JOURNAL OF THE

National Institute for Career Education and Counselling

NICEC
NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CAREER EDUCATION AND COUNSELLING

NICEC STATEMENT

The Fellows of NICEC agreed the following statement in 2010.

'The National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (NICEC) was originally founded as a research institute in 1975. It now plays the role of a learned society for reflective practitioners in the broad field of career education, career guidance/counselling and career development. This includes individuals whose primary role relates to research, policy, consultancy, scholarship, service delivery or management. NICEC seeks to foster dialogue and innovation between these areas through events, networking, publications and projects.

NICEC is distinctive as a boundary-crossing network devoted to career education and counselling in education, in the workplace, and in the wider community. It seeks to integrate theory and practice in career development, stimulate intellectual diversity and encourage transdisciplinary dialogue. Through these activities, NICEC aims to develop research, inform policy and enhance service delivery.

Membership and fellowship are committed to serious thinking and innovation in career development work. Membership is open to all individuals and organisations connected with career education and counselling. Fellowship is an honour conferred by peer election and signals distinctive contribution to the field and commitment to the development of NICEC's work. Members and Fellows receive the NICEC journal and are invited to participate in all NICEC events.

NICEC does not operate as a professional association or commercial research institute, nor is it organisationally aligned with any specific institution. Although based in the UK, there is a strong international dimension to the work of NICEC and it seeks to support reflective practice in career education and counselling globally.'

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TITLE

The official title of the journal for citation purposes is *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling* and the ISSN number is ISSN 2046-1348. It is widely and informally referred to as 'the NICEC journal'.

Its former title was *Career Research and Development: the NICEC Journal*, ISSN 1472-6564, published by CRAC, and the final edition under this title was issue 25. To avoid confusion we have retained the numbering of editions used under the previous title.

AIMS AND SCOPE

The NICEC journal publishes articles on the broad theme of career development in any context including:

*   Career development in the workplace: private and public sector, small, medium and large organisations, private practitioners.

*   Career development in education: schools, colleges, universities, adult education, public career services.

*   Career development in the community: third age, voluntary, charity, social organisations, independent contexts, public career services.

It is designed to be read by individuals who are involved in career development-related work in a wide range of settings including information, advice, counselling, guidance, advocacy, coaching, mentoring, psychotherapy, education, teaching, training, scholarship, research, consultancy, human resources, management or policy. The journal has a national and international readership.

JOURNAL OF THE

National Institute for Career Education and Counselling

Contents

New perspectives on career coaching

This edition contains the latest thinking on career coaching. It features the results of a recent survey and papers focused on practice in public and private sector contexts. There are also new conceptual pieces and contributions from course providers outlining their distinctive approaches. In short, this edition is essential reading for anyone connected with this growing and exciting field.

Charles Jackson discusses a recent survey on the changing shape of the career profession in the UK. The similarities and differences between work in the public and private sectors are explored and implications for the careers profession discussed.

Denise Taylor offers a personal view of career coaching in private practice. She discusses the development of a working relationship and the use of assessments and other exercises. Client examples are included to show the results of this career coaching process.

Lynne Barnes and **Elizabeth F. Bradley** discuss their work with Deaf students in the higher education sector. A case study is developed focusing on the development of employability skills with this client group.

Bill Law discusses the different vocabulary used in careers work and poses the question 'Where's the big idea?' Among his answers are a more developed programme of education, a need for critical thinking and a move to conceptualising careers work as a feature of civil society.

Rob Nathan in conversation with **Wendy Hirsh** discusses developing sustainable career coaching in the workplace. They look at some of issues in working with employers and explore the theories that inform Rob's practice.

Janet Sheath discusses the education and training of career coaches and proposes a psychological model. The model identifies a spectrum of activities within which career coaches work and the skills needed.

Julia Yates argues for an approach to career coaching based on positive psychology. She argues that this approach has led to the rigorous application of scientific methods to generate empirical evidence and explores how positive psychology can inform and enhance career coaching interventions.

Gill Frigerio and I propose that the design of career coaching should be linked skilfully to career-related learning, career literacy, contracting and calling. Overall, a view of career coaching as a creative and critical art is foregrounded.

<div style="text-align:right">Phil McCash, Editor</div>

The changing shape of the career profession in the UK

Charles Jackson

This paper summarises the main findings of a survey of career professionals in the UK working in independent/private practice and of members of the National Association of Educational Guidance for Adults (NAEGA). These two groups represent the majority of career professionals working with adults and include both those working mainly in the private sector and those working in the public, education and voluntary sectors. The survey highlights similarities and differences in the background and working practices of these two groups but also shows the diversity in terms of experience and backgrounds of career professionals working in this sector. As the provision of career support for adults becomes more significant, implications for the career profession are discussed.

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Trends in career provision

Before the latest UK government changes to how career support is provided to young people in England, there were already significant changes taking place in the nature of career provision both in the UK and elsewhere. In particular, there was greater recognition of the need for career support for adults in employment (Jackson, 2010) and research NICEC carried out for Cedefop (2008) had noted the increased role of a range of intermediary organisations (ie not government/public sector or employers) across the EU in the provision of career support for people in employment.

Until recently, it would probably be fair to say that it has been assumed that in the UK most careers work is both with young people and is publicly funded. However, changes taking place in the world of work

mean that there is increasing demand for career support from adults – both those in employment and those making career transitions. While the launch of the National Careers Service in England in 2012 is a publicly-funded response to these trends, there has always been a small independent sector offering career support. Nevertheless, careers work with adults has always appeared to be the 'poor relation' in the careers world. Before the launch of the National Careers Service, many publicly-funded initiatives aimed at adults had only short-term or partial funding and other research (Hirsh and Jackson, 2003; Cedefop, 2008) has highlighted the fragmented and often short-lived nature of many career initiatives inside organisations.

However, relatively little is known about the provision of career support for adults especially that which is not publicly funded. The only attempt to review the scale and nature of the private sector in career development was a small-scale study conducted in 2005 (Watts, Hughes & Wood, 2005). A more recent iCeGS study examined different 'who pays?' models and the impact of technology on this market (Hooley, Hutchinson & Watts, 2010).

While there have always been a number of large-scale providers working in the outplacement market, in recent years it appears that there has been a growth in the number of individual career counsellors/ coaches working both inside and outside organisations and with all age-groups. However, relatively little is known about how this increasingly significant sector of the careers world operates. This was one reason why NICEC organised a half-day network event in September 2012 to explore questions about what it is like to operate in private practice. This exploratory survey of career professionals working in independent/ private practice was initially conducted to provide

some context for the NICEC meeting but has since been extended to a larger audience. This paper summarises key findings from the survey which was conducted between July and October 2012.

The survey had two main aims:

1. To provide information about the career professionals working in this sector – their backgrounds, working arrangements, training and professional qualifications

2. To gather information on the range and type of services offered by these career professionals in order to get a better understanding of how career support is provided in these sectors

The survey respondents

Independent career professionals were contacted using a number of different networks, such as LinkedIn groups, and through emails sent out by the ICG Private Practice Community and by ACPi to their members. This generated 157 replies but 25 were from people working outside the UK and were, therefore, excluded from the present analysis. In September 2012, an email about the survey was also circulated to members of the NAEGA, the main UK association for adult career guidance practitioners. NAEGA membership covers practitioners and staff working in further and higher education, adult and community learning, trade unions and employer bodies. An additional 189 replies were received so that, overall, the analysis is based on 321 replies and covers both those working with adults mainly in the private sector and those working in the public, education and voluntary sectors. This means that it provides the opportunity to compare the replies of career professionals across these two complementary, and to some degree overlapping, areas of work[1].

Training and qualifications: Well qualified

Nearly everyone (90%) reported that they had professional training directly relevant to their work as

[1] For convenience the two groups are referred to as independent career professionals and NAEGA members respectively.

a career coach/counsellor and of those with training just over half (51%) reported that they had had more than one form of specialised training, although NAEGA members (59%) were more likely to report that they had received only one sort of training than the independent career professionals (36%).

Just under half of those with training (48%) had completed some sort of postgraduate training at a university in career coaching/counselling with 30% of NAEGA members having a QCG or DipCG compared to 18% of independent career professionals, while independent career professionals (24%) were more likely to have received other postgraduate training in career coaching/counselling than NAEGA members (15%) (see Figure 1).

Most respondents also had other professional qualifications, although NAEGA members (73%) were less likely to have one than the independent career professionals (84%). NAEGA members were most likely to have a professional qualification in Education (35%) or Management (25%) but 30% had other professional qualifications. In contrast, independent career professionals were most likely to have an HR qualification (39%) or a Management qualification (36%), but 25% had other professional qualifications. In addition, nearly half (49%) of the independent career professionals and 37% of NAEGA members reported that they had a postgraduate degree.

Background and experience

Most respondents were female (75%) but the survey also found that:

- NAEGA members tended to be younger than the independent career professionals. When those not giving their age are excluded, 22% of NAEGA member were under 40 compared to just 6% of independent career professionals, while 12% of NAEGA members were aged 60 and over compared to 22% of the independent career professionals.

- Over half (52%) the independent career professionals had 10 or more years' experience working as a career coach/counsellor compared to 37% of NAEGA members. In contrast, only 24% of independent career professionals had five

Figure 1: Types of specialised training in career counselling/coaching

Figure 1: Types of specialised training in career counselling/coaching
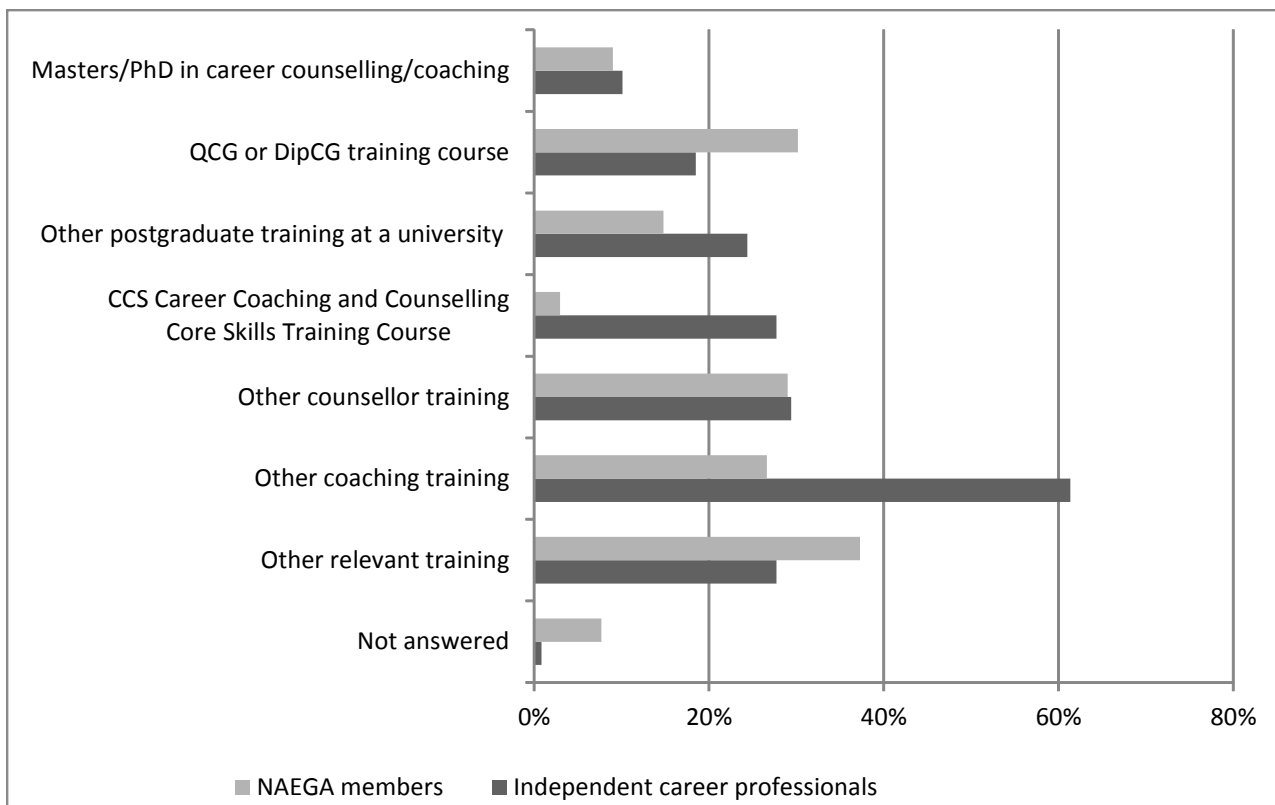
years or less experience compared to a third of NAEGA members.

- Just under a third (32%) of independent career professionals compared to three-quarters of NAEGA members reported that they had worked in the public sector (ie Connexions/Local Authority Careers Service, a University/Higher Education Careers Service, Next Step, FE/Sixth Form College or other publicly-funded Careers Service).

What are their working arrangements?

The majority did other work alongside their career counselling/coaching but independent career professionals (77%) were much more likely to be doing this than NAEGA members (53%). On the other hand, nearly two-thirds of NAEGA members (63%) were working full-time compared to just 44% of the independent career professionals. Female respondents were more likely to be working part-time than their male colleagues as were older respondents.

NAEGA members were also much more likely to be employed (77%) than independent career professionals (20%) and only 11% of NAEGA members worked independently compared to 64% of the independent career professionals.

Those doing other work were asked what proportion of their time was spent doing career counselling/ coaching. Most independent career professionals (62%) spent no more than half their time on career counselling/coaching with only 17% spending more than three-quarters of their time career counselling/ coaching. A higher proportion of NAEGA members (44%) than independent career professionals (38%) spent more than half their time doing career counselling/coaching.

Over half (53%) the independent career professionals were based in London or the South East compared to only a quarter (24%) of the NAEGA members who were more evenly spread across England. The survey got very few responses (3%) from people based in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland and this may be a function of the way people were contacted to take part in the survey.

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How find/attract clients?

There are interesting similarities and differences in the ways that independent career professionals and NAEGA members find and attract clients. Personal referral either from previous clients or from professional colleagues/ networks were the two most commonly mentioned methods by both groups (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Ways of finding/attracting clients
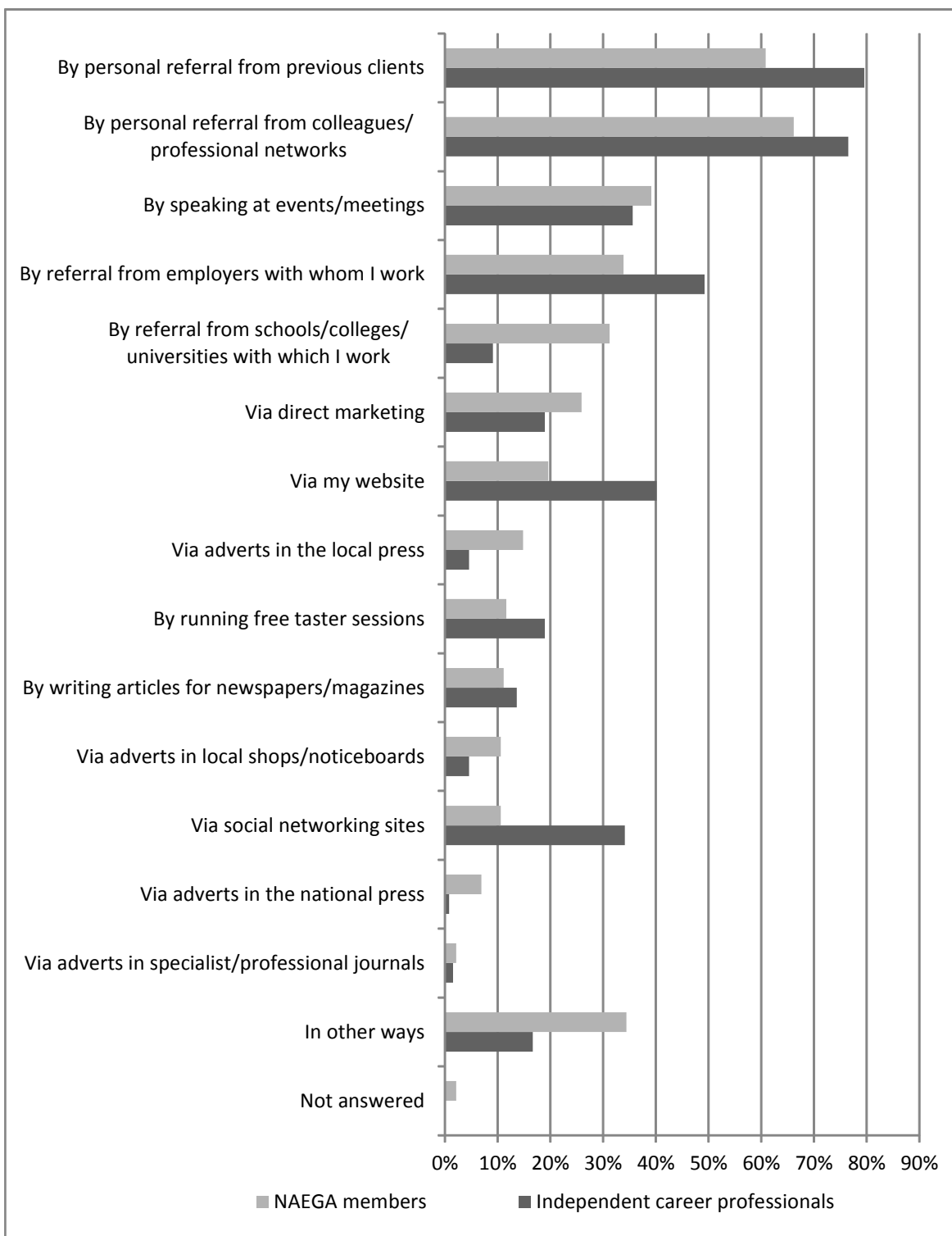
Independent career professionals also commonly mentioned referral from employers with whom they work (49%), websites (40%), speaking at events/ meetings (36%) and using social networking sites (34%). For NAEGA members, speaking at events/ meetings (39%), referral from employers with whom they work (34%) and from schools/colleges/universities with which they work (31%) were the next most common ways of finding and attracting clients. Far fewer NAEGA members mentioned using their websites (20%) or social networking (11%) to find or attract clients.

What mix of services do they offer?

The most common groups of clients for independent

career professionals were those who were looking for a job move/career change (83%) or who had been made redundant (83%) (see Figure 3). In contrast, NAEGA members described working with a more diverse set of clients with more NAEGA members than independent career professionals working with people with special needs, such as offenders, homeless people or people with health or mental health problems (61% compared to 9%), university students/ recent graduates (57% compared to 37%), young people (37% compared to 22%) and women returning to work (67% compared to 43%). Independent career professionals were slightly more likely to work with employees in an organisation they work for (34% compared to 29%) and much more likely to work with leadership/talent groups (27% compared to 8%) than NAEGA members.

Figure 3: Background of clients
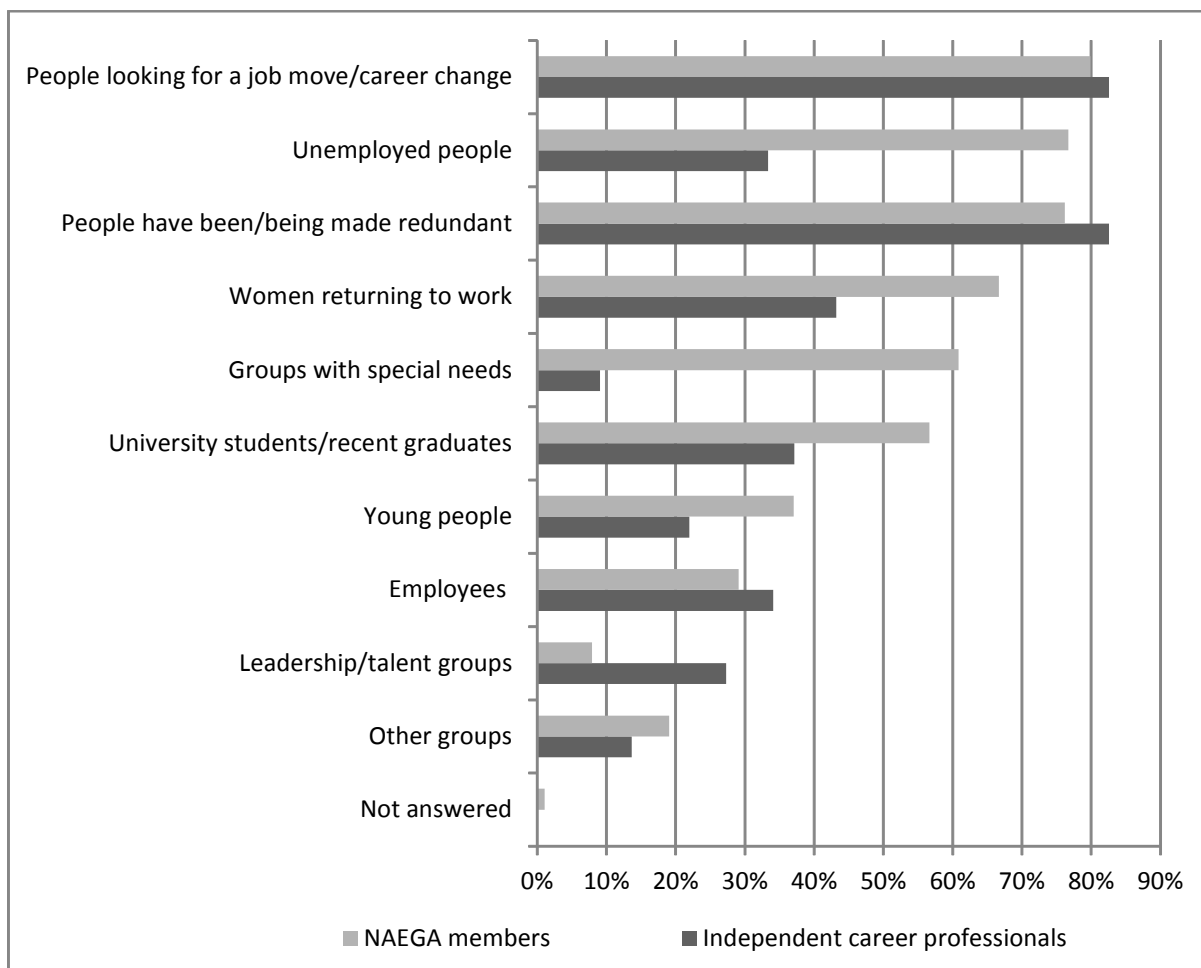
Among the independent career professionals there was a roughly 50/50 split between those who only offer coaching/counselling services on career issues (52%) and those who offer other sorts of coaching or counselling as well (48%), while two-thirds of NAEGA members only offered coaching/counselling services on career issues.

Nearly everyone (97% of independent career professionals and 93% of NAEGA members) offered one-to-one counselling sessions with individual clients but more independent career professionals also ran workshops (85% compared to 69%) and offered psychological testing and assessment (55% compared to 22%). Just over a third of both groups offered other training/services as well.

How do they work with individual clients?

Single sessions or a series?

Nearly all the independent career professionals (97%) offered a series of consultations to individual clients but most (65%) also offered single consultations as well, while 14% of them also offered other services to individual clients. The vast majority (85%) of NAEGA members also offered a series of consultations and over half (53%) offered single consultations as well. Roughly one in five (21%) NAEGA members reported offering other services.

Length of typical sessions

Most (67%) independent career professionals reported that individual sessions lasted between one and two hours with 22% reporting that they lasted less than an hour and a very few (3%) reporting that they lasted longer than two hours. 8% reported that session length varied a great deal.

NAEGA members typically offered shorter sessions with 66% reporting that a typical session lasted between 30 minutes and an hour with only 18% reporting having longer sessions, while 6% had typical sessions of less than 30 minutes.

How are services delivered to individuals?

All independent career professionals and nearly all (92%) NAEGA members delivered services to individual clients face-to-face. However, independent career professionals were more likely to use the telephone/Skype (without video) (73% compared to 45%) or Skype with video/other video link (33% compared to 9%). Both groups used email extensively (64% of independent career professionals and 53% of NAEGA members). First meetings were usually face-to-face with telephone, Skype and email being used for follow-up sessions.

Number of hours/sessions offered

It is probably not surprising that independent career professionals report spending more time and offering

Figure 4: Typical number of sessions with an individual client
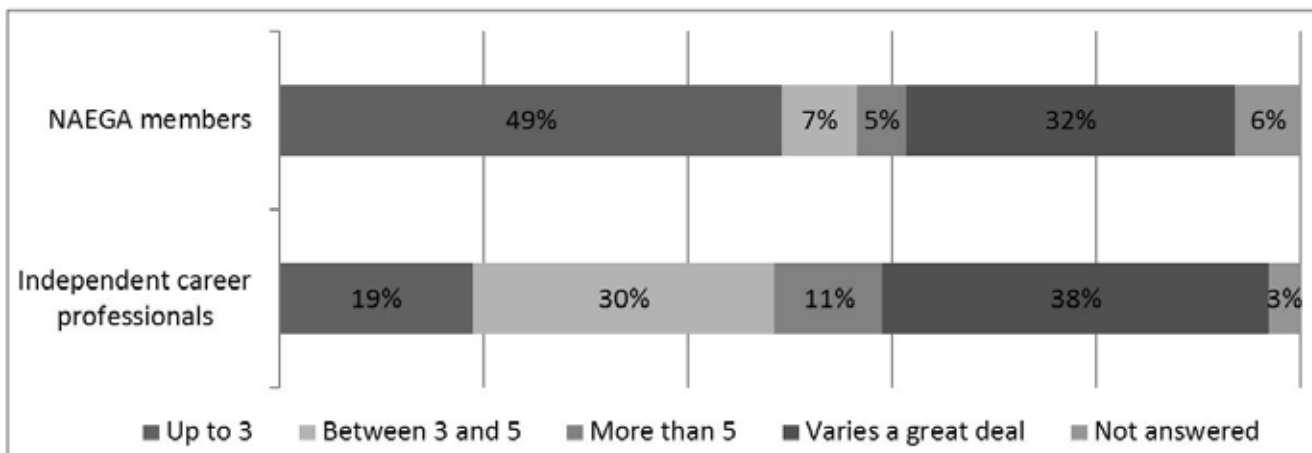
Figure 5: Typical number of total hours with an individual client
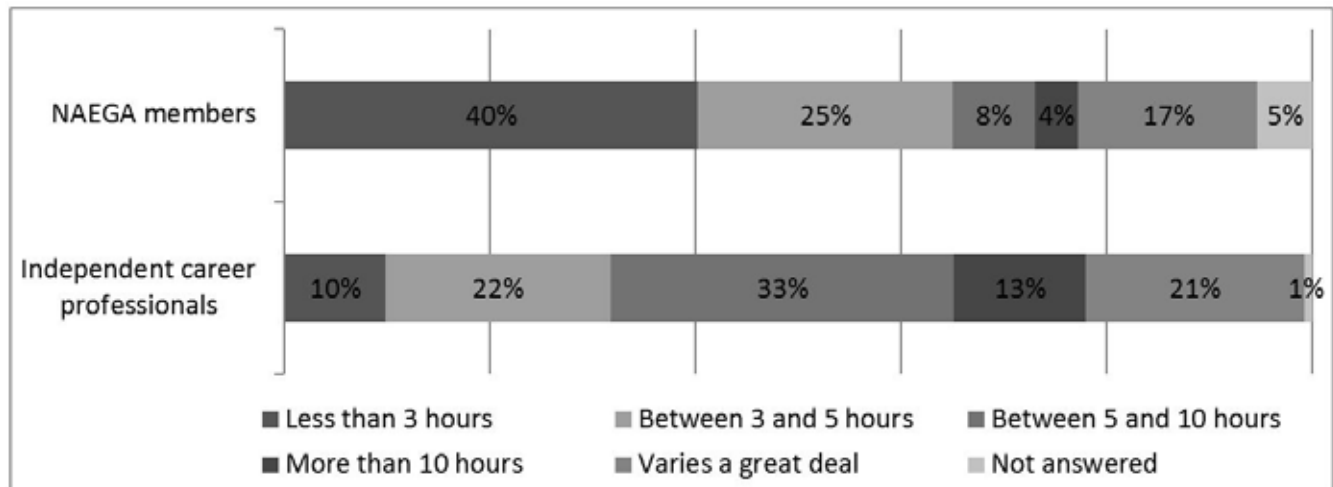
more sessions to individual clients than NAEGA members who are frequently funded by government/ the public either directly or indirectly (see Figures 4 and 5).

While around a third of both groups report that the number of sessions that they offer varies a great deal, nearly half (49%) of NAEGA members typically offer no more than three sessions, while 40% of independent career professionals offer more than three sessions. The difference is even more marked in terms of the number of hours spent with a typical client with 40% of NAEGA members spending less than three hours in total with an individual client and only 12% more than five hours. By way of contrast, a third of independent career professionals spend between five and ten hours with an individual client, 13% more than ten hours and only 10% less than three hours.

Who pays?

How individual services are funded also varies considerably for the two groups. Employers (68%), schools, colleges or universities (11%) or a charity/ voluntary organisation (5%) paid for some clients of independent career professionals but individuals themselves (63%) and parents/relatives (19%) also paid for individual sessions. On the other hand, two-thirds of NAEGA members were paid in other ways – usually by their employer, the National Careers Service or other public sector source.

What about workshops?

Nearly all (92%) independent career professionals and most (86%) NAEGA members listed the topics of workshops they ran. Most offered several topics – typically between four and six different topics. Figure 6 shows that the four most common topics for both groups were career planning, CV writing, interviewing/ advice about selection processes and job hunting. Most (69%) independent career professionals also offered workshops on using social media for networking and job hunting, while NAEGA members were more likely to offer workshops on reviewing education courses/ training options (69%) and returning to work (58%).

NAEGA members typically ran shorter workshops than independent career professionals. Nearly half (47%) of their workshops were less than two hours and a further 39% only lasted up to half a day. Workshops run by independent career professionals typically lasted up to half a day (42%) or a day (35%).

How are workshops organised?

There were clear differences between the two groups in how workshops were organised and funded. Just under a third (32%) of independent career professionals reported that individual clients paid for some of their workshops. However, most were paid for by someone else – employers (65%), schools, colleges or universities (17%), or professional bodies/ organisations (11%). In contrast, just over half (51%)

Figure 6: Workshop topics
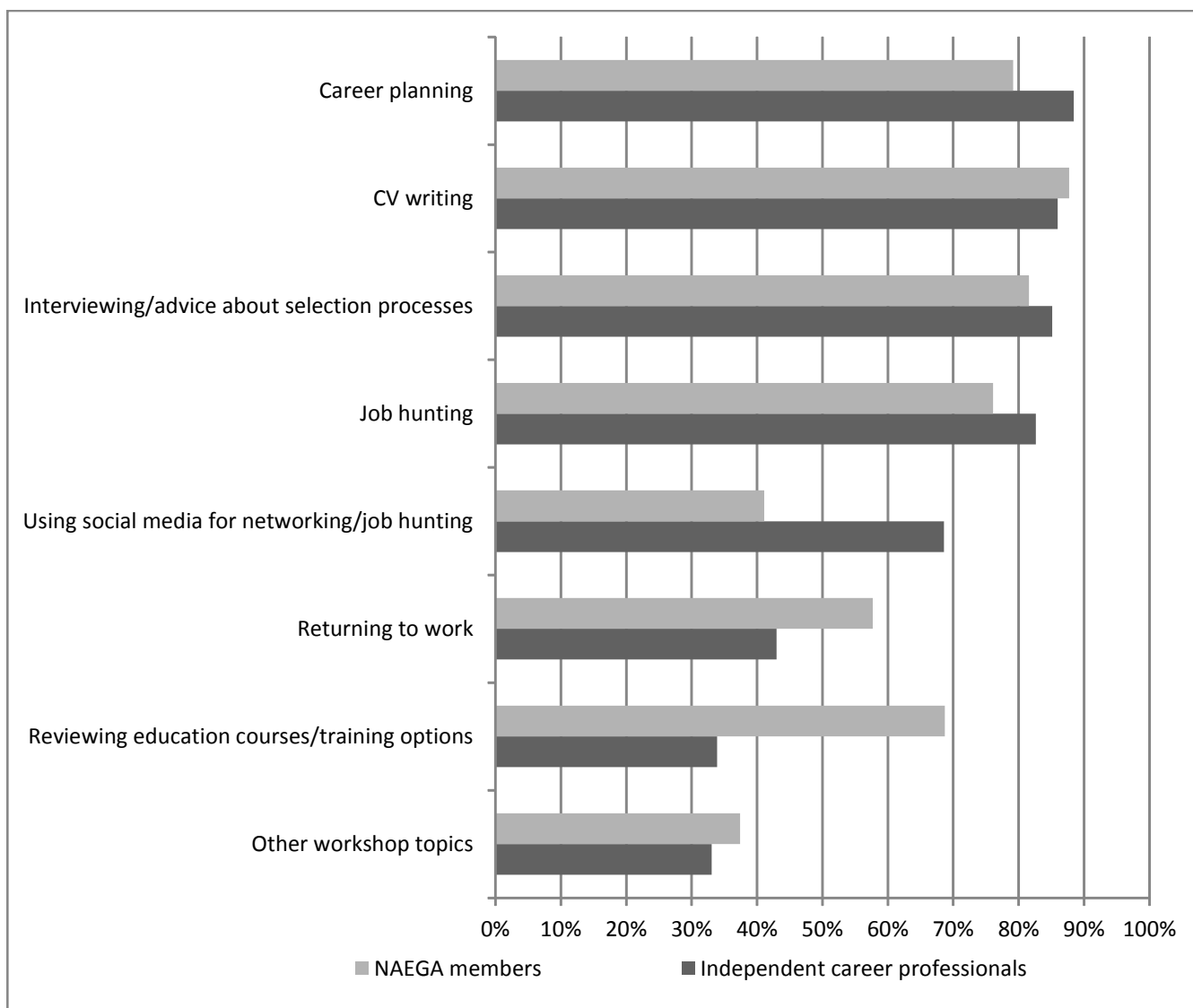
the NAEGA members reported that their workshops were funded in other ways – mostly through public funds either directly or indirectly. A further 12% reported that their workshops were funded by schools, colleges or universities and 7% by their employers. Only 8% reported that individual clients pay for some of the workshops.

Although 37% of independent career professionals organised some workshops themselves, many more organised some of their workshops for others – employers for whom they provide services (39%), outplacement/career consultancies (30%) or their own employer (16%). Although a third of NAEGA

members reported that they organised workshops themselves, more (43%) were contracted by their employers to run workshops. NAEGA members were also contracted by professional bodies/organisations (17%), voluntary groups (14%), employers to whom they offer services (13%), and schools and colleges (12%). Interestingly, more (12%) independent career professionals reported being contracted by universities to run workshops than NAEGA members (3%).

Conclusions

This survey has aimed to present an overview not only of the people working in these two sectors of the career profession but also to generate some insights into how they work. Ultimately a test of the value of the survey will be whether people working in the career sector recognise the picture that this survey provides of the people working in the profession and the nature of their work.

It has also highlighted similarities and differences in the way these two groups work. NAEGA members would appear to work with a more diverse set of clients but both groups offer a similar mix of activities. Although NAEGA members typically spend less time with their clients either individually or in workshops, this is almost certainly a result of how their services are funded.

It is clear that independent career professionals make more use of social media and new technology to attract and find clients, to deliver services and in the content of their provision, where using social media for networking and job hunting is a frequent workshop topic, for example. In contrast, it appears that NAEGA members are often running workshops to review education and training options. These differences at least in part will reflect the needs of their respective client groups.

It is striking that, although nearly all report having received specialist training, only a minority of both groups have a QCG/DipCG qualification. Many have other professional qualifications and it appears from the age profile that many in both groups have probably come to careers work after working in other related fields.

Most independent career professional have never done careers work in the public sector, while in contrast most NAEGA members have (and many are currently). Although most NAEGA members were employed, most independent career professionals worked for themselves. The majority of independent career professionals and many NAEGA members also do other work alongside their career counselling/ coaching. However, over half the independent career professionals were not working full-time, whereas

most NAEGA members were. Both these findings may indicate that some in both groups do not have as much work, and careers work in particular, as they would like. No doubt, however, some will have a preference for part-time working or for combining their career-related activities with work in other related fields.

Perhaps, most importantly this survey has highlighted the diversity of people, in terms of experience and backgrounds working in these sectors. While the survey cannot say anything about the quality of services being offered, there is no reason to think that clients are receiving poor services. One challenge for the career profession more generally is to celebrate this diversity. This means valuing the work of all groups regardless of their backgrounds and the clients they work with and sharing experiences, such as the use of new technology and social media, more widely across the profession. It also indicates the difficulty that the new UK professional body, the Career Development Institute, is going to have in accrediting qualifications.

Limitations

It is difficult to assess how representative respondents to the survey were of people working in these two professional areas. Nevertheless, this survey by using a variety of routes to contact potential survey respondents achieved over 300 replies and this suggests that it has reached a significant proportion of its target audience.

The survey also only provides limited information about how services are funded, although it is clear that individual clients do pay for some services. In retrospect, it would have been useful, for example, to include a question that asked about the proportion of respondents' total fee income received from individual clients to help clarify further to what extent people are prepared to pay for career counselling.

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Acknowledgements

Career coaching in private practice – a personal view

Denise Taylor

This is a personal account of how career coaching is undertaken by a career coach with a psychology background, drawing on a range of assessments. It includes establishing an effective working relationship based on agreed objectives and expectations and how assessments add depth to the counselling process. The approach taken is more than just a review of assessments; other activities are included such as values elicitation and creative exercises. Client examples are included to show some of the changes made following this career coaching process.

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Introduction

Much is written about coaching and careers, but less on the practitioner experience of being a career coach. This paper will discuss the activities I undertake with clients, and why I choose them. I discuss how I take a coaching focus to the sessions, and whilst I share knowledge with clients, any decisions for career choice are jointly created, which helps to encourage acceptance by the client. In this article I put emphasis on the use of assessments as an effective part of my coaching practice. I do not see these as the solution for everybody but many of the people I work with seek to have increased self-knowledge to aid their career decision making. I always make it clear that assessments alone will not provide the answer but they, in conjunction with a sensitive feedback session add greater clarity to decision making.

The first meeting

Coaches talk of 'chemistry meetings' and if a coaching relationship will last for several months it is important that both coach and coachee will work effectively together. For a single session a 15-minute enquiry call is a good choice, with both sides being able to ask questions and ensure expectations are realistic. For a more extensive programme a longer session will ensure that the coach gets a clearer idea of their potential clients objectives and to answer any questions. Part of my first meeting is to manage expectations. I explain that I can't promise that I will identify their dream job, nor that they will be successful in any career but I can help them to gain in-depth self understanding. They will learn much more about who they are, their strengths, abilities and more, and this information will be invaluable to review and adapt their current job and to use it to help in career decision making. The most important part of this session is to listen, to get the client to talk and help them to understand their current situation, we look back on where they have been and where they want to go. Whilst not assessed specifically I'm also seeking out information on their locus of control (Rotter 1954) as when clients have an external locus of control they may see any challenge as something outside of their control.

People seeking career coaching range from young people seeking help to make decisions on university choice, through new graduates to career changers at all ages leading through to approaching retirement. Many seek reassurance that other people also struggle to make a career choice. My approach to career coaching focuses on helping clients understand who they are and thus gain clarity in career decision making. Many career coaches will follow up with job search support; whilst coaching skills can help with this, for example, helping a client improve their interview techniques, much of career coaching focuses on the initial stage of deciding what to do. This goes beyond

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a review of a CV, but to help a client understand themselves more deeply and thus help them gain career satisfaction. Career coaching skills can be an effective part of guidance and involve asking open questions, listening carefully and not being prescriptive in what is said.

Working in private practice

Working in private practice is very different than operating as an employee. As a private practitioner I have to charge for my services and business skills can be as important as professional expertise, I first need to find potential clients! I need to ensure that I make the most appropriate suggestions for a potential client, being mindful of their needs and budgets. I may not be constrained by having to work within the constraints of employer guidelines but I have to ensure what I provide meets the budgets of my clients. Decisions on what to include in the coaching sessions are decided taking both client need and budget into account. A substantial element of my coaching programmes involves assessments. These are not chosen to 'provide the answer' but to expand an individuals self-knowledge to help them make a decision based on a much broader perspective.

Much career coaching includes more exercises and assessments than in 'pure' life coaching. In career coaching people have an outcome in mind, to decide the career path they should take or get the job that they want. Most career coaches will include exercises and inventories and a good proportion will include assessments. Career coaches with a psychological background including chartered psychologists like me will use psychometric assessments to help a client understand themselves more.

I believe that too many people make career choices on the basis of what they are good at, and this can mean they fail to see options that would be much more fulfilling for them. We can learn a skill, but are we inspired to use the skills learned? We need to understand what we are good at, but also need to decide if we are fulfilled when using them. As part of my coaching process I help my clients to review their skills, an inventory can be helpful but is insufficient on its own. Some clients choose almost every skill, others

aren't sure if their skill level is high enough, and this takes us into possible work on self confidence and self belief. Through working together I ensure that my client take skills into account but makes sure they are skills they enjoy using.

There is much negative comment about assessments, but this is often based on the use of cheap or free services available online with short reports for someone to work through alone. Proper psychometric tests provide objective information and add structure and focus to a coaching session, they often uncover information that may not have been found otherwise. It is the information in the blind spot (Johari model – Luft & Ingham 1950) that will aid understanding. Reputable assessments include normative data so a standard comparison can be made against their self-evaluation. Tests are not used alone but in addition to coaching around values, ideal work environment and creative idea generation.

Many people use a personality questionnaire to make a career decision and alongside the official Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (Myers 1985) used by some career coaches, there are many variations of this available either free or as low as $5. Many people are familiar with the MBTI which helps people to understand themselves through personal preferences and strengths across four dimensions:

- Focus of energy (internal vs. external);

- Information gathering methods (concrete facts vs. meanings and possibilities);

- Decision-making preferences (logical vs. feelings and values); and

- Lifestyle preferences (planned and orderly vs. spontaneous and less structured).

Coaching as part of a feedback discussion will help a client to understand personality and in particular their preferred working environment, but I recommend that it should not be used alone to make a career choice. Just because a number of people with a particular personality type report that they are satisfied in a particular job it does not mean that someone else with a similar type would want to work in the same job, (Pittenger 1993). Personality inventories are only modest predictors of job performance against

job families (Novack 1997) so personality type alone should not be used to make a career choice. I find the MBTI helpful as a means to raise self awareness on the type of working environment to best suit a client personal style. I do not give much weight to a list of careers identified for a particular type. My preference is for the MBTI Step 2 (Myers & Myers 2004), which goes much deeper, taking each of the dimensions and breaking them down into sub scales. For example Extraversion and Introversion is made up of these scales.

EXTRAVERSION (E)	INTROVERSION (I)
Initiating	Receiving
Expressive	Contained
Gregarious	Intimate
Active	Reflective
Enthusiastic	Quiet

Someone may have a moderate preference for Introversion, may also have a clear preference for Expressive, one of the facets that are part of extraversion. For example, Simon is someone who gets most of his energy from within and needs to recharge after spending too much time with other people but he is open and will talk about feelings and inner thoughts with others, more typical of an Extravert.

Another popular assessment is the Strong Interest Inventory (Harmon, Hansen, Borgen & Hammer 1994) based on the vocational choice theory of John Holland (1973). Responses are compared to a representative sample of occupations followed by people who enjoy their work, have worked in that area for at least three years, and undertake typical work in this career. People tend to search out those environments that match their interests, and an environment attracts people who share similar interests. Whilst the Strong is a quick way to get a snapshot of career interests, the highest interests may not be the most appropriate career for a client. I personally have high interests for the arts, but alas little talent and am unlikely to follow up their suggestion of fine artist. That's why I use it in conjunction with other assessments.

Both personality assessments and interest inventories are self report, in coaching sessions we need to make sure that any self report is accurate. There can be a need for careful coaching, people may have a self concept that is at odds with what is seen by others and challenge needs to be done carefully, with the use of open questions to explore.

In one sense, I find it easier to work with ability assessments as they provide 'hard data' by comparing the client's answers against norms. Probably the most popular in the UK is the Morrisby (2013). Similar but different is the Highlands Ability Battery (HAB) (Highlands 2013). This American assessment is based on the work of the Johnson O'Connor Research Foundation (2013) and the underlying methodology is used in an online assessment making it easy for people to complete from their home computer. The HAB is a set of 19 tests, which measure strengths, and weaknesses of certain abilities as well as other characteristics important for career and life decision-making. This results in clients knowing their natural abilities - the talents that make some things easy and others more difficult.

The 19 tests are work samples which include:

- **Classification –** to assess the ability to see relationships among seemingly unrelated events, situations, or information. This is the relative ability to move from the specific to the more general, to detect a common thread that joins individual objects into a pattern.

- **Idea Productivity –** measures the number of ideas that spring to a person's mind over a particular period in response to a set of new facts. It is the quantity of ideas, not the quality that is measured and may be evidenced by the relative contributions of individuals who participate in a brainstorming session.

- **Spatial Relations Visualization –** measures the ability to 'see' and follow in three dimensions an object that is represented in two dimensions. The ability is related to the relative preference for hands-on work and experience and the satisfaction in achieving tangible results.

- **Observation –** the ability to focus on and

remember visual details and to detect changes and irregularities as they occur.

Each ability is measured through a work sample. The work sample is specially constructed so that only one ability is being assessed. Being timed eliminates the possibility of substituting another ability or extra time to accomplish the task. Whilst measured individually the results are then considered together, in different combinations. One combination of aptitudes for example, makes the accomplished salesperson, another combination describes a person who enjoys network administration, and another combination explains why a person enjoys one part of management but not the rest.

A client will complete all assessments at home, thus freeing up time that was previously spent in test administration. A coaching programme involves discussions of assessments and more open coaching sessions. For example at least 90 minutes is spent discussing the HAB and an hour to go through the MBTI Step 2. The coaching sessions are focused on expanding self knowledge and later used within decision making.

Many people have experience of completing an ability battery from school, with a report and limited discussion, the temptation is to focus on the list of career suggestions. My approach provides much more time for discussion, so a client gets to understand the reasoning behind the suggestion. For example with the HAB the results are presented in the form of a bar chart where their score is compared to a database of well over 11,000 people. A high score is not necessarily better than a low score. For example while a high score on classification is needed for success in quick problem solving (such as needed by a surgeon), a low score is better for someone who needs patience to work with people at their own pace, such as a career counsellor. Whilst the client will already have read a report, downloadable on completion of the assessment, my objective is to bring the report to life and to make it meaningful, answering any questions they have. The MBTI and Strong Interest Inventory are also discussed in depth, each supported by written reports. Assessments are helpful but other elements are also included, looking at skills, values, motivators, impact of family background and more.

I find that not everyone is creative, and some people don't want to get involved in exercises that involve drawing or developing ideas, but we do need to widen thinking. It's important to recognise what works best for a particular client. For example some will love to create a vision board, collecting images that appeal, this touches the right brain and thus could open up things that are less a part of their conscious thinking. For clients who like to write they may choose to answer the question 'I would love to…' and undertake 10 minutes of free writing. An alternative is to ask a client to write their obituary or a newspaper article set in the future. Thinking about where they want to be, looking at more than just their career, can help people to think about what type of career path will enable them to achieve that goal, but it also helps them to take a realistic view. From this my client can decide if the costs, of time, effort, study commitment and impact on their life is worth it for them.

I help a client to identify their interests through the Strong Interest Inventory, but it can also be helpful to discuss interests and passions. Just because someone has an interest in dogs, music, cooking it doesn't mean they should base a career around this as it may be preferable to keep a passionate interest to be something they do to relax, but it may be useful to take account of interests whilst in the exploring phase.

Values are considered in both career and life coaching as these are underlying principles that affect our beliefs, attitudes and actions. They give us direction and help decide on priorities, paying attention to these can lead to people having greater life and career satisfaction. Values could be found through looking at a list and picking out the ones with most meaning to a person, but I believe that a better approach could be the one I use, using a pack of values cards. From an initial sort my clients take the top 15 or so and then compare each card with each other, thus being forced to put them in order and the top 5-8 being listed. Once we know our top values we can look at both our current role and possible future roles and see how well they match up.

I've described many of the tools used, but my approach to career coaching is much more than a selection of tools, it is an approach focused on helping someone help themselves. Through open questions, listen and

challenge a client moves beyond what they know to how they can make use of this to take action.

My coaching will usually include an intensive and extensive 2 hours session, helping my client bring together a range of information about themselves to draw up a short list of jobs to explore further. This is certainly not looking at a computer screen or a report and leaving a client to decide alone but time spent looking at the results from the assessments, looking for how it relates to our coaching discussions and the results from other elements (skills, values, etc.). With some clients the outcome will confirm a career that interests them, for others it will identify new options.

Each assessment can lead to a list of jobs, contained within the report with the Strong Interest Inventory, or indicated via books and websites with the MBTI. Others are based on analysis personally undertaken by me. For example looking at the results from the HAB and consulting with manuals I may identify someone as a 'Creative Communicator'. This is someone who scores high in both Idea Productivity and Concept Organisation. A high score in Idea Productivity means that someone will find it easy to quickly generate a large number of ideas. A high score in Concept Organisation means that someone will find it easy to take these ideas and organise them into a logical grouping or sequence. When combined together it suggests career satisfaction through careers that involves communicating ideas to others. This includes journalist, public speaker, advertising copywriter, 6th form teacher, lawyer, psychologist and researcher.

It's not always going to be the case that all 3 assessments, if taken, will point to the same job, although if they do it is certainly a career worth pursuing. Assessments can lead to different job titles, and also the jobs are based on combinations of personality/ interests/ abilities that mean that not every job will be listed. So when a job appears through an assessment, or indeed a client has an interest in a job the details of the job are considered, and compared with the data from the HAB to see the extent their abilities support a job role. I would never tell someone not to do a particular job, but would want him or her to be aware of the reasons why it is going to be difficult. (For example, to get through law school you need high scores in classification and verbal

memory to deal with the volume of material to read and to make quick decisions in new areas). Specific patterns of abilities may strongly suggest working in an area that has never been considered, such as a 'hands on' practical role where there is a clear product produced rather than a purely abstract role.

For others the results can lead to expanded thinking beyond what they had ever considered, this can lead to radical changes. From my own private practice I have had a 'magic circle' lawyer move to become a golf pro; an unhappy finance director set up a property management business; and an 18 year old choosing to work for an accountancy firm rather than go to university. The options are wide; however, realism is important but rather than start at the very realistic level which can be too constraining I check with my clients if they want to look at all possibilities before we narrow things down to what they can choose based on experience and background.

Clients will leave me with a 'medium list' of perhaps 6-10 jobs that are likely to offer career satisfaction. They then need to be proactive to find out about them – would they be willing to make sacrifices for the training? Would the money be sufficient to meet their financial needs? At this point, many clients are ready to start their job search unaided. Recently I had an email from John, a few weeks after completing a coaching programme; he was getting ready to move to Australia to pursue training to be a nurse, one of the ideas he left with. Others want to continue career coaching with a further session or two where we focus on clarifying what they are going to do, and then job search involving CV writing, interview coaching, sharing job search techniques.

There are different approaches to career coaching, and this article has focused on one of the approaches I'll take with clients. It's intensive and involves the client in work too, they don't just take away the top three jobs to apply for, they have to undertake research as well. Clients respond to different approaches and this approach is well suited to clients who like a structured and logical approach. It can lead to confirmation why someone is unhappy but also gives many the confidence to move into a new career. There's still work to be done. Even once someone is clear they want to move from, for example, accountant to social

media consultant, they have to have a plan for how to get there and that may include an interim position. The very best feedback I receive is from clients who now have the confidence to make the move to a new area, and excel at interview. They can explain why they want the job, how they match up and how specifically their background will enhance their role in the job using information gained through in-depth self knowledge and understanding.

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Lost in translation: career coaching deaf students

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Understanding employability skills creates numerous challenges for deaf students who use British Sign Language. Graduates need to possess an array of employability skills and career coaching is one way in which careers advisers can support students and graduates. This process helps to identity their skills, define their career goals and translate their experiences into a format that employers anticipate. Careers guidance may not assist deaf graduates unless appropriate changes to methodology and approach are implemented. An example of good practice that could serve as a template for use within the sector is offered.

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Overview

Understanding employability skills creates numerous challenges for students and graduates whose first language is English. When the student is a deaf person who uses British Sign Language (BSL), English is effectively a second language and so comprehension and understanding problems are increased[1]. Deaf students' English literacy development has often been delayed by an education system which has failed to provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge to find meaningful employment opportunities (Barnes, Bradley and McCrea, 2012). Much has been written about the need for graduates to possess an array of employability skills which they need to evidence in their CVs and applications forms (CBI & UUK, 2009). Career coaching is one way in which careers advisers can support students and graduates in the

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[1] The term deaf refers to those students who use BSL as a first or preferred language. However, many of the issues discussed in this article also relate to deaf students who do not use BSL.

job application process. This process helps students to identity their skills, define their career goals (Chung & Gfroerer, 2003, 1996) and translate their experiences into a format that employers anticipate. However, a career coaching approach may not assist deaf graduates who are unable to hear discussions relating to 'employability skills' or have direct access to the language associated with career development. This creates a huge barrier to their understanding and demonstration of employability skills unless appropriate changes to methodology and approach are implemented. This article assesses the problems with generic career advice for deaf students and outlines an example of good practice at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) that could serve as a template for use within the sector.

Background to graduate employment or underemployment

At a time of huge cultural and financial change for universities, capped student numbers, increased tuition fees, the recession and changing demands in the job market, terms such as ' employability skills ', 'work placement opportunities' and 'volunteering' are increasingly being used by universities to attract potential students. Universities are working alongside employers to identify what attributes employers require and how they can provide those (CBI & UUK, 2009). Never has the employability agenda been so important in higher education, however, for deaf students, access to employment and work experience is beset with challenges and barriers. This is reflected in a report produced by the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) that stated one in five of the

deaf respondents were unemployed and looking for work compared with one in twenty in the UK labour market (RNID, 2006). If we look at the graduate picture in 2008/09, the destinations of deaf graduates showed an increase in unemployment levels of over 100% in just two years (AGCAS, 2011). Therefore, whilst the 'career barrier' for graduates is well-documented both nationally and internationally (Punch, Hyde & Power, 2007), we believe that deaf graduates are further hindered by linguistic barriers which make the employability process even more difficult.

For BSL users, English is not their first language; their English literacy development has often been delayed by an education system which has let them down, by communication methodology which is inappropriate, and by assessment strategies based on hearing norms (Barnes & Doe, 2007). This results in deaf students having more restricted literacy skills than their hearing peers. Yet, studying at higher education level requires all students to understand and use academic language and literacies. They need to be 'fluent and confident using the spoken and written language conventions of their academic discipline' (Barnes & Doe, 2007: 106). Deaf students who are under-prepared in terms of their literacy and their ability to access and produce written English at higher education level will struggle to access this academic discourse.

These linguistic barriers are clearly illustrated when deaf students and graduates need to express graduate development and employability skill sets in a written format. Farrar (2007) discusses the difficulties experienced by students in general, when conforming to write in academic settings – including doubts about conveying themselves adequately. She acknowledges that those uncertainties are increased for deaf students if 'there are difficulties with sentence structure, spelling and confident use of an academic style' (p.5) or in this case an employability style.

Furthermore information gaps between career staff expectations and student interpretations of what is involved in application form writing become more complex when one considers that the deaf student is often involved in mediated learning via a third party (Barnes & Doe, 2007). These third parties (i.e. interpreters) may themselves have minimal knowledge of the language of higher education or more

specifically, of how to adequately convey the specialist language needed for the application process.

Additional barriers to employment for this group of students are indicated by reports that 60% of employers expect graduates to have some kind of work experience; and that it is 'not at all likely' that a graduate without work experience will be successful in gaining employment (High Fliers, 2011, 2012). Finding work experience is extremely challenging for deaf students and graduates as they do not have the same access to spoken networks about where the latest jobs are. Telephone interviews are problematic, if not impossible; and they may find application forms and CVs difficult to complete. They will certainly have difficulty gaining information about the job or application process. In addition, Punch et al (2004) argue that deaf graduates are excluded from certain employment sectors such as retail and hospitality (a common employer for most students). A further barrier is funding for interpreters for voluntary experience; historically there has been no funding via the government's Access to Work Scheme or from Disabled Students Allowance (DSA). This has made gaining work experience for deaf students a considerable challenge, thus hampering their ability to gain and subsequently demonstrate employability skills to employers without having the 'means by which these skills can be attained' (CBI & UUK, 2009). These examples illustrate how much more difficult is it for a deaf graduate to secure employment, work placement or even volunteer opportunity, when competing with non-deaf graduates.

We believe that deaf undergraduates need specific support programmes, including one to one career coaching sessions to enable them to gain experience and skills, and to put them in a better position in the recruitment market. The wider university must be engaged with the challenges deaf undergraduates and graduates face. Deaf students need to be provided with more access to careers information, skills audits, application processes and mock interview support. For this reason UCLan has developed a range of training and career coaching opportunities.

Example of good practice: provision for Deaf students/ graduates at UCLan

UCLan has, for many years, been at the forefront of providing high quality services for deaf students (Barnes, Bradley and McCrea, 2012). The support service for deaf students was developed in 1993 alongside a new degree in Deaf Studies. The combination of good quality support plus a signing community within the university led to increasing numbers of deaf students enrolling at UCLan. These numbers have allowed UCLan to develop specialist services which may not be possible in institutions where there are only one or two deaf students. Careers' coaching for deaf students is just one example.

Working closely with the BSL and Deaf Studies course team and with the interpreting service, we identified gaps in the support of deaf students during transition from higher education to work. Additionally, the support being offered to deaf students whilst studying for their degrees was not being replicated at the end of their course. Whilst non-deaf graduates knew how to access the careers services and opportunities, deaf graduates, through lack of awareness and access to information, were being left without knowing where to turn for help. This prompted a multi-disciplinary, cross-university initiative to provide specialist career guidance, training events and one to one coaching sessions.

Employment Opportunities Group

In 2010, a multi-disciplinary group was established to explore the issues and barriers faced by deaf students in gaining employment opportunities and skills. The group incorporated the specialist careers adviser (for students with disabilities), the principal lecturer from the BSL and Deaf Studies degree programmes, the Head of the interpreting services, an adviser for deaf students and representatives from the university work placement team, the undergraduate job centre and the mentoring service. Most importantly, representatives from the deaf student body were

also involved. The group's main focus was to identify and address the issues and barriers faced by deaf students in gaining work placements, voluntary work, and both term-time and post-graduation employment opportunities. The group identified a number of areas which were raised as specific issues for deaf students such as how to access employment information, using an interpreter in an interview, writing a CV and applying for ATW funding. The result was the first Deaf Futures event, inviting deaf alumni to give advice to undergraduates on how to get work and stay employed. This was delivered in BSL and led by deaf undergraduates.

Deaf Futures

Following on from the success of this event, we applied to Action on Access (www.actiononaccess.org) for funding to continue this work with other partners within higher education. The premise was to create a sustainable network and in conjunction with the existing Employment Opportunities Group to share good practice across HEIs. We developed a series of workshops for staff, students and graduates.

The staff-facing workshops were opened to disability advisers, careers advisers, and work placement teams and to anyone who had an interest in developing employability services for deaf students. A series of workshops were developed focused on exploring the barriers faced by deaf students in trying to gain employment, work placements and voluntary work; Access to Work (ATW) and teaching practical skills for coaching. The final event was an online webinar which illustrated how this Deaf Futures network could be sustained and disseminated knowledge and good practice across the sector.

The student-facing events took a slightly different focus. The first event was a full day practicum consisting of a number of different presentations, workshops and 'market place' advice stalls. Delivered fully in BSL, it was open to a national audience and aimed to give undergraduates first-hand advice on how to start their own businesses, information about jobs and work experience and practical skills and techniques for interviews and CV-writing. The latter events included role-play and hands-on activity. Feedback from the day indicated that this type of event

provided students with access to valuable information and skills that they would not have otherwise had access to. Asked what they had learned from this event, the students emphasised, in particular, the practical interview skills, shared experiences and an awareness of the world of work and the range of opportunities on offer to deaf people.

From our experience, it is apparent that students and graduates lack an understanding of employability skills and the ability to define what some of the skills mean. Even trickier is the ability to translate their experiences into a demonstration of these skills. Evidence emerged via the Deaf Futures events and individual career coaching appointments that this was particularly the case for deaf students and graduates using BSL as their first language. Therefore, the second workshop utilising a group career coaching approach aimed at assisting deaf students in gaining a more in-depth understanding of the terminology used in relation to employability and to demonstrate different types of examples they could use to evidence their employability skills.

The focus for this workshop was written English. Students looked at examples of job specifications and job descriptions and discussed employers' expectations of graduate level application forms. In particular we discussed that what the students were writing was not necessarily what the employer was asking for, or expecting. Literacy barriers were also being confounded by cross-cultural miscommunication. A literal deaf-cultural answer for why they want a job will not necessarily be the answer the hearing employer is anticipating. Students completed a Skills Audit using a tailor-made, visual and language modified Skills Glossary. They were encouraged to provide their own individual examples to evidence their skills. Previously this had been difficult as they had not understood the terminology of the job specification. Their evidence was then used to co-write personal statements. This was a practical session, which merely scratched the surface of what was needed, but indicated a real barrier for deaf BSL-users trying to enter the job market.

Some feedback from the students has been reproduced here, as it indicates not only the success, but also the need for this type of career intervention.

[Comments have been transcribed into English]

- *I have learned new words e.g. interpersonal, flexibility and adaptability*

- *I have learned lots which I didn't expect. I now know what I need to put on CVs*

- *I have learned about customer orientation and leadership, details that I can add as evidence*

- *I have learned vocabulary that I didn't know before e.g. Interpersonal, customer orientation*

- *I admit that the event has overwhelmed me because my knowledge is limited, so I hope the event may help. It's taught me that I should be involved in work experience.*

- *It's important to know how I can express my skills*

Events such as the Deaf Futures workshops ensure that key employability skills are also being introduced to and accessed by deaf undergraduates. It is not enough to assume that they will gain them in a similar manner to non-deaf students. All students felt that this session was extremely useful. Students were aware that they did not know how to express their skills on an application form even though the majority of students could easily evidence their skills in their first language (BSL). For this reason they appreciated that the terminology had been made more' simple and visual', that the presentations were in BSL and that the people supporting them could do so in sign language. This gave them a confidence they did not feel when trying to work alone in written English. Of course, the large number of deaf students studying at UCLan made this type of event possible. This raises the question of how HEIs can support deaf students where there is low-incidence within their institution, where there are few interpreters available, and therefore where workshops of this type cannot be delivered. One answer is to organise regional or national events. The other possibility is one-to-one (interpreted) career coaching.

One-to-one career coaching

One-to-one career coaching appointments have been offered to deaf students and graduates at UCLan

Futures[2] since 2008[3]. These sessions are supported by a BSL interpreter. What follows is a case study exploration of career coaching with one deaf student. Greg[4] started to attend career coaching sessions in 2009, partly with a view to building and developing a skills-based CV. The first CV he brought to the session demonstrated a lack of understanding of specific employability skills terminology. He had created a skills-based CV which only mentioned a very limited array of skill sets including communication, organisation and team working. In addition, the evidence supporting the skills sets was limited. Working through a BSL interpreter, it was obvious that Greg had sufficient skills and experiences to draw from; however, he lacked understanding of employability skills terminology, and how to use English to translate these experiences into evidence based skills. The amount of evidence expected from employers also meant his CV was weak and would not meet a job specification. For example, here is an excerpt from his CV, which shows a lack of evidence, brevity of response and limited linguistic ability to convey evidence of skill set:

Organisation Skills

I need to be organised for my degree studies and this has polished my already existing organisational abilities.

Therefore, early career coaching sessions focused on exploring Greg's understanding of a range of employability skills and what the employer would be looking for under each of these criteria. Through this exploration it became evident that Greg had a limited understanding of what each of the skills set meant. Whilst this issue is not limited specifically to deaf students and graduates, it is compounded by linguistic and aural challenges.

Firstly, I utilised a skills dictionary to provide Greg with plain English definitions of specific employability skills, which were explained in detail in BSL. In follow up coaching sessions, time was spent revisiting Greg's understanding and asking him to provide appropriate (and numerous) examples of evidence. Once Greg understood the meaning and the employers'

2   UCLan's centre for Careers, Employability and Enterprise.
3   This did exist prior in a different format.
4   Name fictionalised and permission given by individual.

expectation of each criterion, he was able to articulate his experiences and skill sets in BSL. The problem remained that he did not have the academic or formal language to convey these experiences onto paper (see Farrar, 2007). During one appointment the interpreter intervened and commented on the possible loss in translation. On reflection it became apparent that when the interpreter was translating my comments and advice into BSL, the formal language, expected by an employer was being lost. In order to make sure Greg was understanding, for example, the term interpersonal skills, the interpreter would sign, working together. In doing so, they failed to understand and therefore to portray the range of skills that fell under this umbrella term. In addition, Greg never got to know the actual term interpersonal skills. This is one example of the need for cross-cultural awareness and mediation to ensure clear and appropriate communication and understanding.

Even more enlightening was the realisation that when I was giving verbal examples of what employers would be looking for in a CV or an application form, and in particular, examples of the formulaic written expressions usually required, the BSL translation changed not only the formulaic language but also the English modelling of the answer. So, for example, when I was giving verbal examples of how to evidence Creativity and Team work, I said:

'The degree programme has given me the ability to generate innovative ideas for reports and projects.'

The BSL Gloss, what the student saw in BSL (via the interpreter) was:

LINK CREATIVITY TEAM WORK MEix BEEN MEix GIVEN DEVELOP IMPROVE EITHER REPORTS OR PROJECTS IDEAS HOW? ixDEGREE THROUGH BEEN

The literal back-translation of this; how the student would translate the BSL back into English would be very possibly the following:

'Together creativity and team work for me have given me the (ability) to develop, improve reports or projects. How (have I gotten these skills)? By getting a degree.'

What the student was receiving in BSL was not English structure, and so when Greg reproduced this in his own written English, it did not resemble the language of the examples given. The result was a better understanding of what was required but still a poorly written CV.

As a result, I developed a number of written examples to demonstrate the way to present and convey evidence of specific skill sets. I also took their written examples and rewrote them to show how they should be written in a CV. This visual and hands-on practice proved invaluable over the course of our career coaching sessions. In addition it was necessary to work closely with the interpreter to ensure that they fully understood the employability terminology and the importance of trying to emphasise how the evidence should be written down. As Farrar (2007) explained:

> Interpreters and communication support workers need to know the word but also to have a clear understanding of its meaning. Only then can it be spoken, interpreted, comprehended, absorbed and internalised (p.238).

This was not a quick fix-it remedy. Career coaching with Greg lasted for over 12 months. The experience led us to organise a student event entitled 'Filling in the Flamin' Form' where we distributed tailor-made resources for the deaf students; a visual, plain English Skills Dictionary, a plain English Employability Booklet, Tips and Hints for Getting a Graduate Job. We also had an interactive session modelling the work being undertaken with Greg. Students benefited greatly from this session and have asked for more events to be delivered. For Greg, his search for (graduate) employment goes on. Nevertheless, he is more independent and he is better able to complete his own CV. Here is an example of Greg's revised CV extract following our work together:

> **Organisation Skills:**
>
> Effective organisational skills and self-motivation, which is demonstrated by my ability to continually meet deadlines, achieve good grades and balance the university course with part-time job as well as a dissertation project for the past two years. In my job, this skill is required when organising event such as play-schemes and day out trips for children.

Conclusion

Feedback from the Employment Opportunities Group, Deaf Futures events and individual career coaching sessions demonstrate the need for specifically tailored support for deaf undergraduates, for whom employability is a key issue. There are incredible barriers for deaf students to overcome in the pursuit of finding and securing employment. Added to this are the difficulties highlighted relating to literacy, formal writing and understanding employability skills. This in turn impacts on their abilities to decipher job specifications, complete application forms and compile CVs. Cross-cultural issues also need to be considered as deaf and hearing world norms are different. Both the deaf applicant and the hearing interviewer/employer need to be aware of these issues and take them into consideration.

At its most basic, the project illustrates the need for higher education institutes to engage with their deaf students in the pursuit of employment opportunities. Finding a job for a deaf student or graduate is not the same process as for hearing students. Placement teams, career advisers, disability advisers and course leaders need to be addressing the employability skills agenda and work experience opportunities for their deaf students. More specific training for students, extra intervention in negotiating placements, awareness training for employers (and placement teams) will all contribute to a better experience. Hopefully, the Deaf Futures network will continue to discuss these issues on-line and disseminate good practice across the sector, so that deaf graduates and undergraduates have equal access and opportunities to secure employment.

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Careers guidance and career coaching – what's the big idea?

Bill Law

Careers work is due for a new start. It will mean more than a realignment or reform of what it has been doing. It calls for an ability to imagine what it would do if it were starting from scratch. Such boldness is necessary because neo-liberal reliance on private-sector marketisation has fatally marginalised public-sector careers work. And, just as importantly, the fit between career-development expertise and career-management experience is increasingly askew. A product of these political and cultural shifts is the global prevalence of a private-sector career-coaching industry. The argument here is that, although careers work's public-sector past is irrecoverable, an independent careers-work future is within reach.

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Introduction

There is no shortage of ideas about what careers work is for. Dominant claims are for equipping people for employment in an increasingly competitive global economy. But there's no educative resolution here. The examination[1] shows that employability fails both as a measure of readiness for working life and as an indicator that anything useful has been learned.

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

An able educator is capable of a bigger pragmatism, rooted in the culture of the society it inhabits. This is not a rehash of Matthew Arnold's elitist plea for 'the best that has been thought and said'. That is the kind of aloofness that still appeals to 'education' ministers, such as the UK's Michael Gove. But, in the UK, we found during 2012 that – as a society – we have cultivated what all kinds of so-called ordinary people can enthusiastically embrace. We found more than we had realised – about who we are, what we can do, and why we value it. The director of the welcome to the 2012 Olympics gave us quite a moment.

To be able to think and say this is to be ready to tell every citizen, visitor and competitor what we can be counted on to do. Every culture has its own version. And it does not mean doing what you're told, it means knowing what you're doing. It's not a passing-on of the past, but a reaching for a future. It's argued here that it is what education can do for anybody claiming a stake in their own society.

There is no movement in that society more involved in these issues than careers work. At first sight careers work looks as if it is here to implement government policies for the maintenance of a competitive economy. But to look closer is to find that such talk masks another question…

'Who gets to do what in our society?'

It's not a comfortable question. But it is one which careers workers share with educators who see their professionalism as independent of both policy and

1   this is the polemic - the 'evidence', 'examinations' and 'arguments' are set out, with links, at http://www.hihohiho.com/newthinking/cafcoach.pdf

commerce. This argument develops and examines how that thinking enlarges professionalism. It is for bigger ideas.

Careers-work clamour

Careers work's history of openness to change has left it with a confusing vocabulary. What is now called 'career guidance' has been known as 'vocational guidance' and 'career counselling'. The movement has outfits working on what is variously called 'careers education and counselling', 'guidance and counselling', 'guidance studies' and 'career development'. The term 'careers work' was coined to speak of all these activities in the public service – and it's the term used here. But the term 'career coaching' is a relative new-comer – much of it operating in private-sector enterprises. These terms do not clearly map a territory – boundaries are breezily crossed and signposts nonchalantly re-aligned. A person can get lost. But it's a happy hunting ground for any group clamouring to capture a more favourable position.

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

But well-trained qualification, based on expert knowledge, is not the whole careers-work story. There is a yet-more clamorous scene documented in day-on-day news of economic, cultural and political change. It challenges much of what we call professionalism. Indeed, it shows trust in professions to be irrevocably low. It is part of the culture of not doing what you are told, but knowing what you're doing. People have other ways of finding out what's going on, and figuring what they can do about it. It's argued here that the CDI (with such-like organisations world-wide) needs to take account of this global, volatile and radically re-

aligning scene.

There is a way forward. But it's going to need a more distinctive response than pushing employability expertise on behalf of economy and policy. It means calling to people's claim to a stake in their own society. The evidence shows the terms in which those stakeholders are students with their families and in their communities. And the business world is capable of acting, not just in shareholder, but in stakeholder interests. Also, although policy makers are weakened by global forces, their constitutional role is to represent stakeholder interests – both nationally and locally. But a complete stakeholder network extends into voluntary civil society, acting for the well being of people whose lives raise the 'who-gets-to-do-what?' question. The argument is that, in a clamouring past, some stakeholders have received little attention; and, in a stakeholder future, careers work needs to offer a deeper and wider connectivity.

Those people have other sources of learning – both formal and informal. And so, extending its acquisitive history, careers work now needs to coin another term. If 'career development' is how we refer to careers-work expertise, then what do we call the punters' experience? The missing term is 'career management'. The CDI pushes career-development expertise, the new term acknowledges career-management experience. It's not what careers workers do, it's what their students and clients do – with or without expert help. It belongs to them, and it may be less vulnerable to capture.

There are three recent events where careers workers voice these issues…

- an ESRC-sponsored seminar – concerned with the future development of careers work

- a meeting of the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling – examining private-sector practice

- an on-line social-networking conversation – probing professional responses

Between them, the events engage academics, researchers and practioners. A lightly-edited collection of those quotations appears below. They voice much of what careers workers believe, the values

that they attach to those beliefs, and the ideas they have concerning what might be done about them. Those voices rate a hearing. They speak up in five phases, ranging from a defence of what careers-work professionalism has been in the past, to the development of a distinctive careers-work narrative for the future.

Inside the box

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

The section examines how the thinking appears in both private-sector career coaching and public-service careers work. It finds some shared belief in market forces. To some careers-work professionals such influences appear irresistible. A test of effectiveness then becomes how many people are stably placed in work. Although fundamentally unreliable, we have no better indicator of marketable employability.

Alongside theory, such beliefs lead to the importing of business and policy influences for economic gains and market forces. Such influences have also been taken onboard in some schools and colleges. And that education-careers assonance favours the formation of bi-lateral partnerships – joining 'careers education' to 'career guidance'.

But not all educators have conceded to market forces, neither have all careers workers. The evidence shows why market forces in careers management can, and should, be resisted. It also shows how that realisation leads to an enlargement of professionalism. It prompts an expansion into multi-lateral partnerships, calling on a greater depth of thinking, serving a wider range of stakeholders and – so – achieving a more inclusive connectedness. It's bigger.

Some quotations from the events express interest in the emergence of private-sector career coaching,

but some recognise a different role for public-sector careers work. There is no single dynamic inside the careers-work box…

- all public services are expected to show their impact in economic value
- one of our jobs is to look to the needs of the work-force
- the CDI will have clout at the highest level
- it will demonstrate comparability between public, private and third sectors
- are more ex-public-sector people working in private practice?
- a unified, professional, forward-thinking body learns from mistakes and fights for better recognition
- the CDI is the only independent voice of the career professional in the UK
- we need a rethink – nothing is convincing anyone that careers work makes a difference
- what difference would it make considering how little anyone in government listens?
- employability is determined by the opportunity structure not careers work
- there has, from the beginning, been a tension between placement and guidance
- some will leave education with an understanding of their discipline – they will be high flyers
- there is something about graduate-ness which is the exact opposite of employability

There is no consensus here. In whatever way it is resolved, there must be some letting go of what some careers workers are trying to save. Following sections show how clinging to a conventionally-established position means that boxed-in thinking mostly needs saving from itself.

Out of the box

This section wonders if any movement can be understood wholly in terms of its own claims. Would that not be propaganda? Anyway, careers work

can usefully be understood in other-than-careers-work terms. It means looking at what careers work does not much look at itself. In particular it means understanding the leverage on much of our lives now exerted by global commerce. That influence reaches into neo-liberal government policies, which take private-sector markets to guarantee both the volume and quality of any service. The evidence shows how careers work is on the receiving end of these trends.

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

This is the who-gets-to-do-what question; and it is hard to ignore how access to opportunity is increasingly polarised. Students and clients find answers in their own and other people's experience. There is evidence that students want to take account of the impact of labour markets on other people and their communities. This is a social, not an economic, commitment. And it is exercised both world-wide and locally.

The trends are socially located, working differently in different locations. The locations can increasingly be characterised as 'enclaves'. They are small. Their inhabitants may place more trust in each other than risk trusting outsiders. Enclaves are home-made cultures of social connectedness – in the family, on the street and on-line. And, though social, they do have survival value.

Reports of such trends may not count as career-work literature. Preoccupations with inside-the-box issues can understandably sideline the bigger story. But they are of urgent importance to careers-work. They make the case for a more developed programme of education. And conventional careers work has not needed to understand curriculum in any depth – until now.

The event quotations reflect the resulting range of issues, stretched between trying to locate existing interests in careers work, and reaching for what else careers work can do for who else…

- we must satisfy client expectations
- policy has sought to introduce a wider range of providers operating in market conditions
- how do political and organisational issues impact public-practice careers work?
- careers work is based in occupational psychology
- employability is a function of supply and demand in the labour market
- employers see careers work as a nice-to-have – better to have it than not
- have employers lost their ability to engage with young people?
- mixed messages to policy, parents, friends, colleagues, managers – any wonder we're sidelined?
- send us solutions that we can put in front of a minister
- we fail to communicate our worth outside our own community – we're easy picking for this government
- the CDI is a commitment to the individual not to commercial targets
- our strategy should focus messages to parents and schools rather than our own conferences
- the school-autonomy agenda overrides everything
- the only freedom that is given to schools is the freedom to drop careers work
- it is not possible to show impact in the economic value of what we do

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

A distinctive voice

This section starts from the position that no educator can assume students and clients know nothing about what's going on in the reported world. Indeed, students invariably know something significant that their helpers don't know – particularly concerning the locality. Useful learning starts with educators finding out what that is. And it is invariably complicated.

But the issues it raises are bigger than student-with-teacher. We all need all of our people to be educated. And this section shows how an enlarged careers-work professionalism engages with all who have a stake in how people manage their careers. Those stakeholders also have a sense of the trends, the experience of them, and their consequences for people's economic and social lives. And their point is…

'How is careers work helping us to deal with all this?'

What we know of the economic and politics of these trends does not encourage public-sector careers education to answer in competition with private-sector career coaching. But the evidence documents how a well-stocked education can answer the question with useful, unfamiliar and surprising responses. It also shows how the kind of careers coaching which looks for an immediate pay-off cannot.

There is some career-metaphor thinking here: education opens a gateway to what seems like a journey; while coaching is what is needed to compete in what seems like a race. Contemporary conditions require careers work to be up for the journey.

The journey may start in a some privileged or deprived enclave, but it need not end in either. Careers work can enable a career-management journey to open gates to what is new, unexpected and transformative. The argument probes the distinctiveness of that position.

The quotations map careers-work beliefs, attitudes and expectations – stretching between what is competitive and what is distinctive…

- we have a better careers system than Germany – but Germany has a better economy
- we haven't been able to separate our voice from others who lay claim to the profession
- how do private-practice services differ from public-practice?
- in a low-growth, low-wage, zero-sum economy the competition for places is an incentive to cheat
- what is the unique selling point of the CDI?
- the CDI doesn't represent employers, isn't funded by government and is best at professional support
- we need not worry about our independence from government which hasn't helped or listened to us
- one level of management is to support the learning of others
- the next level is to change the way of working
- career guidance is more effective in a personal-development setting – a more holistic joined-up approach
- careers work is an introduction to the richness of life
- we need to make a new start

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

A credible narrative

The CDI and similar organisations need narratives that connect with people's experience. This section shows how such narratives are within reach. It provides a map for moving on. It is explicit about what conventional careers workers must let go. And it identifies what, at heart, they must hold on to. It means understanding how working from psychological diagnosis to economic information is too linear to enable people in what career management now means. But there is career-development expertise which is strong on stage-by-stage career-learning. And this

section argues why and how careers work must call on it – now more than ever.

People are nowadays readily connected to diagnostic and labour-market sources – notably through careers coaching, commonly on-line, sometimes through trusted contacts. But we know how, these days, that knowledge can be quickly out-dated, The case here is that sources are rarely well-enough interrogated. And that realisation offers careers work a credible narrative, recounting how a person is enabled not only to find out more of what is going on, but also to figure out which finds rate being taken seriously.

That argument shows how such critical thinking is enabled in a stage-by-stage career-learning process. It is a narrative, recounting how a person navigates a career-management path through change, confusion and dispute. Credibility needs a narrative that belongs to people thinking for themselves. Careers work has that narrative. It is to enable people in usefully probing, interrogating and questioning what they find.

This is critical thinking for a hazardous journey – learning-for-living. In the clamour of careers-work claims, no other careers-work position convincingly enables such transfer-of-learning, from where learning is found to where it will be used, both life-wide and life-long.

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

- careers work makes a difference – I know it intuitively

- being the professional is the most important thing

- what are the consequences of public-service careers work for the public sector?

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

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

- having adaptability to whatever comes is what gives people hope

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

Long-term exploration is not a negation of short-term coaching, it is the bigger framework. The ability to interrogate one's own narrative is applicable and re-applicable – indefinitely and without limits. Career coaching cannot effectively function without it.

A new start

A new start is not the introduction of new blooms to an otherwise undisturbed garden. It uproots, replaces and re-aligns the entire cultivation. And, all metaphors aside, careers work is not the only activity needing such a treatment – our high streets, our banks, our diets, our on-line lives, our pair-bonding and our ageing are all being re-aligned as you read this. Those consequences of change reach into some people's religious beliefs. The term 'paradigm shift' comes to mind; and there is such a careers-work claim – but it proved to be not a shifted paradigm but a redecorated convention. A paradigm shift is a big idea which changes everything. This is a change in everything which needs a big idea.

Careers work is not exempt. The complexity, subtlety and dynamism in what people do about career is as unbounded as all the narrations and analyses of what people do in any area of their experience. The argument shows how the more careers work can take on board that reality, then the more possibilities it will find for future development. It enlarges professionalism.

This is not an argument for canvassing government on behalf of some adjustment of conventionally-established careers work. The evidence is that neo-liberal policy does not welcome that advice, and shows little sign of recognising the public-service professionals who canvass it. A new start means escaping that boxed-in position, and abandoning that disdainful audience.

There are uncomfortable challenges to face. They include the possibility of making false claims in defence of good causes. The evidence on this cites some branches of careers work. It can mean acknowledging that we cannot credibly claim to be an arm of

economic planning. It might mean being better at understanding the flakiness of market forces. It might also mean being better aware of the interests they best serve.

The section also argues that what is needed is too big to fit into the time-and-space available to conventionally-established careers work. It examines a wider range of thinking, learned over time, in a stage-by-stage learning programme, calling on multilateral partnerships, seeking a special kind of partner, and serving a broader range of stakeholders. Made to work, this trend will be a distinctive declaration that careers work is abandoning the recycling of twentieth-century answers to twenty-first century questions.

There is a question for positioning the new start. The argument examines the case for escaping arbitrary pressure by prevalent forces. It means thinking of careers work as a feature of civil society – where professionalism can make fruitful links to voluntarism. That argument is for tenable positions and workable strategies, connecting with a wider range of partners and stakeholders. Such a professionalism would be in a position to say either 'yes' or 'no' to hegemonic interests.

Start-again thinking is not easy. It needs to be bold but careful, in both mapping the causes that demand change, and specifying the practices that respond to change. Neither is this short-term thinking. It calls for tenacity and patience on the part of careers workers. The life and interests of a parliament will not cover it. But the evidence examined here is that it is, willy-nilly, already happening.

Nonetheless, we should not be surprised to find that some event quotations hold on to less radical thinking, while others show signs of being able to let go and move on…

- the CDI has a thousand members – all fully trained
- they are 'la crème de la crème'
- impartiality is a bigger issue than careers services can solve
- we want to belong to something that is not government dependent

- the foundations for gaining maximum returns on careers work are laid in schools
- what people do about work is done outside the curriculum
- there has never been a time like now

In helping professions no analysis or narrative can be bigger than the questions and issues it is brave enough to raise. It needs to be able to penetrate flabby abstractions, like 'transparency' and 'openness', which obscure as much as they expose. It must undermine claims to 'accountability' which camouflage everything until they are predicated – accountable for what? and to whom? More importantly, no programme of help can be bigger than the people it calls on for answers to those questions. Clients, students, partners and stakeholder need to be able to find a careers work big enough that they can count on it.

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Developing sustainable career coaching in the workplace

Rob Nathan and Wendy Hirsh

This article is based on a conversation and so presented in the form of questions posed by Wendy Hirsh (W), NICEC Fellow, and answered by Rob Nathan (R), Managing Director of Career Counselling Services. We look at some of the particular tensions and opportunities in working with employers and how to anticipate some of the pitfalls in setting up services and also in framing individual career conversations. Rob also reflects on the theories and ideas which inform his practice as a career coach/counsellor.

W: In this article we will explore your views on 'career coaching' and some observations from your extensive experience. Let's start by understanding the different ways in which you work.

R: At Career Counselling Services (CCS), which was started in 1978, we offer individual career support for people who come to us under their own steam and also for those who are referred by their employers. We also work within organisations to facilitate the development of effective career management and career support programmes and the training of people who will deliver them.

What's in a name?

W: This journal issue is exploring 'career coaching', which seems to be an increasingly popular term in the UK. Do you find it a useful term for your clients?

R: Well, essentially what it's about is having effective career conversations. I think that people are generally more comfortable with the term 'career coaching'. Originally, I would put it at stage 5 of the career counselling process we use (see Fig. 1).

Figure 1: CCS Five Stage Framework of Career Coaching/Counselling

Stages	Possible Frame of Mind	Coach Skills / Tasks	Purpose
1. Contracting	Uncertain	Defining boundaries, ie time, confidentiality: assessing support.	Clarify expectations of the meeting.
2. Exploring	Confused, isolated, frightened, angry, calm, optimistic, shocked, pressured	Building rapport, Reflective listening, Open questions.	Understand the person, Define the issue.
3. Clarifying	More self-aware, Rational? Aha!	Summarising, using silence, presenting feedback. Identifying themes.	See situation in new way.
4. Visioning	Optimistic, Energetic, Fear of…?	Encouraging 'dreams'. Out of the box thinking.	More motivation to promote vision.
5. Resourcing Action	Increased energy, Focussed, Fear of...? How resilient?	Funnelling options, addressing blocks and bridges. Goal setting. Accessing resources. Coaching. Encouraging feedback from network.	Choose options. Identify resources and obstacles. Reality test. Maintaining momentum. Plan for success.

(Nathan and Hill, 2006)

Counselling skills are key to get people to explore which then helps them think through options. Certainly people who have come to our training courses have often come away saying "I now understand the difference between counselling and coaching – counselling is something about going a bit deeper and not just working at surface issues." However, having said that, I think there is now a really mixed use of the different terms: not just career coaching and career counselling, but also career support, career discussions or conversations, career development, career management, career consultancy, career guidance, career advice, career mentoring and so on. It seems that people will choose the terms that suit their context. In a chance conversation I had, the way the person said "I've got a career coach. I've seen a career coach", suggested that it was much more comfortable for them to use this terminology. I think people might feel a bit reluctant, particularly in the UK, about going to see anyone with the term counsellor in their name. So in a sense, coaching has become sort of the acceptable face of counselling and there are many people now doing coaching who twenty years ago would have been considered highly effective counsellors.

W: I suppose my experience is that the nature of career issues is such that at unpredictable points in a conversation, the coach – even a line manager or HR person – can find themselves drawn into somewhat deeper issues.

R: I think that some coaches are well able and well trained to deal with the deeper issues. One of the things we talk about in our training is the difference between presenting and underlying issues. We say that wherever career issues are concerned – whether it's a striving for achievement, a feeling of success or lack of success, a need for recognition, a need for inclusion, a feeling of loss in the case of redeployment or redundancy – issues and emotions can surface which go way back and can be quite deep and require a high level of skill to discuss. There are increasing numbers of highly trained coaches who are adept at noticing and responding to those issues without pushing people into a premature goal-setting activity.

Varied models of workplace career support

W: I know you have worked with employing organisations on different models of how they can set up career support for employees. Can you give some examples of what these models can look like?

R: We have developed models where volunteers inside the organisation are chosen and trained to offer career support as in *Oxfordshire County Council* (see Fig.2). In others there is a dedicated career support person or an independent but internal service (as in the *Ministry of Defence*). In some organisations, learning and development or HR professionals offer career support to employees. For example we are working with a very large private company in the UK and internationally. In this model we are training the HR directors of the different businesses as career coaches.

Some organisations use trusted outsiders to give career support who may be specialist career coaches or general coaches offering career support as part of what they do.

Increasingly we are working strategically with organisations through consultancy and training to tie in what they are doing on careers to their wider HR policies and hopefully to their business needs. That is more in line with our principle of sustainability – embedding if you like – an effective and professional career support service.

Contracting with employers

W: So as someone who works with individuals both inside employing organisations and those who just come to you themselves, what similarities and differences do you find in working in those two different settings?

R: The key difference in an employing organisation is that it may be more complex to know exactly 'who is the client'. When an individual comes to you directly, it's purer in a way. Having said that, we're always aware of who the stakeholders might

Figure 2: Examples of career services inside employing organisations

The **Ministry of Defence Career Consultancy Service** was established in 2006. It currently consists of 3 full-time and 4 part-time consultants selected from MOD's workforce who between them have very varied career experiences in the organisation. CCS trained the team which provides a range of career interventions including workshops (on career development but also on CV writing, MOD job applications and interview skills) and one-to-one consultations with around 5,500 members of staff so far. The service is overtly independent and impartial and has also been accredited with the government Matrix standard for the provision of advice and guidance.

Oxfordshire County Council uses a volunteer career coaching approach. From across the workforce applications for volunteers were sought, sifted and selections made. Those chosen (initially 24 people) each received five days of training. A project manager has overseen the set up and implementation of this service, including case discussion, supervision and ongoing CPD for the volunteer coaches. Referrals are agreed by the individual's line manager and coaches and coachees are well matched, and from different parts of the organisation so they are not in any way the line managers or in the reporting lines of the people they see. The managers of the volunteers commit to their member of staff spending 6-8 hours a month giving career support to others. For more information see People Management (2010).

Success factors in these and other employer-based services include:

- integration with the organisation's career development policy
- strong support from the top and from line managers
- owned and managed by one member of staff with a team who are highly committed to it
- linked to and differentiated from other internal support services for employees
- clear information about the service for employees eg intranet and management briefings
- high emphasis on service quality supported by training, supervision and CPD

be and there's always somebody else in the room even when you are talking to somebody one-to-one. So the first question we might ask is "What has brought you to career counselling?" And the person says "Well, actually, my mother sent me", or "My partner said that I've got to sort myself out." So there is always the need to consider other stakeholders. But the employer is probably a more crucial stakeholder in the sense that they may have set up the meeting with the individual's consent or partial consent. There is probably a stronger need to contract clearly for accurate expectations with the individual client, but also to contract explicitly with the employer. This is not the case in the same way if a parent or spouse has sent someone to us.

W: What sort of contracting conversation do you then have with an employer?

R: The first thing would be to agree the level of confidentiality so that career coaching is not seen as a process by which the individual is feeding in information about what they really want which then goes back to the organisation. We won't write a report on somebody, but it is incumbent on the individual to go back to their line manager or their HR person, or whoever it is, and share what they are happy to share in terms of the outcomes, and invariably they are. We are probably better these days at contracting than we used to be in terms of fending off inappropriate enquiries from employers asking how it's going.

Impartiality and a clear service offer

W: I find that many career professionals who work

directly with individuals or in public services are very nervous about whether it is possible to offer 'impartial' career guidance when employers are involved. How do you tackle this issue of impartiality when you are working through employers or helping them set up their own internal career services?

R: It is possible to create some guidelines, I think, to improve the chances of impartiality. We always ask ourselves "Who am I to the client? How impartial am I? How do they see me?" If there are two people in the room, one is the giver of coaching and the other is the receiver, and it's never going to be impartial. So I think it's a bit of a fool's errand to think that you can ever be completely impartial. However, we work very hard to increase awareness of the need to be respectful, to acknowledge the individual's situation, whatever it is, to respect diversity, to be aware of your own potential biases.

When working with employers, impartiality is more achievable where an internal career service is staffed by individuals who are not the line managers or in the reporting lines of the people they support. It is then part of the job of the organiser of the service to match clients with appropriate career coaches in this way. We try to increase awareness of any potential conflict where the same person can be called upon as a career coach and later to assess an individual in some way.

W: Are there other guidelines or principles you find helpful when dealing with services produced or delivered by an employer?

R: It is also important to help people understand what any career service is offering and where it sits. Guidelines can explain what the service is and what it isn't, how it differs from other services the organisation is offering (such as mentoring, general coaching or counselling support as part of an Employee Support Programme).

Sustainability and fit

W: I've seen so many workplace career interventions get well set up only to be cut a few years later.

How can we improve the chances of employers sustaining their efforts to offer career support to their employees?

R: I do think the volunteer models can be more sustainable as can those where HR professionals enhance their skills in this area but without setting up a separate and definable service. In these models, career support is more embedded within the people in the organisation and so is not a separate cost.

But there are no easy solutions. What works in one organisation may not sit well in another. It makes all the difference if you are working with someone who can navigate the politics to introduce something in a way that is palatable and acceptable to that culture, to that organisation.

Training different kinds of people as career coaches

W: I'm interested in the skills people need to acquire if they are going to act as career coaches. We know that many career coaches also work in other related areas of people development. How far do you think people who are not primarily career professionals, but maybe work in HR or L&D, can go in offering improved career support to individuals?

R: A long way! We often find people are already having career conversations but they don't feel that confident or competent to deliver this. One of the things we teach is a framework, a structure that gives them a beginning, a middle and an end and that gives them immediately more confidence. We also find that the skills people are developing in our training programmes can be applied across a number of activities that HR and L&D people are involved in such as mentoring, coaching or training line managers.

W: What are the learning needs you see in people already working as highly professional as coaches or counsellors, but who want to strengthen their ability to deal with career issues?

R: They can find that clients coming for development

or performance-related coaching raise career issues that they don't feel equipped to deal with. So often their initial request is around career coaching tools. For this we use some of the exercises we've developed which are designed to increase the effectiveness of focused conversation. Such conversations may cover what people are really passionate about, what they are interested in, when they function at their best, what might be their transferable strengths and skills, their values, and so on.

Underpinning Theories

W: Could you say something about any theories or ideas that you have found increasingly relevant and useful working in the careers area?

R: There are several models and ideas which I find useful:

- The core model we use is built from the well-known ideas of Rogers (1967) *On becoming a person* and Egan's (2002) *Skilled Helper*. We have evolved these into a 5-stage model of the career counselling/coaching process and the skills it requires (Fig 1 and Nathan and Hill, 2006).

- More recently we are drawing on the *solution-focused approaches* of Jackson and McKergow (2002) and their OSKAR model. For example we have adapted our use of 'scaling'. Many practitioners would invite someone to flesh out their vision of the future and then say "On a scale from 1 to 10 I'd like you to say where you think you are now" and people will say something like "4 or 5". One might then say "Oh, you're 4 or 5 – how do you get to 10?" Using more positive psychology, one can change this to "You're 4 or 5 – you're 40 or 50 per cent of the way there. How come? What tells you that you are already at a 4 or 5?" This approach helps someone to notice what they're good at and what energy they have, rather than what they haven't got or what their deficits are.

- *Narrative* approaches are useful and

relevant because many of our clients see themselves as having a non-linear CV which they are not able to integrate into their self-concept. That has an implication for how they see themselves and how they see possibilities, as well as how they might project themselves to a potential employer. And so we help people create a narrative which brings together the different elements of who they are in all parts of their life.

- The idea of *planned happenstance* (Mitchell, Levin and Krumboltz, 1999) we see as a way of helping people acknowledge the uncertainties, chaos, and complexity of today. Rather than focus on trying to identify the perfect or right career, we should be encouraging our clients to develop an attitude which is far more experimental and open to opportunities, rather than one which is fixed. So we use the familiar career timeline exercise to help our clients notice the shape and pattern of their ups and down and how they have made decisions. But we ask "What role has chance played in the development of your career?" "How many times have you actually made a career move on the basis of a chance meeting?" I asked someone that question the other day. She looked at me, astonished, and then said "You're absolutely right – I have never made a planned move in my life. It's happened to me."

W: How do you avoid people feeling disempowered by these ideas about chaos and happenstance?

R: Taking advantage of chance conditions can be a positive thing. I like Kahneman's distinction (2011) between the experiencing self and the remembering self. In career coaching people can post-hoc rationalise their experience into some sort of false linear pattern which is not necessarily the way it was at the time. By getting somebody back in touch with the reality of what was happening we can enable them to realise they were actually quite powerful and used a lot of strength and skills which can give them the

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confidence to negotiate those uncertain events in the future.

W: Is there a message about career coaching you would particularly wish to convey to our readers?

R: I think the principles of setting boundaries and contracting are crucial. We are very up-front with our clients from the word go, making sure clients are aware of what is and what is not on the table.

I think above all career coaching is about being clear. In coaching there's a mnemonic ABC – Always Be Contracting. This means always being clear about what it is you are trying to achieve both overall and within this particular conversation and within this bit of this conversation.

We need to be aware of who we are to the client, the limitations of our role, and the limitations of our skills for that matter. What is our responsibility in the career coaching and what is that of the client? We need to be respectful of the client's need for an answer, but to resist the pressures that clients or third parties may put upon us to pretend that we can give answers.

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The education and training of career coaches: a psychological model

Janet Sheath

The educational and professional development needs of career coaches are changing. These changes are discussed within a psychologically and contextually informed model. The model identifies a spectrum of career activities in which coaches work. The skills which career coaches need to support them in these range of roles is also presented. An argument is made that the changing nature of careers and career provision demands a broader and deeper range of career coaching skills. This view is supported by a psychological and contextual approach to career coach education.

● ●

Why I am writing about training career coaches

I train, educate and supervise career coaches who work in higher education, in private career consultancies, as internal coaches in financial services and pharmaceutical companies and in housing associations. I also work with career practitioners in outplacement services, social agencies and with coaches running their own career practices.

The common thread in all these settings is that clients and coaches are often unclear about what career coaching actually is. This confusion creates a considerable challenge to the different stakeholders in the career system: clients, coaches, service providers, organisations and therefore to the people who train them.

The confusion about the training needs of career coaches is related to wider changes in the world of work and in the career sector. Firstly, there is the

issue of deciding what "career" might mean in 2013 and then there is the new challenge of defining what a "coach" might or might not do with someone's "career".

The result of combining two hard-to define words in one go is that there is a great deal of room for interpretation of what to expect from your career coach.

Over the last 12 years, I have been developing a model, which helps me to understand what I am doing with my own clients. I offer this model to my students and supervisees as they develop their own practices. I am presenting the model in this paper in order to bring this view to a wider audience as we move as a sector into more professionalised and unified stage of our own development.

I am going to start from the very beginning by addressing the issues associated with defining career coaching. Then I will consider how a model underpinned by organisational and psychological theory can support this roving definition. I will then link the model to an understanding of the training needs of career coaches. I will conclude by considering what this means for training career coaches of the future.

What exactly is career coaching?

Whether I start with new students on a two year masters programme or internal coaches on a two day career coaching workshop or indeed when I begin a client meeting, we always start out by discussing what "career" means. When we have worked out that career means mostly everything you do in relation to

your work, we have to stop and rethink about what that means about coaching someone to do any or all of those things differently.

I work with the John Arnold's definition of career as 'the sequence of employment related positions, roles, activities and experiences encountered by a person' (Arnold, 1997: 16). This definition covers most bases for the careers work I am involved in. This wider perspective of the 21st century career incorporates the protean (Hall, 2004) and boundary less career (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). If career is to incorporate the subjective experience of work, study and life roles throughout life, then the work of the career coach becomes correspondingly wider ranging and potentially more demanding. As Herr suggested,

> The changing nature of the problems being defined as career issues require a fusion of career and personal counselling to address the complexity of the emotional and behavioural consequences persons experience associated with such phenomena as work adjustment or unemployment.
>
> (Herr, 1997: 86)

Pinning down the idea of a career is hard. On top of that, we need to question what coaches and clients understand about what coaching is too. The growing coaching sector is busy developing a professional identity and empirical base. In the meantime, the term "coach" is being used widely without a clear consensus as to what a coach may be trained to do (Briner, 2012).

We are helped by the work of career writers to identify the tasks and goals of career coaching. Chung and Gfroerer suggest that career coaching 'combines the concepts of career counselling, organizational consulting and employee development' (Chung and Gfroerer, 2003: 141). Whilst Herr writes more broadly of 'an interpersonal process to assist individuals with their problems of career development as well as their work adjustment and work dysfunction problems' (Herr, 1997: 89)

The range of skills and experience that a career coach might need to support a client with this range of career needs begins to look both demanding and sophisticated. If as Chung and Gfroerer suggest 'the general goal of career coaching is to assist client's

personal development within the context of work and career' (Chung and Gfroerer, 2003: 141), then career coaches need to be both flexible and skilled to coach clients effectively.

Why do we need a model to frame career coaching?

As I worked more and more with clients and their coaches with this broader definition of career and career coaching, I realised I needed to communicate more effectively about the nature of career work. I had found the Ali and Graham (1996) Herr (1996) and Savickas (1995) spectra of career work helpful in orienting myself between the poles of vocational guidance, career counselling and personal therapy.

However, as my own work broadened out and my supervisees and students began to arrive from a range of different organisations, I realised I needed a broader and deeper understanding of who career clients are, what they are trying to do and what career coaches need in order to support their clients.
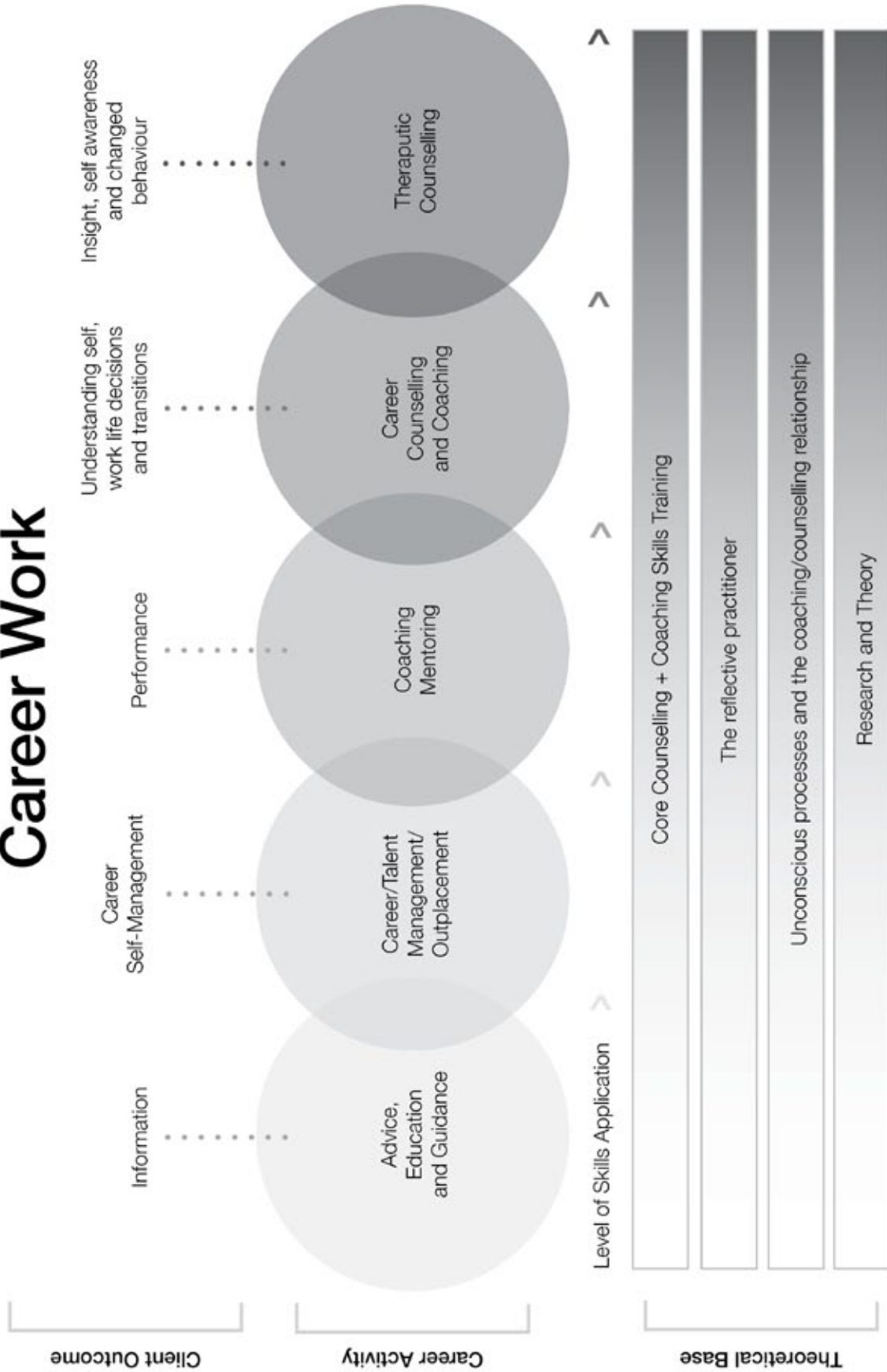
This is how my model of career work evolved. I now start each new programme with a discussion focused on the tasks and goals of the range of career work, which the model depicts. The model is also work in progress. I review the language and focus of the circles, lines and boxes each year to take into account the changes, which continue to redefine our work.

Career Activities

The circles in the centre of the diagram represent a range of career activities, which career coaches undertake. These circles are a development of the model which Ali and Graham proposed in 1996 (Ali and Graham, 1996). The language of these activities has changed since then and continues to change. Edwin Herr made a clear link between the context of career activity and the way in which the language of career work changes over time.

> The terms vary in meaning across time and across cultures as the language of individuals and the language of the profession respond to the ever changing dynamics of the economic, political

Economic, Social and Regulatory Context

Organisational Context

Career Work

Client Outcome				
Information	Career Self-Management	Performance	Understanding self, work life decisions and transitions	Insight, self awareness and changed behaviour

Career Activity				
Advice, Education and Guidance	Career/Talent Management/ Outplacement	Coaching Mentoring	Career Counselling and Coaching	Theraputic Counselling

Level of Skills Application

Theoretical Base

Core Counselling + Coaching Skills Training

The reflective practitioner

Unconscious processes and the coaching/counselling relationship

Research and Theory

and social environments in which persons attempt to negotiate their self and career identity and translate it into personal action.

(Herr, 1997: 81)

As with all models, the circles can reduce the complexity of real world career work. In reality, a career coach is likely to find themselves moving back and forth across the different activities and different stages of career work in whichever setting they base their practice.

A further skill of career practice is in assessing a client's presenting issue and adjusting ones interventions across the different tasks to meet specific client needs at these different stages of the work.

On the far left of the model the activity circles describe the most pragmatic and active aspects of career work. The first circle contains the work of the original vocational guidance specialist. i.e. a career adviser in school, HE or a social agency working with a client on their occupational choice. Practitioners at this end of the spectrum are working in settings where the primary focus is on advice, information and career education.

Alongside this is the work of organisationally based career coaches. This circle includes the work of both internal and external career specialists. They may be deployed as career or talent managers within HR or are brought in as external consultants to manage career development programmes. Outplacement coaches also figure in this circle as their work is closely allied with organisational career development. All of these activities involve career coaches in developing the career self-management skills of people in organisations. Career coaches in this arena work closely with organisational and system knowledge and context and therefore often with complex organisational contracts.

Coaching and mentoring appear at the centre of the model. This circle recognises that at times career coaches may move into a broader developmental role with their clients. This might involve them in dealing with performance or relationship issues in the workplace. As Super wrote when considering the

range of areas of work, which career counsellors might address, 'the best counsellors are those who have sufficient training and flexibility to help a counsellee deal with whatever combination of developmental and adjustment problems he or she confronts' (Super quoted in Herr, 1997: 90).

At times, the internal career coach role may merge more with a mentoring role At these times, It is wise though to have Kathy Kram's very clear definition of mentoring in mind to differentiate the particular nature of the mentoring relationship as one in which 'a senior, more experienced person in an organisation helps a younger, less experienced employee develop an organisational role' (Kram 1985: 2).

The penultimate circle holds the activity of the "pure" career coach or career counsellor. The distinction between career coaching and career counselling feels less critical than it did three years ago when the master's course on which I teach was clearly identified as a career counselling course. The majority of alumni of this programme identify themselves as career coaches in their professional profiles. The career counsellor role is even harder to explain to clients. However I would continue to locate the professional development of career coaches in the theoretical tradition of career counselling, which Jenny Kidd as has defined as:

> A one-to-one interaction between practitioner and client, usually ongoing, involving the application of psychological theory and a recognised set of communication skills. The primary focus is on helping the client make career-related decisions and deal with career-related issues
>
> (Kidd, 2006: 1).

The focus of career coaches working as independent practice or as career consultants is on supporting clients to understand their working worlds, make work life decisions and to manage career change.

Therapeutic counselling appears on the far right of the model. This is not because career coaches work as therapists but in order to identify the edge of career interventions and to recognise the proximity of personal therapy to the work of career coaches.

This proximity of a deeper personal component to career is linked to a central idea, which underpins the circles model. What is core to the model are the overlapping spaces between the different career activities. These grey overlapping areas are often where the confusion can arise for clients and their career coaches. It is here that the work of boundary and role management is key for career coaches. Bordin's work on the importance of contracting on tasks, goals and bonds is foreground when coaches find themselves straying across a task boundary into a different area of career work (Bordin 1979).

This grey space is particularly critical when a career coach finds themselves in the overlap between career coaching and therapy. It is this space where a sound theoretical base and more advanced psychological skills are clearly needed.

The theoretical base and skills for career coaching

The model is underpinned a set of skills rooted in psychological theories. The skills appear below the surface of the career work spectrum. This reflects the idea that career coaches need to be aware of what is going on below the surface of career work. Coaches need to understand where their skills come from, how to reflect on practice, how the relationship with clients is working (or not) and they need to locate this understanding in career and counselling theory and research. The rectangles are shaded light to dark from left to right to indicate the greater degree of theoretical support and psychological understanding which may be required across the spectra of career activities.

First, career coaches require a set of core counselling and coaching skills. These are the skills outlined by Ali and Graham (1995) in their pyramid model and include empathic listening, understanding and challenging skills. These building blocks of the helping relationship also need to be located in their theoretical origins i.e. within the humanistic, psychodynamic, cognitive behavioural or narrative tradition. These are the skills, which we know to be valued by the clients of career practitioners (Kidd, 2006).

Equally important in managing the complexity of

career coaching work are the skills of the reflective practitioner (Schon, 1983). Career coaches in training need to develop the capacity to reflect on their own work, to use supervision and to begin to self supervise in order to develop their professional practice. This is an essential skill when working in complex organisations, with heavy caseloads or when coaches find themselves in the overlap between career and personal work.

This reflective capacity is developed in conjunction with an understanding of the unconscious process implicit in all (professional) relationships. Studying to be a career coach requires an understanding of how transference and counter transference impact on the coaching relationship. This understanding will inform the coach about how the client operates in the world of work and abut the impact of the client's unconscious in their working lives. Working with counter transference will also serve to support the coach in understanding how the client may impact the coach. This is a core part of ethical practice.

All of the skills which career coaches need to work safely and effectively also need to be rooted in a sound theoretical base, supported by career counselling and/ or psychological research. Educating career coaches requires a wide range of theory across different disciplines:

- Career theory
- Counselling theory
- Career counselling models
- Organisational behaviour
- Career management
- Systems theory
- The developing coaching literature
- Supervision

The task of career coaching education is to integrate this theory with practice in a way that equips career coaches to respond to the range of clients and contexts in which they may work.

What will career coaches need in the future?

As career coaches find themselves working with adult clients in a wide range of settings, at different life stages and in more challenging labour markets, they may need a correspondingly wider range of skills.

As Mark Savickas puts it 'Individuals who must cope with unstable occupations and frequent job transitions may request substantially more help from career counselors and I think a different kind of help' (Savickas 2012: 13) Savickas identifies this as meeting the "life design needs of citizens in the information societies". Working with clients who are managing redundancy, career change or career crisis means working with client's life stories, their identity, and supporting them to construct new futures.

> Career intervention is simply a form of psychological intervention designed to affect vocationally related feelings, attitudes and cognitions and behaviours. Thus it is a form of psychotherapy and should be viewed as a method of behaviour change and tied to psychotherapy theory.
>
> (Rounds and Tinsley 1984 quoted in Herr, 1997:88)

Career practitioners who are transitioning from working with young people or HR career specialists are likely to be working closer to the boundary between the personal and the professional than their original training prepared them.

If career coaches are indeed responding to a fusion of personal and career issues then they will need more support based in a psychotherapeutic theory.

'For those career counsellors who wish to broaden their interventions in the non career domain an equally critical task for them is the development of skills and knowledge in psychotherapy' (Blustein and Spengler, 1995: 322)

In addition, career coaches are going to need an understanding of the changing contexts in which they and their clients are working.

At the outer edges of the model, the focus shifts outwards to take into account the wider contexts in which career coaches work. Career coaches need to be aware of and respond to changes in the wider economic, social and regulatory systems of which they are a part. This reality is ever more relevant in 2013 as the profession adjusts to changes in the statutory provision of careers services, an economic recession, new ways of working and demographic changes.

The inner boundary of the model identifies the role of the organisational context in shaping the work of career coaches. Career coaches need to understand and flex their career provision to the demands and realities of their home organisation whilst maintaining ethical practice. Career coaches may need supervision to support and manage their client caseload in complex systems (Copeland, 2005).

Conclusion

As the world of career coaching changes, so the tasks, goals and role of career coaches change too. Equipping career coaches to take up roles in the new world requires career coach educators to look beyond the immediate task of supporting clients to make career-related decisions. Career coaches also need the skills to work with a wide range of clients with a correspondingly wide range of needs. This may mean working below the surface of a client's career and looking inwards to reflect on practice. Career coaches also need to look outwards to the wider economic and organisational worlds, which they are navigating alongside their clients.

In conclusion Ellen Lent's words from 1996 still capture the task ahead for career coaches as we step into the new world of career development coaching. Lent proposes that career practitioners need to 'support [ing] the convergence between the scientist and the practitioner in each of us and between career theory and practice… as our field develops a more holistic perspective of individuals and their career behaviours' (Lent 1996: 119)

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A positive approach to career coaching

Julia Yates

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi took the psychology research community by storm in 2000 with their paper on positive psychology, introducing it as an academically rigorous antidote to the pathology-driven paradigm that had dominated the discipline for nearly a century. The growing body of evidence around both theory and practice is making the links between positive psychology, career development and career coaching, increasingly clear. This paper will describe the contribution that positive psychology research makes to our understanding of the career context, and will explore how positive psychology can inform and enhance both the process and content of career coaching interventions.

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Introduction

The dominant paradigm within psychology during the late twentieth century was a pathology-focused medical model; one that looked at repairing damage and curing mental illness. Positive psychology in contrast was to focus on the things that make life worth living, and examine 'positive subjective experience, positive individual traits and positive institutions' (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000:5). Conceptually, positive psychology was not altogether new, with much of its core thinking reflecting the ideas of earlier psychologists and philosophers such as self-actualization (Maslow, 1971) and optimal functioning (Rogers, 1961), both proposed within the framework of humanistic psychology. One particular contribution that positive psychology has made to the discipline is its rigorous application of scientific methods, providing academically credible empirical evidence to support its ideas, enhancing the debate by employing 'randomized,

controlled experiments to study the good life, the engaged life and the meaningful life'(Jacobsen, 2006:26)

Much of the research within positive psychology focuses on a career context. The literature provides empirical evidence of the links between career satisfaction and well-being in life, and between meaning in life and meaning in work (Rath and Harter, 2010). It also deepens our understanding of what a fulfilled work-life looks like and how to achieve it. In addition to its theoretical contribution, positive psychology provides practical mechanisms for 'weaving the "straw" of research into the "gold" of artful coaching' (Kauffman, Bonniwell and Silberman, 2010:159), introducing techniques that can support clients as they identify and search for fulfilling careers.

Coaching has been described as a 'natural home' for positive psychology (Grant and Cavanagh, 2007) and the synergies are not hard to find. Positive psychology and coaching both strive to inspire growth and change by focusing on the positive aspects of human nature, and both aim to support optimal functioning in individuals, groups and society. This shared philosophy has led to the description of coaching as 'an ideal vehicle through which the science of positive psychology can be applied' (Kauffman et al, 2010:159).

This paper explores the processes and tools of positive psychology career coaching, and the contribution that positive psychology research makes to our understanding of a fulfilled work life. It looks at how positive psychology can inform and enhance both the process and content of career coaching interventions, discussing specific techniques which can support clients in raising their self awareness and boosting positive emotions.

What does positive psychology tell us about leading a fulfilled life?

Positive psychology literature begins to crystallize our understanding of the nature of a 'fulfilled life', identifying three different types of happiness: pleasure, engagement and meaning (Peterson, Park and Seligman, 2005). The pursuit of pleasure concerns meeting homeostatic needs such as eating and drinking. An engaged life involves taking an active interest in one's life tasks; leisure activities that one is passionate about, a family one devotes oneself to, or a high level of work engagement. Achieving the meaningful life entails being significantly involved in something that an individual considers to be bigger than themselves; this gives their life a purpose. This could be family, voluntary work, the community, or the organisation they work for, or could be a spiritual or religious connection. Seligman (2002) suggests that all three approaches can contribute to a fulfilled life, and need to be nurtured and balanced, but holds that it is the meaningful life that most contributes to long-term life satisfaction. Meaning in life is something we have long known to be important (e.g. Frankl 1965; Duckworth et al. 2005) and more recent evidence can be found to demonstrate that meaning in life is positively related to well-being, self-actualisation, fulfilment and job satisfaction (King, Hicks, Krull and Del Gaiso, 2006; Rubinstein 2006).

In pursuit of a clear idea of the factors that contribute to a fulfilled life, Rath and Harter (2010) analysed data from a large scale, international, longitudinal survey, and identified five essential areas of well-being: career, social, financial, physical and community. Those with healthy social well-being surround themselves with supportive people and develop and nurture their relationships. Financial security ensures that basic needs are met, and gives individuals some control over what they do and when they do it. Those with thriving physical well-being eat and sleep well and exercise regularly, leading to more energy and better health. Community well-being comes from feeling safe and secure in your environment and having a sense of pride in your locality. Rath and Harter provide compelling evidence that a fulfilled life will involve

doing well in all five of these areas, and that they are all interdependent on each other.

How does Career fit in with a fulfilled life?

The fifth essential area of well-being is career, and Rath and Harter argue that 'career wellbeing is arguably the most essential of the five elements' (2010;16), supporting their claim with data that suggest that 'people with high career wellbeing are more than twice as likely to be thriving in their lives overall' (Rath and Harter, 2010: 16). The authors' explanation for the importance of career well-being is simply that we spend a considerable proportion of our lives at work, so work satisfaction will inevitably have a significant impact on our lives more broadly. They also point to research which highlights the devastating impact that redundancy or prolonged unemployment can have. Studies into the effects of unemployment (such as Guindon and Smith 2002; Clarke, Georgellis and Sanfey, 2002) link long-term unemployment with higher levels of stress, depression, anxiety, lower self-esteem and a loss of identity.

What are 'strengths' in a positive psychology context?

One of the most widely studied concepts emerging from positive psychology is that of strengths, and for career coaches, this has great relevance.

There are many different conceptualisations and categorisations of skills, traits, or qualities but the framework of strengths developed through positive psychology is one categorisation whose existence and role in career choice and development has been rigorously tested. Seligman and Peterson identified 24 strengths which stem from six virtues that their research suggests are consistently held in high regard across the world (Seligman, Steen, Park and Peterson, 2005). These virtues are: wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence. Three or four distinct strengths have been associated with each of these virtues, for example the strengths associated

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with humanity are kindness, love and social intelligence; those associated with justice are fairness, leadership and teamwork. The strengths are identified based on 13 criteria, such as the strength's moral value, whether it diminishes others, and if one can identify specific paragons who strikingly embody it.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) compare their conceptualisation of character strengths to the psychological concept of personality traits, finding areas of overlap and clear distinctions. Strengths and traits are similar in that both groups of qualities are relatively stable, and both describe individual differences that manifest themselves through thoughts, feelings and behaviours. The key difference is that strengths include a dimension of moral and cultural value judgments which is absent in most descriptions of personality traits.

Let's now delve deeper into the research that enhances our understanding of careers and could contribute to our career interventions.

What can positive psychology contribute to our understanding of fulfilling careers?

Positive psychology provides empirical evidence about a range of career-relevant factors such as work engagement, meaning and the use of strengths at work. It has produced evidence that these factors are linked to job satisfaction, which in turn links to meaning in life. At this stage of the young discipline's existence, the literature points to relationships between factors rather than definitive causal relationships, but is nonetheless valuable to us as practitioners.

Strengths seem to play a key role. Using our strengths within the work place has been shown to have an impact on overall well-being and job satisfaction. In particular, several studies (e.g. Park and Peterson 2007; Mongrain & Anselmo-Matthews 2012) have shown that using strengths, and specifically, using 'signature', or most significant strengths increases well-being and job satisfaction, and reduces the symptoms of depression. Other studies demonstrate clear links

between positive work experiences, such as increased work engagement and the use of up to four strengths at work, and greater job satisfaction (Littman-Ovadia & Davidovitch, 2010).

Engagement is one of the concepts shown to be linked to job satisfaction, but on top of this, the literature suggests that engagement is a good thing in itself. People with high work engagement have lower stress levels and higher levels of happiness during the working day, and disengagement at work 'appears to be a leading indicator of a subsequent clinical diagnosis of depression' (Littman-Ovadia and Davidovitch, 2010:24).

Work engagement clearly has benefits in terms of job satisfaction and its contribution to life well-being through reducing the chances of mental ill-health, and we are beginning to understand something of the factors that contribute to it. The studies above suggest that the use of strengths is likely to lead to engagement. The Rath and Harter (2010) data provide some indications of other antecedents of work engagement, and identify a good line-manager as an important factor. Their study indicates that a manager who pays you significant positive attention, and who focuses on your strengths, can significantly reduce your chances of becoming actively disengaged at work (Rath, 2007). Finding a job that stretches your abilities, but allows you to succeed can enhance flow which is linked to engagement (Jacobsen 2010).

Relationships with other colleagues have also been shown to have an impact on job satisfaction. Rath and Harter (2010) found that having a 'best friend' at work is linked with higher levels of job fulfilment, which builds on evidence from Roelen, Koopmans and Groothoff(2008) indicating that a team of supportive colleagues improves your feelings about your work.

There are clear correlations between hope, optimism and resilience, and job satisfaction (Harter and Gurley 2008), indicating that it's not always just the job, or the degree of person-environment fit that influences job satisfaction, but that factors residing within the individual play their part.

As well as suggesting factors which may lead to job satisfaction, positive psychology has helped to identify some factors that won't. Jacobsen (2010) shows that

following a high salary does not lead to job fulfilment. Aknin (2009) reports that in general people tend to over-estimate the impact that salary has on happiness, so in career decision-making terms, are likely to pursue a well-paid job over a more modest one, based on the expectation that it will bring higher life happiness.

The amount of fun you have during your working day has been linked to lower levels of satisfaction at work. Money, Hillendrasand and Da Camara (2008) adapted Seligman's Approaches to Happiness questionnaire to a work context and in one large scale study found a significant negative correlation between pleasure at work and job satisfaction. Their explanation for this surprising finding was that 'what matters in the 21st century is meaning' (2008: 30), suggesting that those who prioritise seeking pleasure from work over other factors may end up dissatisfied.

It's a complicated picture. We don't quite understand the nature or the causal direction of the relationships between many of these factors, but we do know that the links are there. We can serve our clients well if we encourage them to identify their strengths and the environments where they can use them, and to examine their working relationships and the level of challenge they experience; sharing evidence with clients about the factors that tend to be associated with job satisfaction can help to ensure that their career decision making processes lead to the outcomes they are hoping for.

How can positive psychology inform the process of career coaching?

Positive psychology has developed some specific models and tools that can enable us to work more effectively with clients. In particular, there are tools which we can use to help our clients with their self-awareness and with boosting their general well-being.

Increasing self awareness

Above, we examined some empirical support for the idea that if you can find a role which allows you to use

your strengths, you are more likely to be fulfilled at work.

Seligman's website (www.authentichappiness.com) has three different strengths finders that clients could use before, during, or in between career coaching sessions to help them identify their strengths. The full version, the Values in Action (VIA) Strengths Finder consists of 240 questions and provides a reliable and valid online tool that allows users to identify their strengths profile and signature strengths. The Brief Strengths Finder has just 24 questions, while the VIA Strengths for Children is specifically developed for work with the younger age group.

The research behind the strengths finder is an example of the academic rigour positive psychology brings. The strengths finder has been taken by over one million people and all the results are fed into the data set, thus enhancing our understanding of the exact nature of these constructs and the roles that they play within the workplace.

The Strengths Development Model (Clifton and Harter 2003) is a three-stage framework that career practitioners can use in one-to-one interventions to help clients identify and understand their strengths. The first stage is identification of strengths, which Clifton and Buckingham (2001) suggests can be done by using five triggers: yearning, rapid learning, flow, glimpses of excellence and satisfaction. Practitioners can use these triggers as starting points for discussions, encouraging clients to explore times in their lives when they have experienced flow, or surprised themselves by learning a new skill quickly and instinctively without much conscious effort. Clients can explore the strengths and talents that might be common to these experiences. The second stage of the model encourages clients to integrate these strengths into their self view. The client is asked to think about their activities and to identify the role that their strengths have played in their successes; they then apply this thinking to their future goals and identify how their strengths can help them to achieve them. The third stage of the strengths development model is behavioural change, when the client puts their plans, which now incorporate their strengths, into action.

A positive approach to career coaching

One of Seligman's questionnaires, the Approaches to Life Questionnaire, has been adapted for career work by Money, Hillenbrand and de Camara (2009). It allows participants to identify the relative strengths of the pleasure, enjoyment and meaning that they get from work. Given the research quoted above that it is meaning above enjoyment, and enjoyment above pleasure, that leads to job satisfaction, this questionnaire could help clients better understand their current situation and identify what might need to change in order to increase their work fulfilment.

Cultivating Positive Emotions

Positive psychology has identified techniques that enhance general well-being in life and these can be usefully incorporated within career coaching practice. It provides some evidence (Frederickson 2009) that positive emotions make us more resilient, more creative and more likely to seek out relationships. These qualities have all a part to play in career decision-making and job-seeking. Career theories of planned happenstance (Mitchell, Levin and Krumboltz, 1999) speak of the importance of seeking out and taking advantage of opportunities and positive emotions have been shown to make individuals more likely to identify and seize chances. There is evidence that relationships of various sorts enhance job search strategies, with networking (Wanberg 2000; Van Hoye 2009) and social support (Kanfer, Wanberg and Kantrowitz, 2001) both making a significant contribution to a successful job hunt.

Piecing the evidence together, we can reasonably conclude that boosting our clients' general well-being could bring some palpable benefits to their job hunts. Positive psychology has two straightforward techniques that we can share with our clients that have been shown to have a significant impact on overall well-being (Seligman et al., 2005).

The first is 'three good things in life'. Every night for a week, your clients should write down three things that went well during that day. Clients need to specify why the thing went well and what their particular involvement was. It does not need to be a life-changing or dramatic incident; it might be as simple as that they got a seat on the train to work that morning, and

their role was that they took the time to relax during their journey. There is some evidence that doing this exercise daily for as little as a week can result in a sustained increase in well-being that lasts for up to six months (Seligman, 2005), and has a positive impact on self-efficacy (Critchley and Gibbs, 2012).

In the second exercise, clients are asked first to identify their 'signature strength', and are then encouraged to use it in a new and different way every day for a week. If, for example, your signature strength is your love of learning, you might decide to research something new on the internet one day, watch a factual television programme the next, and visit a museum on the third. As with the Three Good Things exercise, participants on one study engaging in this behaviour for a week reported higher levels of well-being six months later.

Hope training

Career choice literature has generally assumed that finding the 'right' career is the key to work satisfaction. Positive psychology challenges this single-tracked view, and suggests (e.g. Harter and Gurley, 2008) that there are people who are more or less likely to be satisfied in work, rather than that job satisfaction is contingent on people finding the 'right' job for them. One implication of this for career coaching is that as well as trying to identify a suitable career with our clients, it's worthwhile spending time trying to work on clients' levels of hope and resilience, as this may well have an impact on their job satisfaction.

Researchers have identified a range of techniques that can be used to increase hope. Hope theory (Snyder, 1995) has three distinct elements, and the Hope Programme (Snyder, Rand, King, Feldman, & Taylor, 2002) puts forward techniques that can help at each stage. The first stage involves setting goals. One technique is to encourage people to increase the number of meaningful goals they have. This increases hope because it reduces the power that any one missed goal has to decrease one's overall levels of hope. The next step in building hope is described as 'agency thought', which involves clients believing that their actions have a real impact on their own future; encouraging clients to enhance their agency thought

will increase their confidence in their own abilities to achieve their goals. Individuals need to re-examine their goals to ensure that they are all meaningful to them, and at an appropriate level of challenge: too slight a challenge, and the goal may not motivate; too great a challenge and it may result in de-motivating failure. Cognitive behavioural coaching techniques (e.g. Whitten, 2009) can help clients deal with any self-limiting beliefs that may reduce their chances of meeting their goals, and to replace negative self-talk ('I'll never manage it') with positive, performance-enhancing statements ('I could do it'). The final stage of the Hope Programme involves identifying specific sub-goals that form 'pathways' leading up to the ultimate goal. Career coaches could use techniques such as story-boarding to help clients identify these sub-goals.

Conclusions and directions for future research

Positive psychology is generating a substantial and growing body of credible, empirical research. The links between positive psychology and career coaching have been articulated in this paper and there are clearly contributions to both the theory and praxis of career coaching that positive psychology can make. As positive psychology continues to develop, our understanding of what constitutes a fulfilled work life, and the factors that contribute to one, will develop with it. We will benefit particularly from research that links concepts such as job satisfaction, meaning at work and work engagement to the career context and the particular issues facing our key client groups. A further focus not just on the antecedents of career well-being but on the effectiveness of specific techniques to use within a career coaching setting would be of great benefit to our clients. The potential advantages of closer academic links between the specialisms are bilateral and a century of career development theory and evidence can provide positive psychologists with a valuable springboard for their career research.

For many career practitioners, the ideas contained within this paper will be old friends. Supporting clients to find meaning and fulfilment in their careers is a core ideal for most, if not all career practitioners, even if the term 'positive psychology' is new; but

positive psychology has covered a lot of theoretical and practical ground since its introduction thirteen years ago, and we as career practitioners should welcome the idea that such a popular and high profile new academic branch is prolific in its publication of evidence and practical techniques directly applicable to our field.

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Creating career coaching

Gill Frigerio and Phil McCash

In this article, a series of general propositions are made concerning the nature and purpose of career coaching. These statements are designed in response to debates within the formal and informal literature and to flesh out the authors' distinctive approach to career coaching. The activities and settings in which career coaching can take place are described and it is proposed that the design of career coaching should be linked to career-related learning, career literacy and contracting. The importance of calling and career development is highlighted and a critical understanding of opportunity systems encouraged. Overall, a view of career coaching as a creative art is foregrounded. Constructive engagement with the wider community is welcomed in order to discuss and debate these claims.

Introduction

Between 2010 and 2012, we undertook an exploratory literature review as part of our preliminary work for developing a new Master's degree in Career Development and Coaching Studies. It became increasingly clear to us that there was some ambiguity and confusion about the use of the terms career guidance, career education and career coaching. To a large extent this ambiguity was also present within the professional communities. We therefore developed a set of detailed statements in order to clarify our own position. These statements are reproduced here in order to stimulate debate and discussion about the nature and purpose of career coaching.

The activities of career coaching

We take an *integrative* approach to the activities of career coaching. By this we mean that it *includes* a wide range of activities including informing, listening, advising, modelling, assessing, enabling, facilitating and feeding back. These can take place through one-to-one interactions or group working and in on- and off-line contexts. Further enabling activities include networking, advocating, peer training and systems change. Career coaching is relevant to all *ages* and *stages* of career development and involves understanding the career development of others as well as oneself. It can entail exploration of past experiences as well as discussion of the future. A range of career-related roles and interests may be addressed beyond the tasks of paid work. It may involve a single interaction, such as a one-to-one discussion or group work, or a longer term series of interactions over a period of months or years.

Career coaching settings

We reject the idea that career coaching is purely for a particular group of people such as individuals employed in high status jobs in mid-career. Career coaching can take place in a *wide variety* of settings including the public and private sectors, small and large organisations and community contexts. It can take place at board level and on the shop floor and occur within the context of existing work or personal relationships. Within organisations, given the breadth of career coaching activities we identify above, coaching and mentoring schemes and other activities of employee training and development can include career coaching.

Career literacy

Career coaches should also be skilled at reading and interpreting their own career development and the career development of their clients. This demands a very specific way of using career development theories to engage in *multiple readings* of career (Mignot 2004; Reynolds, in press). This *career literacy* can be enabled by developing familiarity with key concepts derived from career development theories to enhance the vocabulary one uses to understand and discuss career development. Thus equipped, the career coach is able to understand both surface and below-the-surface narratives of career. This entails using career development theories, not as a distancing mechanism, but to understand people more deeply, more fully and more wholly. One of the central benefits of using career development theories in this way is to get a better feel for one's own career beliefs and those of the client. There is a consensus in contemporary career development thinking that an understanding of *personal career theories* is fundamental to growth and further learning for coaches and clients alike (e.g. Krumboltz 1996; Holland 1997: 205-6; Patton & McMahon 1998: 167-8; Law 1999; Miller-Tiedeman 1999; McCash 2006; Frigerio 2010). A high level of career literacy, therefore, drawing from a range of career development theories, represents part of the distinctive and specialist knowledge base of the career coach.

Contracting

Given the statements above about the activities of career coaching and the importance of career-related learning and career literacy, we believe that skilled contracting is fundamental to the process. Contracting entails all participants sharing their positions and priorities and developing an agreed way to proceed. It involves checking and re-contracting at appropriate points to ensure that psychological contact is being maintained. Contracting in career coaching should be informed by career literacy and designed to facilitate client career-related learning in all activities. It is through skilled contracting, and thereby staying close to the client, that one *learns* what the client is *learning*. Contracting should inform a wider range of

support activities around career coaching including the marketing and management of the service. It is more important than any particular interview structure and provides a means of modelling ethical career behaviour. In organisational settings, careful contracting is required to ensure ethical practice in terms of confidentiality and impartiality and to develop services informed by an understanding of career-related learning, career literacy and opportunity systems.

Meaning and purpose

We conceptualise career as life-wide and life-long and believe that career coaching is concerned with questions of how clients construct meaning and purpose in their lives (Bloch & Richmond 1997). This may be expressed as *calling*, whether referring to theistic notions of a higher power or a wider spiritual understanding of destiny and values. We should be skilled at helping people engage with these issues and encourage clients to explore these aspects of life satisfaction, commitment and motivation. This means working from a standpoint of openness to the clients' frame of reference and exploring internal solutions to the problems they identify in their meaning-making.

Opportunity systems

Career coaching is nested in and shaped by a series of discourses concerning opportunity systems (e.g. the employability and skills discourses). We believe that the mainstream coaching literature (e.g. Palmer & Whybrow 2007; Cox, Bachkirova & Clutterbuck 2010) has to an extent neglected these dimensions of career development. Understanding opportunity systems and the discourses involved are key competences within career coaching. Through this, coaches can help themselves and their clients understand, interpret and plan responses. This does not mean engaging in didactic or directive practice. It may involve, for example, helping clients to identify, evaluate and make responses to labour market intelligence. For the career coach, this represent a move away from parroting labour market 'messages' towards facilitating the client's own research and decision-making.

Creative integration of theory and practice

Some career guidance, career education and career coaching traditions have been bedevilled by the simplistic application of theory to practice and the uncritical use of models, tools and techniques. We believe that career coaching entails the *integration* of theory and practice rather than the application of theory to practice. This involves rejecting an objectivist distinction between theory and practice. Career coaches should be able to *creatively* design and agree their own models of action and enable their clients to do the same.

Concluding remarks

These general statements paint a broad picture of the landscape within which we see career coaching operating. We fully expect career coaching will continue to develop in several directions and the breadth and strength of professional interest is evidenced by the range of papers submitted to this edition of the journal. We offer the statements above to the wider community for consideration and to stimulate collaborative exploration of this emerging and exciting terrain.

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University of Warwick

Programme of NICEC events 2013

Wednesday, 8th May 2013	2pm – 5pm

Network meeting: **Youth Unemployment**

Location: iCeGS, Derby

May	

Webinar event   (to be confirmed)

Thursday, 27th June	5pm – 6.30pm

Seminar: **Options for the future of careers work in schools**

Location: Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, Euston, London

Monday, 23rd September	5pm – 6.30pm

Seminar: **Topic to be confirmed**

Location: Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, Euston, London

Tuesday, 26th November	2pm – 5pm

Network meeting: **Topic to be confirmed**

Location: TBC

To find out more and/or register for any of these events, please contact:

Professor Stephen McNair, NICEC Fellow

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Call for papers

Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling: March 2014 Issue

Theme: International Perspectives

There has always been a strong international dimension to the work of NICEC and this has recently been underlined with the appointment of new international fellows. More broadly, internationalisation has been a growing feature of careers work in many contexts. Accordingly, papers are invited on any international perspective including but not confined to:

- International perspectives on career development from one or more countries outside the UK
- The relationship between career development theories and international perspectives
- Services in any country for individuals interested in or engaged in international careers
- International labour markets
- Linked to the above, the organisation, management or marketing of career support services
- Policy and governmental issues
- Expanding and/or innovative areas of activity
- Relevant tools, techniques and models
- Critical perspectives
- Case studies and other empirical work
- The training and education of career development professionals

Deadline for initial 100-200 word abstracts: 15th December 2013

Deadline for final submission: 15th February 2014

*For more information on submission or an informal discussion,
please contact the editor, Phil McCash:*

p.t.mccash@warwick.ac.uk

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