which way is forward?

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

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The **Career-learning NETWORK**

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People make up their minds about working life in part on the basis of what they have seen-and-done. But they also learn from what we, as careers workers, know-and-enable. Their experience and our expertise are two different kinds of bases for action.

Bill argues for more attention to experience. It is not that experience has greater authority; it is that there are some questions that experience can more-usefully answer, that those questions are becoming increasingly pressing, and that people's changing attitudes to learning are changing how we should balance expertise and experience.

Using labour-market information as an example, he examines this aspect of our professionalism. That thinking resonates with two important policy-related papers: *Youth Matters* on community links, and the 'Tomlinson' report on the 14-19 curriculum.

This monograph will help you to:

> review changing attitudes to learning;
> probe new ideas for action;
> examine their implications for careers work and related programmes;
> programme needed expertise & experience;
> map your resources for this work;
> locate your key contacts in the resulting network of help.

The implications are radical. And Bill entertains some doubts about conventional wisdom concerning careers education and guidance. But nothing here diminishes the value of professional expertise - and its analyses. Bill does, however, urge the value of other-than-professional helpers - and their narratives.

We have, of course, always drawn on experience. And there are more possibilities for doing that in advice and guidance than we have yet worked out. But the most radical implications for drawing on learners experience are for what we do in curriculum.

There are links between these ideas and others set out at www.hihohiho.com/...

DOTS	analysis of careers work coverage	.../memory/cafdots.pdf
CPI	extended to processes & influences	.../movingon/CPITxt&Map/cafcpiprjcttxt.html
experience	calling on both expertise & experience	.../underpinning/caffutures.pdf
narrative	experience can only be told as stories	.../underpinning/cafbiog.pdf

All are designed to be useful in what we do in response to the green paper *Youth Matters*.

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changing attitudes to learning

'The times they were a-changin'!'; as it turned out, more than any of us could have then known. Economic change on a global scale - and the technology which made it possible – have dominated the last several decades. It is not what Bob Dillon had in mind.

how culture counts: Changing economics and its technology are well documented in our field. Less well documented are how people seek to deal with change (Galbraith, 1992) and what that means for communities (Davies, 1998). Even more neglected are cultural changes - about the way people arrive at their beliefs and values, and the way they see themselves in the communities they inhabit (Eagleton, 2003). There is no need to follow Terry Eagleton into every literary and philosophical by-way he signposts. But his wide-ranging map of 'post-modern' attitudes – especially those associated with gender, ethnicity and social-class - is important to our work.

We might, in careers work, try to argue that such socio-emotional dynamics are none of our business; but they are. Some people argue that it is the economy that should be commanding our attention – it is on the basis of economic benefit that influential support will be found. That may, until recently, have been the case. But the more we understand the extent and depth of contemporary change the more we understand that its dynamic alters everything – politics, technology, economy, society and culture. If we want to help with any, we must be involved in all.

Not that careers education-and-guidance has neglected the need for new thinking. A call for 'transformation' is linked to the need better to embed our work in the culture it serves (Bezanson, 2004). And there is a recognition of change at the extreme level of 'paradigm shift' (Jarvis, 2003, there's more about shifting paradigms at the end of this monograph).

panel one

dynamics of doubt

One version of the cultural-change story gets its start from some time back – in the eighteenth-century 'Enlightenment'. This was before Bob Dylan was born, and before John Lennon got round to his imagining. But both writers have their roots in an enlightenment challenge to arbitrary authority. At that earlier time, the challenged authorities were crown and mitre. That loss of deference was no bad thing and was never going to stop there. All élites eventually become suspect (O'Neil, 2002) - people look for alternative guides. First it was monarchs and priests who were distrusted, but - sooner or later - there were bound to be some doubts about careers-work professionals.

Recent economic changes have pushed this trend on. A key feature is change is in how the labour economy is stratified (Goldthorpe, 2005). Upward structural social mobility has shifted the balance of social-and-political, as well as economic, influence. Some of your learners, whose parents and grandparents would have been taken for granted by the élites, now sense they have a voice - on what is worth buying, who is worth listening to, and what is worth doing. Conventions and norms which constrained their forebears are gone – good thing too. But you see what this means: what people do about working life is part of a more general demand for independence - reaching into family life, shopping malls, media and politics.

These ideological and demographic trends are changing the relationship between careers work and it learners.

learning from experience and through narrative: Cultural change is important to us because it changes the ways in which people learn for their lives: Three features:

> a massive expansion in the ways people can access information - including information about working life;
> new ways of making up their minds about what people will do about what they find – often deliberately independent of what any kind of establishment or élite suggests;
> a sharpening of other-than-professional influences on how such things should be worked out – often rooted among friends, with family and in social-and-ethnic allegiances.

This is more than the so-called English distrust of intellectuals and their abstractions – it is very much a feature of now. Chat-rooms, iPods, game-boxes, soaps, BB and video-phones speak of people's ideas about 'who we are', and 'who can be allowed to have a say in our lives'. It varies neighbourhood-to-neighbourhood, but hang-loose informality, street-level credibility and demand for respect are prevalent. This is a world in which the informal use of the net (Vernon, 2005), the experience of friendship (Pahl, 2000), and social gossip (Dunbar, 2004) are dynamic features. It is a world in which claims to exclusively-authoritative professionalism serve nobody well.

There is one special feature of cultural change. It is that people gather much of what they believe and value in narrative, rather than in analytic, terms. Since we are talking about the valuing of experience, it is worth noting that experience can only be set down as narrative, Actually, 'twas ever so. But, these days, the recounted experience of media-celebrities and characters-in-soaps are dominant week-on-week unfolding narratives. And they are valued in-part for the way in which they become part of the up-close-and-personal life of friends, family and neighbourhood.

But using narrative is different from the conventional ways in which careers-education-and-guidance analyses how people learn for their lives. (You'll find a detailed analysis of how this is so, and why it is important, in Law, 2006).

Any evidence on experience? Well, we know that conventional attempts to inform bases for choice are not always successful. For example, the effectiveness of our work on attitudes to industry is, at best, variable (Cullingford, 2004). We need to know more about how uses of narrative and analysis influence such variability. But we do have reason to believe that the main influences on learners' career-thinking are people they know well (Glynn and Nair (undated). And Sara Bosley is now uncovering more direct evidence concerning these dynamics. She finds that learners place more trust in people they can meet. Sara finds two aspects of the valuing of experience: learners value 'insider knowledge' based on the other person's direct involvement in work; they also value talk in terms which 'resonate' with their own experience of life (Bosley, 2004; and in-preparation).

so what can we do? Surely work-experience already offers the chance of direct-and-personal experience of working life? Maybe. But maybe also we need to think about how much experience-of-work work-experience actually offers. Practising skills is useful. But how much do people learn of the dilemmas, problems and resolutions of working life - in the day-on-day, year-on-year stories of the people they meet? And how much of that has to do not just with intrinsics of work but with the across-the-board consequences - at the shops? with the family? in a life-style? We can do better: well-managed experiences-of-work can help with some of this, well-managed mentoring can offer more.

Policy is becoming more aware of the impact of culture on learning: the policy papers *Youth Matters* and *The End to End Review* both make cultural change part of their starting point in arguments for the reform of our work (DfES, 2005a and 2005b). But we need our own understanding of the changes they signpost.

careers work – ideas for action

careers work and change: Careers work adapts both to economic and social change. Indeed it got its start - in both the US and Britain - as a response to early-twentieth-century developments in labour markets and the formation of new communities (Shertzer and Stone, 1966; Peck, 2004). This is important: it is too limiting to try to see careers work as a more-or-less steady and definable provision; more useful to see it as an evolving organism. We expand the repertoire of responses we make to meet the changing conditions we face.

Because this is so, the phrase 'careers education and guidance' is becoming misleading. Much of the experience-based provision set out here is neither 'careers education' nor 'guidance', it is something more. And, in developing useful ideas for action, making them fit ready-made slots fails to extend our thinking. In a changing world, familiarity is not a test of usefulness.

There is another test: do the ideas help enable learning for action? The fact is that, if young men and women do not use this learning in their lives, then – however familiar it may be to us – what we do is not working.

the adviser with three brains: So what ideas for action now emerge? In order to recognise them, it helps to step back for a moment. When an adviser is helping there are at least three conversations going on:

> what **happens** in the learners' life and in the world she or he inhabits;
> what the learner actually **experiences** of all of that;
> how careers-work can **help**.

Not all of that is talk between the adviser and the learner: some of it is part of the advisers' inner life – what *is* going on? what *is* the learner's experience of it? how *can* I help? The adviser needs three brains; it's what makes her work professional. Her analysis is set out more fully in table one. And experience centrally features.

table one:
careers-work questions

1. information on career-development *'what's going on in working life?'*	**2. experience of career-management** *'what is people's experience of that?'*	**3. learning through careers-work** *'how can anybody help?'*
facts, factors, trends & probabilities influencing career - both 'inside' and 'outside' the person	what a person sees & does - in resolving dilemmas, solving problems and dealing with conflicts	useful learning - through IAG, careers education, experience-of-work, mainstream curriculum, & more

The questions are linked: we cannot know what to do in column 3, if we do not know what is going on in column 1; nor can we help, if we don't know what people do in column 2. But here is an important point: there is no simple '1-2-3' transfer-of-learning to be made. Though linked, the adviser is engaged in three distinct areas of understanding, each with its own chains of cause-and-effect. So understanding what happens among the facts, factors and trends is not the same as knowing what people do about them; neither is it the same as seeing how we can help. That the three areas are independent is demonstrated by noticing the separations: (i) careers sometimes develop without being managed; and (ii) people sometimes manage without getting help.

learning from information and experience

Two of the most useful ideas in careers work have been 'self awareness' and 'opportunity awareness'.

Self awareness poses a 'who-am-I?' question. And careers-education-and-guidance expertise has organised answers around such categories as skills and abilities, interests and values, personality and intentions. It provides some of the structures useful to analysing answers to the column-1 question 'what is going on?'.

Opportunity awareness raises a 'where-am-I?' question. People need to know about the labour economy: its demands and rewards, the opportunities it offers, what those opportunities require, how things are changing and what that does to recruitment and selection processes. Again, in this form it is a column-1 question.

There is mirroring elegance here: what we say about opportunity-awareness is reflected in what we ask about self-awareness. It means that people can see themselves reflected in possible work: their skills in its demands, their values in its rewards, their intentions in its opportunities, and so on. This is a matching model.

from information to help: The matching model also shows up in column 3. It indicates that we help by enabling people to see how they link information about self to information about the work. That thinking shapes much of the conventional apparatus of both advice-and-guidance and classroom work – schedules, worksheets, data bases, checklists, psychometrics and software. It also largely shapes how we link learners to work experience. And much of progress-file work is framed by expert analyses of opportunity and self awareness. An expert search is for a 'fit' between person and plan.

This is why careers-education-and-guidance sets such store by good information. It is a starting point: 'information' first, then 'advice and guidance' (IAG). In our ideal world information will be readily-accessible, clearly-expressed, stereotype-free, and impartial. And coming up with analyses which assemble information into a basis for help has become a marker of professional expertise – moving from column-1 to column-3.

There is nothing inherently wrong with any of this. It works well enough for a lot of people. But it works best for people who are practiced in scanning a range of information, used to working with analyses, and unfazed when asked to articulate their plans. In many ways these have been the people whom it has been most satisfying to work with, and with whom we have had most success. They think like us. But not everybody thinks like them.

There are indications of a growing mismatch between our offer and widespread preferences. A recent survey of user views (MORI, 2005) shows that it has been people with higher social status and more education who are more likely to find, use and value our services. MORI can show these correlates, though it cannot estimate the prevalence of any mismatch. But. taking account of the demographic trends mentioned earlier, the MORI findings could mean an increasingly prevalent preference for experience-based of help.

Is it possible that we are least used by those who most need our help?

from experience to help: For a good many, experience is the more convincing teacher. Of course we already understand that: how can we enable learning for experience without engaging experience in learning? We might need, though, better to build that underlying understanding into how we now re-shape our work. We could wonder what more we can do to switch on the experience-drivers of learning.

To do that will take us back to the observation that accounts of experience are forms of narrative. They are, in particular, biographical narrative:

1. **auto-biography:** Much of what people do is rooted in their own experience – some of it from early childhood. All of those experiences - dealing with people. going places, trying things – leads to learning.
2. **encountered biography:** People learn from other people's recounted experience. In careers work it often means that people act, not so much on the basis of what they know (which is information) but who they know (which is experience).
3. **transmitted biography:** Experience is set down in texting, e-mails, blogs and comic-books - as well as what some people regard as 'proper' books. Experience are also expressed in drama, music, lyric and dance. It is hard to know how independently influential these transmissions of experience are. But they can crystalise what life appears to teach.

There are problems to face here. Any form of biography may be poorly-remembered, inauthentic, self-serving - even deliberately-misleading. So harm might be done. In career management the definitive version of such harm is the formation of stereotypes. Class-, gender- or race-stereotypes are experience-based – often stemming from childhood. And they shape thinking long after the experience has been all-but forgotten. Partially-remembered experience may be an even-more convincing teacher – it's beyond critical reach. But what of transmitted biography? A sub-genre is celebrity self-promotion, and it attracts disdain: we are urged to resist the blandishments of the merely famous (James, 2005). (A much more serious critique of celebrity culture is in associations made between it and incidents of self-harm.)

But all the alarms will prove futile unless we first understand why stories are so compelling. A narrative draws people in where it reminds them of their own lives, and – celeb-biogs do that by holding out hope.

panel two
what narrative can do

But there is more to narrative than that. At a deeper level - and this applies to all narrative, including biography, soaps and gossip - we look for how one thing leads to another. And, in that sequence, we recognise each 'self' by seeing he and she in a social context. Stories portray people in roles – as friends, lovers, partners, consumers, neighbours, citizens, workers. So there is always something to do, in its location and with its people.

Stories also show where there is conflict about that. And that dramatic tension invites members of its audience to imagine how such things might be for them.

This is a useful way for telling of working life. Expert analysis lists facts and factors; but facts and factors come alive when we see them flow together in lives. And so other people's stories – especially authentic and credible ones - can give us each a clue to our own. And where the account is disclosing it is learning from experience.

The use of narrative is deep in our species: we learn from experience by constructing explanatory narratives. It is how we deal with our environment, and it is how we retain contact without our group. And, however much Clive James might disdain them, this is why celebrity stories are so compelling – for good or for ill.

find more on the uses of narrative in Law, 2006
find more on dealing with the environment and remaining in the group in Rorty, 1999

Accounts of experience are compelling teachers. This is reason-enough for educators to acknowledge narrative power. It is also a reason for them to help learners to ask sharp questions of accounts of experience - not just of past but of possible experience, not just of other people's but of their own. (And, if only celeb-biogs attract interest, then we must enable awkward questioning of them.) If stereotypes are experience-based then we must find ways of helping learners to reshape accounts of experience.

Recent thinking (Hodkinson, and others, 1996) has found a useful gateway to that task – in the term 'cultural capital'. Cultural capital is found in the habits-of-mind which stem from experiences of background and upbringing. It can help people to move forward, and it can hold them back. But, so far, this line of enquiry has not done enough usefully to trace these chains of cause-and-effect. We need more on how experience – especially meeting people, taking in their stories, and finding them represented in the media - becomes part of how we come to see self-in-society. (Some suggestions are made in CLN, 2005d.) Practical progress is going to need a more detailed tracing of how these things work.

A useful metaphor for how people build up that generalised feeling of what happens is of a moving-picture (Damasio, 1999). That 'movie in the brain' shows how things are, and suggests what can be done about them. There are real teaching-and-learning possibilities here: we are each in the title-role of our own auto-biographical film. But, like all good movies, we need occasionally to revisit it – ready to be surprised about what it might mean. Educators can work with that.

We are, here, getting close to being able to work out what all of this means for practice. That is where we now turn. What follows concentrates on opportunity awareness, and in particular on the labour economy. It sets out two examples; the first based on labour-market *information* (LMI), and the second including labour-market *experience* (LME). The second will be become the basis for programme design.

working with LMI: Table two is a detailed version of columns 1 and 3 in table one. It is applied to LMI.

table two:
learning from LMI

1. information	2. experience	3. learning
changing demands & incentives		
structures & outsourcing		being flexible
global off-shoring & new technologies		making choices
industrial- & organisation-bases	*watch this space*	being enterprising
sectors, organisations & skill-sets		achieving employability
competitiveness & trends		fulfilling functions
selection criteria, gender-distributions & stratification		being self-reliant

The National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling (NICEC) dedicates a recent edition of its journal to reviewing sources for LMI (Brown, 2005; White, 2005; Williams, 2005). There are some doubts about the extent of change in all labour-market sectors; but there is no denial that change is occurring. In another NICEC publication, Hirsh and others (1998) document the extent to which job titles and associated skill-sets are changing.

But there is another factor included in column 1: stratification. It is also a feature of labour markets: social background influences entry to the labour economy; recruitment reflects social layering; the pecking order is not entirely meritocratic; stereotyping features. This is certainly LMI, and a factor in career development - although not much mentioned in the NICEC journal. It is also a trend: social stratification in the UK is actually intensifying – origin increasingly predicts destination (Giddens and Diamond, 2005).

Table two, column-1 signposts these various features of LMI; and column-3 speaks of what that might mean for the learning we should enable. You'll have no difficulty in tracing the links: 'change' suggests learning for 'flexibility', 'competitiveness' suggests 'enterprise', and so on. Column 3 mirrors column 1.

Or at least a part of it. For there is an issue concerning stratification: how far can column-3 help enable a person to move on from a start low in the career pecking order? For some, it might; but for many we would need to think about how social stratification works out in direct-and-personal experience – over years of upbringing, in which self- and work-stereotyping feature.

Careers education and guidance has been heavily influenced by thinking based in economics, with a consequence that the focus has been on a theoretical individual, making informed choices, in a market. This is a seriously limited portrayal of career development. We need to draw on other sources, offering a fuller account of experience

working with LME: Table two leaves out experience. But people do not just enter the labour market, they take part in it – thinking about its possibilities, seeking its fulfilments, engaging with its people.

Not much direct-and-personal experience comes through the literature of LMI. But there is a growing literature of LME. It shows how early family-and-neighbourhood life shape both self and work stereotyping (Dolby and others, 2004; following Willis 1977). It reports experiences of recruitment which can be careful but may be arbitrary (Warhurst & Nickson, 2001). It points to real-life consequences of how recruitment favours certain groups (Wilkinson, 2005). It shows how engaging with the labour market poses day-on-day quality-of-life issues (Toynbee, 2004). It tells of both fulfillment and stress in work (Bunting, 2004). It recounts how work can reward but can also exploit (Lindsey and McQuaid, 2004). It tells of how a work role can re-shape a person's attitudes, to others and to self (Sennett, 1998). It speaks of workers as commodities, led to believe that their predicament is their own failure to match demand (Ehrenreich, 2005). It describes how a changing labour economy brings economic prosperity to some, but social decay to others (Davies, 1998). It shows how structures and trends sometimes support meaningful lives, and sometimes do not (Giddens and Diamond, 2005). And it shows how economic activity is not all that work means in people's experience, and that getting a job is not all that they can do about it (Terkel, 2005).

These are all either academic writing or social commentary. And they are all well documented. (For suggestions on how such writing becomes useful to research see Law, 2006.) But they all use a story form – even if it is called 'ethnography'. And the story form is discursive, layered, dynamic - hard to verify, pretty-well impossible to replicate. Purists claim that personal accounts are not the same as scientific explanation (Edwards, 2005). No time here to chase all those hares. But it is true that the work of sociologist like Richard Sennett, and journalist like Nick Davies don't use regression analysis, or – for that matter – claim to be impartial. But their questioning and reporting vividly evokes images of how one thing leads to another. And that, at root, is why we bother with

science. For practical purposes, the point of verifiable impartiality is that it enables people to act with their eyes open to what can happen as a result.

Do we best serve help people to act with eyes open by leaving experience out, or by bringing it in?

What happens when accounts of experience get in on the careers-work act? Column-2 in table three signposts some of the journeys that experience makes through labour markets. It uses a different sort of language from LMI, and conjures a different sort of imagery.

table three:
learning from LMI and LME

1. information	2. experience	3. learning
changing demands & incentives	selection & rejection	being flexible & coping with stress
structures & outsourcing	fulfilment & quality-of-life	making choices & finding meaning
global off-shoring & new technologies	over-, under-employment & other work roles	holding on & moving on
industrial- & organisation-bases	using skills & dealing with issues	being enterprising & realising values
sectors, organisations & skill-sets	earning, spending & owing	achieving employability & work-life balance
competitiveness & trends	promotion & casualisation	fulfilling functions & realising identity
selection criteria, gender-distributions & stratification	pecking orders & social stereotyping	being self-reliant & examining alternatives
	consequences for self, others & communities	

Column 2 complicates table three. In working out how to help, taking more into account gives us more ways of noticing what might be going wrong. And more ways of putting it right. Simplicity attracts, but complexity better serves our purposes. Indeed, it is our appreciation of the breadth, layers and points-of-view in any situation which makes sustainable autonomy possible (Law, 2005, following Dennett, 2003).

And so it proves: the addition of the perspectives in column-2 suggest more to do in column 3. That is useful both to us and to our learners: they need to learn how to deal with the working world; we need to know how best to help them. Bringing in experience serves both our professional autonomy and their autonomy as managers of career.

In particular we can see how people may be not-so-ready to see self as an employable reflection of a work-opportunity. In all of these accounts people rely on more ways of engaging with the world – as workers but also as partners, parents, householders,

consumers, friends, neighbours and citizens. They find a sense of identity and value in all of these roles.

There is a lot of variation here: for some, the alternatives to employment may mean self-sacrifice; for others, crime; for a few both. But, for most, work roles are less-demonstratively endured. The prevalence of the term 'work-life balance' tells of how people look for meaning elsewhere. All of this means that a narrow focus on matching to employment might not feel much like help.

A model for career learning is developing here. It is an 'information-experience-learning model'. And being a model, it can be applied to more than one area for learning. We might just-as-well have used it to wonder how we can better enable self-awareness. If we had done that we might have got our column-1 concepts from psychology rather than economics. But, even so, we would not yet necessarily have been talking about experience.

There are still-wider applications of the model. Indeed, it requires them. Information tidily separates into categories; but, in experience, everything is an interruption of everything else. Life is linked. And the model calls for yet-wider links in curriculum: there is no subject on any curriculum which is incapable of helping people with career-learning. But life does not recognisably sort into a wholly subject-boxed timetable.

What experience joins together no curriculum must put asunder – not, anyway, invariably. Bringing in experience requires wider links within subjects and between them.

It all leaves us with another question:

Is it possible that by relying exclusively on impartial careers information we would actually be hindering useful career-learning?

where experience takes learning

There is no argument here about whether impartial information is necessary, we are asking whether it is sufficient.

why theory? We need to turn to theory. In some ways theory and policy are competing influences on practice. Both can set out to answer the question

what makes us think that what we are doing is such a good idea?

panel three

why both policy and theory are important

Policy and theory answer the same question – 'is this a good idea?'. But they do it from different vantage points.

Policy has an eye for what seems socially desirable. For some time policy broadly favoured rational-choice thinking (for example, in much of the DfES *Better Choices* series). Within that framework efficient matching was seen as good for social equity, employability, economic benefits, work-relevant use of learning, social stability, and so on. Policy looks for these macro effects.

Theory answers the question in terms of how things work. Theory would support matching not so much in terms of whether matching was desirable but in terms of whether it made any significant difference to what people actually do. Theory must, then, look for personal and interpersonal effects. It pays attention to:

> what is going on in people's lives? – **description**;
> how does it get that way? – **explanation**;
> what if some factor is changed? – **anticipation**.

The contrast. In theory matching might be defended – not so much in macro terms - but because it works, because we know why it works, and because we know how to make it work more effectively. But theory does not say in what ways the anticipated outcome is desirable.

A lot of research-money has been spent on showing that what we do – including matching - is a good idea. Policy needs evidence of impact in society-at-large – for example by improving the economy. But practice needs to speak convincingly of results in people's lives. And that needs evidence of personal and interpersonal causes-and-effects. And, from this vantage point it can show not just whether matching works, but what aspects work most effectively and why - and whether there is any aspect that doesn't work or that actually hinders. We need to know how matching works in some circumstance, with some people, at some stages of development.

The partnership. If programme managers don't know how any proposed action works in these terms they won't know whether and how to use it. In any complex situation it is unreasonable to expect anything always to work perfectly for everybody: the thinking always needs some modification, and the action always needs some adaptation.

These kinds of local complexities are not for policy. But they fascinate good programme managers. Good policy provides a useful backdrop; but we need good theory to suggest a basis for specific action.

find an explanation of the usefulness of theory-based modelling in CLN 2005e

In an important sense there is no escape from theory. We all assemble what we know into an account of what's going on, why, and what to do about it. It need not be based on formal research; indeed, it is usually based on experience. And it need be none-the-worse for that. Whether published in an academic paper or not, any view of how things works is a theory. This is a *homo sapiens* thing - our fingerhold on survival. Ideas about how things work guide our action; and changing that thinking changes the action.

more leads for careers work help: The thinking in table four accounts for the complexity in table three and suggests big changes for matching thinking. There is more to pay attention to:

> **coverage:** people finding out what they need to know;
> **processes:** moving their thinking on, to a basis for action;
> **influences:** managing the socio-emotional pressures.

The information required for matching is included, in coverage. But the overall coverage-processes-influences (CPI) framework offers more leads for action. (For an overview see CLN, 2005a.)

CPI re-focuses careers-work programmes on experience, and it does so in a number of ways. Table four shows six. Each has - in the third column - pointers to how careers work must look to experience. At the heart of CPI is influences – feelings, attachments , culture and purposes. This is 'inner life and other people'. It is hard to see how such a socio-emotional life can be appreciated except in terms of recounted experience - narrative.

table four
what can experience teach?

CPI-1 **COVERAGE**	**about information**	in people's lives – on a task, at a location, in relationships **looking at life roles**
CPI-3 **INFLUENCES inner life and other people**	**about feelings**	impulses, hopes & fears, sentiments **looking at affective life**
	about attachments	to admire, to be known & supported **looking at influential contacts**
	about culture	shared beliefs, values, insiders-&-outsiders **looking at group allegiances**
	about purposes	for survival, fulfillment, commitment **looking at meaning**
CPI-2 **PROCESSES**	**about learning**	finding-out, sorting-out, pulling-out, working-out **looking at how learning progresses**

There is more about how CPI does this in panel four (following page). It explains why other-than-expert help – such as mentoring, youth- and social-work and experience-of-work - are crucial. These are people and settings where accounts of work are more likely to be recounted, understood and shared. An extension beyond matching? Probably Experience as well as expertise? Certainly. The authority of experience is in authentic and credible accounts of what happens - in role, under pressure, and living-and-learning. Mentors can offer this.

finding the authority in experience: Expertise and experience are not 'superior' and 'inferior' forms of authority: the one cannot displace the other. But they are different. And we need to work out how the authority of each is best engaged. We also need to ensure that neither is exceeded. Earlier studies have characterised other-than-professional help as occupying a 'third space': not professional, yet not just another acquaintance. One particularly valuable study (with useful ideas for mentoring today)

argues that the authority of that third position rest on authentic disclosure of credible authority. It distinguishes this from a mentor posturing bogus authority (Bazalgette, 1971). Put that another way; it is important that mentoring is not seen as another kind of expert help. It is help based on experience.

There is a basis here for useful partnership between advisers, career educators. other teachers, mentors, youth and social workers, families - and parents who will take an interest in the education of other people's children.

features of experience-based learning: Panel four says more about the usefulness of disclosures of experience in careers work.

panel four

experience-based learning

on coverage

role: Learners need to expand their appreciation of what people actually do - in work and other life roles. It is life roles which link people to society, because a role is a person in a social position. By getting more accounts of experience in roles learners expand their appreciation of the day-on-day realities of working life. This means making contact - not only with experience as 'learner', 'applicant' and 'worker - but also as 'family-member', 'consumer' and other life roles. It is important that all is seen in rounded accounts of experience. It offers other-than-matching ways of linking 'self' to 'opportunities' - people can be seen to manage working life in other ways. Learners will also find a wider range of dilemmas, problems and points-of-view to take into account. Accounts of experience in life roles is important also because it is in terms of roles that learners find the most easy-to-recognise ways of appreciating the usefulness of learning in their lives. The wider the range of experience encountered, the more frequently those connections will be made.

find a detailed account of coverage for life-role-related learning in CLN 2005b

on influences

feelings: Learners need to know what to about experience infused with affect. Emotions usually suggest action: do something, and do it now – 'act or be still', 'approach or avoid', 'fight or flee', 'help or hide'. They are compelling but transient. They have an instinctive base - our ancestors survived by such impulses, and we have inherited them. But where they recur, these primary emotions develop over time into more subtly-hued and on-going feelings - about how things are in general. Such sentiments can be expressed as 'needs and wants', 'preferences and interests', 'values and commitments'. That is the analysis. The experience is learners sensing – short- or long-term - whether the payoff is worth the investment. That inner response defines what we call motivation – for learning and for work.

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attachments: Learners need to be clear about how other people are influencing what they do – especially where that influence is subtle or unintentional or both; and, most especially, where it limits rather than extends their horizons. Knowing what to do about learning and work is often shaped by the experience of what other people say and do – for example a parent, friend, neighbour, child or lover. Friends – in the neighbourhood and on the net - are increasingly significant. We often speak of parental help and peer pressure; we might also usefully think about the possibility of parental pressure and peer help. In both cases key interactions are attraction to role models, receiving useful feedback and finding welcome support. There is an underlying social fact here about how people make up their minds: it is often not-so-much based on *what* they pay attention to but *who*.

culture: Learning how to deal with group influences is even more demanding. Group beliefs and values take on a dynamic of their own – whether in family, peer-group, ethnicity or social grouping. And it is in such a culture that we experience much of our bases for action. Some of the most difficult things about moving on have to do with letting go of some part of those beliefs and values. When helpers speak of peer-group pressure they may be talking about allegiances of this kind: what people do about learning and work often has to do with a group commitments. Such allegiances can be very strong – greater than any felt to a school or an employer. They can even be more influential than personal self-interest – self sacrificial behaviour is not uncommonly about group allegiance. The group expresses its belief and values through stories, humour, music and games. Things like these can have the force of a brand image or a religious commitment – they are a way of expressing a world-view, even a sense of identity. Such dynamics can both help a career on, and divert it into a blind alley.

purpose: The bottom-line for behaviour is believing whether that investment of energy will prove worthwhile. Learning for life can, in a wide range of senses, be worthwhile if it helps with some combination of survival, and fulfilment, and realisation of some especially valued good. This is the most basic learning-need in career management, and it has to do with motivation - as much as with information and skills. The search for this kind of meaning is deep in all of us – 'what is the point?'. Where learning and the labour economy fail to help people realise a worthwhile purpose then they look elsewhere. We are all having to face how a widening range of criminality features in some people's search for acceptable meaning in their lives. It is in a sense of worthwhile purpose that aspiration is born; but aspiration is not a free-standing quality - it draws on what feelings, attachments and culture suggest.

All of these influences on career management are experience-based. And the influential experiences are - more than anything - located in the informality of day-on-day life. What comes out of all of this can both widen horizons and narrow them. And what has already been learned from familiar experience must sometimes be re-learned from new experience. Horizons are widened where experience is widened. That means learners meeting up with the-likes-of-whom-they've-never-met-before. Unfamiliar feelings, new encounters, different cultures can awaken unanticipated aspirations.

find a detailed account of the influences of inner life and other people in CLN 2005d

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in processes

progress: Learning for career management is at least as complex, subtle and dynamic as any learning. It means that learners must know how to move through learning processes. That means progression from basic learning to developed learning. And, in careers work, learning is only fully developed when it becomes useful in life. People need to work through this process in a reliable way – one that can lead to a sustainable action. From the point-of-view of the helper all of this means that we must pay attention not only to what people learn but also to how they learn it. That means drawing learners' attention to how they are getting hold of what they need to know and what they are doing with it – the headwork. Processes are experience – sometimes with an expert helper but more commonly in other settings and with other people. The processes range from getting enough to go on, all the way to knowing how cause leads to effect. Learning process is also important because, in a changing world, anything that people learn today might change before tomorrow comes. That is why learning how to continue learning must be part of helping programmes. All of this means alerting learners to what they do in learning the processes. While information and other coverage is expressed in nouns (like 'opportunity', 'role' and 'self'), process is expressed in verbs (like 'enquiring', 'sorting out', 'probing' and 'explaining' and 'anticipating'). It is through the alert use of learning verbs that people learn how-to-learn. This is where the life-long usefulness of careers work is most to be found.

find a detailed account of the step-by-step processes of learning in CLN 2005e

There is another feature worth mentioning. Experienced-based learning is in, a deep sense, personalised learning. It is true that using information to match a self to an opportunity is, in some sense, personal. But, in another, it is a process shared with other people: what happens in matching must be agreed between all parties in the resulting contract. But when it comes to experiences set out in panel four, no two people will enter into it in the same way – indeed other people may have great difficulty appreciating what you do in each of those experiences. That is what makes it so complex, layered and dynamic – and, for research purposes, impossible to replicate.

Thus far, much of what has been called personalised learning has been based on personal learning styles. That concept is itself problematic. In any event, it is not as much a basis for personalised appreciation as understanding learners in terms of their experience – particularly in terms of their socio-emotional experience.

All of this takes programme managers, teachers and advisers to where they can appreciate the dynamics of why people learn, and why they do not. Sometimes what a learner most needs is expert analysis. But, it is argued here, working on authentic and credible accounts of experience will always help; and sometimes it will be all that can help.

The resource implications are radical.

mapping your resources

Learning for life and learning for examination success are two categorically different kinds of purpose. And the distinction raises an issue about why a learner would pay attention to careers work.

purposes and methods: It is true that religious education personal-social-and-health education, careers education, and education-for-citizenship can be taught for examinations. But that is not how such programmes got any kind of hold in curriculum. We have each of these programmes because of a concern (not invariably benign) for the way people live their lives. The personal-and-social-development (PSD) curriculum is not most basically addressed to learner's roles as students and exam-candidates; it is addressed to other life roles. The term used here is 'life-role-related learning'; and all of PSD comes to life when it speaks of learners' present and future roles – son-or-daughter, brother-or-sister, friend, lover, partner, parent, householder, consumer, worker, volunteer, neighbour, citizen.

But, although it may not be for an examination, career learning is as complicated and demanding as any learning. It is not, then, surprising to find that its programme managers have developed as wide a repertoire of methods as any subject. Table five sets out that repertoire.

table five

life-role-related learning - the repertoire

community-linked visits-in / off-site / experience-based learning	engaging direct-and-personal contact with people, places and tasks
integrated one-off / programmed / long-slot	applying specific mainstream learning to life-role experience
PSHE and citizenship modular / continuous / life-wide	seeing each life role in relation to others
recording tests & lists / profiles & plans / autobiography	setting down experience, learning and purposes
specialist classroom short slots / active learning / experiential	forming, examining and adapting plans for action
face-to-face IAG / on-going / mentoring	engaging individualised, personal and specific help
information centre display & loan / multi-media / local & life-wide	gathering information, and impressions on opportunity, role and self

This framework in table five has dynamics as well as structures. The dynamics are more important, and more widely applicable.

structures and dynamics: The dynamics become visible when the framework is seen as having two dimensions. Provision usually gets started on the lower levels and moves upward. And, at each level, provision usually gets started on the left and move towards the right. 'Lower-left' methods are necessary, and badly need support: any movement upward and to right relies absolutely upon that kind of basic provision, But contemporary life increasingly demands more movement - on both dimensions. And that makes life harder.

The framework is, then, an explanation of why careers-education-and-guidance has tended to locate in the lower-left. This is where the importance of the dynamics becomes clear. The more programme managers move into upper levels in the framework, the more visible they are becoming, and the more they rely on the cooperation and support of other people. There can be competitive pressure. And the more programme managers seek to move to the right in the development of methods, then the more time-consuming and demanding the work becomes. This means more resources, not least in training and support: the right of the framework is more expensive. Taking on more pressure, and incurring a greater cost – that is a harder life.

So the institutional and cost pressures are downward-and-to-left. They can pressurise careers work out of existence. There is certainly a danger of getting stuck there. But arguments for the use of experience suggest an expansion of career-work activity. Realising greater complexity means seeing more things to do. And those things are upward and rightward in the structure.

As it happens policy and theory may be moving towards agreement on this. The 'Tomlinson' Report points to the need for more life-role-relevant use of curriculum and *Youth Matters* points to the need for improved community links. Both point to the need for greater integration – whether between elements in curriculum or between school and community – upper right.

But there are further contrary considerations. They have to do with the fact that lower-left basic careers-education-and-guidance carries our most familiar skills and expertise. If that work is seen to be under threat, then the professional impulse will be protective. But the very policies which provoke those fears argue against that protective urge – upward and onward. Resistance is not about institutional pressure and costs, it is about professional anxiety. The drive is to consolidate what has been achieved rather than risk integration with other work. (For an interactive examination of the rationales of integration and consolidation see CLN, 2004.)

In all of this we are looking at a case for careful programme-management. Panel five (following page) suggests where some of a manager's developments might go. All draw on more than one level, and all press to the right – based on the structure and dynamics in table five.

panel five

examples of experience-based learning

Life-role mentoring is a growing development in contemporary society, because – where it works well - it draws on direct-and-personal life-role experience. It offers 'inside information'. This is a different sort of authority from the expert help available from, say, classroom work or IAG. However many work-study visits an expert adviser makes, he or she will not gather the year-on-year experience of a well-positioned mentor. But neither will the experience of the mentor replace the analytical and interpretive abilities of an expert careers worker. These two kinds of authority need to be managed in relation to each other - each to understand the other and neither to exceed are abuse its authority. Useful life-role mentoring needs a range of community links capable of expanding learner perspectives. It also need those links to be integrated with curriculum, IAG and recording, so that to can useful to prepare for the encounter, develop an account of it, and critically reflect on what they find in it.

Experience of work is experience-based learning. All experience-based learning locates the learning among the people and in place where that learning is used. Experience of work therefore includes work shadowing, enquiry projects, media and performance projects and community-service projects - as well as work experience. Each kind of provision links learning to the settings, tasks and people involved in what the learning is for. Economic pressures on curriculum have caused us to concentrate on learning for the tasks - and their associated skills. But, looked at from a broader educational view-point, we now need to write into our programmes more opportunities for learners to engage with narratives in the culture of the settings, and in the lives of their people. Useful experiences of work needs a range of community links, particularly where they are capable of expanding cultural perspectives – for example where they can undermine stereotypes. And learners need those links integrated with curriculum, IAG and recording, in way which helps learning – by developing an account of it, and by critically reflecting on it.

Recording experience engages learners in setting down what they learn and what they mean to do about it. It means enabling them to say what they have learned, to go over it, and review it with others. 'Setting down' does not necessarily mean only words – story-boards are particularly useful to reviewing narrative. And neither does 'reviewing' mean just talk – mind-maps of who is involved and what is important are useful for setting experience in a social context. The purpose is to bring learners to a point where information and impressions can be clarified and reviewed, and where plans can be formulated and – if need be - re-formulated. Much of what a learner is conveying here is not just 'what I can do' it is about 'how I learned it'; not just 'what I seek' but 'what puts that into my head'; and not just 'what I plan' but 'why I now believe that is a good idea'. In other words it is as much about learning processes as learning coverage. Expert help will be needed – but some of our conventional tick-box techniques and quick-click software will need to be expanded. Learning is biographical and social: we need to move more deeply into recording to use that understanding, to make more links with community to inform it and to make more links with curriculum to process it. It needs to be more of a narrative technique.

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Experiential learning is the converse of experienced-based learning. The distinction is important: experience-based learning means being in direct-and-personal contact with real-life sources of learning; experiential learning means probing and disclosing one's own response. The former focuses on 'other people', the latter on 'inner life'. In other words, experiential learning is part of our 'resonance' with other people's 'inside-information'. All experience-based learning needs experiential processing. But the demands are different: experience-based learning may be recounted; but experiential learning must be disclosed. Creating learning spaces where disclosure is safe calls upon a special kind of sensitivity – which can be sharpened by training. It would, then, be foolish to assume that all mentors and work-experience contacts can offer experiential help; but it would also be foolish to assume that no teacher or youth worker can. It is reasonable, however, to assume that a trained professional in careers work will be able to help in this way. And so there is a need to ensure that the network affords both useful experience bases and appropriate experiential supports. Locations for experiential support might be in consulting room, classroom or youth service-site. Exposed and vulnerable learners will find some locations safer than others. It all requires that the programme manager knows her or his human resources – from-lower-to-upper of the resource map, and from-left-to-right.

find more examples of programme development in CLN, in-preparation a

One of the practical uses of the table-five framework is to map specific projects. Colour-coded shading would indicate what resources are 'in place', 'in development' and 'needed'. A collection of such reviews over time would give a programme manager and others a way of seeing how basic provision is being expanded. It would also identify the policy and resource implications of further development.

locating key contacts

We are examining ways in which programme managers ensure the design, development, support and monitoring of the work. They know about learners' starting points, and they can use that knowledge to work out what is needed in terms of human and material resources. They must, of course, go on to engage those resources, and maintain its diversity in coherent order. And they are also open to adapting provision to changing needs and opportunities. This is what a good head-of-department does. You might think it would be enough.

network management: Careers-work programme managers do more. In the first place, the framework (page 15) is not in a department or an institution, it is in an institution-and-neighbourhood-based network. In the second place much of the human resource upon which the manager calls is not specialist and professional, it is voluntary - fitted in alongside other work. Careers-work programmes are negotiating not only with staff but with other-than-staff, other-than-professional and other-than-expert help. Finding common ground between this range of interests and help is not programme management in any conventional 'HoD' sense.

Figure one (following page) maps the field in which all of this must happen. It raises questions about involvement:

> what **organisations**?
> what **links**?
> what **people**?

The following list of possibilities (and map symbols) offers a framework for that discussion. They are best understood in place on the map in figure one (following page).

the network	examples	symbols
central **organisations** - & peripheral?	local schools and Connexions might be (big) central to the network - a (small) voluntary association might not	
boundaries around - & within	locating (outer) participating organisations – and (inner) their departments	
radial **links** - - & orbital?	networks members can make independent (circle) links with each other - or (straight) links only through the centre	
up-close **contacts** - - & distant	where (short) links are close, familiar and well understood - and (long) where they're not	
two-way **communication** - & one	where (two-way) ideas for action flow back and forth - or where (one-way) they only flow forth	
people in organisations - & not?	some (in) links have organisational resources – some do not (out)	
present **learners** - & former	(inside) learners learn from each other -and (outside) from other experience	
professional **helpers** - & voluntary?	some (filled) helpers are trained to help – some (clear) help on other bases	

All of the symbols are used in the network map in figure one. It is a simple example of a map. But it suggests the possibility of a management tool. Thoughtfully put together, it then becomes a way of assessing the scope of the network and how it needs to be developed. It would offer a scenario in which a programme manager, working with others, could ask...

How do the elements in the network interact to get useful results?
What are we doing now? What could we usefully consider doing?
What would be the best next thing to do?

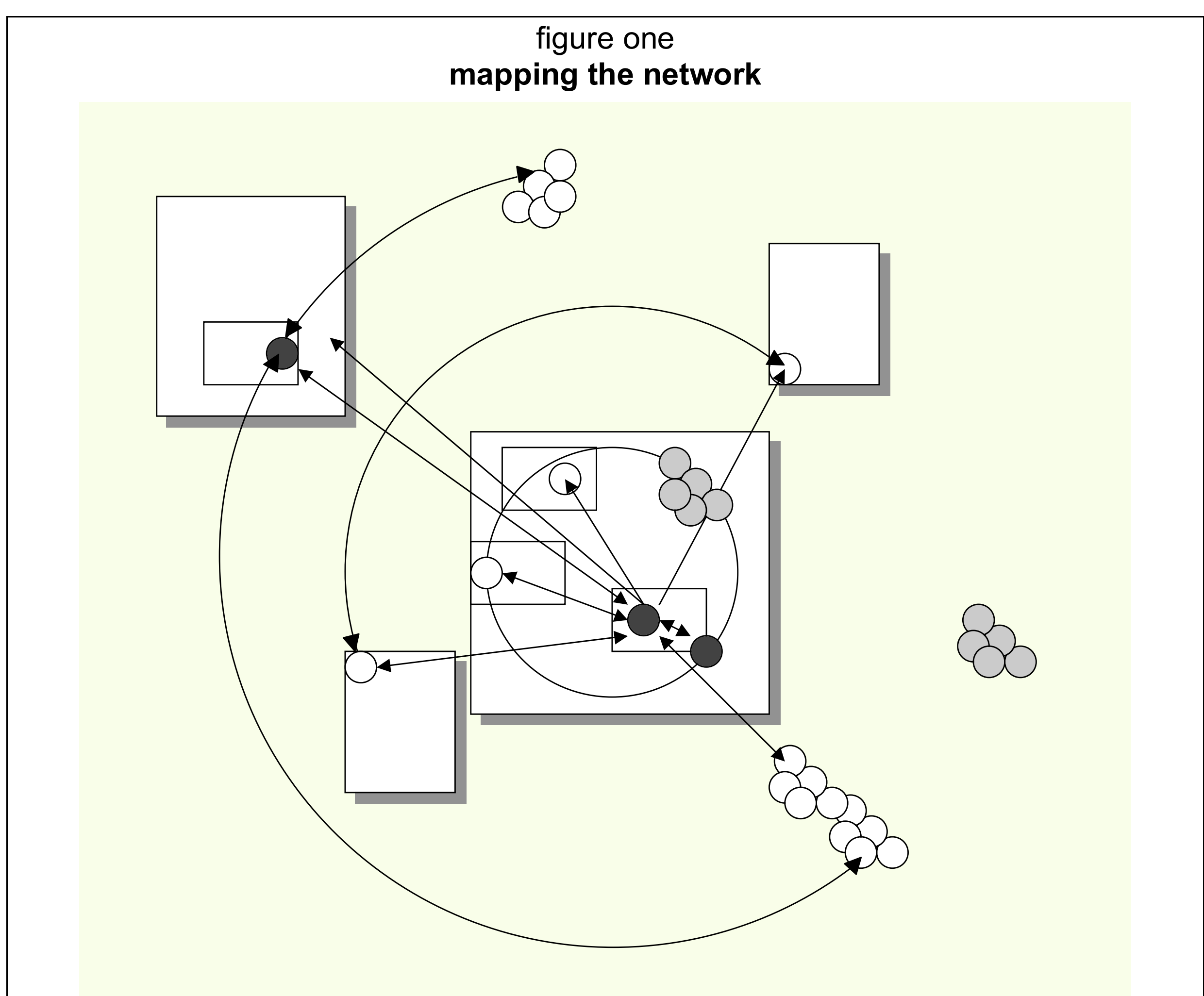

figure one
mapping the network

And so, like the framework in table five, the map in figure one suggests ways of reviewing and planning careers-work programmes. You can use both in working with the network team to ensure that 'left-hands' know what 'right-hands' are doing. An alert programme manager might see possibilities for using a version of such an analysis, with such a map, for explaining the work to senior managers and to learners and their families. Everybody needs to know how they belong to the whole.

Programme managers are neighbourhood-based. They are in schools and colleges, youth centres and local Connexions clusters. They can draw on their own experience - as careers coordinators, personal advisers, youth workers, information professionals, or heads-of-department. But any assumption that this is inevitably the work for orthodox careers coordinators, or even a qualified teacher or adviser, is already under challenge (Andrews, 2005).

what about our professionalism? But nothing suggested here undermines our professionalism. Just look, in panel six (following page), at what a programme manager and his professional team work with.

Far from undermining professionalism, this expands it. Professional and specialist helpers need to develop their 'three-brain' thinking about information, experience and learning:

> using that greater complexity to expand provision;
> engaging the authority of the experience base;
> managing the experiential learning processes;
> drawing all of this into a sustainable, coherent but adaptable framework of help.

This is not low-level professionalism. But it is a different professionalism

panel six

examples of programme management

Youth Matters is strong on community, 'Tomlinson' on curriculum. Programme managers work with both. The possibilities are mind-boggling.

Take a project on the local labour-economy: geography, history, maths and the local Connexions company could help find the facts, trends and probabilities.

But experience-based learning offers more. Drama, literature, local families, experience-of-work contacts and mentors could help with gathering and re-telling experiences.

And, when it comes to working-up an account of how and why things turn out as they do, then science, careers specialists and community-based consultants could help learners find and examine facts and formulate factors worth thinking about.

Are you boggling yet? To be fair, no programme manager would try to call in all of these sources – it would be undo-able! But these are just possibilities, and there's more to come.

Programme managers are working with people who are – in some sense or other – volunteers - they are other-than-specialist helpers and they may be working on other-than-professional bases. Each has his or her own authority; but it is essential to recruit and brief helpers in terms that make clear both how they can best help and where their limits are. If you are not boggling yet, you are simply not paying attention.

Sensible programme managers do not bite off more than they can chew. 'Tomlinson' urges step-by-step progress. Programme managers work with people they know they can work with, on specific projects that they know they can make work. This is what both 'Tomlinson' and *Youth Matters* mean by integration.

on integration: It is important not to confuse integration with infusion. Infusion is a discredited strategy, where all partners (such as teachers and mentors) take separate responsibility for some part of the learning. It abandons any boundary around careers work, is plainly unworkable and is impossible to track.

Integration is not infusion: it links resources for joint, specific, time-limited and focussed projects, involving a carefully selected group of partners and aimed at clearly-defined learning outcomes. It does not abandon boundaries, but it does restructure them. It calls for a special kind of management style because it is not working within immoveable boundaries on the basis of once-and-for-all defined roles. It is as much about personality as skill.

get more principles of network management in CLN, in-preparation b

paradigm shift?

And – as in all professionalism - thinking is the key. One response to changes in the world of work, referred to at the beginning of this monograph, used the term 'paradigm shift'. But, in Kuhn's (1962) coinage of the term, a paradigm shift is not a change in the way things are 'out there'; we shift paradigms by allowing ourselves to see familiar things in unfamiliar ways. Aha! not everything revolves around us. Aha! there is more to

illumination than what we thought! Aha! and more to know about the energy we use everyday. And on we go. It's how we change the world: equipping ourselves with fuller accounts of how things are; developing better explanations of how they got that way; thinking up more ideas about what we can do about them. It's the headwork that does that. Thank whatever god you honour for your three brains.

And so, are we paradigmatically shifting, or no more than shuffling or merely drifting? Well, according to Thomas Kuhn, if any paradigm is to be shifted we must shift it. It's not just the facts, it's not even the evidence for the facts, it is what we do with the evidence. That is why thinking is going to prove to be critical to this work. When we shift the paradigm it will reach way beyond LMI – it will change everything.

And on we'll go.

more help

The Career-learning Café features programme-development ideas draw on experience. The material is available free of charge at www.hihohio.com .

useful narratives	**a menu at** www.hihohiho.com/magazine/reallives/cafrilvsfrnt.html
parallel thinking	***The DOTS analysis of careers work coverage*** www.hihohiho.com/memory/cafdots.pdf ***CPI 3: inner life and other people*** www.hihohiho.com/underpinning/CPIpdfs/cafcpi3.pdf ***Fewer lists and more stories*** www.hihohiho.com/underpinning/cafbiog.pdf
support	***Learning from experience PowerPoint*** www.hihohiho.com/magazine/features/caffutures.ppt to be updated on the website free-of-charge e-mail 'yes' to <bill@hihohiho.com>.

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