

# TRUE NORTH

In today's workplace climate, career advisory has gone beyond the simple act of placing clients into a job. It has become an intricate art of helping clients navigate workplace complexities and interweaving that closely with an individual's beliefs, values and principles. As a career professional, you are tasked with the all-important role of helping one find meaning and fulfilment in their job. You are instrumental in their search for a purpose-driven life; for their **TRUE NORTH**.

## Over 20 Continuing Professional Development Programmes coming your way!



To enhance the learning journey of career professionals in Singapore, WSG has lined up an exciting suite of Continuing Professional Development Programmes. Details will be shared nearer to the respective programme. Stay tuned!



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(if you are not yet on the list).



### MASTERCLASS

Big Five Personality Assessment Certification Integration with Career and Performance Coaching

Career Development Techniques for Professionals Working with People with Disabilities

Certificate in Career Construction

Certificate in Hope-Action Organisation (CHAO)

Certificate in Hope-Action Theory & Practice Masterclass (CHAT)

Chaos Theory for Career Coaching and Career Counselling

Embedding Career Development Practices in the Workplace & Organisations

Group Career Counselling



### SEMINAR/WEBINAR

Career and Psychometric Assessments in Career Development Practice

Professional Supervision for Career Practitioners: The 4W and 1H



### WORKSHOP

Advanced Facilitation Techniques and Skills in Career Counselling & Career Coaching

Career Case Conceptualisation

Chaos Theory for Career Coaching and Career Counselling

Co-Careering and Digital Skills for Career Services

Design Thinking for Career Development

Digital Career and Job Search Strategies Using Professional Social Media Platforms

Group Career Construction Counselling

Motivational Interviewing for Career Coaching and Career Counselling

Self-Care and Mental Well-Being for Career Practitioners

Solution-Focused for Career Coaching and Career Counselling

The SparkPath: Challenge Card for exploring Real-World Challenges to plan career and learning

## IN THE PIPELINE

### Career Advisory Programme (CAP)

**Sep Intake:** 23 Sep 2021

(Application closes: 11 Aug 2021)

**Oct Intake:** 21 Oct 2021

(Application closes: 8 Sep 2021)

### Career Facilitation Programme (CFP)

**Sep Intake:** 6 Sep – 2 Nov 2021

(Application closes: 16 Jul 2021)

**Oct Intake:** 18 Oct – 14 Dec 2021

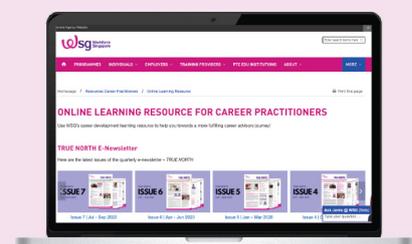
(Application closes: 127 Aug 2021)

### Career Supervision Programme (CSP) NEW

**Oct Intake:** 4 – 6 Oct 2021

(Application closes: 11 Aug 2021)

## LOVING OUR NEWSLETTER?



You can find all issues of **TRUE NORTH** and other career development resources on our **Online Learning Resource (OLR)** for Career Practitioners.

Check it out here:  
[go.gov.sg/olr](https://go.gov.sg/olr)



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## FROM THE CASE CHEST

### Rediscovering Interests & Possible Pathways

Growing up, Sarah (not her real name) always found joy in helping others. Her interest led to her active involvement in her school's Values in Action (VIA) programme to improve the lives of the elderly. Sarah also had a keen interest in sports science. When she was the captain of her CCA sports team, she was eager to learn how sports science could increase people's performance in competitive and non-competitive sports.

When Sarah was in Secondary 4, she had to decide on her preferred subject combination for Junior College. In order to do so, she approached her ECG Counsellor (ECGC), Yui Yi, to explore her areas of interests and possible education and career pathways related to these interests. Her session with Yui Yi started with her reviewing her career interests using the profiling tool in the MySkillsFuture Student Portal. As Sarah and Yui Yi reviewed the careers related to Sarah's RIASEC code, Sarah realised that the careers she was interested in belonged to the helping profession.

To better provide Sarah with the guidance that she needed, Yui Yi developed a positive therapeutic alliance with her by applying OARS, a set of core communication skills (Open Questions, Affirmation, Reflective Listening, Summary and Reflection) in Motivational Interviewing.

Through ECG counselling, Sarah was able to explore the similarities and differences between a career in social work and in sports science. This eventually led to Sarah identifying the transferable skills between the two different industries, helping her resolve her ambivalence towards them.

Armed with this realisation, Sarah saw this as a rediscovery of her interests from a different perspective and was more confident to explore the different education pathways available. As there were other key considerations for Sarah to be aware of when exploring her career choices, Yui Yi also used the Career Wheel to discuss with Sarah internal and external factors that would contribute to her career decision-making process.

With Yui Yi's guidance, Sarah felt reassured, knowing that there were different ways for her interests to be further developed and that her interests were also related to her personality and values. With this new knowledge, Sarah became more confident to navigate her pathways ahead. She eventually selected the subjects, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Economics to further her study at a Junior College.



Contributed by **Looi Yui Yi**  
Senior ECG Counsellor

#### USEFUL LINKS:

[>> Career Decision Wheel](#)

[>> Find a Career You Love Using RIASEC](#)

[>> OARS Model: Essential Communication Skills](#)

## CAREER THEORIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Career theories are developed by academics to help us make sense of people's experiences and dozens have been developed over the last few decades. The theories come from a wide range of academic disciplines and are sparked off by different stimuli. Some theories focus on the content of careers and career decisions, and others look at processes; some are heavily influenced by psychological theories of the individual while the philosophical origins of others are more sociological. The theories do not try to explain every element of the career process and aren't intended to be applied to every person in every context. In one way, this piecemeal approach is quite helpful to us as learners in that the theories do not contradict each other: we don't need to choose which one we want to believe. In another, though, it makes our jobs much more difficult in that it is quite a challenge to keep all the different theoretical approaches in our heads at once, and to know how to and when to use them to help us understand our clients better.

One helpful framework is that devised by Inkson who looked at the range of metaphors that the theories use to illustrate their approaches. The categories below are Inkson's, but Yates have updated the examples to include more recent career theories and concepts.

### 1. LEGACY METAPHOR: CAREER AS INHERITANCE

These approaches are grounded in sociological thinking and hold that our career paths are inevitable, being a product of our family and upbringing, our genes, our geographical location or demographic factors such as our gender or ethnicity. Even some of the more psychological theories which appreciate the role of self-determinism, such as Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise, acknowledge the career inheritances that we are born with.

## 2. CRAFT METAPHOR: CAREER AS CONSTRUCTION

This metaphor incorporates many of the key psychological theories that emphasize the agency of individuals and the role that they can play in determining their career paths. This metaphor encompasses the idea of self-creation of career and the idea of career as part of an identity that helps to create a sense of self. The notion of 'craft' marries ideas of both functionality and creativity. Career models that apply this construction metaphor include Super's life-span, life-space model, Savickas's notion of career construction and the social constructivist theories such as the socio-cognitive career choice theory of Lent, Brown and Hackett.



## 3. SEASONS METAPHOR: CAREER AS CYCLE

This series of theories assumes that the processes of career planning and development are different at different stages in your life. It includes traditional theories such as Super's developmental theory and Levinson et al.'s age and stage theories. More recent theories, such as Maniero and Sullivan's kaleidoscope model, focus on the idea of gender and the varied motivators that drive men and women at specific stages of their careers. Boyatzis and Kolb conceptualize the cycle as a series of cycles, each building on the last.



## 4. MATCHING METAPHOR: CAREER AS 'FIT'

This has been the dominant paradigm in careers for the last 50 years, since Holland came up with his RIASEC inventory of career interests. The metaphor can be explained by the idea of matching square pegs with square holes, and has also been promoted by Dawis and Loftquist's theory of work adjustment and Dawis's concept of person-environment fit. Matching theories such as Holland's have spawned myriad computer programs that link people's interests, skills and values to appropriate job titles and identify suitable occupations.



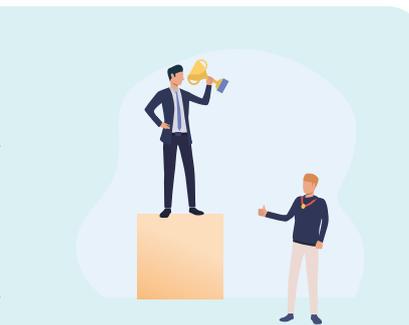
## 5. PATH METAPHOR: CAREER AS JOURNEY

This metaphor incorporates the twin notions of movement between place and time. A range of different theories conceptualize the movement in different ways. The traditional notion of a 'career ladder' implies a journey upwards, climbing promotion by promotion to a more senior, better paid role with more responsibility. Driver describes career journeys as being either 'linear' or 'spiral', and implicit in the boundaryless career is the notion of a journey that is no longer limited to a particular route. This metaphor, perhaps more than any other, has crept into common usage whenever we talk about careers: think about the notion of a career path, reaching a crossroads in your career, taking a step backwards, or finding yourself in a dead-end job.



## 6. NETWORK METAPHOR: CAREER AS ENCOUNTERS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Careers are not pursued in isolation. The network metaphor explores ideas of career as a social or political institution. The prevalence of networking as a way to get and keep a job, or to generate business highlights the importance of relationships, and a relatively recent wave of relational career decision-making theories (Amundson et al.; Blustein) are acknowledging the pivotal and inevitable role that others have in our career choices. There has also been an enormous volume of work on work-family conflict which demonstrates the importance of family life in career decisions.



## 7. THEATRE METAPHOR: CAREER AS ROLE

The organization can be viewed as your stage with you as the central character of a play, taking on different roles as you move through the story. Notions of role models (e.g. Gibson) help us to better understand how to play the part, and psychological contracts as they are negotiated and re-negotiated (e.g. Rousseau) allow the nature of the role to be clarified and to evolve. Role theory leads us to understand concepts of role conflict and role overload, and Gioia and Poole's idea of career scripts is based on the notion of a developing and deepening understanding of a role. Other research on possible selves (Markus and Nurius) shows us how we play with the idea of different future roles, and 'try them out' to see how they feel, as a way to make our career decisions.

## 8. ECONOMIC METAPHOR: CAREER AS RESOURCE

Originally a metaphor conceptualized from the perspective of the employer, this metaphor is best known in the term 'human resources'. This phrase replaced the term 'personnel management' in the mid-1980s as organizations started to think of the labour force as less of a cost and more of an investment or resource. Within the career development arena, the concept is encapsulated in the notion of 'career capital' (e.g. Inkson and Arthur), which looks at a career in terms of a bank of resources that you build up with every new experience encountered.



## 9. NARRATIVE METAPHOR: CAREER AS STORY

The last of Inkson's metaphors is perhaps the one that has most currency in current career development theory and practice. The importance of career stories is grounded in the post-modern concept of multiple truths, which holds that there is no definitive 'truth' about someone's career history. A career history can be told from multiple different perspectives and the same incident can have quite different meanings depending on who sees it and their own take on it. The career story is important because it shows how individuals experience and value their own reality. Our stories about our careers are full of inconsistencies and they change between tellings, but this illustrates the complexities of our careers and our responses to them, and also serves as exploration of how these stories can reveal a great deal about our current situations. Savickas has developed the 'Career Style Interview', which offers a framework for practitioners to use in order to help clients explore their own stories and make their own meanings from their experiences. Other researchers have also made use of this metaphor. Osland, for example, makes links between career 'archetypes', such as individual journeying and heroism, and ancient mythology. Nicholson and West even go so far as to suggest that careers are myths, 'fictions about the past to help us feel good about the future'.

Note: please refer to Julia Yates' book for all the references mentioned above.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Every metaphor has its own strengths and weaknesses, its applicability and non-applicability to the specific situation. Some metaphors, such as "journey," and "construction" are based on the individual's understanding of his or her personal experience. Others, such as "seasons" and "resource" are based on external observers' analysis of the situation. Some metaphors, such as "ladder" and "tournament," do not describe the career so much as the conditions in which the career is enacted: thus, a ladder implies "climbing" and a tournament "competing." "Anchors" and "personality" describe psychological conditions of the career protagonist, and "protean career" and "portfolio career" represent particular career forms.

True understanding comes from considering a range of metaphors. It is this diversity of metaphors that creates such a wide range of images and makes the views of the career practitioners such a contrast with each other. Each of us may, perhaps unconsciously, structure his or her world-view or 'career'-view around a relatively narrow range of metaphors, perhaps even one single metaphor, such as the narrative metaphor of Career Construction Theory.

Can we gain a more eclectic vision of careers by attending to, and trying to learn from, new metaphors which may be as commonplace to others as ours are to us?

**SOURCE:** Yates, J. (2014). In *The career coaching handbook* (pp. 16–17). essay, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.  
Inkson, K. (2004) *Images of career: nine key metaphors*. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65:96-111.

## FURTHER READINGS



Images Of Career:  
Nine Key Metaphors

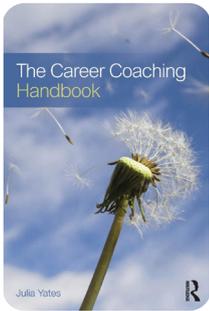


Understanding  
Careers



The Career Coaching  
Handbook By Julia Yates

## BOOK REVIEW



### The Career Coaching Handbook

**Author:** Julia Yates

Career Coach, Veron was looking for a practical-to-use and easy-to-read book on career coaching to help her in providing career advisory to her clients; different ways to probe questions that will help her clients gain better insights to their current situation.

She came across "The Career Coaching Handbook" as featured in the True North and saw positive online reviews of the book where "the author (Julia Yates) is experienced career practitioner and the book is very readable and an invaluable resource for new practitioners for career coaching" and decided to give it a read.

#### Overview of the book

The book is divided into three parts. The first section concentrates on the evidence and theories about careers. The second part looks more specifically at career coaching interventions and covers some of the key approaches, tools and techniques that one can use with their clients. The last section looks at the nuts and bolts of getting a job and how coaching can help clients into the world of the work.

#### Favourite part(s) of the book and your biggest take away

The Real-life cases studies are shared in details and I find the advices based on the author's experience especially helpful and easy to apply. I also made use of the probing questions listed in chapter 9, the GROW (Growth-Reality-Options-Way forward) model to guide clients' behaviour and thought process during my interactions with them.

The best way to describe this book is perhaps the final thoughts from the author:

"I hope that the ideas you have encountered in this book will help. I hope they have given you food for thought and inspired you to try something new in your practice. New ideas will keep us fresh and will enhance our chances of giving our clients the best support possible."



#### Who would you recommend the book to?

Anyone who is keen to seek new ideas and ways to support their clients in their career development journey.



Contributed by:  
**Teh Yen Leng (Veronica)**  
Career Coach  
Workforce Singapore

## TELL US YOUR STORY



WSG is looking for interesting case studies from career professionals showcasing useful learning points, career development practices, etc. that fellow professionals too can adopt in the course of their practice. Your story will also go a long way in encouraging the career professionals community in their journey of providing career advisory to their clients.

If you are a career professional and wish to share your story, please visit our website for details on how you can contribute:

[bit.ly/case\\_study\\_contribution](https://bit.ly/case_study_contribution)

We look forward to your valued contributions!

## SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS!

As part of WSG's effort to improve and better contribute to the career development community, we continuously seek feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of the e-newsletter and explore areas of improvement.

We seek your help to share your views by participating in our short survey. Your contribution will be greatly appreciated!

Do the survey here:  
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true-north-survey](https://go.gov.sg/true-north-survey)



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