

NICEC

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CAREER EDUCATION AND COUNSELLING



Published in partnership with the CDI

Print: ISSN 2046-1348
Online: ISSN 2059-4879

JOURNAL OF THE

National Institute for Career Education and Counselling

October 2018 | Issue 41



Promoting research and reflective practice in career development

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.'

NICEC FELLOWS

Graham Allan, David Andrews, Jane Artess, Charlie Ball, Lyn Barham, Anthony Barnes, Charlotte Chadderton, Anne Chant, Fiona Christie, Kate Mackenzie Davey, Gill Frigerio,

Russell George, Bob Gilworth, John Gough, Peter Harding, Keith Hermann, Wendy Hirsh, Tristram Hooley, Charles Jackson, Heather Jackson, Claire Johnson, Mark Larbalestier, John Lees, Phil McCash, Allister McGowan, Rosemary McLean, Stephen McNair, Robin Mellors-Bourne, Nicki Moore, Marian Morris, Rob Nathan, Siobhan Neary, Claire Nix, Henrietta O'Connor, Emma Pollard, Hazel Reid, Peter Robertson, Janet Sheath, Michelle Stewart, David Winter, Julia Yates.

Emeritus Fellows: Lesley Haughton, Ruth Hawthorn, Leigh Henderson, Jennifer Kidd, Barbara McGowan, Mary Munro, Jackie Sadler, Tony Watts.

NICEC INTERNATIONAL FELLOWS

Gideon Arulmani, Lynne Bezanson, Tibor Bors Borbely-Pecze, Jim Bright, John McCarthy, David McCormack, Col McCowan, Peter McIlveen, Mary McMahan, Annemarie Oomen, Peter Plant, James P. Sampson Jr, Ronald G. Sultana, Rie Thomson, Raimo Vuorinen.

CO-EDITORS OF THE JOURNAL

October 2018 issue:

Phil McCash
p.t.mccash@warwick.ac.uk

April 2019 issue:

Pete Robertson
p.robertson@napier.ac.uk
Lyn Barham
lynbarham@gmail.com

EDITORIAL BOARD

Lyn Barham, Anthony Barnes, Alison Dixon, Charles Jackson, Phil McCash, Claire Nix, Hazel Reid, Peter Robertson, and Michelle Stewart.

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.



GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Manuscripts are welcomed focusing on any form of scholarship that can be related to the NICEC Statement. This could include, but is not confined to, papers focused on policy, theory-building, professional ethics, values, reflexivity, innovative practice, management issues and/or empirical research. Articles for the journal should be accessible and stimulating to an interested and wide readership across all areas of career development work. Innovative, analytical and/or evaluative contributions from both experienced contributors and first-time writers are welcomed. Main articles should normally be 3,000 to 3,500 words in length and should be submitted to one of the co-editors by email. Articles longer than 3,500 words can also be accepted by agreement. Shorter papers, opinion pieces or letters are also welcomed for the occasional 'debate' section. Please contact the relevant issue co-editor(s) prior to submission to discuss the appropriateness of the proposed article and to receive a copy of the NICEC style guidelines. Final decisions on inclusion are made following full manuscript submission and a process of peer review.

SUBSCRIPTION AND MEMBERSHIP

The journal is published in partnership with the CDI twice a year and is available both in print and online (Print ISSN 2046-1348; Online ISSN 2059-4879). Institutional subscription (online only) costs: £120 (plus VAT where applicable). Annual print subscription costs £30 UK, £35 Europe outside UK or £40 outside Europe, including postage. Individual online subscription costs £25 (plus VAT where applicable).

Membership of NICEC is also available (£75 pa or £50 pa for full-time students). Members receive the journal, free attendance at NICEC events and other benefits.

For information on journal subscription or membership, please contact: membership@nicec.org

COPYRIGHT AND DISCLAIMER

Articles are accepted on the condition that authors assign copyright or licence the publication rights in their articles to the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (NICEC). An important goal of NICEC is to encourage freedom of expression. Individual viewpoints expressed in the journal do not represent NICEC as a whole.

PUBLISHER

The *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling* is published in partnership with the CDI by: National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (NICEC), The Lodge, Cheerbrook Road, Willaston, Nantwich CW5 7EN.

www.nicec.org

EDITORIAL

2 Overview of this issue

Phil McCash

ARTICLES

3 Geronto guidance: Lifelong guidance

Peter Plant, Inger Marie Bakke and Lyn Barham

10 Design and evaluation of a short course to address the career related issues of adults from mid-life onwards

Lisa Law

18 The role of career surveys: Identifying issues and evaluating practice

Charles Jackson

26 'The world is your oyster': Exploring the career conceptions of Gen-Z students

Steve Mowforth

33 Career coaching tools: Evidence-based techniques for practice

Julia Yates

39 Cognitive information processing theory: Applications in research and practice

V. Casey Dozier and Debra Osborn

48 Moving from information provision to co-careering: Integrated guidance as a new approach to e-guidance in Norway

Ingrid Bårdsdatter Bakke, Erik Hagaseth Haug and Tristram Hooley

56 Building career mobility: A critical exploration of career capital

Cathy Brown and Tracey Wond

NEWS

64 Book Review

66 Call for papers | Forthcoming events

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

Design and evaluation of a short course to address the career related preoccupations, concerns and issues of adults from mid-life onwards

Lisa Law

This study examines a range of development and narrative career theories that illuminate the career related preoccupations, concerns and issues of adults from mid-life onwards. Using themes identified in the literature, this article also details an innovative short course design, which contains a framework and set of exercises that enable individual adults to resolve their unique career conundrums. Using an action research approach, the evaluation explores participants' response to the course and provides recommendations for the future. It is anticipated that the outcomes of this project will be useful to career practitioners working with groups of adults and career services wishing to strengthen their offering to older clients.



Introduction

Levinson (1978, p.x) stated that 'there is a growing desire in our society to see adulthood as something more than a long, featureless stretch of years with childhood at one end and senility at the other'. Given that the proportion of people aged 65 and over in the UK has increased in the last 40 years from 14% to 18%, and is predicted to rise another 6.6 percentage points by 2039 (Nomis, 2016), it is clear that the UK's population is ageing. This presents an opportunity to social institutions which need to find fresh ways to support an ageing population (Phillipson and Ogg, 2010).

As a university careers adviser, I recognise a need to work with mature students more effectively. Currently my institution's career services tend to be pitched at younger students who are in the process of establishing their first fledgling careers, focusing on topics such as CV and application form writing, job hunting, interview technique and career choice. Whilst these topics *may* have relevancy to mature students, older learners are likely to have additional career issues to work through. For instance, they might be considering how to translate a long working history into a new work role or deciding whether work has relevance in their life anymore.

The question over how older people can be supported in their career development is also of personal interest to me: my father is in his early 70s and is considering retirement, a transition that he has found difficult for many reasons but crucially because, in his words, work is part of his identity. The course that is the focus of this paper therefore very much has my father in mind as my initial inspiration. The project has also prompted me to evaluate my own career: as a person approaching middle-age I find myself questioning what development may look like given that my career is already established.

Project goals and strategy

I adopted an action research strategy to create, deliver and reflect upon an educational course that enables older adults to resolve career related concerns and issues. Action research is described as having four

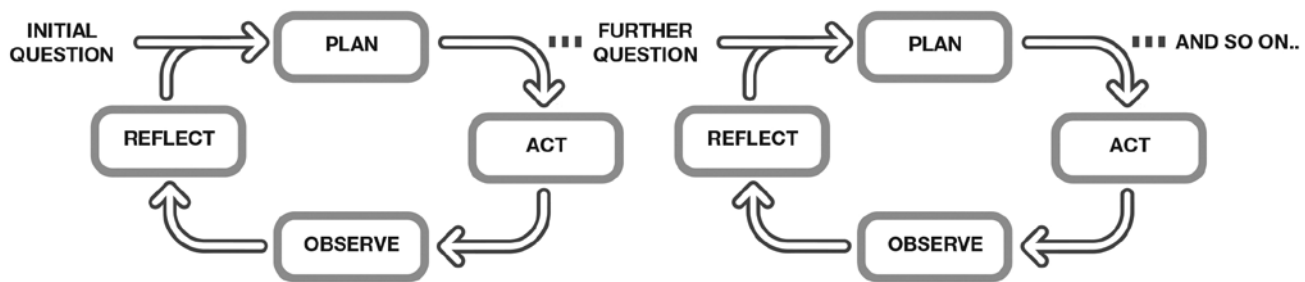


Figure 1: the action research process (Open University, 2013, p.5)

elements: plan, act, observe and reflect, leading to further questions that may precipitate a second cycle (Open University, 2013, p.5).

During the 'plan' element I constructed a short course using a concept mapping process (Amundsen et al., 2008) to show how older learners can be supported to resolve their career concerns.

I drew upon four areas:

1. Life-span development and narrative theory. I drew from theorists who have undertaken extensive primary research to gain a comprehensive understanding of adult development. For instance, Vaillant (2002) analyzed the life stories of over 800 people.

2. Media representations of age and career. There is considerable variation in how age is presented in the media (Vaillant, 2002, p.3). My intention was that facilitating the participants to examine samples of these would enable them to deconstruct culturally held ideologies and personal beliefs about age and career.

3. Personal experiences to lead by example and encourage the participants to engage.

4. Pedagogy to create a curriculum that facilitates participants to engage with content and explore personally held belief systems. I was inspired by Kolb (1984), Cochran (1990; 1997) and Savickas (1993).

During the 'act, observe and reflect' stages I delivered and evaluated the course. The evaluation used multiple data collection methods and frameworks for analysis,

including a reflective journal where I recorded observations immediately after the course, participant questionnaires, and a reflective account which synthesized the data collected from these.

Participants

I advertised the course to all students at the University of Wolverhampton as, although the course was aimed at mature students, there is no ready-made group of mature students to target. This resulted in four mature students eventually attending. Although a low number, I was able to gain good quality feedback about the course.

Course overview

This short course draws upon life-span development and narrative theory, media artifacts and personal narratives. I used a concept mapping process (Amundsen et al., 2008) to synthesise these sources and create the course structure, which is depicted overleaf.

A critical discussion of the literature and explanation of how this guided the design can be found on the next page.

Career conundrum (concept map item 1)

Adult career patterns are hard to generalise: whilst people begin careers in the same way through exploration and establishment processes, they end them uniquely (Greller & Stroh, 1995, p.240). Older adults may therefore be starting, continuing, modifying

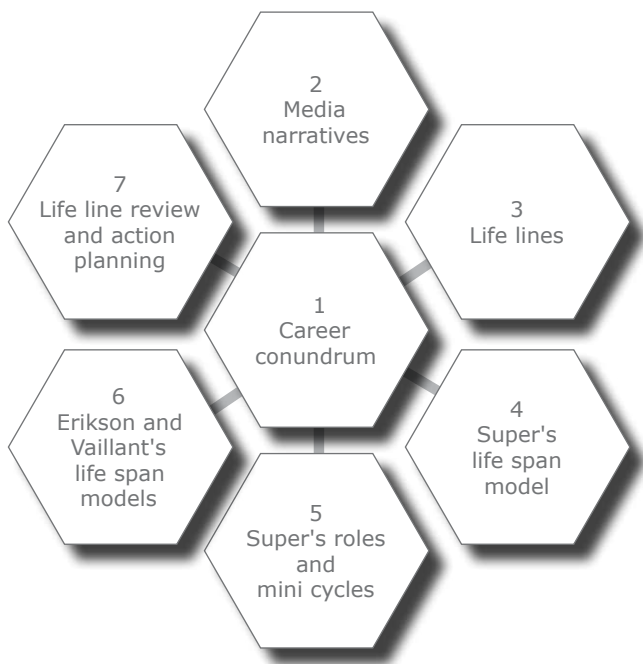


Figure 2: Concept map

or exiting a career (Sterns & Miklos, 1995, p.259). It thus seemed appropriate for participants to define their own career problem and goal from the outset. Drawing from Cochran (1990, p.6), participants did this by creating a metaphor for their problem and its solution. To build trust, I undertook this exercise prior to delivery and shared my career metaphor of an uphill climb, which signified my desire to end my current career phase and to start a new chapter.

As depicted in figure 2, each subsequent segment returned to the participants' conundrum. My intention here was for the content of each course segment to influence the participants' thinking about their conundrums and facilitate a resolution.

Media narratives (concept map item 2)

There are multiple stories that are told about what it means to age and what a person can or should do in relation to career as they get older (Vaillant, 2002, p.3). This segment therefore invited participants to look at news articles with differing perspectives on later life careers. These included: *Why shouldn't the over 50s start a new career?* (Hinsliff, 2015), *Suddenly hot jobs for over 50s* (Kadlec, 2015) and *Age discrimination 'still an issue'* (Jones, 2016). Each person analysed an article and described their view on it to the rest of the group. This

precipitated discussion about career change in mid-life, the value of older workers in the labour market and the possibility of adult career development. Choosing articles which juxtaposed different views encouraged participants to examine the narratives critically, giving them freedom to embrace or reject them. This process inevitably encouraged the participants to become more aware of their own beliefs about these topics, important because individuals may internalize culturally formed ageist stereotypes (Greller & Simpson, 1999, p.336). This activity is therefore consistent with pedagogy which empower learners to examine their existing viewpoints and integrate modified ideas into their belief system (Kolb, 1984, p.28).

Life lines (concept map item 3)

Life span development theories propose that people progress through a series of stages with associated developmental tasks. These can affect their sense of self, intrinsic motivations and career aspirations. I wanted participants to draw out meaning from these and relate them to their own lives and career conundrum. Life lines sensitise people to past memories and provide a chronological account of his or her life (Cochran, 1997, p.74). With this in mind I adapted Sugarman's lifeline exercise (2001, pp.1-3 & p.55) which involves creating an account of one's life in graph form. I then supported participants to analyse their lifeline by prompting them to consider what the "Y" axis represented (to identify important values), and to identify critical events and priorities at different ages (to illuminate change and consistency in their life). I also asked them to ascribe meaning to the shape of the line in order to bring into awareness the overall narrative tone.

Super's life span model (concept map item 4) and Erikson and Vaillant's life span models (concept map item 6)

In these segments I introduced participants to models devised by Super, Erikson and Vaillant. Super's model explicitly focuses on lifelong career development. Erikson and Vaillant's theories provide an interesting contrast as their models of psychosocial development foreground how identity evolves, often in-hand with career.

During segment 4 I presented Super's maxi cycle of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and disengagement. (Super et al, 1996, p.124). Super asserted that a person's development can be assessed from a social and psychological perspective (Super et al., 1996, p.125). For instance, a person of 50 would be classed as being within Super's maintenance stage, however they may identify more with the development tasks of crystallization, specification and implementation: characteristics associated with Super's exploration stage. Bearing in mind that people can be judged "on time" or "not on time" against a social clock (McAdams, 1993, p.197), this person may feel a social pressure to conform to what is expected for their age. In this segment I therefore asked participants to identify the stage they were at according to chronological age and then according to developmental task, precipitating discussion about societal norms. I then asked participants to focus on the developmental tasks they were facing regardless of chronological age and how they may tackle these tasks. For instance, if they were considering how to revitalize their current job (and therefore in the maintenance stage), they may fulfill this stage's developmental tasks by updating their skills and knowledge, identifying new challenges or innovating new ways to undertake existing tasks.

I used the same method in segment 6 but this time used Erikson and Vaillant's stage models. The stages both theorists identified for mid-late adulthood were generativity and integrity (Erikson, 1980, pp.103–105), with Vaillant adding an additional stage: "keeper of the meaning" (Vaillant, 2002, pp.53 – 58). For each stage I explained the inherent identity shift and illustrated how this may alter personal values, in turn, impacting upon career choices. Thus, generativity may precipitate an interest in caring for the development of the next generation (Erikson, 1980, p.103; Vaillant, 2002, p.47), making mentoring or consultancy roles attractive. Vaillant believed that during the "keeper of the meaning" stage, people extend their concern across a wider social radius (Vaillant, 2002, pp.141–158) and therefore they may enjoy a role that impacts a whole community, organization, occupational sector or geographical region. Finally, the last stage of integrity is defined as a time of life evaluation, where individuals face the challenge of accepting their life cycle (Erikson, 1980, 104; Vaillant, 2002, p.49), including how satisfied they are with how their career has played out.

Similar to the exercises based on Super's model, and using myself as an example, I asked participants to consider which stages they identified with and encouraged them to consider how this had a bearing on their career conundrum. This process turned these models into an autobiographical method, as participants related the stages and tasks to their own life in order to create future plans.

Super's roles and mini cycles (concept map item 5)

Super updated his 1950s model by introducing the concept of mini cycles. These account for the way in which people are likely to go through multiple career changes in life due to boundaryless careers that have become prevalent (Sullivan & Crocitto, 2007, p.284). His mini cycles follow a recycling process where individuals end participation with one role and start another. This process follows the same pattern of growth, exploration, maintenance and disengagement, however cycles are shorter and can be initiated at any age (Super et al, 1996, p.134).

Super asserted that the work role may be central, peripheral or non-existent, and other foci such as leisure activities and home making may be central instead (Super et al., 1996, p.126). This means that careers practitioners need to help clients holistically assess the full constellation of roles they inhabit before helping them reconfigure the pattern of the roles. I therefore devised a spidergram mapping exercise based on Super's Career Rainbow model (Super et al., 1996, p.127), which enabled participants to identify the main roles in their life (Super identified seven main roles: child, student, worker, leisurite, parent, homemaker and citizen (Super et al., 1996, p.127)) and the micro roles within these, thus giving them a picture of the content of their life.

Role conflict can arise from differences in the salience a person awards to a role and the amount of time they actually spend in it (Sugarman, 2001, pp.15–16). The exercise therefore also asked participants which roles had the highest salience for them and whether the way they spend their time was congruous with this. Participants then returned to their career conundrum and questioned whether role conflict could be causing their dilemma. This provided the first step in helping

Design and evaluation of a short course...

clients accept or renegotiate the balance of roles, cease or enter new roles.

Finally, I asked participants to identify the stage they considered themselves to be at within the mini cycle for each role and the associated development tasks that they were therefore facing. This enabled participants to plan the action they wished to take in each of the roles they identified.

Life line review and action planning (concept map item 7)

It is acknowledged that a narrative approach to careers guidance can help individuals make sense and impose order on their past career experiences (Greller & Simpson, 1999, p.333; Sugarman, 2001, p.11). This is an important skill of careers practitioners, who can help clients create coherent and credible stories, identify themes and tensions and learn the skills needed for the next episode in the story (Savickas, 1993, p.213). This activity therefore used prompt questions to help participants consider how the content of the course had resulted in a changed perspective on their past, for instance by considering what the positive results of the troughs and the negative consequences of the peaks might be. The activity therefore enabled participants to reframe events in their life and to integrate them into their story.

Finally, to assist with future planning, I recapped the content of the course and asked participants to summarise the insights that they had found useful. I then encouraged the participants to plan practical steps to move towards a resolution.

Evaluation

Participants found it easy to think of metaphors to express their career conundrum (item 1 in the concept map). One commented “this was an interesting way to condense my own ideas” and another: “it was simple but illustrated how I felt”. Later on, one participant said he hadn’t articulated his conundrum, despite having earlier pictured this as “hitting a brick wall”. I assumed that the metaphor would speak for itself, however further scaffolding was needed to help participants make sense of their metaphors.

Participants found the articles in the *media narratives* section (item 2 in the concept map) provocative and these spawned a variety of debates about the purpose of work, ageism and employability. The discussion led to the group collectively expressing desire for a job that they considered interesting, however they were doubtful that they would successfully secure employment. They saw this as being partly due to ageism in recruitment, expressing concern that employers do not want to manage people who are older than them, that they do not consider the skills of older job applicants to be transferable and that they believe younger workers to be more enthusiastic. One participant stated that entering a new work environment would require adjustment, and that it could not be assumed that having worked before meant that a person knew how to function across all work environments.

This demonstrated to me that the concerns of older adults are, at least partly, about the expectations of employers, the needs of new working environments and the extent to which they match these. Therefore, supporting participants to understand employers’ requirements and to improve their fit with these would be beneficial. Having employers as guest speakers would also allow participants to pose questions to them directly about the way they perceive older people when recruiting.

In retrospect, the articles chosen foregrounded the issue of ageism in recruitment and steered this segment away from showing that there are multiple beliefs about the career development of older people. Due to it proving difficult to find media artifacts that illustrate beliefs about development, I propose that participants could be given statements drawn directly from life span development theory to reflect upon. For example, statements could include: “adult development is about a person increasing their social radius” (drawing from Vaillant) (Vaillant, 2002, p.42) or “adult career development is characterised by adapting to the changing needs of a work situation” (drawing from Super) (Super et al., 1996, p.133). This would provide a better introduction to the subsequent theories to be presented.

Speaking about the lifeline activities (items 3 and 7 in the concept map), one participant said “I quite liked

this exercise...it was particularly good to think about triggers for troughs and peaks in my life-line and to recognize commonality in some of the events.” The exercise was successful in enabling participants to explore change and consistency of values, priorities and identity over the life course, for instance identifying the meaning of the Y axis on their lifeline helped participants see overarching principles through which they evaluate life experiences.

I asked participants to describe the shape of the line to raise awareness of the narrative tone they ascribe to their life. However, upon reflection, their lines did not show this, but instead showed ups and downs of events in their life. A better distinction between events and development is needed, as development can exist or cease, slow down or speed up as events occur.

The segments based on Super, Erikson and Vaillant’s life span models (items 4 and 6 in the concept map) worked to an extent, although participants got too caught up in the stage the models placed them at according to chronological age and the notion that the models show an invariable, linear sequence. It is important to make explicit that adult development does not follow rigid rules: stages can be out of sequence or omitted (Vaillant, 2002, p.50).

Super’s model generated lots of discussion about establishment and maintenance and whether this really constituted development with one participant remarking “is that all I’ve got to look forward to – updating my skills?” and all of them agreeing that these stages seemed dull. It would be useful to explore establishment and maintenance in greater detail and link this to participants’ personal definitions of development. This would enable them to imagine how they could enact establishment and maintenance according to their values.

The participants had mixed feelings about the segment based on Erikson and Vaillant’s models (item 6 on the concept map) with at least one participant strongly believing that these models were no longer culturally relevant and others doubting that the characteristics of the stages applied only to people past mid-life. However, one participant recognised that the stages might be used to explore motivation and possibly point to career choices. Instead of

explaining the stages by giving examples of the roles a person may take on (eg mentoring roles for those at the generativity stage), emphasizing the mechanism *underpinning* these roles may have allowed participants to identify with the change in motivations that precipitate career change.

The participants gave positive feedback about the section on Super’s roles and mini cycles (item 5 in the concept map): “the mini cycle was good, because I felt I could look at where I am now and where I want to be within the same bit of work”. Participants also felt that exploring roles was useful, commenting that this was “interesting – made me think about my life in a structured way”. To develop this exercise, it would be interesting to explore how mini cycles contribute to overall development by referring back to the lifeline.

Conclusion

Older adults who are job seeking may need support similar to young adults who are seeking work for the first time, including job identification and matching, and support through recruitment processes. However, this project demonstrates that older adults have additional needs. For instance, ageism in recruitment is perceived as a problem by some; therefore, involving employers in the delivery of courses aimed at older people is important. Moreover, this project demonstrates that older adults benefit from support to evaluate the meaning they have ascribed to their past and present career and its place in their overall life structure. Enabling clients to author new career possibilities which are congruent with changing priorities and life circumstances is also of value.

Careers practitioners can provide this support. To do this well, a course aimed at older clients must recognise the individuality of participants and their experiences. Supporting participants to set their own agenda by identifying a metaphor for their career conundrum is an effective method, however scaffolding to understand the significance of this metaphor is necessary.

Adopting a narrative process throughout encourages participants to explore their career conundrum, reflect upon their past and construct future plans. Development theories can assist in the construction

Design and evaluation of a short course...

of this narrative, however predicting the stage or tasks that a person is likely to be engaging with according to age is far less useful than clients identifying their own developmental stages and tasks according to their individuality. To enable participants to critically engage with developmental theories, it could be beneficial to create activities that enable discussion of the ideas underpinning these theories, so that participants arrive at their own definition of what constitutes 'development' and 'career development'. This would enable them to identify the personal values which may steer future career decisions.

Exercises that utilise life-lining, the mapping of roles and exploration of mini cycles assist individuals to explore personal motivations and their developing sense of identity. These activities enable individuals to establish the significance of work in their life and renegotiate a new balance of life roles if necessary. Within these exercises, a distinction needs to be drawn between life events and life development, so that individuals can see how development occurs through events.

Overall a course which utilises narrative and life span development theories enable participants to think creatively about their career dilemmas. This approach can also enable careers practitioners working in universities and in contexts outside of Higher Education to also be creative and design innovative support mechanisms that enable clients to explore deep issues of identity in relation to career. I have found undertaking this project fascinating: professionally it has shown me a way of working with older clients more effectively and personally it has revitalised the way I think about my career.



References

- Amundson, C., McAlpine, L. & Weston, C. (2008). Concept mapping to support university academics' analysis of course content. *Studies in Higher Education*. 33 (6), 633-652.
- Cochran, L. (1990). *A sense of vocation: a study of career and life development*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Cochran, L. (1997). *Career Counselling: A Narrative Approach*. California: Sage Publications.
- Erikson, E. (1980). *Identity and the Life Cycle*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.
- Greller, M. & Simpson, P. (1999). In Search of Late Career: A Review of Contemporary Social Science Research Applicable to the Understanding of Late Career. *Human Resource Management Review*. 9 (3), pp. 309-347.
- Greller, M.M & Stroh, L.K. (1995). Careers in Midlife and Beyond: A Fallow Field in Need of Sustenance. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*. 47(3). pp. 232-247).
- Hinsliff, G. (2015). Why shouldn't the over 50s start a new career? *Guardian*. (Online). 14th Jan 2017. (Date accessed). Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/25/over-50s-new-career-teacher>
- Jones, A. (2016). Age discrimination 'still an issue'. *Sunday Post*. (Online) 14th Jan 2017. (Date accessed). Available from: <https://www.sundaypost.com/news/age-discrimination-still-issue-older-jobseekers-study-reveals/>
- Kadlec, D. (2015). Suddenly hot jobs for over 50s. *Time*. (Online). 14th Jan 2017. (Date accessed). Available from: <http://time.com/money/3725034/jobs-older-workers-improved/>
- McAdams, D.P. (1993). *Stories We Live By: Personal Myths and the Making of the Self*. New York: William Morrow and Company.
- Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential Learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Levinson, D. (1978). *The Seasons of a Man's Life*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Levinson, D. (1996). *The Seasons of a Woman's Life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Phillipson, C. & Ogg, J. (2010). *Active aging and universities: engaging older learners*. (Online). Universities UK. (Accessed 12th May 2016). Available from: <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/active-ageing-and-universities-engaging-older-learners.aspx>

Nomis, (2016). Overview of the UK Population 20016. (Online). (Accessed 9 August 2016). Available from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/overviewoftheukpopulation/february2016#how-are-the-characteristics-of-the-uk-population-changing>

Open University. (2013). *Action Research A Guide for Associate Lecturers*. (Online). (Accessed September 28th 2018). Available from: www.open.edu/openlearncreate/mod/resource/view.php?id=51626

Savickas, M.L. (1993). Career Counselling in the Postmodern Era. *Journal of Cognitive Psychology: An International Quarterly*. 7(3), pp. 205-215.

Sterns, H. & Miklos, S. (1995). The Aging Worker in a Changing Environment: Organisational and Individual Issues. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. 47(3) pp.248 – 268.

Sugarman, L. (2001). *Life-Span Development: Frameworks, Accounts and Strategies*. 2nd ed. East Sussex: Psychology Press.

Sullivan, S.E., & Crocitto, M. (2007). The Developmental Theories: A critical Examination of Their Continuing Impact on Careers Research. In: Gunz, H. & Peiperl, M. ed(s). *Handbook of Career Studies*. California: Sage, pp.283-309.

Super, D., Savickas, M & Super, C. (1996). The Life-span, Life Space Approach to Careers. In: Brown, D and Brooks, L. ed(s). *Career Choice and Development*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc, pp.121-170.

Vaillant, G.E. (2002). *Aging Well*. New York: Hachette Book Group.

For correspondence

Lisa Law,
Careers Development Consultant

Lisa.law@wlv.ac.uk