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Overview of this issue

Welcome to this issue of the Journal of the National Institute of Career Education and Counselling. In contrast with issue 39, which rightly focused on the work of the late, and greatly missed, Bill Law, this issue adopts a more eclectic approach. This enables us to draw together a wide range of articles reflecting the diversity of expertise among our authors and of interests among our readership. The content for this issue is therefore perhaps best described as a miscellaneous mix of topical issues that includes something for everyone.

In keeping with this cold and wintry season the first article is from the north: Career choice and counselling in rural northern Norway. **Ingrid Bårdsdatter Bakke** explores the experience in making career choices of teenagers from a small rural community in northern Norway. Ingrid's work involved in-depth interviews with seven 10th graders in the process of making their first manifest career choice – choosing upper secondary – and one counsellor. Analysing the data using thematic analysis and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, the article explores the tensions between the individualistic and collectivistic perspectives experienced by the young people, and how these influence their decision-making. It has particular relevance for any involved in careers work in small rural communities, especially where the transition to secondary education involves moving away from home at 16 or travelling great distances to attend their preferred program.

In the second article **Donald Lush** reviews the three main theories of 'good' in moral philosophy and examines careers practice from their perspective. It asks whether, as practitioners, we have ways of apprehending our intentions for doing good. And if we do, whether they provide us with a central anchor from which to support and extend our work, and help us to respond to the demands of our ever-changing environment. Drawing on

the work of Aristotle among others to address these intriguing questions, the article offers a rare opportunity to revisit the philosophical basis of careers work, as well as the wider assumptions of what career guidance seeks to do.

The third article by **Annemarie Oomen** reports on the outcomes of a research project which explores the impacts of a school-initiated career intervention for parents, both those with and without HE qualifications. The research, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Education, adopts a mixed methods approach, issuing questionnaires before and after participation in a bespoke career learning programme for pupils and their parents/carers and conducting semi-structured interviews. The career intervention programme aimed to increase support for the children's career building by enabling parents to be (a) up-to-date and well-informed about educational possibilities and their financial consequences, the labour market and the use of information resources; and (b) able to make considered career decisions with their child. The findings reveal some interesting insights into the influence of parental educational attainment and the importance of early career intervention work with families where the experience of higher education is limited.

Returning to the UK, in the next article **Kathleen Houston and Eileen Cunningham** share their investigations into an intriguing yet unspoken wish in career conversations with students and graduates: the desire for a career epiphany, a sudden realisation of a future career. This methodologically robust research adopts a broadly phenomenological approach, to illuminate and understand the lived experience of undergraduate and postgraduate students seeking career guidance. The investigation found that although the notion of a career epiphany was appealing as a concept, it would seem that waiting for this defining moment can

delay career decisions. Not wishing to leave this issue of deferment unresolved, Kathleen and Eileen bring together a range of recommendations from participating students and careers advisers that will be of interest to career workers in developing their professional practice.

The fifth article by **Erik Zeltner** provides a contrasting analysis on careers service provision based on case studies generated from three European HEIs. Important strategic and service issues result from the rising number of international students and an increasing focus on their successful transition from higher education into the graduate labour market. At a time of uncertainty over the free movement of workers and future visa regulations, it usefully explores the challenges for careers services which rest both in managing expectations effectively by explaining to students what they can deliver and what is not included in the services, and in raising international students' awareness of global careers and opportunities for a successful re-integration into their home country.

In the next article **Tristram Hooley and Beth Cutts** explore issues around students' on-line presence in the form of photographic images and the way that employers may use this information as part of selection decisions. During interviews with nine students attending university in the Midlands, on-line photographs were accessed to stimulate discussion, thereby combining language and image to culminate a clearer understanding of each participant's ideas. From the analysis an interesting tension emerges between the visual representation of professional and personal identities. This dichotomy exposes an ethical challenge as to how far career advisers want to propose to students that they curb their online identities in order to ensure their employability.

This leads nicely into the penultimate article in which **Tom Staunton** provides a critical analysis of Tristram Hooley's Seven Cs of digital literacy, opening up avenues for discussing how we understand digital careers enactment and how

careers practice equips individuals to respond to the internet. In particular, Tom reflects on the danger of seeing digital literacy as being delivered 'autonomously' with wider social contexts being an afterthought, thereby obscuring wider structures that impact an individual's activity. To avert this danger he asks us to consider the importance of locating digital literacy education inside each individual's context; to bring people together to create collective solutions and move away from practice which sees the internet as a resource for individuals to make use of for their own ends.

Finally, in a world where emerging technology is transforming the future of work **Nalayini Thambar** explores how we equip students for their future, not the world we know now. Drawing upon current perspectives on the future of work, Nalayini identifies key challenges for careers professionals in higher education concerning the relevance of their knowledge and practice, suggesting that this futuristic landscape also provides opportunity to challenge the persistent binary divide between 'being academic' and 'being employable'.

The authors in this issue open up a range of important issues reflecting the complexity of 'career' and the need for informed critique and a creative response to provide a service relevant to the needs of the 21st century.

Lyn Barham and Michelle Stewart,
Editors
