

The Chaos Theory of Careers

Customizing Career Services: Issues and Challenges

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Ateneo de Manila University

Quezon City, Philippines

Professor Jim Bright

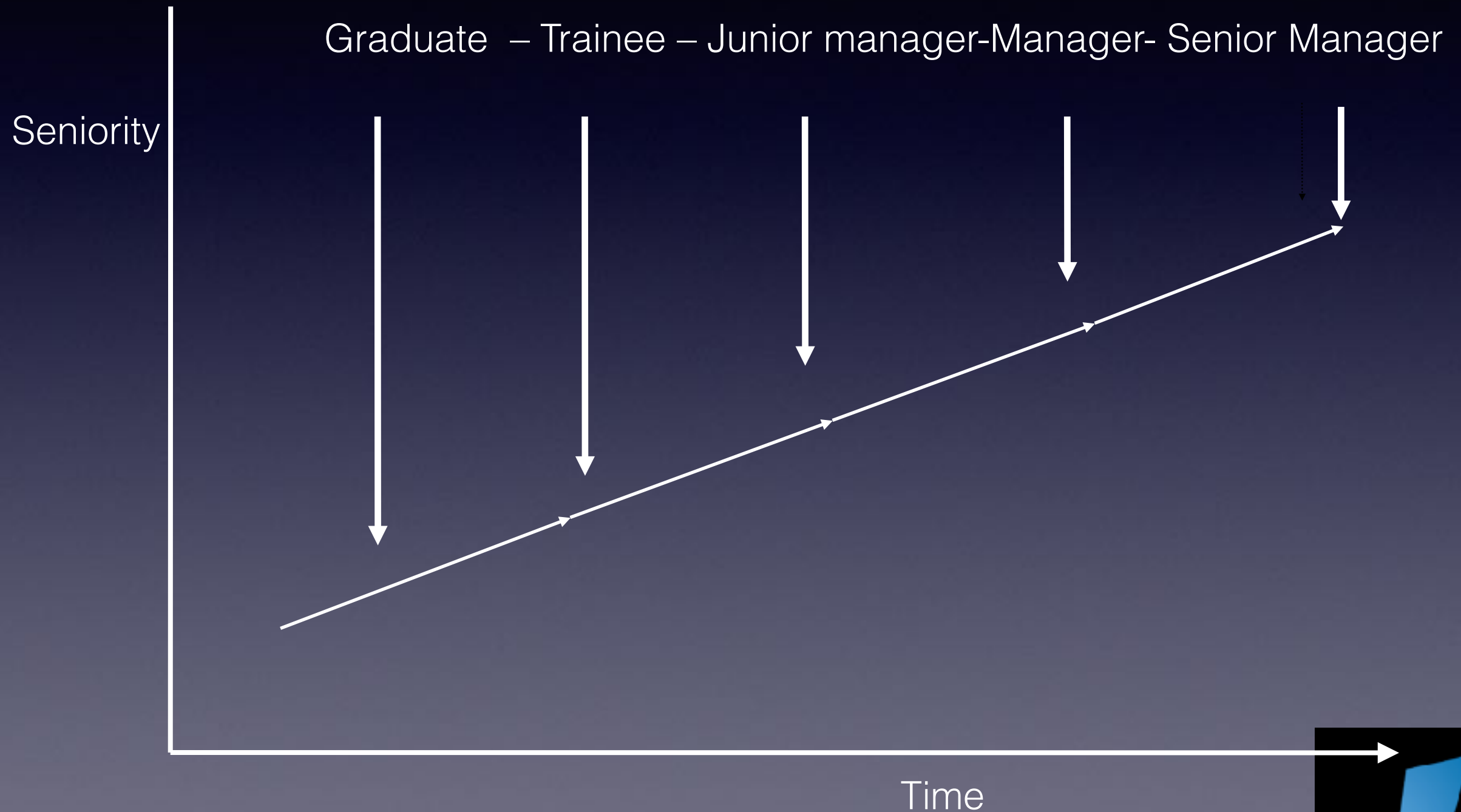
Australian Catholic University

Bright and Associates



Careers are no longer linear

A Traditional Linear Career



“We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.”

— Maya Angelou



The 'founding father' of Career Development Frank Parsons did not have a linear career...

Teacher P/T Boston University, Kansas
State, Ruskin

Sets out ideas on
Vocational Guidance

Legal Editor

Writes on Social Reform

Passes Bar Exam 1881

Teacher
Math, History, French

Cornell at 16
Reads Math (Chaos?) &
Engineering

Engineer for a railroad

Home educated

Financial Crash 1869

Born 1854

Private School

Steel Mill Laborer

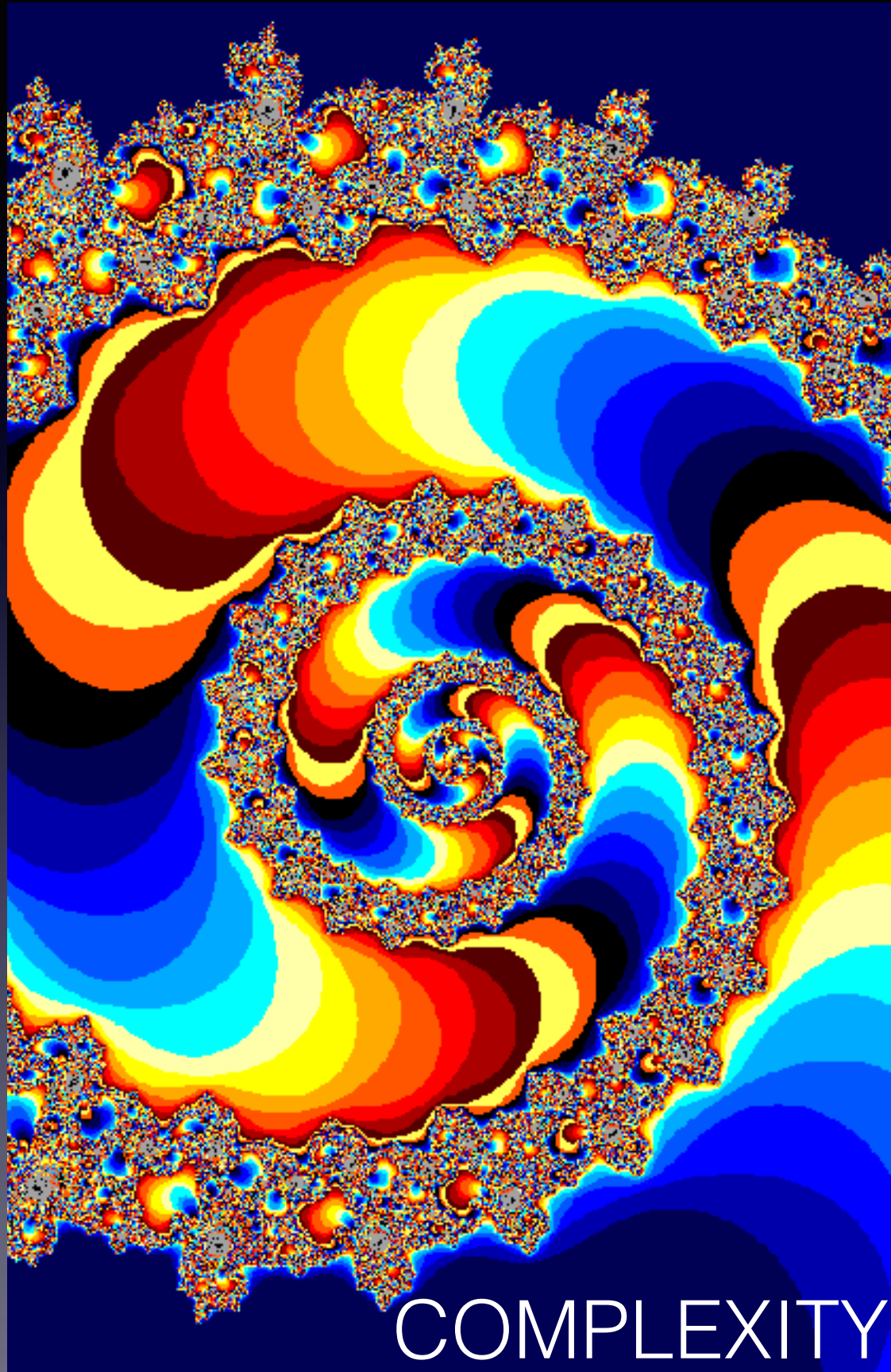


Frank Parsons as Chaos Theorist

From “Choosing a Vocation”, 1909

- “We guide our boys and girls to some extent through school then drop them in this **complex** world” p4.
- “Boys generally drift into some line of work by **chance** , proximity, or uniformed selection” p4.
- “A man cannot be fully successful, nor secure against **change constantly** occurring in the industry, unless he knows a good deal besides the special knowledge applicable to his business” p12

why are careers chaotic?



A tale of ping pong, puppies, predictability and chaos

or why
complexity
makes
prediction
tricky



Ping pong pooch!



Good Theories

- provide a compelling account of **reality**
 - and therefore an account of career development
- provide an overarching philosophy to **guide practice** and education
- provide a guide for **concepts** to **privilege** and prioritise
- provide **practical** intervention strategies
- provide evidence of **outcomes**
- and assist and **improve practice**

Nobody likes being put in a box



Person-job Fit models

a compelling account of reality?

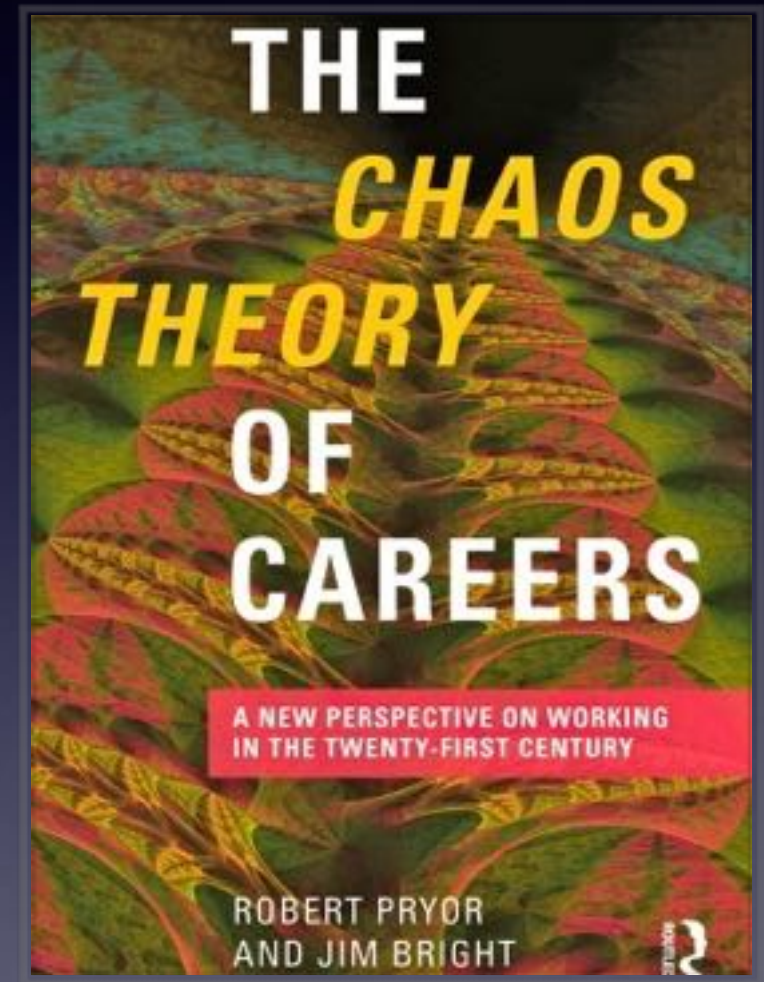
provide a compelling account of reality	reality is reducible to predictable elements	X
and therefore an account of career development	jobs and people are stable	X
provide an overarching philosophy to guide practice and education	match people to jobs	X
provide a guide for concepts to privilege and prioritise	personality, interests, traits, matching	X
provide practical intervention strategies	test and tell	X
provide evidence of outcomes and assist and improve practice	Arnold (2003)??	X

Chaos Theory of Careers and Shift

- Modern Career Paths involve:

- Change
- Complexity
- Chance
- Uncertainty

(e.g. Pryor & Bright, 2003ab, 2007, Bright & Pryor, 2005, 2007, 2011)

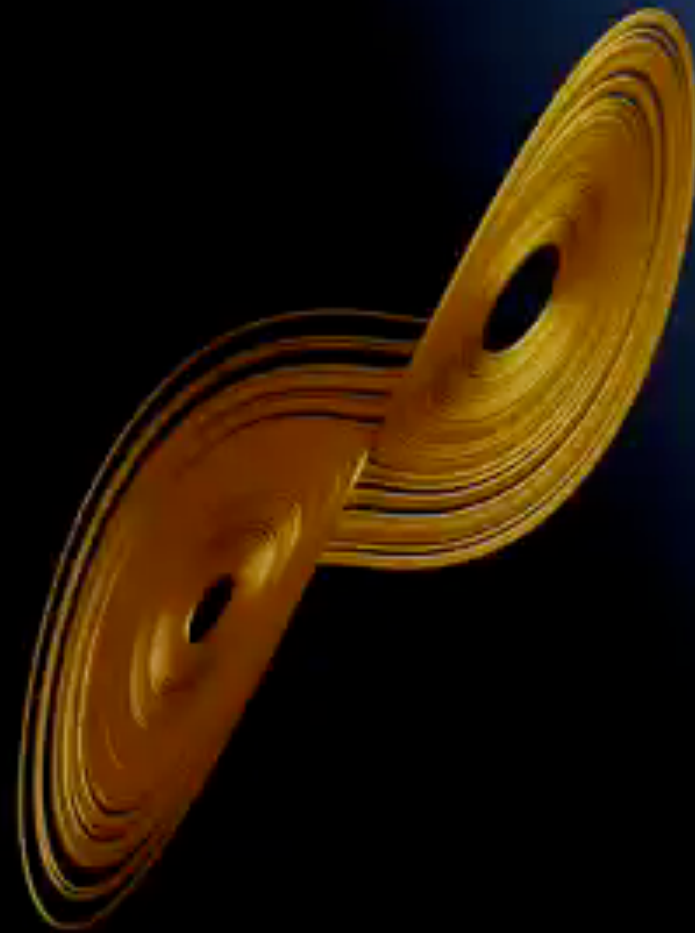


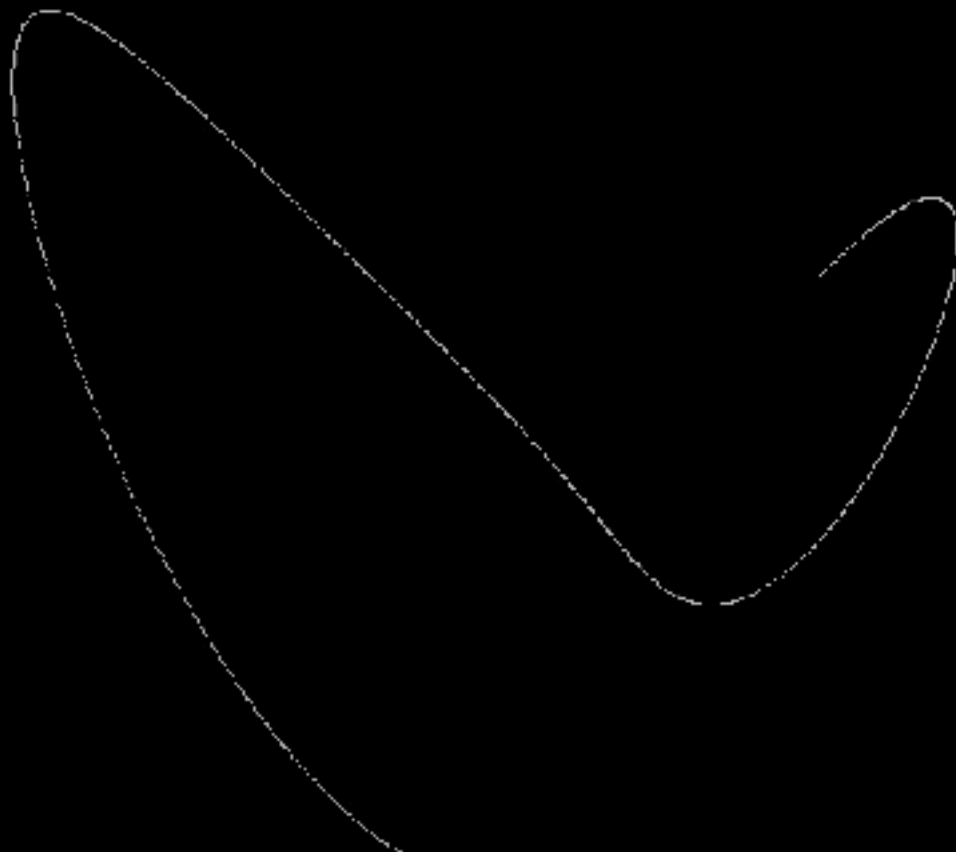
People are complex dynamical systems living in complex dynamical systems



- change is constant
- change is unpredictable

Lorenz, Chaos, Weather & Prediction





Lorenz

Modified Lorenz attractor. It is defined by the following 3 differential equations:

$$dx/dt = -ax + ay$$

$$dy/dt = cx - y - xz$$

$$dz/dt = -bz + xy$$

values $a=10$, $b=28$, $c=3.99$ from 3.98

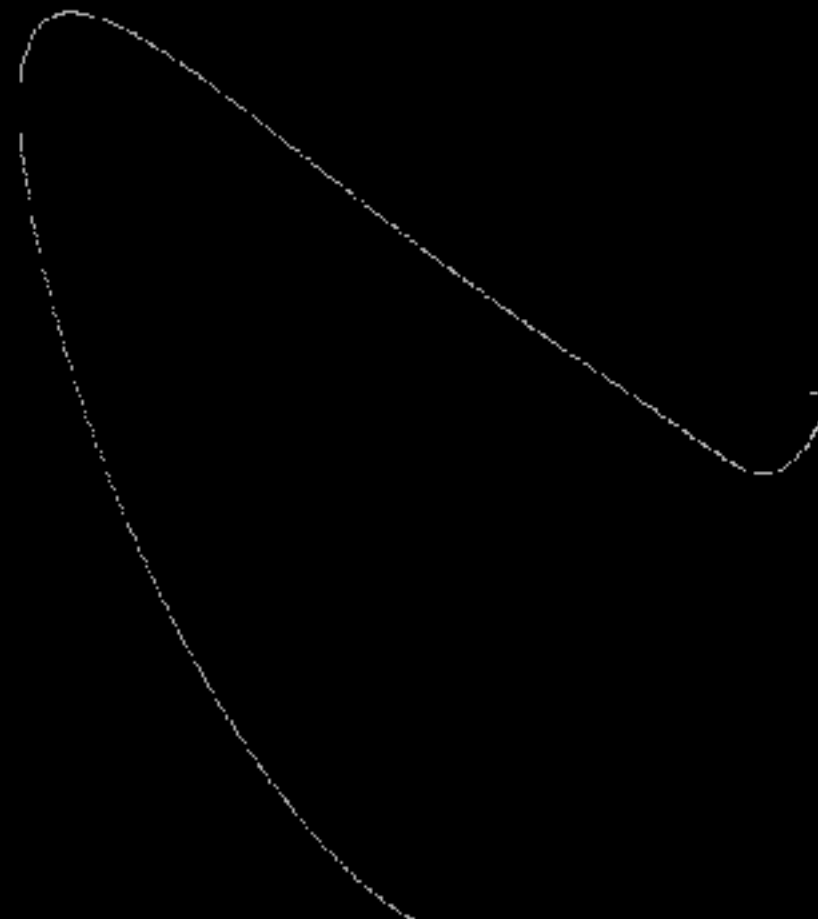
$$x=y=z=1$$

Non-linearity

A tiny change in the initial conditions leads to a dramatically different outcome

In this case the change was

$$C = C + 0.01 \text{ between A and B}$$



A butterfly flapping its wings can be
enough to turn your world upside down



21st Century Challenge: the need to balance order and change



Chance



unplanned and unpredictable events and experiences that are often crucial and sometimes determinative in the narrative of people's careers.

Chance Events

- Being in the right place in at the right time
- Being in the wrong place at the wrong time
- An unplanned work or social interaction
- An unexpected injury or illness
- An activity you unexpectedly enjoyed / did not enjoy
- An unexpected insight/message/vision/calling
- An unplanned move or change or residence

Even the best plans do not always work out

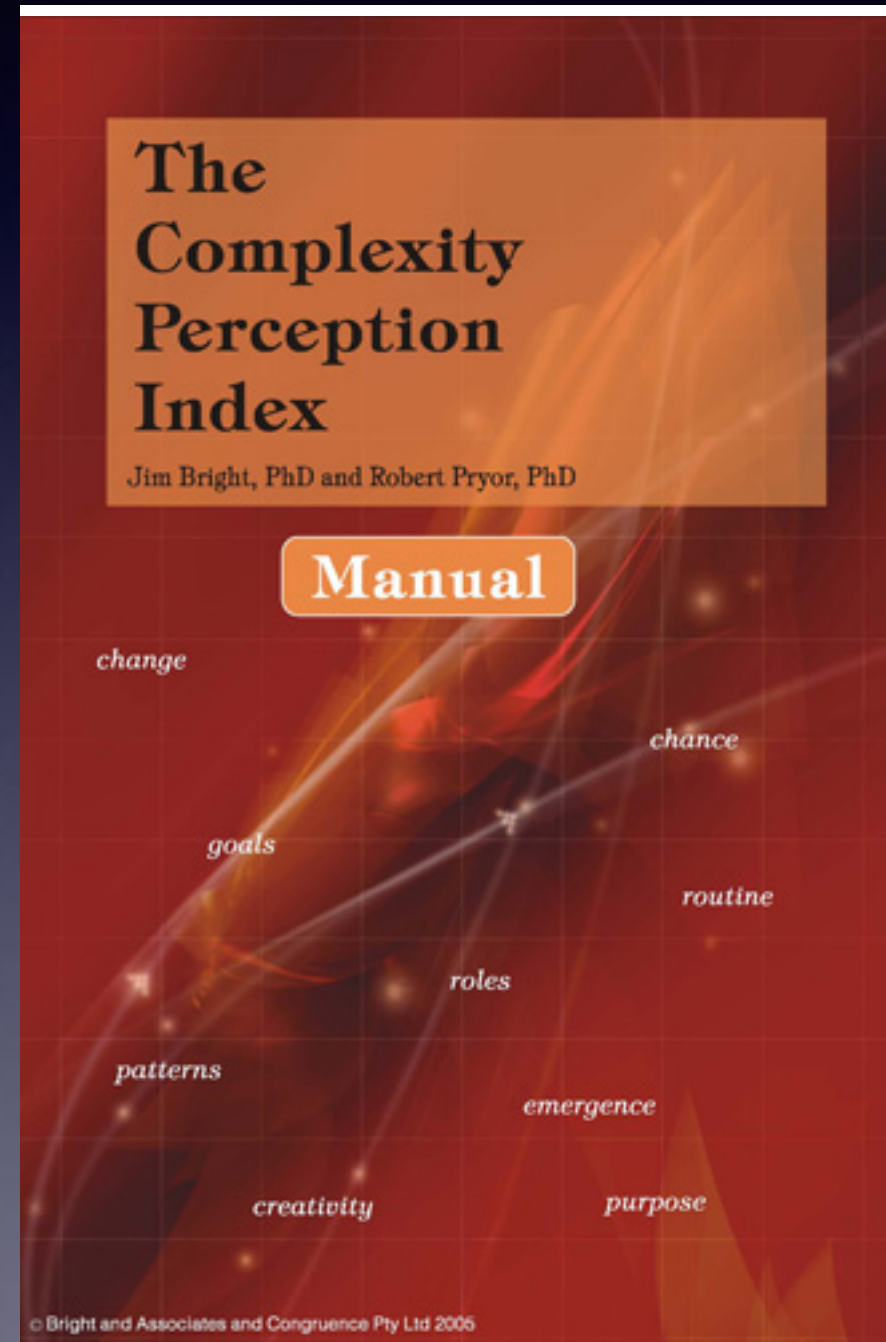


and sometimes things work out better than we could
have dreamed

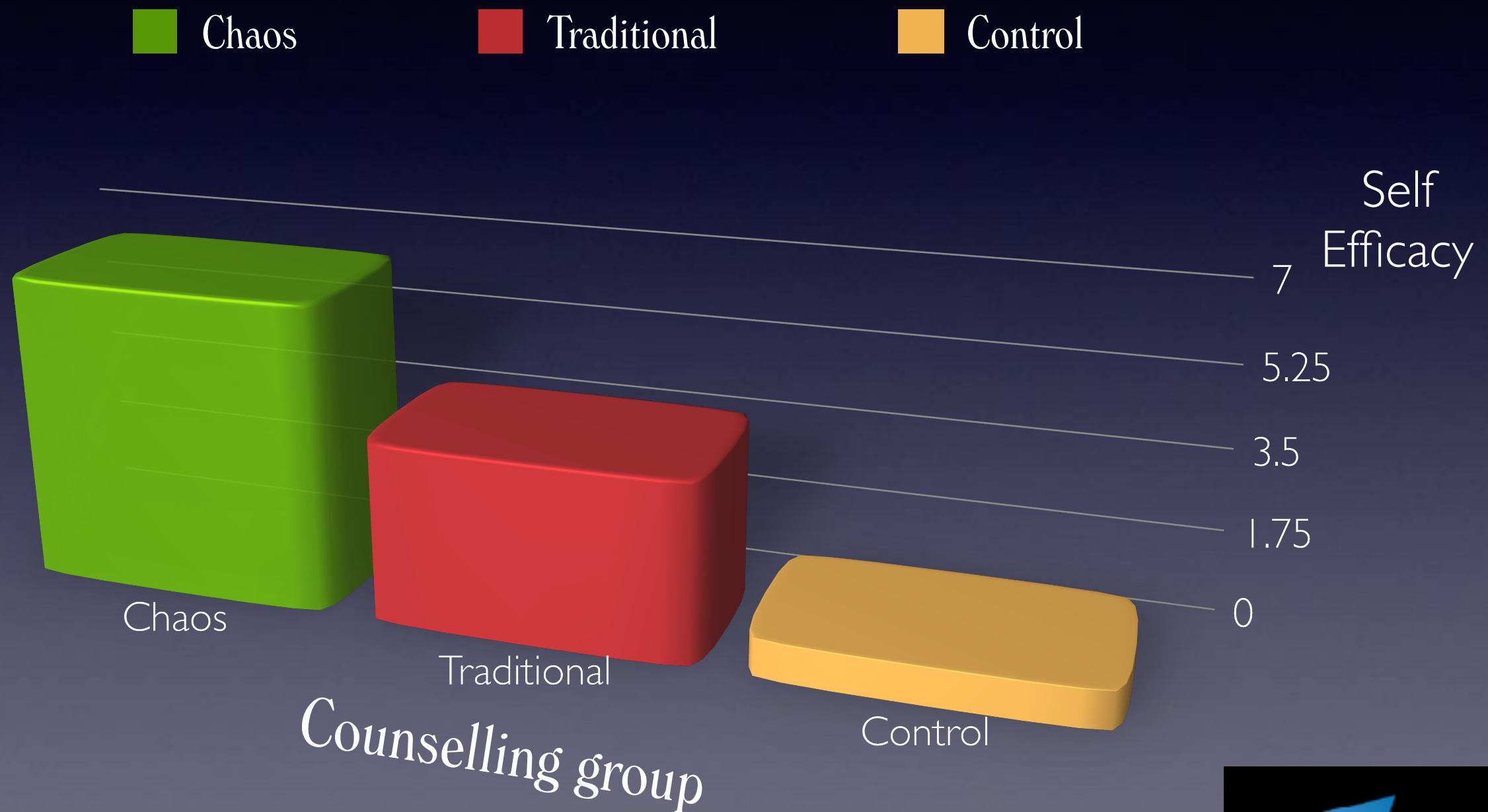


concepts to privilege & prioritise & Intervention Strategies

- Change Perception
- Opportunity Awareness (Luck Readiness - Flexibility, Curiosity, Optimism, Self-Efficacy, Strategy, Luckiness, Risk, Persistence)
- Adaptability
- Planmanship
- Creativity
- Slow Shift, Fast Shift, Deep Shift



Chaos Counselling Increases Self-Efficacy the most over 1 month McKay, Bright & Pryor (2005)



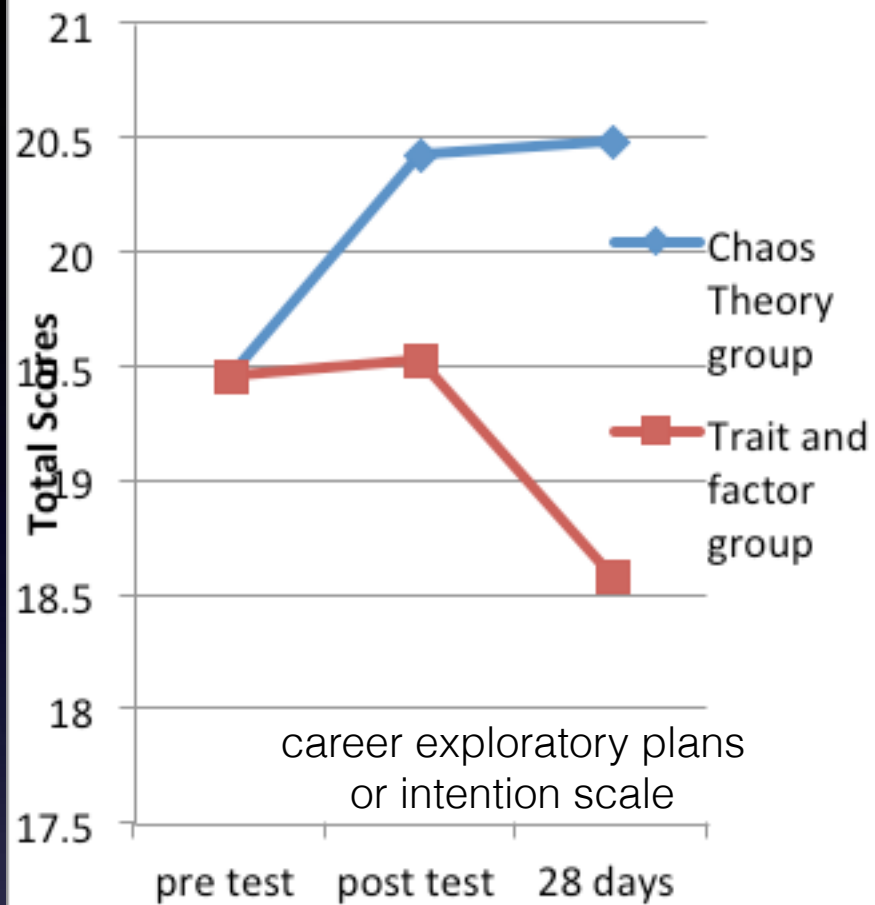
Longitudinal study of High school leavers from Australian High School

Borg, Bright & Pryor (2014)

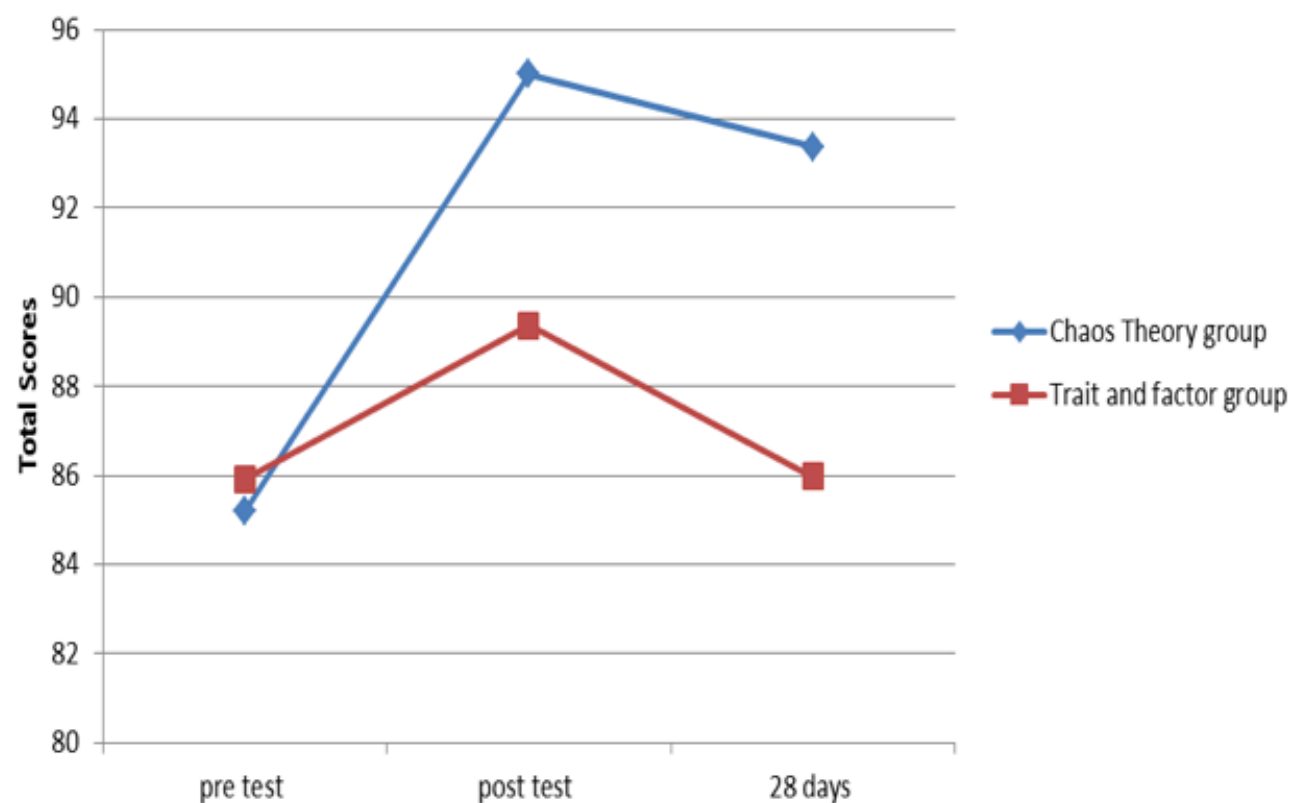
- 50% of students attending university experienced changes to their degree
- 33% students changing degree entirely
- 17% changing the major
- 71% of respondents reported unexpected change Year 12 that was 'significant', 'large' or 'major',
- 53% of respondents changed career interest

Chaos-informed counselling in high schools (Tony Borg, PhD)

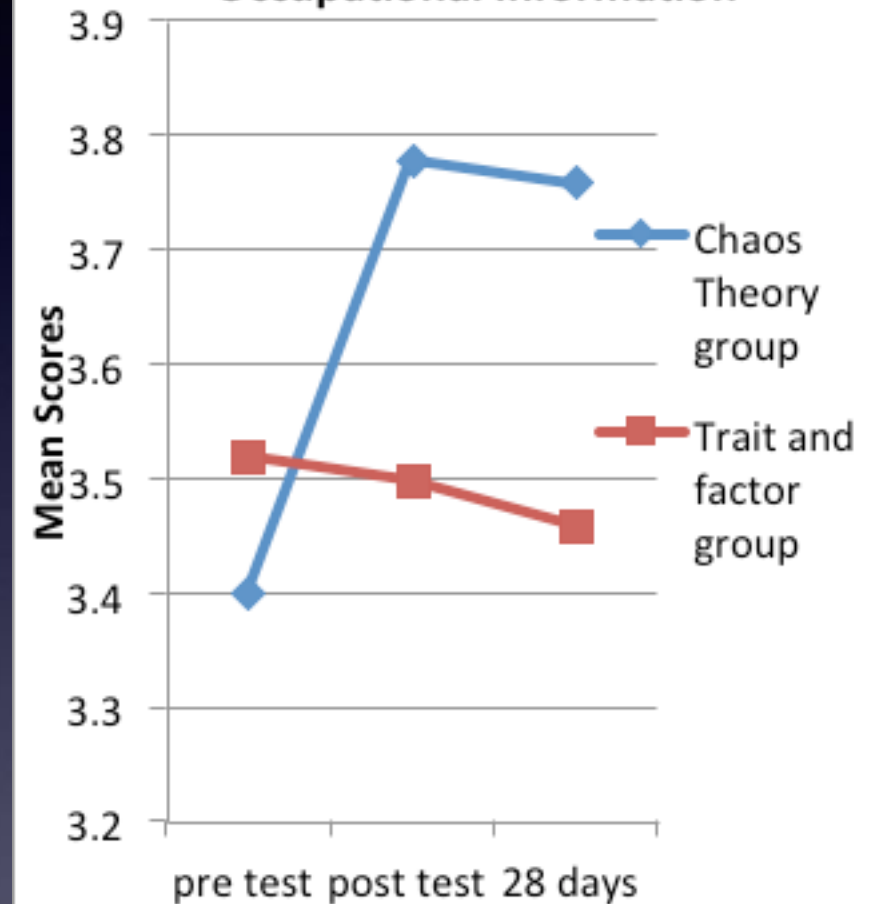
Study Three:CEPI



Study Three:CDSE-SF-Total Score



Study Three:CDSE-SF-Occupational Information



In Conclusion

The Chaos Theory of Careers

people and their careers are complex, dynamic,
unpredictable

embrace the complexity of clients

privilege, coach, counsel, prepare and educate

emphasising

Complexity, Change, Chance,
Creativity

Contact

Professor Jim Bright

Bright and Associates

www.brightandassociates.com.au

email: jim@brightandassociates.com.au

Australian Catholic University, Sydney Australia

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with me on
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