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**Language:** English  
**Type of Presentation:** Workshop

**About the Presenter:**

Col McCowan is a registered psychologist, teacher and counsellor. He was, until recently, the Manager of the Careers and Employment Service at the Queensland University of Technology for 16 years. Prior to that he worked in a variety of roles in schools, in training school career counsellors, in career resource development, and in senior policy roles for the Government. He has authored or co-authored three books including his latest on career planning using the Internet. He is on the editorial board for the Australian Journal of Career Development and has convened or co-convened over 20 career related conferences in Australia, including the successful International Symposium on Career Development held in Sydney, Australia in 2004. He is co-convenor of the forthcoming international conference in Cairns in 2011.

His Service won a number of national best practice awards and he has won a number of personal awards including the prestigious national award for career counselling and in 2007 he was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for his work in the career development field in Australia. Col has worked for many years as a consultant for the UNDP, Asia Development Bank and in a volunteer capacity, for the country of Bhutan. He has also worked in Oman. For the past 10 years one of his major interests has been in the application of career development work for the latest generation of young people.

**Title of Paper:** Career Choice-Making Skills in a Modern World: Making Difficult Simple and Making Simple Difficult

**Abstract:**

Three years research was undertaken with 3000, 17 year olds in the final year of secondary education to determine the issues and difficulties they experienced as they were about to choose their post school career/course option(s). The patterns of behaviour didn't seem to fit some of the traditional



models of career decision making and a new understanding of the processes and an example model was developed. Examples of some of the processes students undertake, as well as a number of applications of the model, will be discussed and participants will get the opportunity to relate the findings to their experiences with their clients. Possible skill development programs will be proposed.