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NICEC
NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CAREER EDUCATION AND COUNSELLING

NICEC STATEMENT

The Fellows of NICEC agreed the following statement in 2010.

'The National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (NICEC) was originally founded as a research institute in 1975. It now plays the role of a learned society for reflective practitioners in the broad field of career education, career guidance/counselling and career development. This includes individuals whose primary role relates to research, policy, consultancy, scholarship, service delivery or management. NICEC seeks to foster dialogue and innovation between these areas through events, networking, publications and projects.

NICEC is distinctive as a boundary-crossing network devoted to career education and counselling in education, in the workplace, and in the wider community. It seeks to integrate theory and practice in career development, stimulate intellectual diversity and encourage transdisciplinary dialogue. Through these activities, NICEC aims to develop research, inform policy and enhance service delivery.

Membership and fellowship are committed to serious thinking and innovation in career development work. Membership is open to all individuals and organisations connected with career education and counselling. Fellowship is an honour conferred by peer election and signals distinctive contribution to the field and commitment to the development of NICEC's work. Members and Fellows receive the NICEC journal and are invited to participate in all NICEC events.

NICEC does not operate as a professional association or commercial research institute, nor is it organisationally aligned with any specific institution. Although based in the UK, there is a strong international dimension to the work of NICEC and it seeks to support reflective practice in career education and counselling globally.'

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TITLE

The official title of the journal for citation purposes is *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling* (Print *ISSN 2046-1348; online* ISSN 2059-4879). It is widely and informally referred to as 'the NICEC journal'. Its former title was *Career Research and Development: the NICEC Journal*, ISSN 1472-6564, published by CRAC, and the final edition under this title was issue 25. To avoid confusion we have retained the numbering of editions used under the previous title.

AIMS AND SCOPE

The NICEC journal publishes articles on the broad theme of career development in any context including:

- Career development in the workplace: private and public sector, small, medium and large organisations, private practitioners.
- Career development in education: schools, colleges, universities, adult education, public career services.
- Career development in the community: third age, voluntary, charity, social organisations, independent contexts, public career services.

It is designed to be read by individuals who are involved in career development-related work in a wide range of settings including information, advice, counselling, guidance, advocacy, coaching, mentoring, psychotherapy, education, teaching, training, scholarship, research, consultancy, human resources, management or policy. The journal has a national and international readership.

Contents

Overview of this issue

Welcome to the October 2018 issue of the NICEC journal. The articles below were contributed in response to an open call for papers. It is once again a pleasure to report that innovative, creative, and engaging scholarship is thriving in our field.

Peter Plant, Inger Marie Bakke and **Lyn Barham** get the ball rolling with a timely call for 'geronto guidance' for older people. They are particularly interested in the support that is available around retirement arguing it is currently something of a blind spot in terms of a genuinely lifelong guidance system.

The second article from **Lisa Law** continues the theme of age and change. It uses an action research strategy to evaluate the delivery of a workshop for older students at a UK university. The workshop demonstrates a creative and successful example of practice for this key client group.

Charles Jackson argues for the value of career surveys drawing from his work with trainee doctors and medical students. The surveys, it is suggested, highlight the importance of the human touch and talking directly with other people about career issues. The article finishes with a set of conclusions about the value of career surveys.

Steve Mowforth extends the use of survey to small-scale qualitative research with generation z students at a British university. He argues that contemporary scene has moved on from attitudes and beliefs associated with what he terms the industrial state.

Julia Yates reports on some contemporary techniques in career coaching. These include visual tools, role play tools, possible selves technique, passengers on the bus technique, pre-designed frameworks, and client-generated maps.

Debra Osborn and **V. Casey Dozier** argue for the value of cognitive information processing theory in relation to interventions. They provide two case studies to illustrate the approach.

Ingrid Bårdsdatter Bakke, Erik Haug and **Tristram Hooley** provide a timely update on guidance developments in Norway. They propose an innovative approach to combining face-to-face and online guidance based on career learning and instructional design.

Our final article by **Cathy Brown** and **Tracey Wond** is devoted to the topic of career capitals. Two contrasting conceptions of capital are critically assessed. Drawing from this, they propose some ideas for the development of career capital using a case study.

This issue concludes with a book review of *Graduate Employability in Context: Theory, Research and Debate* edited by Ciaran Burke and Fiona Christie.

Phil McCash, Editor

Geronto guidance: Lifelong guidance

Peter Plant, Inger Marie Bakke & Lyn Barham

From Greek γέρων (géron): old man, elders (in plural)

We argue that older workers and retirees have a right to be esteemed as members of society. Few guidance activities currently focus on one of the final and important transitions in life, the process of retiring. This process raises challenges to personal identity and self-esteem which could be ameliorated by support in the later years of working life. But most guidance activities are aimed at youth or at people at job and/or education transition points earlier in their lives. With an ageing population, this will have to change. Geronto Guidance is a blind spot in lifelong career guidance.

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Introduction: Ageing and guidance

The aim to include older people in the labour market has a social inclusion side: work in many people's lives provides the framework for social contacts, for social recognition, and, in some countries, for access to social services. There is also a macro-economic drive in engaging the older workforce and extending their working years (CEDEFOP 2010, 2012, 2015; European Foundation 2017). Lifelong guidance has a place in this, but most guidance activities are aimed at youth or at people at job and/or education transition points earlier in their lives. With an ageing population, this will have to change.

The UK Parliament's Women and Equality Committee spells out the issue:

> The country faces acute challenges recruiting and retaining an experienced, skilled workforce in many key public services as well as in the private sector. It is unacceptable that the nation is wasting the talents of more than one million people aged over 50 who are out of work but would be willing to work if the right opportunity arose. People in later life are often playing many different roles in society, but those who wish to work should not face the current barriers of discrimination, bias and outdated employment practices.
>
> (Women and Equalities Committee 2018)

We face a paradox that labour-market participation rates could stagnate over coming years, more so for older people than for the rest of the population, due to age-related discrimination (Loretto et al, 2007) at a time when the cohort of younger entrants to the workforce is significantly smaller than the age cohort likely to retire. Rhetoric salutes older workers, praising their stability and willingness to be flexible in terms of tasks and working hours, whilst at the same time ageism and downright age discrimination also take place. As noted by Plant (2007: 231-235), there is a gap between rhetoric and reality.

This leads to the consideration that life-long guidance (EU 2004) will be needed even more than previously, especially for older people, who could find themselves excluded from meaningful work, and from the links to society that work and other forms of active societal participation (e.g. voluntary work) provide, with the result that national economies lose the employee numbers and skills that they need. And for the older workers this could be an early end to their career rainbow (Super 1957) - with no bucket of gold at the end.

This situation is mirrored across Europe (Plant & Sanchez-Lopez 2011). On average European populations are getting older: an ageing population in European countries creates new challenges to policies and practice (Bergmo-Prvulovic 2017). Demographic change creates fundamental alterations to the

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workforce across the EU, reflected in the European population 'pyramid', which, tellingly, no longer has the shape of a pyramid, due to low birth rates and increased longevity. The increased demand on a shrinking pool of workers to provide for the social needs of an ageing population is leading policy reforms intended to increase the employment rate of older workers and lengthen working life. Policy reforms have – in the UK and Nordic countries in particular – focused on raising the state pension age and providing financial incentives for older workers to remain in work beyond this age. In most countries and most work spheres there is no longer a default retirement age.

Defining 'age'

One complexity of the theme of 'older workers' is defining the group: how old is an 'older worker'? Use of terminology varies confusingly. Historically, statisticians tended to take the age of 45 as the demarcation between being a younger (24-44 years) or an older worker (45-64 years). In the Nordic countries an age limit of 45 years still tends to be used, but this fluctuates according to context. The UK's commission into the future for lifelong learning (Schuller & Watson 2009) argued that the traditional 3-stage model of the life course was outdated and proposed a new 4-stage model to reflect later young-adult transitions into full adult roles, an extended third period of active life, including employment and voluntary work, and a final fourth stage of full retirement.

But is chronological age the most significant factor? Over time, 'biological age', reflecting the physical and mental wellbeing of each individual and their life expectancy, comes to vary markedly from the raw measure of 'years since birth'. This has implications for the concept of lifelong guidance, which will need to take these issues into account, through providing varied guidance services in response to highly differentiated guidance needs.

A life-long guidance need

A range of factors influence workers' decisions to continue working into older age; these include health and well-being, work–life balance, career prospects and job security, and working conditions such as autonomy, hours of work and psychosocial aspects of the workplace.

The transition towards and into a stage of life beyond paid employment follows a number of earlier life-stage transitions. The nature and tasks of those transitions have been viewed through a number of theoretical lenses. If career practitioners are to support effectively those engaging in a late career transition, we need ways to conceptualise the processes, identifying what is common with earlier transitions, and what is distinctive to this particular transition.

Super's life stages and roles

Donald Super's Career Rainbow model builds on a concept of Life Stages (Super 1957). During an individual's life span, s/he goes through a series of career stages. Each stage allows for specific lines of development. Super referred to the entire cycle as a maxi-cycle, where the major stages are growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement. Super introduced the concept of mini-cycles, i.e. revisiting earlier stages as part of re-evaluation or re-reflection. The concept of 'disengagement', incidentally, in early models by Super, was named 'decline', but as he himself got older, he obviously felt a need for a broader concept. While maintenance points at growth and development in the career, disengagement will include vocational development tasks such as decelerating, retirement planning, and retirement living. Retirement planning leads eventually to separation from occupation and commencement of retirement living with its challenges of organizing a new life structure and different life-style.

The transition between the maintenance stage and the disengagement stage may have consequences for self-

perception. The concept of self is, according to Super, formed through social, experiential, and interactive learning, plus reflective self-awareness. Occupational choice is viewed as an attempt to implement self-concept; 'career self-concept theory concentrates on the personal meaning of abilities, interests, values and choices as well as how they coalesce into life themes' (Super et al. 1996: 139). The self-concept system consists of all of the individual's roles (child, student, leisurite, citizen, worker, and homemaker). The importance of a role is determined by three components: commitment, participation and value expectations (ibid: 152). An aspect of transition is that the roles that pervade an individual life are likely to re-coalesce into new patterns of priority and decline: as the student role may have largely ceded place to the worker role in young adulthood, now the worker role cedes place – but to what? And how is the personal meaning of abilities, interests and values enacted in an adapted self-concept responding to adjusted life roles?

Erikson's psychosocial stages

Erikson (1950), in his concept of eight life stages, points to the psychological crisis - a driver in terms of self-development – which accompanies each transitional phase. As we encounter these crises of growing and ageing, we need to face them and find ways to resolve them; a failure to do so may impact on our future psychosocial wellbeing.

Erikson's seventh stage, mature adulthood, is characterised by Care (Generativity v. Stagnation). As this stage draws towards old age, 'fundamental questions about identity are raised as people switch the balance of their attention away from job roles and towards their own needs, with the prospect of full retirement visible on the horizon. While work identity may typically have had greatest salience for men, it is also important for women who gained much of their sense of identity through work', as noted by Barham & Hawthorn (2010: 264).

Key to Erikson's work on adulthood is the notion of 'generativity', the idea that with maturity and increasing age a growing aspect of people's self-concept is their concern for the wellbeing of future generations and for the legacy that they themselves leave. Work is an important arena for generative expression, but varies

depending on the individual. It may evidence through leadership, productivity, creativity or care-giving, as examples, but all contributing in some way to the 'common good' (Clark & Arnold 2008).

Successful exercise of generativity is a precursor to successful entry to Erikson's eighth and final stage of life, balanced between ego integrity and a sense of integration in society, or a sense of despair. Stagnation, as might be experienced in later adulthood in unsatisfactory or unrewarding work, or in unemployment, offers a poor foundation for looking back on a life well spent, and a risk of despair that this is beyond remedy.

Honneth and recognition

With this in mind, the issue of recognition gains importance. Honneth (1995) has pointed to the connection between identity and recognition. He identifies three elements of *recognition*:

- **Love** (most fundamental dimension, recognition through emotional and physical closeness, in families, as friends, close relationships) engendering *self-confidence*

- **Legal rights** (agreements, moral, equality) engendering a sense of *self-respect*

- **Solidarity** (recognition of trait and abilities, me and/or the group to which I belong, contributions to society) engendering *self-esteem*

Moreover, as Axel Honneth has pointed out, recognition is crucial, and applies to all life-stages, including old age. Honneth's three 'patterns of recognition' necessary for an individual's development of a positive relation-to-self (love, rights, solidarity) refers to all levels and sectors in society, and are crucial to developing a positive attitude towards oneself, and it remains as important for older people as younger that these spheres or patterns of recognition are in place:

'For it is only due to the cumulative acquisition of basic self-confidence, of self-respect, and of self-esteem…that a person can come to see himself or herself, unconditionally, as both an autonomous and an individuated being and to identify with his or her goals and desires' (Honneth 1995:169)

Other scholars, such as Paul Ricoeur, have distinguished as many as 23 different usages of the notion 'to recognize' (Ricoeur 2005: 5–16) grouping them under three main categories, namely recognition as identification, recognizing oneself, and mutual recognition. All three aspects of recognition are inter-related. Recognition, or what you contribute within the work sphere applies strongly to self-esteem. Recognition is life-wide, but is in part earned and enjoyed in the work sphere. This applies most strongly to self-esteem. All three aspects of recognition are inter-related, with self-confidence being engendered through love from earliest experience, and self-respect from citizenship conveying access to legal rights, stature and power, in the most general sense of that word. Self-esteem (solidarity) can be seen to be negotiated in a more ongoing, contingent form including particularly in the workplace.

The condition for self-esteem is solidarity. The loss of employment-related status means that identity may be at risk of being defined by 'non-employment' and by age, both of which have negative connotations in modern Western societies.

This is exemplified in recent research with Norwegian female academics where research participants convey a sense that 'recognition' is at risk (Bakke, Barham & Plant 2018). Through their employers' lack of attention to their value and to the need to take steps to replace them, the institution exhibited a disrespect and lack of recognition even before severance from the work role. The women also said they would consider postponing the transition if the institution recognized their contribution to work, and if it prepared for using their specific competences. As they were not even being asked, they felt insulted and not recognised.

On the other hand, the researchers (op.cit.) report that 'several interviewees say they are afraid of loosing their identity when they are no longer employed', but they added that their strategies for coping with this were in fact limited: 'keep going as long as they can; no time to prepare; cross that bridge when they get there; wait and see what happens'. This points to the need, as career practitioners, to provide such competences and guidance offers.

A wider view

The developmental psychology underlying Super's (1957) life-span career rainbow and inter-related life roles, and Erikson's life stages and psychological crises are both based on a Western, largely linear and somewhat individualistic model of career development: a rise-and-decline model, basically. This lies as a tacit understanding behind much Western third age guidance: that third age means being in decline, physically and mentally. Classical illustrations of the life-cycle are based on this chain of thought, with Man (sic!) at the top at the age of 30. Erikson (1950) attends more to altered concerns than to decline as such, but interestingly, other cultures take this further. Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani (2004:148) point to the four Indian concepts of life-span development, in which life is seen as a journey:

- Brahmacharya Ashrama (learning, preparation)
- Grahastha Ashrama (family, personal career)
- Vanaprastha Ashrama (serving society, not for personal gain)
- Sanyasa Ashrama (spiritual service of mankind).

Whilst there is some apparent correspondence between Erikson's 'generativity' and the later stages of the Indian model, the latter clearly adds a much-needed value-based, spiritual, and societal dimension to the more individualistic and market oriented Western career development and guidance models. Honneth's depiction of the conditions for recognition perhaps sits more comfortably with other cultural viewpoints.

Questions for career development practice

Transitions through life stages also imply transitions in personal identity. Identity is formed through processing social and personal experiences, as an answer to the basic question: Who am I? But this is not a question to be posed just once in lifetime. Working with people in their fifties, Hawthorn (2007:1-11) identified 'unfinished business, either educational, emotional or in ambition' which led to them addressing the question 'Who do you want to be now?' Facing the disengagement stage, similar questions pop up.

Recognition develops through others, and has to do with the feedback you get, on who you are, what you say, and what you do. Recognition is sought and occurs in all spheres of life, including the workplace. And, being dynamic, the recognition sought changes over time: it may shift from a claim for recognition of ambition and potential to recognition for experience and wisdom in society as well as at work. In terms of geronto guidance this has implications in terms of the scope and focus of guidance interventions and activities for older people.

Voluntary work, for example, is seen as a vehicle for aligning retirement with professional values (Bakke, Barham and Plant 2018), and admittedly, voluntary work is important in terms of creating social cohesion in all societies. South Korea, has, pointedly, added geronto-dimensions to its Employment programme for Seniors (Choi 2016). This includes a number of elements of which voluntary work is a prominent one. This is also the case in Norway, where incidentally, *dugnad*, in 2004, was chosen as the most Norwegian word: it means working together, voluntary work.

A successful transition from paid work to retirement involves planning and the opportunity to prepare, i.e. late-career guidance. Many older people have both the will and the ability to contribute after the retirement age. Still, very little support is available in terms of facilitating the transition from employment to retirement, or indeed the reverse. Research on 'un-retiring' suggests that retirement for many is not a straightforward stepping away. About 25% of people who report themselves as retired then reverse that decision (Platts et al. 2017), which must raise the speculation that retirement had in some way not been a satisfactory state. Again, this points to the need for geronto guidance.

The need for action has been reiterated in the UK-based Mid-Life Career Review Project, in the pilot of which 3,000 people aged 45-64 took part (Learning and Work Institute 2017). Reviews were delivered by 17 partners including the National Careers Service, voluntary organisations, learning providers, Unionlearn, Workplace Learning Advocates, and Community Learning Champions. They covered employment, training, financial planning and health issues, particularly focused on people out of work, facing redundancy,

or wanting to adapt to a new way of working. This example points to the need for an intensified focus on career guidance for older people.

Policies and research

The Centre for Ageing Better has called on UK employers to ensure they have more age-friendly employment policies and practices. The Centre's studies suggest that only one in five employers are engaged in strategic discussion on how to address issues arising from an ageing workforce, while almost a quarter (24%) admit they are unprepared for growing numbers of older workers.

These are troubling findings in the context of over 50s now making up nearly a third of the UK workforce, with numbers of older workers steadily rising.

They suggest five age-friendly practices in this context, though we note that there is no explicit mention of life-long guidance, let alone geronto guidance:

- Flexible flexibility – working arrangements that work for the employee as well as the employer

- Age-positive recruitment which doesn't discriminate against older candidates

- Appropriate support for health at work, including workplace adjustments

- Equal opportunities for progression and development at all ages

- Age-inclusive workplace culture and line management

From: https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/news/uk-employers-unprepared-ageing-workforce

The absence, in some cases, of the employer in the final phase of working life may cause additional difficulties. The worker is left alone, and potential resources can be lost. Thus, this situation has both individual and societal aspects. Public policy preoccupations have done little to ameliorate a potentially difficult situation for older workers and retirees. Policy preoccupation is with loss of skills to the economy and with pension saving in a dual sense: saving state funds by delaying pension entitlement, and individual saving in order to accrue personal pension funds. To re-iterate the words of the Women and

Equalities Parliamentary Committee: 'It is unacceptable that the nation is wasting the talents of more than one million people aged over 50…'

Career practitioners need to have ways of conceptualising what is happening in the lives of older people in term of the existential questions. The transition towards and into retirement is a time of identity re-formation, which could re-run the identity crisis of Erikson's adolescents if not done well. A focus on these issues has benefits into oldest age (social, health and financial benefits) (cf e.g. CEDEFOP 2010; 2012; 2015), but little research is available in terms of guidance and its role in strategies of active ageing. This brief list of examples of previous research reveals the state of affairs, as precious little is available, so far: Clayton, Greco & Persson 2007; Ford 1997, 2001; Ford & Clayton 2007; Kirk & Belovics 2005; Plant 2000a, 2000b, 2003; Plant & Sanchel-Lopez 2011.

Conclusions

Geronto guidance, i.e. guidance for older people, will be a growing field in the coming years, both in terms of service delivery, and as a field of research. The reason for this is, above all, of a demographic nature. So far, geronto guidance is, largely, a blind spot in terms of truly lifelong guidance. Career guidance, within its traditional boundaries and ties to employment as a means to live a full life, with an income and status, will be challenged to expand into this field and beyond its traditional focus of youth and earlier life transitions. The pivotal question is 'Who do you want to be now?' (Hawthorn 2007), i.e. now that working life is drawing to an end. This is a profoundly existential question which reaches far beyond working life. It implies a 3D approach to guidance: lifelong, lifewide, and life deep in nature (Plant 2006). There is so much more to life than work.

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