

# The future of career development

This edition starts with two articles arising from a recent conference on the future of career development. These are followed by some recent research on the importance of celebrity culture in the career-related learning of young people. The next three articles all broadly cover the topic of career education in contrasting contexts within higher education and schools. There is also an article on young people and labour markets. We conclude with two extra sections in this edition: a research update and three book reviews. Any feedback on these additions or any aspect of the issue would be most welcome.

**Lyn Barham** and **Wendy Hirsh** provide a helpful overview of the *Careers 50/50* conference held in Cambridge (UK) in July 2014. This event was organised jointly by the Careers Research Advisory Centre (CRAC) and the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (NICEC). A number of key themes were identified including the politically situated nature of careers work. This gave rise to critical questions about responsabilisation, beneficiaries and vested interests.

In a further paper arising from *Careers 50/50*, **Stephen McNair** identifies four key challenges for our field: definitions of “guidance”; the notion of “adulthood”; the relationship between learning and career; and the nature of professionalism. He discusses each in turn and considers implications for the future, for example, better use of existing longitudinal studies to inform lifelong career development.

**Kim Allen** and **Heather Mendick** report on their research with young people in relation to celebrity culture. This ground-breaking work enables us to hear about the ways young people make sense of celebrity culture such as TV shows (e.g. *Judge Judy* and *The Hills*) in career terms. The authors acknowledge that popular representations of success are not necessarily unproblematic (e.g. representations of Will Smith) and use this to argue for a critical and creative approach to career education through which young people are supported to arrive at their own definitions of success.

**Laura Brammar** and **David Winter** report on a significant career education innovation using a massive online open course (MOOC). They state that it is the world’s first career and employability skills MOOC with around 90,000 participants from 204 countries. In addition, although working within a traditional career

education paradigm, the authors synthesise bold new claims concerning contemporary career management focusing on: control, clarity, confidence and courage. They also discuss how users have been enabled to evaluate aspects of career development theories.

**Morag Walling, Chris Horton** and **Nigel Rayment** discuss a new approach to employer engagement with young people in schools. An overview of the programme and its underpinning rationale in experiential and co-operative learning is provided. They explain how an invitation to play the role of ‘Young Consultant’ led to the students engaging in research and making recommendations to the company. The role of the employees as co-learners is also extensively considered.

**Paula Benton** explores work placement experiences within some higher education student groups. She argues for a richer conception of employability that includes critical reasoning and evaluation. As part of this, she identifies a need for a *rapprochement* between employability and career development learning. Paula takes a social learning and constructivist approach through which students are supported to reflect upon how career development theories (e.g. matching, developmental and planned happenstance) relate to their career journey.

**Gill Naylor** engages in a critical analysis of the changing nature of the youth employment market and its impact upon the lives of young people on the economic margins of society. She argues that the routes from education to the labour market are seriously flawed. She identifies persistent attempts to pathologise groups of young people i.e. to see them in deficit and not the labour market, government or businesses. It is, she argues, only when the needs of young people are given equal status that the problem can begin to be addressed.

Finally, **Ruth Mieschbuehler** and **Rob Vickers** take an overview of recent research in our field and relate this to careers work practice. Book reviews are provided by **David Winter, Phil McCash** and **Lyn Barham**.

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Phil McCash, Editor

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