

# Innovation in theory and practice

This issue is inspired by the Audrey Collin's NICEC Seminar of 24th November, 2011. As is discussed in her article below, the seminar provided the opportunity to outline the assumptions made by systems theory and consider the benefits for practice and how it might be applied. For this journal issue, additional papers were invited on the broad theme of innovation in theory and practice in career education and counselling. I am pleased to report that contributions were received from a range of experienced and newer writers on a number of important topics.

Jim Bright and Robert Pryor write on systems and chaos theory in relation to career. David Winter and Bill Law consider narrative in relation to reflective practice and storyboarding. Rie Thomsen, Paul Davies, Mason Minnitt, Caroline Vernon and Dawn-Marie Walker report on examples of careers work in relation to specific populations, namely: young people in a town in Northern England, factory workers at risk of redundancy in Denmark and individuals with Asperger's and autistic spectrum disorders in higher education.

**Audrey Collin** identifies the similarities and differences between her own approach to systems thinking and those of others such as Patton and McMahon and Checkland. She argues for a key difference between systems thinking and systems theories of career. It is proposed that the former offers a useful epistemological tool for interpreting career to researchers, practitioners and individuals alike.

**Jim Bright and Robert Pryor** consider their Chaos Theory of Careers in relation to the practice of career education. They identify a number of criticisms of traditional career education programmes and suggest innovative ways in which career education programmes may be transformed.

**David Winter** focuses on narrative techniques in reflective practice. He is particularly interested in considering narrative in relation to reflecting on work

with clients. He proposes new ways in which narrative theories can be used to shape reflective practice.

**Bill Law** considers storyboarding in relation to careers work. An example of storyboarding in relation to careers work is provided; and further perspectives from fields such as literary theory and neurology are explored. He proposes that career helpers can model the probing and exploration of stories and thus model the living of an enquiring life to their clients.

**Rie Thomsen** writes about guidance in communities. A particular feature of this article is the way in which guidance workers, and the communities they work within, can evolve and shape guidance practices to their needs. A process memorably illustrated by the 'Then we took the wall' episode. It is argued that this indicates a way forward for guidance practice more generally.

**Paul Davies, Mason Minnitt and Caroline Vernon** report on Community Asset-Based Career Guidance and the use of evaluation to assist the development of emerging practices. A particular aspect of their work highlighted is the determination to identify and celebrate the contributions made by young people and their helpers within the community.

**Dawn-Marie Walker** writes about an Asperger's/ Autistic Spectrum Disorder project focused on transition from higher education to the workplace. She discusses the formation of the project, design of the learning outcomes, teaching and participant-informed evaluation. Recommendations are made for education providers concerning the identification of individuals with ASDs and for employers with regard to encouraging acceptance and self-disclosure.

---

Phil McCash, Co-editor

---