

**NICEC**

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CAREER EDUCATION AND COUNSELLING



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**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.'

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## TITLE

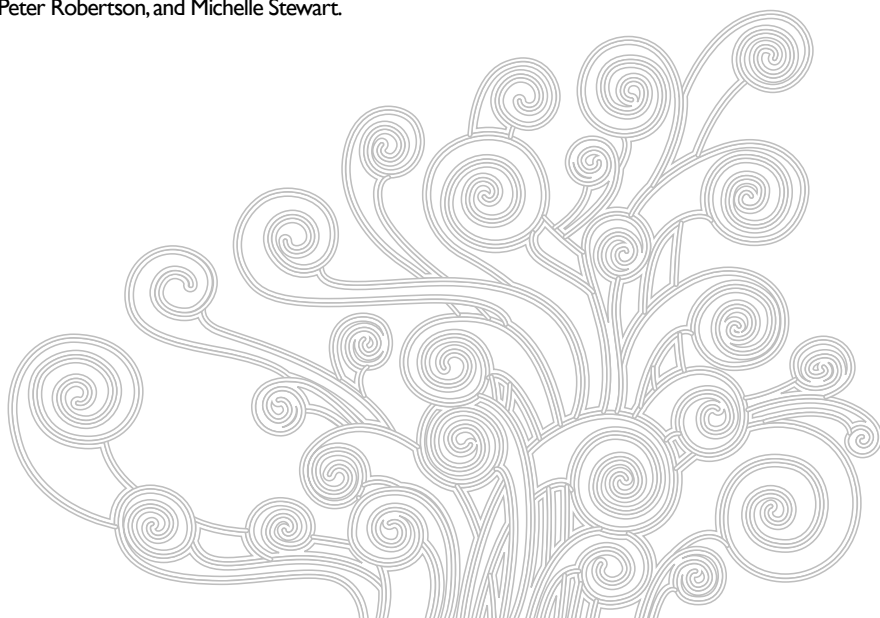
The official title of the journal for citation purposes is *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling* (Print ISSN 2046-1348; online ISSN 2059-4879). It is widely and informally referred to as 'the NICEC journal'. Its former title was *Career Research and Development: the 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.



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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.

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# 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.

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Phil McCash, Editor

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# Book review

*Graduate Careers in Context: Research, Policy and Practice*, edited by C. Burke and F. Christie, London, Routledge, 2019, pp. 201, £115 (hardback), from £20 (e-book), ISBN 978-1-138-30176-4.

Reviewed by Dr Phil McCash, NICEC Fellow

*Graduate Careers in Context* is an edited collection featuring 15 chapters structured into four sections: the graduate labour market, graduate careers and transitions, professional and organisational issues relating to employability, and careers professional evolving into researchers. The intended audiences include career development professionals working in the higher education sector and sociologically oriented academic researchers. It is designed to enhance conversation and dialogue between these groups. As such, this timely and valuable book occupies a distinctive niche and has no direct competitors.

In part 1, Ciaran Burke and Sarah Hannaford-Simpson deftly employ Pierre Bourdieu's notion of capitals to interrogate some claims about graduate attributes in wide circulation. Andrew Morrison perceptively critiques supply-side notions of employability; and uses Nancy Fraser's theory of two-dimensional participatory justice to analyse inequalities in the graduate labour market. Teresa Crew uses the notion of regional capitals, again from a Bourdieusian angle, to discuss graduate employment in Wales. I particularly admired her reflexive stance and skilful ability to situate herself in her work.

In part 2, Charlie Ball critically evaluates some stereotypes and/or popular stories about the graduate labour market such as 'everyone has a degree nowadays' and 'all the graduate jobs are in London'. His use of contemporary labour market data gives timeliness and relevance to this chapter. Katie Vigurs et al. explore the early career experiences of graduates using the evolving concept of a graduate gap year. Their work features detailed and careful fieldwork with a range of graduates. In one of the most fully realised chapters, Rosie Alexander questions assumptions about graduate mobility based on her

role as a career service manager based in Orkney and Shetland. She flags up 'mobiliser' versus 'integrator' positions (p. 91) in relation to geography and drives this credibly into recommendations for practice. Jane Artess analyses anew data from the large-scale Futuretrack survey to discuss how students learn to be employable. She argues persuasively for a more learner-centred conception of employability and career development to shape the evolution of curricula. Tracy Scurry and John Blenkinsopp explore the lived experience of graduates working in call centres in the Midlands of England. I found this a very moving and thoughtful exploration of the 'underemployment' phenomenon.

In part 4, Bob Gilworth provides an extensive typology of career and employability services in higher education. This is highly valuable as it considerably updates previous typologies and will be of great benefit in the training of career development professionals. Siobhan Neary and Jill Hanson discuss their research with HE career development professionals. They skilfully explore issues such as prior experience, gender, and the growing range of roles in HE services. Nalayini Thambar also discusses the professional identity of HE careers advisers and managers; and provides an insightful discussion of professional, sectoral, and institutional influences on identity.

In the final section, David Winter argues for an enhanced research mindset for career development professionals drawing from his experience with a large-scale career registration data project. He proposes good ideas for career development professionals who engage in research and/or need to critically understand research findings of others. Gill Frigerio brings the main chapters to a close by reflecting carefully on her own experience as a careers service manager, researcher, and teacher. She makes a strong case for the value of the systems theory framework developed by Wendy Patton and Mary McMahon.

Looked at in more critical terms, whilst the Bourdieusian inspired chapters are certainly interesting, there could perhaps have been more recognition that Bourdieu's ideas are already very much alive in the higher education careers and

employability community through the work of Paul Redmond, Rachael Collins, and several others, including the seminal publications of Phil Hodgkinson (Hodkinson, 2008; Hodgkinson & Sparkes, 1997). It's fair to say that the average qualified higher education career development professional could give most academics, including Bourdieusian sociologists, a run for their money in terms of a rich, integrated transdisciplinary theoretical understanding of career development that includes concepts from Bourdieu but goes considerably beyond these.

Burke and Hannaford-Simpson are surely right to argue for a more nuanced handling of capital; however, the discussion of Fergal (one of their interviewees) slips uneasily into using terms such as 'low levels of aspirations and expectations' (p. 24), 'negative attitude' (p. 24), and 'negative outlook' (p. 25). Morrison argues for 'a more level playing field in the competition for graduate jobs' (p. 38) without fully unpicking notions of meritocracy and competition. The reader is left needing to hear more about how university staff and students may influence the demand-side of employability. This is a topic that Crew neatly picks up in her discussion of the Welsh context where she advocates working with employers and policymakers to transform the infrastructure of the labour market.

The promise of the Bourdieusian approach outlined is only partly realised as the extent and depth of the link between the early and later chapters is quite mixed. Ball's chapter could perhaps be linked more easily to the social learning ideas of Krumboltz. Gilworth's chapter to the developmental ideas of Super and Gati. Thambar's ideas on organisational contexts linked, to my mind, more easily with the Systems Theory Framework. The varieties of capital add nuance to critique, for sure, but the proliferation of terminology lacks some rigour (capital is always *already* human, social, cultural, etc.) and occasionally drifts into mere intellectualisation. Symbolic violence, one of Bourdieu's key concepts, is referred to obliquely (p. 21) but could have been unpacked much further and linked critically to practices in higher education. So, more work would be needed to craft a fully Bourdieusian career theory and link this to the long and rich tradition of career studies and drive it credibly into practice. Nonetheless, this book provides some intriguing hints.

It is of course impossible to cover all angles, but I felt the focus on career development professionals was a little narrow; indeed, one chapter focused

purely on the specific role of careers adviser. More chapters were needed on the roles played by other staff in HEIs including academics, managers, and other professionals. I wanted to hear more about how sociologically oriented academic researchers could engage in praxis within their own departments. Indeed, more content would have been helpful on the CPD received by academic and non-academic staff across the board in HE. The role of graduate recruiters was there, to an extent, but could have been more fully explored. We needed a meaty chapter on the contemporary experience of graduate employment in large graduate firms. I also struggled to square Thambar's description of undefined, locally focused, unrecognised, and unconfident careers staff with the outstanding, qualified, networked, creative, and highly able HE career development professionals I meet with every day of my working life. Nonetheless, she does recognise their dedication and makes a very good point about the need to understand the changing academic role in HEIs.

The criticisms above need to be set in context however. This is a unique book and fills a gap in the literature. The range of writers is impressive and it represents a considerable feat of scholarship. Ciaran Burke and Fiona Christie have done a great job in not just talking the talk but *walking the walk* in relation to improving dialogue between theory and practice. Judged on its own terms it certainly delivers on its objectives.

Speaking personally, this book will definitely be a welcome addition to the reading lists on our courses for career development professionals at Warwick. I can see some chapters quickly becoming core reading on our modules. It should be similarly adopted at other training centres. It will also be useful more widely for educational developers, university learning and development centres, teacher training centres, HR departments, and, of course, students too.

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