

**Re-framing service delivery,
professional practices and
professional identities in UK
careers work:
ESRC Seminar Series**



**So what have we learnt from others?
Sally-Anne Barnes**

Summary of what we have learnt from others

We have learnt:

- What it is to be a professional
- New ways of thinking about ourselves and the way we work
- To construct a new story of professional practice
- How technology can be used to enhance services
- That the careers profession is an evolving story

To start...Remembering what it is to be a professional

To start, Mark and Mary suggested that to evolve we, as professionals, need to keep in touch with what it means to be a **learner** and to be **curious**. It is good to be reminded of those activities and interactions that make us 'professional'.

Today, it is evidence that as a community of careers professionals (practitioners, trainers, students, managers, researchers), we are still curious and eager to learn from others.

New ways of thinking about ourselves and the way we work

- New ways of working with clients – getting them to tell their stories, to identify themes which can be part of constructing future stories
- Yasmina highlighted the important role a practitioner plays in addressing the gap between the current and future story by supporting students in gaining work experience, developing language skills, etc.
- She also noted the important role a client can play in being a cultural teacher or cultural informant.

To construct a new story of professional practice

In the UK and Ireland the careers profession is in the process of changing, this is our opportunity to talk about our past story, take what we have learnt and to construct a new story – a story of our future. We have seen examples today.

Yasmina told a story of successful collaboration between a UK and a Chinese university to support UK educated Chinese students gain sustainable employment.

How technology can be used to enhance services

At IER, we are engaged in thinking about developing and trying out new ways of providing up-to-date LMI. So, what was particularly interesting was the use of video-conferencing to engage students and connect them with employers and practitioners to access real-time LMI. And more excitingly, how virtual reality can be used to engage young people in the process of skills development. Both examples of how employability can be developed and supported.

How technology can be used to enhance services – example

- Yasmina's story taught us how one technology can be used to enhance careers service delivery by providing, credible, up-to-date LMI that is believable and real for students. Employers were given the opportunity to talk to students and explain the skills, knowledge and experience they expected of potential recruits.

How technology can be used to enhance services – example

- Vic's story taught us the importance of an online space for young people to construct different identities and stories to learn about career transition skills to enhance their employability. By using technology, a safe space (the Inter-life island) was created to explore real world experiences and enable young people to construct a new story.

The careers profession is an evolving story

To return to Mark and Mary's presentation...the careers profession is an evolving story that is never-ending. It is never-ending as we are operating in a changing and evolving labour market; our client group is diverse and their needs complex. The story of the careers profession reminds of what we can do and what have learnt along the way. More importantly, we have learnt how we can construct a positive future story from what we have learnt, understand what is possible and has potential in the future.

What others said they had learnt...

- How powerful story telling can be, particularly in understanding professional lives.
- The importance of acknowledging and interrogating our own story and identity.
- That buddying up international and home students can be successful in developing employability skills.
- The importance of understanding categories and frameworks in story telling.
- The importance of looking for a hidden story.

What others said they had learnt...

- The need to change own thinking about the use of narrative and story telling.
- How we can make use of stories in practice.
- How important it is for the profession to share.
- The significance of technology in creating a powerful new story for the profession and how we can portray our work as innovative.
- The importance of reigniting curiosity to encourage the profession to think about what is possible.

Summary

Today, we have been given three stories of how we can enhance careers services: first, by understanding the story of our clients and ourselves; second, by collaborating with key stakeholders to engage our clients; and finally, by using technology.

Overall, we have learnt the **importance of understanding stories** not only for us as professionals, but also for our clients (whether they are adults or young people) and, most importantly, how to tell the story of our future.