

new deal for careers-work

where is there for careers work now to go? - where does it start? - and what partners can it find?

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Is public-service careers work running out of road? New paths for politics, beliefs and technologies are re-routing the way people live. There is a time to leave but careers work has no certain place to go. The temptation is, then, to signpost and replicate past achievements. And that's a blind alley.

If there's hope it rests on careers work's ability to adjust and re-align its position. The record is of a decade-by-decade importation of new thinking and practice. Each stage has carried options for presenting careers-work as an institution to be defended or a movement to be galvanised. My vote is for the latter, and that means...

- ... realities to face
- ... changes to manage
- ... thinking to expand
- ... action to align
- ... a deal to negotiate

It's a journey, finding strengthened relationships between students and educators. Their positions are of mutually-respecting partnership, each acknowledging the authority of the other. Students become sources based on their appreciation of the distinctive locations they inhabit. Partnerships draw on students' direct-and-personal experience of how people manage their lives in those enclaves. Students and educators work together on what helps and hinders those families' and neighbourhoods' chances in life.

Part of that work probes what is happening to small businesses and what is coming out of global conglomerates. All re-focuses on stakeholder experience of the opportunities on offer - and not on offer. Students are among the authorities who understand what needs to be done. This is a new deal for careers work and a movement where students are sources on learning for living.

Change is a major factor in understanding why it is necessary. Contemporary learning must take account of technologies and economies, and also of the beliefs and values which grow around them. And the resulting array of starting points for action is dizzying. Students might...

lean towards... *college - apprenticeship - university - enterprise*
engage with... *science - engineering - arts - culture - services*
be driven by... *ambition - well-being - fulfilment - helpfulness*
based on... *qualification - advice - media - independence - chance*
considering... *relatives - friends - neighbourhood*
influenced by... *wealth - connections - poverty - marginalisation*
concerned for... *the poor - the rich - the species - the planet*
with expectations about... *identity - race - sexuality - class*

Most careers work can help on all of this. And it will do so by appreciating how dizzying this experience can be. Which is why the call is for student-educator partnerships.

- **facing realities**

But ideas for partnership are surrounded by more than enough talk about what should be done. Some of it comes from bureaucrats claiming to know what the world needs now...

'right choices?' - 'impartiality?' - 'high quality?'

Actually what careers work needs now is fewer vague and abstract generalities and more pushy questions. Reformer students and their educators do better by interrogating...

*right choices... **according to who?**
impartiality... **show me how?**
high quality... **meaning what?***

The search is for recognisable realities, and bureaucratic abstractions don't find them. The most telling question in the 'what-who-when-how-where' spectrum is 'why'. It looks for causes and effects - causes that drive...

'why can I be sure of this?'

...and the effects that beckon...

'why will I bother with it?'

Questioning the bureaucratic abstractions is hard enough but what's harder is probing favoured answers. The danger is treat the preference as if it were the fact. But 'I like' can't be simply transposed into 'I believe'. We all need a waving flag on any sentence beginning with 'the fact is...'. Too many so-called facts turn out to be convenient fictions. So what have we got?

We've got facts that are observable and verifiable. It is guaranteed that observers can verify a claim when people talk along the lines.....

'I saw...' - 'she said...' - 'it describes..'

But beliefs and opinions are not observed they are attributed. The study of 'phenomenology' builds a theory around the way people attribute meaning to observations. People are not talking about what is real, but about...

'which just shows...' - 'so that means...' - 'and the point is...'

Attributions are deniable, but they are important - because, right or wrong, they speak of the sense people make of experience. And that sense-making informs action...

'so we should'... - 'and I will...' - 'because she could'...'

There are facts, there are attributions and there are purposes. I don't know a sequence of thinking-and-feeling that could be more relevant to careers-work. It is the stuff of career-partnership talk.

There are the makings of a step-by-step narrative here but every narrative needs scrutiny. People come across realities, to which they attribute meaning, so that they can find purpose in action - it's a three-scene story. And any narrative can be punctuated by stop-and-think interrogation. But narratives are malleable and can be turned up-side down. A reverse narrative starts with the purpose, looks for the meaning and points to the best-fitting evidence - finding precedes enquiry. It sets up 'do-this' pressure - from peers, colleagues, funders or bureaucrats. The drive to make conclusions fit assumptions is written up as 'confirmation bias'.

Working with narrative calls for vigilance, and from nobody as much as students and their educators. The questions students ask shape their futures as citizens and workers. And they have a lot of future in their hands - as friends, lovers, parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. If they don't find the answers to the awkward questions, somebody else will.

The expert's term 'career development' is a poor fit to all this because there's more going on in reality than in careers-work thinking. Bureaucrats, careers workers and human-resource people use the term 'career development' to refer to what their expertise can deliver. The problem with that is that experts are not centre-stage in career narratives. The narratives are not about the experts they are about the students. The experts are, at best, bit players. So we need another term - not 'career development' but 'career management'.

Career management is not what experts do it's what their clients do about uncovering beliefs, developing meanings and planning action. It does not erode the usefulness of careers work expertise. Far from it - because among the career-management goings-on students are not necessarily above inventing and faking their stories. It needs able experts to see through that. But career-development expertise must learn to live with career-management experience. Because student-educator partnerships are not just for making a living, they are for making a life.

- **dealing with change**

Not so long ago expert careers workers would invite applicants to consider where they want to be in their careers - in, say, five year's time. It was an invitation for a clients and candidates to say what it is that drives and beckons them in their careers. It gave helpers and recruiters clues to the directions those energies might carry a person. All very exciting, but - these days - the question would deserve a snort of derision. Neither careers experts nor their students can know what the world will be like in one year's time - let alone five.

Big employers interests are in the changes which they bring about favouring a few and penalising the many. A big-deal issue for employers is productivity. It's a measure of what a firm gains from the investment it makes. Contemporary recruitment looks for a candidate's productive potential. The formula shows how much training activates how much potential to realise how much profit. There are risks - neither the recruiters nor their formulas are particularly reliable. Nonetheless global players have increasingly heavy-duty leverage on what's going on in working lives. And that trend is strengthened by the conglomeration of companies - fewer headquarters presiding over bigger outfits.

These outfits are centrally staffed by highly-qualified and tech-savvy recruits. Indeed, its wizzes are the inventors of global productivity - inventing formulas which squeeze tons of profit out of ounces of investment. Their salaries are spectacular - their drive and beckoning is signposted by big money. But the total is a microscopic sector in the global work-force. And their cybernetic inventiveness is capable of wiping out what remains of career-management - word-wide. Transactions are increasingly digitised beyond human control. It's already in most-people's global work-force picture. Worker productivity is weakening and it's employment contracts are increasingly precarious - more so in poorer nations and increasingly so in rich nations. All of this is the backdrop for how students and educators negotiate partnership. It should count as what careers work calls 'labour-market information'.

Small businesses and educators share experiences of global change each needing somehow to deal with it. Small businesses are hard-hit. Viable outfits may well be offering valued goods and services to local shoppers. But, nonetheless, they may be refused investment by global banks where they fail to show growth. Shop fronts are taken over by global brands. Until the change overtook them small businesses were where school-leavers had their first part-time jobs, some of them finding sustained employment. Local firms were then in a good position to find and engage likely lads and lassies. The trend against those localities has little to do with productivity, it is the consequence of a theoretical commitment to the economics of growth. However its economics was first

mooted not for growth but as a socialist means of selectively strengthening useful local businesses. It made room by letting some businesses go and the process was called 'creative destruction'. But the term has been hijacked by a narrower political theory. It undermines what had been part of a partnership between students, their educators and local employers.

There are some twists and turns: technologies are being updated not year-by-year but day-by-day. And those technologies are equipping citizens in targeting what they see as destructive. There is on-line vigilance and awareness, and sometimes hostility, bringing commerce itself under fire. So it makes economic sense for commerce to offload that risk, and not just onto small businesses but also onto education. Education is also portrayed as at fault - the institutions of global commerce hold educators accountable for making students ready for productive employment. It's a loose-loose deal for educators - like small businesses, whatever they do, they get the blame. That attempted capture would crush any hope for student-educator-business partnerships. Education and local businesses need a road out. And there is one.

There's plenty of confusion, ambiguity and self-contradiction in talk of education and it offers opportunities to local partnerships. A word that crops up a lot in that talk is 'employability'. It appears to mean what employers are looking for. But what employers look for today may not necessarily be on the list tomorrow. What employers want is also a narrative, and malleable. Today it bounces with economic indices, but tomorrow it may well segue with the stock-markets. Now we want you now we don't - another of those guess-what-we-mean abstractions. Careers work does better to ask whether the learning might be for work or can be about work. Learning for work makes work a benign necessity, but learning about work doesn't. Then there is that other frequent phrase, 'self-awareness' - which is also bendable. It can mean listing what recruiters need to know; but it can also leave them gasping for breath. Most self-awareness is a feature in a narrative, speaking of thoughts-and feelings which ebb-and-flow, are at times self-contradictory. And they are none-the-worse for that - because they are natural reflections on an unfolding narrative.

So there be no short answers about what learning is for. But there can be questions about what learning is ready for a changing world. And there are educators who enable students critically to engage with it. It's muddled, and that gives some cred to what is called the 'chaos theory' of careers. But in a changing world honest reflection on changing facts, myriad meanings and conflicted purposes are bound to be muddled - and are all the better for that. So chaos theory misses what is integral to making sense of experience. The best of employers may have no time for it but the best of educators have. To be fair chaos theory is right about this: there will be surprises. But it's more impressive to surprise than to be surprised. So, wherever your students may be in their application-presentation-selection processes, consider how - in a changing world - the point of learning is being good enough at surprising...

*recruiters and selectors are easy to bore
much of what they hear is based on expert advice
which means they've heard it all before
and they know what's faked
which is all very tiresome*

so surprise them

*make the interview an exchange
as much for your questions as for theirs
you'll do the homework but notice what's changing
and use that to explain why they can count on you*

*and ask what you can count on them for
because for good or ill they'll remember that
If for ill you've frightened them off and you can do better
If for good you've demonstrated ready-for-anything productivity*

and that's what they'll decide on

Change brings surprises and what they mean for possible change of mind. Careers work has been stronger on one-off decision than on think-again change of mind. But, these days, educators were never more needed for helping with surprises and seeing things another way. And that requires learning to be less about ready-for-work fitting-in and more about ready-for-anything finding-out. And it opens doors to student-educator-employer partnerships.

- **expanding thought**

Attributing meaning to change and surprise is neither quick nor easy - it needs time and space for newly-discovered thoughts-and-feelings. And figuring out what to do about it needs yet deeper and wider room. Any resistance would come from narrow thinking voicing accusations of over-complicating things.

Unfettered support for any innovation is unlikely and partnership reformers need to know how to deal with resistance, dismissal and subversion. When it comes to resistance the most subtle ploy, and the hardest to outflank, appears in two stages: (1) establish a boundary around what, at first site, seems like a sensible agenda, and then (2) invite free debate within that agenda. A UK example rests on a government position: (a) the business world provides a complete and credible source of labour-market information, and (b) it needs educators to work on how that help can be delivered to students. It's control posturing as liberation.

And it feels good. Global companies bring compelling shows to schools and localities. Part of the pitch is to welcome educators as partners in making students ready for work. It positions education as an arm of economy. And it's plausible enough for careers-work leaders to believe they can have both the status and influence. But the reality is that careers work lacks the leverage to demonstrate measurable economic effects. And, in any event, any neo-liberal government invitation would go to private-sector career coaching. So public-sector careers work is looking at a comfortable myth not a political reality. And careers work is left needing a road that by-passes the ambush and re-captures the partnership-reforming space. There is such a road.

There's plenty of room for doubt concerning business-world claims for commerce and students need educators and employers to face them. There are controls that can deceive, but no control deceives everybody - and certainly not all of the time. So alert educators are among those who notice that commercial claims overlook the damage that labour markets can do. Much of that damage is done by employers who, in the name of austerity, decline adequately to train and equip employees. It means that workers are underemployed, are in no position to be productive and therefore have seriously weakened claims on decent wages. It's ruthless exploitation relying on the support of discredited economics. Credible sources show how debt-funded investment strengthens an economy. But business 'externalises' those costs by off-loading risk onto suppliers. And that level of thinking sees educators as suppliers of work-life recruits.

This is business manoeuvring for advantage. It is what its managers think they are there to do. But it damages education, penalises students, exploits workers, endangers suppliers and undermines productivity. For an educator to buy in would be a case of compensating commerce for its failures. It's certainly not such a feel-good story for commerce. But none of it must be allowed to rule out possibilities for education-employer partnerships. Indeed it raises labour-market issues that students, educators and employers need to work on together. And there needs to be room for all three voices to have their say...

*why do the less well-off do less well in the labour market?
and women?
and black?*

why are the wage-differences between workers and bosses so extreme?

*what organisations can be held responsible for global air pollution?
how is commerce dealing with climate change?
what about the extinction of species?
and global poverty and disease*

*who should be doing what about ruthless competition?
about exploiting the vulnerable?
is misleading customers and defrauding each other getting less frequent?
if governments rescue banks why not another industry?
must we just accept that shutdowns put thousands out of work?*

*should students get into political websites like Cegnet and Local-Schools-Network?
what about work-critical lines taken in The Guardian, Telegraph and Huffington Post?
what ideas do you have for improving careers-work websites?
what do you think about losing facilities like libraries and sports?
what role are there for local voluntary and social enterprises?
must we now rely on commerce where we used to rely on government?*

*how much of your business will be robotised in the foreseeable future?
why do so many locally valued small businesses get shut down?*

*isn't commercial canvassing and sponsoring of government anti-democratic?
do firms most value workers who fit-in or workers who check-out?
which of these issues do you think is most pressing?
should your firm now be changing anything it does?
does the pressure on young people at school need to be so intense?
should educators be supporting students in probing the business world?
what do you most look forward telling your grand-children about your work?
what are the most important questions that you should be asking us?*

Different programmes working in different localities will come up with different issues. This list does no more than illustrate possibilities. However that may be, the possibilities need to expand the conversation between students, educators and employers.

Where career-related thought-and-feeling is expanding guidance and curriculum need rebalancing. Advice in small-group and individual face-to-face work is different from group-learning exchanges in curriculum. It would be unreasonable to expect careers workers to take on a full-scale partnership-learning programmes. They are trained, experienced and located for a special ways of working. But reform needs the interactions that mainstream curriculum, at its best, accommodates. That curriculum depends on the research and development of its own specialists. These are the historians, geographers, mathematicians, sociologists, psychologists, dramatists and economists that students work with on a daily basis.

A careers-work partnership needs educators to apply their disciplines to the comings-and-goings of contemporary living. But it also needs them to be big enough to learn from careers workers, who know about listening conversations. Every school or college can find a few educators big enough to take this on. And that few is enough, where it is credible and trusted. But, most of all, partnership reform needs educators big enough to recognise that their students know more than they do about what's going on in local lives. So, by the time the business-world's road-show hits town, these students and educators have worked together and are ready for them - ready to listen and ready to question. And, if the road-show visitors are any good at what they do, they will also listen and answer. This engagement of expands the careers-work partnership into a three-way deal...

*...students talking and listening with...
...employers talking and listening with...
...educators talking and listening with students...*

The dynamics of careers-work partnerships are expanding.

- **aligning for action**

Students know about what is going on in their own localities. They learn it from experience. And it's true of present and former students. The learning experiences are variously based - what's noticed...

*hanging with the folks
patrolling the neighbourhood
to-and-froing in and around school or college
within ear-shot of a shout for a home goal
much of the time on-line
maybe with some awareness of a nation out there
and there are also cosmopolitans*

Each of these locations is distinctive. It carries a special range of habits. It nurtures a range of beliefs and values. It celebrates particular priorities. Location collectively aligns people for action - framing what they think possible and marking whether they feel it worth the bother. Learning and location are aligned and entwined.

Locally-situated career influences are beyond the reach of centrally-located policy. National governments are disposed to believe that it is regional difference that explain learning outcomes. In the UK governments make much of the 'north-south divide'. But the prevailing reality shows local alignments to explain most about the outcomes of education. It is in distinctive locations that people learn who they are becoming and what they will do about it.

But there's nothing inevitable about any of this - learning in location is an influence not a causation. However, in any understanding of what people do about working life, it would be foolish to ignore those social and local anchorages. Any starting point for enabling a change of direction is to understand the dynamics that first align people for a work-life - with, for and in response to people who matter to them.

Youngsters are already entwined in the different dynamics of localities when they first come to school. The families coming to drop-off their youngsters approach the school gates from different directions. The directions are printed on the map and imprinted in the minds. So coming from one direction brings puzzlement and confusion about what coming from another takes for granted. Some families see it as natural and necessary to send children at school in nappies. Why would they have seen things differently?

There once were community-based child-care centres scattered across the UK and within reach of most neighbourhoods. Each in one place, they helped families coming from all directions. Few have survived government reforms. So there is little opportunity for either the posh or the poor to get to know and understand each other's postures and habits. It leaves plenty of room for dislike, disgust, disdain, distrust and dismissal. And it's two-way traffic. Each morning schools are greeting families who are strangers to each other. There are hostilities. There are also career-development effects. Reforming partnerships would find more than enough to work on. And, in interests ranging from folks' to cosmopolitans', the matter is urgent. We really don't want finally to find out that 'there's no such thing as society only individual men and women and their families'.

Individual self-awareness is a lot more than what much of government and some careers workers think it is. To dismiss social and cultural influences on what people do is to be left with one explanation of behaviour - the individual. A concomitant is that individual failure is individually blameworthy. Pushed to its limits it locates you and me in each our own social vacuums. Neo-liberal governments get close to that limit. Selfies may be a feature. The careers-work version directs a lot of attention to 'self awareness'. It appears as categories of aptitude, preference and achievement. Much of UK government and too much of careers-work thinking believes that linking that list to a corresponding list of work-life possibilities carries the greater part of what careers

advice should do. The match affirms the self - and the good news can be found in a matter of hours. Indeed it can be expected to lift a 'failing' student into 'employability'. The simplicity of the thinking allows it to be recorded on tick-and-flick worksheets.

Away from those worksheets all but the seriously-in-denial are still finding out about themselves - all the time and lifelong. And, far from uplifting, it can be a troublesome experience. It needs a deeper and wider concept of self awareness - usually inconsistent, probably puzzling, often self-contradictory and sometimes painful. It learns less from the expected than from the surprising. It is beyond the reach of pre-cooked categories. And it has more for educators to learn from students than for students to learn from educators. It belongs to deeper and wider student-educator partnership - mutually learned over years. In that thinking encouraging students narrowly to see their lives as check-listed self-affirmation would be child abuse.

Influences concerned with career development are institutionalised in state and commercial outfits but there is also civil society. Becoming self-aware is socially rooted - informed by the feedback, modelling and support of other people. There is an issue for where these encounters are best understood and served. All institutions are instituted in some interest or other. The institutions of civil society are set up to represent other than political or commercial interests. They are big on child-care, religion and education.

Between them institutions are variously set up in order to rescue, help, serve or control some interest or other. As things change they come and go - each is eventually thought of as redundant, or unfashionable, or inconvenient. Some, like many child-care outfits and some religious institutions, are stealthily undermined. Some that are whistle-blowing dangerous just disappear. As change accelerates so does that coming-and-going turnover. All of this opens a big question for education-based work. How far can reforming partnership relate to any of this?... or survive it?... or escape it? Any reforming partnership movement which is unwelcome to commercial or political interests may need an escape route. And there is one.

Reforming education in an hierarchically bureaucratized institution needs a special kind of negotiating. Institutions are said to be part of 'the system'. Such talk refers to the way an establishment, a parliament or a school can act arbitrarily. It becomes visible when rescuing, helping, serving and controlling moves are allocated inconsistently. Where educators comply they are said to be high on 'system orientation'. A determination to survive or resist institutional control is said to be low on 'system-orientation'. High system orientation behaves itself. Orientations are measured by degrees, as positions on a spectrum. Positions at the lower end correlate with various indications of independence-of-mind. Bureaucratic education determine how welcome independently low orientation shall be. That determining process may quietly rotate wheels-within-wheels.

A low system-oriented programme manager might well think it a mistake to take a reform proposal to the biggest boss. Before any student expectations are fired up a reformer needs to know who, among colleagues, to hand-pick for work on the reform. There are colleagues with 'senior', 'middle' and 'functionary' status. But status does not necessarily speak of influence...

*who wins student trust?
who would best be aware of the effects of the reform?
how is designated careers work positioned about it?
how best to engaged co-operation with that trust, awareness and position?*

Anyone who has spent any time in a staff room knows that influence is not as easily recognised as is commonly supposed. The idea of all-knowing 'super-head' owes more to romanticism than evidence. But all bosses need to know what's going on, conflicting with what, and getting ready to besiege. These are devils and deep-blue seas. Reform for innovation stays afloat by approaching bosses on piloted and proven proposals. That's why trying ideas out - with hand-picked colleagues and, at some stage, hand-picked students - is constructive. Bosses have heard more than enough about problems, they are more likely to align with solutions. Student-educator partnerships qualify.

- **negotiating the deal**

Getting that alignment loads big-time pressures on the partnership's educators and its students. Educators are asked to signpost the learning-for-living relevance of their disciplines. They are asked to re-position their authority in relation to student authority. And they are asked to work for students' own independence of mind, critical-thinking and creativity. Educators are now more than interesting actors, they are interested audiences. This is talking-the-talk that comes ahead of walking-the-walk. It positions students in back-and-forth conversations about what is worth knowing, what is believable, and - only then - what needs to be done.

In the midst of so much back-and-forth negotiation a lot hangs on what educators mean by 'communication'. Partnership talking-the-talk faces factual realities, prioritises shared meanings, and takes on ensuing action. Hand-picked participants are dealing with educators who see the point, and some who feel they've enough to do. They are dealing students who see the point, and some who won't take their eyes off the competitive ball. Careers-work partnerships are not all-round winners.

And prospects are further damaged when conversation is re-labelled 'communication skills'. Those skills are urged on students for promoting, persuading and performing. They're look-good skills. and they hide as much as they disclose. Communication is not conversation. Conversation asks and answers, hesitates and interrupts, whispers and shouts, weeps and curses. It's how we get to know each other. Officialdom may lament a lack of communication skills. Partnership laments a loss of trust in people whose fancy talk is found not to be worth bothering with.

Change-to-meet-change needs learning that students can progressively engage with educators. Walking-the-walk partnerships engage growing students with caring educators. It is a continuously unfolding experience. That is a day-by-day change needing a year-on-year programme for dealing with change upon change.

Few know better than educators how bumpy that ride can be. Some stretches look like failure. But learning from failure is part of homo-sapiens' finger-hold on survival. We learn more from what troubles us than from what pleases us. And all students have genetically inherited some version of those smarts. It presents us all with a repertoire, including working with...

social support... *asking who-what-when-where-how-why questions*
step-by-step reflection... *finding-sorting-checking-figuring what's going on*
turning-point experience... *imagining this-way-or-that dealing with fear and realising hope*
calling on special memories... *from recovering the forgotten to facing the unforgettable*
recounting achievements... *ranging from faking through inventing to creating*
slow-burning intuition... *asleep and awake thought-and-feeling that won't stop*
quick-firing instinct... *experienced as a do-it-now-or-lose-the-chance impulse*

There's more here than any career development textbook has fully contained. It needs handling with care: not to be confused with learning styles or emotional intelligence - neither of which has much of an evidence base. It's a repertoire, any part of which can help with facing confusion, dealing with obstruction and turning loss into gain. And it's the range that makes it a resource for student-educator partnerships ready for a changing world.

Where more-of-the-same won't work there must be a place for new thinking calling on new knowledge. For a long time careers-work thinking has been largely based on aspects of psychology and economics - with a bit of sociology and cultural theory. Thinking for partnership reform brings neurology and evolution-theory into that mix. Their importance is illustrated by the way the support-to-instinct repertoire stacks up. Those smarts

include segments where your brain is telling you that it knows more than you knew it knows. That neurology looks after you because it needs you to survive.

But the resulting mix has bequeathed humanity with a resonance all its own. It speaks not so much of calculative decisions as human longings. There are places which the repertoire more closely resemble falling in love than maximising solutions. And that allows you to sense the glancing, hesitating, breathing, touching and tasting experience of a life-changing encounter. You owe it to your brain - not to emoticons. It is a thought-and-feeling repertoire that can turn obstruction into advance, capture into release, loss into gain - and confusion into clarity. It's also quite a bequest to student-educator careers-work partnerships.

There are shareholders and there are stakeholders and they don't necessarily agree about what's worth

learning. Shareholders are attached to commerce and the interests it serves. They expect their human-resources people to recruit staff who will pump-up productivity. At the same time stakeholders are attached to families in their locations and with their cultures. And it is they who are affected by the impact of whatever shareholders want done. There are consequences for well-being. It's an open question what shareholders and stakeholders will actually support - productivity or well-being. Actually productivity need not exclude well-being. But labour-market experience shows that neither need they be congruent.

Any partnership agreement must negotiate with these influences. So educators need to know where they come in. The possibilities stretch from mindfulness to critical thinking. The one cools students down, the other fires them up. So what of the open question? Partnership agreements are negotiated by students and their educators - and they are stakeholders. And we know this: change is surprising, but surprise is useful; self awareness is uncomfortable, but it's trouble from which we learn; commerce must try to capture education, but it can't afford to over-ride it; systems control behaviour, but nothing is inevitable. All of that looks to me like apple-carts for upsetting - by critical thinking, the independence of mind it sustains, and the creativity it releases.

So is public-service careers work running out of road? And is it in yet another blind alley? Not if you can find partners for reform here.....

...students talking and listening with...
...employers talking and listening with...
...educators talking and listening with students..

It lifts road-shows to where shareholders, stakeholders and educators work with, not on, students. Talking-that-talk points them all to walking-a-new-walk. And that move is as important as any that any of them will ever make.