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Bill Law

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We are entitled to be surprised by the relatively low levels of policy support and media attention we get for our work. After all, careers work is about who gets to do what in society; and there is no more important question in social administration. You'd think we would have attracted a lot of attention and been awarded enough resources to help with that process.

We haven't. And this monograph argues that there is something that we can do about it. But, to succeed, we'll need to loosen our grip on some no-longer-useful habits-of-mind - which, from now on, would cramp our style.

1. We have learned how to defend our work in terms that may have worked well-enough for much of the twentieth century, but we can do better than that. We can make more use of our appreciation of the different ways in which people now live, work and – most of all – how they now learn.
2. It means thinking first about the people we help least well, because that is where we most pointedly understand our own effectiveness. When we can enable the most vulnerable to take sustainable command of their own career-management, then we can help everybody.
3. It all calls for more scope for curriculum, certainly more than can be squeezed into edge-of-timetable careers-education. We need a deeper and wider engagement with the whole curriculum, which will put us at its heart. And we now have an opportunity to make that move.

The way people manage their careers is changing. And, unless we make corresponding changes in the way we help, we risk losing credibility. And that is not just with policy and media people but with the people we're here to help. This monograph is, then, a case for structural reform of our work. It uses three terms for that work:

- > 'careers education and guidance' is the structure we have been using;
- > 'careers work' refers to where we are going with this work;
- > 'our work' refers to both.

This does not imply that careers workers are not helping - many are working heroically. But they are trying to fit the help they offer into structures that can no longer accommodate what now needs to be done. And much of it can only be done through curriculum.

The proposals are radical – they reach to the roots of our work. That means...

- ... questioning our assumptions – for example about 'self', 'opportunity', 'decision' and 'transition';
- ... suggesting that we can learn from 'the excluded' more than they have so-far learned from us;
- ... disentangling how we work with clients and students from how selectors and recruiters work with them;
- ... re-examining the principles on which we use curriculum.

Quick-and-easy it ain't. But you can get a first-take, by skipping the detail in the five panels – and coming back to them as you need to.

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three-brain career thinking

There has always been plenty to think about concerning careers. We need to know about the economy, its technologies, and what that means for people's employability. We need also to know about how people experience all of this - in terms of personal feelings, sought-after fulfilments, and the commitment of their abilities. And we need to work out what we can helpfully do and say about all of this. Every time you sit down with a client, or get started with a class, you are juggling with how these thoughts tumble over each other. No wonder you get tired – chasing three lines of brain work:

- > understanding **career development** requires you to know about the facts, factors and trends in the working world, and how people are ushered into it. That expertise sets out the demands made and rewards offered by working life, and it links that to the employability and needs of people seeking to advance their careers.
- > appreciating **career management** gives you a grasp of the meaning that those people give to all this. So it is about how they respond to career demands and offers. You need a sense of how that feeling-laden experience - in family, neighbourhood and social networking - shapes everything they learn and much of what they do.
- > offering **careers help** engages you in thinking about what you can do to help. Some of that thinking is immediate - here-and-now. For example you are constantly thinking about how to move on with a client or in a class. But much of this thinking is wider - about the schemes we need to design, the teams we need to support in making them work, and the networks into which we need to link that programme.

This is our work - engaging layered and dynamic thinking. Layered because there is always more than one thing going on. Dynamic because what happens in one way influences what can happen in another. These links and tensions - between career development, career management and careers work - are worked out in detail in *Learning from Experience* (Bill Law, 2006a).

But all is changing: changing economies and changing experiences require changing careers-work methods. But it is changing experience that now counts most. At the heart of our present concerns for the future of careers work is an appreciation of how the cultures of family, neighbourhood and social networking are changing. And their influence on what people do is intensifying. How all of this affects career management is worked out in detail in *Careers Education and Guidance – Out of the Box* (Bill Law, 2006b).

These dynamics mean that there can be no straight line from career-development expertise to careers-work planning. If people are changing the way they learn we must change the way we help.

Your work is tiring enough; but there really is some new thinking to do. It means reshaping how we structure our theories, looking again at the underpinning to policy, and drawing on a wider range of ideas than we have – in the past – tapped. And, if we are fully to maintain our contact with our field, we need elbow room for the resulting ideas for action.

rethinking for curriculum

New thinking throws up contrasts with past thinking. It may even expose some persistent habits-of-mind and some cherished assumptions. And that may cause us to re-examine ways of working that, perhaps, we have too-easily taken for granted. Could that be so? And, if so, how would we know?

panel one
agenda for reform

1:
**expertise - but
what about
experience?**

As professionals we value our hard-earned qualifications in career development - and we want that information-based expertise to be valued by others.

Fine - but are we sure we know enough about the changing experience of people making their own sense of career management?

2:
**policy - but
what about
culture?**

We are gratified by whatever attention policy gives us - and by the performance indicators which declare our importance.

But policy is a government response to change, particularly cultural change - so don't we need our own understanding of how these things are happening and what that means for our work?

3:
**impact - but
what about
diagnosis?**

We welcome research reports of the good-news impact of our work – for example, on the 'economic benefits' of guidance.

But, in the real world, the best we can hope for is that our work will be good for some people, some of the time – and doesn't that mean being able to diagnose why it works, and also why it doesn't work for everybody?

4:
**central - but
what about
local?**

Accountability requires some central standards for what we do – the fear is of a 'post-code lottery' of variable standards.

But there are also post-code realities - and changing cultures means fragmenting cultures, so don't we need room for locally-creative responses to neighbourhood needs?

5:
**inner life - but
what about
other people?**

The idea that work is for individual psychological fulfilment is a common assumption informing what we do – reflected in our personal methods and individual assessments.

But people have social as well as personal reasons to work, so do we pay enough attention to how it is always done with, for, and in response to other people – isn't that what work means?

6:
**employability -
but what about
well-being?**

It seems obvious that our work is to enhance the chances of being employed – so we pay a lot of attention to linking people's abilities to meeting work's requirements.

But people search for a balance between doing their work and living their lives, speaking of their own and others' well-being – isn't that what people are now seeking to do?

7:
**knowing - but
what about
learning?**

Much of our expertise centres on how we help by showing our people impartial information and offering them reliable assessment – 'impartiality' is one of our catchphrases.

But the way people make up their minds about work is increasingly shaped by experience – doesn't that mean it's less about what we show them, more about how we help them to scrutinise what they find out for themselves?

The most compelling implications of the ideas on the right are for curriculum. And so....

8:
**face-to-face -
but what about
curriculum?**

When most people think about our work they think of individual help being offered in face-to-face settings – the dominance of the term 'information, advice and guidance' expresses this expectation.

But these issues demand more space and time to find out, sort out, check out and work out what people need to know if they are to take command of their own lives – don't we need more than careers-education-and-guidance for that?

None of the reforming ideas (right of panel one, previous page) necessarily involve a rejection of what we have been doing (left). Each is an extension of that work. It is not that we have been wrong, it is just that we have been occupying too small a space to do ourselves anything like justice.

So what about curriculum? How much elbow room can we find there – and how can it help? What can a well-resourced, carefully-designed and skilfully-delivered curriculum actually do to help? And what will that mean for careers-education-and-guidance?

which way is forward?

The case for a radical new look at curriculum is three-fold. It argues for the needs to enable people...

- (a) **to gather** the knowledge they need;
- (b) **to escape** the traps that entrenched knowledge lays for them; and
- (c) **to take control** of the whirligig dynamics of contemporary knowledge.

These are big challenges to careers education and guidance. But they are not out-of-line with what our work has always been about. This is the way forward for careers work.

table one *the challenge*

(a) **needed knowledge:** We live in more-and-more demanding times. Across-the-board - from global warming, through working life, to diet - people need answers to questions: 'what is going on?', and 'what can I usefully do about it?'. The need for these answers is deeply embedded in the human condition. Knowing how to answer them has survival value. With little else to give us an edge, ignoring them is a good way to achieve extinction. 'Twas ever so, but - in all our life as a species - there was never a time when people have so-much needed to find out what is going on. And - from carbon footprints to supersizing - to work out what they can do about it. All is work related, and few services can offer more help with questions like these than our work.

(b) **entrenched knowledge.** Communities are becoming more isolated from one another. Whether suburban or gated, village or settlement, ghetto or gentrified inner-city, people increasingly live in enclaves. Neighbourhoods are becoming more socially and culturally separated - their people insulated from knowledge of others. And so their ideas about what to believe, to value and to expect are different in different localities. Those narratives, their media, and their use of the net, are increasingly shaped by familiar experience. The bases for action are fragmenting – sometimes for the advantage of their people, sometimes for the disadvantage. And so, that locally-entrenched knowledge encloses life chances. There is no bigger challenge to our work.

(c) **knowledge and control:** Rate of change means that knowledge can easily be out-of-date by the end of the day on which it is released. To keep up, people must continuously update themselves. And they need to do that both on what is so and on what works. It's hard to keep up. But there's more: knowledge comes with commercial, cultural and religious spin. And that means claims for attention are – at the extreme – demands for allegiance. So people need to know how to stay in touch with who is trustworthy, what is useful, and whether it is worthwhile. Keeping up and staying in touch are demands for learning-to-learn – how to find things out and how to question them. And people need that as much for career management as for anything.

It all needs more than occasional face-to-face work and more than hit-and-run classes.

But we are not the only educators facing these challenges. Anybody who is serious about learning for personal and social development must deal with them. PSD is about enabling learning so that students know what to do. And, these days, that is a life-wide and life-long challenge.

People need to know what to do about working life and wages, about fun and parenthood, about substances and obesity, about spending and debt, about bullying and allegiances, about crumbling communities and FaceBook disclosures, about sweatshops and shopping, and about the planet and a carbon footprint. Keeping up and staying in touch is a challenge for us all.

And careers work links to it all. How people stand in relation to any of these issues has consequences for how they stand in relation to work. Life-style, learn-style and work-style are inter-dependent – what anybody does about any of them shapes what is possible for all.

It all generates worrying headlines and political agonising. And we have something useful to say about it all - we rate a hearing.

(a) needed knowledge - global realities. The realities that give these issues their urgency are global. And global change is reaching us in three waves:

- > **economic:** careers education and guidance has long been aware of the consequences of globalisation for wealth creation;
- > **cultural:** our work has been slower to pick up on the impact that the global economy and its technologies have on how people learn for life;
- > **environmental:** we need to become more aware of the carbon footprint of work in a global economy.

We were quick to pick up on what global trade means for competitiveness, employability and standards. All have featured in what we say about the economic benefits of careers education and guidance.

But policy and practice are now taking account of cultural changes. The consequences flow both into how people use the internet to how they engage in local gossip. It calls up talk of the impact on our work of social networking, work-life balance and trust.

panel two
culture and career

Global economic development is made possible by digital communication techniques. But those same techniques reach into cultural as well as economic life. *Careers Education and Guidance – Out of the Box* (Bill Law, 2006b) describes how those changes offer people more ways of finding out what is going on, and of working out what they can do about it.

ways of seeing. Cultural change influences the way people learn:

- > **beliefs:** People can access more images, impressions and narratives – and all shape their beliefs about what is going on. Those sources range from downloaded impressions, through stories gathered from the media, to the local exchange of versions of what they find - in gossip.
- > **values:** Much of what people find in these ways is persuasive – it points to what people should do about things. These are social, commercial and religious messages - about *what* is worth acquiring, *what* is worth doing, and *who* is worth paying attention to. And, in all cases, *what* and *who* is not!

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- > **expectations:** All of this readily forms into impressions, narratives and mind-maps of how things are - 'out there' in the world. But also - 'in here' in inner life - they shape ideas about where a person stands in relation to what is going on. And that conjures up ideas about what a person can expect to get out of life.

What people believe, and what they value are 'ways of seeing' – these are cultural realities. They have as much significance for our work as does the economic 'bottom line'. And they touch on all the issues for people's well-being.

consequences for us. What people learn from this is deeply embedded – the logos, icons and narratives become part of learning about reality and identity. They challenge expert analyses of 'opportunity', 'self', 'decision' and 'transition'. All four terms change in meaning – to the point where we may need new terms. This is as important to the future of our work as any ideas we may cherish about the impartiality of our information or the validity of our psychometrics. We no longer live in a world which trusts claims to exclusive expert authority.

We need to see what we do in this wider context. It calls for more broadly-based ideas for more widely-conceived action. We can learn from philosopher Onora O'Neil (2002) on trust, and the way in which deference to authority is being eroded. Social commentator Madeleine Bunting (2004) sets out how work-life balance is becoming more of an issue - with people increasingly reluctant to take on work that harms their health, their families, their communities, the developing world, any animal-life, or the environment. And big-picture sociologist Zygmunt Baumann (2000) shows how a contemporary a sense of identity is as likely - now - to be formed around that wider search for well-being as it is around any work role.

consequences for career. What Gideon Arulmani (2007) calls 'pride and prejudice' is, in gritty detail, as good as any account of the importance to career management of cultural ways of seeing. Gideon shows how this thinking is critical for careers work in the developing world. It is no less important for what we do in the neighbourhoods, villages and settlements of the so-called developed world.

In all these cases managing a career is entwined in matrices of tension-laden needs, feelings, attachments, and allegiances. People are under pressure, they are increasingly conflicted and anxious. It has been possible, in the past, to think of the future as a promise. Thinking about career was exciting. But, for too many people now, the future has become a threat. People's well-being is damaged. And well-being (or, as it is sometime called, 'happiness') is increasingly a policy concern (Richard Layard, 2005).

pride in skills and stereotyping prejudices. Is lack of skill the most damaging inhibitor of career management? After all employability is the successful acquisition of skills, and not acquiring them blocks entry to the working world.

Yes. But a cultural analysis asks what more might be going on. It suggests, for example, that some people hold back from even trying to gain skills. That would need a deeper explanation of what is happening. And talk of beliefs, values and expectations points to stereotyping. Stereotyping is the idea that certain kinds of activity are not appropriate for certain kinds of people. There are beliefs (for example about men and

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women), values (about masculinity and femininity) and expectations about (who should do what). And there are other stereotypes – similarly categorising race, ethnicity, social background, sexual orientation and immigrants. All are culturally acquired, and form deeply entrenched habits-of-mind – sometimes from the toddler years on.

Lack of skills certainly blocks recruitment, but stereotypes do more basic damage - they choke off aspiration. A cultural analysis of career management will cause us to look again at the influence of such habits-of-mind. It could not more directly relate to what Gideon Arulmani calls 'pride and prejudice'.

The challenge to contemporary careers work is to work with how such habits-of-mind become change-of-mind. This is not to say that skills do not matter. But is certainly to say that they are not at the heart of matter.

Enabling people to manage their careers has become a bigger task than can be taken on by careers-education-and-guidance. People need to know more - more than how to locate and move into a job, a training opportunity or a place in higher education. They need to appreciate how their wider life is setting them up for that move, and how that move is setting them up for their wider life. And whether for good or for ill. And what they can do about it. We won't reach that with tick-box schedules and squeezed-in lessons.

These trends in what people know, and what they seek to know, are pervasive and dynamic enough to have radically reshaped recent policy ideas for curriculum. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA, 2008) has relocated what we have been calling 'careers education'. The new QCA term is 'economic well-being' - referring to both how career and personal finances are managed.

It sets our work in a broader spectrum. In the broadest terms the QCA anticipates links between well-being and all parts of the curriculum. But, more immediately, the authority is positioning economic well-being for close links with personal well-being, with education for citizenship and with religious education. That concept of well-being can – and should - become wider still, including not just economic- and personal-well-being but civil-, spiritual-, physical-, and environmental-well-being (Bill Law, 2007).

All of this is a departure for policy. Policy has, for two decades, been pretty-well exclusively concerned with maintaining high standards in response to economic imperatives. The current reforms do not abandoned that focus, but they do set alongside standards this emerging concern that curriculum should be seen by students as relevant to their lives. It is, in this way, setting up two drivers for future curriculum development: (1) the importance to the economy of raising learning standards; and (2) the importance to society of learning for well-being.

The QCA is handing us an opportunity to set up well-managed and adequately-resourced learning for life. The consequences for our work will be far-reaching. They will rework the partnership between guidance and curriculum. We know what we can achieve through career guidance. We need to be know more about what else is needed, and about what only curriculum can provide.

(b) entrenched knowledge - stratified communities. There is another dimension to all of this. It has to do with 'who gets access to what opportunities?'

Panel two (previous pages) has outlined how, when they come to us, people carry culturally-acquired beliefs, values and expectations. Panel four (following pages) points to how what people gather - in that way - liberates some, and entraps others.

Cultural beliefs, values and expectations are mostly picked up informally - from the people we spend most time with, the media we pay most attention to, and the gossip we most engage in. And all of this applies whether we come from some inner-city ghetto, some leafy suburb, some sequestered parkland, or wherever.

But the point here is that people from different backgrounds carry different beliefs, values and expectations. We sometimes call it 'baggage' – as though it slows them down, holds them back, and needs getting rid of. But the facts are that, while baggage can hold some people back, other beliefs, values and expectations help other people on. In that case we call it 'cultural capital' – as though it were a kind of currency that can pay for a ticket to enter a sought-after life.

The accumulation of this baggage and that currency is a generation-on-generation effect. It draws separating lines between some backgrounds, where sought-after access is granted, and others where that access is denied. The term for the way those lines are drawn in a society is 'social stratification'. But panel three shows how, in recent decades, the lines are changing.

But it still means that what we say to our clients and students, show them, and invite them to do, is understood by them in terms of what they already believe, value and expect. Any helper who is serious about enabling well-being cannot afford to ignore this.

panel three
'them' and 'us'

People's chances of well-being start in the social enclaves which are a home to their backgrounds. We all have some sense of who 'we' are, and how we are different from 'other people'. That sense is gathered in the neighbourhood people inhabit, the upbringing they experience, the informal learning they acquire, and the beliefs, values and expectations they form. All of these are cultural influences. And all are starting-points for career management: this sense of 'them' and 'us' influences what people do with their lives.

stratification. They are the core dynamics of social stratification. Social stratification means more than that we share a multicultural society. It points to how group membership can entrap people, by exerting generation-on-generation effects. High levels of stratification mean that where you start is where you wind up. Low levels of stratification allows for social mobility between different strata of opportunity – born into one, work in another. High levels of stratification allow us to predict - within narrow limits - a child's destiny. And we can do that on the basis of *social* origin - rather than on the basis of *personal* potential. It is – in this sense – an 'inherited' effect. Social stratification is both unfair and wasteful.

We need to know more about how this inherited effect works. Poverty plainly features (Robert Cassen and Geeta Kingdon, 2007). But poverty is not the only factor, and it may not be the most significant. Indeed there is a two-way interaction between cultural and economic position: (1) people celebrate a culture they can afford, and (2) their cultural expectations impact their economic prospects.

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The trailblazer for our work's understanding of all this is Paul Willis (1977). He documents the experience of a group of working-class lads. Though psychologically different, they are bound together by shared experience. And, at the time of Paul's telling, they are *en route* to similar destinies. What they say and do causes them, in his words, 'to collude in their own downfall'. Nowadays we would say 'their own exclusion'.

variations. But Paul Willis's capacity for gritty story-telling is rounded enough to permit a subtle analysis of exclusion. It has opened up a continuing discourse (Nadine Dolby and others, 2004). And there is plenty of evidence for the kind variability that Paul signposts. Exclusion is not one thing:

1. with compliance: For example some of the so-called excluded appear to exclude themselves, or – at least – to accept that they are weak competitors in the meritocratic dynamics of today's working world. It is argued by Peter Saunders (2006) that a modern economy sifts out those who have not inherited the cognitive equipment for contemporary employability – he means that they are not brainy enough to work, but brainy enough to know it. Peter argues that is why resulting exclusions are accepted, both by the 'included' and 'excluded'. (He does not mention the other form of self-exclusion – an escape by the privileged into gated self-protection. This does not fit his general case – which is premised on open competition not closed protection.)

2. with resentment: Unfairness of access to opportunity provokes some of 'the excluded' into opposition. Opposition is expressed as resentment about what is happening to them and their people. There are reports of anger at watching others move, it seems quite readily and naturally, into opportunities which they know are not accessible to them (Geoff Dench, 2003). That resentment can spill over into crime (Alan France, 2007) and – in extreme - into violence (Armartya Sen, 2006). But that does not mean that their perceptions are unreliable, or their allegiances unjustified, or that they cannot argue their case (Jeremy Seabrook, 1978; Geoff Dench and others, 2006).

3. with change: Attributing either stupidity or rage to Paul Willis's lads would be an abuse of the data. Some excluded just do not get excited about what they see in the favoured lives of people 'not like us' (Paul Willis, 2002). Other work has shown that these new encounters may become significant and exciting when they represent unforeseen ways forward in people's lives. Those possibilities might be recognised in new models to admire, unexpected sources of feedback to take on board, and more aspiring expectations to respect. It all means that questions can be posed, experience can be interrogated, and unforeseen possibilities can be probed. In a phrase – 'habits-of-mind' are challenged - even those habits-of-mind which are culturally-acquired, and long-standing (Bill Law, 1981).

changing dynamics of stratification. There is, then, significant variation in what happens in the lives of the excluded. And some of it suggests routes to upward social mobility. But despite this, stratifying barriers in British society are not weakening.

There is a history. During the middle decades of the twentieth century an expanding economy allowed much upward social mobility. People could move from less privileged starting points into the newly-created opportunities. Plenty of 'room at the top'. Some of Paul's lad's contemporaries moved into jobs that their families would have not thought possible for 'the likes of us'.

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But those 'winners' did not imply other 'losers'. They do now: current and foreseeable economic conditions have made career-management a zero-sum game. It means that some people's upward social mobility leads to other people's downward. So there is more pressure on who 'wins' and who 'loses'. The pressure mounts where the able children of less privileged backgrounds threaten to displace the less-able children of the more privileged. The practicalities of how this is managed by the well-heeled and well-connected is well documented. Both the economics and the manoeuvring is explained by John Goldthorpe (2005).

John's work explains why the lines of social stratification are hardening. A recent survey of life-chances shows that the not-so-bright children of privileged backgrounds overtake the bright children of under-privileged early in life. Indeed, they are ahead by the age of seven (Blanden and Machin, 2007).

We don't know enough about the contemporary dynamics of stratification. But it is hard to escape the impression that we should be looking for the causes and effects in the encounters, attachments, allegiances and memberships that form people's cultural background. Careers workers need to take on board the beliefs, values and expectations that those memberships express - and how their expansion can play out in career management. If we don't understand the cultural causes we cannot work with the career-management effects.

challenge to careers work. But, it seems, social stratification can be hard to talk about. The strata are becoming more subtle: we used to think of all of this in terms of class, race, gender and migration. But the influences don't now work in that crude way. Exclusion is experienced by some working class, some blacks, some women, some believers and some migrants – some, but not all. Talk of background influence must describe more cross-flowing currents and vortices in the way culture influences behaviour. The old categories no longer work.

It is difficult to talk about in another way. Jeremy Seabrook (1978) documents a failure of both policy and commerce to get to grips with the issues. He attributes this failure to an unwillingness to step outside politically acceptable characterisations of social groups. The characterisations we need to work with are sensitive. And today's debate on multi-culturalism seems to be running into the same kind of evasion that Jeremy Seabrook noticed (Lenny James 2002; David Goodhart, 2006).

But stratification is a challenge that workers cannot evade. The people who are most vulnerable to the dynamics of arbitrary exclusion are least likely to seek our help. That fact crops up in a MORI (2005) survey of UK user-attitudes to careers guidance. The survey shows that less privileged groups are less likely to approach us; and, if they do, they are less likely to find what we offer useful. It seems that we are offering a service which is least used by those who most need it.

That is a challenge to our credibility which we cannot afford to ignore.

Stratification is a reminder of our core question: 'who gets to do what in society?'. But stratification causes us to ask a supplementary: 'And on what basis?' – that is 'on what kind of say-so do some people get more-rewarding careers while others don't?'. It is a big question for our work – because we are in a position to play some part in that say-so.

But we know less about how these life chances work than we need to know. Knowing how best to locate careers work in the curriculum require answers to question like these.

And so, repositioning ourselves for reform means repositioning ourselves on the spectrum of research agendas.

The spectrum of research on our work is already wide. It ranges from enquiries into what useful impact the work has, to enquiries into what we now need to do to improve practice. Most studies contain elements of more than one sector of that spectrum. Four are worth flagging:

- > **'impact' questions** – e.g. do careers education or guidance work in any useful way?
- > **'compliance' questions** – e.g. do they match anybody's hopes and expectations?
- > **'diagnostic' questions** – e.g. when and with whom do careers education or guidance work best?
- > **'practice-based' questions** - e.g. when they work well, why do they do so, and what can we do to make them work better?

Enquiries about impact show what value our work has. Examples of impact include whether our work puts clients and students in a better position - in terms of *whether* it sets them up for the decisions they need to make, *whether* they get on with what they now need to do in a more satisfactory way, and *whether* they are more likely to go on to manage their careers well. Summative evaluations, which show value-for-money returns on investment, are examples of impact enquiry. They list outcomes like these 'whethers'. The groups of people interested in impact enquiries include service managers, families, employers and students. They are stakeholders needing to know whether our work offers services worth offering, supporting or using.

Policy pressure has resulted in recent decades on a greater attention being paid to whether careers education and guidance has any economic impact for society. John Killeen's (1992) groundbreaking study poses that questions with a subtlety and rigour that has never been surpassed. Credible evidence that our work can show such gains, would be good news - not only useful to policy-makers, but also gratifying to providers.

Enquiries into compliance look into the extent to which the work responds to the expectations and anticipations of interested groups. For example, user-reaction surveys ask people how they feel about the help on offer. Customer surveys belong to this part of the enquiry spectrum. But our work is also made to answer to other expectations and assumptions. People who fund our work and people who commission the provision of our work have their own expectations. There are ready-made criteria to inform their decisions: targets, quality standards and learning outcomes set out what they believe to be indicators of the usefulness of our work. These then become our performance indicators.

We, the providers of careers education and guidance, have our own performance indicators. They are assumptions about 'good practice'. Performance indicators like these sometimes frame the recommendations made by enquiries into the value of our work. Much of the OECD review of careers guidance policies is based on criteria used by careers-guidance people and their managers. As they answer the questions they draw on these indicators of quality. Indeed, some of the indicators are implicit in the terms with which the questions are asked, and in the terms in which the answers are analysed (for example by Richard Sweet, 2003). The support that such studies offer to these assumptions is, of course, gratifying to the providers. But I'm not aware of any convincing evidence that shows that compliance with any of these performance indicators correlates positively with the useful impact of the work.

Enquiries for diagnosis are not satisfied with questions about *whether* careers education and guidance work, or even with its compliance with performance indicators. They probe for the *whys* and *wherefores* of what goes on between helpers and their clients and students. In particular they want to know what works well - with what issues, at what stages, in what settings, and for whom. It all needs much more detailed information, and it needs it in a form which shows how one thing leads to another – that

is in narrative form. Enquiries of this kind are big steps in the direction of practice-based research. The questions they pose are critical for people engaged in scheme, team and network-development for our work. Some such enquiries are episode-by-episode accounts of the experience of career-management theory. For example, Paul Willis's (1997) enquiry is both scholarly and theoretical. Although his work is a contribution to a sociological discourse, it also has clear implications for the way we do our work. And his writing is graphic enough to point to implications for practice. Other work in Paul's field is less usefully detailed; but gives big-time scholarly references and sets out theoretical abstractions.

Paul Willis is into cultural theory, his contribution to career-management theory is a bonus for us. But we have our own people looking much more directly into the complexities in our work and how that affects career management. Frans Meijers (2002, 2008) and Jenny Bimrose and her colleagues (2004) rate attention for work of this kind. Frans looks at students and client behaviour in the context of their cultural experience. His work explains a great deal about how policy-driven work helps – and why it does not. Jenny Bimrose's and her colleagues are disentangling how different approaches to guidance work differently for different groups of clients. It therefore points the way to understanding what sort of provision helps and does not help – and how that works different for different people. We need these kinds of evidence in order to expand our understanding of working with different cultural backgrounds, and – especially – working with its stratifying effects.

Enquiries to inform practice must go even further. Panels two and three point to what we need to know in order to enable people in their career management. It means appreciating how people are enabled to see beyond cultural inheritance – to imagine other possible selves in other possible futures. We need to be able to set that imagination in a narrative in which those realisations can become turning points. We don't know enough, for example, about how habit-of-mind becomes change-of-mind. Neither do we know enough about how that letting-go become a moving-on. We need to be able to set up a processes for students and clients to form all of this into a basis for useful, sustainable and fulfilling action – narrating, scrutinising and re-building the story.

But – most of all – we need to know how we do that, not just for the well-connected, but for all our people. It means knowing how to develop our work so that it helps different groups of clients and students, coming from different background experiences. And, so, we need to know, specifically, where our work works well among these groups, and where it works less well.

And we need to be able to apply that knowledge to our schemes, to our teams and to the networks that link all of this into our programmes. Formative evaluation – an enquiry into how our work can be improved – is part of this sector of enquiry. This part of that spectrum gathers practice-based evidence to improve evidence-based practice.

It requires that Paul Willis's narrative approach, is extended to show how students and clients deal with – or decline to deal with – the help offered to them. It is expensive detail to collect. We need to be able to develop a cost-effective narrative-based enquiry methods (Bill Law, 2008a).

The most telling stage in the setting up any enquiry project is the formulation of a research question. We have been looking at a wide range of ways of posing those questions. The process is shaped by language. Some of the language built into the spectrum of research is spread out in the table (following page). Differently positioned enquiries use different language. As the table illustrates, we are drawing on a mix of policy talk, theory talk and practical talk.

table two
research talk

impact enquiries	compliance enquiries	diagnostic enquiries	practice-based enquiries
'labour economy'	'quality standards'	'individual differences'	'helper contacts'
'competitiveness'	'performance targets'	'cultural backgrounds'	'user experiences'
'user employability'	'learning outcomes'	'social stratification'	'helper credibility'
'user skills'	'stakeholder expectations'	'work stereotypes'	'user narratives'

Much of that language comes to us from policy. Policy-talk has become dominant in speaking of our work: its language has become our language. But policy has begun to speak of culture. The green paper *Youth Matters* (DfES, 2005) is based on a useful analysis of contemporary change in how careers are managed. Nonetheless, it is in the nature of policy to take account of political acceptability. Both *Youth Matters* (DfES, 2005) and the QCA Review (2008), which substantially rests on *YM* thinking, nod at frequent intervals in the direction of dominant commercial and social interests. And so policy produces, at best, a filtered account of the bases for our action. And no profession can allow vested interests wholly to control the terms in which questions about our work are posed. We really don't need politicians and their apparatchiks to do our thinking for us. And we need our own control over our own research agenda.

But when it comes to our own vocabulary, much of careers education and guidance talk is based on psychology – particularly of individual differences. That thinking has given us personal-construct theories – ways of understanding the subtleties and dynamics of inner life. There has been a marriage (explained in panel four) between, on the one hand, these versions of differential psychology, and, on the other, labour-market economics. And the offspring of that marriage have been matching theories – ways of linking a free-standing self to an unproblematic opportunity. Paul Willis's work with wayward lads set up the first culturally-signposted challenge to that thinking. And, as panel two illustrates, with the opening of that door open, much of what we now need to understand is as likely to be expressed in the language of philosophy, sociology, cultural theory - and even well-founded journalism – as in the language of psychology and economics.

Moving from left to right on the table means taking on board more ways of understanding our work – expanding that language. Language is not just a means of communication: it provokes our curiosity, voices our questioning, and maps our progress. There is no sensible walk to walk without a signposting talk to talk. And the farther we walk along that line, the harder it is to imagine how we can move on except by serious reorientation of the uses of curriculum in careers work.

(c) knowledge and control – students keeping up and taking command. We have long understood that career management is not a one-off event. Nor is it a free-standing one. Panels two and three have, between them, signposted eight features of career management. Contemporary conditions are giving each of them an increasing urgency (following page).

Contemporary career management is:

1. **continuing**: episodes and scenes, in a story flowing out of earlier experience;
2. **social**: worked out with, for and in response to other people;
3. **informal**: drawing on other-than-professional sources of information and impression – especially in gossip and social networking;
4. **pressurised**: with social influences on the way all information and assessment is shaped;
5. **conflicted**: with to-and-fro pressures stemming from students' and clients' feelings, attachments and allegiances;
6. **life-wide**: linked into a life-work balancing of personal, social, physical, spiritual, civil and environmental well-being;
7. **life-long**: with consequences not just for 'me and now', but for anybody working people care for, or who will depend on them;
8. **changing**: where global dynamics bring about accelerating change in all of these ways.

There are massive implications for how people need to be enabled to manage all of this. But, like our clients, what we do is tied in with what other people do. We do not even have exclusive management of our core question – 'who gets to do what in society?'. Recruitment and selection people are asking the same question.

However, the eight factors of career management mean that the ways in which they and we work on the question are different. Panel four leads, step-by-step, to a characterisation of what sort of learning that entails for our work. And to what is distinctive about it.

panel four
positioning, learning and 'Curriculum 2.0'

Careers-education-and-guidance is not a stand-alone provision - it is a link in a chain. It is part of the way in which people are ushered into the division of labour in society – who gets to do what. Careers-education-and-guidance links earlier processes of informal and formal learning to later process of recruitment and selection.

And it shares its key question with other links in that chain - for example with human-resource management – which explicitly poses the 'who-gets-to-do-what?' question (Brown and Hesketh, 2004). And one of our key terms, 'employability', is used to refer both to what students need to learn and how recruiters need to select.

wider concepts of work. It means that things can look as though education and selection are inter-dependent phases in a seamless process. The outcomes of education are thought of as the inputs of recruitment - front loading into working life by fitting students for success in the selection process. That is learning for positioning – how to look good for success in the competition for opportunities. And careers education is valued for the help it gives in doing well in assessment and looking good in selection. There are some families, some teachers, some politicians, some business people and some students who would struggle to see any further point in careers education.

But there is a further point: learning for positioning locates students in a narrow sequence of roles – as examination candidate, job-seeker, applicant and recruit. But, as panel two shows, competitive employability is not all there is to career development. Our work has a wider range of life-role relevance. In this view positioning is no more

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than an episode in a life-wide narrative. That is why learning for well-being takes account of the links between work roles and social, family, consumer and civil roles (Bill Law, 2005b). And yet, as far as careers education and guidance is concerned, the distinction between positioning and well-being is easy to fudge.

new conceptual models. A conceptual model is a professional tool - setting out what is worth paying attention to in our work. For most of the hundred years of our work's life, our models have talked a lot about 'self' and 'opportunity'. They suggest that careers develop when the one is successfully linked to the other. Those models reflect conventional wisdom: career fits 'pegs' to 'holes'. For most people – including policy makers - the metaphor has been an obvious way of understanding what happens. These models have worked well for both learning for position and learning for recruitment. It is why they have been so long-lived and pervasive.

The conventional wisdom crops up in the government's Leitch (2006) *Review of Skills*. It argues for expanded guidance provision for an enhancement of the nation's economic competitiveness. Now, it is questionable whether learning services can be set up to enhance competitiveness (Alison Wolf, 2002). Nonetheless, guidance thinking lives with the assumption that we can do it. The Leitch argument is attractive because it makes us look like part of a solution to its problem. And shared matching models do not provoke in us any comment on the need for people's need for a wider appreciation of work in their lives? Nor will they cause us to look for deeper appreciations of why students are not achieving at the required levels.

But we already know about this, and act on what we know. It is just that our long-lived models have not kept up – they have lived too long. They can no longer accommodate what we know and what we do. They are bursting at the seams. We need new conceptual models (Bill Law, 2008b).

material needing development. Much of careers education is rightly focussed on managing the transition from schooling to recruitment. We have a lot of material which helps students to search, choose, plan and implement career-management action. And to do so in terms that look good to selectors.

Bill Barry's (2003) *The Real Game* is a part of a much-used, off-the-shelf and government-sponsored series. It sets out qualities to identify, values to embrace, opportunities to consider and consequences to anticipate. All are urged as bases for career advancement. The material is engaging. But, when the bells and whistles are stripped out, *The Real Game* series sets out matching processes.

It suits user expectations: customer surveys are positive. But evidence of enjoyment and satisfaction is not necessarily evidence of useful learning. (This does not imply that useful learning cannot be enjoyable!) What we know about career management tell us that students need also to be invited to wonder if there might be more to career management than can be organised around getting selected and recruited.

Both the matching models and the classroom materials inhabit the same conventional wisdom. Neither puts career management in any kind of social context of influence and persuasion. And neither pays sustained attention to how people take command of their own learning processes. Both the model and the material need further development.

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coverage and process. What sort of development? Among the key elements in any curriculum are coverage and process (Bill Law, 2005a).

Coverage is about knowing things. But knowing things includes not just knowing that something is so (like how the labour economy is changing) but of knowing how to make something work (like how to build an effective cv). Coverage is often expressed in nouns – ‘facts’, ‘factors’, ‘trends’, ‘skills’. And knowing things in these senses is essential to career management. The conventional model supports talk about how coverage about ‘opportunities’ relates to coverage about ‘self’. And we make much of what we hope is our capacity to provide impartial information and valid appraisal.

But the conventional model say little of how we learn. This is knowing how to gather and use information. These are learning processes – describing how learning is taken on board. Learning processes include finding things out, sorting them out, checking them out and working out how they work. For example up-dating labour-market information is a process, and so is adapting an approach to building a cv. Process are usually described in verbs – like ‘receive’, ‘remember’, ‘explore’, ‘imagine’, ‘question’, ‘practise’, ‘interpret’, ‘explain’ and ‘anticipate’.

In learning, there is no coverage without process, and no process without coverage. Schemes always contain both the nouns and the verbs. You can ‘listen’ to labour market information or ‘look it up’. You can ‘remember’ how to do a cv and ‘practise’ it. But today’s world requires that we draw students attention not just to what they know, but how they know it - and why they should give it any heed. It means paying attention to the learning verbs – by purposefully engaging students in seeing how they can find out more, sort it into manageable order, check out what is useful, and work out what they are going to do about it.

Both conventional models and *The Real Game* series could do with some more on this.

arguments for process. The importance of learning processes is widely understood. It features in talk of curriculum as ‘thinking skills’ (Maclure & Davies, 1991). Conventional arguments for more emphasis on these process usually mention the rate of change. Any attempt to cover any ground will include information that is itself changing. It means that what we say about opportunities and self ‘today’ can easily be misleading in a soon-to-come ‘tomorrow’. People need to be able to update or replace what they know. And that means taking their own command of the learning verbs.

This is a strong argument, but there is a stronger one. All that is now happening in the experience of career management requires that people are able to scrutinise the information and impressions they gather – however impartial and valid their sources may claim to be. It means questioning whether they’ve found enough to go on, whether they’ve sorted out the spin and bias, whether sources have been checked out for reliability, and how they can anticipate that the learning can lead to useful, valuable and sustainable action.

This is about more than updating. When people learn how to manage their own learning in these ways, they are taking command of their own story.

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getting transfer of learning. If we are serious about enabling learning for well-being the most challenging part of these processes is for enabling transfer-of-learning. It means that what is learned in one place will be used in another. This is an absolute requirement for our work: if the learning is not transferred to life then our work is not working.

Transfer of learning requires that learning must remind students of their lives, so that their lives remind them of their learning. In her summary of the evidence Sara Meadows (1993) demonstrates what a challenge this is. She shows that, in order to achieve transfer, teachers must – every time - offer their students clear and specific markers, pointing to where in their lives this learning will be useful. That is the research and the theory; and there are clear implications for practice (Bill Law, 2005b). For, without those links, the only markers students have are for performance in tests and assessments: ‘where will you use this learning? you will use it in your examination!’. That may be good enough for recruitment, but it is never good enough for education. For, beyond that use, learning that proves in life to have no further uses, is discarded. It is not unusual to achieve the learning-outcome, succeed in the assessment, gain the credit – and then to forget all about it. Careers work needs more than disposable learning-outcomes, it needs useable outcomes-of-learning.

curriculum 2.0. We have lived through two decades of a coverage-defined and standards-driven National Curriculum – where the outcomes are mainly used for positioning. But the QCA’s signposting of well-being says that standards are not enough. And, where students are enabled to make their own use of learning process, our work ceases to be a course to be ‘delivered’ - like a commodity, to a consumer. Gaining command of the learning verbs makes learning a shared activity, in which our students are our partners - not customers, ingesting a product.

Indeed, the learning processes - finding out, sorting out, checking out and working out - are progressively more demanding, even troublesome. They engage learners in much more head-hurting activity than tick-box teaching and cut-and-paste learning.

This is no argument here that coverage is no longer important, that matching is out-of-date, or that selection can be safely ignored. But a process-driven use of curriculum makes a strong contrast between learning for selection and learning for well-being. Well-being, in a pressurised and changing world, requires abilities to take a look at other people’s agendas and develop your own, to receive the advice of others and question it – and to examine a proffered opportunity and wonder why you would want it.

On the net such levels of engagement by autonomous users are known as ‘Web 2.0’. This panel calls for the development of ‘Curriculum 2.0’.

Recruiters and selectors are, like us, interested in abilities and motivations. But their interest is differently rooted. For them *the good of the organisation* in which they work is the ‘given’: they work in its interests. A candidate’s abilities and motivations are contingent: significant only when they fit to the given. If one candidate doesn’t fit, another will.

By contrast, for educators the given is *how people effectively learn*. And student’s abilities and motivations are seen as contingent on that – they depend on informal and formal learning processes. Because abilities and motivations have been learned they can be re-learned – expanded, developed, enhanced. And what is then learned can

enable them - not just for a channelled process of selection and recruitment – for life-wide and life long use.

The ways in which process engages students is set out in the table.

table three
student tasks in process-driven curriculum

processes	engagement	task
learning-to-learn	getting into a learning frame-of-mind, for interrogating what they encounter – finding out, sorting out, checking out, and working out what is going on and what they can do about it	researcher
assembling links	linking formal curriculum and community experience, comparing learning from different sources, probing academic and applied knowledge, questioning both expertise and experience - both other people's experience and their own	narrator
progressing learning	moving-on, in a step-by-step progression – building from having enough to go, through how they develop ways of usefully seeing things, and how things can be explained, to what they can reasonably expect from their own action	theorist
transferring learning	bringing learning into life, setting up credible life-relevant markers – embedded reminders for how this learning helps in that life – so that learning is not seen as a hoop to be jumped through, but a resource for living	in all life roles - partner, family, social, shopping, financial, civil, religious and work roles

All of these processes respond to the eight features of contemporary career management (page 13). They can deal with pressure, change, conflict and confusion. They can put students in command of their own learning. They can build from basic to useful learning. They can enable students for the interrogation of curriculum and community influences. And they set learning in a balanced narrative of work life and well-being.

This is wider than learning for employability. It sees students in rounder terms than candidates for selection. It also sees them in deeper terms than customers to be pleased. It offers them a wider range of learning roles - as their own researchers, theorists, autobiographers, each taking control of her and his own story. Most of all, it fires up students for learning. And we all need all of our people to have that kind of curiosity about what's going on and what they can do about it.

A curriculum which enables students to take command of their own learning serves them life-long and life-wide. We have students in our classrooms now who will work into the twenty-second century. They need to be ready for anything.

the great escape

The QCA's current restructuring of curriculum is our opportunity. Its central placing of well-being can enable students to get to grips with global realities, deal with entrenched knowledge, and take control of their own acquisition of that knowledge. This is heady stuff for us: we know what is going on in career management, and we know what we can do to help. It is also challenging stuff: for the most formidable obstacle to our progress has been our marginal position on timetable.

We need to move into a bigger space. All that is argued here needs more room for students - to probe what they find, to imagine new possibilities, to work out what they can do about them, and to rehearse-and-refine action. It will not fit to edge-of-timetable careers education.

And so we must think of curriculum in broader terms. And that takes us into a field with political and intellectual dynamics of its own. There are underlying pressures to be understood, but there is an opportunity to be seized. The pressures are political, the opportunity is a shift in political priorities.

panel five

getting to work on the National Curriculum

The politics of curriculum call up two issues. And they are entangled – when people talk about the one, they often find themselves, willy-nilly, talking about the other. The two issues are:

- > **who does what:** about who gains access to what kind of learning opportunity – this is an issue for stratification (panel three);
- > **what do they learn:** about what people gather from the curriculum – this is an issue for the purposes of curriculum (panel four).

vocational and academic. The entanglement is most visible when tracing distinctions between vocational and academic curriculum. The terms 'vocational' and 'academic' speak - at the same time - of what students learn, and of the students who learn it. We conflate the 'who' with the 'what': 'academic' students on academic courses, 'vocational' students on vocational courses. It is claimed that vocational *courses* can be assigned equal status with academic. But the claim is in serious doubt when it comes to thinking about academic and vocational *students*.

And so, some people insist that vocational curriculum is suitable for some children, but not all. And, when they say 'not all', they often mean 'not mine!'. All of this crops up most visibly in the defence of A-levels for an élite, and the assignment of school-leaving diplomas for the rest.

re-locating careers work. Careers education and guidance is – at a level – already involved. For example we make the point that students need our help concerning what combination of academic and vocational studies they should take on. The point is well made. But if we are serious about engaging curriculum more widely, then we need a deeper involvement in the issues.

Because, at its heart, our work is about more than operating a 'given' system. It is about what learning is for, and how curriculum controls access. It is hard to see how any careers worker can fail to be interested in these issues. It means being ready to speak of more than helping individual operate within a handed-down system.

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curriculum issues. The wrangling about A-levels and diplomas is a surface manifestation of a long-standing and closely-argued discussion about purpose and access. They were identified from day-one of state education. But, from our point-of-view, some of the most useful thinking has been set out by Basil Bernstein (1973). On purpose: Basil examines two features of curriculum: (1) the way it divides what counts as knowledge into arbitrary parcels (which he calls 'classification'); and (2) how schooling separates curriculum from what is going on in outside the curriculum and its assessment ('framing'). Classification and framing have been strong in conventional curriculum. But they are variable; and weaker classification and framing is better suited to an open society. An open society is one where all members can achieve their life roles, rather than having roles assigned to them. And, so, on access, Basil goes on to say that curriculum is marked up ('coded') through the use of distinctive forms of communication – special talk rather than ordinary talk. And the use of these codes privileges some social groups over others.

This is very directly about our work. We have noticed how the MORI survey (panel three) implies that careers education and guidance has its own specialist classifications, professional frames and expert codes. And that the way they work means that its services are more accessible to some people than to others.

The debate goes on. Rob More (2004) re-establishes Basil Bernstein as a contender for attention. John White (2007) characterises the National Curriculum (which is strongly classified, framed and coded) as lacking in any discernable purpose. To be fair the perpetrators of the National Curriculum claimed that its emphasis on standards was necessary for the purposes of economic competitiveness. But Alison Wolf's (2002) examination of the evidence suggests that this is little more than a rhetorical claim, and is not matched by reality. She argues that we should be looking elsewhere for the purposes of education.

resolution and compromise. Are there ways in which curriculum can be both 'academic' and 'vocational'? And how are these paths to be fairly accessible to all? The proposals of Mike Tomlinson's committee (DfES, 2005) envisaged a wholly unified diploma structure, pulling together academic, vocational and other learning. And, here the politics reassert themselves, that unified diploma dispenses with A-levels. The education professions generally found the committee's arguments convincing, and welcomed its proposals.

They are not yet adopted by government. But policy is, inch by political inch, shifting in their direction. Recent government proposals for a more-unified range of school-leaving diplomas – some 'vocational', some 'academic', some 'mixed' - are as close as policy dare come to resolving the issue. The politics of curriculum are potent. Proposals that there should be a unified assessment - based on a more inclusive range of assessments, and leading to a shared school-leaving diploma - are resisted by well-positioned and resourceful families (what some media call 'the coping classes'). In what Goldthorpe (panel three) calls the 'zero-sum game' of the contemporary labour market, that resistance is intensified.

brain-friendly curriculum. Recent findings from brain-scanning research points to features of curriculum to set alongside Basil Bernstein's analysis of classification, framing and coding. The research points to parallels between the way we - as a

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species – learn, and the way we - as a society - structure curriculum. The research points to how different sorts of learning fire-up different neurological networks:

- > **semantic learning** – is knowing that things seem to be so – such as facts, factors and trends in any field of knowledge, and the results of enquiries and assessments of performance in that field;
- > **procedural learning** – is practising how to do things - such as the crafts, routines and skills which are needed in any of the on-going tasks or activities we take on at work or at play;
- > **episodic learning** - is sequencing of events to show the ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ of what happened - such as what goes on in the feeling-laden turning-points of real-life episodes.

What we know moves back and forth in the neurological networks linking these areas of learning. And all learning draws on what these different areas of the brain have evolved to help us survive and flourish – for our well-being.

The correspondences with how we think about curriculum is striking:

- > **academic curriculum** for assessment, calls on semantic learning - and is strongly classified, framed and coded, keeping it categorised, enclosed and pure;
- > **skill curriculum** for performance, calls on procedural learning - and though strongly classified, is weakly framed, making it shared with life outside the ‘classroom’;
- > **personal-and-social curriculum** for managing life, calls on episodic learning - which is weakly classified, framed and coded, which means it cuts across subject and curriculum boundaries and is communicated in every-day terms.

The distribution of resources to these forms of learning is disturbing. Academic learning is less likely to be used in everyday life. It is, therefore, also less likely to be remembered (panel four). But this is where we devote most of our curriculum resources.

Episodic learning is more likely to be remembered, because it has value for well-being. Yet this is where we devote the least of our curriculum resources (Bill Law, 2008a).

policy-led opportunity. The QCA proposals on well-being radically re-map curriculum. And they do it in a way which offers us more ways to locate ourselves on the issues.

- > Curriculum is not to be driven by an exclusive concern for assessed academic achievement, it is also to enable students to find life relevance in what they learn. This is our work.
- > The idea of education for well-being, more inclusive than vocational education, is to be restructured into the whole curriculum, rather than parcelled out into a fragmented scatterings of subjects. More elbow room for our work.

These proposals enlist careers workers as sources of guidance for students navigating the new map of possibilities. But they also call on careers workers to engage with the issues for purpose and fairness which have always underlain curriculum development.

There are four^{*} signposts suggesting our way forward. One will not take us very far. And two others usher us into blind alleys.

- (a) **positioning** careers education with guidance as a way of preparing students for selection and recruitment;
- (b) **locating** careers education scheme-designs in terms of structural benefits they bring to society;
- (c) **establishing** careers education as a free-standing subject - aspiring to what education-for-citizenship seeks, and what geography has achieved;
- (d) **integrating** careers work with a wholly re-structured timetable.

(a) **positioning** students for selection means building schemes of work around searching for opportunities, linking those opportunities to self, planning for the next moves and applying for positions. And it does all of that in terms that look good to selectors and recruiters (panel three). This is necessary work and calls for little more than currently-available resources. But panel four explains why we must do more. And panel five explains how we can do it.

(b) **locating** for structural benefits means designing schemes of work which back up claims that our work drives up educational standards, or contributes to the national economy, or increases fairness in the distribution of life chances, or reduces the nation's carbon footprint. These are policy-related purposes for bringing about structural change in the way we all live. But they stand or fall on the basis of whether careers education actually changes the outcomes of recruitment and selection procedures. And we are struggling to gain credibility on all counts (panel two). But, more importantly, social structural purposes like these lose contact with the helping motives that most deeply drive our work (panel four). Those motives are focussed on personal and group interactions rather than structural change. And that commitment to enabling people is our most significant resource.

(c) **establishing** a free-standing subject means classifying, framing and coding what we do (panel five). We would need to list some degree of distinctive knowledge, methods and objectives. It would put us in competition for resources with the rest of an already over-crowded curriculum. Another free-standing subject, with its own assessment regime, would further congest an already unmanageably congested system. But, in any event, it is doubtful that we should be pursuing examinable learning-outcomes, rather than sharing space for the achievement of outcomes-of-learning in life. For reasons already set out (panel four) it may actually be counter-productive in terms of the core purposes of our work.

(d) **integrating with a restructured timetable** is not without problems. In particular it must not displace students needs for help with positioning (at 'a'). But its value is in the elbow room it creates to enable students to work with the eight issues listed on page 13. Integration provides not just for enhanced competitiveness, but for bigger reasons to learn; not just for standards, but for relevance; not just for vocational but for life-wide use - and not just in hit-and-run help, but at the heart of the whole curriculum.

Current government proposals open doors. The QCA (2008) reforms call up a concept of curriculum concerned for general well-being. They offer us a more sustainable, effective and central position in curriculum development than we have had in two generations.

So what do we do? Recent 'blue-sky' thinking (Bill Law, 2006c), commissioned by the QCA to inform its proposals, relocates careers education in the curriculum. Called

* There was, for a time, a fifth signpost. It pointed to 'infusion' – which means spreading fragments of career-management learning into free-standing academic teaching, as and when the separate links can be made. The method was proposed, during the early days of The National Curriculum, as 'cross-curricular themes'. It has been discredited. And it is not what either LiRRiC or the QCA proposals mean by integration. Unfortunately the OECD enquiry's *UK Country Note* fails to make a distinction between integration and infusion – using the term 'integration' for both. In the curriculum terms that are important to the future of careers work, the distinction is, however, critically important.

LiRRiC: life-role relevance in curriculum', the thinking argues, and the QCA acknowledges, that none of this will be possible without seriously restructuring timetable.

LiRRiC sets out a design specification:

- > **timetable**: for a series of set-aside long-slots which academic teachers share with personal and social development enablers;
- > **time and space**: with enough room for useful sustainable and valued learning;
- > **community-links**: engaging contact with sources of useful experience outside the school;
- > **standards and relevance**: enlisting both expertise and experience for the realisation of well-being;
- > **focus**: drawing on fewer staff, but staff selected for their motivation and ability for each particular piece of work.

Knowing what is going on and knowing what I can usefully do about it, will not be found from any single source in any school's or college's range of human resources. LiRRiC engages both this professional expertise and this extended-school community experience. Long block timetabling is therefore weakly classified, weakly framed and weakly coded. It draws on more than one discipline, it relates to life outside of the classroom, and it draws on conversational language. But, as significantly as any of Basil Bernstein's concerns, that shared time and space gives enough room for students to work through the processes. And these processes can put them in command of transferable learning for life-wide and life-long use.

There is no subversion of academic standards here. The quality of any programme cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. The future of careers work depends on attracting the interested attention of the best in the profession. And that includes the best of our 'academic' teachers. 'Academic' curriculum is good at setting out 'what is going on': from the mathematics of probability, through the history and geography of opportunity, into the narratives of self, and onto the science of consequences - knowing is useful. But this is not a use of learning as a selection device for advancement. It is not even a precious cultivation in students of some 'love of learning'. It is a grittier commitment for firing-up in students an appreciation of a 'point for learning'.

Each rising generation's future will not much resemble its predecessor's past. Neither must the future of careers-work curriculum. We must reform. Because, whatever meaning we are to assign to the current call for the 'personalisation' of curriculum, it will be that learning is less about what we offer, and more about how students shape it. This is 'Curriculum 2.0'.

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