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**About Presenters:**

Dr. Hazel Reid is principal lecturer and Director of the Centre for Career & Personal Development at Canterbury Christ Church University, UK. She teaches at graduate and post graduate level in the area of reflective practice, career theory and research methods. She is a Fellow of the Institute of Career Guidance, a Fellow of the National Institute of Career Education & Counselling and a Fellow of the Academy of Higher Education. Hazel supervises a number of doctoral students, has published widely and presented papers at national and international conferences. She is working with colleagues on two projects related to career education and guidance, funded by the European Union. Hazel is working with Linden on an in-depth study of the use of narrative within career counseling in England. The work pays attention to the continuing debate about the purpose, values and methods of career counselling within an uncertain and diverse world.

Professor Linden West is Director of Research Development, Faculty of Education at Canterbury Christ Church University, UK. His books include *Beyond Fragments* and *Doctors on the Edge*. He is the co-author of *Using Biographical Methods in Social Research*, recently published by Sage and lead editor of *Using Biography and Life History Approaches in the study of Adult and Lifelong Learning*, from Peter Lang. Linden co-ordinates the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) Life History and Biography Network and is an Honorary Life Member of the UK Standing Committee for Research on the Education of Adults (SCUTREA) as well as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Working with Hazel, Linden is studying the use of narrative methods in career counseling, using in-depth auto/biographical approaches. His interest is in chronicling and theorizing change and transitional processes, using interdisciplinary perspectives. Linden is a qualified psychoanalytic psychotherapist.



**Title of Paper:** 'Telling Tales': Do Narrative Approaches for Career Counseling Count?

**Abstract:**

Making career and educational choices is often set within an ideological climate in which people are held individually responsible for their predicament. The pressure to enter the labour market or education and training at all costs, whatever the quality or suitability, is likely to be increased in current times. Many career counsellors are deeply concerned about the inadequacy of 'quick fix' responses to the complex requirements of clients. The aim of the paper will be to question the usefulness of narrative approaches for career counselling. By drawing on a current research project, the paper will argue for the importance of narrative and auto/biographical-based approaches in career and educational counselling and in the professional preparation and continuing development of practitioners. The development of such work provides an opportunity to offer a more meaningful, ethical and culturally-sensitive approach to the work – for all involved. The paper also discusses the wisdom of 'mining' from therapeutic counselling, alongside the recognition that practitioners are often involved in quasi-therapeutic encounters - whether realized or not - given the turbulence and diversity of many clients' lives.

The research is auto/biographical; working with a group of eight practitioners to develop the approach and then to apply and evaluate techniques within the context of their work. Initial analysis of the work with clients has highlighted the usefulness of the approach, but has indicated a number of epistemological and political tensions derived from the working culture of career and education counsellors (and researchers) in the UK. These tensions are related to the pressures of time within a target-driven context and the marketisation of career and guidance work. The paper will raise these affective issues for wider discussion. The on-going analysis has confirmed the power of narrative approaches to help clients construct ideas about self and career futures in ways that are more meaningful. But, it is hard work for practitioners and four of the five practitioners have not continued to use a new approach – why? The research is now in its second phase, where the auto/biographical resonances of the work are being explored. Findings will be discussed at the Jiva conference.