

Careers across the Sectors

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The broad theme of an issue of the journal is sometimes planned in advance and sometimes it has to reveal itself when the articles have been submitted. The previous issue focused on careers education and guidance in secondary schools and the next issue will be devoted to careers in the higher education curriculum. This issue, you will already have guessed, is an eclectic mix; but its unifying theme is that it has articles that span all sectors; and it has an underlying theme related to the significance of cultural context. If you identify any further themes, I am happy to start a discussion forum on the NICEC website!

Jennifer Kidd's opening article is based on the John Killeen annual memorial lecture given in October this year. Jennifer co-authored a number of influential reports with John including their review of the learning outcomes of guidance for the Employment Department in 1991. This year's lecture was a wonderful tribute to John's memory and the talk engaged and stimulated the audience with its fresh perspective on the emotional components of career well-being and its challenge to our assumptions about the kinds of interventions which are necessary and effective.

My article on the development of a career guidance culture in the United Arab Emirates also touches on the need to understand that the systems and models that might be appropriate in one's own culture may not be appropriate in a different culture. Taylor (1990) has set down some of the principles involved in understanding another culture. One of them is that 'personal observations of others about another culture should be regarded with scepticism'. I have not set out to be an unreliable witness, but not everyone will agree with my analysis. It has been fascinating to be both a player and a spectator at the time when the UAE is discovering a need for career guidance. I am struck once again by the complexity of progress - how difficult it is to design systems and models and make them work.

The article by Despina Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou and Katerina Argyropoulou investigates the relationship between career decision making self-efficacy and decision making styles of higher education students in Greece. It suggests that students with a high degree of self-efficacy are more likely to use a rational decision-making style with

its attendant advantages while those with a low level are likely to use a dependent style. It is research that could usefully be replicated with students from a more strongly collectivist culture in order to find out if there is a correlation between low self-efficacy and the dependent style in higher education students in that society. Ian King has written the first of three articles on the career transitions of staff in professional service firms. Traditional notions of career and organisational development are changing and with it the ways that we think about managing career development within organisations. He argues that careers education and management need to be woven into the social fabric of the organisation to better reflect the nature of career and the needs of the individual.

We have a timely reminder of the value of beginning career development learning in primary education from Barbara McGowan. She sets out the case for starting early and then urges the new policymakers in children's trusts to make it an explicit part of the local *Every Child Matters* agenda. The rationale for career development learning seems to be everywhere and nowhere in the five outcomes. It ought to be but isn't a headline outcome under 'Enjoy and Achieve'. Most people will locate 'careers' under 'Achieve economic well-being' although the problem here is that this outcome seems to have been largely taken over by economic, financial and enterprise awareness. Careers education merits not a single mention in the 2006 Annual Report by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools. As the personalised learning bandwagon continues to gather momentum, perhaps we should reinvent CEG as 'personalised work-related learning' and make sure that we start early enough!

Finally in this issue, Leigh Henderson explains how career guidance quality standards for the adult guidance sector were developed for the UK. He illuminates the transition from 'NQSLW' to 'matrix' and what was gained and lost in the process. The insights he provides make fascinating reading for those like me who are waiting to see the final shape of the proposed Quality Standards for IAG for Young People (due in April 2007) and how they will work out in practice.