the future of careers work
ten propositions in search of a profession

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the career-learning café

This monograph is a defence of careers-work professionalism. We need a more stable grounding for our position. It must take account of the fact that careers workers are helpers of their students and clients, not other people's agents. They help people make useful and sustainable sense of working life. And that help is transacted in interpersonal conversations. This is, then, a personal commitment. But that commitment needs to be supported by an institutional policy. The policy frames the commitment, and the commitment makes the framework effective. Without the institutional framework, the commitment is vulnerable - but without the personal commitment, the policy is futile. That's the deal.

Yet the twentieth-century history of the deal is one of repeated crisis. Each provokes an urgent canvassing for government support. Even when we get that support it offers no more than a temporary postponement of fear. We seem to be repeatedly in danger of being marginalised by the struggle between policy priorities. The argument here is that our entanglement with those pressures has masked issues for careers-work professionalism.

Underlying all of this is another reality. No professionalism is a once-and-for-all given. It is an attribution: it means what different people say it means - at different times, in different settings, and from different perspectives. Those perspectives are urged by partners in guidance and curriculum, by commerce, by policy, by clients-and-students and their famiies, and by other stakeholders with an interest in what we do. As careers workers engage with them they find that what one person says about careers-work professionalism is contested by another. If we are to find more stable ground we need to understand how and why that is so.

The monograph probes for that understanding. It raises four sets of issues: for our credibility, for our expertise, for our connectedness and for our independence. The way we resolve them will have consequences for the public face of careers work, the partnerships we must make, the stakeholders we should consult, the research we need to undertake, the developments we can create, the funding we are in a position to negotiate, the colleagues whose interest we can attract, and the kind of helping conversations we engage with our clients and students.

We have inherited a twentieth-century professionalism. It has given us too many temporary postponements of fear, we now need a sustainable basis for hope. It calls for bigger ideas than any individual careers worker is in any position to assert. It needs institutional support for an expanded careers work - enabling enlarged lives.

tags

big society / boundary-maintenance / career coaching / career management / civil society commerce / communication / competitiveness / connectedness / credibility / culture curriculum / education / employability / enclaves / expertise / global / career guidance identity / independence / labour economy / language / learning transfer / markets matching / narrative / policy / profession / programme management / psychology of career reform / research / skills / sociology of career / stakeholders / trust

notes:

> an abridged version of this monograph: Bill Law (2011) the 'Future of careers work professionalism - fears and hopes'. *Journal of the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling*, 26

> list of questions raised, section-by-section: page 35 of this monograph

At the heart of any defensible careers-work professionalism is a belief in the sort of knowledge needed best to serve students' and clients' needs. That kind of knowledge enables true professionals to rise above arbitrary pressure.

There has been a well-trodden path to professionalism. It moves from getting a qualification, through gaining membership of an appropriate body, to signing up to agreed standards, which call on a certain expertise, and which keep us in touch with co-professionals. These have been necessary steps; the question posed here is *'are they sufficient?'.*

George Bernard Shaw overdid his 'conspiracy against the laity' jibe - our professions have been stalwart defenders of integrity and fairness in society. But that's not all they have been - GBS had a point. Max Bazeerman and Ann Tenbunsel (2011) illustrate and document the many ways in which commercial, political and economic interests have drawn highly qualified professionals into ethically indefensible positions. Reliable news sources make those flaws visible on a daily basis. Alert professionals are taking the news seriously. It is giving rise to widespread calls for transparency, and it puts pretty-well all professions under intense scrutiny. It is leading professionals to be modest about the claims they make. It would be rash to assume that careers workers are exempt from the trend.

Factors include economic globalisation and the digital technology which makes it possible. Lynda Gratton (2011) comprehensively signposts the way in which these developments are impacting what is going on in working life. But they are also changing what people do about that. Our clients and students have new ways for finding out what is going on, and working out what to do about it. In that changing situation we should ask whether they find us sufficiently…

… credible	are we widely recognised as necessary, approachable, accessible, relevant - and, therefore, trusted?
… expert	are we sufficiently equipped in the disciplines that offer the most useful account of what people actually do?
… connected	are we in touch with the partners and stakeholders who can authentically speak for these realities?
… independent	are we as free of arbitrary influence on people's lives as our claims to impartiality assert?

These are not questions just for professionals but for the people they work with, try to help and who have an interest in what they do. Julia Evetts' (2004, 2011) opens a door to that discourse with her distinction between profession and professionalism. In that distinction a profession is a body of people who, on the basis of their training and qualification can claim a status which is assigned to a few. But professionalism can be achieved by the many - people who make no claims to membership of an élite group can take a pride in the professionalism with which they go about their work. If all the professions were to disappear tomorrow we do not lose that professionalism.

A profession is a group to be joined and defended, professionalism is an ascription of value to working people. Professionalism is not claimed, it is attributed. To accept that is to begin to see enlarged possibilities for careers work and for all who have an interest in it. Woven into this article are ten such possibilities. They are set out in the table (following page). Some of these expansions are readily recognisable, and some are challenging. None need exclude any other. But all are contested - because each raises questions about where our priorities have lain, and where they might now stand.

This article examines the validity of each, and of what each does for careers-work professionalism. It looks behind the urgent action sought in response to each new challenge to our professions. It does not allow that urgency to mask the need for underlying sustainability. That doesn't make for a quick-and-easy read.

in the following table, reform stretches left-to-right - not to abandon, but to enlarge what we do
shade in on the scale where you see we are now, and whether and how far we need to move on
print the page to see how thinking develops - to re-visit and compare responses with colleagues

table
enlarging careers-work professionalism
shade in: above - where we are now / below - how far we should expand

1:	**a claimed status**	**a recognised credibility**	*moving from being respected into being valued*
2:	**with documented expertise**	**with connected relevance**	*moving from specialised training into a shared understanding*
3:	**for competitive employability**	**for meaning and purpose**	*moving from shareholder into stakeholder interests*
4:	**in the economy**	**in personal-&-social well-being**	*moving from recruitment and selection into work-life balance*
5:	**a differential psychology**	**a sociology of attachment**	*moving from individual competitiveness into culture capital*
6:	**by analysing and listing**	**by sequencing and narrating**	*moving from ready-made factors into meaning and purpose*
7:	**like a competitive race**	**like an exploratory journey**	*moving from images of immediate action into continuous learning*
8:.	**a personal service**	**a curriculum progression**	*moving from an agenda into a scheme-of-work*
9:	**a standardised entitlement**	**a flexible programme**	*moving from postcode lottery into neighbourhood realities*
10:	**with influential support**	**with professional independence**	*moving from external support into professional strength*

how credible?

We need first to take a look at how our clients and students see us. This section moves into examining what informs those attitudes. Then we are ready to ask what this means for what we do now.

Careers work is a helping conversation. Who a teacher or adviser is, as a person, is at the heart of how he or she can help. It is the person that the people need to trust. And we cannot claim that kind of credibility, it is for them to recognise it in us. The news on that issue is not invariably good. It is not hard to find reports of doubt and disappointment concerning careers workers. True, much of the evidence is scattered (Tessa Hibbert, 2010). And, because it is often anecdotal, it can be explained away (Paul Redmond, 2010). But one systematic collection of responses (BYC-NCB, 2009) finds a majority assessing careers work as 'a little bit' or 'not at all' helpful, Even where these reports are anecdotal, they are also persistent, consistent and plentiful. A good many of them have the authenticity of spontaneity.

It would be surprising to find that careers work is consistently well-received. The best we can hope for is that it works well for a lot of people, much of the time, and on a good many issues. We cannot reasonably expect that it works perfectly for everybody all the time. The most thorough collation of evidence for the perceived usefulness of careers work (Deirdre Hughes and Geoff Gration, 2009) looks for evidence of impact...

'does careers work help?'

The report faces the fact that the news is not invariably good. A much-replicated finding supports the evidence of spontaneous self-reports: people place most trust in the informal help of friends and family. The analysis points out a significant contrast on how that works out. It shows that careers work helps with developing search-and-presentation skills - so that these tasks are approached more confidently. However, reports of any underlying understanding of what is going on in people's lives is harder to come by. The report frequently refers to what 'may' be so, what 'would' help, and what 'needs' to be done in careers work. A possible summary, of both this evidence and parallel evidence on expertise - set out below - is that careers work helps people who have some idea of what they want to do, that it is useful to them at a time when they are facing a specific transition in their career, and that what they most value is the hard information it gives them about what is possible. What is missing is convincing evidence of helping people to find sustainable meaning and purpose in the use of those skills and that information. It has more to do with the sort of depth that education can enable, than with the sorts of skills that career coaching can train-up. For deeper help, people go elsewhere.

The report therefore looks for more qualitative, rather than just quantitative, evidence. Qualitative evidence is capable of asking more searching question - offering more clues to the layered complexity of what is going on...

'how does careers work help?'
'...for whom?'
'...at what stage in their experience?'
'...on what issues?'

These are not simplistic questions. Finding answers is more expensive for the programme and more demanding for the sample. But cheaper and more manageable enquiries have serious methodological problems. They can elicit responses which reflect respondents' immediate preoccupations. They reveal what are said to be 'thin' rather than 'thick' levels of trust in careers work

Marek Kohn (2008) draws on this distinction. He shows, first, that our ability to transmit signals of trust is a feature of human interaction. The cheapest and easiest trust is invested in what can be quickly and easily verified by immediate observation...

'is an immediate pay-off all that people see or want from careers work?'

This level of trust, in a person or a product, is the basis on which most day-by-day conversations are conducted. It can easily be detected by market research. It is believing what immediately seems to be so.

But there is deeper and wider level of trust that people feel they can rely on to get help finding underlying meaning and purpose in their lives. It causes us to ask ourselves…

'do people know us well enough to trust us with that deeper kind of talk?'
'are they looking to us for any more to go on than they already have?'

Trust that is based on that level of contact is said to be 'thick'. It is developed over time and on the basis of sustained contact. It is not so much an encounter as a relationship. Robert Putnam's (2000) account of social capital suggest that where the daily bases for immediate response are becoming more stressful, people rely less on occasional encounters and more on sustained relationships - in family and neighbourhood. Claims to credibility, it seems, cut little ice when people can see that there is a lot at stake - calling for more than a transient relationship can offer.

So the scepticism that Deirdre Hughes and Geoff Gration detect is not is ill-founded. People may, for example, sense that what we do seems to be no more than what people they know well have always done themselves. They would not be wrong about that: formal learning professionalism is a refinement of how, in convivial societies, people informally help each other (Illich, 1971). They learn it from sustained experience. They see it as part a shared humanity.

People, in ways that Ivan Illich could only dream of, are now able to seek out that kind of experience-based credibility on-line. It certainly offers more ways of taking control of life - a common contemporary manifestation is by becoming their own travel agents. That is not to say that, in planning journeys, they don't need a deeper level of help. But it opens up challenging questions - for travel agents and for us…

'how much of what we offer do people actually need us for?'
'how convinced are they by the claim that our expertise is more useful than their experience?'

The idea that training on a course is more valuable than learning from shared experience is a challenge that all professionals need to face. It is not unreasonable to dismiss the offer of what you can learn more directly.

Highly trained professionals may shudder - but they miss the point: the credibility of expertise is in question. The evidence is persistent, consistent and plentiful, but, more importantly, it belongs to a well-documented social trend. Following Pierre Bourdieu and Erving Goffman, researchers Vern Baxter and Anthony Margavio (2011) document widespread doubt - and sometimes derision - directed at hierarchies. It belongs to a social trend which compromises trust and undermines deference. Zygmunt Bauman's (2000) characterisation of liquid modernity repositions people in celebration of recognisable experience, in rejection of unnecessary complexity, and in the protection of that comfort zone. Claims to exclusive authority do not go down well in such a culture.

This is why we need to unravel professionalism, because the contemporary world is not just more fluid it is more layered, more dynamic and more complicated. And the more complicated things get the more didactic we can sound. Useful learning often surprises, may not be comfortable, and can be troublesome (Jean Piaget and Bärbel Inhelder, 1969). And all of that can feel like overblown élitism.

Street-level scepticism is said to reflect a post-enlightenment anti-élitist counter-intellectualism. Actually, our independent-of-authority culture owes more to the enlightenment than is fairly credited (Tzvetan Todorov. 2009). But independent thinking means that people learn about their own world, not ours. John Lennon's *'imagine'* may have a point - street-level scepticism can be smart enough to serve people's interests better than we know.

But it can also lead the people who most need help away from the help they most need. Such evidence as there is says that the most vulnerable are the least likely to turn to us for help (MORI, undated).

There is no easy resolution to the relationship between credibility and professionalism. And we are not alone in the search for one; bankers, doctors, lawyers, media and even scientist are re-thinking relationships with their customers, clients and students. Indeed John Craig (2006) has collated widely-distributed evidence that declining deference is evoking rising levels of stress among professionals. An iconic case is the changing position of medics. Though - for centuries - custodians of the Hippocratic oath and holders of the honorary title, their authority is increasingly challenged. They are urged to be better able to recognise failure (Richard Horton, 2007). Some commentators (Stephen Schryer, 2011) point to how such status is eroded in a market-driven mass culture.

Others hold out hope, but it is conditional hope. Nick Couldry (2010) sees these issues as urgent. He draws on a fast-expanding literature which sees the contemporary market-driven politics as needing - world wide - a more layered and more subtle way of understanding the dynamics and complexity of people's lives. He sees the resolution in a change in the way people are heard - which he calls 'voice'. Current politics constrain how people engage their authority to a simplistic calling upon 'consumer voice' - it is no more than market research. Nick sets out more thoughtful ways of engaging people in the processes of asserting their experience-based authority.

Professionals are being invited to rethink the quality of their expertise. It is, of course, wrong to regard any research as final: we deal - at best - with probabilities, forever subject to further adjustment. Leaving aside the media's taste for bad news, the capacity of science and technology to get things wrong is widely visible (Harry Collins and Robert Evans, 2007). Behaviour science is even more challengeable - with plenty of opportunity for picking and choosing between terms-of-reference. A recent collection of definitions and interpretations on careers work (Audrey Collin and others, 2000) illustrates that variability, Drawing on Michel Foucault, researchers Peter McIlveen and Wendy Patton (2006) wonder whether there has been some collusion with dominant interests in the terms chosen to promote careers work. In all events, people are justified in wondering whether there is any agreed and stable expert basis for doing this work. That would feel like a justification for challenging credibility, and seeking a democratic say in what we do.

Michael Lind (2005) documents a mandarin tendency for policy to resist efforts - like Nick Couldry's - to democratise the terms in which programmes are offered. In any event, politicians are - themselves - more likely to pay attention to their own constituencies than to either mandarins or professionals. Both are suspected of defending their own patch. But politician's constituents are our students and clients - with their families and in their communities. We would, then, do better finding common ground with these stakeholders. They are the people that Nick Couldry won't ignore, mandarins shouldn't ignore and politicians daren't ignore.

To summarise: our attempts to assert out credibility may be out-of-tune with the culture, may be unreliably processed by competing élites, and may be overtaken by constituency politics. We need another way. And that is what is now being proposed - in concrete and operational terms - by 'co-production' (David Boyle and others, 2010). Services are shown to be more acceptable when providers and users work in reciprocal and equal relationships - they become a partnership between experience and expertise. Much personal careers-work professionalism is committed to doing that. But we are not consistently seen by our clients and students to be doing that - and we need to understand why. Co-production is the emergent institutional arrangement for the offer of professional help. And the argument in this monograph is that it is our institutional framework that needs to be changed.

Our credibility will, then. be is greater - not when we have more to say to our clients and students, but when more of them have more to say …to more of us.

how expert?

That people find other-than-experts credible does not necessarily undermine expertise. The fact that people have learned for themselves does not exclude the possibility that they can learn from professionals - and that they need to do so. Deirdre Hughes's and Geoff Gratton's evidence shows that people know that. However, there is a question about whether we could be developing a more comprehensively useful expertise.

There is a range of claims. Some see expertise as the special knowledge that careers workers have of the labour economy - and, in particular, the local labour economy. Some see it as a diagnostic ability - being able to arrive at valid and reliable characterisations of ability and motivation. Some see it in academic terms - careers-work text-books and websites frequently cite psychology, sociology and economics. But none of this necessarily puts careers workers in a sustained learning relationship with how clients and students experience work-life.

talking about careers: And what we need most to understand is how we best link our expertise to that experience...

'what do we need to be able to talk about in order to help?'

One of the problems for the search for expertise is that, academically, we have no wholly-owned body-of-knowledge - we borrow from academic disciplines. The result is usefully called 'career studies' (Phil McCash, 2008). It is useful because it suggest that what we know is not a discipline but a subject - drawing on a number of disciplines. Our expertise is, then, a selection from the behavioural sciences.

But our different text-books contain different selections. It's hard to be sure that there is any agreement among professionals about what our shared expertise actually covers...

'what do we need to know about the labour economy?'
'... individual differences?'
'...the social experience of working life?'
'...the processes of learning?'

What counts as careers-work expertise is formulated in different ways in response to different interests. Different key-words crop up in different accounts. For example, some formulations work well for business interests - the citations often include the words 'employability' and 'skills'. Some reflect policy priorities - where the terms 'markets' and 'quality' crop up a lot. Some express personal-and-social interests - where phrases like 'needs' and 'community' assemble into explanatory sentences.

None of these expressions necessarily excludes any other; but, at the centre of each interest, there are ideas that demand most attention: the boundaries are permeable, but the centres-of-gravity are firm. And it is those central ideas, the ones which hold careers work in position, which are contested (Inge Bates, 1990; Suzy Harris, 1999). Differently-constituted groups favour differently-argued responses to differently-conceived situations. There is always more than one way of talking about any work-life situation. There is no single-and-agreed expertise.

Individual professionals are usually eclectic about this: they take what fits on a case-by-case basis. But anyone who has needed to reconcile one bit of 'expertise' with another knows that there are always questions concerning...

'which expertise is most useful?'
'can there be such a thing as an up-to-date expert account of career management?'

The answer to both questions must be guarded. And that is why the best that we can realistically hope for is that some methods will work with some students and clients, on some issues, at some stages. Which is what the evidence shows.

Tristram Hooley and others (2011) finds a 'multifaceted and complex' picture, But their report offers more evidence of ideas and intentions than of verifiable effectiveness. Jenny Bimrose's and Sally-Anne Barnes's (2008) evidence is also mixed: when careers work is seen as useful, it

is as likely to be because it provides the hard-edged information which clients seek. Perceptions of usefulness weaken over time. And careers work is seen as one-among-several sources of community-based help.

A collation of evidence on how careers work promotes equality (Jo Hutchinson and others, 2011) shows that the informal influences of family, friends and background culture is more commonly experienced as moving things on. There are reports that students and clients have not been able to link formal learning to real-time experience. More generally, the authors report that formal careers work impact is indeterminate. That may because its effects are delayed, and monitoring is not maintained for long enough. It may also be because requirements are poorly understood. But it may be because the expertise is not equal to the task. The possibility of partiality among providers is also mentioned. Systemic bias would significantly depress effectiveness - but that level of bias is yet to be found. Indeed, this report suggests that a detached impartiality may well prove not to be appropriate where students and client assumptions need to be challenged.

There is support in these studies, as well as in Deirdre Hughes's and Geoff's Gration's (2009) study for saying that careers work helps people who have some idea of what they want to do, that it is useful to them at a time when they are facing a specific transition, and that what they most value is the hard information it can give them about what is possible. For the deeper need to find meaning and purpose they go elsewhere.

Jenny Bimrose and Sally-Anne Barnes attribute the shortfall to an adherence in the no-longer-appropriate matching model. The model sets client characteristics alongside job characteristics, as a basis for choice. These researchers advocate constructivism as a more appropriate basis for conducting careers work. And constructivism is a more deeply-experienced process. It enables clients and students to probe for the meanings and purposes which underlay and enlarge upon their immediate concerns. And, as Marek Kohn (2008) has shown, these expanded concerns call for more extended bases for trust.

career and the causes of career: One of the most influential accounts of the matching model was set out in the 'DOTS' analysis (Bill Law and A G Watts, 1977). It provides what, at first sight, seems to be a complete listing of what needs to be covered in career conversations. Matching develops categories for people, which can be linked to categories for opportunities. The categories can be inclusively and subtly set out, so that they will accommodate talk of subjective preferences, feelings and hopes. They can also take on board scientific measurements of skills and interests, and research-based labour-market information. They can even call up the romantic imagery of a 'dream job'. A more mundane image is of fitting 'pegs-to-holes' - which may well be how a many people visualise themselves in the competition for placement. DOTS, and its many derivatives, works well for matching lists of personal characteristics with lists of career opportunities.

But it misses too much (Bill Law, 2005a). Its disciplinary base needs little more than labour economics and differential psychology. The psychology is individualistic - centering practice on a free-standing self in an economically-defined environment. It has no place for social attachments and affiliations which bear upon what people do about their working life. It is content-driven when it links a diagnosed self to career opportunities. It has no capacity for framing the step-by-step processes required for enabling underpinning learning. It cannot show how one thing leads to another - not in learning, nor in life. It therefore excludes the expanded thinking which, the evidence shows, students and clients look for elsewhere. Constrictive rather than constructive, it contains rather than enlarges.

But the matching model is useful for mapping immediate concerns for career. And it has proven durable - it recently reached its 100th birthday (Frank Parsons, 1909). It is a twentieth-century phenomenon.

And it has been left behind. Since the first publication of DOTS, careers studies has massively enlarged its scope. Even before Jenny Bimrose and Sally-Barnes raised their doubts about matching, career studies included accounts of social influences on career management - showing how work-life is managed with, for, and in response to other people. That realisation has equipped careers studies to examine career in other-than-economic and other-than-

psychological terms. Ken Roberts and Paul Willis are the trail-blazers - pointing to background, upbringing, attachment and allegiance as important factors in what happens (Ken Roberts, 1968; Paul Willis, 1977; Phil Hodkinson and others, 1996; Nadine Dolby and others, 2004; Howard Williamson 2004; Bill Law, 2009; and Will Atkinson, 2009). The reports of such work fit well to narrative rather than analytic forms. And that form is strong, not just on the coverage of what to talk about, but also on how those things come about - stronger on both career and the causes of career.

Showing how one thing leads to another works better as narrative (Bill Law, 2006). A shift of the centre-of-gravity, away from analysis and towards narrative is a significant development in careers studies. Narrative can sequence what analysis fragments. And it sets what happens in a social context. More than that, a narrative can speak of the way instinct and intuition, impulse and choice, luck and achievement feature in life. That shift in the career-thinking centre-of-gravity has, in all these ways, put our expertise in closer touch with the experience of our students and clients. And that is the issue that this section raises...

'how do we connect career expertise to career experience?'

But narrative cannot do everything; indeed, it can mislead as well as inform. Storytelling's more rounded and dynamic account of career needs a critical understanding. People need to be able take what is useful and sustainable from that complexity - and not be bowled over by what is not. Careers studies therefore increasingly draws on inter-disciplinary accounts of how people usefully learn - some of the accounts would qualify as accounts of critical thinking. The accounts include explanations of learning as progressing stage-to-stage, as constructed from experience, as deeply internalised in ways which may not be fully articulated, of learning in social situations, developing learning repertoires, moving in cycles, often informally, drawing on individual styles, as learned in one setting and transferred to another, in affective layers, with multi-dimensional complexity. Career studies can therefore draw on a wide range of interdisciplinary and overlapping accounts of how people learn from complexity (Jean Piaget, 1932; Piaget and Inhelder, 1969; Lev Vygotsky, 1978; Howard Gardner, 1983; David Kolb, 1991; Jean Lave and Etienne Wengerr, 1991; Peter Honey and Alan Mumford, 1992; Sara Meadows, 1993; Daniel Goleman, 1996; and Knud Illeris, 2002). All expand the range of ways in which people rake account of what is going on.

Jean Piaget's 1932 publication is cited because it probes decision-making. The thinking, for some time unfashionable, is currently gaining confirmation from neuro-science. And that evidence is massively expanding. *'This-or-that'* choice and *'here-and-now'* decision-making may not be the commonplace events that careers workers assume (Barry Schwartz and others, 2010). Their relationship with instinct and intuition calls for more careful scrutiny than careers work has yet given them (Malcolm Gladwell, 2011). An examination of grounded problem-solving and decision-making points to the usefulness of not-fully-articulated intuition (Gary Klein, 1999). The overall claim is that we should be paying more attention to neuro-science in understanding how people manage their lives (Jonah Lehrer, 2010). All of this is bursting the matching model at its seams. And, from neuro-science, there is more soon to come.

Constructivism understands learning as a creative process though which we each ascribe personal meaning to experience. Careers work turned first to Jean Piaget for these ideas - his work is particularly useful in curriculum. However Hazel Reid and Linden West (2010) track constructivist roots for face-to-face work in social interactionism. It opens up a study of human-scale, pragmatic and socially-contextualised biographies. And it leads to development work with personal constructs - inwardly organising experience into a basis for assigning meaning. Mark Savickas's (1995) further development of constructivism actively engages clients in their own search for meaning. Hence Jenny Bimrose's and Sally-Anne Barnes's advocacy of constructivism as, in changing conditions, a preferred method. Hazel Reid and Linden West are now able to show how career guidance help on recalling significant experience enables people to use such meaning as a basis for action.

Audrey Collin and Richard Young (1992) come to a similar position by drawing on philosophical accounts of hermeneutics. Hermeneutics articulates a unified self, engaged in an interactive interpretation of experience. The authors take narrative to be the only format for such work. This position also argues that a person's interpretation can give us our only appreciation of a client's or student's basis for action (Audrey Collin, 2000). Moreover, such

accounts reach beyond economic drivers: people, responsible for their own career management, must have recourse to their own narratives - in whatever terms they recognise - for constructing continuity and meaning in their lives.

This expanding repertoire is, then, applied to life-long learning, in life-wide settings. Its attention to learning activities, rather than learning coverage, means that the helper is more an enquiring friend than a presiding expert. The consulting-room or class-room becomes a space where enquiring learners and probing helpers meet - and build trust. The focus for expertise shifts from what-to-say content to how-to-find process. And that process can be expanded into to any situation, at any stage in a life.

Trying to get a grasp of such complexity and dynamism invites the use of metaphors (Kerr Inkson, 2007; Laura Dean, 2011). But the word 'career' is already a metaphor. The Latin and early-European etymology conjures images of career as both a race and a journey. Both images regularly crop-up in the careers talk of students, advisers and teachers (Bill Law and David Stanbury, 2009). But the imagery of a competitive race is more culturally prevalent. Yet the imagery of career as a journey is more consonant with the expression of narrated experience. Journeying is the more generic idea - you cannot interrupt a race to make a journey, but you can interrupt a journey to run a race. This is a way of working on the basic question about careers-work expertise - how is it best framed…

'do we work on the journey and relate it to the race?'
'do we work the race and count on people seeing it as part of a journey?'

The idea of a journey is more congruent with the design of a stage-by-stage scheme-of-work in curriculum. Making full use of a roundedness and dynamics of narrative requires curriculum.

But an account of training for careers workers (Claire Johnson, 2009) says otherwise. It lists functional skills, closely anchored to a place of work, with a narrowly-conceived body of knowledge, serving a tightly-defined range of tasks. The work is set out as having dominantly economic significance, and engaging a matching model. References to social context are limited to promoting in the community, rather than negotiating with it. And the link to personal professionalism is about making professionals accountable. It is hard to find any basis for liberating professional commitment, or informing their enlarging reform of what they do.

These listings are consistent with an account of careers-work professionalism set out by the OECD (2004). That account conventionally calls on qualification, standards, expertise and association as defining characteristics of a profession. The OECD's attention is narrowly on economic development. We need a wider gamut, gathering a more inclusive range of evidence.

The examination of these contentions and resonances in our expertise is the work of professionalism. We have inherited a twentieth-century version. It has given us too many temporary postponements of fear, we now need a sustainable basis for hope. It calls for bigger ideas than any individual careers worker is in any position to assert. It needs institutional support for expanded careers work - enabling enlarged lives.

commercial influences on careers-work expertise: As Clare Johnson's listing of functional skills illustrates, much of careers-work expertise is thought to be focussed on the requirements of the business world. And the business world is impressed by the matching model. The model puts education's careers workers and commerce's human-resource people on the same page in economics and psychology texts. It is the page devoted to competitive skills-for-employability. The extent and detail of how this is so is illustrated by Philip Brown and Anthony Hesketh (2004).

That shared thinking forms the basis of a series of well-presented business-world working papers on careers work. By stages, the series describes how a person is matched for work, and finds work, in global economic conditions. Starting with 'putting the individual first' (CBI. undated a), the titles lead to 'bridging the skills gap' (CBI, undated b), in what seems to be an un-contestable case for 'world-class competitiveness' (CBI, undated c). The series seeks to win the trust of careers workers.

Marek Kohn (2009) collates evidence to show that trustworthiness is hard to fake. The attempt is therefore always costly - investing a lot of resources in establishing a position. A display of wealth exhibits the power of the proponent's status. It is gets a hearing by using the vocabulary which the target group itself uses. It retains attention by adopt personable and congenial images. The tactic can be effective even among people able to understand that they may be being manipulated. Marek shows that it is sometimes repeatedly effective.

The commercial mandating of the matching model has pervasive effects. Performance indicators used to monitor, evaluate and design careers-work programmes draw heavily on DOTS-like matching analysis. An example is a framework addressed to schools (DCSF, 2010). It compacts the matching model into three categories: students (1) 'understanding themselves and the influences on them', (2) 'investigating opportunities in learning and work', and (3) 'making and adjusting plans to manage change and transition'. A similar but more pervasive professional framework appears in the Canadian Blueprint (NLWC, 2006). It lists career-management competences as: (1): 'personal management', (2) 'learning and work exploration', and (3) 'life-and-work building'. There is also an Australian Blueprint (MCEECDYA (2010) with a similar three-fold listing: (1) 'personal management', (2) 'learning and work exploration', and (3) 'career building'. The Australian version pragmatically shows how its listing can be used to ensure adequate programme coverage. The recurring emphasis on coverage - patterned on aspects of 'self', 'opportunity' and 'action' - is dominantly a feature of the matching model. The framework and the blueprints are more sophisticated than DOTS. Each suggests many times more objectives.

To be fair, there is some acknowledgement of the need for progressive learning by stages. And there are nods in the direction of influences of other-than-career life-roles. But all of these performance indicators visualise an individual moving into work on terms set out by employers. The models trail behind what careers studies shows. The CBI may argue that matched employability enhance economic performance. But labour economics raises its own doubts - individual performance does not closely correlate with commercial competitiveness (Philip Brown and others, 2011). And, on a much broader basis - and raising ethical issues - accounts of unfettered growth are increasingly confronted with stop-and-think challenges concerning environmental-awareness (Richard Donkin, 2010). As previously argued (Bill Law and David Stanbury, 2009) there is an issue for imagery here. Images of a competitive race show individual performance in pursuit of here-and-now winning. But images of journeying-over-time allow for a more reflective consideration of both the validity and the desirability of commercial claims. While careers work must occasionally work with clients and students on the need to look good in competition, the journeying metaphor is more useful for more expansively working on a sense of sustainable meaning and purpose.

This is the case, even for recruitment and selection purposes: A telling cue, posed to an applicant, is to invite a personal statement or to offer an opportunity to ask questions. What people say into these blank spaces are a factor in the selection process. Clichéd responses are a good way to get rejected. Selectors need to hear something separating this applicant from the others. That response will not come from readily-learned formulae. What selectors need to hear is evidence they can trust of what this person, like no other, has taken on board - and what reliable commitment that offers to this particular opportunity. It's an authenticity that's

hard to fake. Short of buying in career coaches, it means being able to draw on the sort of built-up-over-time narrative that curriculum can enable. Of course, from a teacher's point-of-view, that enlarging narrative is worth having anyway - its narrower pay-off in employability is a side-effect.

Nonetheless, education and selection remain yoked. What happens in education is used, not just as an enabler, but as a basis for selection. Test and exam results are used to validate the effectiveness of learning. They are also used to shortlist applicants. In that respect schooling becomes a sifting device - for both commercial recruitment and higher-education selection.

But there is more going on in this process than selectors take into account. Some of the career-costs of the process are personal to the candidate. They each have risked their own investment in the recruitment process - for example in the costs of study, in direct out-of-pocket costs, and opportunity costs in the loss of what else they might have done. These are costs which family and other supporters - and sometimes dependents - have to bear. The greater cost is in enhancing performance - including time spent in unpaid internships. Few, if any, of these outlays feature in recruiter-candidate contracts, nor does the recruiter directly pay for them in any other way. Economically-driven institutions off-load all such costs - they are located outside the transactions which recruitment sets up. Recruitment's natural interest is in finding good candidates - sifting the fitted from the not and the real from the fake. It needs to be strong on the presentation of career, It has no natural interest in background causes and consequences - in economics they are called '*externalities*'.

The relationship between professionalism, commerce and policy is changing. The commercial world has little difficulty in gaining policy support for its interests in careers work. Any expert careers worker will understand how limited that interest is - career studies is continuously expanding its grasp of career and the causes of career. But the capacity of governments is limited by the power and speed now possible in global transfers of capital. Some global conglomerates manage greater turnovers of capital than some nation-states. Policy therefore seeks other-than-monetary influence. John Kampfner (2009) shows how policy, in order to retain leverage on domestically manageable programmes, canvasses citizens on what they are prepared to forfeit in exchange for what it is able to control. He documents how policy-retreat before global-commercial advance is inevitable. Commerce is capturing influence on the terms in which education is available, on what environmental damage will be tolerated, on the terms in which communities form and develop, and on the way media will cover such matters. Such commercial influences have been shown to combine into a capacity to persuade citizens to act against their own interests (Tony Carrk, 2011). All have career-related consequences for helpers, and for their clients and students. Whether all rate support from career-work professionalism raises issues…

'are we taking enough account of the growing power of global capital?'
'are we sufficiently aware of the range and depth of its impact on life-chances?'
'are these trends independently represented in our programmes?'

None of this means that business people are incapable of altruism. Entrepreneurs are famously becoming altruistic in later-life. And commerce has a long-standing history of offering not-for-profit services to employees and to the community. But Deborah Cadbury (2010) documents how her family's business was handed over by policy to wholly-commercial interests. A study of corporate policies (Matthew Kotchen and Jon Junbien Moon, 2011) shows how corporate social responsibility programmes are set in place to mask the damage done in other respects.

In order to appreciate the prevalence of bottom-line interests, we need not rely on the news of Enron, toxic assets, or ponzi schemes. Commercialisation is in careers-work's back-yard. In recruitment, companies postpone contracting until confidential on-line data has been invaded and scrutinised. Interns are exploited, often at their families' expense, while they demonstrate what value they have to the company (CIPD-Hayes, 2011). There is some collusion from education, for example where students are uselessly 'warehoused' in irrelevant vocational courses (Alison Wolf, 2011). Some self-styled education experts (Alistair Smith, 2011) promote commercial competitiveness as a model for 'high performance' in school management. No wonder Peter McIlveen and Wendy Patton (2006) are wondering about the possibility of collusion between careers work and dominant interests.

There is a professional route through this. Policy is, itself wondering whether an exclusive concern with economic performance is enough of a basis for policy. We are increasingly able to see that damaged lives damage us all (Richard Wilson and Kate Picket, 2009). Personal well-being is argued by politicians to be as much a policy priority as economic gain (Richard Layard, 2005). Underlying all of this we are beginning to glimpse the need for what Anthony Giddens (1992) calls 'pure' action - with contracts based on what each partner can directly experience in the other.

There is a lot to take on-board here. John Kampfner shows that, in global conditions business attitudes have sharpened urgently and dangerously, and that policy has followed. In careers work it would be a mistake to assume that what we have been doing in the past will put us in a professional relationship with what is going on in the present. We need to re-position ourselves. It means asking questions about what Anthony Giddens calls authenticity and Marek Kohn calls trust…

'what should we now be negotiating with commerce on where we stand?'
'...and with the partners and stakeholders with whom we work?'
'...and with our students-and-clients and their communities?'

There are increasingly resourceful commercial pressures on careers-work professionalism, and they externalise much of what our own expertise tells us is so. If we do not work on these issues we will perpetuate the twentieth-century role for careers work. That careers-work role was to set in motion a matching procedure which is completed by selectors and recruiters. Can any self-respecting professional - in guidance or in education - now settle for performing that kind of front-loading? We are helpers for students and clients, not agents for other people's interests.

policy influences on careers-work expertise: Prevailing policy interest has, for more than four decades, been dominated by a belief in the power of markets to improve products-and-services and to increase wealth. The central concept is how customer choice causes suppliers to shape supply to demand. This is neo-liberal thinking; and, at first sight, it seems to closely coincide with commercial interests.

However neo-liberalism is actually a rejection of the idea that 'big government' should come to the rescue of commerce. And so, while commercial interests seek policy intervention, policy keeps intervention to a minimum. Instead, it puts its trust in consumer choice. All market transactions are thought to be mutually advantageous (David Harvey, 2010).

But, as Deborah Cadbury's family has illustrated, this is contestable: commerce can itself understand the limitations of markets. The Quakers were not the only ideologues to get this: the Leverhulme Trust rests on a parallel ethic - with its roots in Jewish tradition. Islam sets clear limits on money management. There are many other business-world sources of such community-supportive thinking - many of them based in small firms. However, neo-liberalism offers no basis for defending any of these outfits from market forces. Any financial-market manoeuvring for the acquisition of a profitable business should be allowed to take its course - whatever other good that firm may be doing.

In such thinking the sole test of value is how the vendor and the customer perceive market competitiveness: at what price should a person buy? …or sell? In the career market-place a person is sometimes the customer and sometimes the vendor. In an education market that person is thought to be shopping for goods; in the labour market that same person is putting those goods on sale. In the former case the career opportunity is the commodity, in the latter the person is the commodity. The process is called 'commodification' (Gareth Dale, 2010).

But in any market transaction there are both benefits and costs. And not all are of equal concern on both sides of the counter. The previous section sets out the position of a person who has already incurred time, energy and monetary costs in bringing herself to a negotiating position. That is a cost to her, but it will benefit the employer. But not all labour-market costs are individual. The costs to that woman may be in what that work will do for her child's well-being. Her family-life may be disturbed. Her neighbourhood may lose her. Indeed, the range of development and social costs entailed in an apparently simple transaction can range from the personal to the planetary. And, in that transaction, there is a dominant party whose

interest is in off-loading such costs - they are externalities. Yet we are encouraged to think of career as being 'bought' and 'sold' by a free-standing independently-choosing individual. All other interests in the transaction are ignored. We are currently witnessing the consequences of that thinking for entrants into higher education. The bigger reality is that we all need that student to be educated. None of us can live our own lives without the benefit of what learning will bring under her command.

Markets can work well. But their loudest voices speak of success. We may not hear as much about people who take on more risk than they are ever in a position to calculate, who encounter unforeseen consequences, who are thwarted by shifts in demand, or have plans disrupted by changed personal circumstances. Neither may we hear about the damage that commerce inflicts on vulnerable communities, on developing economies or on the habitability of the globe. It would not be good marketing to tell us.

In a market a negotiator needs to know what's good to look good. And in that respect all markets are lop-sided. On one side of the transaction is a person in a position to know what's going on. But we cannot assume that level of knowledge on both sides. This lack of symmetry can be corrected with market regulation, and with the help we offer. But neo-liberal thinking takes the market to be normal - so correction is artificial, and intervention low-key. It therefore favours minimal performance-indicators to guide vendors and inform consumers. Little attempt is made to determine the depth and extent of help that a person might need in order to appreciate the kind of complexities that are entailed in career-management transactions.

Nonetheless corrective measures need some performance-indicators to inform consumers. The use of such standards, outcomes and targets is welcomed by some careers-work professionals. But they are derided by others as 'tick-box'. Professionals in other fields are increasingly sceptical - such procedures have long been understood arbitrarily to distort what working people do (David Marquand, 2004). Some of the most persistent scepticism is in curriculum; where professionals are more likely to favour a discursive journeying image over a competitive marketing image. The journeying metaphor is thought to work better in enabling learning for ready-for-anything adaptability (Bill Law and David Stanbury, 2009).

But careers workers should be aware that currently prevalent neo-liberal thinking - its rigidity, its unsustainability and its illegitimacy - is coming under critical scrutiny. Part of that probing points to a rigidity which thwarts the pragmatic and flexible responses that change requires (Anatole Kaletsky, 2010), The author tracks capitalist economic thinking through a series of adaptive phases, each responding to change, but each containing the causes of its own failure. Quoting Joseph Stiglitz (2010) he claims that the current failure is the mistaken belief that private incentives can bring about social returns. This does not refer to the-likes-of-Enron, which is fraud: Anatole is referring to what is perfectly legal and commercially routine. He confidently anticipates that policy will provide for the greater adaptability that uncertain conditions require. He also sees it as a capitalist process - navigated by business managers on behalf of shareholders. But it is not twentieth-century neo-liberalism.

Much of the economic commentary points to the weakened position of governments. Colin Crouch (2011) characterises the most recent stages in economic policy as managing the conflict between increasing demand and stabilising inflation. He sees neo-liberalism as a privatised version of the Keynesianism which informed the development of the welfare state. The difference is that demand is now maintained, not by public investment, but by private borrowing. And no national policy is able to cope with massive global capital-flows which move that debt about. Traders can externalise any risk in seconds. Colin sees temporary respite in the integration of governments into stronger entities such as the EU; but the expansion of a domestic-service economy limits the UK's scope for this strategy. And, as the fastest expanding economies become sources of capital as well as products, policy control will be lost. Commerce will come under more sceptical political-economic ideological scrutiny. Dominant economies will place less emphasis on markets and choice. Gains will be unevenly distributed; but there will be no Marxist response - radical Islam will play a role.

Nick Couldry (2010) looks outside economics as a way of dealing with neo-liberalism. Like Marek Kohn, his interest is in communication. He shows how enclosure by a market framework constrains communication. Communication is a product of 'voice' - much vaunted

by policy - but actually a process of exchange between a range of conflicting perspectives. Nick illustrates this with the exchange of information about what is valued by workers - and their need to re-state how things are in contemplation of their own experience. That voice, he argues, must not be restricted by politics. He refers to the market metaphor as a way of limiting meaning and constraining response. A consequence is that economic theory becomes a social fact, depriving people of their ability to give a full and recognisable account of themselves. John Garner (2011) explains much of this by pointing out that policy, and its commentators in the media, over-simplify bases for action - they seek quick responses. But Harold Perkin (2002) argues that professionals collude with marketing ideas which are actually enemies of the professions. They replace assured trust with entrepreneurial competitiveness. It means that that professions fail to respond to client needs. Harold argues for an independent body to assure professional reliability.

Reactions to rigidity, unsustainability and illegitimacy are also canvassed by education professionals. John Beck (2008) shows how education professionalism is undermined by policy attempts to appropriate the basis on which that expertise is defined. He agrees that the talk may be of modernising the profession, but it silences contestation - thereby de-professionalising education. Linda Evans's (undated) survey of professionalism leads her to conclude that the sheer diversity of forms of expertise in education means that its professionalism is not generally understood, resources are wasted and practitioners are alienated.

It is all very well for these various studies to support the expansion and enlargement of our thinking. But we all need boundaries: too much is conceivable, much less is possible. Max Bazerman and Anne Tenbrunsel (2011) collate, and widely illustrate, a range of studies showing how boundaries shape problem-solving and decision making. There are questions…

'does life-long life-wide thinking imply no limits to the framing of careers-work thinking?'
'…do concerns for personal-to-planetary well-being do so?'
'how do we establish any boundary around such concerns?'

Boundary maintenance is a pragmatic necessity. But it needs to be managed with care. Max's and Anne's evidence shows that, once a clearly-marked framework of expectations is established, people comply with whatever expectations that context sets up. This applies even to professionals who see themselves as independent. Working with such boundaries, people have been repeatedly found to act in a way that breaches their principles - at times without realising that they have done so. The work of establishing frameworks for careers work should bear in mind that boundaries, however necessary, are also forms of control.

Historical perspectives on medical diagnosis vividly demonstrate the controlling influence of context. There are parallels with careers work - like medics we rely on observation as a basis for action. And, it seems, diagnosis-and-treatment are culturally situated, so that widespread beliefs influence how professionals shape their observations (Ian Dowbiggin, 2011). There is a history of these changing bases for diagnosis - each range of responses prevailing for a time before being overtaken (Annemarie Goldstein-Jutel and Peter Conrad (2011). The research-and-development of what medics do is bounded by the social-and-historical context they inhabit.

The liberal in neo-liberalism is libertarian - but within whatever the market offers. Indeed the terms 'capitalism' and 'democracy' are thought by some to mean much the same thing (Colin Crouch, 2011). We need to question ourselves about this….

'is the context for careers work best framed by market thinking?'
'can such thinking be made congruent with careers work professional principles?'
'what alternative framework and boundary might there be?'

Libertarian 'freedom' is what Nick Couldry sees as entrapment. It is what Max Bazerman and Anne Tenbrunsel show as scripting. But the many myths of customer choice remain deeply engrained in post neo-liberal cultures. It will not be easy for careers-work professionalism to disentangle itself.

wider influences on careers-work expertise: Nick Couldry's account of 'voice' speaks of the importance, not just of shareholder interests - but more inclusively - of stakeholder interests. Careers-work professionals know about it - it is reflected in the social attachments which people carry into every consulting-room and every class-room...

'are we taking enough account of family-and-neighbourhood influences on career management?'
'...of social, group and networking influences?'
'...of dependents - the people who do, and will, rely on what people do about career?'

Commercial and policy interests pay more attention to economic than to social considerations. Indeed, the calculation of social attachments closely corresponds with what commerce and markets externalise. Career studies explains why this is too-limited-a-framework for understanding how people manage working life. A responsible careers-work professionalism cannot surrender to what John Gardner (20011) has characterised as simple-mindedness.

Economic considerations are clearly important. But they may not feature in how well a job is seen to match a person's psychological profile. The economics of working-for-shopping may well be more important. And career studies has long been able to account for those links between, for example, producer-roles and consumer-roles (Super, 1981).

But there is a change in the way producer and consumer engagement is prioritised. People are as likely, now, to talk about how they spend their income as of how they earn it. The Human Resource magazine (David Woods, 2011) reports that money is more important than job satisfaction. More than half that sample say their top reason for wanting to change jobs is to increase their salary and benefits. Job-based considerations come second.

The links between shopping and selfhood are extensively entwined. Naomi Klein (2007) is among the many who show how commercial-logo and consumer-branding feature in the iconography of identity. Where who-we-are has, in the past, been defined by what-we-do for a living, people are now at least as interested in being known in terms of where-we-shop and what-we-buy. The goods they exhibit, the logos they wear, and the icons with which they decorate their bodies define a social position. That positioning asserts what is valued enough to be made part of a self. And that 'self awareness' is positioned far away from matching thinking.

Such social positioning also features in how the workless define self. A survey of out-of-work young men and women, by Jo Hutchinson and others (undated), illustrates how, becoming pregnant can be welcome, because it offers a person a role. It is a stake in society - with a place to be, a relationship to nurture, and a task to take on. Careers workers need to know about wealth generation, but they also need to know about social attachment. This stake in society replaces what education-employment-and-training fail to provide. It is a position of value - for parent and for child.

We are examining links between work and social roles; and they can have a far-reaching resonance. Clients and students increasingly understand working-life to influence, and to be influenced by - not just attachments in the family and neighbourhood - but allegiances to the developing world and concerning the biosphere (Jen Lexmond and William Bradley, 2010). Work and shopping both have economic significance - they also have a carbon-footprint.

Such realities enlarge the bounded framework for careers work. But it is an expansion which is suggested, not so much by what we tell our clients and students, but what they tell us. That reframing extends beyond an account of how careers work feeds into selection-and-recruitment. Its underlying questions for careers workers are broader - and more troublesome...

'who gets to do what in society?'
'who's society is that?'
'where do we stand in relation to it?'

Danny Dorling (2010). shows that the answers to such questions are different in different neighbourhoods - each with different access to opportunity. Careers work has concerned itself with post-code lotteries - worrying that local variations deprive people of a universal

entitlement to provision. But there are also post-code realities - social and cultural enclaves where the who-does-what question is answered differently in different locations. Danny shows how social and geographic position relate to each other. These post-code realities may be separated by the one-or-two digits locating each enclave. And in each position different values are defended - from what may be seen as un-neighbourly neighbours.

His own evidence leads Danny Dorling (2011) to propose a different take on post-code realities. He calls it the 'inverse-care law': the neighbourhoods most in need of help get the weakest services to meet those needs. This is not an argument for universal provision, but for differential needs. It requires that we see access to opportunity in deeper and wider terms...

'what expands or contracts people's aspirations?'
'what drives them on or shuts them down?'
'where are those dynamics rooted?'
'how do they vary between enclaves?'

Policy takes an interest in the inequities, but it starts from another position: the Milburn Report (Cabinet Office, 2009) assumes aspiration on the part of the poor, and argues that it is thwarted by the selection system. That neglects what Paul Willis and his successors show about how aspiration is squeezed out of a narratives early in life - long before anything outside the neighbourhood comes into view. It means that questions about aspiration must be answered differently, for different people, with different experiences, in different settings.

Career studies shows how career management is framed by positioning - where life-roles, cultural background and geographic location become life chances. The well-positioned know how to position themselves well. And, in the zero-sum economic conditions of a stagnant economy, any move up by the well-positioned means a lost opportunity to the less well-positioned. It also means, conversely, that the improvement of the life chances of the rest will damage the life chances of the well-positioned. Post-code manoeuvring is being characterised as positioning by people who understand the value of education. That is probably true, but the evidence suggest that the more important driver is to position one's own with maximum advantage (Jeevan Vasagar, 2011). This is understandable in a family. But it is not a strategy policy should defend - or for professional acquiescence.

Career studies is better-than-ever equipped to understand this. Ethnographies of career draw on the widely-sourced work of Pierre Bourdieu (1991). His analyses are framed by locations in social positions. He shows that shared background experience leads to behaviour that the group can understand. This applies in all kinds of settings - poor and well-heeled - each in its own 'field'. Over time the process embeds shared and familiar talk-and-action, which members of the group understand to represent reliable accounts of how things are. And that understanding orientates group members to a feel for what is in-tune with that representation. It can seem unassailable, like god's own truth. It establishes pre-dispositions for action - 'habitus'. Those habits are rooted in both where-the-person-is and who-the-person-is - it abandons the 'in-here' and 'out-there' divide of self and opportunity. It equips a person for success in that field. It is, in that sense, cultural capital - useful in the same way that money and qualifications are useful. And it is embodied - noticeable, not only in talk, but in gate, posture, gaze, and gesture.

A version of the usefulness of embodied cultural capital occurs in what is called the 'cosmetic economy'. It refers to opportunities where appearance and manner determine life chances (Andy Westwood, 2004). The possibilities are now being canvassed - with nods to Pierre Bourdieu - in the career management of what is called 'erotic capital' (Catherine Hakim, 2011). Is that what we used to call 'sweet-hearting'? Do we want to give it air-time?

That aside, the way people talk is shown to be a feature of cultural capital. There are - within fields or enclaves - social preferences for accent, pronunciation and vocabulary. At a deeper level, the abstraction and complexity of language feature in the way one person positions another. The limited scope of day-to-day gossip may raise few eyebrows - and even work well enough in the cosmetic economy. But the demands of a knowledge-based economy call for a more complex and dynamic explanation of what's going on, in what are called 'elaborated codes' (Denis Lawton, 1968). And what Dennis calls 'restricted codes' do not work well for the

abstractions and subtleties of voicing meaning and purpose. Neither do they help in voicing aspiration, making an application and looking good in selection.

From a professional point-of-view what is notable in Bourdieu's thinking is the way it by-passes distinctions between the psychology and sociology of career management. In its terms person and society are not separate entities: identity and opportunity are enmeshed where person and culture are part of each other. And so both are spoken of in one breath: *'I am what I buy'; 'motherhood is my life'; 'people like us do it this way'; 'that's not for the likes of us'.*

Pierre Bourdieu's is expansive thinking. It enlarges the basis for help on the issues that commerce externalises and policy limits. It means examining the relationship between aspiration and position. And there is much to examine - of run-down neighbourhood, gentrified suburb, and gated community. To do that is to expand aspiration by introducing people to new positions, and encounters with people who need not be strangers to each other - finding stronger bases for trust.

But it does not mean encouraging people to abandon who they are. Careers workers are helpers not agents - and the helping aim is not to persuade but to enable people to enlarge who they are. It expands repertoires for habitus - equipping people with ready-for-anything flexibility. It presents careers work with demanding questions…

'is any part of a careers worker's role to enhance aspiration?'
'is it any kind of failure if that has not happened?'
'what should careers workers be able to do, to work with any of this?'
'...in guidance and in curriculum?'

This is a telling respect in which what is learned in one setting needs to be carried into another. That capacity for transfer is one of the most demanding challenges for careers work: what is learned in the programme needs to be recognised in the life. Yet without transfer careers work doesn't work - whatever is learned in the encounter is lost to the life. Designing learning so that learning reminds people of their lives. so that their lives remind them of their learning, needs the kind of embedding which curriculum develops (Sara Meadows, 1993).

In this, and in other ways, the evidence points to a need to reposition curriculum in relation to guidance. Tristram Hooley and others (2011) make the case for improving readiness for advancement in US education. They find that there are distinctive and significant contributions which 'academic' curriculum can make - where, that is, it engages with a whole-school experience and a wide team of partners and stakeholders. A more enlarged understanding of the possibilities of curriculum would make a yet-stronger case.

And there is further expansion of the field soon to come. Examining wider influences on careers-work expertise means that career studies cannot be a closed book. A new range of enquiries, developing now, offers exponential growth in our understanding of how culture interacts with neurology (Iain McGilchrist, 2009). We need curriculum to embark people on these kinds of explorations.

This is reform, which is never comfortable. Among the calls which beckon us out of our comfort zone is what Aaron Schutz (2011) warns against - the danger of assuming a correspondence between what is set out by dominant interests and the realities of how people are positioned. Aaron refers specifically to 'progressive' education projects, which are rooted in privileged experiences, and - therefore - inappropriately framing the help they offer. Such progressivism fails to grasp how people see dominant power in relation to their own solidarities. Nick Couldry would agree. And evidence shows public administrations misunderstanding, and publicly criticising, the resistance with which the poor - whose experience officialdom knows little - greet their advice (Nicole Stephens and others, 2009). Research also shows how such rejection of official lines is often rational (Will Atkinson, 2009). There are current news-stories of so-called progressive politics losing touch with the urgent needs of the people it claims to represent. They are not groundless (Geoff Dench, 2003).

Finn Daniel Raaen (2011) theorises the issue. Drawing on Michel Foucault, he claims that the assumptions of twentieth-century modernity no longer work for autonomous professionalism. Finn draws on Michel's call for 'speaking freely' - a boldness which relinquishes its dependence

on what a majority thinks normal. That normality is thought to be the product of un-contestable evidence, but is actually framed by an undeclared view-point. Professionalism, the argument goes, needs to risk looking into other-than-consensual claims about how things are. Which is what Nicole Stephens' enquiry, and Will Atkinson's, do

So, in another way, do Hazel Reid and Linden West (2011). They show how, in guidance, constructivism allows for such broadly-based exchanges. Jenny Bimrose and Sally-Anne Barnes (2008) agree, urging constructivist methods as alternative to out-dated matching methods. Hazel's and Linden's analysis of what is disclosed in constructivist interviews makes the point that professionals need a more creative space for working on an exploratory narrative. They argue that the way in which careers-work is set about by outcomes and targets diminishing its professionalism. Their plea is for room to think and imagine help in more holistic ways.

There is here no necessary denial that there are the-same-for-everybody facts which, careers work must grasp - not in Michel Foucault, nor in constructivism,. But there is an affirmation that every fact is seen, however sincerely, from a point-of-view. The scope of enlarged careers studies is broad enough to recognise that matching and marketing represent points-of-view - not incontestable realities.

Dissatisfaction with the limitations of the wholly-economic framing of this work evokes an educational use of the term 'personal-and-social well-being'. Careers work has been located as part of what is called 'economic well-being'. Alert and responsive professionals are aware that this is too limited a frame. Indeed, there is a question about how impartial a careers work professionalism can be, when its technical expertise is dominantly organised around the pursuit of employability in a labour economy. Jen Lexmond and William Bradley (2010) are among the many who show that much of what people mean by work needs also to be understood in other-than-economic terms. .

A continuously expanding career studies is raising issues for the analysis of the relationship between work and change (Guy Standing, 2009). It is also opening up an ethical discussion. All of the facts have implications for values. There are outstanding and unresolved ethical issues for careers work (Bill Law, 2011c)

But all is contested. There are certainly countervailing pressures. Alerts and responsive professionals may be aware, but their employing organisations may not. Or they may prefer to hold to simpler and more commercially and politically acceptable ways of seeing things. We lack an institutional professionalism which can support careers workers in pushing back those boundaries.

Narrowly bounded ideas are a problem for this thinking - and a danger to us. Enquiries demonstrate that the dissonance of new thinking can lead the unwary into drawing only on ideas which confirm what they are familiar with (Carol Tavris and Elliott Aronson, 2008). And, when that happens, people stop listening to themselves expressing what is taken-for-granted. It then becomes easier to see the inadequacy and partiality of other people's thinking than it is to see one's own - Jesus is said to have noticed the tendency (Matthew, 7:3). No true professionalism is trapped into that kind of intellectual ghetto - where all careers workers are trained in the same disciplines, recycle the same citations, frequent the same websites, and belong to the same associations. Knowing bigger and better than that is our capacity for adaptability - and our hold on survival.

It will undoubtedly take us into greater complexity. But evolution is usually in the direction of complexity - it expands repertoires for action, finding more ways of understanding what is needed, and more ways of working on those needs.

Enlarged career studies demands much from careers-work professionalism. There is no room here for the simple-minded - single-cause-single-effect - thinking dismissed by John Gardner (2011). Our expertise now calls for an opening of conventional frameworks - an ability to take one thing with another, to organise diverse and contested assertions into useful patterns, to open boundaries admitting new and useful ideas, to consider explanations which - at first sight - are not obvious, and to clearly communicate those ideas to others. And it means doing all

that in ways which deepen and widen student- and client-experience, attract able and committed partners, and engage with interested stakeholders.

To be strong, in these ways. on career and the causes of career poses more questions...

'does careers work training-and-support pay enough attention to psychological considerations?'
'...to sociological...?'
'...to economic...?'
'are there other fields we should study?
'are we sufficiently alert to a wide-enough range of view-points?''
'can such flexible adaptability be contained by a single profession?'
'what does this mean for relationship between guidance and curriculum?'

All of this, from any worthwhile professional perspective, is demanding and deeply engaging. It will attract the interested attention of the most self-critical, most able, most creative and most resourceful in the education professions. No profession can be better than the people it attracts. The only hope for pursuing careers-work professionalism is to offer a professionalism worth pursuing.

how connected?

Careers studies is pushing the boundaries of twentieth-century careers work. What we mean by expertise is expanding - better equipped to enlarge the lives of our clients and students. And these developments raise issues concerning what network of contacts we need to share our knowledge with - and listen to. They are issues for connectedness. And they can be resolved on a narrower and on a wider scale.

The reality is wider, but the consensus has been narrower. Careers-workers are engaged in multi-lateral networks. They include people we help, people who cooperate with us, and people with a close interest in what we do. But the twentieth-century convention was that, within that multi-laterality, it negotiated bi-lateral agreements - whether with schools, further-ed colleges, or higher-ed departments. The procedure is called 'the partnership model'. It is worked out locally by two groups of professionals - in guidance and in curriculum. The dominant research has been that the partnership model is the preferred norm. But we must, of course, read such findings in terms of the point-of-view, interests and conventions which frame the claim.

Notable among such Foucaultian doubts are suggestions that bi-lateral partnerships can consign some professionals to roles that are ancillary in the partnership, and to positions that are marginal in the organisation. Both are issues for professional equity.

On ancillary roles: guidance and curriculum each bring a distinctive contribution to careers work. Both are professions - each resting on its own theories, engaging different methods and pursuing distinctive objectives. But they are positioned in a limited partnership - bi-lateral not multi-lateral. The partnership is bounded by an expertise which is assumed to be shared. And, so, it can be seen as more-fully represented on one side of the partnership than the other. One of the partners would then be seen as offering ancillary support. Where that is so, we would notice that able people - in either guidance or curriculum - would not be attracted. Indeed, it is an position that people, well rooted in their own profession, would decline. Of course, there are impressive people who, convinced and committed, will take on the challenge, and independently negotiate an acceptable deal. But that would not be the generality: able guidance people would look for other openings; able teachers would look for other roles.

On marginalisation: a narrowly conceived two-pronged partnership also risks organisational marginalisation. Where the partnership is centred on guidance outfits, the risk is that teachers are located at the edge. Where careers work is located wholly in a curriculum-based setting that danger is for guidance people.

The questions become...

'do we need to attract a more diverse range of talent into careers work?'
'what range of abilities does careers work need that to be?'
'how do we find and attract those people?'

A lively helping organisation draws on a broader perspectives, more openly and freely engaging a range of complementary professions. Bi-laterality is not lateral enough for them. There are open organisations in both education and guidance where the range of contacts is constantly expanding.

And there are emerging now all kinds of community-based and expert providers (Livity, 2011; Ellen MacArthur, 2011; Somewhere to Go, 2011). In any locality people can turn for help to social enterprises, freelance coaches, contract brokers and informal mentors. They can also find narrative-based and interactive social-networking websites - where students become partners with professionals (Bill Law, 2010b). And easement of curriculum controls allows able teachers to adapt their schemes to learning-for-life. Holding to a tightly-bound conception of careers work - where everything is either 'careers education' or 'guidance' - leads us to becoming marginal in our own field.

The question now becomes…

'what kind of agreements should career work be seeking in schools, colleges and unis?'
'…in careers guidance services?'
'…in community-based settings?'

Multi-laterality includes more partners; it also includes stakeholders. A stakeholder is a person who, though not a member of anybody's team, has an interest in what that team does. Those interests are not defined by commerce or policy. Indeed, and as Nick Couldry (2010) argues, other concerns may well have a more pressing claim. The importance of such stakeholders is introduced into the policy discourse by Will Hutton (1995). His account is of a political economy where members of society are more fairly acknowledged as citizens, as customers, and as potential partners. The case for stakeholders counter-balances the dominant and unrepresentative influence of commercial shareholders.

And careers work has a range of stakeholders. Some - like family interests - are personal-and-particular. Others - like business people's - are professional-and-general. In any multilateral network there will be overlaps: families can be business people, some mentors are also teachers. But the most multifariously involved members of the network are students and clients: they are both partners and stakeholders. Students-and-clients and their helpers learn from each other. And a major task for careers work is to enable students-and-clients to claim their stake in society. It is where Nick Couldry's account of voice is operationalised.

All of this is accumulating questions…

'what are the interests of commerce and policy in careers work?'
'who else has a stake, and what are those interests'?
'is it possible to say that some of these stakeholder interest are central and some peripheral?'
'do we need to adjust the balance?'

The idea that other people have a stake in what has been thought of as a tightly-bounded enterprise, is not necessarily welcome. Will Hutton (2010) discloses that the idea, although attractive to ministers, does not command a broad-enough platform of political support. It seems that in policy circles, it is possible to be 'useful' and yet have 'no great influence'. Tight-bound frameworks do not readily link to multi-lateral realty.

But careers work must. Personally committed professional careers workers develop networks as diverse as any. But they need institutional arrangements to catch up with them. And that means re-mapping the framework on which our partnership agreements are negotiated.

An enlarging career studies supports such a movement. Following Paul Willis and Pierre Bourdieu we know that career-management is curtailed by a narrow range of contacts, and that career possibilities are expanded by a wider range of new encounters (Bill Law, 2009). This is not an account of careerist manoeuvring, it speaks of learning networks. The thinking is now further supported by network-modelling, which shows how diversified linking expands behavioural repertoires and is - in that way - liberating (Daniel Dennett, 2003).

The organisational arrangement which implements this thinking is called 'co-production' (David Boyle and others, 2010). It characterises a public service which works in equal and reciprocal exchange between professionals, people using their services, their families and their community (Julia Slay and Ben Robinson, 2011). Participants discover what each other thinks is worth doing - or not. It is, in Marek Kohn's (2008) terms, a direct-and-personal means of establishing trust. It contrasts with a procedure for maintaining control. Marek's network is activated by a process of mutual disclosure. Distant and enclosed institutions cannot do it. And its immediate exchange is difficult to fake. It is true that such trust in stakeholder networks can be abused, and Marek's collation of evidence is that trust is then immediately withdrawn - leaving only the possibility of a tightly-contracted procedure for managing wholly defensive distrust. In a helping organisation that would be an admission of disastrous failure.

But no work of this kind is entirely straightforward and problem free. Trust means that partners and stakeholders can participate in acknowledgement of the strengths and limitations of what each can do. But the dynamics are layered, and can be contrary. For example, people may

exaggerate the value of their own contributions (Max Bazerman and Anne Tenbrunsel, 2011) - claiming credit for more than they actually deliver. It is also true that stronger players may exploit the weaker (Tomorrow's People, 2011) - by, for example, marginalising their position. Another example is where qualified professionals are not able to communicate sophisticated understanding in terms that others understand (John Gardner, 2011). It might also mean not sufficiently relating professional expertise to authentic experience; there is certainly a shortage of experts with a sufficiently generalist grasp of how these various perspectives relate to each other (Katrin Hille (2011). And that can lead to a blindness to the consequences of their specialism for what is happening outside that academic box. However there is nothing here that cannot be managed in informed and responsive programme-management (Bill Law, 2011c). Those managers need to be as wise as serpents and as gentle as doves - for managing this kind of dynamic the wisdom of doves and the gentleness of serpents doesn't work.

Establishing connectedness is a task for a wise and gentle programme management. It raises questions concerning the partners and stakeholders we need - finding who to share our knowledge with, and to listen to. The evidence examined here suggests that we need people who are in command of what they know, who understand how to fire-up learning, who have grasped the importance of this work, and whose authenticity can be trusted. Not all guidance experts are like this. Nor are all teachers. And - as some schools do - working with people who happen to be available will not find them. Our best hope of ensuring that we work with open and impressive people is to ensure that our professionalism is open and impressive enough to attract their attention.

The concept is integration: multi-lateral agreements, integrating teams for integrating learning, in integrated lives. An integrating programme management calls on a distinctive range of management abilities:

- **educational**: actively engaging able partners, in well-designed programmes and evaluation
- **leadership**: credibly positioning the work, so that actual and potential partners and stakeholders are attracted
- **organising**: efficiently coordinating material, logistics, budgeting and reporting.

John Gough (2011) recognises how change requires new thinking in careers-work programme management. He proposes a ready-made framework for identifying tasks calling on abilities ranging from the 'political' to the 'stimulating', and from the 'supportive' to the 'well-organised'. What that is making undeniable is that such programme management is not a job for one-or-two people. Indeed, we are urged to draw on programme managers from a diversity of professions (Tami McCrone and others, 2009). In any event, few organisations are in a position to set this up just for careers work. It is best integrated with programmes of personal-and-social well-being.

Integration finds integers - connecting one helper to another, expertise to experience, and learning to life. There is a declaration of management support for this kind of connectedness. In an ambitious survey of the possibilities, the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services (Iain Barnes and Peter Kent, 2011) list features for the future of careers work: integration, shared leadership, reshaped organisational structures, outward looking partnerships In a similar management perspective John Seeley Brown (2002) sees the internet as a key feature of what is called 'connectivism' in programme management. Its key features include a responsiveness to change, an ability to learn, an understanding of how people respond to change and diverse team membership, with varying view-points,

The questions continue…

'how is programme management best located in its organisation?'
'is there an ideal type of careers work manager?'
'must this always be a trained careers-work professional?'
'how many different sorts of people are we talking about?'

The question belong to a multi-lateral future.

how independent?

All of the perspectives set out here have an ethical dimension. Some people find an underlying 'oughtness' in the celebration of competitive success. Others in market efficiency. Career studies is no-less ethically-charged. It suggests values associated with work-life in its links to personal-, domestic-, neighbourhood-, social-, civil- and planetary-life. All of these ideas assign meaning and purpose to what working people do. Such ethics asks...

'are there some aspects of careers work we should preserve?'
'...change?'
'...why?'

And they pose such questions to both careers-work helpers and its stakeholders. Questions like this call for an ethical rather than a merely theoretical justification. Hence the feeling of 'oughtness'.

There is, in general, no guarantee that ethical claims mean ethical practice. Indeed John Kampfner (2009) illustrates his investigation with several examples of unethical outfits making ethical claims - before and after exposure as frauds. Beware confusing talk with reality: there is a difference between the representation and the thing - what Michel Foucault (2001) calls *'les mots et les choses'*. This does not mean, as some interpreters of Michel assert, that there is no truth to be discovered. But it does assert that what is discovered can only be represented - however sincerely - from a view-point. And that view-point is liable to be loaded - quite possibly with ethical freight. Michel asserts the rights of the rejected, the ill-used and the outsiders. There is no more-compelling ethic.

The record on professional ethics is ambiguous. Chris Higgins (2010) shows ethics to entail subtle distinctions - for example separating inclination, obligation, imperative and justice. And John Gardner (2011) shows that such complexity is beyond the reach of policy. Chris argues that such distinctions are commonly not taken into account even by professional educators, Mark Kohn (2008) agrees, maintaining that moral codes are neither handed down by some authority, nor worked up from day-to-day chat. They are, he shows, derived from what we all find in a long-term accumulation of experience, which attunes us to an inner feeling for fairness. He is going farther than Pierre Bourdieu. Mark acknowledges that ethics may be learned in family and neighbourhood, but - in agreement with Tzvetan Todorov (2009) - he asserts that it must be extended to all life.

Max Bazerman and Ann Tenbrunsel (2011) demonstrate that being ethical does not mean being 'nice'. Neither does it mean loyalty to some group. Yet they document a human tendency to favour people who are, in some sense, *'our own'*. 'Patriotic' allegiance to a professional group would be an example. A relevant test of ethical claims is to evoke the 'veil of ignorance' (John Rawls, 1999) - would we judge our allegiances differently if we did not yet know what affiliations we are to be brought into? There is a lot to consider here. Helen Colley (2011) is surely right to argue that our ethics needs a closer look.

Acting ethically is acting on principle. It means rising above arbitrariness - both in external influences and inner drives. Principle is bigger than compliance with other people's say-so; neither does it merely reflect personal values or individual needs. If an ethical principle applies to anybody, it applies to everybody. Its basis-for-action is that sense of fairness which enlightenment figures sought to uphold as human rights. They resist all pressure which they see as arbitrary. Sooner or later they must take a stand. And that requires willingness to face up to inconvenient truths, and - self-critically - to discard what cannot stand. Achieving such independence can therefore mean first an awareness of what influences we have become dependent on, and working out what to do about them. It needs bigger ideas than can come from personal preferences, however compelling - or from sectional interests, however influential.

More questions invade us...

'which careers-work ideas are big enough to carry this kind of ethical freight?'
'...and address matters in terms which partners can recognise as appropriate?'
'...and stakeholders?'

As every parent knows, deep issues are called up by simple questions - like '*why are you dong that?*'. Careers workers engage useful exchanges by wondering why people might answer in

different ways - like *"I need to earn my own and my family's keep?'* or *"I'm the one round here who knows how to do it?'* or *'because somebody has to - it's important'*.

There are other ways of answering, but these ways are not what - these days - a lot of people would see as high-end career motivation: they're not individually aspirational. or ambitious for advancement, and nobody is saying much about competitive achievement. Indeed, you could interpret them as being quite modest. Yet they reach to stakeholder values which stand outside the gamut of what policy, commerce and contemporary culture celebrate. They speak, instead, of social involvement, inter-personal responsibility and task commitment.

So how much of an ethical commitment does this invite from careers workers…

'how far are we here to help people look after themselves and their dependents?'
'...do well what they do best?'
'...get involved in something worthwhile?'
'...raise their aspirations?'
'...awaken driving ambition?'
'...max out there achievements?'

We need ideas big enough to reflect the terms in which both the competitive and the committed can find meaning and purpose. That's why Abraham Maslow's (1970) organisation of human needs still gets cited - he covers this ground, and more. And ideas as big as this show that competition and commitment are not the same thing. They also show that not all productive careers are pursued by careerists.

This breadth of thought re-embeds work-life in society-as-a-whole, legitimising what all parts of society can recognise as valuable. Its grasp is life-wide - linking work-life to all life. Its reach is life-long - once found, ceaselessly relevant. That work-life is now characterised as occupational citizenship (Guy Standing, 2009). Citizenship is an inclusive concept - it locates work as one of many ways in which people lay claim to their membership of society.

Career studies describes and explains how things are; but moral philosophers insist that we can't move straight from that 'is' to any 'ought' - how-things-are says nothing about how-they-should-be. That is certainly true of the over-used notion of 'good practice' - which wrongly assumes that because something works somewhere it can work anywhere. But that is a practical not an ethical error. It is an ethical error to make what happens into an imperative. But what-happens can be a starting point for arriving at priorities: after all, if we have no idea what is going on, then we have no framework for considering what might be done about it. Career studies is big enough on the causes of careers to frame that kind of thinking.

But there's a practical constraint: implementing such ethical thinking needs a strong institutional base. Careers workers need policies and organisational arrangements which make room for independent integrity. It is true that without the energy and ability of individual professionalism institutional policies are futile. But without institutional professionalism individuals are too-little supported and too-much exposed to arbitrary pressure.

The individual career worker's commitment to an independent ethic is at the heart of professionalism. But we are finding that organisations that employ careers workers cannot be relied on to support that kind of independence. Any employing organisation - whether in school, university or service - has its own ethos. And Nick Foskett with others (2004) examines how organisations vary in this respect. The evidence shows that competitive organisations deal with students-and-clients in terms which support the organisation's survival. People, in both guidance and curriculum, are - then - under pressure to prioritise action which maintains funding streams. And, in doing that, they may sideline their own professional ethics. Max Bazerman and Ann Tenbrunsel (2011) are among the many who widely document that level of compromise. They indicate, conversely, that a secure ethical professionalism needs a framework - maintained outside of sectional interests - where such dilemmas are authoritatively examined, and defensible values are prioritised. As Julia Evetts (2004, 2011) shows, a true professionalism equips a person to say *'no'* to her or his employer.

Asking individuals to carry all of the ethical freight is asking too much. Personal professionalism needs an institutional authority for making any such stand. An earlier attempt to set up a guidance council, which might have taken on this task, was compromised on the

issue of independence. It promoted professional interests, was sponsored by commerce, and depended on government support. Its representation of local and community interest was never better than a patchwork, and there was little shared understanding of why it finally collapsed (Judy Alloway, 2008).

More recently a career profession task force has set in motion another movement. Its leader, Ruth Silver, urges the need for independence. An alliance of careers-work professional associations has been set up to carry its work forward (Rachel Mulvey, 2011). It could collate a collective professional memory, and extend that growing understanding into a shared basis for professional action. And it could independently respect the experience and understanding of all its multi-lateral network of partners and stakeholders. We'll see.

But careers work needs a new start. And it would be naive to assume consensus on how to make it. The argument here is for respecting the growing reach and grasp of our work...

'what range of partner and stakeholder interests should we try to reach?'
'what breadth of understanding should we seek to grasp?'
'will that generate enough momentum for useful action on professionalism?'
'what ethical commitments will such structures and dynamics need?'

It calls for a brave, informed and multi-lateral alliance - extending a collective professional memory into an on-going basis for action, to which all partners and stakeholders can appeal. There are policy proposals for re-locating how issues like this are addressed. Talk of the 'big society' signals that there are areas where government cannot - or will not - go. Political manoeuvring has defiled the concept to the point of derision; but it has an underlying validity. We need institutions where people can work on the value of their citizenship. And, in this sense, 'the big society', is not necessarily a bad idea - it's certainly not a new one.

A more useful account uses the term 'civil society' (Michael Edwards, 2004). It refers to where action is supported neither by government nor by commerce, but by a social fabric of cultural, religious, social, and work-related affiliations. It occupies a range of settings - formal and informal. These outfits correspond with careers work's stakeholder network: family and community groups, cooperatives, mutuals, voluntary outfits, non-government organisations, trades unions, and social enterprises. They represent the interests which commercial and market outfits externalise. They often represent the interests of people whose hold on citizenship is precarious. They need more than the personal voluntarism of the 'big society', They are vehicles for finding shared trust in groups working on how we live together.

There are estimates that this 'third sector' can provide up to 25% of locally-delivered help. But, they need to work in partnership with local authorities; and there are unresolved issues concerning how effectively they can work to acceptable standards (APSE, 2011)

But it is in the social fabric of such activity that personal careers-work professionalism is most useful - and finds the most reliable support. The question is becoming a pressing one: while the 'big society' sounds like an invitation to individuals to get excited about doing something for others, 'civil society' upholds the need for institutional support - urging people to do more than get excited - but to get independently organised (Roger Simon, 1982). More questions...

'is civil society an appropriate concept for institutionalising careers work professionalism?'
'with what kind of independence?'
'and what range of links?'

Tristram Hooley and Tony Watts (2011) have conducted a thorough analysis of the weakening of policy support for careers work. They draw attention to the difficulty in reconciling what policy says with what policy fails to do. Michel Foucault (2001) has sparked a discourse on the error of mistaking representation for truth. In crisis-conditions reality overtakes talk. A failure to understand this explains much of our twentieth-century disappointment.

Nonetheless, Tristram and Tony have a point. Education minister John Hayes (2011) sincerely makes flattering attributions of value to *'career guidance'*. But, differently, he looks for a new start for *'careers inspired learning'* (Cegnet, 2011). And that seeks a free-standing activity, locally developed, unfettered by statuary prescription and a strategy for social equity.

It won't be a minister who brings about this renewal. It could be the alliance - or some other careers-work initiative. It must be us.

what now?

One of the more thoughtful acknowledgements of the need for renewal comes from the National Association for Educational Guidance with Adults (Stephen McNair (2011). It acknowledges the new organisational structure of professions in the public sector. It argues for greater credibility among the public, the development of a more useful expertise, the need for independence in a world where government support is unreliable, and a more robust ethical underpinning.

The Institute of Career Guidance is looking for alternative ways for engaging its professional members in changing conditions. Workshops are available on how to develop professional careers-work resilience in changing conditions. (Ruth Winden, 2011) - although we need more underpinning than we will find in the promised 'hints and tips'.

And think-tank Demos sponsors workshops on how to set up a helping service as a social enterprise (John Craig, 2006). It is cooperating with cash-strapped local authorities on finding new funding for setting up local helping services. The civic participation of young people is on the list - enabling them to connect what they learn in school to where they live.

There is an agenda here for the future of careers work - with questions about how we prioritise it…

> *winning credibility - and usefully expanding expertise*
> *linking working life to well-being - personal-to-planetary*
> *starting from where people are socially positioned*
> *enabling the narration of experience - set alongside our analyses*
> *seeing career as a journey - life-wide and life-long*
> *re-positioning curriculum in relation to guidance*
> *attracting authoritative, committed and authentic partners and stakeholders*
> *developing a multi-tasked programme management*
> *programming flexibly - adapting to local-and-immediate conditions*
> *integrating curriculum, guidance and community resources*
> *maintaining independence of arbitrary influence*
> *enabling enlargement in the possibilities for people's lives*
> *leading to a realisation of meaning and purpose*

This is an agenda for professional educators, not agents acting on behalf of other people's interests. And, for a professional educator, where it is possible to enable sustainable meaning and purpose, employability would be a by-product.

All of this is a social movement: big-thinking enough to negotiate what is contested, self-critical enough to work with changing conditions, independent enough to be credible, and organised enough to support its people wherever they work? The evidence (Bill Law, 2005) is that a deep-enough training enables professionals independently to re-orientate themselves in relation to the systems in which they work. That work has been recently developed into an philosophical framing of careers-work priorities (Bill Law, 2011b).

Contemporary change is shaking the ground on which our professionalism rests. More-of-the-same is not an option. Neither is trying to win back the dependencies that have repeatedly failed us. We need a new institutional framework which can support the breadth and depth of what we know to be our capabilities.

It will change the public face of our professions, the partnerships we make, the stakeholders we consult, the funding we can negotiate and the conversations we engage. But, most importantly, it will influence the people we attract and retain as members of our professions.

We do not need another postponement of recurrent fear, we need another basis for sustainable hope.

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appendix

questions for the future of careers-work professionalism

about credibility (pp. 4-6)

'does careers work help?'

'how does careers work help?'
'...for whom?'
'...at what stage in their experience'?
'...on what issues?'

'is an immediate pay-off all that people see or want from careers work?'

'do these people know us well enough to trust us with that deeper kind of talk?'
are they looking to us for any more to go on than they already have?'

'how much of what we offer do people actually need us for?'
'how convinced are they by the claim that our expertise is more useful than their experience?'

about expertise (pp. 7-10)

'what do we need to be able to talk about in order to help?'

'what do we need to know about the labour economy?'
... individual differences?...
'...the social experience of working life?'
'...the processes of learning?'

'which expertise is most useful?'
'can there be such a thing as an up-to-date expert account of career management?'

'how do we connect career expertise to career experience?'

'do we work the race and count on people seeing it as part of a journey?'

about commercial influences (pp. 11-13)

'are we taking enough account of the growing power of global capital?'
'are we sufficiently aware of the range and depth of its impact on life-chances?'
'are these trends independently represented in our programmes?'

'what should now be negotiating with commerce on where we stand?'
'...and with the partners and stakeholders with whom we work?'
'...and with our students-and-clients and their communities?'

about policy influences (pp. 13-15)

'does life-long life-wide thinking imply no limits to the framing of careers-work thinking?'
'...do concerns for personal-to-planetary well-being do so?'
'how do we establish any boundary around such concerns?'

'is the context for careers work best framed by market thinking?'
'can such thinking be made congruent with careers work professional principles?'
'what alternative framework and boundary might there be?'

about wider influences (pp. 16-20)

'are we taking enough account of family-and-neighbourhood influences on career management?'
'...of social, group and networking influences?'
'...of dependents - the people who do, and will, rely on what people do about career?

'who gets to do what in society?'
'who's society is that?'
'where do we stand in relation to it?'

'what expands or contracts people's aspirations?'
'what drives them on or shuts them down?'
'where are those dynamics rooted?'
how do they vary between enclaves?'

'is any part of a careers worker's role to enhance aspiration?'
'is it any kind of failure if that has not happened?'
'what should careers workers be able to do, to work with any of this?'
'...in guidance and in curriculum?'

'does careers work training-and-support pay enough attention to psychological considerations?'
'...to sociological...?'
'...to economic...?'
'are there other fields we should study?
'are we sufficiently alert to a wide-enough range of view-points?''
'can such flexible adaptability be contained by a single profession?'
'what does this mean for relationship between guidance and curriculum?'

about connectedness (pp. 21-23)

'do we need to attract a more diverse range of talent into careers work?'
'what range of abilities does careers work need that to be?'
'how do we find and attract those people?'

'what are the interests of commerce and policy in careers work?'
'who else has a stake, and what are those interests?'
'is it possible to say that some of these interests are central and some peripheral?'
'do we need to adjust the balance?'

'how is programme management best located in its organisation?'
'is there an ideal type of careers work manager?'
'must this always be a trained careers work professional?'
'how many different sort of people are we talking about?'

about independence (pp. 24-26)

'are there some aspects of careers work we should preserve?'
'...change?'
'...why?'

'which careers-work ideas are big enough to carry this kind of ethical freight?'
'...and address matters in terms which partners can recognise as appropriate?'
'...and stakeholders?'

'how far are we here to help people look after themselves and their dependents?'
'...do well what they do best?'
'...get involved in something worthwhile?'
'...raise their aspirations?'
'...awaken driving ambition?'
'...max out there achievements?'

'what range of partner and stakeholder interests should we try to reach?'
'what breadth of understanding should we seek to grasp?'
'will that generate enough momentum for useful action on professionalism?'
'what ethical commitments will such structures and dynamics need?'

'is civil society an appropriate concept for institutionalising careers work professionalism?'
'with what kind of independence?'
'and what range of links?'

about the future (p. 27)

> *winning credibility - and usefully expanding expertise*
> *linking working life to well-being - personal-to-planetary*
> *starting from where people are socially positioned*
> *enabling the narration of experience - set alongside our analyses*
> *seeing career as a journey - life-wide and life-long*
> *re-positioning curriculum in relation to guidance*
> *attracting authoritative, committed and authentic partners and stakeholders*
> *developing a multi-tasked programme management*
> *programming flexibly - adapting to local-and-immediate conditions*
> *integrating curriculum, guidance and community resources*
> *maintaining independence of arbitrary influence*
> *enabling enlargement in the possibilities for people's lives*
> *leading to a realisation of meaning and purpose*