Mapping the Future of Undergraduate Career Education

Equitable Career Learning, Development, and Preparation in the New World of Work

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Neither Online, Nor Face-to-Face, But Integrated Career Guidance: Introducing New Ways of Engaging Undergraduate Students in Career Learning and Reflective Careering

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Digital technology has been widely adopted in education with the emergence of a range of e-learning technologies and pedagogies (Goh et al., 2020; Mnkandla & Minnaar, 2017; Trakru & Jha, 2019). In career education and guidance, we can learn from this wider trend and make more use of digital strategies to strengthen the quality and outcomes of career learning.

The need for digital approaches to career guidance is in part informed by the new opportunities that digital tools afford educators. But an engagement with the digital also responds to a more fundamental shift. Our careers are now increasingly enacted on, and conducted through, the internet and so it is inevitable that career guidance should engage more deeply with these technologies (Hooley, 2012). The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated this trend, delivering a career shock to many people (Akkermans et al., 2020) and increasing the digitization of working life (Nagel, 2020).

This chapter draws on a strand of work that developed in Norway as part of a policy commitment to digitizing public services (Norwegian Ministries, 2012), and which has become central to the provision of careers services (Hooley et al., 2015; Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). As Norway explored the digitization of careers work it became clear that the country would pursue an 'integrated career guidance' approach which combined face-to-face and digital approaches (Bakke et al., 2018). This led to the funding of a new course which afforded us the space to develop the theory and practise integrated career guidance as we developed Norwegian careers practitioners' competence.

Integrated career guidance is an approach to delivering career support that uses digital technologies, face-to-face interactions and any other approaches, such as the provision of printed information, that are useful to learners. The key issue is not the mode of delivery but its objectives. Integrated guidance is based on career learning and entails designing career learning processes by drawing together different modes of communication and interaction, always with the learners' needs as a central concern.

The Challenge of the Pandemic

> *Amidst the chaos of the 2020 pandemic, career practitioners at Poppleton University*[1] *recognized that they were going to have to change their approach. As they tried to shift their face-to-face services online they became frustrated. What was the point of a careers fair or lecture if you couldn't see the students and if they kept their cameras off? These frustrations prompted deeper reflection. What was it all for? What were they trying to achieve? Shunting existing approaches online was not an appealing option, but what was the alternative?*

At the start of the pandemic university career services saw many of the key features of their delivery model collapse. Careers fairs disappeared, work in the curriculum was more challenging as faculty faced their own challenges in moving to e-learning, one-to-one career counselling became increasingly difficult and opportunities for industry placements dried up (Binnie, 2020; Greaves, 2020; Institute of Student Employers, 2020).

The paradigm shift was not confined to career services but impacted the whole of higher education. After decades of experimenting with e-learning, universities were propelled into full adoption of e-learning during 2020 (Adnan & Anwar, 2020; Ali, 2020; Mpungose, 2020). The rapid movement of higher education online presented universities with logistical and technical challenges as well as challenges related to ensuring equality of access, a positive student experience and the maintenance of social approaches to learning during a period of 'social distancing'.

Moving to a New Paradigm

> *Staff at the Poppleton University careers service took a deep breath, stepped back and considered what they were trying to achieve. So much of their practice had emerged gradually in response to accidents of history, staff preferences and the insistence of university administrators or faculty. The careers service was committed and responsive to student need, but it was rarely more than the sum of its parts. Perhaps now was the time to think differently and to think bigger.*

Digital technologies have been part of career education practice since at least the 1960s (Watts, 2002). Ever since then, innovation has been ongoing with new

approaches emerging regularly (Brigstock, 2019a; Pordelan & Hosseinian, 2020; Turcotte & Goyer, 2018). A recent example can be seen in Farouk Dey's work at Johns Hopkins University, where a strongly digital approach has emerged alongside initiatives designed to rethink and retheorize career learning, embed it in the curriculum and enmesh students within networks of social capital (Dey, 2019; Hub, 2019). Dey's work clearly shows that innovation, the use of educational perspectives and the centrality of digital technologies are not new. What we hope to add to this is a more thorough theorization of how to respond to both these long-standing trends and the recent shifts prompted by Covid.

Some commentators have critiqued the careers field's engagement with the digital, noting that there are issues in training, quality assurance and the integration of digital approaches into careers practice. These problems are partially brought about by the fact that there is a lack of digitally relevant counselling models and career learning pedagogies (Brigstock, 2019b; Hooley & Staunton, 2021; Kettunen & Sampson, 2019; Vigurs et al., 2017). Therefore, the counterfactual story of Poppleton University that we present in this chapter was difficult for universities to realize as they responded to the pandemic.

Existing approaches have variously emphasized the ways in which digital technologies can be used to provide information, to create forms of automated interaction or to mediate interactions between people through forms of digital communication (Hooley et al., 2010). In practice, this has seen the proliferation of careers websites and apps and the provision of career education and guidance via audio or video link, email, and chat technologies (Fusco et al., 2020; Vigurs et al., 2017). Much existing work has focused on the technologies, exploring what can be done, without really focusing on the why or the how. With *integrated career guidance* we refocus the discussion on the use of new technologies towards these questions and ask how the engagement with digital tools can enhance career learning.

We use the term 'integrated career guidance' broadly to describe all forms of interventions that support 'individuals and groups to discover more about work, leisure and learning and to consider their place in the world and plan for their future' (Hooley et al., 2018, p. 20). It is delivered by careers professionals, but also by faculty and other university staff and involves employers, external stakeholders, parents and students in a myriad of career conversations and other forms of career learning. Integrated career guidance encompasses classroom-based learning, experiential learning and traditional career counselling and utilizes a range of technologies and approaches to deliver these interventions as well as to create new and innovative forms of practice. As such it can be argued that integrated career guidance increases the accessibility of career guidance services through digital modes of communication and extends their reach beyond the careers centre or employability-focused elective modules.

In this chapter we are going to set out the theoretical basis of the integrated career guidance approach. We argue that such an approach needs:

- an *ontological basis* which sets out its morals, ethics and ideology;
- a *pedagogic basis* which establishes our understanding of how integrated career guidance supports individuals to learn and make progress in their career; and
- an approach to *instructional design* which sets out a practical approach to delivering integrated career guidance.

Why Offer Integrated Guidance? Our Ontological Basis

> *As they packed up the careers service ready to move their programs online, the staff of Poppleton University could be forgiven for introspective and existential thinking. What was career education even for? In a fiery email chain they generated lots of ideas, shared different perspectives and gradually came to some agreement. Career education shouldn't just be about helping privileged people to become more privileged. Rather it should encourage learners to engage in a reflective consideration of their place in the world and their impact upon it. It should support marginalized students to succeed and help all students to think about what 'success' really means.*
>
> *Career, they argued, could be a democratic concept which was available to all. Career guidance should be supporting learners to be active in all parts of their life, leisure, learning and work and make a positive contribution to society.*
>
> *Shifting the aims of career guidance helped the staff at Poppleton to see that they should not just be supporting decision making and brokering students into the entry point of the labour market. Instead, they needed students to engage in a deep learning process, thinking about themselves and the world around them, building new skills and knowledge and increasing their capacity to act.*

Supporting learners in their careers requires practitioners to have a way of seeing the world and a set of moral, ethical and ideological beliefs about what learning is and what it is for. An underlying component of this ontology is the question about career, what it is and what place or function it has in people's lives. A common distinction between ways of thinking about career is the dichotomy between career as a race and career as a journey (Law, 2009). The journey metaphor views career as a non-hierarchical lifelong endeavour that can be shared with others, while the race metaphor implies that career is a hierarchical and competitive process in which there are both winners and losers (Bakke, 2021).

In integrated career guidance we reject the idea that career should be a race and problematize the idea that career interventions are primarily about helping people to achieve money, power, reputation and the other markers of conventional success. Of course, for some learners this will be exactly what they are seeking to achieve, and participation in integrated career guidance may well help them in these aims, but it should also help them to become reflective, to critique norms and hegemonic conceptions of career (Wikstrand, 2019), and build their capacity to exercise agency in their lives and act on the world around them. Such approaches might empower people to make choices that run counter to social expectations, for example choosing lower-paid jobs that offer moral or spiritual rewards or which simply allow more time

for leisure, family life and unpaid forms of work and activity. They may also engage students in critical thinking about the structures and hierarchies that exist around them and lead them to question these things and take action through their career to change them.

How Learning Happens: The Pedagogic Basis of Integrated Guidance

> *The Poppleton University team challenged themselves to start with a blank page and think big. The fact that career guidance and learning would increasingly be done in an online environment reconfigured many of the traditional tools that could be used in learning. The time of the 'sage on the sage' was over, and face-to-face career counselling seemed less central too. They recognized that they would need to learn alongside their students, participating in informal learning online as well as engaging with faculty to review and develop the curriculum.*

Thinking of career as life-wide and life-long (Inkson et al., 2015), as democratic and for all (Bakke, 2021; Watts, 2016) and as something that exists in creative tension with existing structures and power relations, has implications for the kind of career guidance that we offer. Such a *critical* approach to careering is rooted in reflexivity, curiosity and a willingness to question assumptions. It is inevitably linked to social justice as it encourages individuals to imagine the world as it could be, not just as it is, and to consider the relationship between context, social structures and individual careering. Integrated career guidance seeks to foster learning, support growth, inquiry and development and encourage an active, experiential and critical engagement with the world. In this sense, integrated career guidance builds on recognized learning and career learning theories (Kolb, 1984; Law, 1999), viewing career learning as a cyclical, iterative and interactive process through which knowledge and skills are gradually acquired, developed and utilized in a dynamic relationship with other people and the wider context.

These approaches draw on Bruner's (1977) theories which conceptualize learning as a spiral which is at once cyclical and progressive. Learners need to engage with conceptual structures and use them to organize the acquisition of knowledge and skills whilst also building a progressively more complex conceptual understanding. Framed as a career development learning spiral this means that individuals need to build their understanding of career as a concept whilst simultaneously acquiring career management skills and knowledge (Hooley, 2021). The career educator's role is then to provide the scaffolding that supports this process of career learning.

Career learning is also understood to be a social process through which individuals come together and support each other to learn and career. The building of scaffolding is not just the creation of a ladder up which the learner can ascend, but rather the construction of a climbing frame on which learners can play together.

The career educator is a facilitator and a connector as well as an instructor and a trainer. The scaffolding is carefully constructed from content, exercises, questions and assessments to foster learning, although learners may sometimes be unaware that it even exists. The visible aspects of education, the teacher standing at the front of the class, are only the tip of the iceberg, with much going on in the preparation and structuring of learning.

This means that integrated career guidance needs to analyse both *what* the learner needs to learn about career and *how* the learner can learn about career. The fact that much of this learning takes place in a digital environment means that the educator needs to think about *what* the learner needs to learn about careering in the digital world and *how* learning takes place in a digital environment. This can sometimes mean tracing back to more elementary starting points, e.g. building digital competence to allow the learner to get online to access career learning material. Such skills-based training needs to take place within a spiral framework where the learner is motivated by the idea of developing their career, whilst they engage with the technical challenges of accessing the digital environment and building their career management skills, scaffolded by the integrated career guidance programme.

Kettunen and her colleagues (Kettunen et al., 2013; Kettunen, Vuorinen, & Sampson, 2015) have explored the different ways in which career professionals can respond to changing technologies. After surveying various ways of using digital technologies for careers work, Kettunen, Sampson, & Vuorinen (2015) argue that practitioners should recognize that there has been a paradigm change and this necessitates a new approach which they describe as 'co-careering'. Co-careering moves away from a focus on the delivery of information. It is non-hierarchical and learner centred and is based around learners using digital tools in an autonomous manner drawing on a range of online resources for their career. Hooley and Staunton (2021) link Kettunen et al.'s approach to the wider theoretical perspective of 'connectivism' (Cormier, 2008; Siemens, 2005; Wheeler & Gerver, 2015), which views digital technologies as breaking down traditional hierarchies and requiring a new facilitative role from educators of the kind that Kettunen et al. described for careers practitioners.

Kettunen's concept of co-careering is a useful building block for integrated guidance as it links a broad non-hierarchical concept of career to digital technologies and sets out an ethical and pedagogical role for the careers practitioner. But we are also mindful of the critiques that are made of connectivism by Selwyn (2016) and others including Hooley and Staunton (2020) in relation to careers education, which highlight the differential capabilities that individuals have for making use of the internet in terms of access to it and being a competent user, and raise concerns about the ownership of online spaces and their capacity to inscribe ideology and power. This leads us to argue that there is a need for practitioners to adopt more critical approaches to co-careering which acknowledge both the way in which digital technologies have changed existing hierarchies of careering and recognize and critique the new forms of hierarchy that have emerged.

What Should Careers Practitioners Do? The Instructional Design Approach

> *As the University of Poppleton started to return to campus in the aftermath of the pandemic, the team reviewed their delivery. Many members of the team are involved in delivering a standard two-hour lecture on 'Resume writing' which faculty often request the career service to run for final-year students. In this session students are taken through the key principles of resume writing, provided with examples of effective resumes and given an opportunity to ask questions. The session ends with students being encouraged to go away and put their learning into practice.*
>
> *The team developed an alternative, flipped classroom model for this session in which students are provided with access to online resources explaining how resumes should be set out and some model resumes in advance of the session. They are told to draft a resume and/or LinkedIn profile before the session starts. This means that the two hours of face-to-face time are then used for reviewing the work that the students have done and discussing how to improve it and make use of it as a part of their career transition.*

Integrated career guidance draws on blended learning pedagogies (Bersin, 2004; Bonk & Graham, 2012), which argue that effective learning needs to identify the learner's need and the learning problem and then to design the instructional approach to meet these. This approach is often described as instructional design (Merrill, 2002; Wilson, 2005; Zemke, 1998), and covers a wide range of different approaches. The idea of instructional design can be illustrated through the example of the flipped classroom (Akçayır & Akçayır, 2018), where contact time is reorganized so that students begin with the self-study of, usually digital, learning materials and time together with the tutor is used for questions, debate and other social learning activities and to deepen critical engagement with the learning material.

The example above shows the importance of the design of the instruction. By flipping the classroom and ordering the components of instruction differently, students are scaffolded to move further round a career learning spiral. In integrated career guidance, we think carefully about how delivery is organized to best effect and make use of traditional methods including face-to-face counselling sessions, group sessions and the provision of career information as well as digital forms of communication and interaction (e.g. chat, video-link, email or wikis).

In choosing the right tool for the right job, we must pay attention to the affordances of the technology (what it can actually do) and consider how these can support our aims. Key decisions include whether we want students to interact with us and each other:

- face-to-face, digitally or in some blend of the two;
- in a synchronous or asynchronous way;
- through text-based chat or multi-media forms of communication;
- using video or audio;
- one-to-one; one-to-many; or many-to-many;
- in open/public spaces, such as LinkedIn or Facebook, or behind the closed doors of the virtual learning environment or classroom;

- for minutes, hours, days or weeks; and
- once, repeatedly or regularly.

These are decisions that we make in all forms of learning and ones which are often pre-decided for us by the infrastructure, budget, resources, policies, quality assurance, geography, architecture and design that shape our teaching. In conventional lecture halls, seminar rooms and counselling offices, decisions have already been made about the forms and format of interactions that can and should take place; for example, placing the teacher at the front of the lecture hall and the students facing them rather than one another is one such decision. The instruction has already been designed, just not always consciously or purposefully. This is where the use of technology becomes important because it offers new opportunities and, in some cases, gives us new choices that can transcend existing limitations.

As noted above, integrated career guidance applies the idea of co-careering and career as a democratic project, and as such the approach emphasizes the importance of a community of career learners, including the careers practitioners themselves, learning together. Sometimes individual activity is the right choice, but much potential exists in group-based career learning activity. Interacting and participating in a mutually supportive learning community can build capacity for reflexivity and critique, which is also central to developing individuals' capacity to transform the world through their career.

Integrated Guidance in Practice

> Using all of the tools, ideas and approaches that they had reviewed, the Poppleton team began to build a new type of programme, one that was not just preparation for recruitment processes or career training, but which supported students to become critical, lifelong learners and careerists. The programme took place in the curriculum delivered both by faculty and by careers practitioners working in partnership with them, in the careers centre, as part of student activities and in informal online spaces, and it used a range of tools to support this, from whiteboards and classrooms, to LinkedIn and TikTok, but the technology was always in service of learning and never an end in itself.

Integrated career guidance starts with an investigation into learners' needs, often using dialogic and participatory techniques to get learners to define what they want and to inform how the learning itself is structured. This starting point supports the creation of learning aims which can be used to design learning processes that utilize a range of modes of delivery and which scaffold the career learning process.

Using Salmon's (2000, 2002) five-stage online learning model is helpful, although this is only one model that can be used and it can be critiqued for imposing an artificial and simplistic linearity onto a process that is actually recursive and complex. But its approach and philosophy align well with the ontology, pedagogy and instructional design approach that we have outlined so far. Models are inevitably

reductive, but they help to provide structure to the messiness of reality and provide practitioners with insights about how to act.

The five-stage model provides a ready-made instructional design which was created for asynchronous, text-based e-learning environments but has since been adapted for a wide range of different technologies (Ruzmetova, 2018; Salmon et al., 2010). The model scaffolds learners to move around a learning spiral, gradually increasing their capacity and competence both as online learners and in the learning outcomes of the programme by structuring learning programmes through five stages (see Table 9.1).

Table 9.1 Integrated career guidance tool adapted from Salmon's five-stage model

Stage	Focus	Pedagogical considerations	Technological considerations
1	Access and motivation	Welcoming and encouraging students. Exploring what they want and expect from participating.	Ensuring that students can utilize the technologies that are going to be important for the delivery of the programme and providing support for those that cannot.
2	Socialization	Introducing students to each other and supporting them to build a relationship as a community of learners. Encouraging students to consider the benefits that can be gained from learning and careering in a community.	Giving students an opportunity to send and receive messages and try out other approaches to communication that they will use in the course.
3	Information exchange	Providing content, resources and materials to inform students' career thinking. This might include presenting students with labour market information, career theories and models and case studies.	Choosing the technologies through which information can be communicated e.g. deciding whether to provide reading or video lectures.

Table 9.1 Cont.

Stage	Focus	Pedagogical considerations	Technological considerations
4	Construction of knowledge and skills	Scaffolding students to move round the career learning spiral and begin the process of putting this into practice in their career. This will typically take the form of asking students to respond to materials, demonstrate how they would put them into practice and comment on other students' responses.	Using technology to create the spaces within which knowledge and skills can be developed.
5	Development and enactment	Building connections to content, resources and opportunities outside of the course to support career enactment. This includes providing scaffolding to help students make use of the knowledge and skills that they have developed during the programme and put them into practice in their lives.	Encouraging engagement with new technologies that support further development.

Salmon's model is a social constructivist approach which sees learning as a social process. Social constructivist approaches draw on theorists like Vygotsky (1978), who argued that learners develop skills and knowledge through social interaction with both the teacher and each other. Learning is not simply the assimilation of knowledge, but also includes the integration of learners into a community of knowledge. Drawing on this theoretical base, Salmon's work focuses on developing the *collective* of learners and their relationships with each other and views these relationships as a key resource for learners. This social learning aim has implications for the instructional design of an integrated career guidance course, requiring the selection of fora (both online and face-to-face) that support communication between learners, the formation of community and social learning to happen. It also requires the career educator to spend time building students' motivation and encouraging their inclination to share questions and knowledge with the others. The career educator needs to design a program which meets learners' needs and provides a supportive scaffold and then helps learners get access to the system and the e-learning platform, to facilitate and encourage communication, and structure and follow the learners' process. The careers educator may provide information and resources that support learning, or they may curate this information from other sources (e.g. YouTube).

Embedded within the five-stage model, Salmon provided us another pedagogic technique, called the 'e-tivity' (Salmon, 2002). The e-tivity is a framework for structuring and enabling active and participative online learning for groups. If the five-stage model provides a suggested instructional design for a career education programme, the e-tivity provides a suggested design for an individual activity. Designing an e-tivity begins with thinking about the learning aims and then identifying what new tasks and content learners need to encounter. This means considering how the learning material can be delivered and deciding how to facilitate the processing of it, typically through interaction with other students and the production of an output. Salmon described this process as providing a *spark* for learning, requiring a *response* from learners (typically involving presenting ideas to others and discussing them) and a *summary* or *critique* which is provided by the career educator to support students to identify what is important.

Using Salmon's approaches provides a model for the development of a career education programme which might include multiple e-tivities (and potentially face-to-face activities) linked together through the five-stage model.

> *The University of Poppleton team launched the Poppleton Digital Career Bootcamp aimed at students in their final year. Students are invited to join the programme on the University's Virtual Learning Environment and welcomed when they enrol with a video from one of the team, which presents the programme's structure. Students are then asked to create their own video to present themselves and say a few words about what kind of work or employers they are interested in. Learners are asked to watch all videos, and post 'likes' or encouraging comments on both this and future posts. They are also presented with a new spark encouraging them to think about their fellow students as an important part of their network and to explore ways in which they might help each other in their career.*
>
> *In the next stage, students watch promotional films from a variety of different employers. They are formed into small groups and encouraged to work together to produce a presentation on one of the employers. In the presentation they are asked to cover what the employer does, what job roles they have on offer, and what recruitment process they use. They are also asked to take a critical look at that employer and find out what the employer has been challenged and criticized for in the media. The group posts their presentation online and reviews and comments on the presentations of other groups.*
>
> *In the next stage of the programme students are encouraged to think about what the experience of transition looks like. They are presented with a new spark, which is a series of narratives from recent graduates about how they experienced transition, and are encouraged to reflect on these narratives. They are also encouraged to identify, make contact with and interview a recent graduate from the University of Poppleton. The students are introduced to LinkedIn to support them in this networking. They then have to post a short summary of their learning about transition and discuss how they will approach transitions themselves. They are asked to comment on each other's posts and the career educator draws together the learning and offers a summary of the good advice that the group has identified.*

Finally, the students are encouraged to set up a LinkedIn account for themselves. They are provided with one spark that talks about how to optimize a LinkedIn account and another that provides detail on the business model of LinkedIn and the way that the site uses your data. They share their LinkedIn account with other students and discuss how best to manage engagement with the platform safely and in a way that they are comfortable with. The career educator invites them to a final synchronous plenary session and summarizes their thoughts, wishes them luck in their careers and provides links to more resources, including highlighting other programmes and services run by the career service.

At the end of the example above, students have built their knowledge about how career transitions work, but they have also formed a supportive network of fellow students and begun the process of building a broader professional network. Through a well-designed learning process multiple career learning outcomes can be achieved by using a range of technological tools in service of learning. For career educators these kinds of programmes also offer the advantage that they can be designed once and used many times as once the resources are in place different groups of students can work with them repeatedly.

Reflections on Integrated Guidance

As students started to engage with the programme it became clear that the new integrated career guidance approach was challenging and effective in equal measures. New types of students started to access career education and the quality of conversations and depth of learning increased. But it was also strange and unexpected. Some students wanted to focus on conventional notions of success and expressed concerns that taking a learning-centred, critical approach was a distraction. Others found the use of multiple technologies challenging. But the co-careering approach, involving students, faculty and careers professionals in dialogue and review, gradually saw the programme evolve and develop, ultimately leading to a fundamental change in the place of career in the University of Poppleton's curriculum and culture.

In this chapter we have introduced you to the integrated career guidance approach. Inevitably much of this has focused on how to use digital technologies to deliver career education. But integrated career guidance is not primarily a *digital approach*; it is primarily an *educational approach* which is comfortable in using all of the technologies available to deliver career guidance through learning. Integrated guidance is about choosing the right tool and the right venue for learning, not about a drive to technological adoption. There is huge value in human connection and face-to-face meetings where this is possible and appropriate. The principles of integrated career guidance can still be applied in wholly face-to-face environments.

Practitioners seeking to take these ideas forward in their context should ask themselves the following questions:

- Why do we offer career guidance at all? What is it we are trying to achieve?
- How do we believe that students best learn about the world beyond the institution and decide what kind of career they wish to pursue in it?
- What approaches, tools and technologies should we use to support career learning?
- How can we engage, involve and listen to students and other stakeholders as we build and deliver our integrated guidance approach?

We hope that the chapter provides sufficient insights to allow readers to begin to create their own integrated career guidance approaches. We need to build up more examples of practice to find out how this approach works. Further research needs to explore how comfortable practitioners are with paradigm change, how different types of students, with different levels of career competencies and digital literacy, respond to this approach. But for now, we wish you luck and look forward to co-careering with you as you experiment with integrated career guidance.

Note

1   Poppleton University is a fictional British university invented by the columnist and academic Laurie Taylor. Like many before us we are using it to illustrate some of the typical dynamics that we find in universities across the UK (and indeed across the world) and to present a counterfactual about how integrated guidance could offer a way forward.

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