



Advanced Negotiated Work-based Learning Project

Strategies for career education in New Zealand schools to foster 21st century career development

Master of Professional Practice

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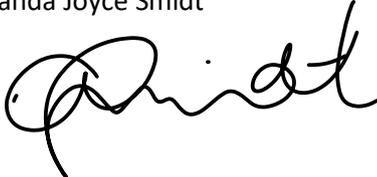
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I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of an institution of higher learning.

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Date: 04/07/2018

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Executive summary

For many years, there have been calls for change in our education system to reflect the reality of change in the world of work. But more recently, the rate of technology driven change has become exponential, and with the impending arrival of AI systems and other forms of automation that are projected to increasingly replace or profoundly and continually change most human working roles, we face significant and abrupt disruption to how we live, learn and work, and calls for an effective response from our education system.

This research paper proposes a paradigm shift in the provision of career education in New Zealand schools to reflect and respond to the challenges of change disruption, and in doing so, contributes to the current education reform debate in New Zealand.

Informed by literature, the paper draws attention to the skills and competencies needed to function effectively in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world, and investigates the career development and pedagogical strategies required to nurture, facilitate and enable the development of these capabilities in our young people.

This work places the student and their needs at the heart of the issue. Learning experiences shape student identity, and their ideas of who and what they might become, and thus, for students to become the 'confident, connected, actively involved lifelong learners' envisioned by our New Zealand Curriculum, our schools approach to careers, teaching and learning must acknowledge and be responsive to the uniqueness of each of its students.

Influenced by wider research on career development and learning, the paper discusses and justifies a constructivist approach. The OECD (2018) identified that there is a strong, interconnected relationship between the student's acquisition of competencies, and pedagogic approaches that encourage active learning. To this end constructivist approaches to career and learning are explored (where the adult is the 'knowledgeable observer and facilitator' of learning, and the student the 'active participant'). A shift from a pure logical-positivist approach (where the adult is the 'information provider' and the student a 'passive responder'). It is clear through this research that how the student learns (pedagogy) is just as important as what they learn (content), and that it is within this constructivist 'way of learning' that a sense of self and of possible-self emerges.

This paper illustrates some ways that career practitioners, teachers and curricula might nurture and facilitate an environment where the student, and the development of their ideas and hopes of possible selves, is central to learning facilitation. An environment where students are aware of who they are within their system of influence, understand the world of work and how they might navigate it, are self-directed, adaptable and resilient, are proactive and have a desire for, and an understanding of the need for, life-long learning. One where schools, and in particular career practitioners and teachers, are, and feel, well supported within the curriculum to offer the student the time, space and resources to develop a coherent notion of possible-self.

In conclusion three main themes are proposed as strategies for a way forward for career education in New Zealand schools to foster 21st century career development. These are:

- a national vision for career development which includes career as central to the national curriculum, career practitioners in influential roles within the Ministry, a national career development association with national professional standards and professional recognition, and a strengthening of the Career Development Benchmarks

- the career practitioner as career-champion who drives the culture of career development within schools
- promoting a whole-of-school career culture where career is 'part of', rather than 'in-addition-to' the students' learning

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Acknowledgements..... | 3 |
| Executive summary..... | 4 |
| Context..... | 7 |
| The career education landscape in New Zealand..... | 7 |
| A call for change..... | 10 |
| Critical review | 12 |
| Student identity | 14 |
| Ages and stages..... | 15 |
| Possible selves..... | 16 |
| System of influence – a look at the Systems Theory Framework..... | 18 |
| A constructivist approach to learning and career practice in schools..... | 21 |
| Shifting from a logical-positivist to a constructivist approach to career development and learning | 22 |
| A constructivist approach to learning..... | 24 |
| A constructivist approach to career development | 28 |
| A constructivist approach to learning in a bicultural and multicultural setting | 29 |
| Towards and integrated, constructivist approach to career education and learning..... | 31 |
| Career development and Learning - developing the ‘possible self’ | 33 |
| Strategies for career education in New Zealand schools to foster 21st century career development | 38 |
| National vision for career development | 39 |
| Career Practitioner’s role..... | 39 |
| Whole-of-school careers culture | 40 |
| References | 41 |
| Appendix 1 | 46 |
| Reflective Summary: Advanced Negotiated Work-Based Learning Project | 46 |
| Appendix 2 | 61 |
| Review of Learning..... | 61 |
| Appendix 3 | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| Learning Agreement | Error! Bookmark not defined. |

Context

The accelerated pace of change (technological, climate, globalization, demographic and so on) and the future of work are challenging for the education system, and also the career development occurring therein. How do schools deal with the increasing demands to prepare young people for jobs that have yet to be created, technology yet to be developed, and the resulting social challenges that are yet to evolve? The Organisation for Economic Development's (OECD) report to G-20 Finance Ministers (2018) notes that "technological change shifts labour demand towards more cognitive skills for which many current workers are not adequately trained, contributing to the polarisation of the labour market and the hollowing out of middle-skill jobs" (p1), and go on to suggest that "to help workers adapt and gain from the digital transformation, policies should focus on investing in skills at all levels, especially life-long learning, supporting transitions to new jobs, and adapting social protection systems and labour market institutions to new forms of work" (p1).

Furthermore, the OECD, as part of their '*Future of Education and Skills: Education 2030*', state that central to this future is an education system, with a strong focus on career education, that considers the young person as a whole, empowering them to shape the world around them, by equipping them with both a sense of agency and competency. The OECD's Education 2030 tagline, "*it is about acting rather than to be acted upon, shaping rather than to be shaped and choosing rather than to accept choices decided by others*", emphasizes the key career development construct of agency which is developed over time through self-reflection, and meaningful career development interventions.

The career education landscape in New Zealand

Currently in New Zealand (as the education system is undergoing significant reform under the Labour Government), schools are required by the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) – more specifically NAG 1 (f) - to:

Provide appropriate career education and guidance for all students in Year 7 and above, with the particular emphasis on specific career guidance for those students who have been identified by the school as being at risk of leaving school unprepared for the transition to the workplace or further education/training.

This is further emphasized in two of the Government's National Education Goals (NEGs):

- *The highest standards of achievement, through programmes which enable all students to realise their full potential as individuals, and to develop the values needed to become full members of New Zealand's society (NEG 1)*
- *Development of the knowledge, understanding and skills needed by New Zealanders to compete successfully in the modern, ever-changing world (NEG 3)*

Furthermore, the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) has as its vision for young people the following:

- *who will be creative, energetic, and enterprising*
- *who will seize the opportunities offered by new knowledge and technologies to secure a sustainable social, cultural, economic, and environmental future for our country*

- *who will work to create an Aotearoa New Zealand in which Māori and Pākehā recognise each other as full Treaty partners, and in which all cultures are valued for the contributions they bring*
- *who, in their school years, will continue to develop the values, knowledge, and competencies that will enable them to live full and satisfying lives*
- *who will be confident, connected, actively involved, and lifelong learners.*

These three interconnections (see Figure 1 below) form the foundation of the intent of education in New Zealand. Essentially, if schools follow the NAGs, NEGS and NZC vision, young people should develop the attributes necessary to become ‘*confident, connected, actively involved, and lifelong learners*’.

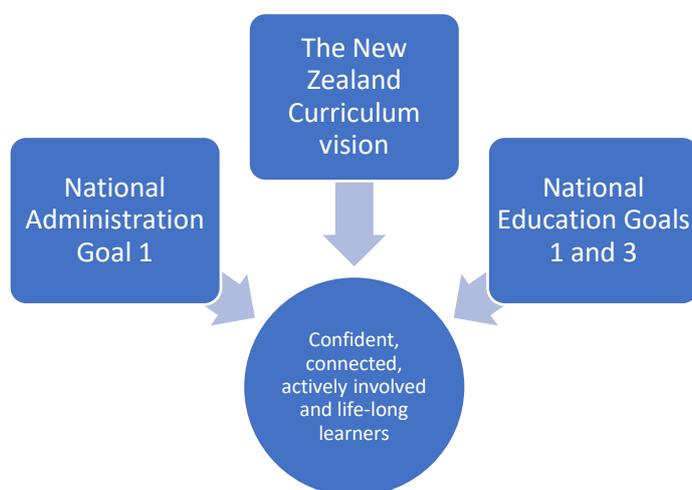


Figure 1: Interconnectedness of NAG, NEG, NZC and the development of young people

Although it seems sensible, simple, and do-able; left without a comprehensive framework or clear guidance to implement, CIAGE in schools across New Zealand has been somewhat fragmented. By not specifying what ‘*career education and guidance*’ might be, it is not surprising that there remains a wide variation in the provision of careers education in schools. These concerns were asserted in the Education Review Office (ERO) report in 2006, as well as NZCER’s Karen Vaughan and Ben Gardiner’s report on *Careers Education in New Zealand Schools* (2007), and more recently, the Productivity Commission’s new Models of Tertiary Education report (2017, p73) implies this disparity to still be the case.

Since the ERO and Vaughan report, the *Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools* was revised (2009), and in 2009 the then Career Services Rapuara stated in their *Rethinking Career Education in Schools - Foundations for a New Zealand framework* (2009), that the “purpose of career education is not just in developing the capacity to make a successful transition from school to adult life. Rather, the emphasis should be on the lifelong skills required to make choices and take action ... our aim should be to ensure that through a planned programme of learning, young people develop

the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that are necessary to develop a career effectively” (p 31). By appraising current practice in New Zealand schools at the time, their own career education initiatives (Designing Careers and CPaBL), international models such as Canada’s (Blueprint for Life/Work Design) and Australia’s (Australian Blueprint for Career Development), and OECD reports on career education, CNZ developed the *Career Education Benchmarks* (2011, more recently revised, 2016) as a self-review tool for career education in schools. It must be noted that the revised Benchmarks (2016) have at its core, the development of student career management competencies (CMCs): self-awareness, exploring opportunities, deciding and acting, and transitions, and have further strengthened their guidelines around inputs required to ensure that career development programmes enable students to build on their CMCs.

However, the Guidelines and Benchmarks, although help to clarify NAG 1 and provide some additional guidance to schools, are aspirational documents and much is left to be interpreted by the user.

Following on from their 2006 report, *The Quality of Career Education and Guidance in Schools*, ERO’s 2013 systemic overview, *Careers Information, Advice, Guidance and Education (CIAGE) in Secondary Schools*, highlights the big picture of what will be required in schools; and hints at the significant systemic challenge in achieving this. In terms of implementation of this change, my critical questions are:

- Who will lead this critical change within the schools? If it is the careers staff, what skills and training do they require to do so? What frameworks will assist them?
- What would be the new role for careers practitioners in schools and how will they best develop the new map for career education that is required?

This paper is being written at an already interesting time of change for the education and careers milieu in New Zealand. The recent merger of Career New Zealand into TEC, the shutting down of Career Development courses at Auckland University of Technology, the work being done by the Career Development Association of New Zealand (CDANZ) on professional standards for career development practitioners and how this might impact those career practitioners in schools, and the changes in education with more schools being upgraded to, or built for, Flexible Learning Spaces to facilitate and accommodate the drive for a more innovative, collaborative and inclusive style of teaching and learning. Furthermore, the Labour Government’s decision to shut down or transition Charter schools back into the state system has caused much social debate. My own opinion is that it is in these schools, and perhaps private and special character schools that shifts in practice, and more innovative approaches to learning could occur more readily as they are often less constrained than mainstream schools. Charter schools, labelled as 'Partnership Schools' or 'Kura Hourua', were, until recently, governed by the Education Amendment Act 2013, and received government funding similar to state schools but were subject to fewer rules and regulations from the Ministry of Education. It is interesting to me that where governments are slow in taking the lead on education and career, communities rally together to find innovative ways to move forward. Several international innovative ideas/new ways of thinking around education and careers, (of which P21 – Partnership for 21st century Learning, and UDL - Universal Design for Learning, are examples), have evolved because of the constraints of government, and have followed similar methodology when designing curriculum: engaging with community, including career practitioners, industry and education experts, future thinkers, academics, and the very people affected by the education system, the young people, to develop a future-based, student-centred curriculum. However, the risk with community-driven initiatives is that they are not always sustainable as they are vulnerable to

changes in funding and government, as we have experienced more recently. And I think it is because of this and previously mentioned commentary relating to the efficacy of the current school curriculum and the system within which it functions that we are experiencing the latest education reform led by the Labour Government in New Zealand. My hope is that career education will be integral to this reform, rather than an 'add on' or afterthought.

A call for change

The combination of the NAGs, NC and Benchmarks should be the basis for sound career education in our schools. However, reports and commentary indicate that career education in NZ schools are disparate in meeting the career development needs of students and indicate a clear need for change. Why is this? My sense is that:

- although the NAGs and NC include broad career development goals and guidelines, there is no clear, national vision for career development and more specifically career education in NZ
- without a clear national vision/directive, schools are inconsistent in their approach, and sometimes attitude, to career education and those who run these programmes
- schools are not resourced adequately (lack of time, expertise, funding) to implement effective, theoretically-driven career development strategies
- there is resistance to change

The New Zealand's Labour Government education reform strategies have as their vision for education:

"a high quality, fair, and inclusive education system that provides all New Zealanders with learning opportunities and prepares them for the future. To meet these aspirations our education system needs to change to meet the needs of the 21st century. As the way we live, and work continues to change rapidly, so too do the demands we place on our education system".

To realise this vision, a three-year work programme, which includes an education summit, and wider public consultation was initiated by the Minister of Education and includes, amongst others, a review of Tomorrow's Schools in terms of governance, management and administration of the schooling system to respond to the education needs of the future, and conversations about strengthening NCEA. Ozga (2004), states that policy-makers in Scotland are increasingly expecting researchers and practitioners to be active in the knowledge transfer process. In other words, those involved in research, practice, and policy, share their knowledge for a better outcome. She also alludes, however, that realistically practitioners in the system are more likely to be "recipients of research, rather than interpreters or producers of actionable knowledge" (p2), which, translated into the NZ system, could be a reason why practitioners may be reluctant to, or feel unable to adequately implement programmes as these have been 'imposed upon' them without any input from themselves. I am, however, encouraged by the intent of the government to involve all stakeholders, including those involved in research and practice, and I will certainly be keeping a close eye on, and contributing to, consultation phases as it impacts my own professional practice, and that of careers education and the education system in which we practice. By intentionally being part of the process, there is less of a sense of 'imposition' and rather a sense of 'contribution'.

Also encouraging, was the Tertiary Education Commission's (TEC), through their Careers Directorate, (2017/early 2018) workshops with a range of stakeholders to develop a careers system strategy for 21st century New Zealand. I was fortunate to be part of these workshops and was particularly

pleased that one of the overarching aims of developing this strategy was to put in place a system that would shift the learner/unemployed/employer/etc from a point of “I don’t know” to “I am confident”. Although this consultation was at the early stages of development, and likely to be assimilated into the education reform consultation, there was congruence with career development theory and research around constructs such as self-awareness, reflection, agency, action, with a strong emphasis on the need for professional facilitation.

The time is right for change.

Critical review

The notion of applying holistic career development principles to career education is not new to New Zealand (NZ). Neither are the conversations around preparing young people for the 21st century world of work. Conversations heightened in New Zealand (NZ) since the television series fronted by Nigel Latta and John Campbell in 2017, 'What Next'; and the earlier American documentary film, *Most Likely to Succeed* (2015) discussing education and curriculum reform in 21st century America. Furthermore, are articles, research papers, reports and commentary highlighting the challenge and need for preparing young people for an unknown future.

In today's world, we face unprecedented disruption in the way we live, work, teach and learn. On the one hand the surge of scientific and technological development, including the development of artificial intelligence, automation and biotechnology which are challenging our assumptions of how we relate to the world. On the other hand, political and social instability have prompted the displacement and migration of people disrupting the family nucleus, and how and where we live, learn and work. Our world is one where change is a constant truth, and with that, a certain tension.

We know through history that nations and individuals do indeed adapt to change. The industrial revolution, the advent of and exponential changes in technology, K2, global financial crises, natural disasters, wars, radical change in government, are all examples of events that have challenged humankind. These disruptions to our status quo, although 'unnerving', provide an opportunity to view life and work with fresh eyes and, depending on the event and their preparedness for such an event, individuals (and nations) find themselves either responding or reacting. It is no surprise that if one is prepared, transition is a little less reactive, and a bit more responsive.

One's ability to respond can be illustrated using the VUCA model for preparedness, which is useful when considering career development strategies in a changing world. The model was initially developed by the American military as a strategic model for preparedness and is adopted by leaders across business to develop and measure leadership readiness in an ever-changing world. The VUCA model depicts four distinct challenges and responses (see Figure 2).

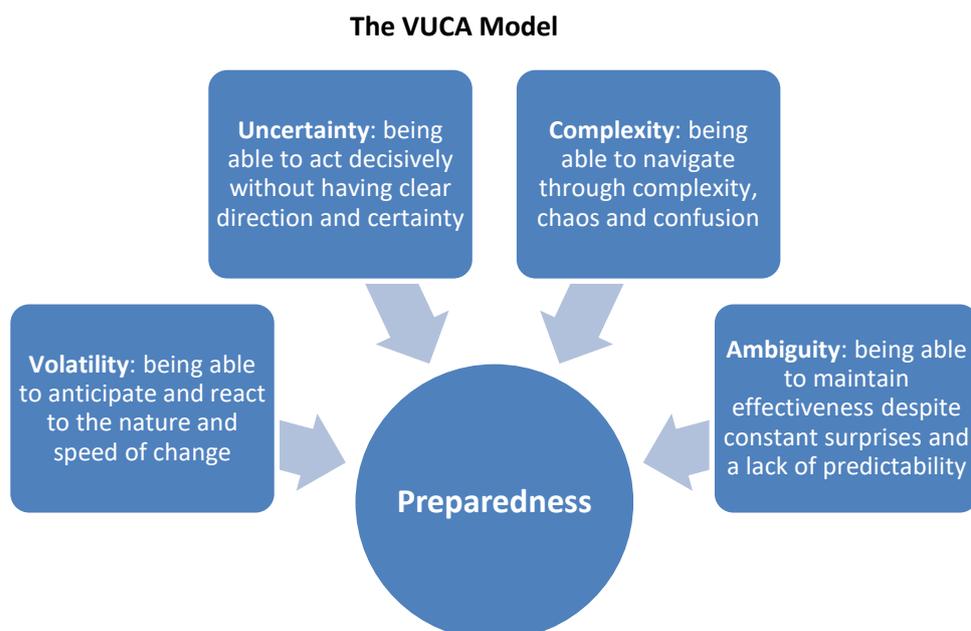


Figure 2 Illustration of the VUCA Model for preparedness first developed by USA military

Volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity are by no means new concepts – they are part of life, work and business. However, it is one's ability to be prepared, responsive and agile under these conditions that is becoming a crucial factor of career success in the 21st century world of work. This raises two considerations: How might schools develop preparedness in their young people to anticipate and respond to the accelerated pace of change, the complexity and unpredictability of the changing world of work, and the uncertainty this milieu brings. Conversely, schools as entities need to reflect upon their own preparedness in a volatile, complex, ambiguous and uncertain system. Right now, New Zealand schools are facing change with the Government's intention to reform New Zealand's Education system. The Minister's vision statement for this reform "for the education portfolio [to be] a high quality, fair, and inclusive education system that provides all New Zealanders with learning opportunities and prepares them for the future. To meet these aspirations our education system needs to change to meet the needs of the 21st century. As the way we live, and work continues to change rapidly, so too do the demands we place on our education system. This will involve broad engagement and getting broad support about objectives then setting out clear strategies to work towards achieving them".

In her book, *The Future of Thinking: Learning Institutions in a Digital Age, and The New Education*, Davidson (2011) posits that though the current cohort of children entering primary school will end up working in non-traditional careers, provision for this in our schooling systems are not adequate. Our lives outside of the classroom are changing rapidly (at home, in the workplace, technologically); yet our classrooms in NZ overall, and bound within that, our careers education, remain mostly caught in an earlier era (ERO, 2006, 2012, Vaughan & Gardiner, 2007). Davidson (p58) asks, "are the educational areas on which we are placing our attention a good match with the world for which we should be preparing our children?" Taking this further, is current career development practice in New Zealand schools a good match with the world for which we are preparing our children? In her research, Davidson examines the work of several educators across schools and higher education in the United States of America (USA) who are reframing their classrooms in acknowledgement of the changes in the world of work; integrating within their teaching and learning key 21st century skills such as creativity, collaboration, and adaptability.

The emphasis of education and career practice in the 20th and early 21st century was (and still is to some extent) applied to 'life-long' job attainment, and career advancement within organisations. The education system (the teaching and learning as well as the built environment) that supports this is essentially based on developing citizens to fit roles. Twentieth century career counselling was thus perceived as a straight-forward, problem-solving process of matching knowledge about work-self (skills and attributes) to the world of work, characterised using quantitative assessment, diagnostic tools and predictability; examples of which are Frank Parson's trait-factor approach, and Holland's career interest assessment. In a rapidly changing and unpredictable world (VUCA), some calling it the fourth industrial revolution (Schwab 2016, Hirschi 2014), using quantitative methods alone, without dialogue to make sense of the quantitative assessment results, in other words considering the assessment alongside the person's whole system, can be deficient, and misguided. "A qualitative interpretation of quantitative assessment would address Savickas' (1993) call for career assessment to move from scores to stories" (Watson and MacMahon, 2015, p7). Watson and MacMahon, and indeed, Savickas, are not rejecting scores, but rather emphasise that the 'unpacking' of the story and context behind the score is just as important as the score. As society shifts from a very linear approach to career, having 'life-long jobs', and 'climbing the career-ladder' to boundaryless and protean careers which are exemplified by a more mobile workforce, changing jobs several times in a

lifetime to fit the person-context, there is a need for a more holistic, agentic approach to career education. One which nurtures the young person's ability to adapt to an ever-changing, unpredictable world of work.

It is important to emphasise here Hall's (2004) concept of protean careers as it illustrates for me 21st century career. One that is ever-evolving and requires the individual too, to be 'ever-evolving', in other words, adaptable. The protean career is one that is self-directed and values-driven, meaning that the individual both takes responsibility and has the power to shape the form his or her career takes. "According to Hall and Moss ... the ingredients of success changes from know-how to learn-how, from job security to employability, and from 'work self' to 'whole self'" Inkson, Dries & Arnold (2014, p125). Arthur, Khapova & Richardson (2017) in their book, *An Intelligent Career*, call for an understanding of the changing nature of work, of appreciating new career possibilities, and more dynamic work arrangements, and navigating work-life with an authenticity, calling for better understanding of self and the world in which we live. Although Hall emphasises adaptability as a key skill in shaping or forming one's career, Arthur, Khapova & Richardson (2017) emphasise self-identity as one of the key tenets of adaptability. Similarly, Hughes, Law & Meijers (2017) perceive that self-awareness and self-direction are pre-requisites for 21st century skills of active citizenship, intrinsic motivation, collaboration (ability to work with others), proactive adaptability and resilience to changing circumstances. Hence, understanding self and being adaptable are interconnected. As the individual becomes more self-aware, so they can adapt and shape career; conversely, the more the individual 'practices' career adaptability, so their self-awareness and confidence to adapt develops. Important considerations as we reflect on preparing our young people for future career.

Even so, the notion of adaptability is a 'big ask' for some people who find change a challenge. How do they navigate 21st century expectations?

The VUCA model, and Carpenter (2008, 2010), Davidson (2011), Arthur, Khapova & Richardson (2017), Hughes, Law & Meijers (2017) commentary on some of the competencies needed to adapt to and navigate 21st century world of work discussed above, hints at how one should respond in a dynamic world. From this it is clear that a strong sense of self alongside key career competencies are needed to be more agile. How do young people develop their understanding of self? More so, how might the education system, and more specifically the young person's experience of career education and learning, help to shape or form their identity and furthermore, their ability to independently, meaningfully and actively navigate 21st century career?

Student identity

Who am I, and what do I need to know, do and be to be successful in this world?

One of the key tasks (consciously and sub-consciously) of young people in their schooling years is developing identity (*who am I*) – their possible self (who I want to be). Super's (1990, 1991) notion of self is the individual's belief that their identity (and intertwined within that, their career identity) is a product of how they see themselves. Therefore, any decision-making will be influenced by their idea of self. Super also introduces vocational development stages which recognize the influence of lifestyle factors and different roles people have (and how much importance they place on these roles and factors at different times), and the changes they experience as they mature (move from one stage to the other).

Ages and stages

As outlined in the Life Rainbow in Figure 3, Super illustrates five major stages of career development, each one characterized by several developmental tasks. Although these life stages and the associated ages may seem linear, and it was certainly true in Super's initial theory, he acknowledges that life stages can occur and reoccur at different times depending on context and change over time (life roles, and environmental, situational, and personal determinants), a notion congruent with several constructivist theories such as Patton & McMahon's Systems Theory Framework, Savickas' Life Design, and so on.

Young people accessing career education in New Zealand schools tend to fall into the Growth and Exploration stages.

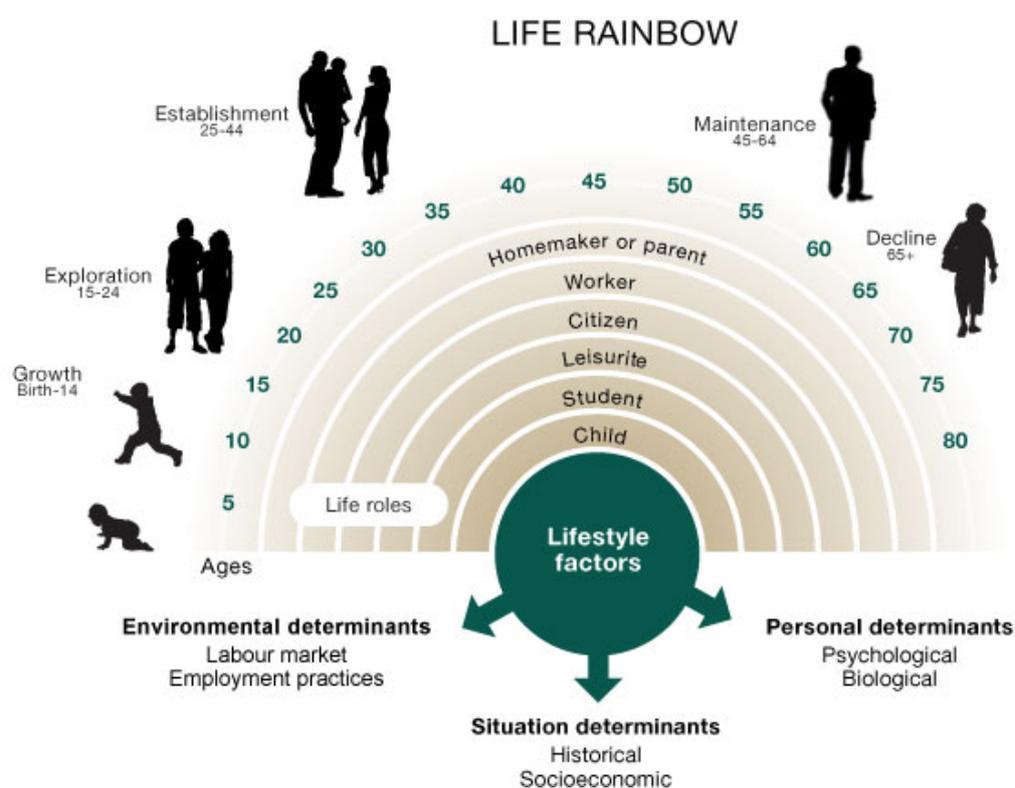


Figure 3: Image of Super's Life Span Life Space career development theory

The Growth stage from birth to 14 (early childhood to early secondary), although spanning through some significant developmental stages, is seen as the period where children develop their capabilities, attitudes, and interests, and start forming some understanding of the world from the people around them. In the latter part of this stage children begin to think about their possible future, start to assert a level of personal control over their own lives, and acquire work habits and attitudes through their learning (at home and school).

In the Exploration stage from around age 15-24 (senior secondary to early adulthood), young people are working at gaining a deeper understanding of themselves and finding their place in the world of work. It is a critical and often anxious time in the young person's life. Through their learning (at

school and elsewhere, including social connections), work experience, and hobbies, they try to identify their interests and capabilities and figure out where and how they fit in the world. It is here that they start to form their identity, crystalize career preferences, and develop and plan tentative career preferences. As they begin the process of implementing their career preference, they also consider further education and finding work that fits their career preference.

I think Carpenter's (2008, 2011) reference to the young person's emerging self (growing, learning, developing) and Markus and Nurius' (1986) possible self (the person they can see themselves being) describes well the young person's development at these stages. From a very young age they are presented with questions about possible selves; "What do you want to be when you grow up?" to the very definite and often daunting "Have you decided yet what you are going to do after school?"

As the young person in the growth and exploration stages are developing their possible selves, they are developing identity. This identity is moulded by all the influences within their system (system of influence). Learning does not only occur through school subjects, but also through cultural, sport, religious affiliations, social connections and activities, parents and other adults, media and so on – context and identity (self) are thus inextricably intertwined. But before we delve into the students' system of influence, it is important to discuss the 'possible selves' construct and its relationship to student identity and motivation.

Possible selves

"I want to be me!" Pip, a student, 2017

Markus and Nurius (1986, p1) explain 'possible-selves' to represent the individual's "ideas of what they might become [expected-self], what they would like to become [hoped-for-self], and what they are afraid of becoming [feared-self], and thus provide a powerful link between cognition and motivation". It is informed by the person's context – past and expected. Thus, given the opportunity to examine and reflect upon their possible selves (expected, hoped-for, and feared), students begin to view learning as a pathway to their aspirations (their hoped-for selves), and a way of avoiding their feared possible selves from transpiring. Both hoped-for and feared selves can motivate students to act, for very different reasons. The focus on possible-selves, for me, pivots on both "what I can/want *to do*" and "what I can/want *to be*" which takes on a more holistic approach to future. I think this is what Markus and Nurius intended in their explanation of possible-selves above. Pip's quote, "I want to be me", elicits further food for thought. Although I believe this might have been a throwaway line after constant questioning by family and friends with the age-old question "what do you want to be when you grow up?" I think her answer is loaded with possibility. Who is this possible "me" now and what would Pip need as she develops her future "me". Surprisingly, Pip is a six-year-old and in Year 2, exceptionally curious, and creative in her thinking and drawing, and hails from a line of creative ancestry. Imagine the possibility if this creativity and curiosity, and emerging sense of self is encouraged, nurtured, and supported. Pip's world as she transitions in to the workplace in 2029 will certainly look different to what it is now. So, standing firm on "being me" and being supported and nurtured to understand and develop her authentic future "me" (hoped-for self) will enable Pip to meaningfully manage her relationship with her system of influence as she navigates life and career. So, by nurturing her 'possible-self' we help build a "bridge to [her] future", Martz' (2001, p131), and in-so-doing help develop what Savickas and Porfeli refer to as "adaptabilities" (2012) in other words, the 4 Cs: being *Concerned* for her vocational future, taking *Control* of preparing for her vocational future, being genuinely *Curious* about her possible self and future, and the *Confidence* to pursue her aspirations (i.e. hoped-for self). By focusing positively on possible

selves, learning takes on a personal relevance – where students are intrinsically motivated to learn (and more-so, have a desire to continue to learn), set goals (and a drive to achieve them), and tackle challenging (and sometimes mundane) tasks when knowing the purpose or point of it all. Practitioners and teachers play a significant role in facilitating this, by helping *all* students (no matter their background or ability) make the connections between their experiences, their ideas and hopes of 'possible self' and their learning.

Additionally, it is important to note that just as a strong hoped-for self can inspire motivation, a strong feared-self can inhibit the student's motivation if the feared self is seen as inevitable and not balanced by an achievable hoped-for self. "I might as well give up ..." It is thus imperative that practitioners, teachers and parents understand and identify this tension in students, and gently work with them, without bias, through their fears, as, without this balance (between fear and possibility), feared selves can be overwhelming for students, negatively impacting their performance and ultimately their ability to enjoy career success. Furthermore, so can destructive (as opposed to constructive) feedback to students regarding hoped-for selves (aspirations). This feedback is often expressed with good intentions ("I only want what is best for you") or are just throw-away statements in the moment and thus not meant to be taken seriously; nonetheless, during these early exploration stages where the student's system of influence is strongest, these words and actions (without dialogue for clarification) are just as quickly internalised by the student with sometimes profound and lasting effects on their self-esteem (who I am, how I see myself, and how I perceive others see me), self-efficacy (what I can do and who I can be), motivation and future decision-making. Examples of aspiration destroyers are numerous and many of us need not dig deep to recall an adult, or friend who, through their words or actions, consciously or sub-consciously, intentionally or unintentionally, dashed our hopes of who we could or wanted to be.



Figure 4 Examples of aspiration destroyers

In my role as careers advisor, a student came to see me about changing subjects because her teacher had said, "You are bringing our average down, perhaps you might want to consider taking another subject". The student was understandably mortified as she felt she was letting the whole class down, but more-so, she felt disappointed as taking the subject was a critical ingredient in realising her hoped-for self. Fortunately, after some dialogue, the teacher had a better understanding of the student's aspirations, and so they came to an arrangement which included peer-tutoring. A follow-up session with the student later in the term revealed a motivated student, connected to her learning and who aspired to achieving an endorsement. Had this dialogue not occurred, I wonder what might have been the outcome?

System of influence – a look at the Systems Theory Framework

Ubuntu – I am who I am, because of who we all are...¹

The traditional African philosophy, Ubuntu, resonates with my worldview and practice not only because I am from Africa, but also because it offers an understanding of ourselves (our emerging and possible selves) in relation to the world. This does not mean the elevation of community above the individual, as some commentators believe it to mean (Louw 1998, Marx 2002), but rather acknowledging the interconnectedness of the individual within their context and how this relationship enhances (or not) self. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, South African Nobel Laureate explains Ubuntu as:

"I am who I am, because of who we all are ... [it is] the essence of being human. It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and is inextricably bound up in yours. I am human because I belong. It speaks about wholeness; it speaks about compassion." Tutu (2004, p26)

Patton and McMahon developed the Systems Theory Framework (STF) as a conceptual and practical guide for career interventions. It is not an approach as such, but rather provides a theoretical overview of a range of converging career development theories. The STF is subjective, placing the individual at the centre of a dynamic, relational system. Ubuntu is a philosophy which has applicability as an analogy for the STF which also acknowledges the multi-directionality and interconnectedness of influence between the individual and their social, environmental and societal systems – their relationship with and within their context. Patton (2005, p40) goes on to explain that "the individual is an open system recursively interacting with and within multiple systems". Additionally, any change that occurs in one part of the system, or even within a system itself, can have a causal effect on other parts of the system, "and individuals and their systems will experience their own recursiveness" (Patton & McMahon, 2014, p255).

I feel that as a career practitioner (and teacher) it is important to understand and to integrate this understanding of systems into practice so that we see the 'whole' person in front of us, "I see you, and I see everything and everyone that has come before you". By understanding the student's aspirations in the example in the section above, the career practitioner was able to facilitate a dialogue, which ensured that the teacher was more aware of the student's needs and thus more willing to offer support. By applying the STF (see Figure 5) to practice, we recognise each individual's unique set of characteristics - their gender, ethnicity, age, health, beliefs and so on (their intrapersonal system). Some of these characteristics are largely unchangeable by their nature, and others are influenced by the context in which the individual finds themselves. These contextual influences (their social system) include for example, the influence of peers, family, teachers and the

¹ Unknown author

media. The individual is also influenced, although not always directly, by a much broader system (their environmental-societal system). These environmental-societal influences may include the individual’s socio-economic status and geographical location, globalisation, historical trends, political decisions, safety and security, employment market, and so on. Although the environmental-societal system is usually out of the individual’s control, it can have a profound influence on the individual’s life and career decisions. The disruption of the Christchurch earthquakes to my own system was profound, making life decisions I might (or might not) have made otherwise.

Confounding this, the systems also affect the individual at different stages of their lives (change over time). “The past is inextricably entwined with the present, and together past and present shape the future” (Arthur & McMahon, 2005, p214). Within the individual’s systems and sub-systems (influences within the system) there are elements of recursiveness which, when one takes a closer look, can unearth key patterns influencing the individual’s decision-making. Notwithstanding this, chance events may also occur which add a further complexity. Although some might argue that students have not had much ‘life experience’ and thus negating the use of the STF in a career education context, I believe it is an assumption we cannot make. ‘Life experience’ does not merely equate to years, but rather the significant and seemingly less significant experiences and influences on their lives.

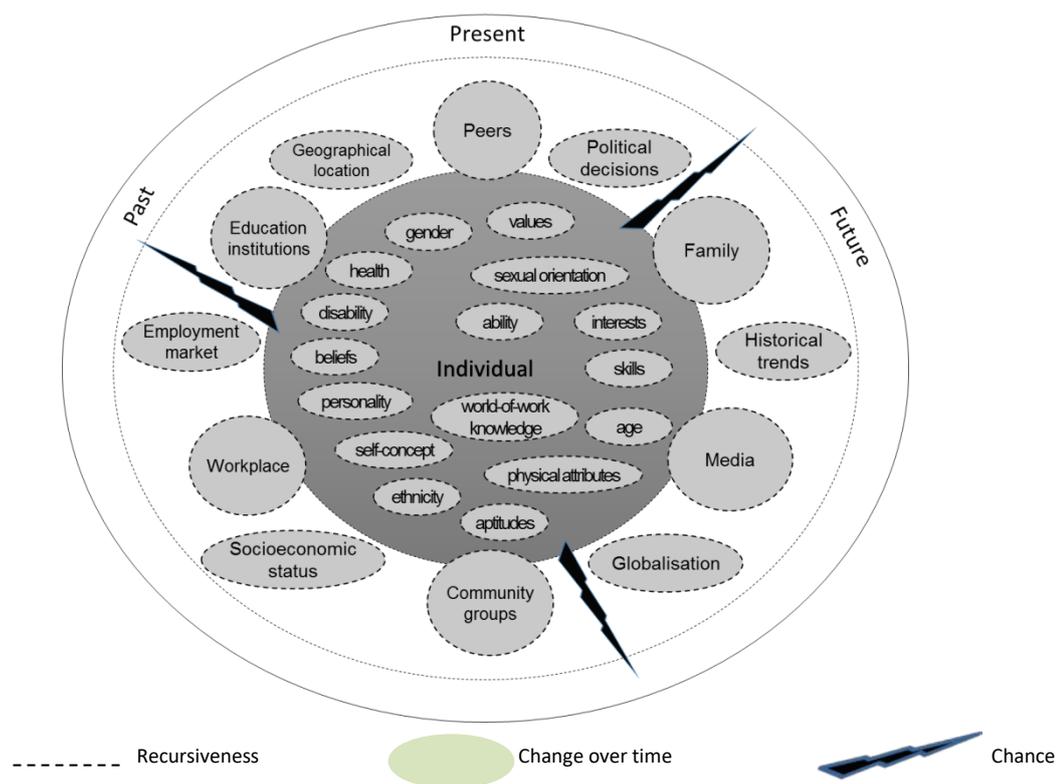


Figure 5 Systems Theory Framework. Taken from Patton, W., & McMahon, M. (2014)

Within the vast interconnected network of relationships within which individuals exist, order and meaning are created. Maturana (1978) and Gergan (1985) posit that what is known and understood by the individual “derives from interpersonal processes – what is learned in language or in other ways of understanding comes from relationships” (Cottone, 2007, p193). Furthermore, Cottone explains that “within a social group, what people come to believe together becomes absolutely true

to them within their community” (p193). A notion Gergen (1995, p273) refers to as “communities of shared intelligibility”. What people in one community may perceive as true may not be so in another community. The complexity arises when an individual is removed from their social group and must function in an entirely new community – a new set of social influences emerge within their system to be woven into their narrative.

Nonetheless, by using the STF as a lens on a young person’s narrative, we can view their unique selves holistically, *no matter their background*; and by ‘digging deeper’ we recognise the dynamic complexity in which they function. Furthermore, we can see more clearly the emergence of recursive patterns (the stories they tell themselves about self) which help us to better understand and assist them to develop their ‘emerging selves’, and the impact that variables might have on their vision of their ‘possible selves’. Young people are susceptible to their influences, the opinions of those around them, and the expectations others might have of them – positive or negative. It is the rhetoric they choose to assimilate that directly influences not only their career choices, but their belief of what they might or might not be able to do and be (self-belief).

Proponents of congruency believe that choosing a career direction based upon the expectations of others, rather than one’s sense of self and aspirations, directly impacts career satisfaction. However, it is also argued that having the self-confidence and ability (self-efficacy) to redefine and adapt one’s job for a better fit is possible. Inkson, Dries & Arnold (2014, p158) refer to Wresniewski and Dutton’s (2001) work on job-crafting as “the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work”, which means that one’s career satisfaction and congruence can change over time by shaping work for a better ‘person-fit’. A shift from Parsons’ Trait and Factor Theory, Holland’s Vocational Personality Theory, and Schein’s Career Anchors which, by and large, focus on the person (self) and their fit to work. Nevertheless, “the fit of individual to organization or job, as well as occupation [and I would say career], is important” (Inkson, Dries & Arnold, 2014, p160). Our role as educators (teachers, careers practitioners and parents) then, is “to help young people come to know their unique selves well enough to choose the paths to move forward into becoming the competent adults they desire to be ... [their possible selves]” (Carpenter, 2008), and to have the confidence to reinvent themselves in a changing world.

“Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime²”.

Our job is not to provide solutions (the fish), but to help young people develop their understanding of self and the world of work, and the skills they require to navigate through a VUCA world, information and expectations by parents, school, media, friends and so on, so that they are able to find solutions to their unique situation and act – giving them a sense of agency (teaching them to fish so that they can feed themselves for a lifetime). Nurturing the emerging self so that the inevitable “What are you going to do...” question is not met with anxiety, but with a sense of competence and confidence, in other words, agency. “I know myself and the world of work, this is what I want to do and be, I have a plan to get there, and the agility to re-evaluate and change if and as I need to”, echoing the aims of the OECD’s Future of Education and Skills: Education 2030 tagline, *“It is about acting rather than to be acted upon ...”* (see p1 of this paper).

So, how can we best help young people develop (self) identity and career competencies to be the agile decision-makers in a VUCA world?

² Origin unknown

Kuijpers, Meijers, and Gundy (2011, 2013), Kuijpers and Meijers (2012), and Draaisma, Meijers and Kuijpers (2016) suggest that a learning environment that prepares students for a precarious labour market should focus on the development of career competencies and a career identity. Key to this is dialogue (talking), as opposed to an information transfer and monologue approach (telling). For there to be any benefit of education (and career education) to young people, constructive conversations about self and developing self-knowledge and the world of work need to be integrated into their learning – both in the classroom as part of their subject content, and through focussed career interventions. Career is thus part of, rather than separate to, their learning. The learning environment should be such that career decision-making does not come as a surprise to the young person towards the end of their schooling, but rather be a journey of clarity – of self and of career, engendering in the young person a sense of life-long learning. A constructivist approach(s), allowing for more holistic, meaningful learning and career interventions, considering the young person and their context (their system of influence) has applicability as it responds well to the needs of our changing world - new technologies, globalisation, the changing world of work, and so on.

A constructivist approach to learning and career practice in schools

A constructivist approach acknowledges the student's interconnectedness with the world around them; their sense of relationship with the world, and the meaning derived from these relationships. As discussed earlier, we are a part of, and not separate to, the influences of social and environmental-societal systems. Thus, the tools and techniques used in 'traditional' career practice in schools, for example the use of Holland's 'vocational personality' system, are valuable as a starting point for meaningful, constructivist dialogue, rather than merely arriving at an objective outcome such as a job title, without further dialogical exploration. Patton and McMahon (2006) concur, explaining that career counselling within a constructivist worldview does not necessarily preclude traditional positivist approaches, but rather "career counsellors are likely to operate in a continuum of practice between these positions". Patton and McMahon (2006) suggest the framework developed by McMahon, Adams and Lim (2002, p23), illustrating the influence of the logical-positivist and constructivist worldviews on career counselling, to be a useful tool for career practice. This is an important assertion, as I believe it provides a basis for approaching both career practice and learning in schools. Just as we acknowledge the student's interconnectedness within their system, so too must we acknowledge the interconnectedness of career and learning as part of its own system, by working towards an integrated approach. A framework must thus consider the essence of constructivist career development and leaning. That "knowledge is constructed by learners as they attempt to make sense of their experiences" (Driscoll, 2005, p387). This means all knowledge – knowledge of self, and the world, is not only attained through formal learning experiences, but rather accounting for all learning experiences. The framework Patton and McMahon refer to is thus indeed useful as a learning and reflection tool for career practitioners. For it to be useful within the context of career education and learning, I have adapted it to illustrate the influence of logical-positivist and constructivist worldviews on career and learning practice, and how constructivism can be used to inform a "career-learning environment" (Draaisma, Meijers, Kuijpers, 2017, p1). I elaborate on this further by explaining the constructivist approach to learning, to career development and its application in a bi-cultural and multi-cultural setting. Later in this paper I expand on this further by providing a career-learning framework for developing students' 'possible selves' in a 'protean' world.

Shifting from a logical-positivist to a constructivist approach to career development and learning

| Elements career development and learning | Logical-positivist learning | Logical-positivist career practice | Constructivist career-learning environment |
|---|--|--|--|
| Role of the student | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passive responder – “I don’t know – tell me” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passive responder – “I don’t know – tell me” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participant “I am curious ...” |
| Role of the teacher and careers practitioner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher as expert – “I know best” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioner as expert – “I know best” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Let’s do this together” • Knowledgeable facilitator • Interested, curious and tentative inquirer • Respectful listener • Tentative observer |
| Relationship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher-directed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioner dominated | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative • Interactive • Mutual involvement |
| Place of assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantifiable • Determines learning outcomes • Facts valued | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective • Assessment scored and reported by expert – “Test and tell’ approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjectivity is valued • Story and meaning – where meaning is co-constructed • Both feelings, ideas, thoughts and facts are valued |
| Use of information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on facts provided by the expert (teacher) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provided by expert (practitioner) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information-seeking process is emphasised • Student becomes the information-gatherer • Facilitator provides key information |
| Nature of knowledge and learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge is imparted by the subject expert • Subject-specific knowledge is received, stored and repeated by the student in | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge is imparted by expert • Problem-solving approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge is imparted, but as part of the learning journey (over time), rather than as the outcome • All knowledge and learning |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | assessment | | are integrated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally responsive • Use of diverse methods that are interpreted and investigated to construct and internalise knowledge • Student’s curiosity and intrinsic motivation is nurtured • Language is critical to understanding and creating knowledge |
| Wholes and parts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject-specific | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on traits such as personality, ability and interests • Some attention to context • Work and life viewed as separate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic approach – subjective experiences and feelings are valued as part of the learning • Applied and integrated knowledge • Context is important • Work and life viewed as a whole |
| The process of learning and career | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher-led • Sequential • Assessment determines learning • Student seeks short-term strategies to get through tasks and assessments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioner driven • Sequential • Objective outcome expectation e.g possible job title • Student seeks answers, practitioner provides solutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator/practitioner enters the student’s space through dialogue • Guided discovery • Seek deeper understanding – “take a closer look” • Expectation of the student to drive change/learning • Inspires life-long learning |

Table 1 - Shifting from a logical-positivist to a constructivist approach to career development and learning. Adapted from Table 1.1, McMahon, Adams and Lim, 2002, p23.

A constructivist approach to learning

This section extends on Table 1, briefly outlining constructivist learning and how this approach encourages the development of 21st century career competencies and nurtures the students emerging self as they aspire to possible selves.

Although this paper did not start out with a focus on pedagogy, it acknowledges the parallels between, and the dynamic, interconnected relationship of learning (and teaching) and career. In their most recent report, *Teachers as Designers of Learning Environments: The importance of Innovative Pedagogies*, for the OECD, Paniagua and Istance (2018) assert that “the strong focus on learners acquiring a diverse set of [21st century] competencies require a correspondingly strong focus on pedagogy” (p20). I consider this report important as it provides a snapshot of innovative pedagogies adopted around the world and can be used as a means of reflecting upon and adapting current practice.

In its simplest form, in a constructivist classroom, learning happens in context (student-centred “who am I in this learning”), it supports students in identifying and pursuing their learning goals, it includes meaningful activity and allows students to apply acquired knowledge as part of the learning process. Students are not passive in this process but are instead actively involved in determining what their learning needs are, and how those needs can best be met. It is an approach that engages the student; one that brings meaning to learning, and that answers their question: “what is the point?”

Recently I observed an example of inquiry learning and teaching. The assertion below taken from the New Zealand Curriculum (p34), for me, encapsulates the intent of inquiry learning, and is, constructivist. I have highlighted words and phrases that reflect this assertion.

*Students learn most effectively when they **understand what they are learning, why they are learning it, and how they will be able to use their new learning**. Effective teachers **stimulate the curiosity** of their students, require them to search for relevant information and ideas, and **challenge** them to use or **apply what they discover in new contexts** or in new ways. They look for opportunities to **involve students’ directly** in decisions relating to their own learning. This **encourages** them to see that what they are doing as **relevant** and to take greater **ownership of their own learning**.*

I observed the senior leadership team leading this practice through intentional, timetabled professional development time, and the teachers embracing it to inform and evaluate their own practice, and integrate this into their classes. I was able to see the effects of this approach in the way the students (overall) approached their career development, and their ability to engage (comfortably) in constructive career conversations with me. There is much to be said for leadership driving quality learning. So, the emphasis here is not only inquiry from a student perspective, but also teachers modelling this in their own practice, taking the form of reflective practice and reflexivity.

Conversely, a criticism often articulated of constructivist learning is its perceived emphasis on ‘soft skills’ to the detriment of content. It is important to note here that the constructive approach to learning does not preclude direct information giving (teaching and curriculum), as Paniagua and Istance (2018) emphasise, “both 21st century competencies and a deep understanding of content knowledge are needed” (p20). Delivering key subject content is vital, but it is how much, how this is done, and when the teacher ‘steps back’, that is significant.

“It is obvious that the teacher as organizer remains indispensable in order to create the situations and construct the initial devices which present useful problems to the child. Secondly, he [the teacher] is needed to provide counter-examples that compel reflection and reconsideration of over-hasty solutions. What is desired is that the teacher cease being a lecturer, satisfied with transmitting ready-made solutions; his [the teacher’s] role should rather be that of a mentor stimulating initiative and research” (Piaget, 1973, p16).

Critical thinking, independent and meaningful learning will occur when the teacher steps out of the ‘teaching/instructing’ role and into the ‘facilitator’ role providing guidance, rather than acting as the expert.

For students to be able to make sense of their learning, they must be encouraged to ask probing questions which stimulates deeper thinking and understanding, and the ability to argue for and against points, rather than merely reciting facts. Because active participation and social negotiation is integral to constructivist learning, collaboration becomes a critical part of the learning, exposing the students to multiple perspectives, allowing students to gain new knowledge, insights and solutions which may not have been reached if they were working alone. Furthermore, constructivism encourages students to take ownership of their learning through the knowledge-building process (knowledge of self and content), encouraging self-awareness. Price-Mitchell (2015) in her article explaining metacognition, asserts that “self-awareness plays a critical role in improved learning because it helps students become more efficient at focusing on what they still need to learn ... ” and, furthermore, “with greater awareness of how they [best] acquire knowledge [in other words reflect on how they learn], students learn to regulate their behaviour to optimize learning, [and] they begin to see how their strengths and weaknesses affect how they perform”. So, in their act of practicing metacognition, they are reflective and reflexive, and begin to make sense of who they are, and how best they learn. Hence, the mechanisms must be in place for this to occur meaningfully, for example through curriculum design and delivery, resources, and environment.

There are several international curriculum design models which have relevance to New Zealand of which the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is one. I think it useful to discuss the UDL here as it is a research-based curriculum design framework that addresses the diverse learning needs of students and illustrates for me an approach that embraces a constructivist worldview. Whereas our traditional, or logical-positivist worldview of education focusses on content and performance (“what I know”), the UDL approach helps students’ master learning itself, in other words, to become expert learners. It is this mastery of learning that is, and will become, more critical to 21st century career.

Broken down into parts helps us to understand the framework’s intent and usefulness in the learning environment and, indeed career development practice. By ‘universal’ it means that it can be used and understood by all, considering the uniqueness of each student (their strengths, needs, background and so on – their context). ‘Learning’, from a neuroscience perspective, happens through three networks in the brain; the affective network (the ‘why’ of learning), the recognition network (the ‘what’ of learning), and the strategic network (the ‘how’ of learning). Because learning is not just one entity, and because learning happens differently for each student, the curriculum needs to be designed in an inclusive and flexible way to accommodate the variability of learners. One approach does not fit all.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

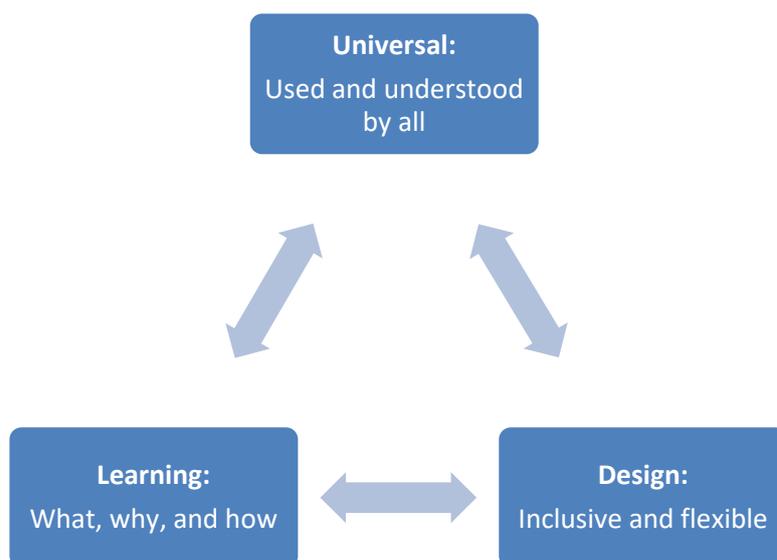


Figure 6 Elements of the Universal Design for Learning

Interestingly, it is an approach that has very recently been encouraged by the Ministry of Education as one that may assist educators realise the vision of the New Zealand Curriculum. Considering this, Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI) has developed a guide which introduces this approach within a New Zealand context. I am encouraged by this as the UDL is an approach that encompasses the strategies needed to make learning more meaningful for students as they develop their possible selves.

Below (Table 2) is a snapshot of the UDL illustrating the framework's principles and the mechanisms that could be used to allow students to optimise their learning. In brief:

- by providing *multiple means of engagement* we can develop purposeful, motivated students. CAST provide a useful tool to assist educators with strategies to engage students, acknowledging their emotional triggers.³
- providing a range of activities or *means of representation* should stimulate the student's interest and motivation for learning, developing resourceful, knowledgeable students. Examples could include digital technologies, interactive tools, field trips, work experience, expert talks, and so on.
- by providing *multiple means of action (doing) and expression (showing)*, in other words allowing students to choose how they express what they know (assessment), we can develop strategic, goal-directed students. Since the adoption of NCEA, in my own experience, I have noticed very distinct groups of strategic, goal-directed students. One group strategically accumulating credits (in whatever way – often without a concern for the content of those credits) to achieve the minimum to 'pass'. The other, strategically selecting the 'easy options' to accumulate credits, while other students consider subject choices and attainment of endorsements to secure entry into further study. These are not the 'strategic,

³ <http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/assets/inclusive-education/UDL-emotional-triggers.pdf>

goal-directed' abilities UDL are encouraging – it is rather demonstrating their understanding of their learning through means congruent with their knowledge of self.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

| UDL Principles | Learning | Mechanism | Aim |
|--|---|---|--|
| Provide multiple means of engagement | This principle is concerned with students' motivation to learn (" <i>why</i> I learn") | When students feel safe and supported in their learning, they become engaged, focused learners, who are able to self-regulate, and persist and sustain their learning efforts. | To develop purposeful, motivated students who feel connected to their learning |
| Provide multiple means of representation | This principle is concerned with how students recognise and make sense of information (" <i>what</i> I learn") | Because students are unique, and thus perceive and understand information differently, it is essential to present information in multiple ways/pedagogical approaches (e.g. blended-learning, experiential learning, discussion-based teaching, and so on). | To develop resourceful and knowledgeable students |
| Provide multiple means of action and expression | This principle is concerned with how students plan, organise, create and demonstrate understanding (" <i>how</i> I show what I know") | Similarly, because students are unique, offering flexible and supported options to prepare for, and demonstrate learning will reduce perceived barriers. | To develop strategic, goal-directed students |

Table 2 Representation of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. Adapted from CAST and TKI information.

Thus, a strong curriculum design, aligned to constructivist principles, alongside career conversations (both in the classroom and through career interventions), and learning and assessment from a

constructivist worldview, not only encourages meaningful knowledge acquisition and assimilation (learning), and engagement, but also teaches skills critical to navigating future career.

A constructivist approach to career development

As it is in a constructivist classroom, how people know, as well as what they know - and the proactive participation of themselves and others to create change in their lives is distinctive in constructivist approaches to career development. Furthermore, Mahoney (2003, p4) suggests five basic themes/assumptions of constructivism: active agency, order, self, social-symbolic relatedness, and lifespan development" which illustrates constructivist career practice. One where the career practitioner as facilitator (co-creator) provides the student space to develop their 'possible selves'.

As mentioned above, a central tenet of constructivism is the acknowledgement that individuals are active participants and agents in their own lives – they are self-organising. Peavy (1994) suggests that the goal of career counselling, from a constructivist perspective, should be aimed at self-help; thus, enabling individuals to be active agents beyond the counselling intervention. A determinant of agency is self-efficacy ("can I do it?") and knowing ("because of what I know about myself and the world - I can/cannot do it"). Bandura (1986, p391), explains self-efficacy as "peoples' judgements of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action..." and purported that individuals' who regard themselves as highly efficacious act, think, and feel differently from those who perceive themselves as inefficacious (Bandura, 1977). In a constructivist career education and learning environment, individuals are guided, through narrative, to determine the underlying contextual influences affecting self-efficacy and agency; and through this process, the career practitioner (and indeed the classroom teacher) can assist the individual to counter any misconceptions so that they are able to work towards building a better understanding of self and the world, and so-doing, create a new reality, moving from 'not-knowing' to 'knowing' to 'acting'.

Constructivism is also concerned with "how [individual's] know, and by implication how [they] develop meaning" (Young and Collin, 2003, p3), and in-so-doing, act. This action "is focused on ordering processes ... on patterning one's experiences so that they provide meaning" (McMahon and Watson, 2006, p27). Over time, we notice patterns emerge that regulate our behaviours, emotions, and thoughts, and these patterns are sometimes difficult to alter. Career practitioners, using a constructivist approach, can help individuals free themselves from some of the more debilitating patterns. The career practitioner can (gently) expose the effects of these patterns (deconstructing), and what future role that behaviour will play (co-constructing). A significant part of this meaning-making is the use of language. Language (and gestures) allows the individual to express their narrative – the story of 'self'; "we construct reality through our shared and agreed meanings communicated via a common language" (Patton and McMahon, 2014, p8). Furthermore, the role of emotions should not be underplayed in the process, "our relationships with our feelings are often at least as important as the feelings themselves" (Mahoney, 2003). A theme central to constructivism is self, and relational-self over time. Self is inextricably linked to their relationship with their context (people, and environment) over time. What might have been significant three years ago, may not be so today, similarly, how the student responded to a situation previously might help them overcome a similar situation today. How the individual interprets their experiences and their world (past and present) has much influence on their beliefs, motivations, and actions (decision-making) going forward. Meaning therefore is connected to interpretation. To illustrate this: two Year 13 students receive their assessment grades, both achieving a merit grade. One student is elated and the other disappointed. Another illustration: twins in Year 13, both achieved overall 'excellence' endorsement

in Year 12, in a career interview they present very different worldviews – one displaying very clear aspirations for university study, and the other anxious about her ability to achieve at university level. The disparate ways in which the students construct the meaning of a ‘good’ grade and university study is coloured by their self-belief and previous experiences. One can only begin to help students make meaning from this and move towards their ‘possible selves’ through constructive dialogue.

A constructivist approach to learning in a bicultural and multicultural setting

“Most of the time the lights are turned off. The light comes on Tuesday afternoon at kapahaka”
Macfarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh, and Bateman (2007, p69)

How do we ensure that the light stays switched on throughout the student’s learning experience?

The guiding principles of Ka Hikitea, the Ministry of Education’s Māori education strategy, provides some direction as it talks about the joint responsibility of Crown, iwi and Māori (through the Treaty of Waitangi) in education success, setting high and realistic expectations, the principle of reciprocity – where learning happens alongside and with the support of others within their system, that identity, language and culture count in teaching and learning, highlighting that Māori students are more likely to achieve when they see themselves, and their community, reflected in learning and teaching.

As an officially ‘bi-cultural’ country, which means New Zealand recognises and provides for the culture, language and rights of Māori and Pākehā. Certified teachers in New Zealand schools (and this includes careers advisors) by upholding the New Zealand *Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession* (Our Code, Our Standards), are expected to, amongst others, “understand and recognise the unique status of tangata whenua ..., design and plan culturally responsive, evidence-based approaches that reflect the local community and Te Tiriti o Waitangi ..., [and also] critically examine how [their] own assumptions and beliefs, including cultural beliefs, impact on practice and the achievement of learners with different abilities and needs, backgrounds, genders, identities, languages and cultures” (p18). Most careers advisors in schools are members of the Careers and Transition Education Association (CATE), who adhere to the Education Council’s Code and Standards, and use the Career Development Benchmarks as a guide for practice, but do not have any explicit career development codes or standards. Some careers advisors choose to be members of the broader careers association - CDANZ (Career Development Association of New Zealand) – who, in their latest Career Development Competencies draft document (May 2018), I think set very clear expectations around culture and diversity, and application of Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles, and have congruency with a constructivist approach to career. There would be an expectation for CDANZ career practitioners to:

- maintain relationships and demonstrate practice behaviours that are mana enhancing, self-determining, respectful, mindful of cultural uniqueness, and acknowledge cultural identity (Te Rangatiratanga)
- utilise practice behaviours that ensure mauri ora e.g. assure safe space, be respectful and mana enhancing, acknowledge boundaries, and meet culturally responsive obligations (Te Manaakitanga)
- engage in practice that is culturally sustaining, relationship-strengthening, mutually contributing and connecting, and encourages warmth (Te Whanaungatanga)

Not only is New Zealand bi-cultural, but it also has a multi-cultural fabric as shown in the 2013 census. Major ethnic groups from 2013 census (Statistics New Zealand, 2013), indicates nearly 74% of the population identified with one or more European ethnicities, 14.9% Māori, 11.8% Asian, 7.4% Pacific Peoples, and 1.2% Middle Eastern/Latin American/African. All groups of society and more specifically, the individuals within those groups, have a unique set of needs, challenges, values and aspirations – they all have a unique narrative.

In response to this changing fabric of New Zealand, mirrored in our classrooms, and consequently more diverse students presenting with more diverse needs, career practitioners and indeed teachers are compelled to be skilled at “understanding and negotiating multiple realities” (Arthur, 2006). Not only their own realities, but also “the similarities and differences in the meanings held by [their students]” (Arthur, 2006). A constructivist approach such as the STF is a means in which career practitioners and teachers can deal with the diverse needs of students and can reflect on the impact their own cultural values, biases and attitudes might have on their role.

Also, it is not necessary for the career practitioner to be an ‘expert’ on all areas of culture and diversity, but rather to take a ‘curious’ approach, acknowledging their own unique worldview as well as that of their ‘client’. Working within a multicultural, constructivist worldview, career practitioners are then able to move from “applying one grand narrative to everyone” Savickas (1993, p211), to helping individuals construct their own futures meaningfully, by telling their stories within their own cultural context; in other words, meaning as they perceive it to be, rather than what society (or indeed the careers practitioner, or school) may wish it to be.

A narrative approach used under the umbrella of the STF is particularly congruent with groups where storytelling is the norm, but more so stories of relationships – the interconnectedness with self (context/individual system), others (social/societal system) and nature (environmental system), past and present. Reid (2010) explains that relational identity, and the “connections, interaction and participation” of the individual with and between “whānau, hapū and iwi” (p59) are key components of Māori wellbeing. Similarly, strongly embedded within the Pacific Island people’s (PI) identity and belonging is their sense of self in relation to their social system – family, church, and community. In addition, Te Pou includes family, language and tapu as key themes when working with PI. The challenges when using a narrative approach are time and language. Time to hear and work with the stories, and language to understand. If language is a means of constructing reality, how do we overcome any language barriers without hindering the flow of information and meaning-making. Reid (2010) infers that because of the limited number of Māori career practitioners, the likelihood of non- Māori career practitioners working with Māori clients is highly likely; and that some Māori might find non-Māori practitioners ineffectual, others not. I would suggest that this is also true with PI and Asian peoples. The complexities of bi- and multi-cultural career practice and learning, is worthy of further thinking and research.

I recall a career conversation with a student early this year who felt affronted at continuously being ‘boxed’ as an ‘Asian student’ by her peers and teachers. “I am from Osaka, Japan. My Mum is from Nagoya, and my Dad from Australia. We moved to New Zealand from Osaka when I was seven. I speak Japanese with a New Zealand accent!” A reminder of the importance of seeing the whole person in front of you, without bias and assumptions. Because of the many conversations I have had like this, and through my own experience as a ‘new’ New Zealander, I felt that it was important to highlight career and learning in a bicultural and multicultural society here. Reid, quoted by Middleton in *The Herald* (2002), sums this up: “We run the danger of putting everyone in little boxes ... sometimes the fit isn’t there.”

Towards and integrated, constructivist approach to career education and learning

It is clear to me that a pure-logical-positivist approach to career development and learning, without considering the student in context, will disadvantage students in terms of career development and learning. When students are taught to learn for assessment outcomes, they either become proficient at accumulating credits or, equally sadly, disengaged. Adopting an integrated, constructivist approach, however, where students are encouraged to be self-motivated, self-directed, life-long learners, provides a solid platform for understanding who they are now, and developing who they want to be, their 'possible selves'.

"New pedagogical approaches are needed to keep education relevant and engage young people ... the knowledge and skills being developed need to change in tune with the world of the 21st century, and ... taught and learnt deeply so that they can be adapted by young people in rapidly-changing circumstances." Paniagua and Istance (2018, p20)

Valerie Hannon's *Learning Futures* (n.d) paper is inspiring and pragmatic as she discusses approaches and principles used to design the Learning Future's programme. The programme's aim was to address the need to engage students. Not in the way some might view engagement, for instance where a student conforms, attends school, completes required classwork, is on task and generally pleasant, but rather one where students are deeply engaged in their learning – of selves and the world. In other words, one where the student is committed to learning within and beyond school. To do this, Learning Futures schools adopt project-based learning as their overarching pedagogical design. By solving problems through inquiry, using extended blocks of time and extending relationships beyond the classroom, students can connect with the world outside and work across the curriculum (interdisciplinary). Where the school is considered a "basecamp" for knowledge, rather than the only source. Hannon (p6) references Dewey: *"Give pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking ... learning naturally results."*

The whole process of 'learn by doing' encourages the development of the confident, connected, actively involved and life-long learners envisioned by our national curriculum. But I think it goes further as it is a process that teaches 'real-life' career competencies as students learn, in the pursuit achieving outcomes, that they can make mistakes – the 'end-product' in real life rarely is the first iteration. This is a key learning, especially when translated into making career-related decisions. Further is peer and expert critique where students learn that developing a quality 'end-product' is rarely a 'one-person-job'. Meaningful conversation, critique and collaboration raises their expectations of what they can do and instils in them critical thinking about their own processes and ideas. Professor Darling-Hammond refers to this as "[building] grit" in the documentary, *Most Likely to Succeed*, and "it is what allows people to be successful when they get out of the artificial system we call school". It is an environment where students can develop their possible selves. A 'possible self' that is self-aware and self-directed, resilient and can adapt to change, is aware of the dynamic world of work, one who is proactive and curious – a life-long learner. Hannon explains that "Students who were deeply engaged in their own learning presented an integrated story about their process of learning in their project, which moved seamlessly into their life beyond the school – both laterally [across their personal, work and learning lives] and temporally [over time]" (p12).

I was encouraged by a recent article by three students from Hobsonville Point Secondary School (HPSS), who responded to an article by Auckland Grammar in Education Central, "21st century reboot

[of NCEA]”. It was good to ‘hear’ through their writing their enthusiasm for learning and the future, unsurprising as they are part of a future-focussed school that encourages students to “have real conversations” (Amos, 2015). One that, in their words, “focusses on innovation, inquiry and exploration through unique learning design.” Led by a strong senior leadership team, including the Deputy Principal, Claire Amos, who is a strong advocate for future-focused education in New Zealand. They conclude their response well, “[the] proposed NCEA changes indicate a shift to a more modern approach. This will allow New Zealand high school graduates to leave with the tools to shape the future and the skills to know how”. Students at HPSS are able to assimilate 21st century learning into NCEA without a sense of being over-assessed, or ‘chasing credits’, but rather, as their emerging selves are being nurtured in a constructive learning environment, they are developing their ideas and hopes of possible selves. In her keynote speech, “Disrupt, Connect, and Co-Construct”, at the National Digital Forum Conference in 2015, Amos outlines the school’s future-focussed curriculum design and ethos, which mirrors a constructivist approach to career and learning and incorporates elements of UDL and Learning Futures, while also challenging the audience to become strong partners in education, as it is through these partnerships that innovation, engagement and inspiration can thrive.

Referring to a point made earlier about students questioning “what is the point?” I would say ‘this is the point’: for deep and authentic learning to occur which extends beyond the classroom into the student’s life and work. Where students’ progression from education to work is seen as a natural transition, rather than one filled with apprehension. How can this be done authentically in our school environment? One where, overall, teachers are already feeling stretched and students are feeling pressured to perform.

Considering this, as well as career theory, approaches to curriculum design and pedagogy, the table below (Table 3) illustrates how New Zealand career practitioners, teachers and curriculum might nurture, facilitate and enable meaningful learning so that the student can realise their possible selves. One where students are aware of who they are within their system of influence, understand the world of work and how they might navigate it, are self-directed, adaptable and resilient, are proactive and have a desire for, and an understanding of the need for, life-long learning. One where schools, and more so, career practitioners and teachers feel well supported within the curriculum to offer the student the time, space and resources to develop their notion of possible-self.

Career development and Learning - developing the ‘possible self’

| Elements of <i>Possible Self</i> | Students demonstrate this by: | Career practitioners nurture this by: | Teachers facilitate this by: | Curriculum enables this by: |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Self-aware | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowing their strengths, skills, and abilities Knowing their values and anchors Knowing their system of influence (context) and how that impacts learning decision-making Reflecting upon feedback to test perceptions of self | <p>Using theoretically driven tools, techniques and dialogue to help students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify their strengths, skills, abilities, values and anchors in relation to future options understand the interdependence of self and their system of influence on career reflect on perceptions of self | <p>Providing the space (physical environment and cognitive) for students to reflect on their learning so they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand how they learn best recognize their own growth recognize their inherent biases/preferences/assumptions | <p>Providing space and time within the curriculum for self-development to occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> integrated into learning – through intentional, focused sessions, within formal and informal learning through career development interventions and self-awareness programmes |
| Work-aware | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the changing nature of work, and dynamic work arrangements Knowing what skills are needed to successfully navigate work | <p>Building the student’s awareness of the world of work by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> connecting students with business through talks, mentors varied work experience opportunities | <p>Expand and enrich students’ knowledge/learning by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inviting experts into class to talk about latest trends and developments, and provide expert input into projects engaging and meaningful field trips | <p>Providing time and resources to enable careers practitioners and teachers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fully utilize ‘external’ expertise, and keep up-to-date and develop their own knowledge of the changing world of work |

| Elements of <i>Possible Self</i> | Students demonstrate this by: | Career practitioners nurture this by: | Teachers facilitate this by: | Curriculum enables this by: |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Self-directed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being self-managing • Taking responsibility for their learning • Managing their time, and their learning, • Set and pursue goals, self-evaluate, • Use peer/expert critique • Gather and use appropriate resources | <p>Through group and individual career development sessions, support students as they plan, manage and review their 'possible selves'</p> | <p>Facilitating students' transitions to self-direction by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • challenging the student, then stepping back - being available as a mentor/guide/sounding board • allow students to generate and ask questions, and provide alternatives • providing constructive feedback and feedforward is critical in developing students' confidence to direct their learning | <p>Allowing students to assume responsibility for their own learning by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoiding over-assessment • providing the time, space and resources to enable students to set and pursue learning goals |
| Adaptable and resilient | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being adaptive • Anticipating and responding positively to uncertainty and change • Taking risks, learning from mistakes and being adept to managing change | <p>Assist students to be aware of, and adapt their hopes and aspirations to the dynamic world of work by providing opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research and understand the dynamic labour market and global trends and its impact on possible self | <p>Provide learning opportunities and a safe environment for students to feel confident, capable and competent by encouraging them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be creative in their thinking • make mistakes and problem-solve solutions using a | <p>Providing space and time within the curriculum for formative assessment, reflection/reflexivity, career exploration and dialogue to allow students to practice resiliency and adaptability</p> |

| Elements of Possible Self | Students demonstrate this by: | Career practitioners nurture this by: | Teachers facilitate this by: | Curriculum enables this by: |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘test’ and evaluate aspirations, e.g. through work experience/shadowing /dialogue • Discover and act on ‘adapt-abilities’ • Dialogue perceived failures and unrealistic goals | variety of tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflect – thinking, rethinking and reworking without harsh judgement or being provided solutions • listen to, reflect upon and assimilate constructive feedback | |
| Proactive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning ahead • Seeking, identifying and pursuing opportunities for self-improvement • Building on ‘career capital’⁴ Showing initiative and perseverance • Building a portfolio of learning | Assist students to develop the skills and awareness to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use various tools and media to identify, source and integrate into their career plans any work, training and educational opportunities for self-development/improvement • develop strategies for self-promotion, by | Provide a learning environment for the student where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the teacher models proactive behaviours • they are active partners in the design, implementation and evaluation of learning (co-construction) • they are encouraged and supported to be self-directed, proactive | Providing the time, space, resources for students to get involved through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opportunities for co-constructing learning • real-life projects • education-outside-the-classroom such as through sports, culture, arts, service/community • extending learning |

⁴ Refers to the value of the following in relation to career/work for example: Human capital (work, education “what I know”), Social capital (social connections “who I know”), Political capital (reputational and representational “what people think of me”)

| Elements of Possible Self | Students demonstrate this by: | Career practitioners nurture this by: | Teachers facilitate this by: | Curriculum enables this by: |
|---------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| | | identifying and integrating their career capital, and using relevant media to showcase portfolio of learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> critically evaluate and interpret labour market information, and work/employment practices and their impact on aspirations use their initiative to connect with, explore and act on career opportunities, persevering and re-evaluating when 'things do not quite work out as planned' | learners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> they feel confident to assume responsibility for their own learning by managing their time, setting goals and planning they identify their gaps in learning and encouraged to identify and act on learning opportunities for recourse e.g 'think-tanks', expert input, research, extra tutoring they are encouraged to take initiative and lead projects/tasks | relationships i.e. 'adult- world' connections, links with tertiary education, attending conferences, volunteering, experience in the workplace, and so on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encouraging and offering leadership /self-improvement opportunities |
| Life-long learner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being curious and reflective Cares about and is responsible for their own learning Being aware of, showing an enthusiasm for and participating in both formal and informal | Modelling life-long learning through continuing professional development Taking on a guiding/facilitating role in the student's learning | Modelling life-long learning through continuing professional development Taking on a 'knowledgeable facilitator' role in the student's learning | Provide the time, space and resources to develop the potential of both students and staff through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> creating a culture of learning continuous professional development for staff |

| Elements of <i>Possible Self</i> | Students demonstrate this by: | Career practitioners nurture this by: | Teachers facilitate this by: | Curriculum enables this by: |
|----------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| | <p>learning opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being aware of the impact of continuous learning on possible selves • Indicating a range of diverse and continuous learning strategies to develop possible selves | <p>Encouraging students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be curious about the world around them • be active participants in their learning of self and the world of work • engage in continuous learning • be aware that all experiences are 'learning opportunities' | <p>Using pedagogy that focuses on quality of learning and less on assessment to engender:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deep, rich learning experiences, encouraging students' desire to learn beyond the 'classroom' <p>Using models of learning such as UDL (see p22) that develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purposeful, motivated students who are connected to their learning • resourceful and knowledge life-long learners • strategic and goal-directed | <p>– both for individual members, and as a whole staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a curriculum that values learning of both subject content and 21st century competencies • harnessing the extended learning relationships outside of the school eg mentors, coaches, parents, businesses for both students and teachers • broadening the learning of staff and students through a range of experiences • celebrates learning in all its forms |

Table 3 Career development and Learning - developing the 'possible self'

Strategies for career education in New Zealand schools to foster 21st century career development

Just as young people are developing their possible selves ... so the debate and conversations around education reform, is the beginning of New Zealand's vision of a "possible self". To conclude this paper, and to address the questions posed on page six:

- Who will lead this critical change within the schools? If it is the careers staff, what skills and training do they require to do so? What frameworks will assist them?
- What would be the new role for careers practitioners in schools and how will they best develop the new map for career education that is required?

I have offered three strategies for consideration to envision a new "possible self" for career education in New Zealand; that of:

- a **national vision** for career development which includes career as central to the national curriculum, career practitioners in influential roles within the Ministry, a national career development association with national professional standards and professional recognition, and a strengthening of the Career Development Benchmarks
- the career practitioner as **career-champion** who drives the culture of career development within schools
- promoting a **whole-of-school career culture** where career is 'part of', rather than 'in-addition-to' the students' learning



Figure 7 Strategies for Career Education in New Zealand schools

National vision for career development

A national vision for career development that is central to curriculum – developing *confident, connected, actively involved, and lifelong learners (NZC)*, and *[developing] the knowledge, understanding and skills needed by New Zealanders to compete successfully in the modern, ever-changing world (NEG 3)*, are amongst others, the aspirations of our national curriculum and education system. A national vision for career development requires there to be:

- Experienced, credentialled career practitioners in key roles in the Ministry of Education in determining the vision for career development
- National standards specifically for career practitioners working in schools – whereas they currently adhere to the teachers' standards.
- Furthermore, having one national Career Development Association (NZ has two associations: CDANZ⁵ and CATE⁶) is critical to ensure one national, unified vision and standard for the profession as a whole.
- Following this, recognition by government of the professional role of career practitioners in schools through registration and remuneration.
- Although the Career Development Benchmarks are a tool for helping schools improve their provision of career development, and there is some good practice in schools already; to provide consistent quality career development across all schools, the work already started with the Career Development Benchmarks should move from 'aspirational' to 'usable' by developing supporting resources, and building within this, professional development.
- A national career development agency acting as a bridge between school and work: by providing a 'wraparound' career development service – ensuring students are not 'left in the dark' without any explicit support once they leave the school gates. Students going on to further study have strong tertiary institution support networks, whereas those choosing work may not have the support they need.

Career Practitioner's role

Having a 'career-champion' within the school who not only drives, but also leads career development within the school. The Oxford Dictionary defines a champion as: "A person who vigorously supports or defends a person or cause". In this instance the person is the 'career practitioner' championing the 'career development of young people' as the cause.

What would someone like this look like?

⁵ *The Careers and Transition Education Association (CATE). Their main focus is on the career education of youth and their transition from school into the wider world of employment, training and/or further education. The majority of their members are school careers advisors, transition teachers, STAR, Gateway and Youth Apprenticeship Co-ordinators.*

⁶ *The Career Development Association of New Zealand (CDANZ). They represent members involved in career development across a range of settings, including education, industry, commerce, government and the professions. Their aim is to promote professional standards and best practice in career development in New Zealand.*

- Advanced skills and knowledge (minimum qualifications/credentials) in career development theory and practice to implement theoretically-driven career-development programmes and practice (group, one-on-one, whole-school). This will engender confidence in career practitioners practicing in schools by parents, students, colleagues, employers.
- Full-time role within schools to effectively champion a culture of career
- It is not an administrative role, but rather one that is both strategic and hands-on – needs focus on this and not the ‘permission slips’, and other administrative work that overtakes the role and takes away time from championing careers
- Careers Champion support role to focus on the administrative requirements of career in schools
- Has the capacity (time, space and resources) to effectively establish relationships with and collaborate with ‘work/futures experts’ – industry, employers, researchers
- Has the time to work alongside HODs and teachers to collaborate on content and programmes that will encourage the development of students’ ‘possible selves’
- Integral to the senior leadership team – critical role in curriculum and building a career culture
- Engaging in continuing professional development to keep up-to-date with research and trends to inform practice

Whole-of-school careers culture

Developing a whole-school ethos/culture of career, and building a strong learning environment, where pedagogical approaches and career practice are integrated to support and encourage students’ desire for learning – within and beyond school will require:

- A well-informed leadership team (which includes a ‘careers champion’) with a clear vision for career and a means of articulating, implementing and monitoring a career-culture
- Organisational/operational requirements to enable an integrated approach to learning: less rigid timetables, technologies and built-environment to support and enhance learning, collaborative teaching teams with dedicated time for shared planning and preparation
- Teacher professional development (PD) – general staff PD linking to the school vision and goals, but also a focus on individual PD to fit the needs of individual teachers, e.g. Digital Technologies teachers given time to develop their skills to keep pace with the exponential changes in technology – furthermore these teachers can be given the time to champion technology within the school
- A focus on quality of learning, rather than quantity of content and assessment
- Fostering a genuine partnership with parents
- Established (establishing) relationships beyond the classroom to ensure authentic, relevant learning – taking the student out into the world, and bringing the world into the classroom

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Appendix 1

Reflective Summary: Advanced Negotiated Work-Based Learning Project

Reflective Summary

Advanced Negotiated Work-Based Learning Project:

Strategies for career education in New Zealand schools to foster 21st century career development

Master of Professional Practice

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I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of an institution of higher learning.

Signed: Amanda Joyce Smidt

Signature:

Date: 04/07/2018

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Reflection: Advanced Negotiated Work-Based Learning Project | 50 |
| Background | 50 |
| Project learnings – 21st century career development | 51 |
| Project learnings – Trusting the process | 57 |
| My learnings - Towards a voice of authority | 57 |
| My hoped-for possible-self | 58 |

Reflection: Advanced Negotiated Work-Based Learning Project

Background

This reflection piece is a manifestation of my own personal reflections as much as it is about the project. The completion of the Master of Professional Practice has been a journey of super-learning! Learning to juggle the rigor of academic study whilst still maintaining an engaged and committed presence within the realms of both my professional and family life. Interestingly, as I learnt more and more about career, education and 21st century trends, I realized that my academic learning was not only contributing to the outcomes of this project, but also having a profound relevance to my personal development, and my own career journey as I, too, navigate the changing seas of the world of work, and find my way post MPP.

As I reflected along the way I realized that while I might have started out with a clear destination in mind, i.e. *'Exploring strategies for career education in New Zealand schools to foster 21st century career development'*, there were a few times I had to take a step back, take stock and rethink my approach, my thought processes, and sometimes my own long-held opinions; and other times allow the waves to just take me – 'trusting the process' as my supervisors and mentor would remind me.

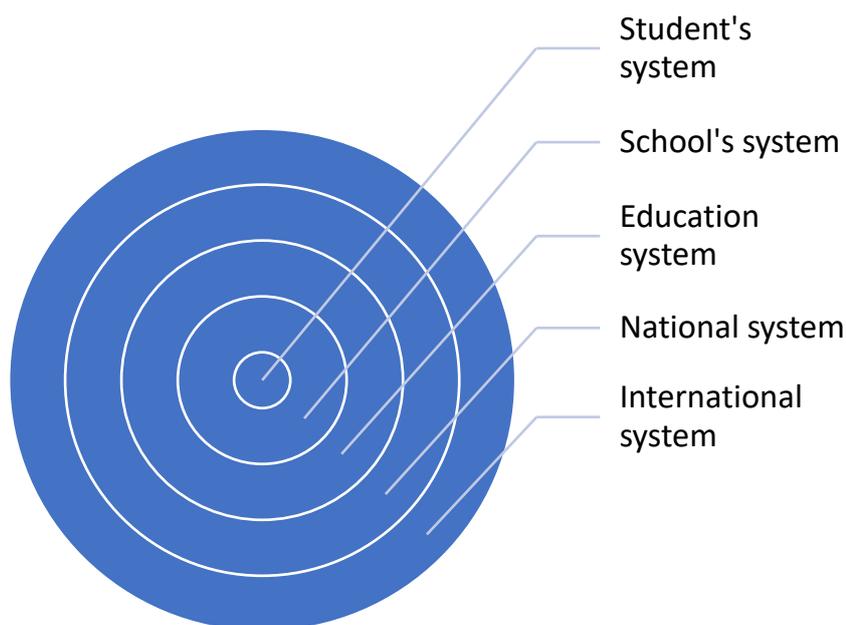
My purpose in undertaking this research was borne long before I started post-graduate study. In various roles in education – teacher, dean, careers advisor, head of department, training advisor and qualifications/programme developer - questioning the often-restrictive and complex education system and how this impacts not only how we might provide a meaningful service, but more so, how this impacts the student. However, reflecting on my time in secondary education (as a 'new' New Zealander 20 years ago), I felt that the New Zealand education system was far more progressive than the one I had come from in South Africa, which was a very traditional system, with equally traditional mindsets, governance, and hierarchical – you really needed to 'know your place' as a teacher and as a student. In New Zealand, NCEA, as well as the opportunity for students to follow competency-based pathways alongside their NCEA, was in its infancy. I flourished in this system as I took every opportunity to ensure students in my care were able to take advantage of the system to also flourish. But some did not. I recognised that although progressive, the system was still heavily focused on assessment, and thus not quite a fit for some students. It was (and is) a system that celebrates academic, sporting, cultural and arts achievement at the highest level, and I believe this should absolutely be celebrated. However, as I sat in assemblies or end-of year awards evenings feeling so proud of my students and their achievements, I would also think of those students who were considered not the 'high-achievers', but who, nonetheless, had overcome some life obstacles they never thought possible, or those who were achieving 'outside' of school, those who were afraid to speak up or challenge themselves and through work experience or a small part in a play or a teacher's recognition, became just that little more confident and were doing just that little bit better in their schoolwork and were happier to be at school. Those achievements were awesome too, and needed to be celebrated! I remember a Year 12 student, who, on the surface was not achieving, but after a chance conversation with him, I discovered that he had his own online business developing logos for start up companies across the globe! He was saving up to move to Auckland to join a cousin in his graphic design business. Wow! In a system where the benchmark for achievement, or non-achievement is assessment, this child, and many others, are deemed failures. Statistics will represent them as failures. Their school report will show this too. Are they failures – or have we failed them?

Intuitively I knew that it was not just one person's responsibility in a school to help develop 'happy', connected and engaged students, but that it was a collegial effort that was required. When a

student had wraparound support, was placed at the centre of learning, allowed to be active partners in their learning, given time, and the opportunity to make and learn from mistakes, and their achievements celebrated, they were more likely to thrive ... in their way, in their time! The age-old adage, "It takes a community ..." often comes to mind when I reflect on students and their development – both in learning and career development. My learnings through the MPP have not only confirmed this, but also provided me the opportunity to think more deeply and strategically about how this could occur in schools.

Project learnings – 21st century career development

One of the major surprises I have taken away with me through my MPP journey, is the shift in the project, from a purely career development focus to one of 'learning'. That, yes, career is central to learning – it is (or rather, should be) the reason we do what we do in the education system, but ultimately, we are learning. We are learning about self and our relationship to our context (our system), who we are and want to be in the world, and that learning is lifelong. Learning should not stop at the school gates – but should continue beyond that, if we wish to thrive in our career lifespan. Conversely, this learning does not preclude our wider system or context. The system that supports this learning of self, must, too, evolve (learn) to keep pace with the changes in the wider system.



I was fortunate, a year prior to undertaking the MPP, to complete post-graduate papers in Career Theory and Career Counselling, which provided a strong foundation to explore contemporary career development theories and frameworks for this project. The reason for wanting to explore career development theories and frameworks was to provide a theoretical basis for any strategies that would develop from this project. But before I launched into career theory, I felt I needed to frame my study. My focus was on strategies for career education in New Zealand schools (this was the immediate or local context) to foster 21st century career development (the wider context).

I knew early on that before I could examine career theory, I needed to understand 21st century career. We are already 17 years into the 21st century, so was this term still relevant? I noticed in

various commentary and literature the preferred use by some of 'future' rather than '21st century'. However, I do think 21st century is a valid term to use as it acknowledges the 'now' as well as the 'future'. We are certainly present in the 21st century world of work and we are looking towards, and preparing for, the future and what that might be. Furthermore, I needed to identify just what this '21st century career development' looked like. My question was thus, "what is 21st century career", and following this, "what skills we need to develop to navigate this 21st century career?". Some of the conversations were already happening around this subject here in New Zealand through the television series, 'What Next'. The OECD and Deloitte provided some good data and insights into 21st century labour market trends and career competencies which I was able to assimilate into my writing, but as I read further I became overwhelmed by just how much information there was, and the rate of new information being written. This was a good exercise in 'discernment'.

I wondered about the impact these exponential changes in technology and science would have on who we are (as humans) in the future – what would/could life look like and how would we live, work and learn. I realized too, that some of this curiosity (and angst to be honest) for this unknown future could be attributed to having a 6-year old daughter who would be navigating that life in a very real way, and so I wondered if we as parents, and the education system she is in, are preparing her for these unknowns. Conversely – how would we, as parents, respond to the 'VUCA' as it impacted our own careers and our ability to provide for her and enjoy life.

My conclusion was that the world of work is changing, and that, instead of reacting (or feeling overwhelmed), we need to be prepared. Our education system needs to support schools to provide the infrastructure, resources, and flexibility within our curriculum to model preparedness and also develop 'prepared' students to navigate 21st century career. I came across the VUCA model which I felt captured this notion of preparedness well as it not only illustrates the challenges (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) of the 21st century world, but also indicates how we might respond to these challenges. I came back to this model often during this project as I see value in it not only as a visual illustration of preparedness but also a reminder for me as I navigated my way through the often-unpredictable nature of postgraduate study, and, to be fair, the dynamics of my own life. Furthermore, in my own practice, I see its relevance as a practical tool for professional development, leadership programmes, tackling projects and developing key 21st century skills such as adaptability, flexibility, self-awareness and so on.

As I waded through the literature and commentary on 21st century skills, it became clearer to me that to effectively prepare young people for this emerging world of work, **developing the skills to navigate and manage career would be critical**. Reading the OECD's, *Teachers as Designers of Learning Environments*, amongst others, confirmed for me that it was not simply the role of the careers advisors in schools to develop career competencies, but that 21st century skills are developed and nurtured through students' learning experiences – both formal and informal, intentional and unintentional. What really stood out for me and cemented a change in focus in my project from pure career development to learning, was their assertion that: "the strong focus on learners **acquiring a diverse set of [21st century] competencies require a correspondingly strong focus on pedagogy**" (p20). So, how they learn (pedagogy) was just as important as what they learnt (content), and it is within this 'way of learning' that a sense of self and of possibility emerges. What I discovered as I was writing during this time, was that in all this I missed the critical reason for this study - the student. My focus was on future trends, career competencies for 21st century, career development theory, career education strategies, and so forth, which are all important components of this project, but who was this person that would be affected by these exponential changes, how did they form an identity, what would influence their decision-making about their future career. It

made me think how often we forget the student in our design of curriculum, our lesson plans, in assessment, in learning, and in career. Imposing “what is best” on them, rather than working with them. Heather Carpenter’s book, *The Career Maze*, provided a good reference to the student in relation to identity and career and through this reading I came across the notion of ‘possible selves’, which I had, until then, overlooked. The more I explored this notion of possible selves, the more I began to get a sense of clarity around student identity development and its influence on future career. Markus and Nurius’ (1986) work ‘rewired’ my thinking in terms of the purpose of education and the role we have as educators and career practitioners in nurturing the young person’s ideas and hopes of possible selves. Conversely, how our actions and words play such a critical role in student’s sense of self efficacy. It set the tone for the remainder of my writing “whatever we do, we must **have at the forefront** not only the student, but the **student’s hope of a possible self** in an ever-changing world of work. With this in mind, I felt justified in my thinking that a pure logical/positivist approach to career and teaching/learning is not adequate. Yes, there was certainly a place for this worldview and approach, but it cannot be ‘the way’. I found Patton and McMahon’s table referencing logical/positivist and constructivist career development to be very useful as I tried to capture what I felt was a need for a shift from pure logical/positivist career practice and teaching/learning (where the adult is expert ‘information provider’ and the student is a ‘passive responder’) to one where the student is actively involved in their learning and the adult is a ‘knowledgeable observer’ and facilitator of learning – key tenets of constructivist career development and learning approaches.

Although I was happy with the comparative table I had developed, I felt that it needed more. It was aspirational but required a more comprehensive framework to strengthen. I wanted to explore the constructivist approach more against the context of possible selves and 21st century career - considering the role of career practitioner, teacher and curriculum. What were some of the constructivist approaches used internationally and here in New Zealand? What new ways of thinking could I tap into? Just like the literature and commentary around 21st century career, I found many sources to reflect on and assimilate into my writing. For example, I drew from P21 – Partnership for 21st century Learning⁷, and UDL - Universal Design for Learning⁸, and also our own New Zealand Curriculum and Career Development Benchmarks. Although there were a few ‘aha’ moments, there were some key influences that captured my attention and presented some practical ways in which we can provide a learning environment that would indeed prepare our young people for 21st century career, develop their emerging selves and allow them to develop an idea of possible selves. I will summarise the key influences here (in no order):

*The American documentary film, Most Likely to Succeed (2015)*⁹: This film resonated with me as a teacher and careers practitioner, but also showed how a school is putting into practice the essence of constructivist teaching and learning through a project-based approach. I was able to see the table I had created come to life.

*Sir Ken Robinson’s Ted X talk, How to Escape Education’s Death Valley (2013)*¹⁰: The reason I decided to listen to Robinson’s Ted-X talk was firstly because he is a well-known education commentator, and his commentary in the documentary film above, explaining the ‘organisation’ of our current school system as a silo, factory style system essentially linear, logical/positivist, reminded me of

⁷ Refer to: <http://www.p21.org/>

⁸ Refer to: <http://www.cast.org/our-work/about-udl.html#.WwaGsUjFNPY>

⁹ See interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iez92IQUHdc>

¹⁰ https://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_how_to_escape_education_s_death_valley

some his previous talks which I had appreciated. The essence of this talk, using 'Death Valley' as an analogy, was one of hope for young people who might not be showing promise (he questions why they weren't showing promise, and what were they being expected to do and be in the education system – was the system perhaps stifling their 'promise'?). He asserts, and this is congruent with other literature, and I agree, that by celebrating and allowing space in the curriculum for diversity, nurturing curiosity and creativity, they do indeed grow and do show promise. Furthermore, he emphasized the notion of teacher/practitioner as facilitator rather than 'deliverer' – their role was to stimulate, provoke, and engage learning; and that assessment (the ultimate 'stifler' of learning), should be diagnostic and support/help learning – not obstruct. Through my own experience and conversations in education, it is this constant focus on assessment and the often-rigid structure of the school, e.g. timetabling, that stifles not only the student's learning and creativity, but also the teacher's ability to be creative and allow the student to be curious and creative. The irony is that curiosity, as Robinson puts it, is the "engine of achievement". By not allowing time for curious thinking and learning, are we really achieving – or rather, what are we achieving!

Claire Amos' keynote speech, *Disrupt, Connect, and Co-Construct*, at the National Digital Forum Conference in 2015: Claire Amos' tenacity and drive to shift the way we 'do school' is evident at Hobsonville Point Secondary School. As deputy principal of, and just recently appointed as principal of Albany Senior High School, she is a strong, outspoken advocate for future-focussed education and lives it through her work in education – both in the classroom and outside. Both schools mirror key elements of the 'High Tech High' as depicted in the film, *Most Likely to Succeed*, and this was confirmed for me somewhat, as I read her students' articulate response to an article by a principal about NCEA Reform. Her keynote speech is one that I have come back to a few times to check my thoughts around constructivist career development and learning. A stand-out feature of the school, which she describes in her keynote speech, is the genuine partnership with industry – investing space and resources within the school to allow industry to be part of the school, where they are present for students to be 'business' mentors, critiques for projects, all which sits well within constructivist learning – 'providing real world experiences'; a feature explained by Hannon in her report on Futures – encouraging partnerships.

The Universal Design for Learning: As a research-based curriculum design framework (which accounts for the 'science' of learning, neuroscience – the how, why and what of learning) I felt that, as a learning design approach addresses the diversity of students and their learning and illustrates for me an approach that embraces constructivist learning. As a teacher I could see myself developing my curriculum using UDL as a framework, and as a careers practitioner I see relevance as an approach to practice considering and respecting the student's uniqueness and context: by providing multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation multiple means of action (doing) and expression (showing). It was a very useful framework to refer to when developing Table 3: *Career development and Learning - developing the 'possible self'*.

Valerie Hannon's *Learning Future's* report (2017): Hannon provides an outline of the Learning Futures Programme – and key for me was her assertion that schools who adopted an overarching pedagogical approach of project-based (also referred to as inquiry-based) learning saw students who were engaged in their learning, where learning became part of, rather than separate to their lives – learning beyond the school gates. Congruent with other literature and constructivist approaches to learning and career, and evident also in the documentary above.

Furthermore, earlier this year I took on a part time (16 hours), fixed contract (Term 1) at a secondary school. The timing and opportunity to apply my learning, and learn from this time, was certainly not lost on me. My contract was principally to focus on Year 13 career interviews. The brief was to get a

sense of the student's future directions, and what (if any) support they required. The context: all girls catholic school, 168 Year 13 students. When I did the sums I worked out that I could see each student for 20-30 minutes which was do-able – but did not account for any administration, self-referrals, or any disruptions to the timetable. As a career practitioner I was very clear in my approach – that the interviews would not merely be a 'tick-box' exercise, the time was to be meaningful and not rushed. Not surprisingly, the 16 hours turned very quickly into 26-30 hours! On one hand this impacted on the progress of my MPP (I was not reading or writing as much), but on the other hand, I was learning and putting into practice my own learnings in a way that could not have happened otherwise. What a gift!

I think it will be useful here to provide a context for this school. As a 'special character' catholic girls school they live and breathe the attributes of the Sisters of Mercy, which translates to an education that is grounded in the catholic faith and mercy – they respect the dignity, worth and potential of every individual, they show concern for the poor and the disadvantaged, and concern for justice. In their mission statement, their vision is to: Empower each young woman to determine her potential, live Gospel values, confidently embrace life-long learning and as a Mercy woman be inspired to make a difference.

I was able to see how the school lived their mission statement through opportunities of leadership, service, and peer support in 'Ako' groups (vertical form groups) which were timetabled to provide opportunity for girls from different age groups (11-17) to be quiet and reflect, to be creative and spirited, to show concern and connect in a meaningful way – it was not merely a time to read the notices and rush off to class. This is where the use of technology was used well, and rather than adding to teacher workload, allowed more time for learning, connecting peer-to-peer, teacher-to-student and so on, active participation in learning of selves, of others and of subject areas. Students are encouraged to be self-managing and proactive in their learning - taking responsibility, for example, for reading notices, e-mails and group forums, class projects on One Note throughout the day. My Year 13 students had to keep up-to-date with career-related notices and interview times through the careers portal and e-mail, and able to work through some reflections prior to their interview using One Note. There were very few occasions where I had to reschedule appointments.

It was evident from these interviews the impact of the student's system of influence. In one way or the other this impacted on their sense of who they are (emerging self) and who they could be (possible/hope-for selves).

Most students had some idea of possible selves or more so: hoped-for selves and showed real excitement about the possibilities. On the opposite spectrum, there were those who had "no idea" – this caused angst in some, and others not so much, and in the middle a mixture of those who were unsure, those who felt pressured to follow a path they did not necessarily want to follow, those who were anxious about life after school and felt either 'stuck' or changed their minds regularly, then there were those (a small group) who felt that they could/would not allow themselves to think beyond the practicalities of leaving school and earning money – theirs was a narrative overwhelmed by, rather than motivated by, the 'feared-self'. All valid and real. My challenge was working with these students, through their 'stuckness' – and it certainly did not happen in the 20/30-minute time slot, and required the joint input of others – parents, teachers, dean, senior management. Going back to Robinson's talk/analogy of Death Valley – it is these students who are the "seeds of possibility waiting to blossom". It could be a matter of just allowing them space and time to explore possibility that shifts them from a point of 'stuckness' to a point where they do indeed blossom. For others, a lot more wraparound support (parents/guardians whanau, teachers, school management, practical help with work experience/shadowing, making connections and so on) is required.

I found those who had the support of their parents to explore and be creative had a stronger sense of emerging self and had well-considered ideas for future career/hope-for self. Interestingly a number of these students bucked the trend of going directly to university. For example: a few were typically 'Excellence' students who preferred to defer further formal education and pursue a GAP year. Upon further dialogue, it became evident that these students had thought carefully about how they might structure their GAP year to include volunteer experiences overseas. Not surprising with the school's strong service ethos; and this sense of service, and making a difference that would continue beyond school.

My observations from my time at the school were many and varied, but in essence, although there are still very many elements of traditional approaches to pedagogy, and also career education, I felt a sense of desire to shift gear. The school does well – it has a good reputation, many old girls excel in sport and academia, and are making a difference in their communities through service. I wonder what the possibilities could be, if teachers had more latitude to be innovative, had the freedom and time to customize/design their curriculum without the perceived constraints of assessment.

What was encouraging was the scheduled time in the school timetable for staff professional development. Yes, there are focused teacher-only days, but enhancing that is a 40-minute slot once a week where teachers come together to discuss and work on their own inquiry-based projects either as groups or individually. My key observation here was that central to most of these projects was the impact on student achievement. *How is my practice enhancing learning?* I was able to work alongside one of the Technology teachers in her inquiry "How to create more authentic learning in Digital Technologies". We discussed Hannon's report on Learning Futures design principles, and the UDL model which allowed her to frame her inquiry better and put some thought into re-visioning her Year 12 and 13 classes. I invited her to join me at the launch of the University of Canterbury's School of Product Design, where she was able to make connections, and start building a collaborative relationship with staff. Furthermore, she is taking more steps in her own postgrad learning in digital and collaborative learning. Small steps, but it was extremely satisfying for me as a career practitioner to use my skills in a different, yet valuable way, where I could be part of the student's career development, as well as that of the teacher's professional development, curriculum design and connections with partners outside of the classroom. This experience was the impetus for developing 'Career Champion' strategy in my project report, and cemented my thoughts around what this career champion would need to know, do and be, and what system-wide support they would need (both in the school environment and the wider education system) to be effective in championing career culture in schools. Without a national vision for career I am not sure this is possible.

Our focus must be on creating an environment where the student is central to learning and developing their ideas and hopes of possible selves - where they are aware of who they are within their system of influence, understand the world of work and how they might navigate it, are self-directed, adaptable and resilient, are proactive and have a desire for, and an understanding of the need for, life-long learning. One where schools, and more so, career practitioners and teachers feel well supported within the curriculum to offer the student the time, space and resources to develop their notion of possible-self. I have seen a shift in the way I approach career development as a facilitator working alongside co-constructing, as opposed the expert stance "I know what's best". I found myself using words such as "would you like to ...", "let's explore ...", "how does this sound to you ..." more. Just really focusing in on who is front of me – their context; but more importantly to encourage curiosity, creativity and a desire for lifelong learning. Earlier this year there was a news segment on TV One News about Careers Advisors in schools, which was not complementary, but also presented the constraints around careers practice in schools which I appreciated. But in the days

following this, I felt the need to justify my role (once again) and also share that I am indeed a careers practitioner, with the experience and qualifications to back it up. I could visibly see a change in attitude when people realized I was doing post graduate study in career development and was on a committee who were developing professional standards in this realm. This was just a subtle (or not so subtle) reminder of how people value others, and links back to my three strategies: national vision (government values career), a careers champion with the credentials to stand with authority, and a culture of career within schools.

Project learnings – Trusting the process

As I began to form my ideas and thoughts for this project, I was aware of a growing sense of self-doubt – a recursive theme I will reflect on again later. It seemed that what I was writing was no different to all the other literature I was reading, and literature by well-known theorists, academics, organisations, future-thinkers, professionals, and so on. So, I questioned the validity and value of my project. Was my project going to mean anything beyond the MPP? Was it going to make the difference I had envisaged in my Learning Agreement? Would I need to change my project direction; and if so, what would that be? Because the topic was something I had felt strongly about for a while, the prospect of changing direction was disheartening. This was indeed, one of my biggest challenges in this journey. But, as I was reminded time and again, “back yourself”, “trust the process”, “bring your own voice into this space”. Finding my own voice, I knew was key to unlocking this self-doubt. What was it that I really wanted to say? And so, instead of changing direction, I re-read my Learning Agreement and started to reframe the way I approached my literature review. The key was to use the literature to inform my project, to inform (and argue) my voice, rather than using the literature to create my ‘voice’.

Another challenge was determining what needed to be emphasized in my writing, and what required a mention (a nod to), and what was beyond the scope of this project. I did spend quite a bit of time initially on the exponential changes that were impacting the way we work and live, but realized that this was an entire paper in its own right, and so were many other topics, specifically, inquiry and project-based learning, neuroscience and the notion of learning and re-learning, constructivist career theories (of which there are a few), teaching and learning in a bi-cultural and multicultural setting, curriculum design and so on.

So, on a practical, and very tactical level, I had to reorganize my study area so that I could ‘reorganise’ my thinking (and attitude). On my newly purchased whiteboards I was able to visualize my thoughts which made a huge difference to the flow of my writing, but also provided me the space to brainstorm, rearrange and, form and develop ideas of my own; and, the ability to stand back and see the big picture. A fascinating reflection for me, as I realized that this was the same methodology I use in my qualifications/programmes/curriculum development work, and the way I teach and run career development workshops. Focusing purely on writing and re-writing and re-ordering my ideas on computer was not my natural way of learning and doing. So, a lesson in constructivism – “it is not just what you learn, but how you learn that is important”. Tapping into my strengths gave me back my flow.

My learnings - Towards a voice of authority

As I write this I am acutely aware of the role of serendipity in my MPP journey. In the last 18 months I have seen a huge shift in government in terms of education reform. With several forums already taken place and the ongoing ‘Education Conversations – Korero Matauranga’, I have been able to

contribute as a practitioner with a developing voice of authority on topics such as Curriculum, Progress and Achievement, NCEA (which has caused much debate), Tomorrow's Schools. I have had the opportunity to present to staff at a school earlier this year on 'Constructivist Conversations', and brief members at the CDANZ Symposium, and a local branch about my project, and will present a workshop at their symposium in October. I have been elected onto an advisory group for career development qualifications and have worked on and presented to members a draft competency framework for career development practitioners.

How much of this has happened because of post-graduate study. How much of it because of what others see in me and my expertise. Throughout this journey, I have discovered within me what started out as a quiet voice of authority, become stronger - but it has not always been so. Even through my learning and the serendipitous events and opportunities that have come my way, I have had to be mindful of my perceptions of self. In my Review of Learning I spoke about Luft and Ingham's 'Johari's Window' which is a technique that helps individuals gain a better understanding of self (self-awareness). It considers how others see you, how you see yourself, and what you or others do not know of yourself (the shadow). During the MPP journey I have discovered that in my Arena I know and others know that I am passionate about career development hence my work in careers in schools and privately, at CDANZ, and so on. And I recognize that it is because of my place in the Arena, but more so in my 'Blindspot, that I have been nudged into advisory work, presenting at workshops, and so on. I have really appreciated the encouragement and nudging from my supervisors and mentors who sometimes see in me what I don't know, or perhaps am too afraid to know about myself; and it is this sense of growing authority that I have grappled with the most, as it is an area where I would need to step out of my comfort zone and talk with an authoritative stance. I have come to recognize that this fear of stepping out of my 'comfort zone' is related to the 'Shadow', and stems from my past and my perceptions of self as the "weeshuiskind" – the 'child from the children's home', as I expressed in my Review of Learning. Interestingly, as I contemplate my hope for possible self, I know I take on board my own sphere of influence – past and present – and I recognize the power of the past on my present, but also the realization that my 'feared self' has played a significant role in forming and motivating my hope-for self.

My hoped-for possible-self

*What we can or cannot do, what we consider possible or impossible, is rarely a function of our true capability. It is more likely a function of our **beliefs about who we are.***

~ Anthony Robbins

This quote captures for me the essence of my personal struggle with my 'voice of authority' and feeling able to allow my possible self to blossom.

Despite being very good at my work, I have long tended to step back and allow others to succeed, rather than taking the initiative to step into those roles myself. It is only when I have been/am nudged (by people I respect and admire), do I consider the possibility, "well, if they think I can do it, then I probably can", and often I have thrived in those projects, and positions as a result. So, it was really challenging for me to leave full-time employment and become a contractor, so that I could focus on my family and post-graduate study. Contracting and private practice work is not for the faint hearted; and I certainly found it (and still do find it) challenging. I would rather rest on my

laurels and let contracts 'come to me' than actively pursue work. As I reflect now I realise with firm clarity that it was and is my reputation that has allowed me to continue to get regular (and interesting) contracts without too much hard work from my part. So why am I so afraid of stepping up? My self-belief – deep-rooted within my Shadow! But, it is in the 'knowing this' and slowly recognizing the shadow and 'being okay with this knowing', that I feel I have grown most, and where I feel is my greatest transformation. As careers practitioners especially, just as it is important to work alongside our clients to co-construct their stories to re-author new ones, so we must work through our own stories.

Through the process of researching and writing up my report and reflections for the MPP, I am also re-authoring my story, my hoped-for self, and how through this re-authoring, I can make a difference in career education and career development in New Zealand – and who knows, perhaps internationally too, as I still have a strong sense of my 'Africanness' and giving back to my country of birth.

I really do get a buzz thinking about the possibilities for career development here in New Zealand and the real difference the work career development practitioners make in the lives of those they work alongside. I am excited by the possibility of how I can contribute and truly make a difference in the lives of my clients, to career education in schools, and to the professionalism of the career development sector overall. I have often shared with others that I am not wanting the MPP as a tick-box exercise for my CV or LinkedIn profile, but as a means to make a difference. I will do this through my work with CDANZ, where I will continue to be part of the professionalism project where my current focus is on the entry level qualifications and alternative pathways strand and making a meaningful contribution to the advisory board for career development qualifications at NMIT. This was one of the key strategy outcomes of my project, in terms of 'credentialing' the role of career champions.

Furthermore, my plan is to have a closer relationship with the schools' careers association CATE, which I have not been for several years as I have not been in a full-time role in a school, but also, I have valued more the research focus of CDANZ, and the work I am doing with them on professional standards. What a powerful message would it be have one, unified careers association for New Zealand. I think the time is right for this, and I plan to be a part of this transforming journey. It will not be an easy road, I think, but a necessary one nonetheless.

As I developed the constructivist approach to career and learning table, my natural tendency was to start thinking about and developing the resources to support it. I know there is a lot of work in this space that still needs to be done, and which I can see myself doing. What this looks like and how it might be done, I still need to think about as it is beyond the MPP. What I can envision is my role in the design and development of professional development that will sit alongside this table. Working alongside senior management and careers advisors to re-envision career in their schools. Designing curriculum content and support resources and assisting teachers to customize their programmes to integrate constructivist career and learning. A big space here, which will need some brave thinking around attitudinal shifts and resourcing on the part of schools.

Another key area I am keen to pursue is mentoring and facilitating post-graduate students. Something I would not have considered prior to MPP, but something I have come to appreciate through my own connection with my supervisors and mentor, and work through my role on the NMIT advisory board.

I do love one-on-one interventions and group career development facilitation, and with a stronger sense of 'possible selves' I feel that my career development practice will be strengthened. My goal, once I have completed the MPP, is to revisit my private practice – top to bottom to rejuvenate and repackage just what this might look like. I am excited by this, as, in my mind, I have shifted from 'contractor', to 'consultant' and 'practitioner' ... from whispering to projecting my professional voice.

When I re-read this, it seems like so much I would like to do in this space, but what has become very clear to me is that I no longer want to just 'pick up' any design and development contracts, but rather take a more discerning approach. First and foremost, I am a careers practitioner, and this is where my future career focus must be to be true to and fulfil my hoped-for self.

Appendix 2

Review of Learning

