

Editorial

The first issue of what was then called 'The NICEC Bulletin' that I took responsibility for was devoted to 'Career Guidance for the Third Age' (No. 51, Winter 2000). It was a particularly strong edition as I recall not least because Geoff Ford, one of the NICEC fellows, made all the contacts with potential contributors for me! So, it is with sadness that we carry an obituary to Geoff in this issue. I absolutely concur with Tony Watts when he comments on Geoff's extraordinary generosity of spirit. I still recall with great fondness the day I spent with him at his home in Thirsk planning my first journal.

Textbooks on career development often make the distinction between established and emerging theories and approaches. Traditional theories and approaches that are empirically supported and that have been well researched such as Holland and Super have had a considerable impact on career guidance practice. Interestingly, this is not the case for all influential theories. Gottfredson, for example, has commented that not all parts of her model have been sufficiently well tested. So, it is even more important to examine the ideas behind emerging approaches, to see what needs to be done to check them out and to consider what they might have to offer to career guidance practice now and in the future.

We are delighted, therefore, in this issue of the NICEC journal to publish Gudbjörg Vilhjálmsdóttir's article about the value of Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* in career guidance research and practice. Gudbjörg answers a number of questions about the applicability of Bourdieu's ideas to work with young people and draws some interesting distinctions between the way that Bourdieu's ideas have been taken up in France and the Nordic countries in comparison with England. It is to be hoped that further research will show us how we might be able to assimilate ideas around *habitus* in career guidance practice.

This is the second time that we have given prominence to the possible applications of Bourdieu's ideas in career guidance work (see Phil Hodgkinson and Martin Bloomer's two-part article about cultural capital and young people's career progression in the autumn 2002 and spring 2003 journals). Gudbjörg's article is based on the London lecture she gave in October 2007 in memory of John Killeen, a NICEC Senior Fellow, who was her PhD supervisor.

A major theme of this issue of the journal is the career planning and development of older workers. We have four main articles submitted by contributors and attendees at the CRAC Barbican conference in October on 'Decisions at 48: Supporting mid-life career planning'.

The Decisions at 48 conferences are set to become an annual event. They aim to bring together those working both in adult career guidance and in career development in employment settings to facilitate discussion and take forward the older worker agenda. The UK faces a number of challenges including a decline in the number of young people entering the job market, an ageing workforce and growing skills shortages. We are only just beginning to think about how to address the career needs and aspirations of older workers in ways which will both benefit them as individuals and benefit society and the economy as a whole. Jeffrey Defries sets the scene and raises a number of issues relevant to the role of companies in promoting career development opportunities for older staff. Stephen McNair considers the implications of the changing workforce for policy-makers and careers providers involved in implementing the Leitch skills agenda and the proposed new adult careers service in England. Mike Clark and John Arnold discuss some of the implications relating to the career motivation and needs of men in middle and later career. Ruth Hawthorn also picks up on the theme of career change for the over fifties and the kinds of support that they need.

Finally in this issue we complete the final part of Ian King's series on the career transitions of staff in professional service firms. His article focuses on the capabilities that professionals need to make effective career choices.

Anthony Barnes
Editor