



Follow your head or your heart?

Repositioning careers guidance to
enable people to flourish as lifelong
learners

Jeanne Booth and Paul Hacking

UK Presenters

Jeanne Booth

Jeanne has been an Independent education and business consultant for twelve years. She was previously head of a university careers service in the UK so much of her consultancy work is around higher education, but also lifelong learning and entrepreneurship. For four years she also owned an art gallery and meeting venue in Nottingham city centre and continues to be very involved in business networks. Currently she is researching people who are trying to make a 'good living' from something they are passionate about and the presentation draws upon some of that research .

Paul Hacking

Paul has been Head of the Career Development Centre at Nottingham Trent University for twelve years. He previously lectured on managing change for the University of Nottingham and ran workshops for professionals, such as teachers, on career change and development. He was elected Chair of the Fedora Careers and Employment working group at Fedora 2009 and was previously Secretary .



Key to lifelong learning: head or heart?

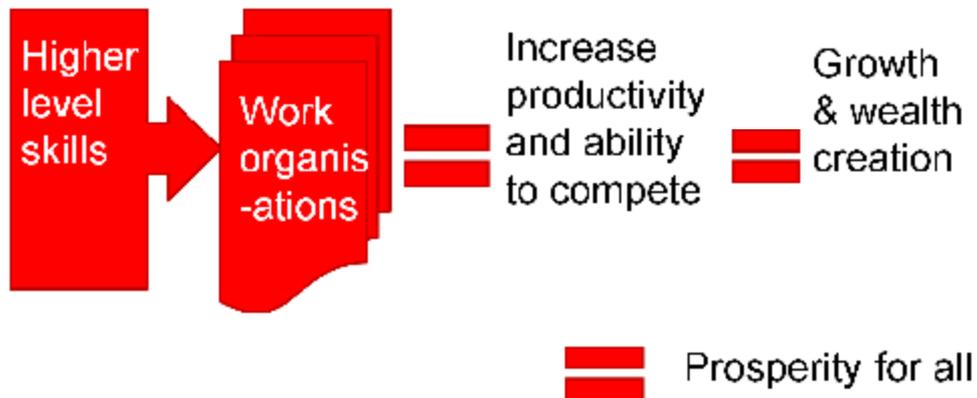
- Lifelong learning is an economic imperative.
- More people with higher level skills are needed.
- People are learning that to progress, remain employable, or change direction they will need to re-skill.
- This may involve a return to education or engaging in higher education for the first time.
- Providing high quality careers education, information and guidance is vital to support decision-making at key transition points.

This workshop begins with our conference theme which is Lifelong Guidance as the Key to Lifelong Learning and the assertion that Lifelong Learning is an economic imperative.

We're not disputing any of that but we are questioning whether people become lifelong learners predominantly for economic reasons or whether it is more complex than that. And in order to be the key that unlocks lifelong learning, guidance needs to speak to both the rational economic reasons for people engaging in higher education, and perhaps, more importantly to those things that will keep people engaged, and enable them to live a good life, to be happy, and to flourish as lifelong learners.

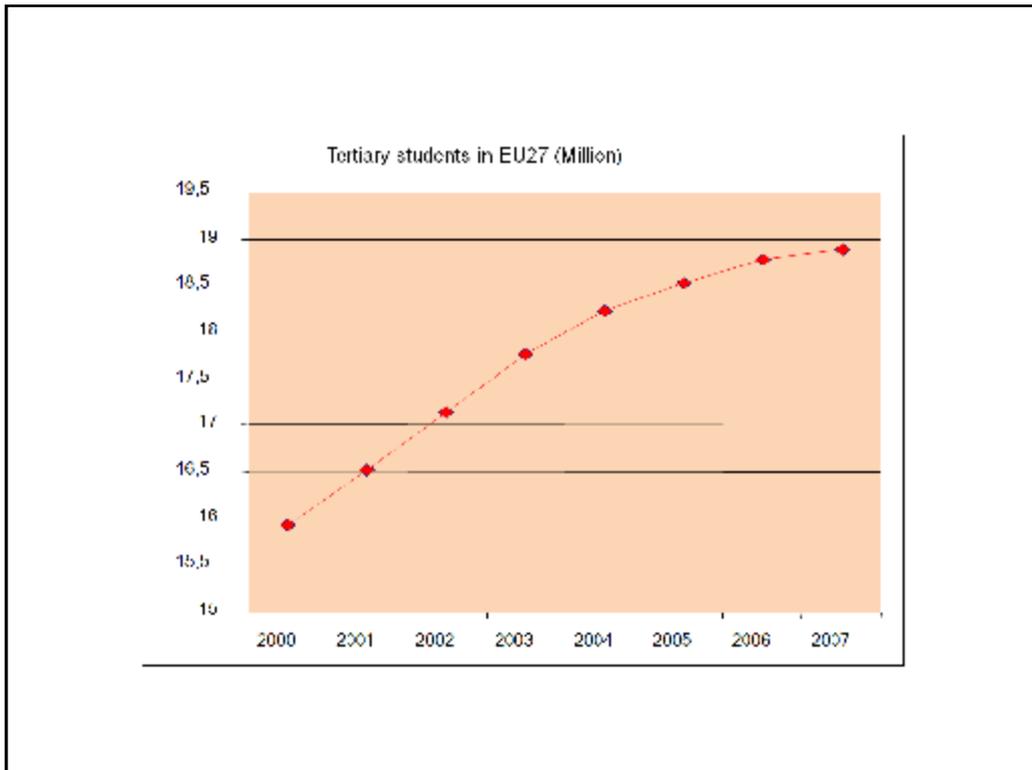
We've simplified the argument into 'head or heart' and of course it is more complex, but in recent years university guidance and careers services have tended to argue their worth in their institutions, and in their nations, in economic terms. Understandably, we position ourselves as *vital* to achieving the economic imperative and we're not going to argue with that. But we'd like to explore with you some of practical ways careers services can help people to develop the skills they need not to be led solely by the economic arguments but to follow their passions and to flourish.

Imperative in knowledge economy



The economic argument goes simply like this – we need more people with higher level skills in our work organisations in order for them to be able to compete on the global stage creating wealth and prosperity for all.

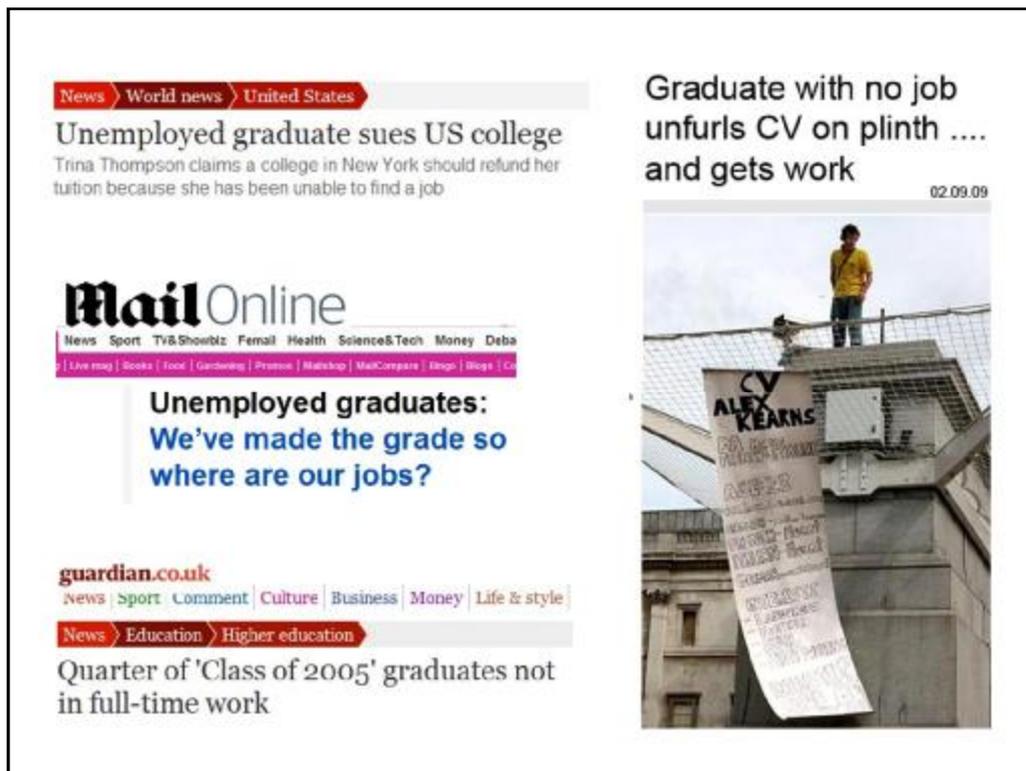
So higher education has expanded and we've been telling people that in order to get a job and get on in this knowledge economy, they've got to get higher education.



And the numbers of students has dramatically increased – see slide.

But the number of graduate jobs hasn't

Graduate vacancies were expected to fall by 5% in 2009 in the UK but actually fell by a quarter according to Association of Graduate recruiters.



In the UK this has led to headlines such as those above. Note the one on the right-hand side – ‘Unemployed graduate sues US college’ – a student in New York is claiming her college should refund her tuition fees because she has been unable to find a job.

We may say headlines like these are temporary - we’re in a recession – things will pick up and we’ve got to have the skills ready for the upturn,

But are there also other things going on?

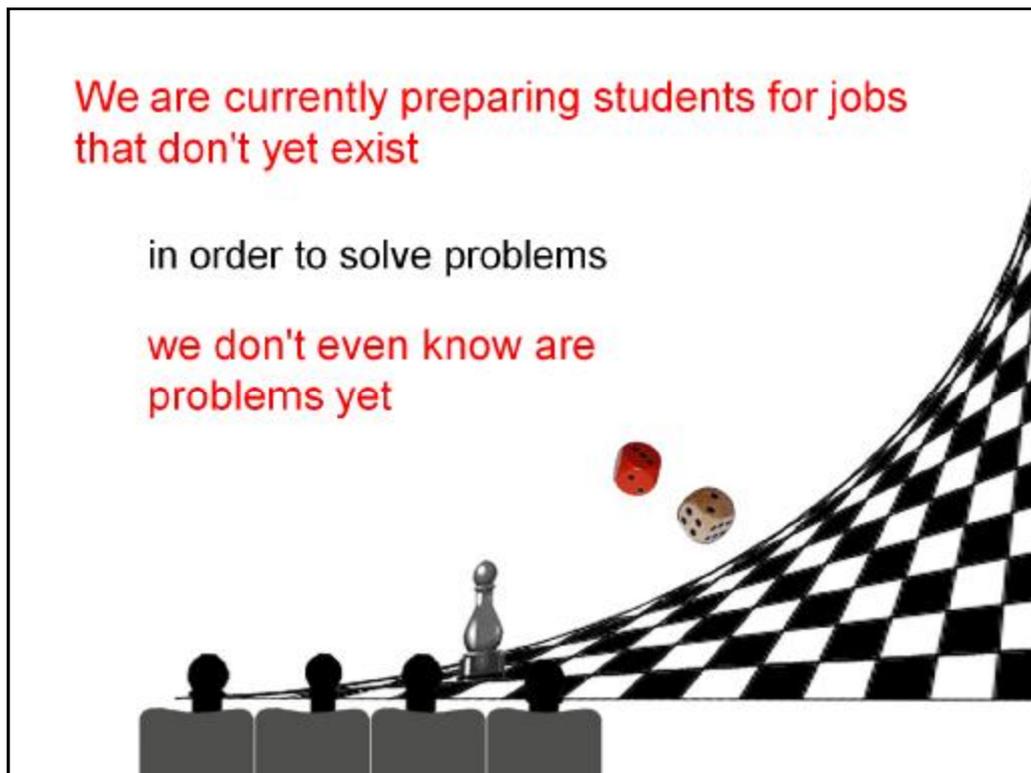
Consider the following -

It took two hundred years to fill the shelves of the Library of Congress with more than 57 million manuscripts, 29 million books and periodicals, 12 million photographs and more.

Now the world generates an equivalent amount of digital information nearly 100 times everyday.



We are living in exponential times. Knowledge is created and changing rapidly.



Our current task is preparing students for jobs that don't yet exist, in order to solve problems, we don't even know are problems yet.

Today's learners will have 10-14 jobs by the time they are 38

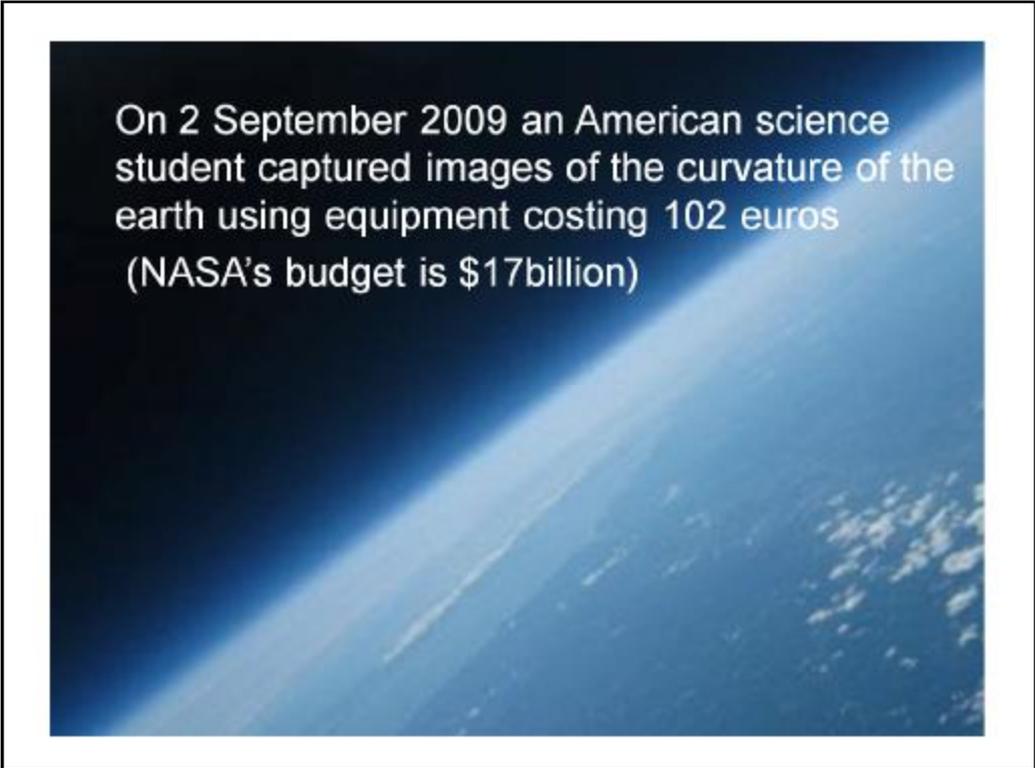


Estimates are that today's learners may have 10-14 different jobs by the time they are 38.

Half of what a technical student learns in his/her first year will be out of date by their third year.

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On 2 September 2009 an American science student captured images of the curvature of the earth using equipment costing 102 euros (NASA's budget is \$17billion)

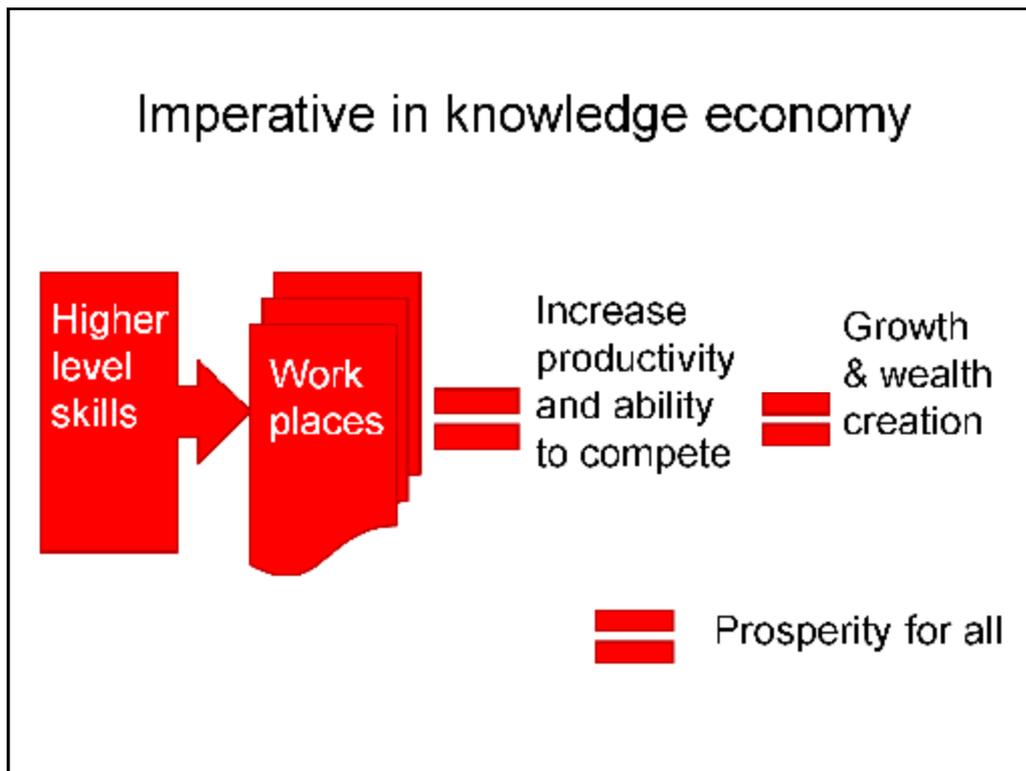
If you don't believe it – here's a very recent example. On 2nd September 2009, an American science student captured images of the curvature of the earth using a weather balloon, a digital camera and computer costing around 102 euros. Only space programmes such as NASA with a \$17billion budget had taken such images before. His tutors and the academic authorities, his friends, everybody told him it was not possible. Nobody thought it could happen except him. He just did it. He said,

' For me it was just about not being afraid to do what I love to do. Before people were just kind of 'that's a crazy idea; there he goes all over again.'

See their website at <http://space.1337arts.com/>

Ten years ago teenager Shawn Fanning went into his bedroom and wrote software for sharing music files across the net. And signed the death warrant of the old-style record industry. The music industry is still reeling, desperate to find new business models.

The top three technologies people say have had the most impact – the computer, the internet and the laser were all unplanned, unpredicted and unappreciated.



So if we go back to the economic imperative argument

It's really hard to be specific about the kind of higher level skills we need, everything is moving so fast – and a teenager in love with his/her hobby can turn the world upside down and change whole industries. So we know we've got to prepare graduates to cope with shifts, re-invent themselves, spot opportunities and recover from setbacks

And we know our work organisations have been changing for sometime with the breakdown of large scale manufacturing and large companies outsourcing functions. In the UK 99% of businesses employ less than 50 people, 74% employ nobody except the owner of the business. So how do you get those higher level skills into those kind of tiny organisations? Well one way is for graduates to become those tiny organisations. So we need to develop them with entrepreneurial skills they can use inside an organisation or as themselves.

And the final bit – growth and wealth creation equals prosperity for all – well people are questioning that

1. We don't have enough energy to keep growing – we've depleted the planet's resources. And is that wealth creation real or is it based on bubbles and debt?
2. We also know that it hasn't brought prosperity for all but a greater divide between those that have and those that have not.
3. And for those of us who have, and live in wealthy countries with growing economies (up to now) research is demonstrating that it hasn't brought us happiness. This is being recognised at high levels in Europe with the launch of Sarkozy's recent report but it is also increasingly important to individuals in the way they choose to live their lives and pursue their careers.



Chris – insert website screenshot

Sample case study - This is Netty.

Netty is living a good life doing something she is passionate about. Her company runs 'design and make projects' with schoolchildren <http://www.thedesignandmakebus.com/>
This is something of her story.

'I was the first person in my family ever to go to university. I put myself through (at 26 years) and I got a first. It was a BEd in Design Technology for teaching and my second subject was English. In my second year I was picked to go to America on an exchange and that gave me so much confidence. I had the opportunity to teach in a leafy lane arts school in the Pocono Mountains and in Philadelphia where the school had metal detectors and security guards! When I became a teacher I always did an evening class because I thought if I'm saying to these kids, 'you've got to learn and you've got to put the effort in', then I need to keep doing that as well. So I did welding one year and Swedish massage another. I did a jewellery-making course because I wanted to try and increase the number of girls that were doing Design and Technology, because there were hardly any of them taking it. I thought if I bring in jewellery-making it might entice some of the girls to pick it, and it worked. I had 25% girls from almost none in the beginning.

I really loved teaching and being with the kids, but I got fed up of the playground politics. My double lessons with the GCSE kids were taken away from me without any consultation. That meant rewriting all my schemes of work and I ended up coming in on a Saturday so that the kids could have chunks of time to get their work glued. But I did really love it. But I absolutely adore what I'm doing now. It was quite a decision to come out of teaching because I was Head of Department and it was a good wage. People were saying 'you're crazy Netty, it's suicide, what are you doing that for?' But we lived in a fairly big house down south and we've come up here and we live in a little place now. So we've shrunk our outgoings. We used to do crazy things like take the kids to Disneyland on New Year's eve but now we go to the park. So we still do stuff but it's enabled us to have this lifestyle and I feel so much happier and a lot less stressed.

Generation

Want **good** work

- Makes a difference
- Shared values
- Flat structures
- Self-development
- Ethical & sustainable operation
- Sharing learning & working in teams

Netty is clearly flourishing as a lifelong learner. She's adapting and changing all the time but holding onto what is important to her. And she's not alone – Generation Y, people born in the 80's and 90's will make up 40% of the workforce in 2010.

They have experienced affluence and know that money doesn't make you happy. They've seen their parents make their lives TV and work and they are not prepared to give up work-life balance for cash and status. When you look at what they want from work, its not much different from what most people would want. But they are perhaps the first generation not willing to sell out on themselves to please their employer. If they don't get what they want, they will leave. On average they will have had 5 jobs by the time they are 30.

So they embrace lifelong learning *but they are not motivated by the economic arguments* – indeed they are cynical about them.

So does any of this stuff change what we do as careers guidance people? Or do we simply reposition careers guidance to emphasise our role in developing lifelong learners?

Over to Paul Hacking

Changes in careers guidance?

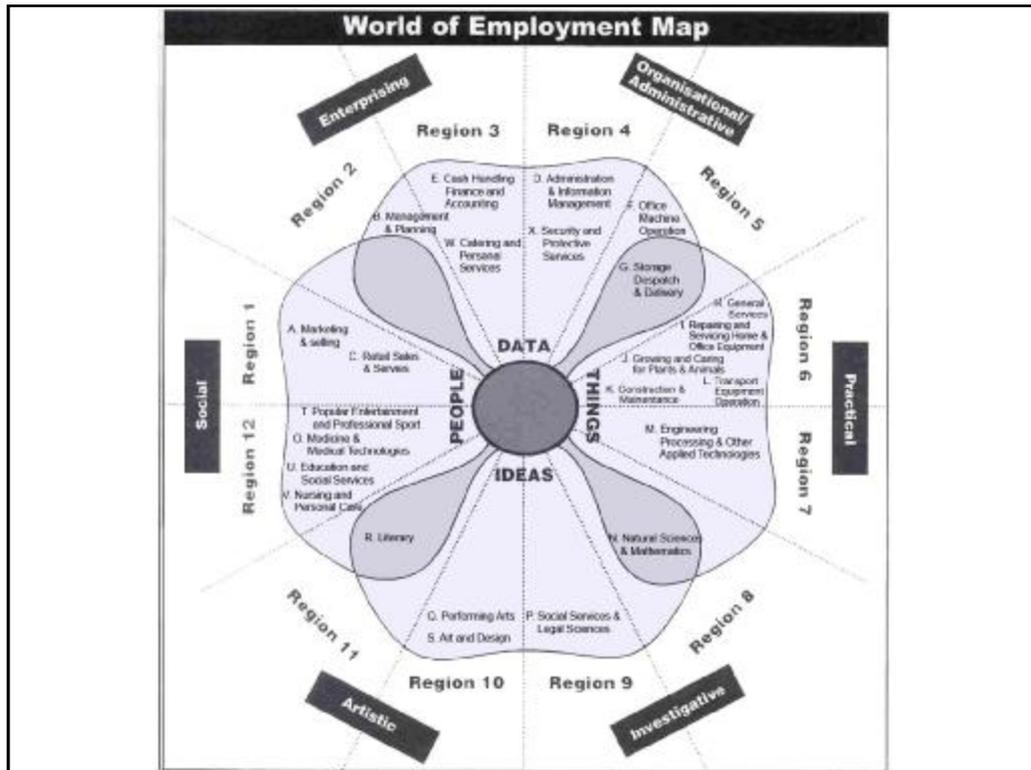
- Is the concept of 'career as a fit' out of date?
- Careers theories of Parsons & Holland.
- Human resource management is about moving individuals from an old to a new structure.
- Do education and employment maps still match?



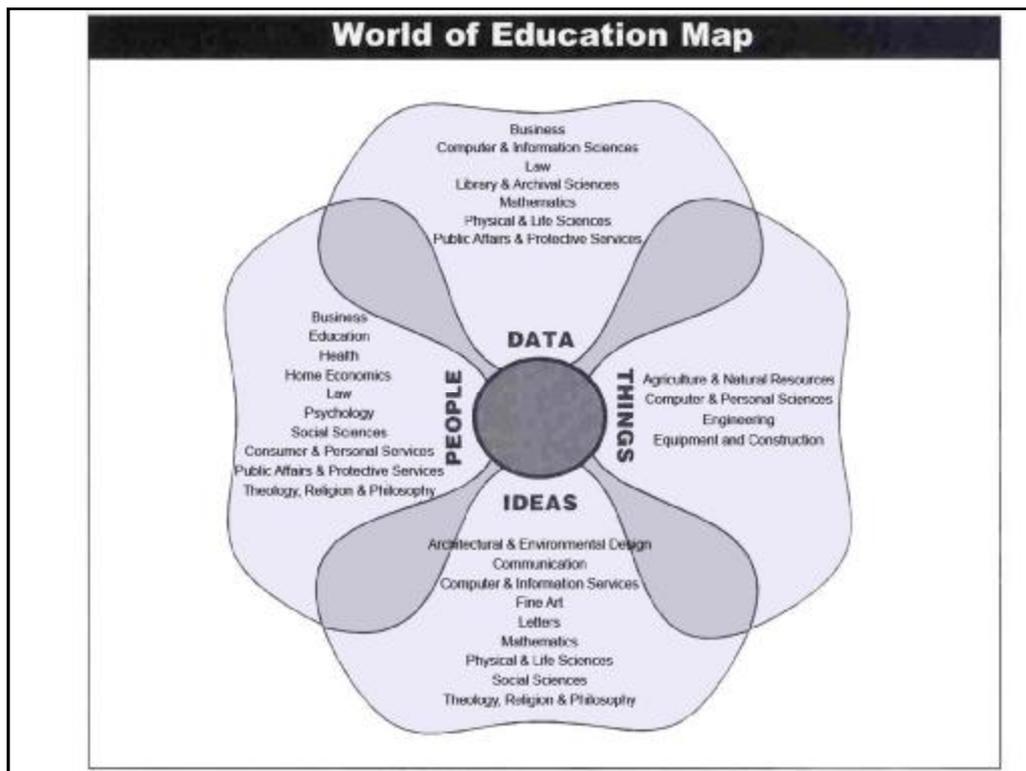
One fundamental approach drawn into question is the 'career as fit' model
.....essentially it is saying that certain personality types are more likely to be successful if they enter particular occupational areas. John Holland for example claims there are 6 personality types; realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising & conventional and that people of a certain personality type flock together. Therefore artistic people are best suited to creative careers. Both claims of particular personality types and only artistic people can flourish in creative environments seem very simplistic in what today is a very sophisticated working world . Also where individuals are encouraged to grow and explore who they are will mean they will inevitably develop new aptitudes and value systems.

As we have seen from what Jeanne has presented society is changing at an ever increasing pace and the nature of jobs is changing to reflect this complexity. Is there a good reason why a graduate who is realistic by Holland's definition can't flourish in an artistic environment and learn from a different skill set approach and contribute a new dynamic to the problem solving in that sector.

This 'career fit' philosophy is also being reflected within organisational structures and changes and therefore not allowing individuals to grow their jobs. The best model is one that allows evolving job roles to meet changing business needs.



The above employment map has been drawn up by Hopson & Scally about 20 years ago but its thinking still pervades most careers guidance practice today although it does provide an insight into one way of describing the working world. Does however the employment map still match the education map?



Is matching the employment & education maps still valid and are these simplistic boundaries between types of subject disciplines appropriate for providing an insight into what careers graduates may enter?

For example Network Rail in the UK has 9 work strand areas such as operations and customer services, finance and civil engineering; there is some cross placement activity for new graduates but this is not the norm. Would a civil engineering graduate benefit from a short placement in customer services and a similar arrangement for the customer services graduate in civil engineering? Network Rail has an excellent training programme for new graduates but could they like many other graduate recruiters benefit from developing a more multidisciplinary approach to problem solving?

Does Careers guidance need to go on a journey? Paul Theroux and his great railway journey around the world? Ghost Train to the Eastern Star on the tracks of the Great Railway Bazaar

Failure!

- Unplanned and unpredictable events and experiences are often crucial in determining an individual's career direction.
- At different stages of our life we also aspire to different goals and our value systems evolve.
- Do we need to find alternatives to *career fit*?

CHANGING GOALS

Read 1st point – Paul Theroux, the travel writer, tried to repeat his journey around the world by train 30 years after the original trip . Nearly all the changes were unplanned & unpredictable. He couldn't have predicted he wouldn't be allowed to enter Iran because he was denied a visa or that previously areas which had denied him entry in Eastern Europe would provide open access because of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Or despite increased prosperity in India but widespread poverty nearly everyone he met had a mobile phone. Other things had not changed the trains still ran on time in India but most of the roads were still terrible to travel on.

Is the journey in career development any different to this? At some points where he had previously travelled by train he had to transfer to a boat or a plane. Isn't the role of the careers guidance counsellor to help the client know when to transfer from the train to a different form of transport and if the intervention isn't made the client gets lost or finds themselves in a cul de sac/dead end.

Read other points



Managing change

- Key guidance role today is enabling clients to manage change in their lives.
- Help the client to spot opportunities, recover from setbacks and capitalise on chance.
- Create dissonance by challenging or suggesting alternative courses of action.

Read 1st point – this can often be done through working in partnership with other professionals. Careers counsellors are only part of the jig saw puzzle in helping the graduate manage their career, lecturers, alumni, family, friends, volunteering managers all need to be engaged if the graduate is to fulfil their potential.

Read 2nd point

A difficult part of the careers counsellors job is to challenge assumptions and enable the client to explore hidden alternatives; this may initially be met with resentment.

In the UK this form of guidance is often called 'coaching'.

Key interventions

- How can we enable the graduate to manage the complexities, uncertainties and dynamic aspects of modern work?
- Influence personal aptitudes e.g. persistence, flexibility, risk taking & curiosity.
- Facilitate movement through different phases in career development.



Many of the key interventions will only be achieved outside the counselling room and lecture theatre – the graduate will manage their career more effectively by doing than thinking, although this will lead to reflective thought.

Jim Bright in his Chaos Theory talks about fast and slow shift. Fast shift is, for example, applying for promotion, whereas slow shift may be a cultural change within the organisation brought about by a change of chief executive inevitably bringing with it changes to jobs & career opportunities. Our clients are often good at spotting the promotion opportunity but poor at observing cultural changes which may bring with it the opportunity to redefine their job. The Careers Adviser can encourage the graduate to be more curious or persistent and seize that slow shift opportunity.

Can we help the client identify that moment when water changes to ice or steam or travel with Paul Theroux and know when it is necessary to change our mode of transport.

Mechanisms to manage change

- Projects that encourage multidisciplinary working such as 'creative' students working alongside 'science & technology' students.
- Mini work based learning projects where graduates are 'problem solving' for 'SME's which can also grow new jobs.
- Alumni mentoring students/graduates and providing models for managing uncertainty.
- Unexpected changes, Paul Theroux.

WORKING TOGETHER

Read bullet points & illustrate by Nottm/NTU mini post graduate placement project & social enterprise placements but non accredited; enabling students and graduates to become involved in multi-disciplinary projects.

Are we as careers guidance advisers still wedded to the goals of predictability & stability in work & career or can we embrace the realities of change and encourage graduates to explore new opportunities.

Discussion

- Have you examples of ways you have experienced or addressed any of the issues we've outlined?
- Do you think we need to do anything different to respond to these issues?

Points arising from workshop participants

- There is a problem with the word "*careers*" but it is difficult to find an alternative word. Young people don't relate to the word 'career' - they don't believe you can plan too far ahead but want to know what the immediate next step is (UK).
- However teachers and parents influence students. They want stability and security for their children eg. a 'good' job such as law or banking, but the young people increasingly want a 'good' life – Y generation. (Belgium)
- Gerhart Rott is contributing to the handbook of the Bologna Process and looking for examples of how career management competences are developing and changing for graduates. He referred to the work of John Krumboltz in Stanford University in the USA. (Germany)
- There is need to review the contract between the student and the university. In the past there has been an implicit contract that going to university would lead to a good job (France).
- At primary school level children are open and creative and somehow we need to sustain these qualities at the tertiary level. Suggested that '*life planning*' might be an alternative word and also recommended L. Sunny Hansen's book, '*Integrated life planning*' (Ireland).
- The power is with the university teachers and we need to change their perceptions of the graduate employment world, and thereby influence curriculum development (Bavaria/Germany)
- It is important to involve students in interdisciplinary mini-projects to develop their adaptability (France)

Further Reading

& keep the discussion going at

www.headorheart.net

Future skill supply in Europe: Medium term forecast up to 2020: synthesis report, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities 2009

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Upload/Information_resources/Bookshop/546/4086_en.pdf

Shift Happens – business slant

<http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2009/09/did-you-know-40-shift-happen.html>

Shift Happens – education and technology slant

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Q75KhAeqJg>

Shift Happens – Keynote presentation by Professor Jim Bright, School of Education, Australian Catholic University.

http://www.vetnetwork.org.au/dbase_upl/conference2008_bright.pdf

Generation Y resources

<http://workempowermentfoundation.typepad.com/>

Resources on innovation in 21st century

<http://www.nesta.org.uk/provocations>

Prosperity without growth? The transition to a sustainable economy. Professor Tim Jackson, Sustainable Development Commission

<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=914>

Build Your Own Rainbow, Hopson & Scally 1999

Ghost Train to the Eastern Star, Paul Theroux, Houghton & Mifflin 2008

Integrative Life Planning, L. Sunny Hansen, Jossey Bass 2001

Luck is no accident: making the most of happenstance in your life and career, Al S. Levin & J D Krumboltz, Impact Publishers 2004.