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*which way is forward?*

images, ideas, realities  
and the uses of career metaphors

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What we do about career depends on the way we see it; and there is more than one way of looking at career. This monograph examines two metaphorical images: the one sees career management as positioning, as though people are competing in a race; the other sees it as travelling, as though they are on a journey. We examine evidence for how such images differently figure in the thinking of students, advisers and tutors. Your examination of how this is so will contribute to your understanding of why you take certain lines of development to be so important in your own work - and, maybe, why certain others are not.

So much is perception; but the reality is also changing. Change and uncertainty are endemic; but - right now - the working world, and our clients' and students' access to opportunity, are changing faster than we are. And the change is radical - we may not yet know how radical. So there are issues: does the way we see things help us see what sort of change is now needed? - and can it hinder us? Your examination of the issues will help you to organise - perhaps re-organise - your own priorities.

The term 'paradigm shift' means a change of perspective that changes everything. That depth of change has always been accompanied by a realisation of how much the emerging ideas mean in practice. And, here, that is made the test for the usefulness of how we speak of career. That test is worked out in relation to...

- ...face-to-face and curriculum work;
- ...integration with life-long and life-wide concerns;
- ...branding of services;
- ...partnerships and professionalism;
- ...research and evaluation.

The most significant usefulness of this work may well be for how we approach research. It opens new doors for establishing evidence-based practice. We can do better than understand things in terms of what is currently sought; we can look into what we know might have been found, but wasn't; and we can learn from what people are not yet asking for. It expands our research horizons.

Underlying all of this is our willingness to look again. The consequences will be decisive - either because we do see how we can adapt, or because we don't. Our students and clients need us to be curious, courageous and inventive. The polar-opposite of that kind of vigour is to be moribund.

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Careers work is notable for its inventiveness. For more than a century our work has evolved a widening repertoire of help for people managing career. In face-to-face work this has included 'vocational guidance', 'careers guidance', 'career counselling' and 'information advice and guidance'; together with - more recently - 'career coaching' and 'mentoring'. In curriculum the terms include 'careers education', 'the work-related curriculum', 'education for enterprise' and 'personal-and-social development'; with - more recently - 'economic well-being'.

The extent of this diversification is attracting research interest. Julia Horn (2008) is currently probing the range of values informing career-curriculum work in higher education. A preliminary account suggests that careers education pursues a diverse range of values, which will not fit into any simple typology. It seems that the widening range of what we do is reflected in correspondingly widening ways of saying why we do it.

This monograph uses metaphorical images of career as ways of understanding how we answer questions about why we do this - and what sort of action each answer supports.

## ways-of-seeing

The usefulness of metaphor to talk of career is widely acknowledged. Kerr Inkson (2007) analyses ways of understanding working lives in a framework based on what he calls 'metaphors for working life'. But our use of metaphor here is differently rooted: it draws on the thinking of George Lakoff (2003), who shows that much of what we say about why we do things is intangible, and must be expressed through metaphor. How this works out in talk of career has been tracked in some detail by Bill Law (2008).

## why we use metaphors

Two metaphors are developed here. Both are taken from the etymology of the word 'career'. The word is rooted in the Latin for 'path'. But, in early usage, it can speak of both a race-track and of carriage-way (T F Hoad, 2008). When talking of career we might, then, call up images of career as if it were a race, but also as if it were a journey. It is that 'as-if' quality that gives metaphor its distinctive usefulness. The metaphors for careers are *ways-of-seeing* career management: *as if* people are positioning themselves in a race, and *as if* they are travelling on a journey.

However, it is important to keep in mind that much of what we say about career is not intangible but directly observable - the 'who', 'what' and 'where' of career can be described in concrete, operational and tangible terms. And we do not need metaphors to speak of observable people, engaged in operational action, in real locations. But George Lakoff is not speaking of such relatively easily researchable aspects of life; he is talking about what cannot be directly observed - values, purposes and meanings.

That kind of deeper talk often answers the question 'why?'. But the question is itself ambiguous. And metaphors are less useful for the 'whys' that speak of observable facts - say in opportunity structure or social influence; they are more useful for the 'whys' that speak of what inwardly energises us. The subtlety and complexity of that inner life is still beyond the reach of direct observation (the best that brain-scanning can do is to show how different brain areas fire-up for different thoughts and feelings). Answering 'why?' in terms of individually-shaped values, linked to specific purposes, carrying personal meanings - all of this is expressed as a state-of-mind. Every careers worker knows how hard it can be to disclose such things, and how risky it is to attribute them. But we need ways of sharing what can be known about this other person's inner-life. George Lakoff argues that we turn to 'as-if' metaphors to convey that kind of hard-to-express significance.

George's case is supported by evolutionary psychology: Steven Pinker (2007) agrees that it is when we need to talk in abstractions that we resort to metaphors. But, as he also shows, our most pressing survival needs speak of beings, behaviours and locations - the 'who?', 'what?' and 'where?' of observable experience. This is, then, what gives us our most deeply-laid structures of language. They speak of what is concrete, operational and directly observable. However, argues Steven, we use that concrete language also to speak, of what cannot be directly observed. That is metaphor, conveying what cannot be observed, but as if it can be observed. We use metaphors to speak of inner meaning, purpose and significance as if it were tangible - people doing things. So, in our work, we can find ourselves talking about career management as if it were setting-off on a journey, or - if that doesn't suit - running in a race.

We know that is not what they are actually doing. But, as both George and Steven show, the way we talk about things shapes the way we think about them - and what we do about them.

### race or journey

So, what do we say? Figure one (following page) illustrates possibilities - each of the words and phrases in the two panels calls up an image of career. They speak of career as if you can actually see it happening - like following a journey or running a race. But in career there is no 'avenue' to explore or 'finishing-line' to cross. These are not realities, they are ways of *imagining* our *ideas* about *reality*.

And we have a choice about that. The two panels contain identical images, but in each panel images are given different emphases. (They simulate website 'tag clouds'; where, the more people show an interest, the bigger gets the font.) On the left, more people are using positioning search-images; and, on the right, journeying.

figure one  
speaking of career

**...as positioning**

adventure arrival avenue challenge bridge  
 champion **coach** companion compete  
 connection cross-roads departure detour direction  
 diversion **finishing-line** flow gateway  
 get-ahead guide **head-start** horizon  
 hurdle **inside-track** map parting  
 performance position practice **pursuit**  
 range **selection** settlement signpost  
 starting-gun strength spring-board **team**  
 training travel trophy turning-point unbeatable  
**winning** world-class vista

**...as journeying**

**adventure** arrival avenue bridge  
 challenge champion coach companion compete  
**connection** cross-roads departure  
 detour **discovery** diversion finishing-line  
 flow gateway get-ahead guide head-start  
 horizon hurdle inside-track **map** parting  
 performance position practice pursuit **range**  
 selection settlement signpost starting-gun  
 strength spring-board team training travel  
 trophy **turning-point** unbeatable  
 winning world-class **vista**

To sum-up: metaphorical images convey psychological and social constructions - ways-of-seeing career, not concrete realities. Those images and ideas influence what people do about career - what your students and clients do, and what you do to help. Furthermore, because inward experience is not directly observable, there is plenty of scope for different people to entertain different ways-of-seeing. And, as figure one illustrates, you have a choice about how those exchanges between image, ideas and reality are processed.

**image, manipulation and reality**

George Lakoff is subtle about the relationships between image, idea and reality. He acknowledges that some usage is not explicit - the use of an image may be allusive, rather than up-front. And we will show here that much career-talk, though not always expressly calling on any image, nonetheless resonates with images of either positioning or travelling.

But George Lakoff's argument has a sceptical edge - and carries a warning. He claims that compelling metaphors are smuggled into people's minds, by others who have an interest in people seeing things their

way. He further claims that the people who are being enticed are not always aware that it is happening. You are aware of how advertising, politics, the media and the professions use imagery in this way - but none of us is as fully aware as we think we are.

But could we be the perpetrators of such manipulation? People can certainly be attracted to a 'world-class' service for 'winners'. Do we collude with such talk? Should we? In contemporary conditions it might be more useful for people to think of us as embarking them on a 'journey' of 'discovery'. Would that be any more acceptable?

But that is only half of George's warning. Are we ourselves on the receiving end of manipulative images - about what *others* think *we* should be doing. Careers work has been persistently presented to us using little more than the imagery of competitive employability. Do we swallow that? - whole?

Careers work is for economic competitiveness, but it is also for personal well-being and learning for sustainable action. In a world of quick-fire communication, balancing those aims and finding ways of presenting ourselves in relation to them, is not easy. There could be a useful development workshop built around comparing the 'tag clouds' in figure one - and probing their usefulness to that challenge. (More on a research framework for this on pp.14f. & 24ff.; and on the uses of images for branding on pp.20f.)

That reflection should take account of the possibility that George Lakoff may be too sceptical about the uses of metaphor. Metaphors are not just tools for spin-doctoring, they are - often enough - illuminations of ideas we already entertain, but may be struggling to get across. The images we use are sometimes not so much intruders as allies - helping us, as Steven Pinker suggests, to express the hard-to-express. If that is so, the images we use will be supported by ideas expressed in other terms. That certainly happens in the evidence that we examine here.

There is two-way exchange between image and idea: we use the image to shape the idea, we use the idea to find the image. Each helps the other to represent and respond to what we take to be reality.

### contrasts and tensions

Table one (following page) sets out ideas which resonate with the two metaphors about how careers are managed. It is set up to point to the contrasts.

These contrasts give this study its hypotheses. We expect to find...

1. **on scope:** talk about career can be mapped onto these two ways-of-seeing;
2. **on voices:** different groups each make distinctive use of the two metaphors;
3. **on uses:** these ways-of-seeing also correlate with ideas-for-action expressed in other ways.

table one:  
**contrasting ways-of-seeing career management**

<b>positioning</b>	<b>journeying</b>
skilled-up for performance	opened-up to surprise
matching known demands	seeking new horizons
calling on coaching	calling on companions
for winning	for discovering
needing habits-of-mind	open to change-of-mind
for achievement	for well-being
prescribing next steps	ready for the unforeseeable

Any evidence that these patterns-of-talk actually occur will, in the nature of things, be diffuse. Such evidence, collated in the following section, is certainly diffuse. But it is not entirely lacking.

## evidence on metaphors

Any evidence worth reporting here must recount what people freely say. It must also be able to show different groups engage with those ideas. And it must be able to relate how they use metaphors to ways of talking about action.

## sources for evidence

Evidence of this kind has been gathered in a questionnaire-survey of attitudes to careers education, conducted by David Stanbury (2008). That enquiry poses three questions:

- > **definition:** give a short definition of careers education, in one-to-five sentences;
- > **a good session:** write up-to-three sentences describing what a careers-education session should be like? - what characteristics would a good session have?
- > **ideal:** imagine that you have created a perfect careers-education course - what would you hope that participants would gain from doing your course?

Each of these questions is posed to three groups:

- > **advisers:** a university careers service's six people - all engaged in curriculum work - with two other similarly-experienced advisers;
- > **tutors:** ten people involved in curriculum design-and-delivery, including eight of the 33 university academics who are working with the advisers;
- > **students:** twelve people who, while using the university careers library, have agreed to the receptionists' invitation to complete the survey.

### **caveats about the evidence**

The questions concern careers education in particular, and are asked of people thinking of higher education in particular. However we can think of no reason to suppose that the sort of career-related ideas and images evoked here would only be used to speak of careers education and not to other aspects of thinking about career. Neither can we think of any reason to suppose that the ideas and images used in higher education would not also be applicable in other sectors of education.

That being so, it is important to bear in mind that this is a small self-selected sample. At best the findings can only suggest and illustrate possible ways-of-seeing career. No attempt can be made to generalise from the frequency of different responses - the observation that something is often said here cannot indicate how often it is said anywhere else.

However, like George Lakoff, we are interested in the inner significance that people can attribute to their thinking about career, not with its statistical significance.

### **organisation of evidence**

The responses are organised in nine rows - setting out what each of the three groups say in answer to each of three questions. The resulting nine tables are in the appendices to this monograph (pp.31ff.). Table two (following page) signposts them.

All of the statements reported in the original survey have been included in the analysis. The responses have been lightly edited to remove redundancies and duplications inside each quote.

table two:  
discourses on careers

<b>from students:</b> appendices 1-3	1. about definition	page 32
	2. about a good session	page 33
	3. about the ideal	page 34
<b>from advisers:</b> appendices 4-6	4. about definition	page 35
	5. about a good session	page 36
	6. about the ideal	page 37
<b>from tutors:</b> appendices 7-9	7. about definition	page 38
	8. about a good session	page 39
	9. about the ideal	page 40

We are interested in the uses of metaphor. We need to know, then, whether and where each metaphor crops up in these nine discourses. The nine appendices are, accordingly, organised in three columns. The columns (from left to right) show people...

...using a <b>positioning</b> metaphor	...using <b>both metaphors</b> or <b>no metaphor</b>	...using a <b>journeying</b> metaphor
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## what people say

The appendices show patterns which broadly correspond to our hypotheses:

1. talk of 'positioning' and 'journeying' feature in what people say about careers education;
2. different groups differently call upon these metaphors and their associated ideas;
3. each group's distinctive ideas correlate with their suggestions for action.

## mapping the range - for positioning or journeying?

The basic hypothesis is that talk of careers will resonate with one or both metaphors. We found such metaphorical uses - coded in the appendices ('positioning' in red, 'journeying' in green). We also found some parallel images: for example the fast-and-focussed use of 'hunting' is a positioning image, while the slow-and-delicate 'sowing seeds' is a kind of journey.

Though they are not metaphorical, we found other ideas which resonate with the metaphors. For example talk of 'requirements' and 'employability', though not manifestly positioning images, is more competitive than exploratory. Conversely, talk of 'possible careers' and 'different options', though not directly conjuring journeying images, call up ideas about exploration rather than competition. We have been able to locate most of the quotations from the questionnaires on this basis.

Some responses have, in the appendices, been collected in the middle column. Even here it has been possible to colour code some words and phrases as 'positioning' or 'journeying'. They are in the middle column, because a single person is concurrently using both sets of ideas. Others, at the bottom of the middle column, have no discernable racing or journeying resonance. There are few of these.

A summary of these findings is in table three (following page). It is framed like table one, so that it can show differences between what was then expected and what is now found. Three of our table-one contrasts are, in table three, entirely one-sided. The resulting structural gaps, where nothing at all is said, are about:

- > habits-of-mind needed for positioning;
- > a search for partners while journeying;
- > a concern for well-being during journeying.

The images and contrasts that people neglect may be as significant as the ones they use. They can point to ways-of-seeing which will expand the range of images which are worth examining and using. We'll look again at this (p.14f.).

table three:  
**terms of metaphorical career imagery**

for positioning	for journeying
<b>skilled-up for performance</b>	<b>opened-up to surprise</b>
<i>performance strengths and weaknesses</i>	<i>starting point</i>
<b>matching known demands</b>	<b>seeking new horizons</b>
<i>best suit / fit into a team match</i>	<i>avenue of investigation / career path mapping / move on / overview perspective / wide range</i>
<b>looking for coaching</b>	<b>looking for partners</b>
<i>selection process / challenge how to impress / prepare techniques to develop</i>	
<b>for winning</b>	<b>for discovering</b>
<i>exploiting / head start / hunting / empowering vital / impact</i>	<i>future path / direction places to go / sowing seeds</i>
<b>needing habits-of-mind</b>	<b>open to change-of-mind</b>
	<i>explore a range / new perspective</i>
<b>for achievement</b>	<b>for well-being</b>
<i>maximise / achieve</i>	
<b>prescribing next steps</b>	<b>ready for the unforeseeable</b>
<i>immediate / selection goal / tracks targeting</i>	<i>throughout their life</i>

## examining who says what - do students, advisers and tutors agree?

The distribution of responses in appendices one-to-nine is not inconsistent with our second hypotheses - that there are between-group differences in the uses of metaphor. More students think of career in terms of positioning than do their tutors: and tutors are more likely to think of career in terms of journeying.

Student positioning is, here, often expressed as an awareness of relatively short-term priorities, for example...

*'how to get a head-start in career'*

While tutors may be more able to see education as a prolonged process for longer-term use, such as ...

*'explore a range of occupations'*

The one priority does not necessarily exclude the other; and advisers may be needed to reconcile that immediate student-vigilance with that on-going tutoring-process, for example by...

*'constantly monitor their progress'*

No quantification of these observations is possible; but, if the hypothesis were to be retained, it might be represented in terms of figure two. The figure suggests how the three groups can draw on the images and ideas. But it also acknowledges that all three groups mix their metaphors: there is a 'long tail' of students and tutors - each calling on the alternative imagery. Advisers are, distinctively, located in a linking position.

figure two:  
notional distribution of the uses of metaphor by three groups

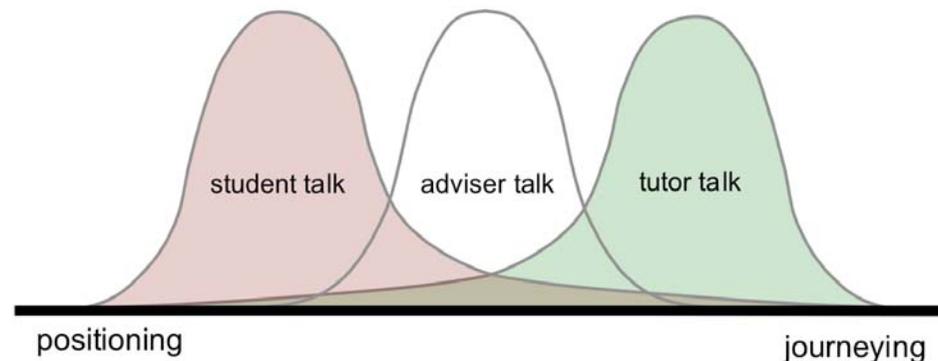


Table one sets out positioning and journeying as contrasted images. And they are in tension: an 'avenue of investigation' is not a race-track image; and 'competitive performance' is not a journeying image. The one way-of-seeing tends to squeeze out the other. After all, no true competitor takes a detour before she reaches the finishing-line.

But - as the long-tails suggest - neither way-of-seeing *entirely* excludes the other - people see the value of both: any journey might - at least for a time - incorporate a race, The idea of career as journey and race may be in tension - but not absolutely. However much you may want your students and clients to explore wider horizons, they need help - from time to time - with short-term up-coming procedures.

Nonetheless, every journey can be paused - once-in-a-while - for a race; but no race can be paused for a journey. And that makes journeying the more inclusive idea.

### probing implications for practice - is career coaching enough?

When people are trying to position themselves for clearly-targeted, specific and immediate outcomes, they seek directive help to maximise the chance of success in that pursuit. Some students may be satisfied if that were all that careers work ever offered. And the sporting metaphor - 'coaching' - fits that expectation. In our work 'coaching' is no better defined than 'guidance'. Careers advisers use the term 'coaching' in less-directive ways. And life-coaching is a highly variable form, which can be quite exploratory. However, both sports and career coaching certainly include techniques for tightly-focussed, one-on-one help - with people who know what they want to do, and sooner rather than later.

This is only to say that some face-to-face work is a form of coaching. Guidance is coaching where it is directed at helping a person to take the next step in pursuit of competitive employability. But there are other forms of face-to-face work, reflecting other values. They include lay-mentoring, which is more biographical and more attuned to the value of exploratory experience. And there is also counselling, which is also exploratory but, this time, auto-biographically of the students' or clients' inner-life. Both need more process-time and unstructured-space than guidance is currently in a position to offer. And both are more appropriately seen in terms of making a journey than competing in a race. These values - embraced by some guidance, a lot of mentoring, and much of counselling - are different from those of tightly-prescribed coaching. There is more, later, about the potential of face-to-face work compared with curriculum (pp. 17ff.).

And there is a parallel comparison for curriculum: 'careers education' is coaching when it focuses on how to 'look good' in application-and-selection procedures. But curriculum-in-general is capable of much more. It can take on designs of space-and-time to set learning in an emotional-and-social context, to progress learning in a stage-by-stage unfolding, and to embed learning for use in future action. These are all journeying images. Curriculum-in-general is capable of calling on wider range of ideas than conventional careers education is in any position to realise.

These differences in value might lead us to expect that students, advisers and tutors would draw on metaphors to support each their own underlying valuing of how careers should work. The survey cannot suggest any generalisations about that. But it can illustrate the possibility.

table four:  
people speaking of how-to-do careers education

student positioning	adviser linking	tutor traveling
<i>it should entail everything that is vital to securing a good job - advice on how to apply, CV, which job to apply for and how to tailor the specifics for that job</i>	<i>needs to acknowledge that, unlike curriculum knowledge, students are at different stages of self awareness and understanding so individuals need to access what is relevant for their own development - conveys that decision making is a process and not a tick-box exercise so students can constantly monitor their progress</i>	<i>interactive - informative - challenging to make them reflect and question - interesting - instructive, so they feel they've acquired new knowledge or a new perspective - all of this to be based on discussion, group talks, verbal and post-it feedback - presentation of relevant (as defined by students) feedback - should have evaluation</i>

### the findings

The hypotheses set out on page 4 are broadly supported by the evidence yielded by David Stanbury's enquiry. That evidence is set out in full in the appendices (pp.31ff). It is summarised in table three (p.3), in figure two (p.10), and in table four (above).

David asked no questions about the usefulness of metaphors; but, nonetheless, they crop up. His questions were sufficiently open to permit that, and to permit the disclosure of how the images fit with other ideas that people wanted to talk about.

We have located the uses of metaphor in a broader discourse - images resonating with ideas, and both supporting action...

1. ideas of 'positioning' and 'journeying' do feature in what people say about careers education;
2. students advisers and tutors do differently call upon these images and their associated ideas;
3. each is seen to carry practical implications for the way we do this work.

David Stanbury's enquiry therefore uncovers some practical implications of this level of thinking. There are others. But before we examine them, we should pay attention to what is not said in the evidence that we have so-far examined.

## omissions and possibilities

Metaphorical images assemble into a framework for showing how ideas relate to each other (tables one and three). They can, therefore, signpost both what is said and what might be said - but is not said. Omission can be noted.

### what has been left out?

And in this enquiry there are some obvious metaphorical images which might be used but - in the talk of this sample - aren't.

More importantly, there are some whole areas of thinking that these respondents just do not enter. In relation to positioning, there is no talk of the habits-of-mind - effort, application, practice - required for competitive success. In relation to journeying, there is no talk of companions - partners for well-being - which any kind of travelling might well call upon. These structural gaps in thinking are blank areas in table three (p.9).

**on positioning:** Nobody actually uses the terms 'race'. And you might be relieved to find that 'down to the wire' is also not used. Would it be over-dramatic? But other possible positioning images are also missing...

*champion / coach / compete / contention / fast-track / field / finishing-line  
get-ahead / hurdle / inside-track / pursuit score / spring-board / starting-gun  
target / thrust / tough / trophy / unbeatable / winning / world-class*

Plenty of missed grist for a spin-doctoring mill here.

About structural gaps in talk of positioning: nobody talks about habits-of-mind - where phrases like the following might crop up, but don't...

*dedication / discipline / exercise  
mind-set / practice / regime / training*

This is hard talk - it is a 'take-the-pain' application to self discipline, which is part of any competitive success. But it has, here, been avoided.

**on journeying:** This imagery is also incomplete, nobody actually mentions the word 'journey'. And it might have been over-romantic to look for the use of 'long-and-winding-road'. However other images - many of them enticing - are also missing...

*adventure / arrival / bridge / change-of-direction / connections / cross-roads  
departure / discovery / diversion / exploration / gateway / horizon / launch / map  
moving-on / on-board / perspective / settlement / signpost / survey / turning-point / vista*

About structural gaps in talk of journeying: there is no talk of partnerships - such as...

*companion / crew / guide*

And there is also no talk in journeying of well-being - which might have been imaged as...

*access / greeting / refreshment  
relaxation / start-again*

The two omissions might be linked. Travelling companions help a person find different routes, and do things differently. And that support might well be for a well-being that would otherwise be lacking.

### thinking against the grain

The gaps in table three illustrate an issue for research-and-development. Talk of 'taking-the-pain' and 'depending-on-others' speaks of deficits - that is what people need to find and what they don't yet do. 'Taking the pain' speaks of a need for disciplined application to the task. 'Depending on others' speaks of seeking help in finding a different ways of seeing things. In some cultures such thinking is against the grain: a lack of application can sound like a judgement of character; and seeking help from others can feel like relinquishing independence. Contemporary heroism is frequently presented in terms of self-propelled action, for which 'who-I-am-now' is entirely adequate, and where help from others is neither wanted nor sought.

However that may be, careers work cannot afford to ignore such omissions from what people say. Both effortful application and a wider range of helping influence have been shown to be factors in effective career management. So we need to be able constructively to think against the cultural grain - and skilfully to reshape the imagery. In reality, neither counter-cultural connotation is necessary: 'taking the pain' is part of 'taking control', and 'finding good companions' is a way of 'increasing options'.

The point here is that not-finding some images is, itself, a finding. It enables us to take account both of what people say, and what they don't say. And it equips us to probe what limits such ways-of-seeing - wherever they come from - may put on what people think and what they do.

### reframing research

We shouldn't jump to conclusions about the need for application and companionship - this evidence base is too small. But how these people have responded illustrates a more basic point for the uses of evidence: what we do not find may well prove to be as much an evidence base as what we do find. And, in order to get that kind of insight, we need a framework for knowing what it might be possible to find.

This approach belongs to what Sue Clegg (2005) claims is a richer and more promising line of enquiry than the research world has grown used to pursuing. What she calls 'critical realism' works from an idea of what might be going on, and how it can best be discovered. It is evidence-based, but not in the sense of directly transposing evidence into action. Where that more accommodating framework for research is established, there is no necessary link between what 'the findings say...' and what 'we should...'. There is, instead, a need to grasp what is possible and why it is not found.

Critical realism, in this way, interposes - between finding and resolution - a framework of ideas which is sufficiently comprehensive to accommodate all relevant possibilities. And it keeps an eye on the evidence as it relates to that framework. It does not dismiss what does not fit, but it does wonder about what is not mentioned.

The development of such a framework requires what David Stanbury's enquiry has given us: ways-of-seeing things, how things might be seen, what is not yet seen, and how it might be useful to see. The framework is set out in tables one and three. (More about the consequences of this thinking for research on pp.24ff.)

### **stakeholders**

We are pushing boundaries. David Stanbury's is an interesting and diverse sample; but there are other stakeholders in careers work. We need also to know how members of families, cultural-and-religious interests, business communities, programme managers, politicians and others see careers work. David's enquiry uncovers significant variation in what students, advisers and tutors say. A wider range of constituencies might well uncover greater variation.

Critical realism certainly means more than finding out what providers and their managers say; we have enough surveys of such producer opinion. It means more, even, than looking for more broadly-based stakeholder valuing of careers work; there is also plenty of work on customer satisfaction. But - as the omissions noted here illustrate - what people say does not always correspond with experience, and what they seek does not always correspond with what most helps. That means, therefore, both looking wider and noticing gaps.

### **thinking big**

We are going through one of the most dramatic periods of labour-economic change that anybody can remember. The 2008-09 credit crunch is the first global-economic crisis - we need not assume it will have been the last. The shock waves have a long and sustained reach: they flow, not just into work-life, but into personal well-being, and into all aspects of family, social and cultural life. This damage in the developing world is massively more severe than in the west. And what it does to life-on-earth is - literally - a survival

issue for us all. There was never a time when people more needed to know what is going on, and what they can usefully do about it. And that need links up every aspect of their lives.

Working on what is going on, and what people can do about it, is a careers-work task. But we are used to thinking of it mostly in terms of employability for personal and national competitiveness - and, perhaps, also for social equity. We are not used to working in farther-reaching terms. The here-and-now urgency of the positioning metaphor hardly encourages us to do so. The journeying image is more exploratory and inclusive.

But there are certainly other images. Speaking of other stakeholders: would families be more comfortable with tangible images of gardening? ('cultivate', 'seeds', 'growth', 'maturation', 'roots'). And the business community with operational images of commerce ('market place', 'buying', 'selling' - but probably not 'slavery').

The uses of metaphor can call up broader resonances than positioning and journeying. And critical realism in contemporary conditions needs as many ways of usefully imaging careers as it can find.

### **your test of these ideas**

The significance of this enquiry is in the way it illustrates the usefulness of metaphorical images.

So, are they useful to you? Think of what you take to be a key idea for careers work (perhaps from a report, a conference, a workshop or an encounter). It may have helped to shape the basis for your own work. The questions which follow are demanding of careful thought - a basis for consideration with partners. But you can get a feel for them by taking a first shot with your own 'yes-no' answers. The questions, then, are about that important source of influence on your work...

1. does it contain ideas that resonate with any metaphor of career?
2. can you now see alternative images that have not been used?
3. might that omission mean that some ideas are pursued at the expense of others?

and so...

4. does that matter?
5. would a differently-based idea usefully expand the range of ideas?
6. perhaps displacing some of your own current ideas?
7. and showing you where to break new ground?

The usefulness of whatever frequency of 'yes'-and-'no' you use is that it helps you, with your partners, to locate your understanding among other possibilities that you might have considered, but have not - yet.

## bases for action

Different people draw on different metaphors of career at different times. It makes the word 'career' hard to define. But that variability gives the word a more useful quality. It is, in Richard Dawkins's term, a 'meme' - an idea which, like a successful gene, adapts to changing conditions. The value of the word 'career' is - then - less in how we carefully define and contain it, more in how we fully use and liberate it.

## practice - face-to-face work and curriculum

One of the most common terms for careers work has been the double-barrelled 'careers education and guidance' (ceg). The 'g' is now expanded into 'iag' - 'information, advice and guidance'. More recently the term 'ceiag' - 'careers-education-information-advice-and-guidance' - is coming into use. All of these terms locate our programmes in our institutions. We know what they mean - familiar operations, agreed objectives and defended positions. They define and contain.

But careers work is not, most basically, an institutionalised programme. It is, before everything, ideas for action. Metaphors help us to realise this, not by settling on verifiable facts, but by imaging ways-of-seeing. And that includes some imagining that has not yet been instituted. Those ideas show how there is more to face-to-face work than information-advice-and-guidance, and a whole lot more to curriculum than careers education.

**face-to-face work.** And iag is, then, no more than an example of what can be done in face-to-face work. The positioning metaphor expands possibilities for that work, for example, into 'coaching'. The journeying metaphor suggests even more possibilities.

Journeying speaks of learning from recounted experience - a feature of mentoring in its many forms. We need to understand how that kind of narration can usefully be engaged (Frans Meijers, 2009). That is not to say that mentoring can supplant iag; but it is to say that the authority of authentic experience is as useful a basis for exploration as the authority of expert analysis.

Journeying also speaks of an inner-life, accessed by reflection on its own experience. The thinking which comes closest to an appreciation of that idea is constructivism (Hazel Reid and Linden West, 2008). It calls for the dynamics of counselling rather than the structures of iag.

Journeying speaks of more to be done with face-to-face work than iag is able to deliver. And both face-to-face work and curriculum reach beyond the coaching metaphor (p.11).

**curriculum.** And there is a whole lot more that can be done with curriculum than careers education is able to deliver. Even the positioning metaphor needs more help from curriculum. Learning successfully to compete demands a stage-by-stage programme - for practising skills, developing them, trying them out, adapting them and embedding them for continuing use. We wouldn't think of training athletes on the basis of anything less.

But it is in the uses travelling imagery that re-thinking curriculum becomes most radical and most demanding - particularly in the uses of narrative. A journey is an experience; and an experience can only be spoken of in narrative terms. Narrative and learning are historically entwined - fables, myths and parables are our longest-standing teaching-and-learning methods.

There is growing interest in career-learning narratives (David Stanbury, unpublished & in preparation). It is important, because people do not process experience in the same way that they process expertise (each fires-up different brain-areas). And, also, anecdotes can mislead. And so there is a lot to do here. It needs all of the 'who', 'where', 'what', 'how' and (most-of-all) 'why' interrogation that the journeying metaphor can provoke. But only curriculum can provide the kind of time-and-space that such processes need. Careers education is in no position to accommodate all of this far-reaching reflection (Bill Law, 2007).

Both face-to-face help and curriculum may well be presenting more possibilities for effective careers work than your institution and programme yet provides. We all need to know in what direction to move, and on what - as yet unrealised - basis. Careers-work metaphors give you a handle on those ideas for that reality.

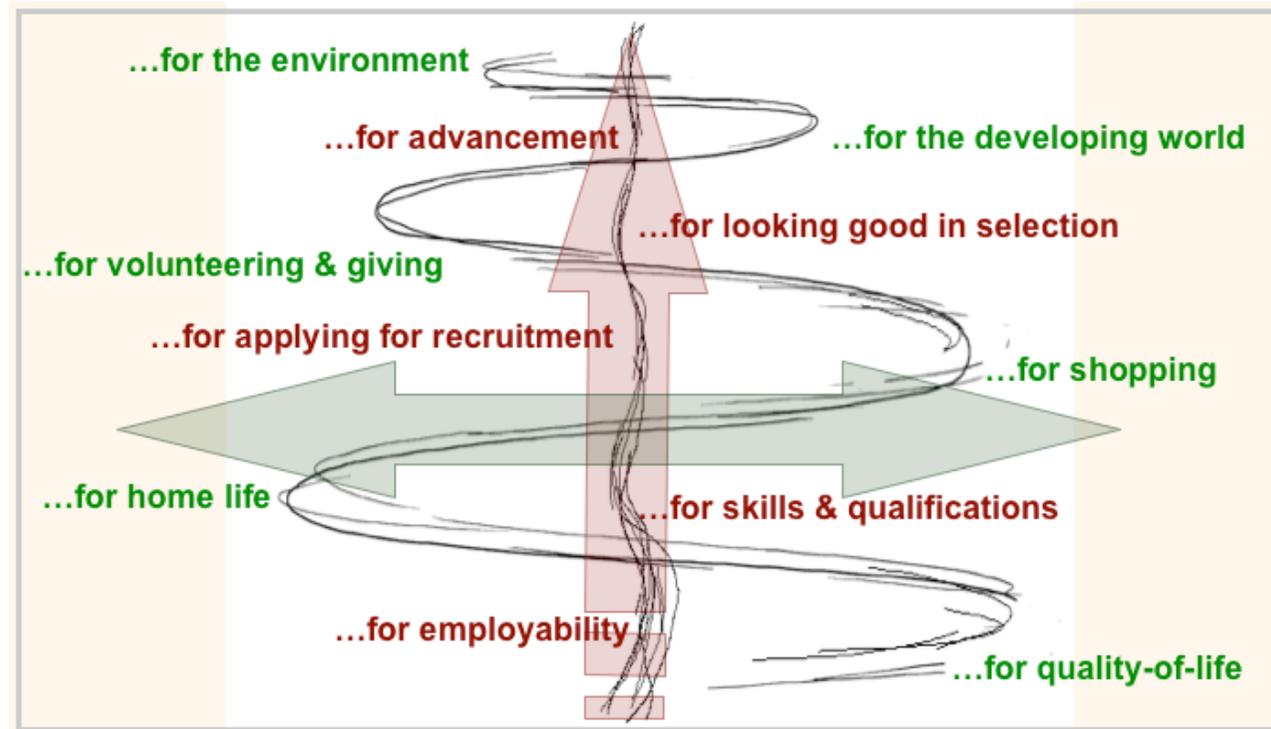
### integration - linear and lateral thinking

The term 'integration' refers to how our work takes account of other ways-of-seeing. Other people - such as recruiters and social workers - also need to explain what happens in career. That means that different lines-of-development can intersect - suggesting a meeting place that more than one programme can share. This is integration: and it always means making links - taking one thing with another. Figure three (following page) sets out some of these links - drawing on positioning and journeying metaphors.

Positioning makes links for pressing ahead, journeying for looking around. The sketch-lines in figure three show both pathways: a straight-ahead track; and a long-and-winding road. Linear thinking is for positioning (coded red), lateral for journeying (green).

**linear thinking.** Linear integration links careers work to on-going programme development, with tightly-sequenced goals. The goals relate to skills for employability, used in a labour-market arena, and set out by well-defined performance indicators. The word 'advancement' is increasingly used - an image of present achievement leading to future success. (Is this a soldiering metaphor? - targeting, challenging, overcoming.)

figure three:  
linear and lateral learning



The red coding points to integers with other programmes that share this interest. Careers workers can comfortably share research and theory with human-resource people in commerce, and with selection personal in further and higher education. Indeed, linear integration can readily extended career into a life-long series of scenarios - which is what the red arrow links together.

There is nothing wrong with this - students seek it. But our examination of a framework based on the uses of metaphors says that it is not all that there might be.

**lateral thinking.** The green coding points to wider-ranging motivations for action. Lateral integration relates career to physical health-and-safety and to domestic-life. It acknowledges how life as a worker links to life as

a consumer. It tells of how progress in work relates to social, cultural and religious affiliations. And it is aware of the impact of work on the developing world. And to the fact that work has a carbon footprint.

Lateral integers therefore intersects with other concerns - social, community, cultural, religious, egalitarian and environmental. The phrases 'work-life balance', 'quality-of-life' and 'well-being' express those concerns. They are seen, not a distraction from, but an enrichment of careers work. The scope is life-wide as well as life-long. And all of this resonates with a journeying metaphor - exploratory, ready to be surprised, and open to a change-of-direction. It truly is a 'long-and-winding road' - and it is what the green arrows link together.

**integrative complexity.** There are greater and lesser degrees of engagement in making any of these links. But the more complex the range of links, the more ways-of-seeing you have. And ways-of-seeing mean seeing what is possible - what you can attempt, how it goes (even if it goes badly), and what you can do to make it go better. On the whole evolution - genetic and memetic - is in the direction of developing this kind of breadth in repertoires for action.

It is in these terms that the idea of integrative complexity helps us to understand the effectiveness of reforming organisations (P Suedfeld and others, 1992). It seems that effective reform avoids assembling priorities around a limited range of readily-identifiable objectives - however popular. Integrative complexity becomes resilient and innovative by being able to respond differently, in different circumstance, and at different stages of change. This open-mindedness can respond positively to surprise - and contemporary living does bring its surprises.

But this is more than efficient resource *management*, it is imaginatively resourceful *leadership*. In current and foreseeable conditions the best that competing for position can do is to change the pecking order for the available opportunities. The more demanding task - when the employment options have been exhausted - is honestly to work on what other options there may be for a life that retains value, and social membership - and hope. There's no simple way to do that. We can't get there without thoroughly exploring what we are doing, what we can do, and what we might do - that is journeying.

### **branding - who we are and how we're seen**

The branding of careers work presents us with an ongoing challenge. We have not been as successful as we deserve in helping people to understand who we are and what we do. Phrases like 'careers education' and 'information-advice-and-guidance' speak to few... 'ceiag' to fewer! Both sporting and travelling metaphors conjure images with branding possibilities (though you may not want to choose whether your service is more like a 'gym' than a 'travel agency').

The words and phrases listed on pages 9 and 13 offer more likely-looking possibilities. Some have already been taken - like 'prospects', which can call up both competitive and exploratory images. And 'connections',

though with an 'x', allows for more of a long-and-winding journey than some career purists feel able to take on. But there is still plenty of room for your creativity.

**saying what.** A brand declares 'who we are' and 'what we do'. Racing-talk will attract a good many - for its edginess, urgency and promise of a result. Journeying images attract less attention - especially if they lack urgency and glamour.

(Speaking of the need to use journeying images with care: in an informal consultancy to a proposed project, my - over-optimistic - urging of 'voyaging' lost out to 'flying'. But sailing is metaphorically richer - 'winds', 'currents', 'vortices', 'horizons', 'harbours', and so on. But flying - which can be a miserable travelling experience - was thought to have more appeal.

However, in another setting, a proposal for 'your service station on the motorway of life' seemed to nearly all of us to take too-little account of the M25.)

So what do we need to get across? In presenting 'who we are' we often first draw attention to our qualified expertise. But, in a culture less-and-less deferential to élites, that aspect of who we are needs careful voicing. And, anyway, any broadly-based service offers plenty of room for narrated experience as well as for analysed expertise.

But we really do need to lose 'ceiag' - it sounds like a bad-tempered expletive.

**talking to whom.** Branding is first addressed to clients and students, but there are other stakeholders. We have worked hard at presenting ourselves to managers and politicians - in terms which we hope persuade them that we are worth supporting. But, when it comes to policy, the most influential voices are not providers but users. Managers and politicians may well be less interested in what we have to say about ourselves than in what their own customers and constituents say about us. Not just what students say, but their families, communities and work contacts. And so, a measure of the effectiveness of a brand is 'gossip-ability': how people talk about us when we are not around. Competition is highly gossip-able, but - potentially - so is curiosity.

But there is this: journeying images are probably harder to get across. They do not promise an immediate pay-off, indeed they may imply a big surprise. And so, although we have plenty of images for journeying, they do not have a competitive fizz..

And in - in a world where pushing for competitiveness is increasingly part of the problem and exploring alternatives much more like part of the solution - how do we honestly brand ourselves in any other terms?

## partnership, professionalism and other-than-professionals

Explanations of British careers work commonly emphasise its partnerships. The argument is that any careers-service group needs links to other groups. An example in higher education is 'service-led' agreements made with a number of academic departments - each focusing on learning for 'employability' (A G Watts & Val Butcher, 2009). In secondary education there are partnerships between careers services and schools, set out in bi-lateral agreements - agreeing who-will-do-what (Careers England, 2007).

**issues.** There is an underlying principle here - that a careers service should be, part of something bigger than itself. But there are also issues - sharply exposed in secondary education. Current policy proposals for child-care urge schools to locate careers-services as part of arrangements for the welfare of children. These links are not bilateral but multi-lateral - calling on a range of contacts, and engaging a range of activity. The issue is whether this expansion of the partnership principle unacceptably dilutes the work of specialist careers advisers. Purists defend the 'independence' and 'professionalism' of careers advisers.

The operational reality is that, the more careers workers seek partners in other departments and institutions, the less prominent is their own distinctive voice, and the less they are able to define and contain the way in which help is offered. It can seem to compromise their free-standing professionalism. When it comes to the uses of metaphorical imagery and associated ideas we have noted (pp.10&12) that the points-of-view of advisers and tutors do not exactly coincide - although advisers are located in a linking position between tutors and students-and-clients

The concern is for careers work professionalism and independence, and the issue remains. It needs to be addressed in terms of a question: 'what is there about careers work which is distinctive and valuable?'. The answers are held to be...

- > what advisers know - securing a distinctive knowledge of how careers develop;
- > what advisers do - securing a distinctive skills in enabling career management.

This response is concerned not with making links but with maintaining boundaries. And multi-laterality compromises both boundaries: it opens the gate to other knowledge of what is going on; and it lets in other ways of helping. In terms of degrees of integration (pp.18ff.) a linear commitment maintains those boundaries, while a lateral interest is curious about how what we do stands in relation to other bases for help.

Some form of professionalism is worth defending: only a qualified careers worker is in command of the knowledge and skills needed for enabling employability. What careers workers know about the labour economy and the management of the selection and recruitment system is unmatched anywhere else. And that kind of help is needed by everybody - for some of the time. At those times, partners whose purpose is solely to position students for competition in the labour market may well find what they seek in bilateral agreements. And they may never look elsewhere.

And so, there is something to defend here; but it is not all that there is to value - and there is assuredly elsewhere to look. Any kind of concern with quality-of-life, and any interest in the meaning people attach to their work, these will call up a greater curiosity. Tutors in this enquiry have exhibited it. Other workers in a multiple partnership will expand that curiosity. And careers advisers in this enquiry are open to maintaining their position in terms of negotiating with that wider range of interests, rather than in just defending their own expertise as the sole basis of what can be done to help.

The uses of career imagery gives us other ways of seeing - for a more varied journey along a more densely-populated path. It calls for greater curiosity about what is going, and about what can be done about it.

Multi-lateral careers-work partnerships do all of this in two sets of links: it works with *other professions* - for example in education, social work, economics and the behavioural and social sciences; and it works with *other-than-professionals* - for example in families, community groups and voluntary agencies.

table five  
range and scope of multi-lateral partnerships

partnerships with <b>other professionals</b> working with...	partnerships with <b>other-than-professionals</b> working with...
... the social and economic causes and effects of what happens in the labour market	... informal knowledge held by members of a local community
... the learning processes of recounting, questioning and embedding that learning for use	... how the uses of learning work out in episodes from recounted experience of that process
... how personal economic well-being links to physical, social, spiritual, civil and environmental well-being	... experience-based narratives which are open to interrogation

**professionalism and other-than-professionals.** All of this raises serious questions for contemporary professionalism - and not just in careers-work. The claims of professionalism commonly point to the qualifications that provide technical expertise, and to commitments that uphold ethical codes. But neither of these qualities are tidily distributed between professionals and other-than-professionals. Volunteers, informal mentors and community groups are as capable of offering each their own distinctive authority - but based on experience rather than expertise. They are also capable of maintaining a worthwhile ethic - though based on altruism rather than training. There is evidence for these claims: Charles Tilly (2006) shows how

'professional expertise and ethics' are valued in working out how to deal with challenging situations; but he is also able to show that there are ways in which such action is based on what he calls 'social conventions and shared narratives' - more informal ways of expressing commitments. Few argue that we should abandon professional expertise, but some, like Charles Leadbetter (2008), point to the usefulness of informal 'conviviality' - in societies where claims to exclusive expertise are increasingly suspect. Conviviality, in this and in its original use (Ivan Illich, 1973) does not exclude professional helpers - but it does reposition them.

The erosion of deference in contemporary society demands a wide-ranging look at professional-lay partnerships - between expertise and experience, formality and informality, control and negotiation, and between ethics and altruism. Appendices four-to-six show that careers advisers are aware of this. One in particular - at the end of a long list of requirements for an effective programme - envisages students and clients both...

*....connected to other learning they are engaged in*

but at the same time...

*...supported by on going careers service.*

But the who-does-what questions that spring from that aspiration need a wider basis for settling, than a narrow concern with competitive positioning. We need other ways-of-seeing.

## **enquiry - questions for an emerging research agenda**

This closing section of 'bases for action' is pivotal to the whole - it probes our research agendas. We are arguing, throughout these pages, that images of careers are influenced by, and influence, both the ideas we work with and the realities we take to be important. We have also pointed to how the images we work with can frame the concepts which shape our resolution of research findings - both what it finds, and what it does not find (p.14f.). This section develops an account of research which, at every stage, redirects our curiosity. But it looks for no straight-line between research findings and their resolution, it uses findings in a more-reflective way

**research questions:** The most critical phase in any enquiry is the framing of a research question. It directs the search for evidence. It might be a variation on one-or-more of these questions...

*'does the action have useful **outcomes**?'*

*'what **expectations** does it meet?'*

*'what seems to **cause** which of these **effects**?'*

*'does anything point to **possibilities** for further **development**?'*

All teachers and advisers are, in this sense, researchers - none of us can reasonably avoid this kind of reflection. And, of course, we share these questions with other areas of enquiry - in basic research, action research, evaluation, and progress monitoring. In all this, what we have been calling 'ways-of-seeing' become 'ways-of-looking' - image shapes ideas, which frame questions. All research methodology follows from this: method must be capable of detecting what the framework suggests might be there.

So, we now have questions about questions. They are rooted in: the images we have been examining; the scope that they are capable of expressing; and the extent to which they reflect ideas for what is found, and may be found. Some are sketched-out in table six.

table six  
questioning research questions

questions about...	...can look for data which is...
(1) <b>...outcomes:</b>	on impact for competitiveness? / easier to detect? / quantify? / interpret? / for exploratory journeying? / harder?
(2) <b>...expectations:</b>	on fitness to student- and client-expectations? / adviser? / broader? / possibility of disagreement? / conflicts?
(3) <b>...causes and effects:</b>	on diagnosing employability? / probing the observable? / including well-being? / one thing affecting another?
(4) <b>...possible development:</b>	on reforming <i>status-quo</i> ? / transferring good practice? / probing possibilities? / reforming new action?

You and your partners can use the questions posed by table six as a basis for characterising any research report whose authors seek to influence you.

**developing agendas:** There is a narrative here - the story unfolds as each new set of questions is posed. Questions on outcomes and expectations look for the value of the work. They seek 'summative' evidence - which sums-up the basis for deciding whether the work is worth supporting. This is important to those who need to know whether it has any *impact*, and whether it *fits* to what people expect of it. But questions on causes-and-effects push the research agenda on. They look for how the work can be improved. They therefore seek 'formative' evidence - which can inform changes in the work and point to how it might be reformed. It is important to people who need to know how to *diagnose* what works, and what possibilities there are for further *reform*. The telling of this story, therefore, highlights four key concepts: 'impact', 'fitness', 'diagnosis' and 'reform'. Together they focus segments on a spectrum of research agendas.

### summative agendas

- 1 **impact:** looks for evidence of outcomes which shows that something is being achieved. For example, Deirdre Hughes and others (2002) collate evidence of learning outcomes, participation rates, job-search, success, and of outcomes for the economy.
- 2 **fitness:** looks for evidence of value, but sets that evidence in context. The context is what others expect - expressed by policy-generated performance indicators, or in the views of stakeholders. For example, the OECD *Review of Career Guidance Policies* (2003) reports on what guidance providers and their managers think important - and frames its description of the work in those terms.

### formative agendas

- 3 **diagnostic:** looks for evidence not just of what happens, but how and why things happen as they do. It means wondering about the causes and effects in how things work out. For example, Jenny Bimrose and her colleagues (2004) disentangle how guidance works out in people's lives - including asking why it doesn't work out as careers workers assume or intend.
- 4 **reform:** takes a further step, by looking for evidence to support development work. An influential example was set up by The National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling (NICEC) using the findings of its research (Law and Watts, 1977) to suggest further developments in careers work. A contemporary parallel to that approach is HECSU's (2009) PROP project - 'Putting Research Outcomes into Practice'.

**bad-news values.** Summative enquiries look for good news. But, in contemporary conditions, we need to think more - not just on whether and why we deserve support, nor even on whose expectations we are meeting. We need to know more about how our work should and can respond to change. A feature of that enquiry is asking why things do not work out in the same useful way for everybody? It can mean probing for disappointing news - including not finding what we know we might have found. These are ways in which research can signpost how we can make good use of bad news.

**uses of metaphor in posing questions:** We need, of course, summatively to know what kinds of things can come out of work, before we can even begin formatively to ask how that happens and where it leads. The case here is that, at all stages of that unfolding agenda, we need now to pay more attention to how change is reframing what we look for. Journeying images are more comprehending of layer-upon-layer change dynamics in contemporary lives.

And so, as table three first suggested, what people do, and may usefully do, is - increasingly - better described in terms of...

- ... **surprise** - more usefully than performance;
- ... **horizons** - more usefully than matching;
- ... **companions** - more usefully than coaching;
- ... **discovery** - more usefully than winning;
- ... **change-of-mind** - more usefully than of habit-of-mind;
- ... **well-being** - more usefully than achievement;
- ... **the unforeseeable** - more usefully than prescribed next steps.

This emerging agenda poses increasingly demanding versions of what have always been our basic research questions.

**uses of metaphor in answering questions:** If the terms in which we pose research questions are the most important stage in any programme, then the terms in which we frame our answers run a close second. There is no straight-line from finding evidence to resolving conclusions. But there is a difference between over-hasty resolution and evasion. Some research reports read as though they are primarily addressed to an academic audience and wholly for intellectual purposes. It can seem to the rest of us that they are of little other use or interest.

But even the academic agenda is in for some rethinking. Research methodology (Louis Cohen and others, 2000) is itself moving on. It is prepared to acknowledge that where an hypothesised effect occurs in reality - that is where an anticipated practical outcome is achieved - that can have validating value. Effective implementation can carry as much intellectual freight as successful replication. This means that being practical can be relevant to a purely intellectual discourse.

But intellectual discourse is not our priority. Our people need to know things in order to know what to do about them. Furthermore the people who need to know aren't one group: enquiry, whether for summative or formative purposes, is for the use of more than one group of stakeholders.

We therefore need to learn how to set the findings of research in terms that are accessible to the range of our stakeholders. It will mean customised versions of what we find - differently framed for different audiences. It will usefully be able to call upon pertinent metaphorical images. And it will require the full use of media - journals and pamphlets, posters and press, handbooks and development material - in hardcopy and digitally.

## which way is forward?

This examination of career images, ideas and realities has signposted possibilities for the future development of careers work.

### by positioning

It does not reject the value of seeing ourselves as enabling students and clients to position themselves for competitive advantage in the labour market. That image locates careers work in what seems an advantageous position: lining up with policy concern for the economy; making close contact with high-level government and business interests; logging gains that are readily verifiable and generally applauded. Such alliances seem clearly to assert the value of what we do - strengthening our hold on our own position. These are powerful motives and enticing rewards. And trying to argue against helping individuals to become winners would be counter-cultural. Some organisations and some students and clients look for nothing more than this kind of help.

But there are limitations in the positioning metaphor. In current labour-market conditions some high-flyers are re-aligning their aspirations in ways which affect other people's chances of success. Offering guidance help with that process may do little more than shift both parties in the pecking order for available opportunities. In this respect the current labour market is a zero-sum game - one person's gain entails another's loss. And it seems likely to remain so for some time. If we can enable students and clients to be winners, we are - for their immediate future - doing well by them. But that is all we are doing: it is far from clear that we are improving the economy, it is not obvious that we are rebalancing social equity, and it is plain that we are pushing for shorter-term advantage rather than for longer-term understanding. That is training, it is not education.

### by journeying

On a journey people are engaged in wider-ranging reflection: on the how things are, and why they change; on what they do, and how they might do things differently; on how one thing leads to another, and what meaning those consequences can have. And, so, these ways-of-seeing help in a world where economic, social, cultural and environmental change is accelerating and critical. There has never been a time when people more needed to know what is going on and what they can sustainably do about it. Furthermore, the diversification of travelling partners can be useful where deference to entrenched élites is being eroded, and people are looking for alternative sources of help. But the links with policy interests are different: they focus on personal-and-social well-being, and quality-of-life; they equip people for flexibility, and a basis for responding to change; and they set working life in an agenda for social cohesion, and a sense of social-and-global membership.

But there are few tick-box answers to the questions that such work raises. And it proposes a wider range of links in our work than we have been used to managing. It means that progress is more difficult to negotiate, needing deeper levels of understanding between partners, and calling on the working of new organisational and networking arrangements. And so the journeying metaphor may be counter-cultural. But that makes it the more necessary to learn how to work with images that make it more recognisable and more engaging.

### **paradigm shuffle**

'Paradigm shift' is an overused phrase. In our field it is used by some who have done no more than decorate conventional practice with entertaining bells and flattering whistles. But, in Thomas Kuhn's (1962) originating use of the term, it is a deeper and more pervasive way-of-seeing. When Nicolaus Copernicus finally convinced us that we are not at the centre of everything, that changed the way we see ourselves and everything else - forever. A paradigm shift, shifts everything. Charles Darwin and Albert Einstein similarly disturbed the way we see ourselves in the order of things. In all cases, any new action we take is the result, not the cause, of that paradigm shift. It changes, not just how we see things, but how we do things. Forget the heroic talk: a paradigm shift is not something we do to ideas, it is something that ideas do to us.

This study may shuffle in hopeful anticipation of a shift. There is enough here to cause us to suppose that we need one. And seeing careers in terms which resonate with the two metaphors helps - it illuminates our position in our world, and it suggests ways of acting on that realisation. It is also well-timed - an educator's management of the relationships between image, idea and reality was never more critical.

People of a certain age may recognise some familiar thinking in what we have set out here. But this is no argument for finding a way back to anything. There were also forerunners - ancient and medieval - to what Nicolaus, Charles and Albert had to say. But paradigm shifts are not regressive; they are curious, courageous and - like careers work - inventive.

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the evidence

appendix one:  
definitions of careers education  
student views

positioning	mixed	travelling
<p><i>understand what you want from a career and what you need for it i.e. skills etc. also asking the question if you match the career requirements</i></p> <p><i>maximise their <b>performance</b> for anything related to <b>hunting</b> for a job</i></p> <p><i>possible jobs available to you and how to go about achieving your desired career - information and advice on a number of areas such as, CVs, numeracy and psychometric testing</i></p> <p><i>building a skills base around which one will establish a career</i></p>	<p><i>student is made aware of all key points and options available to them</i></p> <p><i>provide information and advice on a number of areas</i></p> <p><i>aware of different career options that are available to them</i></p> <p><i>options available in the work after and during their study - advice about the requirements and benefits for individual career paths</i></p>	<p><i>information on possible careers that they could be suited - looks at <b>a wide range</b> of career options for the individual, giving them relevant information on <b>each career path</b></i></p>

appendix two:  
a good session  
student views

positioning	mixed	travelling
<p><i>should be subject specific, possibilities available for your chosen career - how the process is structured, specific requirements, achievements, personal qualities needed</i></p> <p><i>it should entail everything that is vital to securing a good job - advice on how to apply, CV, which job to apply for and how to tailor the specific's for that job</i></p>	<p><i>specific to the individuals attending as well as relevant information for everyone e.g. CV's and covering letters information - input where people are unsure of their options - information on places to go to get more information</i></p> <p><i>information giving a basic overview of options, a basic guide to next steps and possible info from a few workers in different companies</i></p> <p><i>should be open - maybe have a career advisor, describe what we want to talk about and then maybe have a group discussion on it</i></p> <p><i>future options based on specific disciplines - rough 5 year plan</i></p> <p><i>more informal than formal - rather than someone telling the individual what they should do for a career, get as much input on what the individual actually wants to do</i></p>	

appendix three:  
the ideal  
student views

positioning	mixed	travelling
<p><i>how to get a head start in their career, how to enhance employability</i></p> <p><i>clear and concise understanding of how to apply for a job - clarity in what and how to write one's CV - understanding of what companies look for in a graduate student</i></p> <p><i>provide them with confidence about the whole job application process</i></p> <p><i>insight into their own personalities and career options that would best suit them</i></p>	<p><i>knowledge of all their relevant job options</i></p> <p><i>knowledge of next steps to take</i></p> <p><i>options based on qualification, information about these options (e.g. salary, requirements, training etc) - information from workers about the pros and cons of their job</i></p>	<p><i>a rough idea of direction following study</i></p> <p><i>some sense of future path, guideline, career options that would best suit them</i></p>

**appendix four:**  
 definitions of careers education  
 adviser views

positioning	mixed	travelling
<p><i>how to manage personal and career development effectively and confidently - usually delivered to groups of students at similar stages in their University course... sometimes delivered to subject similar groups - outcomes tend to cover career management skills, making the most of opportunities to develop skills and experience while studying, networking, career research and presenting yourself effectively to potential employers or course provider - may be assessed as part of the formal curriculum</i></p> <p><i>process whereby students gain a clear understanding of the career process – steps, skills and strategies needed to be successful - and are motivated to take responsibility to manage their own future - and are appropriately and successfully <b>challenged</b> to get off their backsides and do something now to get the process going</i></p>	<p><i>needs to acknowledge that, unlike curriculum knowledge, students are at different stages of self awareness and understanding so individuals need to access what is relevant for their own development - conveys that decision making is a process and not a tick-box exercise so students can constantly monitor their progress</i></p>	

appendix five:  
a good session  
adviser views

positioning	mixed	travelling
	<p><i>career aspirations and goals - information regarding work experience and the benefit - helping students to prepare for job applications - letting them know what's involved and going through CVs and covering letters</i></p> <p><i>awareness of key career and employment issues: personal skills and motivations profiling and <b>mapping</b> - employment area profiles (including equal opportunities, promotion and skills development, working environments etc - the range of career opportunities - information research - <b>targeting</b> and exploiting opportunities - development of this awareness should occur through student-centred activities and study, allowing students to identify and follow their own specific career tracks and address issues of particular relevance to themselves (e.g. how to gain experience, how to impress at interview, how to return to a career/move to a career after a (degree) break etc - in short, careers education should be designed to encourage student ownership of the processes</i></p>	<p><i>how their developing skills-base can be best be utilised to further their career plans - gives students the opportunity to <b>explore a range</b> of occupations and to understand how versatile the transferable-skills base might be in career management</i></p> <p><i>providing structured knowledge, advice, skills and training to allow someone to successfully own and manage/create their work choices throughout their life</i></p> <p><i>preparing learners for their future careers; remembering: that they may know what they want to do and the job they may be doing in the future may not exist yet</i></p>

appendix six:  
the ideal  
adviser views

positioning	mixed	travelling
	<p><i>include but not exclusively be interesting, engaging, motivating, empowering, informing and would enable students to move on with their career planning</i></p> <p><i>clear learning outcome - delivered to students who understand the benefits of the course and are motivated to engage with it - well structured to include a variety of teaching and learning styles - timely, delivered at the right time for participants, and taking an effective length of time - in a convenient and appropriate location - makes good and appropriate use of learning technology - connected to other learning they are engaged in - supported by on going careers service</i></p>	<p><i>interactive; informative - challenging to make them reflect and question - interesting - instructive, so they feel they've acquired new knowledge or a new perspective - all of this to be based on discussion, group talks, verbal and post-it feedback - presentation of relevant (as defined by students) feedback - should have evaluation</i></p> <p><i>context and relevance clearly stated - enjoyable and thought provoking i.e. 'sowing seeds' to stimulate further action after the session - mixture of delivery methods, perhaps external speakers</i></p>

**appendix seven:**  
 definitions of careers education  
 tutor views

positioning	mixed	travelling
<p><i>participants feel able to manage their career development - understand the <b>impact</b> that their skills, values and interests have on their career plans - understand the significance of career research and how to conduct it effectively, thoroughly and actively feel confident that they can make plans and put them into action - know and understand how to communicate effectively with potential employers and course providers - be able to review their career progress and refine plans accordingly - know how to find and access and have high levels of trust in resources available to support their career development</i></p>	<p><i>raise confidence and self esteem - identify networks and key decision-makers - reflect and articulate their achievements - identify gaps in their knowledge, skills - have willingness to act upon them, when they are ready</i></p>	

appendix eight:  
a good session  
tutor views

positioning	mixed	travelling
	<p><i>making clear its relevance to both their long-term planning and their short-term goal - tailored to the time available and the size and interests of the student cohort - those facilitating the session would have confidence in its value - students should come to a position where they see each session as merely the starting point to an avenue of investigation or skills development</i></p> <p><i>student-centred activities are key (e.g. team-working activities, role-plays, interaction with tutors, use of on-line materials and/or hard copy resources - workshops and/or seminar-style sessions are preferable to a 'traditional' lecture - the layout of the teaching space is also therefore very important - the tone of the session needs to be honest and upfront - there is little use in trying to persuade students that careers education is the most exciting thing in the world, but it is worthwhile helping them to realise that careers education is extremely important</i></p>	<p><i>informative, challenging, thought provoking and hopefully enthuse the student to want to find out more - instill the importance of taking ownership of your career</i></p>

appendix nine:  
the ideal  
tutor views

positioning	mixed	travelling
<p>awareness of their skills, <i>strengths and weaknesses</i> - aware of how they <i>fit into a team</i> - able to convey information about themselves verbally (as in interviews) and in writing (as in CVs, application forms, letters, emails) - aware of the types of jobs for which they might be suited - make a plan of SMART actions needed to get from where they are now to getting an interview for and/or work experience in the type of job in which they are interested - feel confident that they have as good a CV as possible and know how to <i>perform</i> to the best of their ability in an interview - know where to get more help and debriefing after interview- know what to do when they get offered a job - if a specific job is seen as a stepping stone to something else, to know how to ensure that they maximize its benefit - know when it's time to start looking for another job!</p>	<p>understand the need to continually identify and reflect upon aspects of work they enjoy, they are good, they are weak but want to improve, they do not enjoy or would like to avoid - aware of the career opportunities available to them both <i>in the short</i> and medium term - prepared for all aspects of the selection process - know techniques to help develop their career - feel excited about their career potential'</p> <p>enjoy the session, and see its relevance - students would grow in confidence, in their skills, talents and marketability - be inspired to carry out independent work</p>	<p>awareness of the full range of career opportunities potentially open to them awareness of the range of information resources available - self-assessment of their own skills and <i>mapping</i> of their skills against employment profiles - awareness of the immediate (i.e. during their degree) opportunities for developing their profile (e.g. work/volunteer experience, skills training and development etc) - development of careers 'action plans' to be sustained beyond the duration of the course</p>