career coaching. But the evidence documents how a well-stocked helper can - nonetheless - answer with surprising, unfamiliar and useful responses. The evidence here also shows how the kind of careers coaching which looks for an immediate pay-off cannot do that.

It means taking a look at some career-metaphor thinking: while coaching is what is needed to compete in what seems like a race, education opens a gateway to what seems like a journey;. Public-sector careers work has a hand on that gate.

The journey starts in an enclave, but it need not end there. Careers-work can signpost paths to what is new, unexpected and potentially transformative. This argument probes the distinctiveness of that position.

## what careers workers say

The quotations map careers-work beliefs, attitudes and expectations - stretching between competitiveness and distinctiveness...

*'we have a better careers system than Germany - but Germany has a better economy'*

*'how do private-practice services differ from public-practice?'*

*'we haven't been able to separate our voice from the others who lay claim to our profession'*

*'what is the unique selling point of the CDI?'*

*'in a low-growth, low-wage, zero-sum economy the competition for places is an incentive to cheat'*

*'we need not worry about our independence from government which hasn't helped or listened to us'*

*'the CDI doesn't represent employers, isn't funded by government and is best at professional support'*

*'guidance is more effective in a personal-development setting - a more holistic joined-up approach'*

*'one level of management is to support the learning of others'*

*'the next level is to change the way of working'*

*'careers work is an introduction to the richness of life'*

*'we need to make a new start'*

A distinctive narrative cannot afford to be contained by some tightly-bound, ready-made framework, assigned to it by interests which are - at best - marginal to the priorities that it seeks most to hold onto.

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## evidence, ideas and argument

**frustration and hope.** Some who speak up for guidance hold on to a hope for policy support. But government officials show no sign of being impressed. The record of a parliamentary enquiry speaks for itself. There is also anecdotal evidence that policy apparatchiks favour careers workers with a business background. It all accords with a neo-liberal trust in market-place thinking. And it severely frustrates careers workers with any level of commitment to this work.

There are some careers workers who hope for a rescue. But the position of the still-hopeful is askew of what people now seek from working life. The analysis of contemporary careers-work professionalism ([Bill Law, 2011a](#)) probes how careers work particularly connects with the social-and-cultural aspirations of the people it sets out to help. It shows how stakeholder interests seek working-life help that is more usefully and broadly credible. Of course there is an interest in readiness for work, but not at the cost of social-and-emotional well-being - for themselves, for their children, and for other people.

If the public service can offer nothing better than the private sector, then the analysis points to a danger of the term 'careers education and guidance' getting terminally marginalised in its own field. But nothing is inevitable. The analysis also documents a careers-work understanding which a well-trained public-service is able to offer, but which short-term private-sector services are in no position to offer. It identifies a distinctive careers work. And it is more able to respond to the breadth of care which broadly-based stakeholder interests seek...

*'how does careers work help us to deal with what's going on now?'*

**dealing with chaos.** One of the claims that challenge conventional career thinking is based on 'chaos theory'. There is some resonance with this analysis which calls for more than short-term decision making. In chaos theory career is less about foreseeable planning, more about dealing with the unforeseeable. The thinking ([Jim Bright, 2013](#)) draws on the scientific observation of big effects from small causes. Meteorology has the most graphic example: a puny butterfly-wing fluttering over Kowloon can, in theory, cause massive cyclonic damage in Kansas.

The resulting scientific discipline is particularly interested in cause-and-effect links which appear in formerly unconsidered patterns. It sees those events in an other-than-straightforward way - finding divergent rather than in-line patterns. It can therefore show how similar causes can have variable effects. The consequences would seriously undermine a careers theory which relies on straight-forward diagnoses linked to narrowly contained information,

But self-styled chaos career thinking overlays the science with a psychologically-driven commentary. It understands what people do in terms of how they construct their own individual experience. There have been other phenomenological accounts of career development - explaining what people do in terms of how they subjectively see things. That overlay may explain why the techniques proposed by chaos career theory are not so very distinct.

Nonetheless, chaos career theory has a point. Career management needs to navigate its way through a perpetual experience of change, confusion and dispute. And that means that what is first found may well turn out to be not what it appeared to be. That does not mean that it is outside the gamut of planfulness. But it does mean that finding meaning in experience needs more time-and-space than conventional thinking can adequately inform or that established practice is in any position to offer.

**locating meaning.** This argument has already pointed to how sociological ethnography uncovers complexities which individualistic psychology cannot reach. It pays special attention to what people do in the various enclaves where they do it. It means that ethnography can find accounts not just of the up-close-and personal but also, in various degrees, of the out-there-and-pervasive. It can find the behavioural variabilities between one location and another. It understands events in their geographical, social and cultural context. This kind of complexity

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seriously disturbs conventional careers-work thinking. It tracks how the causes-and-effects of career management work out differently in different neighbourhoods. And the risks.

An analysis of literature of space-and-place ([Bill Law, 2012a](#)) is intended to be useful in expanding that understanding of career management. Like meteorology it expects to find different patterns working out differently in different locations. The career-management differences need not be hemispheric: this is thinking to pick up how Scotland is not Wales, and Yorkshire is different from Cornwall. Conventional career-development thinking knows about those differences in economic terms. There is much research-and-development still to do in social-and-cultural terms.

But some aspects of space-and-place career-management variation are also more tightly focussed than county-by-county. The two sides of an Islington street may speak of career-management life chances in entirely different ways. They are enclaves, where people have a sense of where they belong, who they can trust, and what they can count on.

Call it chaos or call it complexity, careers work needs an understanding of how and why different outcomes are rooted in the different beliefs, values and expectations that people hold to. Those continental, regional, local and enclaved cultures are cultivated by different conditions. And that makes an objective of careers work to understand how and why different starting points can mean different destinations.

It needs that appreciation in order to understand how to ensure that nothing is inevitable. And that means that a careers-work commitment needs to be able to chart starts, journeys and arrivals. In such terms ethical justification can be sought. This is a fully-alerted mapping of the who-gets-to-do-what question.

**tracking career programmes.** Mapping is a journeying image - it poses the question...

*'which way is forward?'*

The very word 'career' calls up just such moving-on imagery. Its etymology connotes both race and journey. Conventional career development thinking evokes pictures of competitive success - as though in a race. The language of 'coaching' for 'getting ahead' and being a 'winner' fits. But there is a different imagery. It is for a journey, where there things might be 'slowed down', a person can 'linger', there might be a 'detour'.

Different images - but no pro-and-con dichotomy, and no need to marginalise either. Both metaphors can live together; indeed, the one can be part of the other. But there is a task: to find what kinds of co-existence are possible - taking account of all versions of moving on.

There is a trial version of a [career-development device](#) for working on that <sup>4</sup>. It sorts out careers-worker attitudes by inviting responses to key terms - some reflecting racing imagery, some journeying. For example, these terms can be reorganised out of alphabetical order...

*'...exploratory' / '...developmental' / '...disclosing' / '...looking good' /  
'...immediate' / '...individual' / '...in a group' / '...tight-focused'*

Key terms are what professionals partners and stakeholders take to be necessary for talking about what careers work is about. There are many others - some appear in the event quotations.

The task is to work out whether and why a programme is already-established and conventional, or distinctively-emerging. Of course, nothing is as tidy as a paper-and-pencil device seems to make it - there needs to be a place for what is neither or both.

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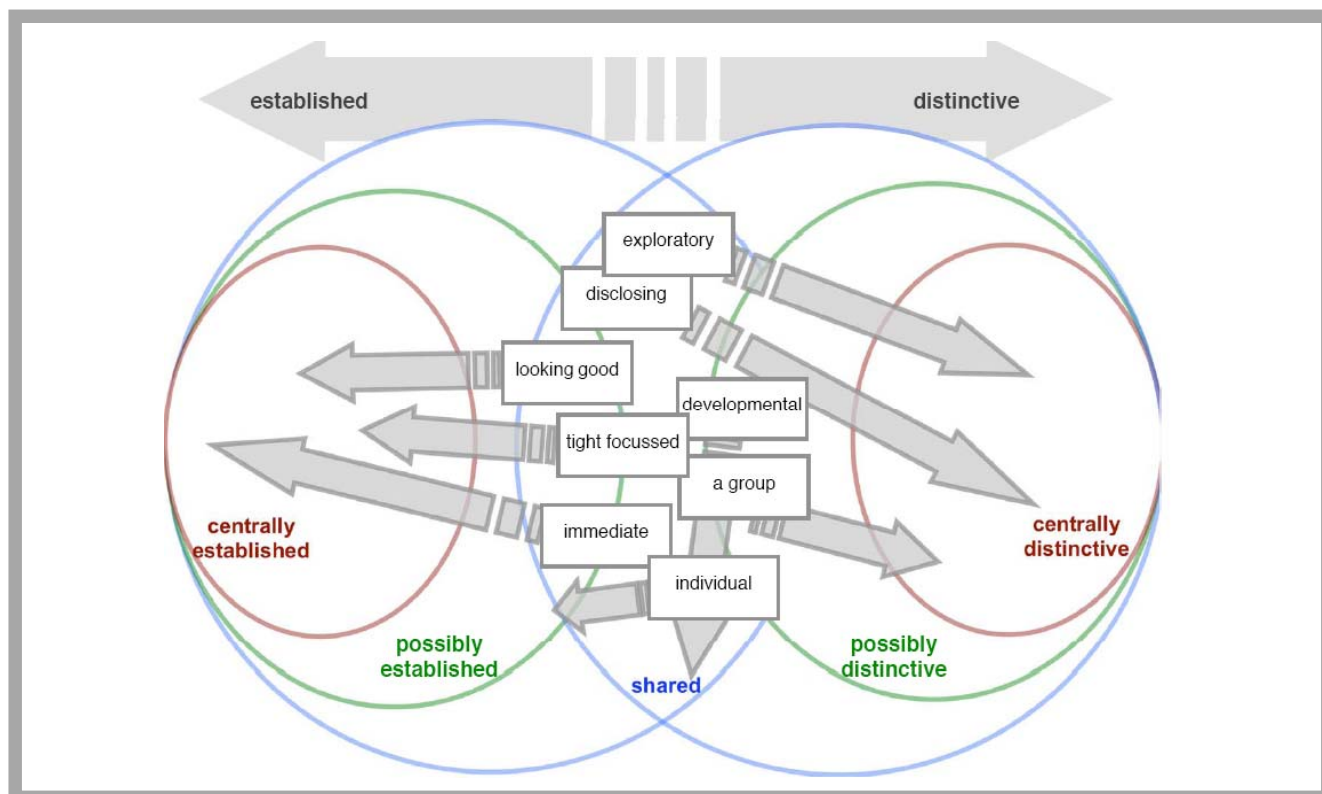
<sup>4</sup> As before, a screen-shot is on the following page. The layout and language of the device is experimental. Updates will respond to feedback - probably quite soon! The task might work well around a white-board projecting the framework, with moving colour-coded post-its for comparing different people's different ideas. Should start an argument.

The device has three broadly separated areas...

*'what is central to each?'*  
*'what is possible to each?'*  
*'what may be shared?'*

The argument here is that the future belongs to what is usefully distinctive.

**figure two**  
**images for established, distinctive and shared careers work**



**boundaries and centres.** The device is a framework for seeking and negotiating useful resolutions in the muddled diversity of careers-work. A central concern is that each partner knows what others are doing. Underlying questions...

*'are there different and complementary programmes, or one?'*  
*'...if different, in what ways?'*  
*'...if one, can every programme do everything?...'*

Space-and-place thinking says that the answers will be different in different locations, among different people, with different cultures and supported by different justifications. There can be no standardised agenda for training, expertise, experience, qualification or staffing. And some of what has been taken for granted may be impossible to sustain. That may mean losing central control issuing ready-made targets. Formerly iconic terms - 'employability', 'leadership' and 'impartiality' - may need to be abandoned.

Definitions may also have to go. In the muddle of possible provision the possibilities move into and out of each other. Chaos theory is good about this - its boundaries are leaky and shifting. And locality, variability and permeability mean that what is going on is best understood, not by trying to find the edge, but in looking for a centre of gravity, positioning one energy in relation to another mass. Boundaries may be impossible to find, but we don't need them. Partners and stakeholders need to know where things are at their core...

*'what is at the heart of this work?'*

The CDI in pursuit of a distinctive narrative cannot afford to be contained by some tightly-defined and ready-made framework assigned to it by arbitrary influences. It would not be credible.

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## a credible narrative

Narrative thinking carries this argument forward. The CDI's of this world need narratives - and narratives that credibly connect to people's experience. This section goes into detail concerning how such a narrative is within reach. It is explicit about what distinctive careers work must let go. And it focuses on what, at heart, it must hold onto. And that is an expertise in career-learning process. Careers work's research-and-development contains an account of stage-by-stage career-learning - as it is gathered over time, and applied to career management. This section sets out why and how to call on that expertise.

People can, nowadays, readily make their own connections to diagnostic assessment and labour-market information. They do it notably through career coaching, but also through on-line, social networking. They also seek it informally from trusted contacts. This section examines how that information sometimes helps, but sometimes leads astray. The career-learning argument is that all sources - formal and informal - are rarely well-enough interrogated. It is that realisation which offers careers work a credible narrative. The narrative recounts how a person is free to find out more of what is going on, and enabled in figuring out what rates being taken seriously.

The argument links stage-by-stage critical thinking to narrative process. The narrative recounts how a person navigates a career-management path through change, confusion and dispute. Credibility requires it to live in a culture where people expect to think for themselves. Careers work has that narrative. It is of people enabled in usefully probing, interrogating and questioning what they find.

This is critical thinking for the hazardous journey - learning-for-living. Amongst the clamour of careers-work claims, no other position convincingly enables such learning. Neither does any take account of the need to transfer that learning - from where it is found to where it can be used. Command of that process is a life-wide, life-long, ready-for-anything gain. That's the story.

## what careers workers say

Some of the event quotations seek to hold onto a conventionality already lost to other providers. But some let go - moving on to a more distinctive professionalism...

*'careers work makes a difference - I know it intuitively'*

*'being the professional is the most important thing'*

*'what are the consequences of private-sector careers work for the public sector?'*

*'in what areas is public-service careers work practice expanding?'*

*'careers work is about more than getting a job - but try telling that to a student piling up debt'*

*'having adaptability to whatever comes is what gives people hope'*

*'students need to know how to manage a knowledge-base - it is a transferable skill'*

Holding on to the case for a conventional public service may reflect nervousness about private-sector expansion. There is no need for nervousness. There are voices searching for new possibilities. And conventional careers work cannot itself function effectively without the transfer-of-learning which these latter voices call for. The conventional and the distinctive need each other. The whole relies on the kind of adaptability that the latter voices seek. And enabling that story is no short-term gain: it is applicable and re-applicable - indefinitely and without limits.



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## evidence, ideas and argument

**new-deal learning.** A distinctive careers-work commitment can afford to let go of conventional matching techniques, which link personal characteristics to work-life opportunities. In essence this is pegs-for-holes thinking. And that is what most people assume careers work does. It's also a good fit with what policy and commerce seek from careers work.

And, as career coaching's websites show, it is what it has imported from long-established conventional careers work. It's wholly possible that versions of diagnosis-and-information services can appear free-to-access on-line.

There's not much wrong with all of this. But it will not take people far enough into the management of today's working life. Contemporary career-management needs to look wider...

- > concerned for child-care as much as for entry requirements
- > more worried about exploitation-risk than talent matching
- > wondering how I look good for work when I've never found work
- > finding work but refusing its humiliations
- > attracted by the opportunity but repelled by its people
- > more attached to whose respect I must retained than to expert opinions
- > interested in work's impact on other lives as much as its rewards for my own
- > troubled by the futility of stacking up wealth
- > caring for children is the most worthwhile work I can think of
- > seeking a meaning for my life which my children will respect

These are, as much as anything, community-interactive concerns. They broaden and deepen the thoughts-and-feeling people have about career management. And they call for a new deal from careers workers...

*'pulling back from who-we-are'  
'reaching out to who-they-are'*

It's a turning point - which is an episode, in a story.

What kind of learning enables people to deal with such social and psychological complexity? The argument here is that there is no short-cut. Indeed, the analysis of career-learning ([Bill Law, 2010](#)) shows how hope is born of doubt, and may well take some time to resolve...

*'making my own sense of how things are'  
'...and what I can expect to happen'  
'... and what I can do about that'*

The process is constructivist. But it is not a psychological construct; it is based on shared experience. The analysis shows how, from infancy, we make subjective sense from what other people are seen to be doing, and heard to be saying.

The updated analysis draws on neurological data to show how constructs are at-first expressed as immediate emotions which well-up and can overwhelm. And they settle into on-going and habitual thoughts-and-feelings about what to expect and what can be about it.

There is more going on here than conventional careers work can deal with.

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**narrative as learning.** Constructs come over well as narratives...

*'I'll never forget how...'  
'it gave me the jitters, but...'  
'that's important to me because...'*

There's plenty of scope here for a career management narrative.

Narratives are popular. Stakeholder voices are pervasive enough that finding a narrative is becoming fashionable. Furthermore, neurology increasingly understands narrative to be the default mode for sorting out experiences. It's not surprising, then, to be told that we all need a narrative. Narrative comprises much of advertising copy, policy promotion, entertainment, and news media. It's an hegemonic tool.

In careers work, influential voices may urge the use of narrative to inspire people, raise aspirations, improve vocational readiness, and favour economically-significant occupations. Stories that favour STEM get frequent mentions. But a wide-ranging analysis of narrative technique ([Bill Law, 2012c](#)) finds both use and abuse. Although other people's stories give each of us a clue to our own, one life will not cut-and-paste into another. The story that works well for one person will work differently for another. A narrative is no more than an anecdote. It is not generalisable. It can mislead. A free-standing story is, by itself, useful but incomplete. Careers work should proceed with caution.

The essence of a story is sequence - one thing leading to another. The 2012 examination contrasts narrative with analysis. A narrative sets out people, places and events. An analysis lists significant factors in that sequence. A narrative makes subjective sense of objective events. And it is that subjective sense-making which is the basis for action. No helper can understand students until that helper has appreciated how students understand themselves. Then it becomes a basis for action which engages students in some of the most useful question in careers work...

*'what gave you the idea of doing that...?'  
'how will you make it happen...?'  
'what would happen if...?'*

No story has been completed until it has been scrutinised. Career-learning theory enables command of that process in students. It can only be located in the students' management of their own careers. It is a tool for that student voice. This narrative is for listening, not telling.

**tracking career management.** An earlier phase in this argument described a device for calling on the voice of careers-work professionals. A student's career-management voice needs more. A second trial device <sup>5</sup>examines [how people describe career learning](#). It asks what students see as important. It needs good-enough descriptors to reflect a range of experience.

Each of these resulting 'tags' becomes part of a vocabulary of learning experience. Each student is asked to reorganise the alphabetical into a pattern that speaks for that person. The start up is - 'thinking about all the times when you've talked and thought about careers, is it possible that you were ever...

*'...amused?' / '...bored?' / '...calm?' / '...changed?' / '...comfortable?' / '...committed?' /  
'...compassionate?' / '...competitive?' / '...concerned?' / '...critical?' / '...disillusioned?' /  
'...enjoying?' / '...fearful?' / '...fulfilled?' / '...grateful?' / '...harmful?' / '...happy?' /  
'...healed?' / '...hopeful?' / '...impulsive?' / '...lost?' / '...mistaken?' / '...pained?' /  
'...panicked?' / '...passionate?' / '...satisfied?' / '...scared?' / '...sure?' /  
'...sympathetic?' / '...uncomfortable?' / '...unsure?'*

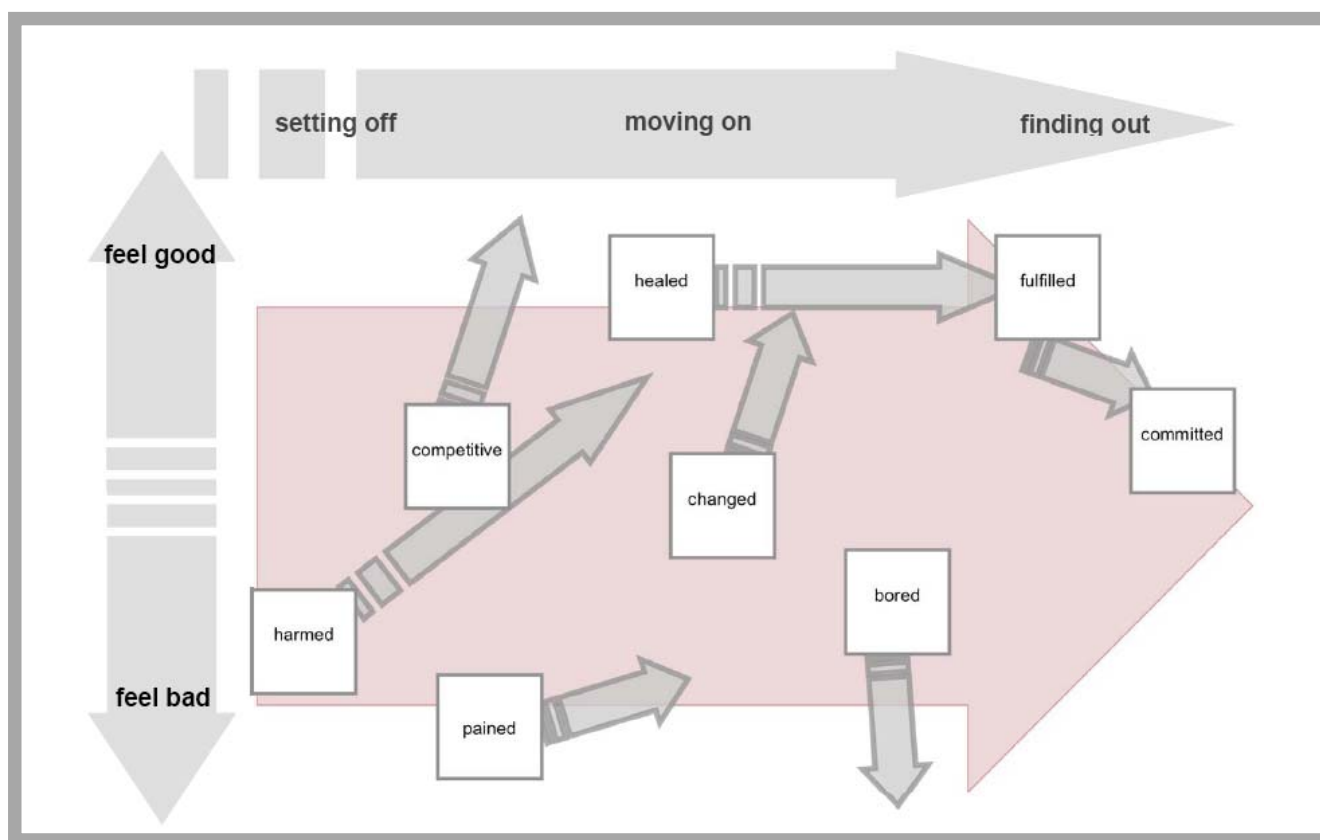
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<sup>5</sup> Again, a screen-shot is on the following page. The layout and language is also experimental. Updates will respond to feedback. This is a task for a learning setting. It might also work well as an anonymised paper-and-pencil activity based on the framework - with a chance to compare displays of different students' different ideas.



The responses go onto the format. Students speak of formal and informal learning - including on-line. Left-to-right it is a narrative sequence. Top-to-bottom is a feel-good feel-bad dimension.

**figure three**  
**up-and-downbeat career-management voice**



There is no positive-negative positioning here. It may feel good to be 'hopeful' and 'sure', but it may be more useful to be 'doubtful' and 'unsure'. And 'mistaken' can mean the chance to make good use of bad news. Furthermore what is useful at one time is not bound always to be useful - sometimes 'impulsive' means...

*'act now or lose the chance',*

Other times it means...

*'stumbling up a blind alley'*

A student may entrust this to a helper. It would be useful material for the reaching-out-to-who-they-are movement. A person may also entrust it to a relative, a friend, a lover. No student is an island. In all cases this is for student voice - a listening, not a telling device.

**enlargement and challenge.** Narrative thinking re-aligns careers work to what is both enlarging and challenging. Enlarging? - race-and-journey imagery makes the searching journey the bigger concept. Because any journey can be interrupted for a race, but no race can be interrupted for a journey. Challenging? - enabling narrative probing enhances the quality of helper-student exchange. But it does so in a troublesome way - at heart it is more about critical thinking than comforting relationships.

The enlargement and the challenge are in conflict with hegemonic interests. It locates careers work not as a special agent of commerce or policy, but of all stakeholders. Some businesses and some politics will welcome this; but critical reflection opens a path to social, cultural and political criticism. It equips an unfettered citizen for well-founded scepticism. And there is a tension.

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Hegemony must be concerned with what it requires people to believe. Education enables students in finding out what they need to know.

A widely-experienced educationist, with a deeply informed understanding of education policy recognises the tension, [Contributing to LinkedIn](#), [Anne Finlayson](#) calls for the 'de-politicising' of education, seeing this as a 're-professionalising teaching'. Stakeholders deserve to know what the CDI and similar outfits make of this.

A credible curriculum concerns itself less with advice about what to do, more with asking why anything is worth doing. It is for figuring out what is appropriate, fulfilling and sustainable. It needs students and other stakeholders to trust careers workers enough to voice this. That trust is socially and cultural rooted. Earned trust is what credibility means. Especially in bad times.

**job-or-no-job deal.** The question is how that trust can be earned from students, stakeholders, and partners. It shifts priorities from conventional expertise to learner autonomy. The bad-job-no-job world needs to be navigate through change, confusion and dispute as only a distinctive careers work can do...

- seeing learning as readiness for assessment and selection
  - > but distinctively as learning-for-living
- working with individual perceptions
  - > but distinctively in their social and cultural contexts
- taking on-board careers work's expertise in economics and psychology
  - > but distinctively expanding it into the disciplines of the arts, sociology and ethics
- calling on bi-lateral partnerships
  - > but distinctively forming multi-laterals across the curriculum and among community agencies
- producing some basic how-to-do lessons
  - > but distinctively integrating them into stage-by-stage learning programmes
- working with the well-connected
  - > but distinctively seeking out the many disconnected from their stake in society

The most able and most in-touch helping agencies can cut that deal. They are vulnerable to exploitation, but they are distinctive. The CDI and such-like - with their concerns focussed on training qualification and expertise - need these agencies' most enabling and most in-touch helpers.

Such credibility calls for a broader appreciation of psychology, a more critical examination of economics, a wider grasp of social forces, and a sharper appreciation of ethics. Tightly-focused career guidance, offering immediate gains, has too little elbow for such thinking. It never managed to shake off its reliance on auxiliary lessons clinging to the edge-of-timetable.

In a job-no-job world a credible new start requires standing back for long enough, looking deeply enough, and listening attentively enough for careers workers to see things as though they had never seen them before.

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## new start

Speaking of being 'rooted' in a 'culture' is metaphorical talk. Horticulturally we might say that a new start is more than seeding a new blooms in an otherwise undisturbed backyard. New starts uproot, re-model and re-stock entire landscapes - root-and-branch!

Enough! But there is observable evidence that careers work is not the only activity to get the start-again treatment - our high streets, our banks, our diet, our on-line life, our pair-bonding, our health-care, our food supply, our ageing, our weather, the bio-sphere and the climate are all being re-aligned - as we speak. Some of that re-alignment reaches into religious beliefs. It would be arrogant to assume that careers work can stand aloof from all of it - indeed, from any part of it.

Start-again thinking is not easy. It needs to be bold but careful, in both mapping the causes that demand change, and specifying the practices that respond to change. The life of a parliament will not cover it. Long after the next election it will be calling on the tenacity and inventiveness of careers workers.

For example it will not fit into the time-and-space available to conventional careers work. It calls on multilateral partnerships, seeking a special kind of helper, and giving voice to a wide range of stakeholders. There are unrealised opportunities to grasp. Career management is as unbounded as any part of people's lives. But few such claims fully recognise how that complexity offers so-far untried stating points for reform. And reform will mean not making false claims in defence of good causes. The evidence suggests that careers work may not be entirely in-the-clear on any of this.

The term 'paradigm shift' comes to mind. There has also been a careers-work claim for that. But it proved less of a shifting paradigm, more of a redecorated same-old. A paradigm shift is a big idea which changes everything. We have the changing everything, we're awaiting the big idea.

And then there is the immediate and practical issue of how new-start careers work is to be situated. The argument here is for careers work as a feature of civil society - where professionalism and voluntarism connect. And there is evidence that it is already happening. The evidence supports tenable positions and workable strategies for this connectedness - for partners and for stakeholders. Such a commitment would be in a position to say 'no' to partial interests.

In narrative thinking all of this is a 'turning point' - a new situation, with new people, dealing with changed conditions... and in sight of a promising horizon. It's a journeying not a horticultural, metaphor.

## what careers workers say

Nonetheless, we should not be surprised to find that some event quotations hold on to protecting the past. While some reach forward...

*'the CDI has a thousand members - all fully trained'*

*'they are 'la crème de la crème''*

*'impartiality is a bigger issue than careers services can solve'*

*'we want to belong to something that is not government dependent'*

*'the foundations for gaining maximum returns on careers work are laid in schools'*

*'what people do about work is done outside the curriculum'*

*'there has never been a time like now'*

Neo-liberal policy does not welcome private-sector claims, and shows little sign of recognising their messengers. A new start means escaping that position, and dumping that disdainful audience. There is in these quotes the beginning of a declaration to abandon the recycling of twentieth-century answers for twenty-first century questions.

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## evidence, ideas and argument

**contested curriculum.** A sub-text of this whole argument is that careers work needs to be understood as education. Over the half-century-or-so of its life careers education's location in schools, colleges and other learning centres should have meant that its objectives, methods and justifications are understood in educational terms. It has more commonly been understood as ancillary - an add-on not integral to curriculum.

An irony is that it is among the most, scrutinised of any area for schooling. It stands on a meeting point for commercial and political interests. That position has been characterised as 'contested' more than once. But the commentary has been no better than sporadic and piecemeal.

A systematic account has now has been assembled by [David Andrews \(2011\)](#) - a widely respected voice in contemporary careers work. The author documents how careers education has never been as strong as it is needed to be. It is a chronicle of the sometimes whimsical comings-and-goings concerning the frameworks, roles, and evaluation of careers education. The account covers both public- and private-sector activity. It also goes into relationships with parallel curriculum initiatives, such as education for citizenship, and for personal-and-social well being.

Among his most dynamic analyses is a distinction between what David Andrews calls...

*'learning for careers and work' and  
'learning about careers and work'*

This may yet prove to be seminal: 'learning for...' is getting ready for an up-coming application-and-placement process; 'learning about...' has a wider take on the scope and value of possible working lives. On the one hand, 'learning for...' works closely with guidance. It is training, in the sense that its outcomes are thought to be incontestable. On the other hand, 'learning about...' is closer to curriculum than training. It is education in the sense of an exploration with no prescriptive outcomes. And the contest is part of the education.

There are parallels with the 'conventional' and 'distinctive' analysis - which speaks for careers work. David Andrews' wording speaks for education. There is more than one starting point for careers work reform, and each needs its own signposting. Indeed, perceptions of careers education as a kind of training may help to explain why it has been marginalised. Self-respecting educators may not see themselves as agents of careers services. And a continuing failure to attract the interested attention of the best in the teaching profession would be a massive loss to the future development of learning-for-living.

What David Andrews calls 'learning about work' is at the heart of that case; and it cannot be consigned to the margins. He provokes demanding questions for the future of learning for working life. It is not surprising to find him also urging the need for a new start for careers work ([David Andrews, 2013](#)).

He proposes possible new frameworks for future action - all addressed to policy. However, when policy-makers talk about education they tend to speak of structures - what sorts of organisations can be set up, like 'free schools' and 'academies'. But there is little reason to believe that such structural changes do anything to improve the usefulness or effectiveness of education. Much of that evidence is collated by [John Hattie \(2009\)](#).

It is the quality of the exchange between educator and student which John Hattie shows to be important. The particular argument here is that, in that exchange, critical thinking is essential to navigating the contemporary journey into working life. It may not necessarily be a priority for policy. But if a new-start careers-education commitment means anything, it means enabling students to take charge of their own thinking and action.

It won't be hard to find education partners and stakeholders who understand the value of that for their students fulfilment and well-being.

**coaching comparisons.** David Andrews' work provokes questions for careers-education, learning-for-living and career-coaching. In what ways would a new start mean...

*improvements in existing careers-education-and-guidance?  
integration of learning-for-living with mainstream curriculum?  
an expanded role for career coaching?*

And, as table one <sup>6</sup> illustrates, the questions are far-reaching. Each line in the table has a range of features. Their importance can be signaled by colour coding what any programme under consideration looks like, and what a new-start would need to look like.

**table one**  
**questions for new-start careers work**

these features...	each becomes part of a new start because it ...
<b>situatedness</b>	is in the private sector - public sector - with community contacts is well-advertised - on-line - easy to find - part of everybody's life is politically friendly - commercially friendly - stakeholder friendly
<b>prominence</b>	is well promoted - generally visible - universally recognisable is active day-on-day - week-on-week - year-on-year - throughout life is available occasionally - as-and-when - continuously
<b>objectives</b>	brings economic gain - employability - well being - fulfilment enables competitiveness - enterprise - satisfaction - critical thinking offers answers - points to sources - invites meaning - gives voice
<b>responsiveness</b>	responds to change - confusion - dispute - points-of-view is drawn to business opportunities - challenges - resources - needs attends to career-development expertise - career-management experience
<b>effectiveness</b>	changes behaviour - persuades - nudges - opens eyes operates immediately - long term - life-long demonstrates by measurement - accountably - responsibility - commitment
<b>resources</b>	is funded by customers - government - local bonds - grant agencies thinks in terms of economics - science - sociology - the arts - philosophy seeks commercial sources - political - social - partnership - stakeholder
<b>reliability</b>	is shaped by markets - impartiality - independence depends on demand - an established agenda - versatility maneuvers effectually - already in position - can relocate itself

<sup>6</sup> The table is for use in training, discussion and planning. It is work in progress. A colour coding by each participant of 'where we are' and 'where we need to be would start hares running.

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Such issues are raised in the event quotations. They are critical for the future of careers work - not least for leadership outfits like the CDI.

The career-coaching movement has been clear about all of this. It characterises careers coaching as a private-sector market place. It announces itself as economics-informed. And it acknowledges that it works to employer requirements. All is a matter of record ([David Clutterbuck and David Megginson, 2008](#)). Career coaching is largely a private-sector service. It's hard to imagine how it could have more completely aligned itself with neo-liberal policy.

But the table can only sketch that position in. And any agency scrambling for position can easily claim any selection for its mission statement. Its categories overlap, as they do in life. There are other features and possibilities. They pose questions, they do not impose answers. They refer to dynamic trends not settled definitions. And there is an arguments here: a new start means letting go of something on the left of each line, in order to hold onto something on the right.

Meanwhile, career coaching is a competitor with careers-education-and guidance. Such enterprise sees chaos as a business opportunity - so that bad news is good news. With policy and commercial support the private is pre-empting the public. This is the backdrop to David Andrews' new-start scenarios.

The safest assumption for public-service careers work is that its twentieth-century status is irrecoverable. Actually, policy support for that status was never reliable. The task now is to work on a twenty-first-century recovery - not replicating what careers work has always done, but doing what only careers work can do.

**claiming too much.** The task means re-examining old claims. Some may be doing more harm than good. Careers work is a helping agency, and a widely-reported tendency is for helping agencies to claim that, because they are trying to help, they must be doing good. The anecdotal evidence says...

*'helping agencies do good? - not necessarily'*

Anecdotal evidence is easy to dismiss. And it is limited - only able to suggest what's going on, not to say how prevalent. But some claims are sufficiently persistent to raise an eye-brow. It's hardly surprising that helpers want to say they help. There are claims like that among the event quotations. They are understandable - people working in marginalised organisations need to reassure their audiences ...and themselves.

Film-maker [Ricardo Pollack](#) is among the few to have probed the doing-good claim. The claim may be sincere, but reports show they sometimes do not accord with experience in the lives they claim to help. Some agencies have claimed what they know not to be true. Ricardo Pollack's accusations are criticised as overstated; but that is not a total refutation. And critics acknowledge that there is a need to democratise helping agencies do ([Hugo Sim, 2012](#)). It means connecting with experience, rather than with mission statements. Ricardo Pollack speaks for stakeholder voice.

There are reports of a promise-and-delivery mismatch in careers-work ([Zoe Williams, 2012](#)). In the extreme it is outright exploitation. Once an agency has made a successful funding bid, it can discard promised local contacts - they are no more than 'bid candy'. That maneuvering means that up-close need is discarded by out-there enterprise. It means that providers are increasingly private-sector, centralised, large-scale and out-of-touch. The trend penalises the most vulnerable members of a community.

The mission statement may well speak of its 'openness, transparency and impartiality'. But an organisation concerned for survival, is liable to pump-up claims and camouflage disappointments. There are regular reports of target-chasing agencies inveigling vulnerable clients into loss of benefits. And of self-interested misrepresentation of course options. Procedures have been imposed which meet government demands but are known not to serve client interests. Claims to 'openness, transparency and impartiality' are over-ambitious when they are



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contained within pre-defined and undeclared operational limits. Genuine independence escapes such containment. It is not a management procedure, it is a professional commitment.

**market myths.** Independence is compromised where competitiveness needs to look good in a market place. An independent organisation would position itself outside that containment. But it would need to be informed. And [Amitai Etzioni \(1991\)](#) is the forerunner of many authorities showing that economics is not sufficiently informative - it is, itself, contained. The author documents the failure of economics to take account the social-and-cultural settings its organisations inhabit. But its failure to take account of the damage it causes means that operational management based wholly on a belief in the effectiveness and fairness of markets has limited credibility.

There is another way of probing market forces. In order to believe that they are irresistible we need to believe that they are like gravity. But they are no more than a way in which we arrange our lives - like marriage. People may spring to the defence of market forces and marriage. And they can't duck gravity; but they can duck markets forces and marriage. Neither is compulsory. If they control us as individuals, it is because collectively we allow it.

Whether markets or marriages have any ethical justification is another question. But assertions on both accord with some interests more than others. People in protected enclaves want that sequestration preserved. People able advantageously to negotiate want free markets. The well connected value their economically-savvy grapevines. But for most people life is not like that. And that is an ethical, not an operational, issue. A probing would separate what is ethical from what is self interested. And an independent careers-work commitment would ask for the justification of markets favouring some interests while penalising others.

There are risks in standing outside; independence must take on its own risks. Speaking against a dominant trend, whistle blowing, is repeatedly reported to penalise the conscientious. The media and the professions are ducking and weaving through the targeting and recoil of powerful interests. It must be hard to know where to put your feet while treading carefully.

Conventional careers work sees itself as an arm of economic planning. The economic containment of that position raises ethical issue. But it is also a reality issue - careers-work has never had the leverage to influence the economy. But, on the ethics, what we call impartiality can be contained, and what we call independence cannot. The operational use of the first term, rather than the second, makes careers work smaller than its students need it to be.

**pragmatic is bigger.** To take on the risk of independence is to enlarge careers work commitment ([Bill Law, 2011a](#)). Able educators are likely to recognise it, but not all careers workers are ready for it. Neither are all teachers.

There are teachers who think of education as intrinsically worthwhile - learning for its own sake. It's idealism - and none-the-worse for that. There are others who see education as equipping students for qualification-and-selection. And that's utilitarian - it goes down well with careerists.

Distinctive careers work is neither idealistic nor utilitarian, it's pragmatic. It needs to attract the interested attention of partners who appreciate how such learning-for-living pragmatism is possible and why it is important. It needs an ability to fire-up learning, and to relate it to experience. Not all teachers are like that.

But not all learning partners are teachers. Some are in local outfits - in touch with what local career-management needs, why it needs it, and how that can be built into useful programmes. Some of these outfits are set up by careers workers making their own new starts.

This enlargement does not does not rely on quantity, it relies on commitment. Distinctive careers work does not need a lot of partners, it needs partners who know what they're doing.

They can be found inside and outside formal careers-work and education institutions.



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**a bigger society.** Does an enlarged commitment belong to the big society? No, though UK public-sector careers work could do with some big ideas...

*'if not extinct, how distinct?'*  
*'less for "learning-for..." , and more for "learning about..."?'*  
*'and which way is that?'*

It would be a bold step; but funding status and support can be gathered on a local basis from a range of non-government and non-commercial stakeholder and partner links. This way of locating and resourcing such partners and stakeholders has a long-standing provenance, developing effective management structures. The term is not 'big society', but 'civil society'... more recently ['third sector'](#) - separating it from 'first-' and 'second-'sector interests. The image of the 'big society' is risible - and its motives are suspect. The idea of civil society has greater credibility - based on a longer history.

Civil society includes personal volunteers and their families. But it also includes a range of collective organisations and associations. They are often locally based and - like 'bid candy' - well connected to local conditions and needs. These are socially-, culturally- and religiously-rooted organisations. And they operate as social enterprises, charitable trusts and non-government organisations. Some accounts of civil society claim that education belongs here - though there are first- and second-sector bids for possession of education.

The UK CDI is already encouraging displaced career professionals to move into civil society. They can set up as self-employed consultants and as full-blown social enterprises. The CDI sees these moves as survival strategies. But there is a deeper idea waiting to be found. Civil society is where professional expertise and local experience join in mutually comprehending commitment.

This is a life-long narrative, beyond the reach of short-term coaching. The long-term narrative is stand-out distinctive, widely connected and with a credible voice. And it is universal: we all need all of our people to be educated. One third-sector agency - in worker representation - maintains its independence of both first-sector policy and second-sector commerce. One of its outfits argues that everybody benefits ([TUC, 2013](#)).

And such a commitment can attract public attention. Its appeal to connectedness and its offer of a distinctive agenda is fundable. Charitable funding sources can be interested. The sale of results-linked social bonds is a possibility. These are better than survival strategies - they bring together knowledge, experience and trust.

All of our students need critically to question if they are reliably to navigate a hazardous work-life journey. It would not be surprising if learning-for-living, worker representation and education were to find a shared interest in the well-being of those navigators. And suppose they were to find the structures of civil society a natural home for that work? It would not be the big society. Could it be a new start for a big idea?

**living uncomfortably.** The theory is clear about this: significant learning is not a comfort zone. It disturbs both students and their helpers. That is, in part, because it is a process of holding-on to some things, and letting go of others. It's working well where people hold on to what helps them forward, and let go of what holds them back.

But that is always a matter for careers-worker argument - with each other, and within themselves. In the event-quotations those arguments stretch over some distance. And not all those aspirations can be met - something must be let go.

None of this means that anybody is being difficult, negative or blaming. It is facing a reality - something must be lost so that something can be gained...

*'is this creative destruction?'*

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Destructive argument is creative where a promising future displaces a dysfunctional past. It's an argument because what is welcomed as fair and reasonable by some people is resisted as dangerous and misleading by others.

Different people call up different thoughts-and-feelings about what is worth doing. In careers work some readily take into account the up-close-and-personal - focusing on the helper-client relationship. Others stand back, taking account of what is out-there-and-pervasive - focusing on social and cultural trends, and more widely.

But in figuring out its future, careers work has more than the up-close-and-personal to take into account...

> the interview?

yes, but what about...

> the learning-programme surrounding it?

yes, but what about...

> the neighbourhood and culture where that programme runs?

yes, but what about...

> the community's region and its work-life?

yes, but what about...

> the continental position that all of this occupies in a global economy?

Conventional careers work is best equipped for the up-close-and-personal. In offering help it asks about the person...

*'what does the person offer?'*  
*'what can the person adapt to?'*  
*'what will the person fit into?'*

But that can miss much of where a person - student, partner and stakeholder - need to look for a futures. Things stack up differently for people who look around. Help will feature the up-close-and-personal, but careers-work help cannot be contained by that.

Any refocusing - up-close or out-there - pushes different questions...

*'so why is this important?'*  
*'...then what do we need to know about?'*  
*'...and where do we look for that?'*

The stretch is from the psychological, through the sociological to the global - personal to planetary. Some is familiar and readily recognisable to people for whom it is therefore comfortable. Some is unconsidered and disturbing, and therefore troublesome. Arguments start. People get angry. On some issues, anger is justifiable.

But commerce, policy and professionalism all have an interest in making nice. It means accommodating and foregrounding what is positive, and assimilating into the background what is not. A corporate video can hide the troublesome in soft focus.

The future of any independent helping agency depends on what its people are ready to face up to, and what they think they can hide. And that depends on how many uncomfortable questions they are in a position to ask. More importantly it depends on who they turn to for the answers.

Everybody has a story. But few are uncomfortable enough.

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## whose story?

**compulsory careers** Career-management is a personal narrative; but in which other people have an interest. They include everybody who will ever depend on how the story works out.

There are also some who want to impose stories. Among them are people in a position to develop narratives which serve their interests. Such stories often feature heroically-realised potential, or startling-and-daring achievement, or passionately-inspired advancement. They can be popular, especially when they feature celebrities. But they are other people's stories.

But, suppose the story says...

*'I've had enough of realising, achieving and advancing - that's not for me...'*

From some points-of-view that attitude will seem a bad case of what is called 'poverty-of-ambition'. But should aspiration be compulsory? What's wrong living in accord with who you care for and cares for you? What if a person finds money-and-fame more trouble than its worth?

There is evidence ([Bill Law, 2011c](#)) that so-called poverty-of-ambition can be rational refusal to join a club with such narrow sympathies. And that rejection is part of a bigger case for career management which says...

*'...and I'm the author of my own story'*

That bigger case questions what long-term hope there can be in short-term STEM nudging, What if...

*'...all that she has learned from her cultural experience speaks of media studies?'*

Or if...

*'...all of what he experiences in inner life speaks of creative arts?'*

Or if they say

*'neither of us wants to force the other into what we know will force us apart'*

Something wrong with that? Would the CDI know? Does it need to? Do the rest of us need it to?

But, at least, we can know about the practical improbability of cutting-and-pasting one person's aspiration into another person's life ([Bill Law, 2012c](#)). We can also know that living on the basis of other people's values raises ethical issues.

So can anything compulsory? The evidence is that career management is not exclusively self focussed, nor necessarily competitive, nor always for employability. The continuing search for well-being, which is based on work-life fulfilment, is a more inclusive process. The careers-work commitment that it seeks from CDI-type outfits therefore needs to be independent. That means being able to say 'no' to influences that the evidence does not support - or the ethics cannot justify.

This is not saying that competitive aspiration is a bad thing - or a good thing. It just re-focusses it in wider terms. And the refocusing offers a career manager the possibility of personal-to-planetary meaning and purpose. Which is not so much compulsory as compelling.

The kind of careerism which doesn't know what to do except to seek promotion, get richer, and impose growth is a state-of-mind which can harm us all. Career management cannot be curtailed in that way - and careers work shouldn't be. It can seek the kind of work-life fulfilment which takes account of the people whose lives it touches...

*'if I am harming you or depriving you of what you need, I will listen...'*

*'...otherwise the story is mine - and for people who I know depend on me'*

This is not a marketing or neo-liberal story. It lives on a another level of hope.

**finding hope.** Careers work deals in hope. Learning for living sees it as a search for well being in work-life fulfilment. It is more interesting than trying to look good to everybody - and unimpressed by the self-serving, the thoughtless, and the bogus. It is best managed by critical thinking and finding a distinctive voice.

Amidst all the clamour, capture, and demands, can learning-for-living table two <sup>7</sup> wonders if students can be attracted that story...

**table two**  
**your work - your future - your story**

<i>thinking about...</i>	<i>if you want it you can have something to say about...</i>	<i>yes?</i> ✓ - ✓✓ - ✓✓✓
<b>keep moving</b>	<i>questions I ask - things I find out - learning-for-living</i>	_____
	<i>all the time taking on something worth doing</i>	_____
	<i>no lack-of-scenery on this journey</i>	_____
<b>be my own person</b>	<i>not trying to please everybody</i>	_____
	<i>surprising the people I want to surprise</i>	_____
	<i>respect for the people whose respect I need</i>	_____
<b>no pretending</b>	<i>sensing who I can trust - and need to hold onto</i>	_____
	<i>walking away from what tries to hold me back</i>	_____
	<i>showing my people the way I find things</i>	_____
<b>tough on myself</b>	<i>taking on the head-work hassle</i>	_____
	<i>making the time for this - doing the work</i>	_____
	<i>me controlling gut impulse - not it controlling me</i>	_____
<b>reasons being here</b>	<i>telling myself why I know I can do this</i>	_____
	<i>so it can be taken on board by people I need to do that</i>	_____
	<i>and by anybody who depends on me now - or ever will</i>	_____
<b>now and whenever this needs up-dating</b>	<i>knowing whatever I do I can do something else</i>	_____
	<i>ready for whatever I need to be ready for</i>	_____
	<i>with who I want to be with me</i>	_____
<i>talk about this with anybody who knows you and cares about you</i> <i>use your yes-yes-yes ideas to say something special-to-you in a - say in an interview</i> <i>keep coming back to this - change it when it needs changing - and to stay ready for anything</i>		

<sup>7</sup> This is a draft framework - work in progress - for inviting students to say what meaning and purpose they can find in working life - what is bogus, what is real, and what is a worth doing.

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## no conclusion

This is work in progress. The planning devices need reworking. And new ideas, argument and evidence is constantly appearing. And so, while there is a clear line marking the end of a race, its harder to be absolutely sure about a journey's end.

New stuff is constantly emerging. Like this...

**bad-news enterprise.** Seeking to restore lost trust in commerce [Colin Mayer \(2013\)](#) pays more attention to expansionist managers and investing shareholders than to exploited customers and neglected stakeholders

**limits of employability.** Criticising the concept [Ken Roberts \(2013\)](#) points to the likely failure of policy dependence on market forces, in connecting careers work to the realities of labour market

**careers-work policy.** Documenting the attitude of neo-liberal policy to careers work [Tony Watts \(2013\)](#) sets out how demand-led structures of curriculum reform are incompatible with an all-age careers service

**policy failure.** Setting that failure in a wider context, [Ira Katznelson \(2013\)](#) shows how the habits of continuous adjustment to global forces means that politics loses any sense of direction for domestic well-being

**market limits.** Adding to the critique of marketisation mounted here [William Davies \(2013\)](#) sets out the imperfections of markets under strain, curtailing connection to the societies that markets claim to serve

**social science pragmatism.** Tracking the development of social sciences [John Brewer \(2013\)](#) rejects the imposed impact agenda, and argues for the ability of social sciences to demonstrate the usefulness of their work

**neglecting the vulnerable.** Adding to the account of enclaved social separation [Ulrich Beck \(2013\)](#) shows how social class too vaguely plots the lines isolating those most at risk

**relocating civil society.** Starting from the weakening of civil society [Todd Swanstrom and others \(2013\)](#) demonstrate the importance to stakeholder interests of robust institutions and charitable funding

**understanding curriculum.** Setting out the essentials of the structure and dynamics of curriculum, [Garry Thomas \(2013\)](#) elaborates the terms in which careers work needs better to understand it

**careers-work philosophy.** Re-examining classical-to-contemporary roots [Peter Sloterdijk \(2012\)](#) counterpoises the manoeuvring of commerce, government and culture with a pragmatism for sustainable meaning and purpose

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## meta-analyses

Much of the evidence has already been gathered from sources, and collated into analyses. The original citations are not repeated here. You can find them by following these links and links-to-links.

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## links

These are links to on-line sources, the event quotations and the devices.

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OECD reports	<a href="http://www.oecd.org/unitedkingdom/4522836.pdf">http://www.oecd.org/unitedkingdom/4522836.pdf</a>
career-development device	<a href="http://www.hihohiho.com/information/InfCWDstnctv.pdf">http://www.hihohiho.com/information/InfCWDstnctv.pdf</a>
career-management device	<a href="http://www.hihohiho.com/information/InfCWCompWell.pdf">http://www.hihohiho.com/information/InfCWCompWell.pdf</a>
ESRC seminar	<a href="http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloud/view/6212">http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloud/view/6212</a>
NICEC meeting	<a href="http://www.nicec.org">http://www.nicec.org</a>
LinkedIn conversation	<a href="http://linkd.in/13ORJ0U">http://linkd.in/13ORJ0U</a>
Gillian Tett	<a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gillian_Tett">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gillian_Tett</a>
Ann Finlayson	<a href="http://linkd.in/13OS57P">http://linkd.in/13OS57P</a>
Ricardo Pollack	<a href="http://bit.ly/13OSqHB">http://bit.ly/13OSqHB</a>
Third Sector Research Centre	<a href="http://tsrcnews.org.uk/A1N-19O64-2A5JYNZ28B/cr.aspx">http://tsrcnews.org.uk/A1N-19O64-2A5JYNZ28B/cr.aspx</a>

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