JOURNAL OF THE

National Institute for Career Education and Counselling

April 2023 | Issue 50

Promoting research and reflective practice in career development
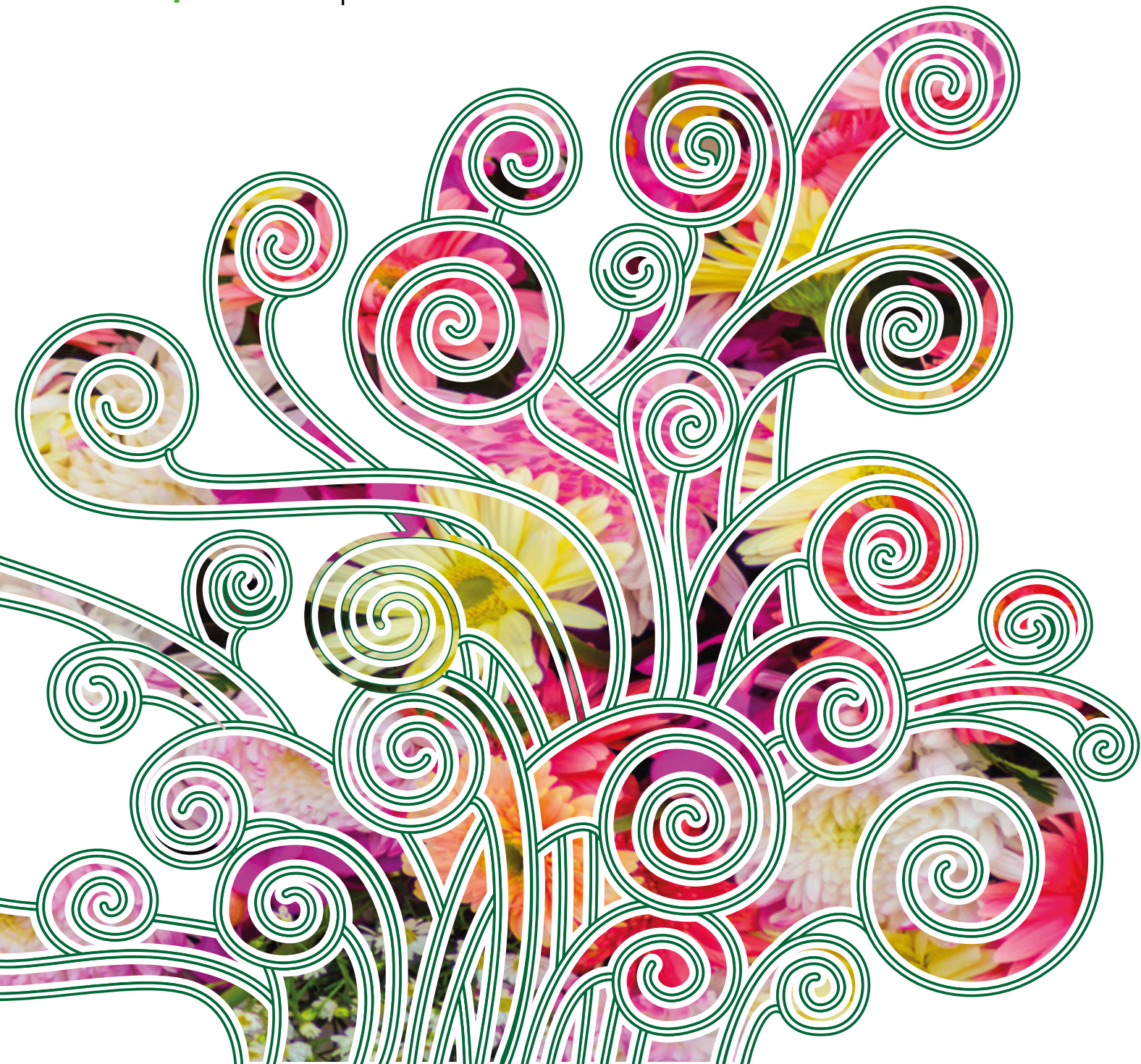
NICEC

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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EDITORIAL BOARD

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

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 via the Journal webpage: www.nicecjournal. co.uk. Articles longer than 3,500 words can also be accepted by agreement. Please contact the relevant issue associate 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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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

Overview of this issue

Pete Robertson, Editor

Our Spring 2023 issue is an opportunity to announce two new developments for this Journal. Firstly, we have reconstituted the editorial board. Recognising the global accessibility of our open access platform, we are pleased to welcome NICEC international fellows: Peter McIlveen, Mary McMahon, Ronald Sultana, and Rie Thomsen. They join our new editorial team of Jane Artess, Fiona Christie, Gill Frigerio, and Tristram Hooley, together with Oliver Jenkins (representing the Career Development Institute). Collectively the board will advise on the editorial policy for the Journal, raising standards, and positioning the publication after the move to open access.

Secondly, the Journal is now discontinued in paper-based format. Although the printed version was fondly received by NICEC fellows and members, this move allows flexibility and resources to be devoted to open access. This is the first issue to be exclusively available in electronic format.

This is an open call issue. Contributing authors have addressed a diverse range of topics related to career development.

Opening this issue, **Rosie Alexander** questions accepted wisdom about the centrality of labour market information to career guidance practice. She points to assumptions in the way we frame labour market knowledge problems, and the need for other kinds of information in the helping relationship.

From Canada, **Charles Chen and An Li** describe the career development experiences of international students at universities and colleges in North America. They address some of the implications for careers services supporting this client group.

In our second contribution from North America, **Seth Hayden, Debra Osborn and Kaitlyn Costello** adopt a more intra-personal perspective. Using Cognitive Information Processing theory, they explore the relationship between executive processing and career development, and its implications for wellbeing.

Tristram Hooley questions the concept of impartiality, and its role as a keystone of professional ethics in the UK. He points to its ambiguities and suggests a way to clarify the notion.

In a more personal autoethnographical account, **Emma Lennox** explains her experience as a career development practitioner serving arts students in the university department where she herself was previously a student.

Whilst acknowledging the recent discourse around green guidance, **Steve Mowforth** challenges the near silence in the career development community around the climate and

ecological emergency. He points to a gulf emerging between young people for whom this crisis is central to their thinking, and career service providers.

Dan O'Sullivan and Catherine Heneghan explore the interface between guidance and youth work, and the interface between school and further education systems. They describe guidance services in Youthreach centres in the Republic of Ireland.

Nalayini Thambar and Helen Hughes, in a follow up to a previous article by Thambar, consider how the role of career development professionals in UK universities is evolving - in a post-COVID, technologically driven world.

Why LMI? Questioning the role of labour market information in career guidance

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Abstract

This article surfaces debate in the literature around the role of labour market information (LMI) in career education and guidance. Building on questions of whether LMI is peripheral or pivotal in career services (Bimrose, 2021) the paper aims to synthesise the argument in the existing literature around LMI. Utilising an approach informed by Bacchi's *What is the problem represented to be?* (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2019), the paper asks how and why LMI has been positioned by some interests as central to career interventions, and the implications of this positioning. It also asks whether there are alternative ways of imagining the role of LMI and explores their implications for policy and practice.

Keywords: Career information; labour market information; labour market intelligence; career guidance

Introduction

In recent years the question of Labour Market Information (LMI) has received growing attention in the research literature. This includes work that has sought to identify the role of LMI in career guidance (Bimrose, 2021; Milosheva et al., 2021), and that which has aimed to identify good practice in the use of LMI in career education and guidance (Alexander, McCabe, & De Backer, 2019; Bimrose, 2021). Critical perspectives on LMI have also explored and problematised definitions of LMI (Staunton, 2022), and sought to identify how LMI can be used in socially just forms of careers provision (Staunton & Rogosic, 2021). A number of publications have also directly addressed questions of how central LMI should be in career guidance and career decision making (Bimrose, 2021; Milosheva et al., 2021). This paper seeks to extend these arguments by looking at the positioning of LMI in the existing literature, asking how and why LMI is positioned as important, and considering the implications for practice.

In order to structure this paper, Bacchi's *What is the Problem Represented to be?* approach is utilised (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2019). Bacchi's approach invites a critical analysis of policy through asking six specific questions:

1. What's the 'problem'…represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?

2. What deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the 'problem'?

3. How has this representation of the 'problem' come about?

4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the 'problem' be conceptualised differently?

5. What effects…are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?

6. How/where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been and/ or how can it be questioned, disrupted and replaced? (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2019, p. 20)

This paper draws on existing evidence in the literature relating to LMI in career guidance and asks these six questions to critically interrogate the role and position of LMI and to open up some questions about alternative ways of thinking.

LMI – what is the problem represented to be?

Applying Bacchi's approach to the LMI literature, we can ask what is the problem represented to be? In answering these questions it is notable that despite a significant body of literature on LMI, the majority of this work simply starts with the assumption or the claim that Labour Market Information (LMI) is central to the practice of career guidance (Alexander et al., 2019). Typically the literature focuses on what information is being provided, rather than how information can be best used in career services (Milosheva et al., 2021; Staunton, 2022). Where previous literature has often focused on the 'what' of LMI, Milosheva et al (2021, p.12) argue that it is often informed by a '"lack of information" assumption – a belief that insufficient career information is at the root of career indecision, and that the provision of more career information will resolve career conundrums.' The lack of information assumption is paralleled elsewhere in the literature by concerns in deficit of *quality* of information (Alexander et al., 2019), which is accompanied by similar assumptions, that improving the quality of information will improve career decision making. The 'problem' is therefore one of poor quality or quantity of information which, if resolved, is anticipated to improve career decision making.

Assumptions underlying the importance of LMI

The 'problem' as it is presented comes with several assumptions. In particular the focus on quality and availability of information positions career decision making in a certain way: as a rational choice whereby individuals weigh up their options rationally in relation to the information they have and make a decision accordingly (Grubb, 2002). Here, it is notable

that in many publications the importance of LMI in career guidance is tracked back to Parson's foundational work in the field (see for example Kumar & Arulmani, 2014; Staunton & Rogosic, 2021). Writing in 1909 Parsons proposes that choice of a vocation should be based on knowledge of oneself and 'knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work' (Parsons, 1909, p. 5), and 'true reasoning' in relation to these two areas. This is commonly known as 'matching theory'. The dominance of matching assumptions in much of the literature on LMI (Staunton, 2022; Staunton & Rogosic, 2021), results not only in a position whereby decision making is presumed to be rational, but also suggests that career decision making is primarily based on 'matching' labour market needs to career interests, that information is neutral and unproblematic (Staunton, 2022), and that information processing of individuals is straightforward (Milosheva et al., 2021).

How has the representation of the problem come about?

In understanding how LMI has come to be seen as so pivotal by some interests, it is also useful to explore Offer's (2001) justification for the importance of labour markets in career guidance. This is frequently cited: see, for example, Barnes & Bimrose (2010); Bimrose (2021); and European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. (2016). Offer (2001, p. 76) argues that what makes career guidance 'distinctive' is the 'application of, and reference to, expert knowledge and understanding of the labour market and its functioning'. The idea of 'distinctiveness' positions career guidance as something different to counselling or other forms of helping. Offer goes on to extend his argument: 'careers guidance, in relation to counselling, we might argue is an applied discipline in a way analogous to engineering's relationship to physics and maths… the argument that guidance makes an effective and measurable contribution to the labour and learning opportunity markets is still essential to the political survival of the species' (2001, p.76). Although this extended argument is less often referenced in the literature, it does represent Offer's key point – that LMI is important because it is key to aligning labour market interests and individual interests in career guidance. Here his argument is closely aligned to the policy tradition in the career guidance literature that sees the career guidance having a dual role, addressing both labour market needs and individual needs (Hooley et al., 2018; Watts, 1996). In the literature on LMI it is instructive to note that LMI has had a particular prominence in the policy related literature (Milosheva et al., 2021), and indeed, to a certain extent that the language of LMI itself is aligned to the language of policy makers, rather than individual decision makers or careers practitioners (Alexander, McCabe, De Backer, et al., 2019).

Thinking about how the language of LMI is aligned to policy interests, it is useful to note the growing dominance of neoliberal ideologies in the way that career guidance is positioned politically (Hooley et al., 2018; Sultana, 2014). Neoliberalism, with its overarching assumption that the best way to improve outcomes for a population is through pursuing economic success (Harvey, 2007), positions career guidance as fundamentally about assisting individuals to secure economically rewarding outcomes, and thereby to also support the functioning of the economy by improving the stock of human resources and reducing under-utilisation of skills. From such a perspective, being able to 'match' individual interests into appropriate 'gaps' in the market supports both individual achievement and market functioning, and LMI is a key means by which to do this.

What are the alternatives?

Having explored some of the rationale for the importance of LMI, Bacchi's questions invite us to ask: 'what is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the 'problem' be thought about differently?'.

Firstly, the idea that career decisions are rational decisions has been widely challenged (Grubb, 2002; Hartung & Blustein, 2002; Krieshok et al., 2009). There is also a lengthy history of theoretical perspectives that have developed alternative models of career decision making since Parsons' work. Alternative models for example, have explored the socially and contextually embedded nature of career decision making, for example Krumboltz' learning theories (Krumboltz, 2009; Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996), Law's Community Interaction Theory (Law, 1981, 2009) and Hodkinson and Sparkes' Careership theory (Hodkinson, 1998, 2008; Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997). These different approaches all emphasise how an individual's understanding of their options impacts on their career decision making. However, in all these approaches this knowledge is not developed through a neutral process of information gathering but is rather developed by socially and contextually situated individuals – including through work experience, role models, family experiences, social connections, and networks.

From these theoretical perspectives simply attempting to 'correct' an individual's understanding of their options with information provision is problematic given the relative strength of these socially situated, embodied and experiential knowledges. Further, scholarship on how individuals *use* information has demonstrated the complexity of how individuals acquire, process and act on information (Milosheva et al., 2021). Research into LMI has shown how information on its own has limited impact on decision-making (Alexander et al., 2019), and that information from 'hot sources' (e.g. information provided by family or friends) is more often impactful than formal information sources (Greenbank & Hepworth, 2008). Further, rather than formal, statistical information (that narrow definitions of LMI often imply), it is more often information in the form of 'inspiration' that is impactful (The Careers & Enterprise Company, 2016), or 'career intelligence' which is information personalised to decision makers (Barnes & Bimrose, 2010; Howat & Zaidi, 2010). Thinking from these perspectives, then, the 'problem' is not so much information – quantity or quality – but rather how people come to understand their career or labour market options as socially situated individuals.

The second core assumption around LMI is that career decision making happens as a 'match' between individual career interests and labour market options, an assumption particularly dominant in the policy tradition of career guidance. However, the policy tradition is only one tradition of thinking about career education and guidance, with the psychological and emerging emancipatory traditions suggesting quite different ways of thinking about the roles and functions of career guidance (Hooley et al., 2018). In the psychological tradition for example the focus of career education and guidance is more firmly on individual outcomes, potentially including wellbeing outcomes (Robertson, 2013). These approaches highlight for example that positive outcomes for individuals may not always be the economically 'best' outcomes – for example an individual may sacrifice pay or status for the sake of lifestyle or other priorities. These ideas appear in Super's (1980) notion of life roles for example, or Schein's (1990) idea of the 'lifestyle anchor' for career

decisions. Thinking about career decisions within wider life decisions suggests that the information needs of individuals are likely to be radically wider than narrow definitions of LMI typically identify. Indeed in some of the careers literature it is notable how narrow definitions of LMI are often replaced by broader terms such as '*careers and* labour market information' [italics added] (Hooley et al., 2010a; The Gatsby Charitable Foundation, 2014) encompassing occupational information and educational information. Arguably, however, information needs of career decision makers may be considerably wider still, including topics like lifestyle, housing and accommodation availability, benefits provision, childcare options and availability, impacts of health conditions, and transport for commuting (Alexander, McCabe, & De Backer, 2019).

Another key challenge to ideas that career guidance has a role in serving labour market needs comes from the emerging emancipatory tradition. In the context of growing precarity in the labour market, scholars have recognised what is good for the labour market may not always be good for individuals (Hooley et al., 2018). Where these needs are in conflict, resisting the pressure to meet labour market outcomes may be perceived as an ethical imperative. This potentially changes how careers advisers should think about LMI in their practice. Some work addresses alternative uses of LMI in pursuit of social justice goals, by opening up labour market functioning to critique (Alexander, McCabe, De Backer, et al., 2019; Staunton & Rogosic, 2021).

What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?

Having explored problem representations, origins, assumptions and alternatives, Bacchi's approach encourages us to think about the effects of the problem representation. With regards to LMI the key impact is that this problem representation supports certain forms of career education and guidance delivery.

The clearest impact is in how career services and national career systems have often invested heavily in information resources. Development of free to access careers resources on the internet is often pursued on the basis of increasing efficiency of career guidance provision and decreasing cost-per-user (Hooley et al., 2010b). Information resources are imagined to replace, or at least reduce demand on, more costly one-to-one guidance services.

However, with the recognition that 'information' on its own may not always be sufficient (Alexander, McCabe, De Backer, et al., 2019), and inequalities in access to online information (Howieson & Semple, 2013), potentially other forms of service become important. Career education, and wider careers programmes in schools which include employer engagements and work placements have all been positioned as having key roles in increasing access to knowledge and information. Kashefpakdel and Percy (2016, p. 229) for example identify the economic benefits of career education, specifically identifying the social capital value of employer engagements whereby 'teenagers engage with the labour market to gain *access to information* found to be more authentic, useful and persuasive than rival sources of knowledge' [emphasis added]. Educational approaches to promote social justice may include using LMI as part of group activities designed to facilitate the

development of critical perspectives on the workplace (Hooley et al., 2018; Precarious Workers Brigade, 2017). Therefore a focus on the value of education is emphasised both in policy and emancipatory traditions of career practice, with education being seen as a key means of gathering information and knowledge, and developing critical awareness.

Perhaps a more problematic implication of the centrality of LMI in policy perspectives is how one-to-one career guidance is positioned. In the literature on LMI, guidance services are primarily identified as valuable for 'personalising' and targeting LMI to ensure that it is most impactful. However, such a position potentially still relies on fundamental assumptions around matching and overlooks the complexity of career decision making as a process that involves lots of wider lifestyle considerations, and which is made by socially and contextually embedded individuals. In practical terms the dominance of matching approaches positions career guidance interventions as relatively simple, short, and often one-off interventions (Bimrose, 2006). Such a position is potentially problematic, limiting the scope, and potentially impact, of career guidance practice. This argument will be elaborated in the following section of the paper.

Disrupting LMI

The final questions that Bacchi invites us to ask are: How/where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been (or could it be) questioned, disrupted and replaced?

The discourse of LMI has been produced largely in the policy literature. Given that career guidance is predominantly publicly funded (Watts, 1996), challenging the centrality of LMI in career decision making may be viewed as risky for undermining the rationale for public funding. In his argument for the importance of LMI, Offer (2001, p. 76) states that 'if no-one who received careers guidance could hold down a job or earn a living thereafter, there would be little basis for supporting it out of public funds...'. However, there is an alternative here: what if the policy rationale for career guidance was not aligned primarily with economic policy but, say, health or wellbeing policy? How would this change the objectives of career guidance practice? The potential for career guidance to have a wide range of health and wellbeing benefits and an argument for a stronger alignment of career guidance to health, or indeed other policy portfolios has, for example, been made by Robertson (2013, 2021). Here we could argue that the 'policy tradition' of career guidance is actually a tradition that stems from one kind of policy alignment, with other alignments being possible. These different alignments would potentially understand the information needs of individuals as much wider than the labour market and might lend themselves to different models of practice.

Another disruption to the discourse of LMI, has stemmed from the theoretical literature already discussed in this paper, which positions career decision making as a much wider and more complex process than matching models would assume. Understanding career decisions as complex and embedded in wider life-decisions has implications for service design and delivery. Although knowledge of the labour market (developed through career education and information services) is likely to be valuable, individuals may still

face challenges in thinking through their own life-situations, choices and dilemmas. And it is in exploring and overcoming complexities and dilemmas in decision making that career *guidance* practice potentially has a key role. Taking these arguments forward, it is instructive to note that if the centrality of LMI in careers practice is disrupted, then so too is Offer's argument about the 'distinctiveness' of career guidance from other forms of helping. Indeed, we might debate definitions of careers work as guidance, coaching or counselling practice (Bimrose, 2006), with literature that explores career counselling and coaching potentially allowing greater scope for understanding the complexity of clients' stories, dilemmas and barriers (Yates, 2014, 2019). In these models, not only is career guidance practice not necessarily assumed to be a short one-off intervention, but potentially more in-depth, but also the use of information is positioned differently. Knowledge of the labour market is typically identified as important for career counsellors or coaches to have, but primarily this is used to inform practice including assessment of client needs, rather than being directly provided to individuals (Alexander, McCabe, De Backer, et al., 2019). As client-centred forms of practice, it is also the case that counselling and coaching models adopt a much wider understanding of the kinds of information needs of individuals, recognising for example the ways that decision making is embedded in wider life choices.

Disrupting discourses of the centrality of LMI in career services potentially, opens up different understandings of careers practice. These understandings recognise the depth and complexity of the work, and the distinctive contribution that guidance (as opposed to education or information services) can provide in helping individuals process complex decisions. Disrupting discourses of LMI also potentially has some value for career professionals, who are often trained in counselling models of practice, for example Ali and Graham's (1996) career counselling approach is widely used in the UK (Hooley, 2022). Further afield, constructivist approaches to practice are widely adopted across the globe, with these approaches paying little attention to LMI (Staunton & Rogosic, 2021). De-centring guidance practice away from LMI, may support professional career guidance practice, and reduce the potential for professional dilemmas and challenges for careers staff when entering workplaces that are framed by public policy assumptions (Douglas, 2011; Reid & West, 2011).

In disrupting discourses of LMI, career guidance practice can become framed as in-depth person-centred work supporting individuals to make decisions based on their own needs and desires – a framing that is well established in the psychological tradition of thinking about career guidance. This approach is potentially more aligned to models of practice and professional identities of careers practitioners.

Conclusions

This paper has utilised Bacchi's 'What is the Problem Represented to be?' approach to explore understandings of Labour Market Information in career education and guidance. This analysis has shown that ideas of the value of LMI are closely related to policy perspectives on career guidance and have been aligned to theoretical approaches of 'matching'. By exploring rationales, and alternatives, this paper has argued that knowledge of career options is fundamental to career decision making. However, where the provision

of career information and education services are important to assist with building knowledge, the function of career guidance should be understood quite differently.

Disrupting the idea that LMI is necessarily central in career *guidance* provision – as opposed to information or education services – aligns understandings of career guidance away from policy traditions towards psychological traditions of understanding careers provision. This is important partly because it aligns with commonly taught models of practice based on counselling or coaching. Although there is potentially some conflict with policy interpretations of career guidance, where LMI is central, the paper has also identified how disrupting discourses of LMI potentially opens up different policy alignments for services including areas such as health and wellbeing.

● ●

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Career development for international students in North America

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Abstract

The proportion of international students studying in post-secondary institutions in the United States and Canada is growing. These students are facing various career development issues that are unique to the population and may contribute to employment difficulties. This article focuses on international students' career issues from three aspects: cultural barriers, help-seeking barriers, and visa restrictions. Career counselling interventions are reviewed and discussed from a theoretical perspective, including lifecareer theory and social cognitive career theory. The goal of this paper is to add to the literature on career counselling interventions for international students who experience specific career issues.

Keywords: career development; international students; higher education; career theory; career counselling

Career development for international students in North America

The number of international students is growing and now represents a large proportion of students in colleges and universities. Approximately 4.5 million students are studying outside of their country of citizenship (Nilsson & Ripmeester, 2016). The population of international students in the United States increased substantially over the last three decades, with an annual growth of 7% (McFadden & Seedorff, 2017; Nilsson & Ripmeester, 2016), while the proportion in Canada tripled over the last decade, representing more than half of the total growth in students in post-secondary programmes (Statistics Canada, 2020). Across Europe, the estimated number of international students pursuing tertiary education in 2020 exceeded 1.46 million, with the highest proportion of international students reported in Germany, followed by France and the Netherlands (Eurostat, 2022). The United Kingdom alone has attracted over 500,000 students to leave their home

countries and commence their study abroad (OECD, 2022). In Canada, over half of all international students are from China (Crockett & Hays, 2011; Statistics Canada, 2020). Similarly, China is also the most common country of origin amongst all international students across Europe, followed by India (Eurostat, 2022). The main fields of interest for international students are business and management (Crockett & Hays, 2011; Statistics Canada, 2020). The USA Department of Education estimated the proportion of international students represented 3% of all conferred bachelor's degrees, 12% of master's degrees, and 25% of doctoral degrees (Crockett & Hays, 2011).

The reason why international students choose to study abroad is mainly due to the higher quality of education and better career opportunities. Students believe that education in North America could provide them with better knowledge in their learning field, a better social network, better mentorship, and better job opportunities (Han *et al*., 2015). The study also showed that graduates who have experience learning abroad during their university studies are more likely to be employed after graduation, compared to peers who stay in their home country (Di Pietro, 2015)this paper investigates the extent to which participation in study abroad programs during university studies impacts subsequent employment likelihood. To address the problem of endogeneity related to participation in study abroad programs, I use a combination of fixed effects and instrumental variable estimation where the instrumental variable is exposure to international student exchange schemes. My estimates show that studying abroad has a relatively large and statistically meaningful effect on the probability of being in employment three years after graduation. This effect is mainly driven by the impact that study abroad programs have on the employment prospects of graduates from disadvantaged (but not very disadvantaged. However, an early landmark study found that international students are likely to encounter considerable career challenges, with greater employment difficulties in comparison to their domestic peers in the country (Leong & Sedlacek, 1989). Given the difficulties, 78% of students still hope to stay in North America upon graduation and pursue a career there (Han et al., 2015).

The aim of this paper is to discuss the career development of students originating from different countries who pursue post-secondary education in the USA and Canada. This paper discusses three career issues that international students face in general, including cultural barriers, help-seeking barriers, and visa restrictions. Possible interventions that could be applied to career counselling are discussed while integrating relevant career development theories, with a specific focus on Lifecareer Theory (Miller-Tiedeman, 1997) and Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent et al., 2002). Even though student experiences and visa policies vary across countries, issues discussed in this paper hold great relevance to international students in Europe as research has identified similar factors that facilitate or impede their adaptation, such as language barriers, cultural transition and identification, the dominance of the host culture, academic and structural support, and visa difficulties (Abdulai et al., 2021; Alberts, 2019; Brisset et al., 2010; Han et al., 2022; Hayes, 2019; Hyams-Ssekasi & Caldwell, 2019; Mikuláš & Jitka, 2019).

Career issues affecting international students' career development

Cultural barriers

Each country's culture is formed based on its unique history, it is linked with citizens' experiences growing up and can have great impacts on an individual's personality and way of thinking. Cultural differences could be seen as the top issue affecting international students' employment, especially for Eastern students staying in Western countries.

A majority of international students would experience a cross-cultural transition after their landing in the host country. The purpose is to adjust themselves adopting to the novel culture in a timely manner. While learning in the host country, many international students recognize the gap between two cultures and find that their familiar way of functioning is more or less disrupted when exposed to the host country's norms and behaviours (Crockett & Hays, 2011). International students also tend to experience more adjustment problems than domestic students due to the stressors created by cross-cultural transitions, and the problems usually become more obvious in job seeking circumstances (Leong & Sedlacek, 1986). For international students who are not native speakers of English, language barriers are one of the distinct adjustment concerns making them more vulnerable (Chen, 1999). It is not only the basic requirement for daily living but also the necessary skill for academic and occupational activities (Chen, 1999). Other primary adjustment problems could be academic difficulties, discrimination, inadequate financial resources, social adjustment difficulties, homesickness, and employment related worries (Crockett & Hays, 2011; Hyams-Ssekasi & Caldwell, 2019). With the appearance of all these problems, international students would experience a high stress level during adaptation, which can increase their susceptibility to comorbid psychological symptoms and physical illnesses. The most common somatic symptoms would be loss of appetite, problems sleeping, and headaches, along with psychological symptoms like anxiety, depression, disorientation, and social withdrawal (Chen, 1999; Crockett & Hays, 2011). As a negative feedback loop, international students' mental and physical illnesses could further delay the process of adjustments to the host country and prolong the amount of time needed on the cross-cultural transition.

One further challenge to the cross-cultural transition for international students' career development is the challenge of adapting to the unfamiliar and possibly unspoken cultural job search norms (McFadden & Seedorff, 2017). With the lack of knowledge on the host country's employment opportunities, international students tend to face more difficulties, especially at the beginning of their job search. As the norms could be very different between countries, international students could be unfamiliar with using the internet and other electronic resources to gain information on job opportunities, as well as not knowing the appropriate directions to look for resources (Spencer-Rogers & Cortijo, 1998). Besides electronic approaches to locating job positions, international students may also not notice the importance of networking in job search and may even have a cultural misunderstanding of networking as for the purpose of nepotism (Spencer-Rogers, 2000).

On the other hand, with all the years spent in the host country, international students are more likely to get adjusted to the host country. Meanwhile, international students'

opportunities of re-entering their home country for career development start to get limited. With all the experience learning and working in the foreign country, international students expect to be offered a well-paying job within a short period of time. However, in reality, it is hard to find work opportunities in the home country that are different or better than those in the host country (Butcher, 2002). Furthermore, international students' friendships and social networks would also change gradually during the time they are abroad (Butcher, 2002).

Another cultural barrier may be the influence of culture on international students' personal identities. One study reported that Asian and non-Asian international students tend to indicate a higher familial influence when making decisions on careers than domestic students from the United States (Singaravelu et al., 2005). An earlier case study from Arthur and Popadiuk (2010) examined a Muslim woman from Iran who later came to Canada as an international student. They found that in order to respect her parents' wishes, she decided to pursue a science or business degree instead of sociology, which was her actual interest (Arthur & Popadiuk, 2010). She struggled a lot due to this decision. She experienced more stress and got uncertain about her future (Arthur & Popadiuk, 2010). This situation is quite common amongst many international students, especially those from collectivist cultures. They accept their families' expectations and do not view their own wishes as the most important factor in career decision-making (Henry & Fouad, 2007).

International students' cultural barriers also include the need to understand and overcome differences between Western countries' corporate culture and their home countries' corporate culture when seeking a job in the host country. They might be different in a lot of specific ways, including their definition of appropriate dress, assertiveness while working, self-promotion behaviours, the common language used in a corporate environment, and preference for maintaining direct eye contact (Spencer-Rogers, 2000; Spencer-Rogers & Cortijo, 1998; Zunz & Oil, 2009). Some of the customs could even be opposite between two cultures, thus, it is quite difficult for international students to digest and fit in. A lack of understanding of corporate culture would also limit international students' capabilities to make career decisions informed by comparisons between the working environment in the host country and the home country (Arthur & Flynn, 2011).

Barriers to help-seeking behaviours

External help-seeking behaviours could be a useful way to address an individual's problems and confusions. One of the most common ways to help with career development is through career counselling, and it is widely used by Western families and students. However, international students are experiencing heightened barriers to help-seeking behaviours compared to domestic students.

Data showed that current counselling centres in colleges and universities are commonly underutilized, with only 9% of students seeking help from the centres (Crockett & Hays, 2011). Research documented international students' hesitation when seeking professional counselling assistance (Singaravelu et al., 2005). Several factors are found to contribute to their hesitation. Language barriers are the first category. It is international students' difficulties in speaking and understanding the English language that makes communication with professionals a burden to them and discourages them from seeking help (Zunz & Oil, 2009).

The second factor contributing to hesitation is linked to cultural differences, specifically differences in cultural norms and values. In contrast to Western countries, international students tend to grow up possessing collectivist values, which have more dependence on families and friends (Yi et al., 2003). Instead of reaching out to counselling centres and outside resources, they favour gaining support from people that are closer to them. Not only that, international students would have different basic beliefs on counselling, along with severe stigma associated with it (Mori, 2000). For example, individuals may not see counselling as normal and may even feel shame around the act of seeking help. The circumstances that may lead them to actively seek help from counselling when the severity of psychological problems has escalated.

The third factor behind international students' hesitation is their lack of experience in counselling (Mitchell et al., 2007). With the different beliefs and stigma mentioned previously, international students would not usually have the motivation to initiate the counselling processes, especially given the unfamiliar environment in the host country. Besides, international students tend to have limited knowledge regarding the organizations that offer counselling services, what services are available to them, or the process of interpersonal counselling.

With all these factors presented in front of international students, they would not believe that seeking external help like counselling is worthwhile. Even for those who tried to seek out counselling services, the lack of adequate knowledge could lead to their false expectation of counselling. For example, if they do not know the proper way that counselling is conducted, they may not understand the importance of the exploration process during counselling. Instead, they may expect the counsellor to give all the answers they want and solve their problems all at once. In this way, international students' differences in values and expectations may lead to dissatisfaction with the counselling service (Shen & Herr, 2004).

Visa restrictions

A major difference between international students and domestic students is the status they obtain that allows them to legally stay in the country. As domestic students being the permanent residents, most international students always need to apply for a visa to maintain their right of residence. Visa status is illustrated to be an issue that can largely restrict and reduce international students' employment opportunities (Spencer-Rogers & Cortijo, 1998). International students also face confusing government policies and work authorization procedures that regulate employment, which would consume their time in addition to job search (Tidwell & Hanassab, 2007). With visa restrictions, international students have to take more factors into account while making career related decisions. They may have to reconsider their personal career goals and aspiration based on their visa status and further evaluate the feasibility of the career plan given the current government policies. For example, when international students have long-term plans of staying in the host country, they need to consider the expiration date of their visa and change their plans accordingly. Almost half of the international alumni returned back to their home country mostly or entirely due to work and visa related reasons, including better job opportunities back home, trouble securing good job opportunities in the host country, or trouble securing a work visa there (Crockett & Hays, 2011).

The United States, a destination for many international students, has different policies facing international students before and after graduation. For currently registered students in general, their visa would give them a permit to work part-time on-campus for a maximum of 20 hours weekly. They cannot legally engage in any off-campus employment without authorization from the host institution. For international graduates, they could apply for post-graduation Optional Practical Training (OPT), which gives them a 12-month temporary permit to be employed regardless of their future intention of remaining in the United States or returning to their home country (Spencer-Rogers, 2000). After the expiration of OPT, unlike the direct application, they would need to find an employer who is willing to "sponsor" the employee for a visa (McFadden & Seedorff, 2017). Even then, the application for a visa is not guaranteed. The visa is given through a random selection process, which means that only about one-third of the applicants each year would be provided with a visa allowing them to work in the United States legally (McFadden & Seedorff, 2017). For those who do not obtain the visa, they would have to leave the country. Given all the difficulties and uncertainties in applying for a visa, many of the employers would choose not to hire international students and save the time for other domestic candidates (McFadden & Seedorff, 2017).

In Canada, the policy for international students before graduation is quite similar to the United States. Students also need to follow the 20-hour of work restriction, but they may be allowed to work on-campus or off-campus based on the conditions given on their study permit (IRCC, 2020b). Canada's policies are less restricted on international graduates. In general, international students who complete their degrees in Canada could apply for a post-graduation work permit. For those who complete a degree with a programme duration longer than two years, they would normally be provided with a work permit lasting for three years (IRCC, 2020a). This would allow international students to make relatively settled plans with more time to consider their future career paths. The immigration policies also provide more options for international graduates who plan to stay in Canada permanently (IRCC, 2019). Nonetheless, nothing is guaranteed in terms of visa application or immigration status when one has the identity of an international student.

Compared to the United States and Canada, which are typically seen as immigration countries, Europe – and the United Kingdom specifically – do not have a history of a consistently positive view of immigration (Hansen, 2014). Since the 1999 Bologna Declaration, Europe has started to promote international student mobility and attract students from outside of Europe, along with embracing more liberal visa and immigration policies (López-Duarte et al., 2021). In 2023, international students who complete their undergraduate or graduate degrees in the United Kingdom are eligible to apply for a Graduate visa that allows them to work for two years (GOV.UK, 2021). Even though the Graduate visa is unextendible, they have the option to switch it to a Skilled Worker visa if eligibility criteria are met. Nonetheless, the adverse labour market environment with heightened risks of unemployment and declined entry wage creates a less favourable condition for international students to meet such criteria (Han et al., 2022; Weisser, 2016).

Career counselling interventions to support international students

Exploration of the self

The exploration of the self is culturally situated (Arthur & Popadiuk, 2010). As discussed earlier, with international students' decision of staying in the host country, they start to manage the cross-cultural transition of living and learning in another country. Through this transition, they would develop new understandings of who they are in terms of their relationships, their futures, and the world around them. It is a period of confusion. Utilizing the framework of the Lifecareer Theory from Miller-Tiedeman (1997), which sees each individual as his or her own theory maker (Sharf, 2013), it promotes the view of not looking for a career because life is the career.

One aspect of the Lifecareer Theory emphasizes the importance of having the individual listen to their own personal beliefs instead of listening to what others think of. In terms of counselling, it could be particularly important for counsellors to advise international students to avoid too much familial influence and have more belief in themselves. Take the case study from Arthur and Popadiuk (2010) as an example, where the international student from Iran altered her area of study and started to pursue an area that she was not interested in due to her family's opinion. With the application of the Lifecareer Theory, she might have stronger beliefs in her own opinions and could experience less stress and confusion and continue in her chosen field.

Another aspect of the Lifecareer Theory promotes not fighting or working against the lifecareer. Instead, individuals should flow with it. To apply this to the situation of international students, with all the uncertainties in front of them, it is hard to make a perfect plan and follow it all the way through. Leading international students to flow with lifecareer could benefit them, in that they may adjust themselves during the cross-cultural transition and further cope with visa challenges.

Strengthen self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a key concept of the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent et al., 2002). It is an individual's belief that they can successfully accomplish something (Lent et al., 2002). It is proposed that individual views on their abilities and capacities can affect their academics, career, and many other choices (Sharf, 2013). With a low sense of self-efficacy, individuals will think that they cannot do the task well and may not be able to persist. Oppositely, individuals with high self-efficacy believe that they have the capacity to do the task and will feel encouraged to accomplish it. Self-efficacy is a changing set of beliefs, which means it is something individuals and counsellors can work on to improve gradually (Sharf, 2013). In relation to international students specifically, self-efficacy could also affect students' abilities to overcome proximal contextual factors, such as the cultural barriers discussed. If the international student from the Arthur and Popadiuk (2010) case study developed high self-efficacy in her abilities to excel in sociology, she might be more certain about a future in sociology and less fearful of disappointing her parents because she has chosen a path not approved by them. Therefore, for career counsellors to provide intervention, they could focus on ways to improve international students' self-efficacy to reduce the cultural barriers amongst them.

A typical way of strengthening self-efficacy is through the social cognitive model. Basically, an individual's self-efficacy is set based on their learning experiences, which **are** affected by their performance outcomes. With satisfactory learning experiences and performance outcomes, individuals will, in turn, have higher self-efficacy. Based on this relation, one of the strategies that a counsellor could use is to suggest the student perform tasks that are within their zone of proximal development; tasks that are challenging enough to trigger growth in ability but not too difficult or too easy, as to affect the learning experience.

Despite the various strategies possible to promote self-efficacy, international students must believe in themselves, knowing it is normal for international students to be confused at the moment of transition **and**, most importantly, knowing they have the capacity to overcome difficulties and accomplish their goals. This would enable the students **to** go through the cross-cultural transition faster and more easily adjust to the environment.

Promote the utilisation of counselling

Research has pointed out the underutilisation problem of counselling centres in colleges and universities and international students' hesitation in terms of reaching out to the centres (Crockett & Hays, 2011). For counsellors to provide intervention, the counselling programme could be modified to provide specialized career counselling for international students. This may attract them to seek out external career counselling as well as to make the programme more friendly to them. Data has shown that 76% of international students indicated their need to learn about the United States' occupational system, while 77% of them wished to connect with a career counsellor to discuss career plans and goals, indicating there is a demand for counselling for international students (Spencer-Rogers, 2000).

Specialized career counselling could target population-specific occupational obstacles, which are rarely tackled in the common career counselling processes. First of all, similar to all other counselling, career counselling for international students would provide information for the general career planning process, such as self-assessing, decision making, and goal setting. Secondly, for international students specifically, the counselling would help solidify their occupational identity, support them in understanding visa regulations, and help them obtain relevant career information. Counsellors would help international students adjust to Western corporate work culture and familiarize them with the host country's specific job search strategies. Simultaneously, specialized counselling may assist international students in understanding how government policies will impact their career planning. In the case of the international student from Iran (Arthur & Popadiuk, 2010), she would benefit immensely from career counselling to make an informed decision. Counsellors could present a comparison of the employment prospects for science, business, and sociology, and review relevant course load, post-graduation possibilities, and visa policies. Simultaneously, counselling might help her navigate her relationship with her parents and abate feelings of stress.

In addition to specialized career counselling, another intervention could be to reach out to the international student population instead of expecting them to come in for counselling services. This could be an effective way to lessen students' barriers to help-seeking behaviours. The reaching out action could be done in various formats. For instance, counsellors could form a small counselling outreach team, holding relevant information sessions and counselling seminars introducing some basic knowledge on the counselling process and their specialized counselling programme. The sessions could be open to

the public and located in areas having a high density of international students. Besides, school counselling centres could also form a partnership with other university offices that international students are contacting frequently, such as a student health centre. This could point out the direction for international students to search for and make career counselling more approachable to students.

Extend the length of stay

One study has reported a correlation between low acculturation and high occupational identity amongst a group of international students from China (Shih & Brown, 2000). The study further explained that the benefits of low acculturation levels are due to those students' clear and stable understanding of their abilities, interests, and career aspirations. Another study found that with a longer duration of international students remaining in the host country, they tend to have plans to stay in the country for an even longer amount of time (Tidwell & Hanassab, 2007). Furthermore, they tend to seek out more information on immigration regulations, visa requirements, and local career information (Tidwell & Hanassab, 2007). Similarly, in comparison to those international students who plan to leave, those who plan for post-graduation residency are reported to have fewer instances of cultural difficulties, are more willing to engage in intercultural communications with domestic residents in the host country, and are more adapted to the culture and representative elements from the host country, including the utilisation of counselling and mental health services (Crockett & Hays, 2011; Knipscheer & Kleber, 2001).

This supports the idea that the length of stay in the host country could help international students better adapt to the country's culture and better connect with domestic residents, which is beneficial for their career development in the host country.

Conclusion

With the internationalization of the world, the international student population is growing to be recognized as one of the major groups of residents in society. Despite the opportunities offered to international students when they go abroad, they experience several barriers that may contribute to difficulty securing employment post-graduation. This includes, but is not limited to, cultural barriers, barriers to help-seeking behaviours, and visa restrictions.

Career counsellors aim to support individuals in navigating career decisions within their lives. In order to do this, they must take into account the individual seeking counselling and the context within which they find themselves. International students represent a specialized population with a certain context that must be examined and explored. Career counsellors could play a crucial role in aiding international students' career development. This paper has outlined two ways career counsellors can use career theories to assist international students: 1) utilizing the Lifecareer Theory to promote students' exploration of self, and 2) utilizing Social Cognitive Career Theory to promote self-efficacy. Furthermore, career counsellors may consider increasing counselling services' utilisation and access to care. They may accomplish this by proactively reaching out to international students and offering their counselling services. In addition, prolonging international students' length of stay may help international students plan for their career development and support them to be more prepared for the job market.

International students are continuing to come to countries such as the United States and Canada for post-secondary education and in growing numbers. While they may benefit from the education they receive here, it is important they similarly benefit from the career opportunities available to them. The aim of this paper was to suggest specific career interventions and how they may help alleviate the issues faced by international students. In addition to the guidance mentioned in this paper, career development literature should consider further specific interventions that may help this population be successful in their career lives.

Acknowledgments

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The connection between executive processing and career development

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Abstract

There is substantial evidence of the connection between career development and mental health. Executive processing, including associated feelings and thoughts, has been found to significantly impact career decision making and problem solving. This has implications for career practitioners tasked with addressing these complex concerns. Utilizing comprehensive frameworks that account for this connection is essential. Cognitive Information Processing theory (CIP; Sampson et al., 2020; Sampson et al., 2004) accounts for the interconnected elements of career and mental health, and specific dimensions of executive processing. Interventions derived from CIP as well as other approaches offer a structure in which to address executive processing elements influencing career development. Being intentional in assessing and addressing career-related thoughts and feelings enables a career practitioner to effectively and efficiently support those in need.

Keywords: Career theory; wellbeing; mental health; executive processing; Cognitive Information Theory

Introduction

Work has positive effects on mental health and wellbeing (Fouad, 2007). It can also be a source of identity, social support, financial means, and other coping resources. Additionally, it can give an individual a sense of meaning and purpose. Given the importance of career, uncertainty concerning one's inability to find work can have a significant negative impact (Fouad, 2007). Broader economic, socio-political, and mental health factors influence individual's experiences and perspectives pertaining to career and work. These contextual

elements impact individual's perceptions of themselves. There are indications of the importance of career support on overall well-being, and arguments for expanding the scope of attention to mental health factors within career services (Robertson, 2013). This has implications for career practitioners in terms of scope of practice and degree of attention allocated to dimensions of mental health within the services they provide.

Within mental health, specific dimensions are indicated as being impactful on career development. Executive processing (EP) is concerned with metacognitive functions including self-talk (silent observations by individuals regarding their progress in decision making that can be perceived as positive or negative), self-awareness (the extent to which individuals are aware of themselves as decision makers, including the potential impact of self-talk), and monitoring and control (the extent to which individuals are able to monitor their progress in decision making and control the impact of negative self-talk) (Sampson et al., 2020; Sampson et al., 2004). Thoughts and feelings – aspects of EP – significantly influence career decision-making and problem-solving. An associated concept of EP, executive functioning, refers to the higher-level cognitive skills one uses to control and coordinate cognitive abilities and behaviors (Weill Institute for Neurosciences, n.d.). Self-control, selective attention, working memory, and cognitive flexibility are elements of executive functioning (Diamond, 2013). Career decision-making is a rational process, which involves emotions (Farnia et al., 2018).

Becoming more aware of thoughts and feelings related to career development will enhance strategies and associated activities designed to address a career concern. These attitudes, thoughts and perceptions of a career concern can have influence the potential for a positive outcome resulting from receiving career support services. The aim of this discussion is to enhance the awareness of practitioners and researchers of the importance of integrated career and mental health support by outlining relevant elements of EP, research specifying the EP factors that impact career development, and targeted theoretically grounded strategies for addressing EP in career services.

Career development and mental health

There is substantial evidence of a connection between career development and mental health. Anxiety (Osborn et al., 2016), psychological distress and family conflict (Constantine & Flores, 2006), depression (Cardoso, 2016; Hayden et al., 2016; Rottinghaus et al., 2009; Saunders, Peterson, Sampson, & Reardon, 2000), and emotional and personality-oriented elements (Gati et al., 2011; Coleman et al., 2023) are associated with dimensions of career development. In addition, the financial strain and negative outlook of the future experienced by the unemployed has associations with psychological distress (Creed & Klisch, 2005).

Further evidence of the connection between career development and mental health has been identified within career assessment research. Dieringer et al. (2017) found that certain scales of the Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI: Sampson et al., 1996a), a measure of negative career thinking, positively correlated with the Beck Depression Inventory II (Beck et al., 1996) and the Beck Hopelessness Scale (Beck et al., 1993). Dipeolu, Hargrave, and Storlie (2015) found that elements of the CTI subscales of Decision Making Confusion and External Conflict and the Career Maturity Index-Revised, Attitudes subscale (Crites & Savickas, 1996), differentiated the diagnoses of attention-deficit hyperactivity

disorder and learning disabilities in young adults. This emphasizes the tangible connection between career and mental health and informs conceptualization of presenting concerns in career services. A specific component of importance within mental health of relevance to career development is EP.

Executive processing and career development

The importance of EP is emphasized within various career theories. Both Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT: Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 2000) and Cognitive Information Processing (CIP: Sampson et al., 2020; Sampson et al., 2004) highlight the importance of focusing on cognitions associated with career decision-making. SCCT focus on perceived barriers, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations identifies dimensions of EP within this framework. CIP conceptualizes EP as a primary component of the theory. The EP domain of the Pyramid of Information Processing is an essential element indicated by CIP-related assessment, practice, and research. A more recent framework, the Hope-centered Model of Career Development, includes dimensions of EP through encouraging individuals to reflect on their circumstances; envision their future; and develop, implement, and adapt their plans as they build their desired life (Niles, Admundson, & Neault, 2011). These theories prioritize EP as essential for understanding the career development experience. These approaches have associated assessments and interventions designed to identify and modify thoughts and feelings which are hindering positive career development.

Evidence of connection between executive processing and career development

There is substantial research indicating the impact of EP on aspects of career development. Negative career thoughts have been found to account for a significant amount of variance in elements of career decision state, career decidedness, and satisfaction with a career choice (Chason et al., 2013). Bullock-Yowell et al. (2011) found an increase in career stress correlated with an increase in negative career thinking, with negative thoughts contributing to lower levels of decidedness and satisfaction with a career choice, components of career decision state. A significant relationship between neuroticism and career decision state via negative career thinking has also been indicated (Bullock-Yowell et al., 2015). Affective experiences such as anxiety, confidence, and worry have been associated with negative career thoughts (Hayden & Osborn, 2020; Osborn et al., 2016). A meta-analysis of personal factors that predict career exploration found large effects for locus of control, vocational decision style, thinking-feeling, and self-efficacy (Lee et al., 2023). Specifically, self-efficacy has been indicated as impactful on career choice (Ye., 2014) and decidedness (Restubog et al., 2010).

To effectively address career concerns, interventions focused on cognitive and affective elements are warranted. In relation to recent events, negative outside circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic increase career anxiety (Mahmud et al., 2021). It is imperative given the impact of EP on career development to attend to these experiences within career theory, research, and practice.

Career interventions for executive processing

Career theory and associated interventions have been shown to provide a useful structure for practitioners when attempting to design individualized interventions to enhance EP. These customized interventions allow practitioners to focus on specific goals for individual clients (Williams et al., 2018). Those who have received theoretically based interventions have indicated a valuing of the helping interaction (Osborn et al., 2016). A review of research on guidance innovation indicates that the three critical aspects to these interventions include the relationship between practitioner and client, the conversation structure, and the techniques used (Drobnic, 2019). The complexity of a career concern requires practitioners to adapt interventions based on the needs of those they serve. Based on the characteristics of the concern and readiness to received various interventions, this right-sizing of support ensures appropriate interventions and modality of support are utilized. CIP's differentiated service delivery model offers a framework for determining the degree of support related to readiness (Sampson, 2008; Sampson et al., 2020).

Career interventions can contribute to positive mental health outcomes (Osborn et al., 2016; Redekopp & Huston, 2019). Career management interventions can lead to an increased amount of career preparedness and therefore result in more positive mental health outcomes (Vuori et al., 2012). Evidence indicates a benefit of career interventions beyond career decision making such as a having a significant positive influence on academic performance (Evans & Burck, 1992). Career practitioners possess the potential to enhance the EP experience through their provision of theoretically grounded, evidenced-based interventions.

Cognitive information processing theory

Two primary components of CIP theory (Sampson et al., 2020; Sampson et al., 2004) are the Pyramid of Information Processing and the CASVE Cycle. The pyramid contains the ingredients of a career choice with three domains (i.e., knowledge, decision making, and EP). Within the decision-making domain, the CASVE cycle involves the process of navigating a career choice (i.e., Communication, Analysis, Synthesis, Valuing, and Execution). The apex of the pyramid is the Executive Processing Domain which emphasizes metacognitions and how these may impact career choices. These can be positive or negative, helpful or hindering in relation career decision-making and problem-solving. Improvements in metacognitions enhance one's ability to more effectively manage the knowledge and decision-making domains enabling them to effectively navigate difficult career challenges (Osborn et al., 2020).

Cognitive information processing theory interventions

CIP focuses on the thoughts and feelings associated with career decision making and problem solving (Dozier & Osborn, 2018; Sampson et al., 2020; Sampson et al., 2004). The EP domain within CIP theory includes specific elements of cognitive and affective elements of career decision making and problem solving (Sampson et al., 2020; Sampson et al., 2004). A concept within CIP is readiness in career decision making, as it has been found to influence one's ability to successfully navigate a career concern (Leierer et al., 2020). Adapting interventions based on the degree of readiness is essential to efficient

and effective support (Sampson et al., 2020; Sampson et al., 2004). Evidence of the importance of individualizing support is indicated by young individuals experiencing negative attitudes towards career support because they felt that the support was less tailored to their individuals needs and aspiration (Orlando, 2022).

The Differentiated Service Delivery Model provides a framework in which to adapt interventions based on readiness (Sampson, 2008; Sampson et al., 2020). The Career Thoughts Inventory (Sampson et al., 1996a) provides a global score of negative career thinking along with subscales of Decision Making Confusion, Commitment Anxiety, and External Conflict. This specificity enables precise identification of the degree and nature of negative career thoughts that are impacting progress towards goals. The associated Career Thoughts Inventory Workbook (Sampson et al., 1996b) offers the opportunity to modify problematic beliefs via cognitive reframing.

Another CIP intervention that engages the EP domain is the Decision Space Worksheet (DSW: Peterson et al., 2016). Aimed at identifying and exploring the complexities that a person is experiencing as they consider their career concern, the DSW connects thoughts with emotions. Clients are instructed to list all elements, including thoughts, feelings, people, relationships, financial aspects, and so on, and to indicate whether each is having a positive, negative or neutral influence on their decision. The next step involves creating a visual demonstration of how much of an impact each is having, and how they intersect with and affect each other. Connecting thoughts and feelings during this intervention can provide a more complete picture of what is affecting the person's readiness to engage in career decision-making and problem-solving (Sampson et al., 2020; Sampson et al., 2004).

Within a higher education setting, a CIP-based career course can be useful for providing career support as a curricular offering. The course is characterized by defining of CIP concepts, assessing for the existence of negative career thoughts, and engagement in experiential activities associated with components of the theory (Reardon et al., 2022). This course has been found to positively impact various components of EP such as career choice satisfaction, career decidedness, career affective state, and vocational identity (Freeman et al., 2017; Galles & Lenz, 2013; Miller et al., 2018). Using the format of this course provides an educational experience which impacts EP.

Finally, the recent events in the world such as the pandemic have created a loss of agency in relation to career decision making. Circumstances outside of one's control can significantly impact thoughts and feelings associated with career and work. Hayden et al. (2021) identified specific strategies designed to enhance agency for each component of the Pyramid of Information Processing. Assessing for a sense of agency and utilizing these strategies can enhance EP in relation to career development.

The Tech Center in the Florida State University Career Center is specifically tasked with overseeing the development of CIP theory, facilitating the ongoing investigation of the approach, and disseminating evidence-informed CIP interventions. Resources such as a bibliography of writings, conference presentations, and intervention resources related to this approach can be found at the FSU Tech Center website: https://career.fsu.edu/tech-center.

Other interventions to strengthen executive processing

While CIP offers several EP-related interventions, other career interventions can also be utilized, especially those that focus on supporting the cognitive-affective connection, personal agency, decision-making skills, career decision-making self-efficacy, and the importance of exploring and challenging negative career beliefs and self-talk. A relatively easy intervention to incorporate into the career practitioner's toolkit is to expand beyond thoughts to include emotions in career support. For example, Yates (2015) recommended that "career practitioners initiate fruitful conversations about their intuitive and emotional reasons even with clients who articulate sound rational reasons for their choices" (p. 33). At its simplest level, this might involve asking questions that direct the client to consider their feelings, such as, "You've been sharing how you need to make a decision within the next week, and that you're not sure how to go about it. How does that feel to you?"

Houston and Cunningham (2018) suggested that career practitioners encourage clients to combine rationality with intuition or gut instinct as they engage in career-related research and activities. A practical extension of that suggestion might emerge as a client is considering the pros and cons for several options and upon exhausting the list, to inquire if their list resonates with what their "gut" tells them they should choose. For those who have difficulty articulating their thoughts and emotions, a career activity such as creative narrative writing (Simpson, 2011) could be useful. A final example that can elicit both thoughts and emotions was described by Dallison (2019). She explained a diagramming career activity called "PLAN: Me" that aims to enhance personal agency through combining goal setting and creating visual depictions of their career planning process. Each of the activities described above strengthen the goals of EP by encouraging acknowledgement and exploration of thoughts and feelings associated with the career concern, and regularly returning to them as the client engages in career decision-making activities.

Use of common career practices to enhance executive processing

Career practitioners are ideally positioned to provide opportunities for enhancing EP via tasks commonly utilized within career service delivery. Various interventions such as information interviews, mock interviewing, resume/CV support, and other associated activities offer a means of bolstering one's view of their capability within the career development process. Individuals learning how to apply career-decision making skills to their concern, such as through the *Guide to Good Decision-Making* (Sampson, 2008; Sampson et al., 2020) builds competence and can contribute to career decision-making self-efficacy. Operating with a specific focus on the impact of these interventions on EP adds a degree of intentionality to the process.

While facilitating these activities, being intentional in assessing thoughts and feelings experienced in the completion of these tasks offers valuable insight into EP. Though this may appear to detract from the efficiency of addressing a specific need, the established importance of EP within career development indicates the need for attention to this dimension of their experience. Given the evidence of the importance of impact of EP on career development, attending to this within career practice is essential.

Integrating career practice, research, and theory offers a sophisticated framework in which to address the complex elements of career development. Conceptualizing career decisions as impacting thoughts and feelings requires practitioners to respond in kind. Though there is variation in the degree of capability in terms of training that career practitioners possess when address elements of mental health, some proficiency in this area is needed in order to appropriately address the needs of those they serve.

Referrals to mental health support

There are instances when the mental health dimensions of an individual's experience are so pronounced that it significantly hinders the ability to meet career goals. In this case, a referral to mental health support would be beneficial. If a referral is deemed necessary, the career practitioner is still an essential component of the treatment support team. EP concerns in need of specific attention are often long-lasting requiring protracted support. Many career concerns require a time-sensitive resolution and specific action. Given this reality, career practitioners who are not qualified to addressed more severe mental health concerns can partner with a mental health provider to offer a continuum of care.

Though referrals for mental health services are an appropriate response to certain EP concerns, career practitioners often encounter career-related problematic feelings and thoughts such as anxiety about concern or a lack of self-efficacy in certain skills. To account for this, it is essential, regardless of professional identity, to possess proficiency in assessing and addressing elements of EP. Taking a holistic approach to addressing a career concern which includes a curiosity about the broader context of an individual's experience appropriately orients the practitioner to identify and support EP skills for career decision making and problem solving. Consultation, supervision, and training are resources for enhancing capability in addressing dimensions of EP.

Conclusion

This examination of EP within career development is intended to broaden awareness of this dimension of the career experience. While it is acknowledged that there exists a connection between career and mental health, evidence and specificity is needed to inform the work of career practitioners in this area. With this understanding comes responsibility on the part of career practitioners to develop competence in enhancing EP within career services.

Given the complexity of career concerns, holistic responses grounded in theory offer a sophisticated framework in which to support those in need. EP and its associated elements have been indicated as impacting career development. Cognitive Information Processing theory is a framework that offers both assessment and intervention strategies to identify and enhance EP. Attending to this aspect of one's experience can positively impact career decision making and problem solving.

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Impartiality: A critical review

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Abstract

This article (re)opens debate about the concept of 'impartiality' in career guidance. It argues that while the concept of impartiality is at the centre of professional ethics for career guidance in the UK, it is poorly defined and weakly theorised. Through a process of concept mapping and an exploration of the challenges associated with impartiality, the article clarifies the definition of impartiality and problematises its centrality in the UK's ethical frameworks. The article argues that there are three main ideas which constitute the contemporary notion of impartiality: institutional independence, outcome neutrality and political neutrality. It argues that the grouping of these three ideas under a single term is unhelpful as they all raise different issues and objections. The article then outlines five challenges: ambiguity; application in practice; alignment with career theory, tensions with other ethical values; and practicing within partial funding regimes. Finally, some ways forward are suggested.

Keywords: Impartiality; transparency; ethics; professionalism; career guidance

Introduction

In the UK the concept of impartiality is built into the ethical frameworks of career guidance professional associations: the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS, n.d.a) and the Career Development Institute (CDI, 2018). It is also mentioned seven times in the statutory guidance on career guidance which the UK Government issues to schools and colleges in England (Department for Education, 2023).

Yet, despite its importance to the UK's career guidance profession, the concept of impartiality has received very little theoretical or empirical scrutiny. Much of the extant literature treats it critically (Evans, 2021; Irving & Malik-Liévano, 2019). One of the most substantial treatments of the concept is Payne and Edwards (1997) work on pre-entry guidance delivered by colleges. They argue that the concept of impartiality emerged to guarantee careers professionals independence from the institutions where they work when

it became apparent that more structural approaches to institutional independence (i.e. having guidance services formally located outside of learning providers) were not tenable.

In its early manifestations the concept of impartiality was related to the need for guidance professionals to operate in ways that served the interests of their clients, but which may not serve the short-term interests of their employers. For example, by advising a student to continue their studies in another institution rather than to remain in the school or college. Its elevation to an ethical principle provided protection for guidance professionals undertaking the dangerous work of giving advice against the interests of their employers, and potentially in conflict with other stakeholders in that person's life such as the funders of career guidance services, policymakers and even parents.

The establishment of impartiality as an ethical principle therefore created an agreed compromise between professionals and the institutions that employed them and meant that, at least in theory, the advice given by guidance professionals was no longer a matter that employers and funders should be able to steer in their own institutional interests. Such an employment-based agreement may be difficult to realise in practice, but there is at least an agreed terrain through which such disagreements can be managed (involving line management, human resources, professional associations, trade unions, and ultimately the law). As the concept of impartiality is expanded to cover other sorts of relationships, such as those between the individual and their family, the level of complexity of the issues involved and its enactment in practice increases.

A UK concern

The terminology of impartiality is far less common outside of the UK. The International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) does not use the term in their ethical code (IAEVG, 2017). Their framework talks about several related concepts such as 'self-direction', 'independence', 'avoiding imposing' the professional's values, and 'avoiding conflicts of interest', as well as things like challenging prejudice and supporting social justice. But the language of 'impartiality' which does so much work in the UK, is absent.

The terminology of impartiality also does not appear in the ethical standards of the United States National Career Development Association (2015) or the Career Industry Council of Australia (2019). It is mentioned once in the Irish code of ethics (Institute of Guidance Counsellors, 2012) where it relates to professional honesty, once in the New Zealand (CDANZ, n.d.) where it is used in relation to the disclosure of conflicts of interest, and once in the Canadian code where it is used to define justice (Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2021).

As this review of other English-speaking nations shows, nobody places as much importance on the concept of impartiality as the UK profession. When the concept is used in other countries, it is used in a variety of ways alongside a range of alternative concepts. It is only in the UK that is has a level of pre-eminence in the profession's ethical frameworks.

Impartiality in ethical frameworks

One way to explore the concept of impartiality is to look at how it is used in the ethical frameworks that guide the profession.

AGCAS (n.d.a.) has six ethical principles (equality and diversity, achievement for all, impartiality, confidentiality, integrity, and a commitment to maintain high standards across the profession). It defines impartiality as follows.

> Impartiality – embedding the principle of impartiality into the design and delivery of career development services so that students and graduates have the freedom to develop their own career paths. Any conflicts of interest will be declared as soon as they are known

Impartiality is what guarantees students and graduates the freedom to develop their own career paths. Career professionals should not be telling people what to do with their lives, but rather respecting individual autonomy. Presumably such an ethical principle does not limit questioning a client's career ideas, the provision of information or the encouragement of reflection, but it does place some limits on directive advice. The AGCAS definition also notes that conflicts of interest should be declared, but this might be more accurately described as 'transparency' as it relates to the declaration of partiality rather than the adoption of impartiality.

AGCAS (n.d.b) has recently clarified its position on impartiality in response to moves to limit the freedom of fossil fuel companies to access students on campus (Green, 2022). The clarifying statement introduces new concepts such as 'trustworthiness', 'freedom of speech', which is used here to challenge the idea that 'no platforming' employers is ethical, and 'encouraging students to hold the conversation' rather than making decisions on their behalf.

The AGCAS clarification views careers professionals and careers services as the providers of trustworthy information and as a conduit for discourse between employers, who can exercise their freedom of speech, and students, who are free to debate the merits of different employers and career paths. What is not explored is what happens when the provision of trustworthy information comes into conflict with either of these expressions of freedom of speech. So, if student protestors argue that an employer is a polluter, and the employer says that they have in fact moved beyond fossil fuels, does the careers service have a role to weigh in with who might be right, or would such an act be a contravention of impartiality?

The CDI (2018) code of ethics is similar to that of AGCAS. The CDI have 11 elements to their code: accessibility, accountability, autonomy, competence, confidentiality, continuous professional development, duty of care, equality, impartiality, transparency and trustworthiness. Again, it is worth quoting the discussion of impartiality in full.

> Members must ensure that professional judgement is objective and takes precedence over any external pressures or factors that may compromise the impartiality of career development activities and services. In doing so, members must ensure that advice is based solely on the best interests of and potential benefits to the client. Where impartiality is not possible this must be declared to the client at the outset.

This provides more detail than AGCAS's definition, highlighting the importance of objective professional judgement and the need to resist external pressure. Such a position is closer to how the concept of impartiality is articulated in law (Education Act 2011). Schools are required to provide 'all registered pupils' with 'independent career guidance'. Primarily independence is defined in terms of the guidance provider's employment relationship with the school, with the statute specifying it should be provided by someone other than 'a teacher employed or engaged at the school, or any other person employed at the school'. In practice this definition of independence is ignored by many schools, in part because the associated statutory guidance redefines independence to mean any external sources of information, and divorces it from the specific role of the careers professional (DfE, 2023). Instead, the statutory guidance picks up on the terminology of 'impartiality' and defines this as 'showing no bias or favouritism towards a particular institution, education or work option' (p.12). Again, this principle of impartiality is conceived as applying primarily to the school as a corporate body, rather than to the practice of an individual career development professional.

Such entreaties need to be understood in the context of an educational system which is assumed to favour academic over vocational pathways. This creates incentives for institutions to retain their students for as long as possible, for example by encouraging 16 year olds to progress into the sixth form of the school where they have been studying rather than considering all of the possible pathways (Select Committee on Social Mobility, 2016). In such examples, impartiality is viewed discretely as a bulwark against institutional interests rather than as a wider prohibition against taking sides in political or economic debates.

Impartiality is also important in how guidance professionals respond to policies which seek to increase engagement with particular pathways, occupations, sectors or careers. Government has frequently concluded that the careers of individuals would be better, and that they could make a bigger contribution towards society, if they went to university or alternatively chose to undertake a vocational pathway, studied a science subject, learnt to code, moved to where there was more work, or alternatively stayed in their local area. Each of these agendas requires individuals to make different career decisions and policymakers have often funded career guidance interventions with the aim of getting individuals to pursue one or other of these pathways (Kreutzer & Luga, 2016; Watermeyer et al., 2016; Zelloth, 2014). In such cases impartiality is one of the things that prevents career guidance professionals from becoming a marketing service for the latest policy whim.

The CDI's code of ethics argues that career guidance should be 'based solely on the best interests of and potential benefits to the client' but does not give us a clear way to calculate such benefits. So, we might assume that enabling an individual to achieve career success and a high salary would be clearly in their interests, but is there also a case to be made that it is in their interest to live on a planet which is not being choked by fossil fuels? Yet the latter attempt to serve the best interest of the individual could be seen as a move into the political sphere, and therefore a rejection of some versions of impartiality.

The concept of impartiality is both slippery and normative. It exists within a chain of signification which gives it meaning, but it can be difficult to define precisely. Laclau (1996/2007) has discussed how debates about the meaning of such ambiguous concepts

(what he describes as empty signifiers) can be intensely political as different individuals and groups work to associate the key concept with subtly different meaning which privilege their worldview. For example, debates about the meaning of 'freedom' can associate the term with the freedom to smoke or with the freedom not to breath passive smoke. Debate over the meaning of such terms is a key site of political and ethical struggles. As the concept of impartiality has been placed at the centre of career professionalism in the UK, disagreements about its meaning or even small variations in definition matter because they speak to different conceptions of what the profession is, what it is for and where its ethical and practical limits should be.

Reviewing these different treatments of impartiality in UK ethical frameworks allows us to explore the signifier of 'impartiality' further by creating a concept map.

Impartiality	**Definition**	
	Institutional independence	Careers professionals are expected to serve the individual over and above the institution that they work for or any other institutional agendas.
	Neutrality (outcome)	Careers professionals should not have preconceptions about what the best or right outcome for an individual is. This is up to the student to decide (see autonomy).
	Neutrality (politics)	Careers professionals should not take sides in relation to political, environmental, economic or ethical controversies.
	Outcomes	
	Autonomy	Students/clients should have freedom to develop their careers. They also should be free to believe what they choose and hold whatever values they choose.
	Ensuring the best outcome	Careers professionals are expected to work towards achieving the best possible outcome for the individual rather than sublimating such outcomes to the interests of institutions or outside agendas.
	Related Concepts	
	Freedom of speech	Employers, students and clients and other actors in the labour and learning markets should be free to state what they believe. The exercise of freedom of speech is not normally extended to careers professionals who are viewed as outside of such debates.
	Transparency	It should be clear where a careers professional is coming from and what agendas, funding and other forces are influencing them.
	Trustworthiness	Careers professionals should be telling the truth rather than pushing agendas or ideologies.

Figure 1. A concept map of impartiality

In figure 1, I have coded the concepts identified into three groups. The first group are those terms which seek to define impartiality, describing it as a stance which can be adopted by a careers professional in which they seek to be institutionally independent and neutral about the ultimate destination of the individual. These definitions can be found in the work of Payne and Edwards (1997) and represent what we might view as the traditional concept of 'impartiality' in UK career guidance. However, recent debates have seen an attempt to extend this definition to encompass political neutrality (Webb, 2022).

Secondly, there are concepts which are presumed to be positive outcomes associated with the practice of impartiality. So, if careers professionals are impartial it will lead to, or at least aid, students and clients in exercising their autonomy and achieving a positive outcome. The logic chain between the professional value of impartiality and these outcomes are not explicitly stated, but in the case of autonomy it is linked to the idea that if a careers professional can maintain impartiality, they will not displace the individual's own career ideas. In relation to ensuring a positive outcome, the assumption is that where individuals are able to guide their own development rather than being channelled into things that suit the interests of their school, their government or the whims of the career development professional, they are more likely to achieve a positive outcome.

Finally, there are several concepts that are addressed alongside impartiality, but which are not directly connected to it. These include freedom of speech, transparency and trustworthiness. Freedom of speech is not dependent on the impartiality of careers professionals. For freedom of speech to be dependent on impartiality, careers work has to be viewed as a venue for freedom of expression rather than as an expression in itself. While it is possible to make this case, it is also possible to imagine an alternative situation in which freedom of speech was also extended to careers professionals and all parties were enabled to participate in the debate.

Similarly, trustworthiness may also be desirable, but impartiality is neither necessary nor sufficient for someone to be trustworthy. Someone can be trustworthy whilst still holding a position if they are transparent about that position. Trustworthiness also depends on a host of other things including knowledge and competence.

Transparency has a distinct, almost antinomic, meaning from impartiality. While impartiality is about not taking a public position, transparency is about the public declaration of any positions that you hold. Transparency recognises that true impartiality is very difficult in practice and addresses this through the reflexive acknowledgement of partiality. Such a position seeks to empower the student or client by providing them with the information needed to make critical judgements.

Challenges with impartiality

The fact that impartiality is difficult to define and is enmeshed in other concepts leads us to the first major challenge, that of *ambiguity*. I have already discussed the complex chain of signification that is mobilised in various definitions of impartiality and argued that at the heart of the definition are the three inter-linked but not synonymous concepts of institutional independence, outcome neutrality and political neutrality.

If impartiality is going to be central to career guidance professionalism it is important that impartiality is more clearly defined and that a debate is had about whether all three of these components are included and whether any other components should be included. Such work could include a more explicit logic chain clarifying what the outcomes of such a commitment to impartiality are expected to be and why.

Secondly, we need to consider the *application of impartiality in practice*. There are many descriptions of the activities which can be included within career guidance, but the NICE model of careers professional competencies (Schiersmann et al., 2012) provides a well conceptualised and internationally recognised summary. The NICE model views the professional skills needed for career guidance as including career counselling, career information and assessment provision, careers education, active intervention into social systems including networking, brokerage and advocacy and the management of programmes and services.

If career guidance is understood in this kind of multifaceted way, can an ethical value like 'impartiality' play the same role in each of these activities? It is possible that professionals might want to reveal more of their opinions or to discuss issues in different ways in different contexts. So, if a careers professional is approached by a young woman to discuss the possibly of pursuing a career in construction, we might expect them to address this in a very different way from how they might treat the same subject in a career education lesson, where they may choose to address stereotypes and the gender segregation of the labour market more explicitly.

At the very least it is clear that the exercise of impartiality may be different in different contexts. Providing information, counselling, educating, advocating, and designing and developing careers services all offer different opportunities for partiality and therefore require different strategies for remaining impartial. This raises the question as to whether impartiality is always possible or desirable. Maintaining impartiality whilst discussing the gig economy or legal rights relating to discrimination, or whilst advocating for a client who has been badly treated by their educational institution or the benefits system, may prove challenging. In such a case the more ethical approach may be to be in favour of social justice or unproblematically on the side of the client. Given this, should impartiality be an absolute principle or is it more of a strategy that should be applied where it is useful and dispensed with at other times?

Indeed, it may be that impartiality often crumbles amongst the complexity of careers professionals addressing real problems with real clients. Payne and Edwards (1997) found that this was often the case with the concept of impartiality given 'different and uncertain meanings… within the individual, social and institutional contexts of guidance practices' (p.373).

We may also recognise that much of the value of the concept of impartiality is rooted in a cultural conception of the individual as an autonomous career decision maker and that as such it may be more challenging to adhere to in a multi-cultural society in which not all individuals share that assumption (Sultana, 2017). Of course, the fact that a principle is difficult to realise in practice does not necessarily invalidate it. Principles may provide useful guiding lights, even if they can be difficult to fully live up to. But it remains important to

provide some clarity about what is covered by the principle as well as to consider how such a principle survives when it moves into practice.

Thirdly, we may want to consider the *alignment of the concept of impartiality with career theory*. As already discussed, the concept of impartiality has received scant attention in career theories. However, there are some connections between this concept and the concepts of 'non-directivity' and 'unconditional positive regard' which are drawn from humanistic tradition associated with Rogers (1942, 1951, 1961). In contrast emancipatory traditions of career guidance tend to emphasise more subjective and dialectical approaches which call into question the viability of career guidance professionals adopting an impartial and apolitical position (Hooley, 2022). The differences between these two approaches show the need for careers professionals to consider how their theoretical stance recontextualises their understanding of professional ethics.

Even if we remain within the theoretical space of humanistic counselling, there is still a need for theoretical alignment. Non-directivity and impartiality are not synonyms and whereas non-directivity has been explored through extensive theoretical and empirical discussion, impartiality remains weakly articulated. I suspect that many who are regulated by professional codes on impartiality would baulk at adopting a fully Rogerian counselling approach or assimilating its underpinning assumptions. The strong influence of matching theories in career guidance means that many practitioners feel that their job is to help individuals to move forward by supporting them to make an assessment of their capabilities and the availability of opportunities within the labour market. It is difficult to square such normative practices with non-directivity, but neither is there a clear sense of how impartiality can be aligned with the assumptions of matching theories.

Work on non-directivity in the field of therapeutic counselling has suggested that some similar issues emerge as to those raised in this article about impartiality. Spong (2007) concludes that while counsellors are committed to being non-directive, they also highlight a range of paradoxes that showcase the complexity and challenges of living this value. While some counsellors felt that they 'shouldn't influence their clients' many recognised that 'influence is inevitable' or indeed that the process of counselling is in fact predicated on the possibility of influence. For example, encouraging clients to clarify their ideas, challenging them, and pointing out inconsistencies in their narrative are tools which are regularly used by counsellors and career guidance professionals to influence their clients and help them to change and develop. This raises a range of ethical issues around the degree of intentionality and transparency that should accompany this process of influence.

The fourth challenge relates to impartiality's *tensions with other ethical values*. I have already discussed some of the tensions that exist with the value of 'transparency'. It addresses a similar problem to that addressed by impartiality (dealing with the partiality of the career professional) through a different strategy (reflexive acknowledgement rather than obfuscation). But there are at least two other places where the principle of impartiality is commonly in tension with other ethical principles: the requirement to act in the best interest of the clients (e.g. AGCAS' 'achievement for all') or to take action in pursuit of social justice (e.g. CDI's commitment to 'equality').

If impartiality is meant to safeguard the best interests of the client or student there is a need to be able to define what is in their best interest. The identification of the best

interest is notoriously difficult with an extensive literature devoted to exploring the nature of objective career success, e.g. salary, seniority and position, and its inter-relationship with subjective career success, e.g. wellbeing and job satisfaction (De Vos & Soens, 2008). Given that the process of career guidance is frequently held up as one which can stretch clients' perceptions of the possible and help them to reach their potential, it also seems unsatisfactory to devolve all responsibility for the identification of success onto the student or client. Of course, concepts like 'the possible' and 'potential' are also open to various interpretations, which as Watts (1996) notes are themselves shaped by the ideological perspective which guidance takes.

Evans (2012) views the identification of best interest as a negotiated outcome, co-produced through an interaction between the professional and the client. In such a negotiation the careers professional may challenge students' ideas and assumptions about things like what constitutes a good or beneficial outcome for them and whether they should challenge norms and assumptions about their future. Guidance also includes discussion and mutual assessment of what possibilities are offered by the opportunity structure. Such a process is inevitably partial and subjective with the professional considering what questions to ask, information to present and opportunities to highlight.

The adoption of an impartial stance can also be in tension with ethical principles that emphasise social justice, and equality and diversity. Irving and Malik-Liévano (2019) argue that in a political world career guidance can never truly be impartial. It needs to either support assumptions or question them and that inevitably brings in the need to engage with dominant social and political narratives and to be open and honest about your own position. For Irving and Malik-Liévano this ultimately leads to emphasising transparency over impartiality as the key professional value.

Moving away from the specific articulation of ethical practice in the codes of the CDI and AGCAS, there is also a wider literature which looks at ethics in career guidance. Such work emphasises values such as beneficence (doing good), nonmaleficence (doing no harm), fidelity (honest and trust), justice (fairness and equality), autonomy (individual responsibility) and societal interest (society rules and requirements) (Schulz, 2021). Such theoretical articulations again surface similar issues, with the concept of impartiality being strongly related to a respect for autonomy, but also distinct as autonomy is a goal for the client whilst impartiality is a strategy for the practitioner to use in service of that goal. Tensions again emerge between justice, societal interest and autonomy, raising the question of whether all can be delivered simultaneously whilst maintain beneficence and nonmaleficence for all parties. What if the empowerment of the client results in the oppression of others or damage to the social fabric? An ocean of ink has been spilt on such issues by philosophers and it is unlikely that they will be resolved neatly in the messy reality of career guidance practice. But neither is it wise nor possible to commit practitioners to fulfilling a range of ethical conditions which are destined to collapse under the weight of their own contradictions.

A fifth challenge relates to *practicing impartiality within partial funding regimes*. Evans (2021) traces a range of ways in which the impartiality of career guidance services has been challenged by co-option of the field into a variety of 'aspiration raising' projects funded or advocated by the British state. Career guidance professionals may be seeking to be impartial, but they are also entreated to get more people to go to university, become

apprentices, pursue STEM subjects, or meet various other objectives. In many cases funding is linked to such aims and professionals expected to at least emphasise and prioritise even if not to proselytise such options.

In addition to managing a range of policy agendas which are actively partial, careers professionals also find themselves in sub-optimal practice contexts, starved of time and resources and subjected to a variety of managerial pressures. In such context professionals have little space for 'doing ethics' and may find themselves subject to 'ethical drift' (Colley, 2011). While it is possible to point to various kinds of active and passive resistance in defence of ethical standards, the reality of funding and power dynamics has rarely allowed for a full-throated defence of impartiality (Colley et al., 2010). Even back in the 1990s, Payne and Edwards (1997) observed that there was often an identifiable gap between the rhetoric of impartiality and the reality of practice, in which professionals often favoured their own institution over alternatives. This raises the question as to whether it is right to establish ethical principles that it is impossible to satisfy within existing conditions or, alternatively whether future government agendas and funding and employment regimes should create programmes which take greater account of the professional ethics of careers professionals.

Reflections

Despite the way that it is mobilised in debates, ethical frameworks and government documents, the concept of impartiality remains as a problematic one. There is evidence that its meaning has changed over time, moving from a more discrete concept associated with institutional independence to a broader and more politicised terminology.

While I have concerns with approaches that lock career professionals out of politics or the pursuit of social justice, this is not the main problem with the current terminology of impartiality. Rather the main problem is that the terminology is at once imprecise, poorly defined and teetering under the weight of multiple distinct meanings and associations. We are asking too much of impartiality and need to use the terminology more carefully and add new terms to address different concepts.

I would be in favour of narrowing the terminology of 'impartiality' to focus on the careers professionals right to support clients in a way which is independent from the institutional interests of their employer or the funders of their service. I would also argue for some rebalancing of professional ethics away from impartiality and towards transparency, as such an approach seems to me to foster an open and reflexive way of handling issues of partiality. But, regardless of my preferences, I would argue that the UK's professional associations should foster further debate on this terminology. Such debate might include research into how professionals define the term and whether they experience challenges in operationalising it. It might also include more comparative work with the ethical frameworks of other countries and congruent professions. Finally, it might include more detailed concept mapping on the wider ethical frameworks and greater investigation into how these frameworks influence practice.

The belief in impartiality as a core ethical value for career guidance practice has its roots in genuine power struggles within the field and an attempt to empower professionals to allow

them to serve the best interests of their students and clients. This article has argued that as the concept of impartiality has swelled, it has become more problematic. Given this, it is now time to begin a more fundamental debate about what impartiality is and where it fits into the future of career guidance practice.

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Acknowledgements

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The biased careers consultant: An autoethnography of two perspectives

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Abstract

This article is an autoethnographic reflection of my experience working as a careers consultant in the university I graduated from. Drawing on the ideas of constructing identity and Systems Theory Framework, I have considered the positives and drawbacks for the careers consultant as an individual, as well as potential impacts on the students supported, and implications for practice. This account seeks to support career development professionals to navigate the balance of delivering CEIAG as an 'insider' with lived academic experience, and also as an 'outsider' providing a professional service.

Key words: Autoethnography; higher education; professionalism

Introduction and context

I work as a careers consultant in Queen's University Belfast (QUB), a university I graduated from almost 20 years ago. In a career mostly defined by Happenstance (Krumboltz, 2009) I now also have my faculty school as part of my caseload, speaking in lecture theatres I once attended as a student, in several cases now a work colleague to those who once taught me and marked my assignments. I occupy a strange in between position – as an outsider I am a professional service provider who can see 'the bigger picture', the diversity of options available and how Arts, English and Language (AEL) students can access the workforce. As an insider, an English and art history graduate who also completed modules in drama as part of my degree, I understand exactly how much these students love their subject, the barriers they have faced to get to this stage, and how fiercely connected they feel to their school and discipline.

To try and further support this school in improving their employability and student satisfaction outcomes, I completed a masters research dissertation, interviewing 12 final year AEL students completing a work placement module. I found myself speaking with

12 past versions of myself. This caused me to question and examine my position and professional identity, fulfilling these multiple roles as a career development practitioner, a lecturer within a curriculum, and an alumna of the school.

Autoethnography has been used as a tool by higher education professionals before to examine their identity in changing employment circumstances (Leitch, 2018; Franklin, 2019; Kumar, 2021), and it is comforting to know that the tension felt by occupying multiple roles is something I am not alone in experiencing in the sector. Identity is a fluid and dynamic idea which includes how we are socially perceived and constructed (Castells, 2004). In this case study, the central identity is that of 'careers consultant', but that identity is modified when the social or physical context changes. When situations change the role becomes more subjective (Billot, 2010). The 'careers consultant' finds themselves speaking as an assignment assessor in an education meeting, or as someone with previous industry experience from the front of a lecture theatre. Previous literature has highlighted the strong correlation between subject and academic identity as an anchor upon which academics can base their role and position (Becher and Trowler, 2001; Delanty, 2008; Fanghanel, 2012). But even within these more clearly defined university roles, there has been room for nuance, with Clegg's (2008) academic respondents bringing their personal experience and characteristics to their professional identity. If these professionals, with more clearly defined positions within a university space, are expanding and evolving their identity, what about those professional service staff who inhabit multiple spaces in multiple roles?

McMahon and Patton (2018) included career identity in their review of the Systems Theory Framework, acknowledging the impact that multiple external factors can have on the individual, and the fluidity of the position. Career identity 'influences how we view our work and how we behave in the workplace' (Lysova et al., 2015, p. 39). LaPointe (2010) highlighted the importance of the physical and social situation, that career identity is co-constructed in relation to interactions with others. Thus, the individual can play and perform multiple roles depending on the interaction taking place. Within the Systems Theory Framework it is acknowledged that the individual does not exist in a vacuum and is influenced by a variety of factors, including individual intrinsic characteristics, the surrounding social system (including people and location), and the wider environment and society (Patton and McMahon, 2006).

This autoethnographic study addresses the question:

> What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a careers consultant working within their alma mater school?

This exploration requires understanding the experience of the careers consultant, in addition to the perspectives of students. The implications for individual practitioners and for career services will be highlighted.

Methodology

Autoethnography offered the tool to examine my own individual experience while also setting it in a wider context for careers staff who work both in and outside the subject

areas they have a background in, and the implications for practice. As a research method, autoethnography extends the horizons of study to 'accommodate subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence on the research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don't exist' (Ellis et al. 2010, p.3). It also allowed space to link the theories from literature to the lived and narrated personal experience (Holt, 2003: Sparkes, 2002). Previous writing has focused on practitioners moving from industry to academia (Franklin, 2019; Shreeve, 2009; Learmonth & Humphreys 2012) but little research has looked at professional services careers staff who have in-curricular responsibility within a school and the potential experience or bias they bring in their pedagogy.

Within the initial study only a small percentage of students could be included so the opinions could not represent the entire AEL student cohort. I asked for volunteers after a lecture and 12 individuals made contact. Despite the small number, the self-selected students were motivated stakeholders, in their final year of a three-year degree, who had chosen to undertake a double work placement module and had experience of the careers service. They were close enough to graduation to be considering life after university, and could also reflect on their previous three years.

Throughout the process of collecting data with semi-structured interviews I consciously kept a neutral position, adhering to the script I had produced to ensure no answers could be deemed influenced or coerced, aiming to gather data that came solely from the interviewee. Noticing how difficult I was finding this method of communication has prompted me to examine other communications with this cohort, whether in one-to-one careers consultations or lectures, and how much of myself I bring to the interaction to build a story or illustrate a teaching point. I became conscious of when I shared personal examples or anecdotes during both curriculum lectures and employability sessions. During one-to-one appointments, I noticed when I disclosed that I was a QUB alum and the subjects I studied. Autoethnography, a research method designed to 'examine significant experiences from the standpoint of someone who has been through them' (Cousin, 2009, p. 11) presented itself as a useful tool to explore how a practicing careers consultant navigates embracing changing roles and the influences from multiple systems they bring with them.

Ethical concerns when choosing autoethnography as a method was something I considered at length. During the initial research the interviewees knew me as a careers consultant and lecturer, and I was conscious this positionality could influence a participant who wanted to impress or show engagement, to say what I wanted to hear. I had to reaffirm my role as researcher and maintain a neutral position to gain honest student feedback. My position in this paper has changed yet again to that of research subject. The challenge has been to reflect on my own behaviour and interactions with the distance required for effective analysis, while engaging with the lived experience of the situation.

I was conscious of my own motivations when undertaking the initial research, and my expectations of students' perspectives. Interviews were conducted with a consistently applied structure and questioning. I queried my own neutrality every time I wanted to ask a follow up question, what did I think the student had missed or was I trying to elicit a response. Autoethnography has allowed me to examine those grey areas and reflect on the impact of collecting and analysing the data. It has also made me examine my own

career identity and what image do I want to portray. Edwards (2021) asked if ethical autoethnography could exist when it is one perspective being presented and describes the ethic of the self, that 'the researcher has an obligation to describe and investigate their own experience authentically' (p 3-4). There would always be the risk that the autoethnographer 'strives to achieve a version of the self and an account of events that is consistent and acceptable to their own conscience' (Lee, 2018, p. 313). If I completed this autoethnographic research and concluded practices needed change, would I be open and willing to address this and what potential impact could this have, personally and professionally.

Results and discussion

Findings in relation to the research question, 'What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of having a careers consultant working within their alma mater school?' can be understood by a simple separation of benefits and drawbacks.

Benefits

There were two main stakeholders involved in these interactions. The first are the students in the faculty assigned as part of the consultant's caseload. They are connecting with someone who has literally been in the same position that they currently inhabit. Letting the student know that I am also an AEL graduate builds instant rapport and I have often referenced modules or texts to help break the ice in a conversation. While I have never described my CV in detail, I have used examples from past work experiences to illustrate teaching points such as transferability of skills, or examples from past job interviews, with the aim of exposing students to instrumental and associative learning experiences they can relate to (Krumboltz, Mitchell, & Jones, 1976). This is one of the four pillars of Krumboltz' Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making, and increasing the number and variety of these experiences can support a student broadening their horizons for action. An example I use to highlight transferability of skills is describing working in the finance department of a large manufacturing company with an English degree. The ability to proofread, spot mistakes and scan read large amounts of information, skills I had learned from my degree, meant I was able to transfer this to analysing multiple types of data, applying the same skills to financial documents. I recovered significant sums of money for the company, a job I found very satisfying yet would not have been on my radar as an undergraduate considering routes into employment. I can evidence the successful transferability of skills to multiple sectors, highlighting areas of employment a student may have overlooked, but also the need for creativity and innovation to manage different professional identities throughout a career.

The consultant's position as an outsider (not an academic member of the faculty), allows sufficient professional distance to be honest about the realities of competitive job markets. This encourages the students to take the necessary steps to position themselves to be the right candidate when the opportunity arises. By referencing past personal and student experiences, both successful and unsuccessful, I can provide practical interventions and realistic timescales to support students in their career management development. Using the communication channels available, as well as face-to-face conversations, has allowed me to highlight opportunities students might otherwise have missed, for example

encouraging pursuing relevant graduate schemes, training courses or funding programmes which fell outside their planned time to look for employment. Engaging with students early in their degree programme has meant less uncertainty and panic decisions in final year and increased confidence in their career management skills.

However, the career consultant's position as an insider (alumna of the faculty) offers two other facets to an interaction. The first is a genuine, lived empathy appreciating how passionate arts students are about their subjects and the importance some can place on the need to use their subject in their future career. Discussing applying their transferable skills to other sectors is not something these students often want to consider and, having experienced a three-year degree in the same institution with passionate and inspiring academics, I understand the determination many have to make this happen. In my years working with this group, I have seen students rise to meet and exceed these expectations and have learned never to question the determination of the individual. I often reference two students I had the privilege to work with who now work as national broadcasters. Students in lectures are inspired by the end result of these examples, but I can break down the steps these graduates took over their time at university, each year building on experience and contacts. I can discuss their resilience and creativity, gaining experience and skills in non-traditional settings, the initiative they took to leverage opportunities and actively seek out opportunities to network and gain sector experience. In a sector of non-linear career routes these examples can help provide a general framework and plan of action which both encourages and challenges students to the realities of the sector. When students begin a careers consultation meeting by explaining their query, they often struggle to articulate the exact problem and will finish with 'do you know what I mean?' And yes, I do. We can then start to untangle the threads together.

The second benefit to the insider careers consultant is the genuine interest in the sector, which supports the information pillar of Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG: Gatsby Charitable Organisation, 2014; CDI, 2021). When my outside interests include writing, art, drama, media and performance, I am following this sector closely outside of any professional capacity. The student is tapping into up-to-date information from a variety of industry specific sources which have been built up over time, supporting their commercial and industry awareness.   This authentic interest in the sector can bring an increased awareness of opportunities, initiatives and aligned organisations. Having a longitudinal viewpoint of relevant sectors has also allowed me to see changes and patterns affecting recruitment processes and what employers want. Being able to pass this information on can support students to build up a portfolio of skills, increasing confidence in their abilities and expanding and effectively using a sector specific network.

The second stakeholder in this setting is the careers consultant. Advantages I have perceived include regaining the feeling of belonging to a subject area I have invested in. Working in a school and location I experienced as a student brings a familiarity of surroundings, practices and material content. I can talk with academics and support staff knowing the faculty structure, streamlining communications and increasing confidence during interactions. While my experience was a significant time ago and there are many new staff, I have still remembered and respected the faculty structure, recognising the key job roles to work with, building relationships with clerical and professional support staff, and remembering the best resources to disseminate information. It was easier

to integrate into this school as a new careers consultant than other subjects, which had different organisational structures to understand. Not having to navigate unknown protocols leaves more time to be student focused, to tailor and develop content, and to work with academics with a greater awareness of their pressure points and how the careers service can best support them. This has led to greater job satisfaction. Preparing and researching for these subjects is something I genuinely enjoy as it aligns with my interests and strengths. While I have enjoyed the challenge of working with other subjects, there is always the unknown of not experiencing the sector as a practitioner, as opposed to the confidence of speaking about a sector I have worked in. Supporting students in these schools has the added benefit of being exposed to fresh and new ideas as they are emerging. Students I have worked with previously have won awards and credentials even before graduation and maintaining contact as they thrive in their careers has only added to my own industry and commercial awareness. While not working in the sector directly, I am closely linked to those who are, again increasing confidence and credibility to talk about the workplace in a relevant manner.

Drawbacks

As a careers consultant occupying this unique crossover position, I must remember that one individual's experience is exactly that, just one experience, and will not apply to the population as a whole. Each career case study has many external systems impacting directly and indirectly on decisions made, opportunities available and the networks accessed (McMahon and Patton, 2018). How I experienced one job role and sector was unique to me at the time I was there and is being viewed through the lens of hindsight. I must always be aware that, even within personal examples, this was my experience and my recollection. I always make sure to offer balance. Workplaces, sectors and job responsibilities change quickly and the same role but in two different organisations might be vastly different experiences due to the company culture and values. With these caveats in place, I always encourage students to seek their own experience and build their own opinions, that my examples are not to be taken as direct instruction but to be used to inspire creative thinking and encourage the students to use resources available to them at their stage of career readiness and management.

Reflecting on my experience has forced me to ask myself some uncomfortable questions. Do I treat students from other subject areas differently and how does this fit with industry standard codes of ethics surrounding impartiality (CDI, 2019; AGCAS, 2022). I have discovered the answer is more nuanced and is less about equality than equity (Minow, 2021; Paul, 2019). I have always strived to be impartial when working with students and passionate about seeing individuals achieve their goals. But different groups need different help. For example, I also work with accounting students, a sector I have never worked in. I can deliver effective CEIAG to this group, but have worked to bring employers into sessions so they can describe and discuss company culture. I have less in-module contact with this cohort due to the extensive employability support they get from their course and a relatively linear career path. In contrast I spend significantly more time with AEL students in-module, breaking down the recruitment processes they might encounter, helping them identify skill sets and the importance of proactively seeking opportunities. This group does not have multiple creative employers coming on campus in the same way accounting and financial services companies attend. While I enjoy working with multiple faculty groups,

I have recognised different subjects will have different barriers to employment, and as a careers consultant I can have the ability to try and support filling those gaps. Schools do not need the same support, they need differentiated tailored support with students knowing they are being listened to and encouraged to develop career management skills.

Implications for practice

To bring the methodology of autoethnography full circle is to consider how the individual experience maps against others also working in this space and possible impacts for professional practice (Belbase, Luitel and Taylor, 2013). Should careers service managers actively seek out future hires with a direct background in a subject area or should they place more importance on the transferability of skills between industries that can support a student's exposure to a wider range of options available. Would assigning staff caseloads dependent on their backgrounds impact which institutions and roles job seekers would apply for, knowing that not every education setting offers the same subjects. And what about those careers consultants who did not have a positive engagement with their background area of study and would prefer to distance themselves from their experience and possibly past industry involvement?

Having reviewed my own experience, not initially working with AEL then gaining the school during a re-structure, my job satisfaction as a careers consultant has increased. I was given the option to change schools, and being part of this decision-making process has increased my job autonomy and confidence. Where there is space within a department to allow discretion in caseload allocation, engaging with careers professionals could give a greater sense of job satisfaction and staff retention. Completing my research on this subject has reignited this passion. One of the findings, highlighted by each interviewee, was the attitudes of others when they say what they study. I had expected opinions of arts education to have improved and was surprised at the similarity of experiences so many years apart. This has spurred me on to keep advocating for this cohort. As one student said, 'Can you please keep shouting that we don't all want to be teachers!' I am trying.

Ultimately the key stakeholder is the student who is receiving the support. Are they aware of their consultant's background and does it matter? Not every student will enter the workforce using creative skills directly linked to their studies so not every student needs creative background input. For those students who do value vocational insights, do they have value from someone removed from the sector, and does their viewpoint carry enough credibility to inspire action? Perhaps the fact that students can hear how someone has completed their same course of study, has taken the transferable skills gained, and adapted them to multiple industries to build a career, can relieve pressure and give confidence that they do not have to make one definite career decision, that Plan B and Plan C are still options, and their career is theirs for the defining and developing.

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Climate and ecological reality: A blind spot in our practice?

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Abstract

The climate and ecological emergency is widely acknowledged to be *the* defining issue of our time. Psychologists speak of a pervasive silence across many areas of society in relation to the unsettling realities of climate and ecological breakdown. In this article, I propose that reluctance to engage with stark implications of the crisis risks diminishing our capacity to practise inclusivity and core guidance principles for certain clients. To get a sense of the extent to which the career guidance profession is addressing the emergency, I undertook a survey of the published literature. The findings suggested limited explicit discourse around these issues. I conclude that research informed practice would benefit from increased attention to the implications of the stark realities of the crisis. We can begin to address this challenge through engaging in frank professional discourse around uncomfortable truths and their implications for career education, information, advice and guidance.

Key words: Climate change; environment; green guidance; career development

Introduction: Stark realities

There will be many clients of career education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) services for whom the climate and ecological emergency (CEE) is not a pressing concern in relation to their career development. For others, a tacit understanding that the guidance intervention will not stray into the uncomfortable territory of the emergency will be reassuring. For others still, a failure to fully acknowledge implications of the present CEE trajectory may be experienced as a denial of their reality – a kind of *gaslighting*, albeit unintentional. Serving the latter group is the principal focus of this article. I stress that I am not proposing it is appropriate to indiscriminately raise unsettling dimensions of the CEE: the professional challenge demands skills of observation and discernment and – for willing practitioners – a personal engagement with uncomfortable realities. While it is

essential to help clients envisage a positive future and for them not to be overwhelmed by doomism, I propose that as the CEE progresses – to whatever extent the current trajectory is mitigated – it will become increasingly problematic to disregard its harsh realities.

The UN website spells out the scale and immediacy of the global emergency:

> Climate Change is the defining issue of our time and we are at a defining moment. From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale.

> (United Nations, n.d.)

In our communities of practice, trusted scientific opinion, along with voices of authoritative institutions and figures, can provide a basis for exploring the wide-reaching realities of climate change. Information about the scale and immediacy of the CEE and its effects on society is widely accessible today. CEIAG clients may struggle to make sense of that information and, in some instances, risk being drawn into extremes of denialism, fatalism (IPSOS, 2021), doomism or pollyannism. By engaging with difficult truths in a professional context we will be better placed to build rapport, display empathy, effect unconditional positive regard and include those who may be struggling with climate change related concerns but reticent to express them in a CEIAG context. We will also be better situated to help those clients make sense of sometimes conflicting opinion. Career guidance has traditionally been focused on career planning in a world that was comparatively predictable. Today, the profession must support clients to envision their future in the VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world, where multiple – often interrelated – macro-level factors are at play (Mowforth, 2022).

Surveying the body of knowledge

Helping clients pursue a *green career* aside, the question I am asking is: to what extent is the sector engaging explicitly with the harsh realities of the crisis? Given that the CEE is considered the defining issue of our time, the expectation is that we would see implications for practice reflected widely in professional and academic literature. To gain insight into this question, I undertook a survey of the literature to identify instances where the CEE is addressed in the sense considered here. I set the start date to late 2018 on the rationale that it represents an inflection point when the reality of the CEE essentially began to enter public consciousness (e.g. news media reporting on Greta Thunberg, Extinction Rebellion). This is also the time of the landmark International Panel on Climate Change Report (IPCC, 2018). I selected several CEIAG sector magazines and blogs (e.g. *CDI Career Matters*, *AGCAS Phoenix*, *Prospects Luminate* (articles), *Career Guidance for Social Justice* blog, CERIC *Careering*) and several academic journals (e.g. *Career Development International*, *Journal of Career Development*), and this Journal. For each I excluded those articles with titles that clearly were not pertinent to the research question, scanning the text of those which hinted at some relevance. A keyword search within the article was also performed where deemed to be useful. Of the approximately 3000 article/posting titles, from late

2018 until the end of 2022, surveyed across 20 CEIAG-related media, there were 50 titles I identified as green-related (those with a passing reference excluded). Of these, 24 were judged to contain – to varying degrees – matter directly connected to the present question, three of those titles reflecting ethical issues associated with the CEE. Inevitably the exercise was reliant on my own judgement, but it was intended only to provide a heuristic answer to my question.

The following is a selection of the articles identified making explicit reference to the CEE. Hooley (2022) considers that much more needs to be done in terms of environmental change in the *social justice in career guidance* movement and states: 'it is not meaningful to talk to people about their careers without recognising the changing context of environmental change'. In a slideshow entitled 'Green Guidance' (Hooley, n.d.) linked to from the same blog posting, the author points to considerations like rising global temperature, impacts on food supplies, and corporate interests, all within a social justice perspective. In a video Hooley (2020) describes why climate change matters for career, a perspective echoed by Guy (2019). Sultana, in Abbas (2022), questions whether the sector is doing enough to understand implications for the field. The approach of career counsellor and environmentalist Lehmann (2022) is to help people make sense of their career in the context of the CEE. Hutchison & Lehmann (n.d.) point to a gap between the climate threat and individual and collective response, as well as uncertainty about the future being common ground between the CEE and career. The authors identify the aspect of uncertainty within some modern approaches to career guidance (such as *chaos*, *narrative career*, *career construction* and *planned happenstance*) as useful in the empowerment of clients. During a podcast of the Asia Pacific Career Development Journal (Hutchison, 2022) a speaker suggests that career professionals need to educate themselves and be prepared to bring climate change into career development. CERIC *Careering Magazine* devoted a special issue (Purchase, 2019) to climate change and careers in a Canadian context. Six of the items in that issue, including the editor's note, made explicit reference to CEE realities: an example being an article by Maggi (2019) which opens with acknowledgement of the stark realities of the crisis and points to the potential vulnerabilities of young people. Plant (2020) cites a passage from Al Gore's film *An Inconvenient Truth*, describing the scale and immediacy of the crisis.

Beyond the present survey, Barham (2021), considers the possible impact of environmental movements on the career choices of young activists and refers to solastalgia (a neologism approximating to environmental grief and frequently found in climate psychology discourse). Contributors featured in a NICEC (2021) webinar highlight in varying levels of detail: climate psychology and emotions; professionals' self-education; narrow focus on CEE in contrast to its ubiquitous reality; sharply rising temperature data; a need for more discussion within the CEIAG sector; along with a mention of climate anxiety. Robertson (2021) highlights the reality of climate change in a careers context in relation to UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) and points to Plant's green guidance concept as a 'deep change'. Bedi et al. (2023) also discuss green guidance in terms of SDGs. The goals were also a theme of the 2022 Career Development Institute (CDI) conference (Morgan, 2021). There will of course exist many other sources relevant to the present topic.

My initial expectation had been that whilst there would be sparse explicit consideration of the CEE in the CEIAG body of knowledge, I would encounter an abundance of articles addressing green jobs and careers in a general sense. Surprisingly, the latter expectation

was not born out on closer scrutiny. Nonetheless, green career fairs and green career education, do seem to have become commonplace in CEIAG practice.

While there are indications that CEE realities may be becoming more central to CEIAG discourse, those explicit references remain relatively few, considering the scale of the emergency and given the total number of titles surveyed. From this I conclude that, within the CEIAG body of knowledge – and by extension CEIAG practice – there is reason to expand consideration of the explicit implications of the CEE for careers, and this assumption frames the remainder of the article.

A socially constructed silence?

Climate and ecological awareness will be partially shaped through exposure to news media, social media and interpersonal communication. Some scholars point to a socially constructed silence with regard to the harsh realities of the CEE, which is said to pervade virtually all aspects of society – at least in those parts of the world thus far distanced from its physical effects. Commentators frequently cite sociologist Zerubavel's (2008) book *The Elephant in the Room: Silence and Denial in Everyday Life*. The author explores the idea that conspiracies of silence, which can be found across all areas of society, may function as a collective defence mechanism against uncomfortable or inconvenient realities. The environmentalist Marshall (2014) devotes a chapter to the theme of socially constructed silence. Heald (2017) describes how the phenomenon has a *reinforcing spiral* effect. Hogget & Randall (2016) focus on how the constructed silence can serve to protect policymakers from facing uncomfortable truths. Norgaard (2006) expounds the concept of socially organised denial, in the context of an ethnographic study.

I speculate that in educational and employment settings the prevailing organisational culture will dictate how comfortable individuals feel communicating their thoughts and feelings about the future in frank, open terms. I propose that socially constructed silence along with other defences, such as pluralistic ignorance Nickerson (2022) and disavowal (Randall, 2015), risks shaping CEIAG communities of practice such that we may find ourselves unintentionally participating in collective silences. I am not claiming that tacitly agreed silence is the only explanation for the apparent mismatch between the reality and our collective response to it. There will undoubtedly be other interpretations, beyond the scope of this paper.

Eco-anxiety and higher purpose

Eco-anxiety, also known as climate anxiety, is increasingly becoming a topic of academic enquiry (Clayton, 2020; Goldman, 2022; Verlie, 2022). The CPA Handbook (Climate Psychology Alliance, 2022 p.22) describes eco-anxiety as: 'heightened emotional, mental or somatic distress in response to dangerous changes in the climate system'. A large-scale international survey of climate anxiety in children and young people (Hickman et al., 2021) identified high levels of eco-anxiety (59% extremely or very worried, 84% at least moderately worried). A large proportion expressed fear for the future (75%) and this of course is pertinent to the future oriented nature of careers work. In addition, the study identified a sense of moral injury in the perception of inadequate government response, and related feelings of betrayal. In that regard, failure to acknowledge – as appropriate – the difficult truths of the CEE may be experienced by some clients as a denial of their

reality. Eco-anxiety has been identified as a concern in higher education, especially so in relation to environmental courses and research (Pihkala, 2020; Wallace et al., 2020), with obvious relevance for CEIAG practitioners who work with those kinds of clients. While research identifies high levels of eco-anxiety across populations, and in particular with regard to younger people, this form of anxiety, as typically experienced, is said by many eco-aware professionals to be not a psychological disorder but rather a normal response to extraordinary conditions (Climate Psychology Alliance, 2022; Kurth & Pihkala, 2022; Whybrow et al., 2022).

For some, personal responses to the CEE translate into a sense of higher purpose and agency. Surveys have identified evidence of higher purpose orientation within younger generational cohorts (Deloitte, 2021; EY, 2021; Farrell et al., 2021) often related to sustainability. Some – and perhaps as the CEE progresses an increasing number of – CEIAG clients may engage in some form of climate-related activism: from lobbying to public demonstration to nonviolent civil disobedience. This raises questions around how we support these clients in marketing transferable experience gained through those activities, as well as employers' potential responses (positive or negative) to more controversial kinds of actions. For activists already in employment, concern may be around bringing their whole self to work. These are potentially matters of consideration for CEIAG communities of practice. I propose that to be fully client-centred we may benefit from knowledge and understanding of the issues. Environmental concern may motivate some individuals to adopt a pro-active, higher purpose outlook in their career development (Lashbrook, 2021; Satwik MV & Harikumar, 2021; Smith, 2022). I speculate that in other cases, however, troublesome thoughts and feelings associated with the future of the planet could engender a kind of future-orientated experiential avoidance (Niederjohn, 2019) or anticipatory grief (Goldman, 2022) to the detriment of career planning.

Helping professions

By way of comparison with CEIAG, it is useful to consider to what extent other helping professions are engaging with the CEE. Whitcombe (2021) reports that: 'Many psychologists say they feel unequipped to handle a growing number of patients despairing over the state of the planet'. She considers how a client's presentation of eco-anxiety may evoke troublesome feelings in the therapist who is new to that kind of work. In referring to a master's thesis (Seaman, 2016), Whitcombe highlights that over 50 percent of the therapists interviewed considered their training had not adequately prepared them to help clients with climate crisis related issues, with some participants reporting their clients' responses as inappropriate. The Royal College of Psychiatrists (2020) report that 57% of child and adolescent psychiatrists in England are seeing CEE-related distress in their clients. Aspey (2021) reports that when she asks counsellors, coach-therapists and psychotherapists about their levels of climate concern, most say that they are very concerned but they are not really talking about it, and neither are their clients. Within their vision statement, the Climate Coaching Alliance (n.d.) state that: 'We influence the global professional coaching community to bring in the deep and difficult questions of climate and ecological emergency into coaching conversations'.

Some implications of the CEE for CEIAG practice

The primary aim of this article is to generate discussion within CEIAG communities. I will nevertheless consider some implications for practice, but with a caution against responsiblising practitioners, as highlighted by Hooley (Abbas 2022).

Career development is intrinsically a future orientated activity. While there is acknowledgement that detailed career planning can be problematic in the VUCA world, CEIAG professionals encourage clients to look to the future. For some career makers, envisioning a medium to long term future in the CEE era may prove an arduous or troubling task, as suggested in a non-career context by Ray (2020), Marshall (2014), and Kelsey (2020). There appears to be relatively little research into this dimension of the CEE. In the extreme, clients' perception of the crisis may be shaped by fatalistic news media or denialist pseudoscience. As in relation to other career topics, the CEIAG function includes helping the client to make sense of the world and to adopt a realistic outlook framed in a positive, motivational light. Willing practitioners may benefit from developing their own insight into the present topic; at the same time being sensitive to their own and colleagues' possible eco-anxieties. Ideally, practitioners would be formally supported in this regard. I propose that within our communities of practice there would be value in exploring ways to expand the safe CEIAG space, so as to communicate that CEE-related career concerns are legitimate and welcome topics.

One-to-one career guidance work is grounded in core principles found across many of the helping professions: person-centredness, unconditional positive regard, empathy, congruence and rapport-building (Ali & Graham, 1996). I suggest that the inclusive nature of these qualities could be diminished where there lacks a basic awareness with regard to issues that certain climate-conscious clients might present. I am not suggesting that career development practitioners (CDPs) as individuals need necessarily engage with the topic at any deep level. Roe (2020) raises the issue of practitioners' personal viewpoints regarding the environment. It may be useful to reflect on how CDPs might respond (internally and outwardly) to a client who is finding it difficult to envision their future (Ray, 2020); or one whose eco-anxiety evokes an avoidance of future orientated matters; or another who expresses frustration at political inaction; or the climate-aware client who has acquired valuable transferrable skills through radical activism. This is with an acknowledgment that practitioners are trained to be aware of their internal biases. I propose nonetheless that the CEE is distinct in that it presents specific challenges in communicating shared understanding, since ultimately everyone on the planet is a stakeholder in the crisis.

I posit that in CEIAG practice we are inclined to focus on green careers narrowly in the sense of green jobs and role functions. This is of course essential information which underpins advice and guidance work. My point is that, similarly to a default sustainability-as-usual outlook encountered across organisations (Godalnik, 2021), a narrow emphasis on green jobs and careers may mask an 'elephant in the room' and thus exclude those clients who need to take climate reality issues (cognitive or practical) into account in their career planning. CEE and broader green career issues are increasingly likely to intersect during guidance conversations.

In the helping professions there is a concept of creating a 'safe space' (Jenkin, 2021; Linnekaste, 2021; Robertson, 2019; Savickas, 2005) where the client can feel at ease

talking expansively about their concerns. It may be that unintentionally, whether through systems in which we operate or implicit communication, we place tacit boundaries around what is 'acceptable' or appropriate to bring into that space, perhaps amplified by socially constructed silence around the CEE (for client and CDP alike). While we want to help clients make sense of the CEE in a careers context, we probably need to guard against unintentionally dismissing their concerns through well-meaning efforts to reassure. I propose that observation and discernment will help gauge whether and to what extent it is appropriate to expand the safe space in the CEE direction. Tactfully allaying fears of social judgement by the CDP may prove useful, especially when working with activist clients. The contractual elements of the intervention may be opportunities for the CDP to communicate that it is valid to explore matters tangentially career related, including but not limited to the CEE. Going forward, it could be insightful for researchers to canvas CDPs as to engagement with the CEE in their work. There may also be value in exploring best practice in other helping professions. It may be that the existing CEE-related literature is already informing guidance practice. To reiterate, the primary aim of this piece is to promote discussion within CEIAG communities of practice, which I expect would generate additional ideas and questions.

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Guidance provision in Youthreach centres

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Abstract

This article investigates the current provision of guidance counselling in Youthreach education. Current research and policy on guidance counselling provision in Youthreach suggests that there is an apparent gap in policy outlining clear guidelines (NCGE 2019: SOLAS 2020). This article aims to investigate these claims in more detail by combining themes from current literature and policy with themes identified in the data obtained from qualitative semi-structured interviews with eight Youthreach coordinators and eight former students.

Key words: Ireland; disadvantaged groups; mentoring; career guidance; youth work

Introduction

The Youthreach programme originated in 1989 as an alternative education pathway for disadvantaged and marginalised early school leavers in Ireland, and was set up to be the main career route for this group. There are just over one hundred Youthreach centres in Ireland. 'The learners come from a diverse range of backgrounds and have left the traditional education system for an equally diverse range of reasons' (O'Sullivan 2019). Youthreach typically offers training and work experience placements to early school leavers aged between 15 and 20. Multiple studies (Stokes 2003, Dale 2010, Brown 2005, Downes 2011, Gordon 2017) suggest that the typical Youthreach learner comes from a disadvantaged background.

This paper critically examines the provision of guidance counselling in Youthreach centres from two perspectives, from the viewpoint of co-ordinators who fulfil the roll of school

principals in Youthreach centres and from the viewpoint of former students who are products of the centres that they attended. Due to its origins as an attempt to bridge the gap between youth work, secondary and further education, Youthreach falls under the umbrella of both post-primary education and further education and training (FET), as it is inspected by both the Department of Education and SOLAS. SOLAS is the State agency that oversees the building of a world class FET sector in Ireland. Dual governance causes confusion and lack of clear policy. The aim of this research is to investigate the provision of guidance counselling in Youthreach education.

Methodology

Data was collected by recording semi structured interviews. Purposive sampling was adopted. This involves intentionally selecting respondents based on their experience, knowledge, and position (Cohen *et al* 2018; Creswell and Creswell 2018). Eight co-ordinators and eight former students were recruited, anonymity and confidentiality were discussed and insured, each participant was briefed on the aim of the research, why they were chosen as participants, how the interview would be recorded and where and how long the recording would be kept (Bell and Waters 2014). All participants were based in the greater Munster region, in the South of Ireland.

Findings

Three themes were identified during the analysis phase in the data collected from co-ordinators, and an additional four themes were identified in the data collected from former students.

Key Themes Identified by Coordinators

- Key Working
- Dual Governance
- Barriers due to a lack of guidance provision

Key Themes Identified by Former Students

- Work Experience
- Career Planning
- Life Skills
- Culture of high support

Key Themes from Coordinators

Theme 1: Key Working

The first theme deconstructs the activity common in Youthreach settings that is known as 'Key Working' and 'Mentoring'. Key working was generally regarded by coordinators as the poor cousin to guidance counselling. Only centres that have Special Educational Needs and Inclusion (SENI) status receive additional funding for staff to spearhead mentoring while other centres are encouraged to take part without any additional hours, training, job description or eligibility criteria.

There are 20 SENI Youthreach centres in Ireland who receive additional funding each year to operate a SENI initiative which includes the use of mentoring. The SENI centres are the only centres whose staff have received any training and guidance on what the mentoring role is and how it should be carried out. While the SENI centres have received training and guidance on mentoring, the initial training occurred over 15 years ago and has potentially become diluted as original staff members train new staff and so on over the past 15 years.

Beth commented on the mentoring role in her SENI centre and how the initial training had been delivered 15 years ago and that the upkeep and continuation of this training is the responsibility of her centre. Both SENI coordinators acknowledged that the key working, or mentoring role was vital to their centres and provided individual guidance to students.

> *It's about having someone to talk to, whether that is over a game of pool or it's in a meeting setting it can be whatever the student needs it to be. – Brian*

The other participants coordinate non-SENI centres who all take part in key working, an adaptation of mentoring. In these centres there is no funding, training, or job description for key working. Due to the absence of guidance counselling all coordinators saw key working as a necessary alternative but were frustrated by the role. Jack, in relation to key working as a support to students stated.

> *I think they're worried about that maybe people aren't qualified enough to be working this way with students. I don't think to be honest with you that there is an understanding of what key working actually is. Every Youthreach looks at key working and they look at it differently. it is it's a big role. – Jack*

Vicci, a coordinator who believes that key working cannot be implemented by untrained staff without guidelines stated that:

> *I would be nervous about it being on a one to one when you're untrained – Vicci*

In addition to training and guidance, another barrier to the key working system is that it is the first thing to be withdrawn from the timetable if teachers are out sick. Six out of eight coordinators reported that when staff are out sick and cover is needed, key working provision is adversely affected. Career guidance is not delivered by qualified guidance counsellors, but falls on the shoulders of whoever is delivering career planning or work experience. This issue is discussed further in theme 3.

Theme 2: Dual Governance 'Everybody's problem and nobody's problem'

Youthreach is subject to inspection by the Department of Education and SOLAS which places it under the governance of both. The dual governance of Youthreach places it at the intersection of post-primary education and FET. Participants suggested that education in general in Youthreach got 'lost in between structures' and in terms of guidance felt they were 'left to their own devices', 'lacked relevant supports', and are 'the problem child'.

Coordinators reported that although post-primary circulars and policies are best suited to the needs of their students, the main source of their funding comes from SOLAS therefore their operational tasks would cease to exist without its involvement in Further Education and Training (FET).

> *The FET side are not going to let go of us because of the European funding. So we're getting the funding for the program through SOLAS so we have to answer to them – Gill*

There was a unanimous sway towards the post-primary policy due to its suitability for the age group that Youthreach caters to.

> *You would always lean on the kind of post-primary because I think that's where our learners are you know, I definitely don't personally see this as further education. You know, very much in secondary education these are young people who were getting a second chance to complete a leaving cert standard – John*

It is evident that the dual governance is an obstacle for Youthreach to access guidance counselling. Youthreach is in receipt of their funding from SOLAS and audited by SOLAS while being inspected by the Department of Education which makes it difficult for Youthreach coordinators to ask for better services and provisions.

Theme 3: Barriers that face students in the absence of guidance counselling.

Youthreach relies on an external counselling service that equates to 3 hours per week per centre, coordinators have acknowledged that this service is often not enough to meet the guidance counselling needs of the students.

> *Work experience is obviously a core subject. So we need to teach that. But again, I mean, sometimes we have X, Y or Z teaching work experience, then we might have someone who's never taught it before and it's just a bit of a pass the buck. They definitely don't get the same level of career guidance through those subjects as the students in post-primary would – Emily*

Gill acknowledged that the lack of career guidance often sends the message that students are limited to further education or an apprenticeship and that the lack of career guidance inhibits their ability to see past further education as an option.

They shouldn't be settling for these poor paid jobs and just these level 5 courses and apprenticeships and that's the message we're getting. You know, if you get an apprenticeship now you're doing great. What about the university? What about going on to UCC? – Gill

Youthreach education is aimed at early school leavers that are the same age as their post-primary peers but due to their classification as further education students are not entitled to the same statutory educational rights as post primary students, making this issue a social justice issue. (Elftorp 2022) comments that though although guidance provision in the Further Education sector has improved these improvements have not extended to Youthreach. These early school leavers are being marginalised as they are not being provided with the same educational rights and opportunities as their peers.

Most of them are coming from difficult backgrounds where they wouldn't really have any structure, they might be coming from backgrounds where education wasn't regarded as important. So this is all very new to them. They need to be advised and they need to be supported and they need to be encouraged – Jack

The importance of guidance counselling was highlighted by all coordinators due to the counselling needs of their learners. Mental health research demonstrates that school-based guidance counselling can be highly effective in reducing feelings of distress, depression, and anxiety while helping students achieve personal and academic goals (Laletas 2019). The increased prevalence of mental health illnesses – combined with issues such as substance misuse, anger management challenges, lack of home support, involvement in criminal activity, and low self-esteem – had coordinators feeling stretched.

Every day we are putting out fires, the needs are so complex I could have four different students in my office needing psychological support on any given day – Jack

Key Themes from Former Students

Theme 4: Work Experience

Work experience undertaken was seen by former students as a crucial element in their career journey with three of the eight former students still working the job that they took on as part of their work experience, and seven of the former students attributing part of their career success to their time in Youthreach.

There were maybe five or six different work experiences I had to do during the time I was there. I am still in the same job I got from work experience in 5th year. The last term of 5th year we had to go on work experience through one of the modules. They offered me a job then three or four months later and four and a half years later I'm still there, and I am actually a manager inside there now. It got me in the door of an actual job and gave me the basic experience of working. – Greg

It is a common thread among the student participants that they got their first job through the work experience program in Youthreach, and stayed in that employment for a number of years after finishing in Youthreach. The successful work experience that these students underwent has kept them in gainful employment long after their time in Youthreach has ended.

Theme 5: Career Planning

The integration of career planning across the curriculum was identified as being of value to the former students' career journey. Though this was not conducted with a qualified counsellor it was integrated across the curriculum. There is a strong focus across all subjects on gaining employment and life skills.

> *Youthreach helped me to write my own CV, how to do interviews. We did kind of mock interviews and that. When I used to pronounce my words I used to pronounce them differently. Youthreach really kind of helped me with my speech – Andrew*

Andrew reports similar experiences and though the career planning and preparation that they undertook may not have been undertaken with a qualified guidance counsellor. These elements are so embedded into the curriculum within Youthreach centres that they have a lasting effect on students after their time in Youthreach.

Theme 6: Life Skills

Gaining life skills during their time in Youthreach was identified as being of particular importance to former students. Career planning and preparation for the world of work are deeply embedded within the curriculum in Youthreach centres, another essential element of the curriculum within Youthreach centres identified by former students was the development of life skills.

> *Youthreach pushes us to do work experience and teaches life skills that I don't think normal schools would. I came out of my shell completely in Youthreach. It taught me to be more of an active member of society more than normal schools would like normal skills teach you how to do maths and stuff wheras Youthreach teaches you how to be a person. Realistically they showed us how to get a job and how to live after school – Dermot*

Many of the former students interviewed expressed a dissatisfaction that their previous mainstream secondary schools were preparing them only for a points race to enter third level education. Many students who attend Youthreach see progression to third level as unviable and uninteresting and some former students even credit this as their reason for leaving as they felt their teachers in the mainstream had only one goal in senior cycle and that was to prepare them for higher education.

Theme 7: Culture of high support

The highly supportive environment, small classes, and approachable teachers were identified by former students as being developmentally significant to their careers and personal development. Greg credits the culture of high support in Youthreach as well as the expertise Youthreach teachers have in dealing with students who did not have a positive experience in mainstream schooling.

> *I got more time from the teachers in Youthreach because they had seen this before. They had seen people drop out of school, not get on well in school, go different roads in life and come to Youthreach and at the end of the day they were there to do a job and their job was to make sure we stayed in education. – Greg*

Youthreach was established to deal with marginalised students, the former students are aware of this being part of the organisational culture within Youthreach centres. The culture of Youthreach centres is also recognised by Conor. He also credits the Youth Advocate as being highly supportive, the role of the Youth Advocate is similar to that of a guidance counsellor in that they provide support in sourcing work experience and also emotional support, while not necessarily being qualified counsellors.

> *I think Youthreach improved my people skills – there are less people in Youthreach so it improved my people skills and my social skills. I used to get nervous talking to people, I would have been a bit shy about talking to people. The advocate is there to listen to you. Any problem doesn't matter what it is, could be stuff you're going through or you could be after hitting someone with a car she would listen to you all day long. You were never the bad guy in her eyes. There was always some bit of good seen by the advocate. – Conor*

A culture of high support and the ability to treat students with unconditional positive regard in spite of indiscretions are identified as being helpful to his development. Youthreach was established to provide a second chance at education for early school leavers and Conor clearly indicates that the support of the Youth Advocate and the culture within Youthreach as contributing to him having a second chance. The expertise of the teachers in Youthreach in dealing with students who have challenging home environments in recognised by Brian.

> *The teachers there, they treat you different, nothing seemed to shock them either. There were students there with X Y Z issues going on at home and nothing ever seemed to shock the teachers there. They would hear things that are totally bizarre, that anyone else would be taken back by, and they would just take it as normal. – Bill*

The former Youthreach students clearly identify the expertise and dedication of the staff within Youthreach centres. The perceived deficit in qualifications among Youthreach staff does not seem to have affected these students adversely. The sample size of students interviewed was admittedly small however they do seem to recognise the dedication and

experience of Youthreach staff as having an influence in their own personal development and on their emerging careers.

Discussion

There seems to be a disconnect between the perceptions of the practitioners and the former students. A possible reason for this is that once the students leave, staff have very little opportunity to find out what happened to them and how their lives developed. Gordon (2013) claims that teaching staff were responsible for the delivery of guidance subjects such as work experience and career planning, which were reinforced with access to a guidance counsellor and supports from external counsellors. Gordon's account of the guidance provision in Youthreach is more in line with the account of the SENI coordinators who took part in this study. However, unlike Gordon's account, the non -SENI centres had far less access to a qualified guidance counsellor. Non-SENI coordinators in this study painted a less favourable picture of the guidance provision in their centre claiming none of them had a guidance programme due to the absence of policy, resources, and appropriately qualified staff. Psifidou *et al* (2021) comments that while a whole school approach to guidance is recommended for Youthreach by the NCGE (2017), this is problematic when over half the staff in Youthreach do not possess teaching qualifications.

Two SENI coordinators stated that mentoring is delivered by all Youthreach staff including teachers, resource people and coordinators and although there is no official training for this role, original staff who were present during its introduction trained the new staff when they joined. Both SENI coordinators in this study found that their staff were appropriately qualified to engage in the mentoring programme despite having no counselling qualifications.

Non-SENI centres do not receive the additional €58,500 funding per year but are expected to implement a key working programme. Coordinators from non-SENI centres reported that the key working programme was unregulated, had no guidelines on how it should work or who should deliver it, had no funding or training and they were required to implement it with existing resources. Most coordinators reported that they liked the idea of key working and thought it could benefit learners in the absence of guidance counselling but felt frustrated that they were left to their own devices. When asked if they felt their staff were qualified enough to provide key working there was a varied response with some coordinators saying that some staff were naturally good at it and others felt that key working could be dangerous due to its unregulated nature and delivery by staff who were not appropriately qualified to key work with students who had such complex and adverse needs. The coordinators who were reluctant to provide key working in their centres stated that Youthreach students needed psychological supports from appropriately qualified professionals, especially considering the rise in their students presenting with adverse issues.

Conclusion

In spite of the challenges in the provision of guidance counselling the frustrations and management headaches indicated by the co-ordinators interviewed the former students seemed happy with the education and career preparation they received within Youthreach.

Issues identified by co-ordinators, such as increasing needs for psychological supports and a lack of desire to progress to third level education, may be deeply rooted in societal issues and social reproduction. Perceived deficits in qualifications of Youthreach staff, or inadequate provision of counselling may be less important factors. While Coordinators seemed overburdened and exhibit high expectations of their students, the former students recognise the care and legitimate concern for their well-being and progression.

SENI funding, currently available to only 20% of Youthreach centres should be extended to all centres. This study, together with Gordon (2013) and Smyth et al (2019), demonstrate that the outcomes of SENI funding are positive. Mentoring and key working must become standardised with appropriate training, guidelines and funding and should be delivered by appropriately qualified staff members in the absence of a guidance counsellor.

Youthreach has neither been adopted by either the post-primary or FET sector fully. Attempting to adhere to two sets of guidelines is stressful for Coordinators. National Association of Youthreach Coordinators should establish a working group to examine the possibility of creating Youthreach specific policies, guidelines and training procedures for Youthreach staff.

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'The Robots are Coming 2 – Rise of the Screens':
The role of higher education careers professions in disrupted times

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Abstract

This article reflects on the role of higher education (HE) careers professionals in the post-covid era, and how their practice might evolve in that context. First, the article considers student and graduate career preferences and social experiences during the crisis phase of the pandemic and the ways that such experiences have shaped their position and career development. It then considers studies of the hybrid workplace, highlighting the pandemic's impact on a graduate's likely early experience of work. Drawing these aspects together, the article offers recommendations to help career development professionals sustain the relevance of their practice in these disrupted times.

Introduction

In April 2018, an article by the first author, published in the NICEC Journal, reflected on the relative stability of early career graduate workplaces in the UK dating back over the previous thirty years, and suggested that the consistency of skills requirements by employers and for career progression was about to be challenged (Thambar, 2018). The prediction at the time was that a 'Fourth Industrial Revolution' would emerge from a combination of developments in artificial intelligence (AI), big data, bio and nano-technologies, transforming the ways we would live and work (Schwab, 2016). There were concerns that a rapid acceleration in the role of AI could undermine humans in society,

particularly in labour market roles that could be more easily replaced by advanced technology (sometimes robots), thus rendering groups in society unable to make a living (Osbourne, 2017). This vulnerability was not the sole preserve of jobs composed primarily of transactional and repetitive tasks, so traditional professions, typically requiring a degree, and including law and medicine, could be significantly altered (Susskind & Susskind, 2015). Not unreasonably, few at the time predicted that it would be a pandemic that would inflict global turbulence to those in education, and a career shock to all those in, or entering, the workplace. Nor was it anticipated that before robots could replace humans, screens would become the primary mediator of all human contact, at least for some time.

In this article, we reflect on the disruption that the pandemic has caused to previously familiar terrains of student experience and graduate recruitment based on our professional experiences as an Associate Professor in Organizational Psychology responsible for work experience in a Faculty of Business, and a Director of Careers and Employability, in our respective institutions, working throughout the pandemic period. We then consider lessons learned from research undertaken and reported by the University of Leeds (Hughes and Davis, 2021) around transitions to the new graduate workplace, to highlight new challenges and skills that are required for graduates to successfully transition to the post-covid workplace. Finally, we set an agenda for higher education careers professionals to help meet the challenge. This work is set in the UK and the context of its pandemic response which involved periods of lockdown and regionally tiered restrictions. We recognise that the equivalent environments in other countries will have been affected by their own pandemic experiences.

The disrupted student experience

During the pandemic, students in many academic disciplines experienced sudden, rapid transition to online and remote learning and assessment, alongside the restriction of opportunities for social activities. During the crisis phase of the pandemic, the experience of new students involved arriving at university following a turbulent period of A-level assessment and being fully locked down at the start of their higher education career. Established students had to rapidly adjust to restricted and remote learning, having started their university career in the 'normal' way. Consequently, a largely in-person experience in which devices were an accessory for study and leisure, was suddenly transformed to an experience in which the screen became the primary channel through which students conducted their lives. Beyond the acute crisis, screens are still prevalent, with 50% of the UK adult population now using screens for 11 hours or more each day, and 28% using them for over 14 hours (Clayton & Clayton, 2022).

Today's student experience is typically now dispersed, incorporating a blend of in-person and on-line education: the enabling of hybrid possibilities is changing the way in which students expect to engage with study, with online options offering greater accessibility and flexibility. Students still appreciate and seek in-person contact as part of their experience, although ideally at times that suit them (Thambar, 2022). This is leading to reduced student engagement with in-person classes and lectures (Williams, 2022), and with that, considerable debate within the sector about the importance of challenging traditional pedagogy (García-Morales et al., 2021). Discussion also continues into the ways that universities can be enabled to embrace the possibilities that screens bring (Donald et al.,

2021), in ways that seek to build a sense of teaching presence and progression of learning in hybrid, blended and online environments; and that encourage student collaboration, rather than perpetuating a sense of isolation that began during the pandemic (Singh et al., 2021).

A dispersed student experience with fewer traditional touchpoints throughout the journey, is altering the ways students form social networks and gain experience that develops their skills and attributes. At the height of the pandemic, a growth in loneliness emerged (Phillips et al., 2022) with 74% of students reporting a pandemic-related negative impact on their wellbeing and mental health (Frampton & Smithies, 2021). Opportunities for in-person socialising are now being restored to pre-pandemic levels, but this will not automatically offset the impact of the previous three years. For students considering their careers, work experience opportunities which decreased dramatically at the start of the pandemic are now back at a healthy level, with more in hybrid form; but there will be many who missed opportunities to develop their skills during their student career (Institute of Student Employers, 2022).

The graduate recruitment shock

Akkermans et al. (2020) suggested that the pandemic will have differing career impacts depending on individual levels of resilience and career skills; differential impacts in the short, medium, and longer term (the latter yet to materialise); and that those impacts could be negative or positive depending on an individual's circumstances and capacity to respond. The UK's graduate market was immediately affected by the onset of the pandemic. Economic fluctuations in the early stages of the pandemic (ONS, 2020), were reflected in those who were seeking work around that time. They noticed a fall in vacancies, with many graduates rethinking career plans, and taking on roles that did not require their graduate-level skills or qualifications, feeling less confident about the prospects of securing work, and finding it harder to secure work than they had reasonably expected (Tomlinson, 2021). There has been a swift bounce-back, with graduate vacancies in late 2021 at a higher level than pre-pandemic (Ball, 2022). More enduring, however, have been the impacts of comprehensive technological solutions on graduate recruitment. Rapidly introduced in response to government-directed lockdowns, computer monitors and smart devices, are a ubiquitous presence in today's graduate career development journey.

Meanwhile, over the last few years, the use of AI has accelerated, to the point where we live increasingly in an age of 'algorithmic governance', monitored, nudged and reminded, in many aspects of our personal and professional lives, through smart devices (Danaher, 2020). This 'algocracy' (Anneesh, 2006, 2008, Danaher, 2016) raises major debates about privacy and surveillance, bias and inequality, and transparency and procedure (Danaher, 2020). The pandemic accelerated AI use in recruitment and selection processes, from chatbots and video interviews, to AI-assisted or even AI-led interviews, to the extent that the algorithm both facilitates the interview and makes a recommendation on whether a candidate proceeds (Institute of Student Employers, 2023). For candidates, the benefits of accessibility in times of restricted travel were balanced by the negative experiences of de-personalisation which had the potential to leave them cognitively and emotionally exhausted, and with 'feelings of diminished humanity' (Jaser et al., 2021, pp.7). Concerns about bias when using AI are well-documented (Bogen, 2019). Yet, recent investigations

indicate that the use of AI in recruitment is now widely established. According to the Institute of Student Employers, one in ten recruiters are now using AI in their process, most frequently to pre-screen candidates and analyse interviews, but also using algorithms to analyse CVs, to update candidates on their progress, and using AI in gamified assessments (Roberts, 2022). This prevalence increases the risk of AI recruitment biases, which could lead to higher cohort homogeneity, and decreased diversity and social mobility (Bogen, 2019).

Once recruited, many students now have a significantly altered experience of moving into graduate-entry and graduate-level roles. As a result of mandatory remote working for many, collaboration platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom have been rapidly embedded into workplace practice in many sectors, typically for roles that would have previously involved office-based work and have been considered 'white collar' in scope. Beyond the period where remote working was a legal requirement, a blend of working on and off-site (typically at home), coined 'hybrid working', has emerged as a norm in many working environments, and for a wider range of employees, including those at more junior levels of employment. It is still likely to be the case that remote and hybrid working patterns are disproportionately more viable for those involved in certain types of 'white collar' work (like graduates). Nevertheless, in a longitudinal study, exploring the prevalence of different work patterns between 2020 and 2022, Davis et al. (2022) found that hybrid work was preferred by a constant majority of employees, with employers also expecting workers to split their time between home and the office, to achieve improved work-life balance and wellbeing benefits, alongside opportunities for collaboration, social interaction, and technological support (Ball, 2022). However, the value of hybrid working for new and early-career graduates, is more contentious (BBC News, 2021; Scrimgeour, 2020), with research suggesting that remote and hybrid working at the career outset, may negatively impact initial experiences of work.

Hybrid working: The socio-technical challenge

The shift to hybrid working is not simply a technical problem that can be resolved through good technological choices (Davis et al., 2022, a,b). It is a complex, socio-technical challenge, because choices about aspects such as hybrid policy, and the role, purpose, and availability of technology and types of workspace, are intertwined with social aspects of the hybrid workplace, including individual choice, organizational culture, and preferred ways of working. Research undertaken by the University of Leeds (Davis et al., 2022, a,b) drawing on primary data collected across sectors and organizations, shows how aspects of the socio-technical system interact in both intended and unintended ways, creating differential experiences. Related research, has sought further to unpick the particular challenges faced by graduates and interns (Hughes, 2022; Hughes & Davis, 2021), showing how graduates have a distinct experience in hybrid settings characterised by inter-connected challenges. These are outlined below:

Hybrid working affects the way that graduates learn to do their job. Graduates reported being well prepared to complete job tasks through their degree, and induction training offered by their employers. They appreciated the opportunity to replay instructional videos, and consult manuals and websites, without having to reveal they had done so, or disturb more senior colleagues. However, they reported taking longer to learn the culture of the

organisation, with some admitting limited understanding of norms and etiquette months later. Graduates reported missing the 'bigger picture', because they did not know why they were undertaking certain activities, or how they fit alongside the wider work of colleagues. In online environments, there were fewer opportunities for 'osmosis learning', and to overhear conversations about other projects, or pick up on opportunities through informal interactions, because colleagues often attended the office on different days to them.

On returning to offices post lockdowns, graduates reported appreciating the value they obtained from the physical workspace, which provided better cues about aspects of hierarchy (e.g. through office sizes, décor, or restricted spaces), and helped them understand how to communicate with others, through easier assessment of office formalities (dress code etc.), and the approachability of colleagues. In the absence of workplace models, graduates noted that role models in their homelife became more important, as they learned the norms of remote work by modelling the behaviours of siblings, and parents (e.g., during their conference calls), while others benchmarked workloads and experiences through social comparisons with young professionals in their house-shares.

Remote and hybrid communication brought further challenges for less-experienced graduates. They found it difficult to know when to ask questions, and who to ask. They could not ask questions across desks as readily, so had to arrange meetings for simple questions, delaying their ability to complete tasks and/or secure opportunities. Graduates found it more difficult to make sense of workplace politics and unspoken sentiment. Miscommunications were more likely when working remotely, and were harder to resolve, because difficult situations could be avoided more easily, for instance by turning cameras off to hide frustrations, or choosing to work from the office on different days, to avoid people and situations.

Another challenge for the hybrid graduate was building the relationships they needed, to progress their career. They found it straightforward to build peer friendships but considered these peer networks to offer limited value to career possibilities and trajectory. Rather than considering 'networking' as a natural component of a workplace role, they saw it as a set of discrete tasks focused on making contacts on platforms such as LinkedIn or meeting senior people at conferences or events.

A final challenge identified by Hughes and Davis (2021) is that graduates reported difficulties demonstrating proactivity in hybrid environments. They struggled with infrequent and formalised access to senior colleagues and teams and missed chance conversations in corridors and kitchens. They found it difficult to establish visibility and exposure in these circumstances, wanting to ask questions, but struggling to do so confidently, and without appearing intrusive and/or demanding. In some cases, this was to the extent that they reported spending days with little to do when they had finished their work, because they assumed they had misunderstood the brief. In a physical workspace, they believed these challenges would have been more obviously recognised and dealt with.

Collectively, these findings underline the importance of considering hybrid working and the rise of screens, as a *socio-digital* challenge. They show that work tasks of any kind, are not completed in a vacuum, but are socialised in the context of the wider work environment (Maitlis, 2005). Graduates draw on prior experiences – perceived successes and failures

– to contextualise new experiences, and these experiences also help employees to benchmark their performance and recognise and respond to new challenges.

Higher education careers professionals: Meeting the challenge

Higher Education (HE) careers professionals operate at the nexus of student, academic and employer interests (Thambar, 2016). These three terrains have been disrupted in recent years leading to a change in their professional operating environment. Nonetheless, careers services seized the opportunities that online and remote services offered for student engagement and methods of delivery (Hooley & Binnie, 2020). Services also saw the potential of online engagement, particularly to connect students with employers who, pre-pandemic, might not have had time or capacity to participate in on-campus activity, particularly with institutions they did not traditionally prioritise for recruitment (Thambar et al, 2020). Throughout the disruption, careers services worked persistently to retain their position as an expert service, supporting students, collaborating with academics, and facilitating positive and informed connections between recruiters and potential candidates.

However, the pandemic's disturbance has amplified areas of long-standing interest for careers professionals (Hughes & Thambar, 2023). Three are identified here:

1) Social Mobility has been severely challenged. Reduction in opportunities to gain recreational and work experience that would build skills and connections, has favoured those with stronger social capital, placing them at an advantage in the early stages of career (Tregaskis, 2021).

2) It has been difficult for students to maintain their wellbeing and sense of belonging, both important factors in the ability to foster the necessary confidence to engage in skills and experience building, and career planning (Frampton and Smithies, 2021).

3) The changes to office-based workplaces, outlined above (Davis et al., 2022), mean that supporting students through their transition from study to work – whether work experience or graduate employment – requires preparing graduates to navigate more complex and individualised landscapes.

In this context, the following suggestions are offered to enable HE careers professionals to continue deploying expertise to the benefit of their stakeholders, even in these disrupted and evolving times. It could be argued that there is nothing novel about the principles behind them which are long-established in guiding practise and provision. However, the speed and scale at which the operating context has changed demands reflection to ensure that approaches evolve and remain relevant as we emerge from this distinctive period.

1) **Integrating employability within student education.** This is a primary focus for many careers professionals with 'employability' now extended to include preparation for the digital workplace, as well as knowledge, skills, and capabilities, that will enable students to fulfil graduate roles and progress in their career. Many university programmes today incorporate digital competencies into programme syllabi as standard practice, to prepare graduates for transition to the workplace – be it through the nurturing of programming skills, exposure to AI,

or through digital assessments such as blog posts, and video production (Digital Skills Organisation, 2022; García-Morales et al., 2021). For careers professionals, liaison with academics should extend to ways in which pedagogy is adapted, so that approaches to blended learning can equip students to meet hybrid working challenges. By keeping abreast of workplace developments to inform their institutions, careers professionals can make a significant contribution to integrating effective employability learning into Student Education.

2) **Equipping students to develop their own career trajectories.** In times of disruption, career paths are more dynamic, requiring self-direction and self-reliance. While career theory underpins the work of careers professionals, making theory explicit to students will enable them to craft a way forward, and be encouraged, despite the uncertainty that lies ahead (McCash, 2006). Planned Happenstance (Krumboltz, 2008), and Chaos Theory (Pryor & Bright, 2011), may provide particular reassurance. Similarly, understanding the role of social learning and Community Interaction Theory (Law, 1981) in career choice and opportunity awareness will help students to optimise work experience opportunities and prepare for active engagement when hybrid working in order to create opportunities for themselves.

3) **Creating opportunities to experience work.** This is long-established provision, but as workplaces rapidly evolve, the opportunity for a student to get used to an environment *before* they need to adapt to it will be important for successful transitions. Those entering the hybrid workplace will benefit from a range of work experiences to reflect against, so they can better calibrate hybrid work experiences, and understand what they like and dislike. To support social mobility, careers professionals should help ensure that in the access to, experience of, and learning from being in the workplace, students *without* siblings and parental role models are not disadvantaged in their university to work transition.

4) **Enabling decision-making.** In an environment where social learning opportunities have been limited and will be changing in structure, expert advice and guidance are ever more important to help students to make informed, realistic and positive choices. This is not an alternative to the increasing use of technology in Careers Service activity, but it is a risk for those needing support if guidance is considered a poor or cost-ineffective relation. There is value in the powerful partnerships that enable specialised platform providers to unleash the potential of technological integration and AI, to enable connections between careers services, students and employers, tailor content, and support and map career journeys. There may also be value and efficiency in simulated AI-enabled recruitment activities, offering opportunities to practice and provide rapid feedback, thus increasing the immediacy and access of career development support. But there are risks that options could be closed down, dismissed, or never presented without expert intervention, to offset 'algorithmic governance' where it prevails.

5) **Maintaining insights.** A careers professional's expertise includes knowledge of labour markets and career paths which must now extend to include a contemporary understanding of evolving workplaces and practices. Informed insights into role profiles in a hybrid world will enable careers professionals to help

students and graduates understand their likely fit. Equally, up-to-date insights on the evolving student experience and pedagogical practices will enable careers professionals to help employers understand the student experience and appreciate the alignment of educational with professional digital skill development, because they themselves will have informed institutional pedagogy (see point 1, above). Careers professionals can also, then, support employers in developing strategies and messaging that helps them attract, recruit and retain graduate talent; while anticipating the professional development requirements of future recruits.

6) **Fostering wellbeing.** Underpinning the approaches above, careers professionals play a role in supporting student wellbeing through the ways in which they engage with students. Offering opportunities for in-person and individual conversations, and enabling group learning, will provide valuable opportunities to offset loneliness, practice interaction, and build confidence in socialisation, which will help to build networks. Peer-to-peer delivery of initial careers engagement will also add value here. Like other cross-sections of the workplace, graduates reported polarised experiences of how remote and hybrid work affected their well-being and work-life-balance. Careers professionals can support the wellbeing dimension of transitions to the workplace by reinforcing the value of self-awareness and reflection, helping students build their ability to establish good relationships with peers and seniors.

An illustration of the retention of enduring principles in a changing context is the work of the University of Nottingham where, in 2018, a dimension of employability education was introduced to the curriculum by identifying four professional competencies that would be surfaced and articulated appropriately within every academic discipline: *Professional Communication*, *Digital Capability*, *Co-ordination with Others*, and *Reflection* (Thambar, 2018). A review in 2021, and further reflection in 2022 in the context of changing workplaces and the evolving student experience (Thambar, 2022), has confirmed that they are appropriate for the challenges that students face, but that the context in which students will deploy such competencies has changed significantly in many graduate arenas. For example, *Professional Communication* is now as important online as in person, *Co-ordination with Others* requires insightful use of collaboration platform, to achieve outcomes and develop effective, meaningful working partnerships and *Reflection* is more widely recognised as a critical component of wellbeing. Thus, the way in which careers professionals support and promote the articulation and development of these competencies is changing to reflect the evolving student and early graduate career experience.

At this crossroads in the pandemic journey, and with the old fruits of the past re-emerging in the landscape, it can be tempting to set aside the pandemic and welcome back the familiar. Yet, in spite of their challenges, the screens have brought new possibilities and engagement, alongside new expectations from students, and their future employers. In other words, the careers eco-system has evolved, along with the rules of engagement. Now is an optimal time to step back and reflect on practices that have emerged and evolved over the past few years. Not only do we need to ensure that current approaches are relevant, but also that they have the capacity to evolve, as the pandemic career shock continues to reverberate.

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Book review

Title: Swim, Jump, Fly – A guide to changing your life

Author: Charlotte Sheridan, organisational and coaching psychologist

Publisher: Charlotte Housden Consulting Limited (2022)

ISBN-10 1399930044 / **ISBN-13** 978-1399930048

Price: £12.99. Available from swimjumpfly.com and Amazon.co.uk

Reviewed by **Michelle Stewart**, Canterbury Christ Church University/NICEC Fellow.

● ●

This a great book to add to your collection if you want to better understand and support others to make and manage career changes, big or small. In addition to offering her own considerable knowledge and experience, Charlotte Sheridan, an organisational psychologist and coach, appropriately introduces the models and theories of others, offering a range of approaches and understanding. Having conducted interviews with 108 people across 27 countries, she skillfully supplements her work by sharing the experiences of others, allowing them to tell their stories and adding a range of voices to her own narrative. Her writing style is easily accessible, grounded in the reality of day-to-day life and reassuring.

The book has a logical easy to follow structure based around a change model, while also supporting a 'dipping-in' approach should the reader wish to focus on a particular stage of the change process. If you are seeking to gain new insight and a better understanding of the what, how, when and why concerning career changes, then this is a good resource to help you answer those questions, both for yourself and to support others. The cartoons and illustrations by Simon Pearsall add a lovely touch to a book that I am pleased to have on my bookshelf and to recommend to others.

Call for papers

Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling: October 2023 Issue

Editor: Pete Robertson

Prospective authors may submit articles for consideration at any time, via the Journal website: www.nicecjournal.co.uk   Select the button 'make a submission' and read the author guidelines carefully.

The first draft of articles for inclusion in the Autumn 2023 issue must be received by **22nd July 2023**. This will be an 'open call' issue. Articles will be considered on any topic related to career development that falls within the scope of the Journal.

For advice on the suitability of topics, and for support in preparing an article please contact the editor:

Pete Robertson: p.robertson@napier.ac.uk

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Forthcoming events │ NICEC

NICEC offers a series of seminars and network meetings. These are likely to take place via Zoom for the foreseeable future. Please register your interest when the events are promoted to receive the login details.

Note all times listed are for the United Kingdom.

Full, up-to-date details for events are on the NICEC website: http://www.nicec.org/

Please send any queries to Claire.m.nix@gmail.com

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Valuing Career Guidance (Seminar)

18 May 2023 5pm – 6:30 pm

This session explores the value for money provided by CEIAG services to young people in schools, colleges and universities. Topics will include: How do we measure return on investment? How much should be spent? The event will be chaired by Keith Herrmann, and include input from David Winter (Careers Group, University of London), and Emily Tanner (Nuffield Foundation).

The Bill Law Annual Award Event and Celebration

5 July 2023 5pm – 6:30pm

This event celebrates innovation and recognises the contribution of postgraduate students and future researchers in career development.

The Future for Adult Guidance (Network event)

18 September 2023 2pm – 4:30pm

This session will explore the future for adult guidance drawing from the work of two key studies which are considering how best to support adults.

Tony Wilson and Rakhee Patel from the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) will discuss ideas on how to configure a public employment service so it can better meet the needs of individuals, employers and our economy using the work of their Commission on the Future of Employment Support.

Tom Shirt and Beth Jones from the Gatsby Foundation will outline emerging findings from their international research project into what good looks like for adult careers guidance.

A Career Change Model in Practice (Seminar)

23 November 2023 5pm - 6:30pm

Richard Alderson outlines the ideas and structure that underlies the successful Careershifters Launch Pad programme, one of the world's longest established and biggest online career change programmes. Hosted by John Lees, career strategist, author, and NICEC Fellow.

Forthcoming events │ CDI

For the full training and events programme, including expert training sessions, conferences, webinars, CDI Academy courses and more, please visit www.thecdi.net/ Skills-training-events

If you have any queries, please contact the events team by emailing events@thecdi.net

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The UK Career Development Awards 2023
Monday 26 June, 6 pm - 11.45 pm, Hilton East Midlands Airport, Derby

We hope that you can join us for this memorable event, which will see practitioners from across the career development sector meeting to celebrate the outstanding work of their colleagues and friends. The event will begin at 6 pm with a drinks reception, followed by dinner then the announcement of the awards winners. Following the award presentations, you will be able to celebrate with colleagues at the after-party until closing.

To book your place, please visit www.thecdi.net/Quality-Assurance/UKCDA

The awards will take place the evening before the National Careers Leaders' Conference. You can save £20 when you book a joint ticket to attend both the awards and the conference.

The Careers Leaders' Conference 2023
Tuesday 27 June, University of Derby, Kedlestone Road Campus

Theme: Gatsby benchmarks and beyond: Developing and evidencing impactful careers programmes

This live, in person event, kindly sponsored by Morrisby, is jointly organised by the CDI and iCeGS, University of Derby. It is the sixth conference of its type, designed to support the learning, information sharing and professional development of careers leaders working in secondary schools, FE and SEND schools and colleges, enterprise coordinators and careers advisers. There will also be an exhibition, which provides an opportunity to engage with organisations supporting the careers sector.

For more information and to book your place, please visit www.thecdi.net/NCLC

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ABOUT THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

The Career Development Institute (CDI) is the UK-wide professional body for the career development sector. We have a growing membership of 4500 individual members and affiliate organisations and speak with one voice for a lively and diverse sector.

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We have a key role to play in influencing UK skills policy as it affects those with whom career development practitioners work and a clear purpose to improve and assure the quality and availability of career development services for all throughout the UK.

All CDI members subscribe to a Code of Ethics, which is supported by a strong disciplinary process, and subscribe to the principles of CPD.

Importantly the CDI is responsible for the UK Register of Career Development Professionals; the National Occupational Standards (NOS: CD); the first Career Progression Pathway for the sector; UK Career Development Awards; QCD and QCG/D qualifications; the CDI Academy; the Careers Framework and a UK-wide CPD programme.

Below are a few of our major achievements:

• A powerful brand supported by an evolving website **www.thecdi.net**; social media (Twitter and LinkedIn) presence; and quarterly magazine *Career Matters*;

• A schedule of CPD, skills training, webinars and conferences based on market analysis and members' training needs;

• A growing media and lobbying presence with the CDI recognised as the *expert voice* in the field; advising politicians, speaking at conferences and commenting on policy;
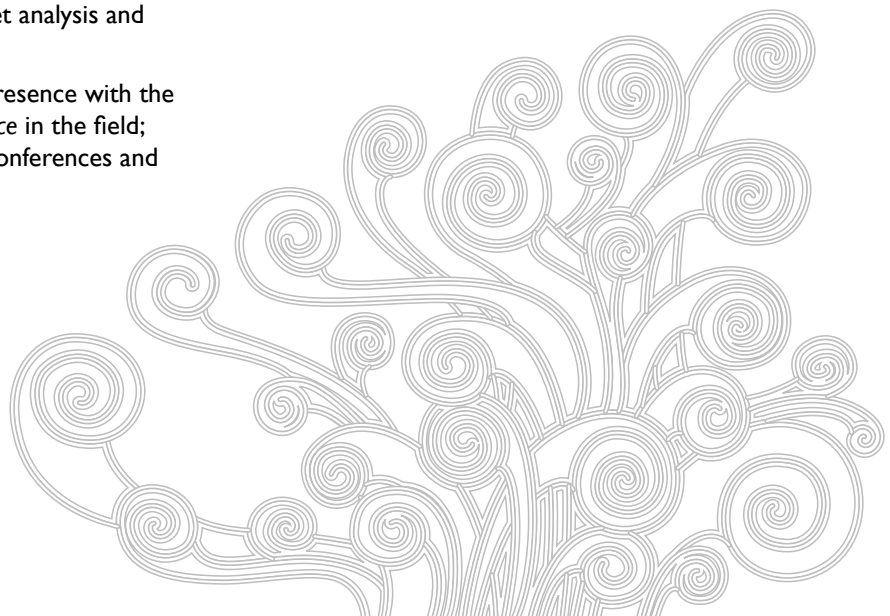
• The establishment of the UK Career Development Awards – ten sponsored awards including *Careers Adviser/Coach of the Year* and *Careers Leader of the Year and Lifetime Achievement Award*;

• Clear focus on professional identity and increasing the professionalism of the sector through our influence, ownership and development of the QCD and QCG/D and the CDI Academy including the new *CDI Certificate in Careers Leadership*.

ASSURING QUALITY

The CDI has a critical role to play in setting standards and articulating what quality looks like for the sector. Importantly we are an awarding body, managing the Qualification in Career Development (previously the QCG/D) and the UK Register for Career Development Professionals, which is pivotal to our ongoing quality agenda and is fast becoming recognised as the sector's equivalent to chartered status.

We are delighted to be working in partnership with NICEC on the Journal and the NICEC/CDI research-focused events which take place twice a year across the UK.

The Journal is made available to all CDI members via our website.

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