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NICEC

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CAREER EDUCATION AND COUNSELLING

NICEC STATEMENT

The Fellows of NICEC agreed the following statement in 2010.

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

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

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

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

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AIMS AND SCOPE

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

- Career development in the workplace: private and public sector, small, medium and large organisations, private practitioners.

- Career development in education: schools, colleges, universities, adult education, public career services.

- Career development in the community: third age, voluntary, charity, social organisations, independent contexts, public career services.

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

Contents

Overview of this issue

Welcome to the April 17 issue of the NICEC journal. The articles below were contributed in response to an open call for papers. It is a pleasure to report that innovative, creative and engaging scholarship is clearly thriving in our field.

B. Grace Meadows gets us off to a flying start with a critical perspective on the evolution of Irish manpower and welfare policy. A virtual duoethnographic enquiry is used to offer an alternative discourse to a dominant narrative of undeserving citizens who are responsible for their own unemployment. It is presented in the format of a dialogue between two fictional Dublin characters.

The second article from **John Gough** offers us a new story concerning the professional identity for career guidance practitioners. It uses grounded theory to explore the nature and extent of a common professional identity of careers guidance practitioners in England in the wake of rapid policy change. This article challenges dominant views about pessimistic or demotivated profession(s).

Tristram Hooley provides a timely take on Brexit and the implications for career guidance in the UK. It is argued that development of the EU since Maastricht has resulted in substantial shifts in the opportunity structure and that Brexit can be seen as a consequence of the failure of the neoliberal approach taken by the EU to guarantee career development for all.

Michael Tomlinson, Hazel McCafferty, Helen Fuge and **Kathryn Wood** present a new perspective on graduate employability based on a graduate capital model. Capitals are defined as key resources that potentially empower graduates and equip them for managing the transition from HE to the labour market. The article considers the practical side and makes suggestions for practitioners who help students and graduates during and beyond higher education.

Susan Meldrum calls for delivery models which encourage the collective career learning of groups to be brought to the centre stage of career guidance

practice. Her article challenges the long term focus of the sector on the one-to-one guidance interview and considers why group work is seen as a support activity for the majority of practitioners. A group integrative narrative approach (GINA) is introduced as a model of small group work.

Following this, **Rachel Roberts, Laura Brammar** and **Fiona Cobb** focus on experiential work-based learning as a social mobility mechanism for widening participation students. They evaluate a project that involved facilitating teams of students from low-income backgrounds to conduct mini-consultancy projects with local businesses. Students responded positively and increases in employability-related self-efficacy scores were identified.

Our penultimate article by **Yasuhiro Kotera** and **David Sheffield** is devoted to the use of the 'Disney strategy' with Japanese university students. This tool enables students to approach career decisions in contrasting ways. A mixed methods pilot study reports significant increases in self-esteem and job-search self-efficacy.

Lastly, **Ananda Geluk** addresses a vital but neglected topic with a meditation on motherhood and career development. This article uses a heuristic inquiry approach, relying on an autoethnographic study of her own embodied experience of negotiating the competing demands of motherhood and career, complemented by narrative interviews with other mothers. It discusses the experience of negotiating multiple identities as mother, learner and careers practitioner. A central theme of this study is the importance of a robust, multifaceted self-concept and its significance in relation to increased personal resilience.

We are also grateful to **Gill Frigerio** for providing a topical and thought-provoking book review of *Graduate Employability in Context: Theory, Research and Debate* edited by Michael Tomlinson and Leonard Holmes.

Phil McCash, Editor

Virtual truths: a citizen's-voice view on Ireland's Public Employment Service

B. Grace Meadows

Arguably one of the most significant changes in Irish manpower policy in the half-century since its inception has been the reassignment of Irish Public Employment Service (PES) provision to a Civil Service Welfare Department after 50 years of delivery via dedicated agencies. This paper traces that historical journey, providing a critical narrative on the evolution of Irish manpower and welfare policy, pinpointing the issue of unemployment as a common denominator in labour market policy formulation and establishing how lifelong guidance counselling is viewed as key to achievement of labour market policy goals. It argues that reframing PES within a disciplinary architecture denies client-centred guidance to unemployed citizens and queries Ireland's ability, in that context, to deliver on Europe 2020 growth strategy. Based on a virtual duoethnographic enquiry by the author, it offers an alternative discourse to a dominant narrative of undeserving citizens who are responsible for their own unemployment and is presented in the format of a dialogue between the virtual co-researchers, two fictional Dublin characters

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Introduction: A brief note on virtual duoethnography and creative representation

Diverse narrative approaches are gaining wide appreciation in social science (Zazkis & Koichu 2015), with many noting purpose and benefits of the narrative enquiry genre, in particular the presentation of events using creative formats. Acknowledged by Reece & Speedy (2014) and Riessman (2008) as the

extension of an invitation to enter the perspective of the narrator, and the opening up of spaces for thinking (Richardson 2005), it has likewise been hypothesised as the creation of a space of resistance: either to think both within and against a given context (Lather & St. Pierre 2013), or to counter dominant discourses (Ellis & Bochner 2000). Kara (2015) credits the use of fictional accounts, portraying actual but anonymised experiences, as a solution to the problem of how some truths and perspectives cannot be made available in a non-fiction realm. Ellis, Adams & Bochner (2011) observe similar necessity for alterations of the authorial voice, while Wiebe (2014) notes a vital role of literary characters in affording identity protection through the creation of a context where an author, particularly in autoethnographic research, can become an "other". Such method is adjudged by Ellis (2004) and Fetterman (2010) to be both a process and a product. This author's production of a text of a dialogic format, where fictional characters conduct research conversations, exemplifies an approach conceptualised as virtual duoethnography. Zazkis & Koichu (2015) delineate virtual duoethnography as an amalgamation of both duoethnography and virtual monologue, where duoethnography consists of real researchers collaboratively producing a dialogic text in their own voices and virtual monologues are works of fiction where researchers reproduce their subjective perspective as a text in monologic format. According to Wegener (2014), fictional dialogic others serve as collaborators, co-writers and co-researchers, an additional voice in an author's dialogue with data. The enquiry on which this paper is based was conducted using conversations between two fictional characters as an innovative research tool and their reported dialogue as a creative method of representing the findings, thus giving voice to the citizen. The dialogue of the virtual duoethnographers in this paper reads like the script for a two-person play, the anonymous

characters differentiated simply by regular and italic font. Consider this your invitation to listen in on their conversation:

● I'm so sick o' lookin' for a job, an' no' findin' one…

● *Unemployment…wasn' it Thatcher (1983) tha' called it the universal problem of our time?*

● Yeah, think so…pity **I'm** only ever a statistic but…me humanity is diminished behind those percentage rates they're always quotin'

● *For policy-makers an' suchlike, unemployment is just a phenomenon, a theoretical construct*

● …I know…an "economic concern"…bu' for me it's a lived reality (Hearne 2014)…Wilson (1971) got tha'…he understood tha' for an unemployed person the rate is 100%

● *Thing is, countries use different determinants to measure the rate of unemployment…our Government uses the Live Register as the main short-term trend indicator (CSO 2015), tha's why they use exit rates from it to verify how effectively they're managin' unemployment*

● To show how well they are doin'?…but I see it first an' foremost as a social concern

● *Look, Governments an' policies may be concerned abou' the individuals who aren't workin', bu' the electoral salience o' unemployment (Murphy 2012), an' macro concerns abou' its collective effects mean its reduction becomes a national priority (Herr & Cramer 1996)*

● So it's a problem by default for whoever happens to be in Government (Bond 1988)? The Irish Government's concern abou' unemployment reduction is as old as meself…

● *Yer righ', ever since active manpower policy was first defined in the 1960s it had the stated aim o' achievin' full employment*

● Difference is, at tha' time they enunciated a clear vision for the role of Employment Services guidance counsellin' in the achievement o' tha' objective (NIEC 1964)…no' like today…

● *No' just then, o' course, throughout the followin' decades aswell…wi' growin' unemployment in OECD countries, successive Irish Government policy responses focused on reforms to effect a "major assault" (Government of Ireland 1991: 7) on unemployment, wi' an increased emphasis placed on the role o' guidance, in particular a client-centred approach*

● The Social[1] seemta have forgotten all abou' tha' since they became the Employment Service

● *I don't see why…the most recent series o' Government policy statements on Labour Market Activation, commencin' 2012, set a number o' explicit goals in the management o' unemployment, envisagin' "the provision of appropriate career guidance support" (Government of Ireland 2012: 20) as part o' the client engagement process an' thus part o' the solution*

● Tha' IMF Executive Board were also lookin' for improved employment services (IMF 2013)…I'm confused now…if no' only unemployment, bu' also guidance, has featured as a common denominator in the development o' manpower policy since its foundation fifty years ago…how did it all transmute into a disciplinary activation architecture (Boland & Griffin 2016)?

● *Since it landed in the Welfare…*

● "Welfare"…strange name for a system tha' doesn't seem to have yer welfare at heart…

● *It's built on a foundation o' moral judgement, tha's why…tha' discourse o' deservin' an' undeservin'…goes back to the Poor Laws*

● I though' we hafta thank Winston Churchill for labour exchanges an' welfare (Keenan 2006: 198; Keenan 2008)?

● *From 1909 on, yeah…them exchanges were intended as an Employment Service bu' ended up almost exclusively doin' unemployment payments (McCashin 2004: 20)*

● Ah, the precursor to the oul' Social…

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1   Colloquial name for the Social Protection/Welfare Ministry

- *…tha' thread o' suspicion…so deeply ingrained in the welfare psyche…policies predicated on a belief tha' jobseekers are indolent or fraudulent…or both… support based on conditionality…ye'd be sick o' tha' discourse*

- Where yeh satisfy qualifyin' conditions to get yer money, yeh mean? Wha' abou' welfare as an unconditional social right, based on citizenship?

- *Nah, forget rights[2]…citizenship's been commodified (Brodkin 2014), it's all abou' social contracts, work-first, an' the active citizen nowadays*

- Terms an' conditions apply!

- *Tha' principle o' mandation conveys tha' welfare claimants hafta be coerced inta lookin' for work (Anaf, Newman, Baum, Ziersch & Jolley 2013)…an' when tha' emanates from the top down…Taoiseach[3] wantin' to stamp ou' "unemployment DNA running through some households" (Kenny 2013)…how insultin'…*

- How judgemental! The conditionality o' activation is the polar opposite o' the client-centred approach where the client value **isn't** dependent on "acceptable" behaviour

- *look, the objectives o' welfare an' manpower policy have always been polarised! Go back to where it all started…the 1960s…*

- Wha'? Flower Power?

- *No, Manpower…picture this…it's 1964 an' the OECD is all interested in manpower policies…gettin' countries to set up an Employment Service to provide vocational guidance an' occupational counsellin'(OECD 1964)…*

- Wha' did Ireland do?

- *Took notice straight away…NIEC did a report for Government, recommended providin' staff trained in up-to-date placement an' guidance procedures, a single agency for all functions, an' the dissociation*

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2   Many authors note the shift from a concept of social rights as unconditional to one based on obligations: Aasen, Gloppen, Magnussen & Nilssen 2014; Bothfeld & Betzelt 2013; Brodkin 2014; Dahlstedt 2013; Evers & Guillemard 2013; Handler 2003; LeGrand 2003; Lister 2011; Marston 2008; Powell 2002
3   Irish Prime Minister

o' the Employment Service from the Dept. o' Social Welfare…because **tha'** *operation was so unsatisfactory (NIEC 1964)…*

- They took it **out** o' the Social? We've come full circle in a half century so…constructin' an' Employment Service an' deconstructin' it again. Imagine puttin' it back inta the Social, what made 'em think the polar opposites would attract this time?

- *Corporate memory loss?…anyway, next is 1965 White Paper on Manpower Policy an' the establishin' o' a new Dept. of Labour in 1966 to implement the manpower policy an' develop the placement an' guidance functions*

- They sure took the oul' guidance seriously back then, really seemed to understand wha' citizens an' society required…

- *It useta be characteristic o' Ireland to focus on the human angle…a person-centred philosophy…from day one o' settin' up an employment service Agnew (1967) said tha' there would be* **no question** *o' havin' an impersonal, institutional approach*

- There was a client-centred perspective, eh!

- *Wha' a different discourse today…anyway, next came a dedicated employment service agency, the National Manpower Service (NMS), wi' an integral occupational guidance service*

- An' sure we joined the EEC soon after tha'…

- *Yeah, 1974…an' all tha' European Social Fund (ESF) money…then a series o' reports published on Manpower policy in OECD countries, includin' Ireland (OECD 1974), an' the Minister for Labour got the NESC to comment (NESC 1975)*

- Reports abou' reports!

- *Well the NESC were really strong on how the economic an' social dimensions o' manpower policy were of equal importance (NESC 1975: 5, 7, 37) an'* **again** *insistin' on the NMS as an executive agency* **outside** *the control o' the civil service…couldn't have 'em workin' towards the Minister, wha?*

- Definitely didn't want the Social back in on the act…they saw how tha' had gone the first time…

- *well the NMS certainly distanced themselves from the Social…no compulsory registration…meanwhile, back in Europe, unemployment levels risin'…discourse shiftin' from passive payment o' benefits to active approaches[4]…still wasn't activation as we know it… until the policy discourse changed, an' the enablin' system o' active measures morphed into a regulatory one o' mutual obligations an' people havin' ta take up opportunities to keep qualifyin' for benefits*

- Way to go! Turnin' a positive inta a negative… Governments an' policies seem to react in strange ways to unemployment rates…

- *Even Ireland was forced inta givin' it a go eventually. 1986 White Paper on Manpower Policy introduced a Direct Action Programme for long-term unemployed. Remember 1987 an' JobSearch[5]? People selected by the Social…the NMS dragged inta interviewin''em… an' the AnCO runnin' courses…*

- Same welfare discourse o' lazy, scroungin' jobseekers?

- *Always…the Minister for Social Welfare said it'd identify those who weren't genuinely seekin' work (Woods 1987)*

- Did no one object to tha' language[6], but?

- *Senator Ryan (Ryan 1987) did, an' he agreed wi' you abou' somethin' positive bein' turned inta a negative … one-sided, judgemental terms o' reference, he said, an' how it looked like a witch hunt for people who weren't, get this, **the deservin' poor**!*

- He saw the wolf in sheep's clothin'…musta thought he'd landed back in the condemnatory days o' the Poor Laws…

- *He wasn't advocatin' today's "work-first" approach[7]… fundamental tha' people shouldn' be forced inta jobs tha' bore no relationship to their skills, trainin' an' aspirations*

- Ireland musta got disconnected from its client-centred beliefs somewhere along the line, tha' "work-first" approach conflicts directly

- *Ah, bu' the JobSearch wasn't a resoundin' success…a "blunt instrument" (Bond 1988: 204) tha' drew negative publicity due to the compulsion attached, **an'** it didn't achieve higher placements than would've occurred naturally (ESF Evaluation Unit 1996: 25)*

- So, activation was shown not to work…an' they're tryin' it again…definition o' madness doin' the same thing an' expectin' a different result

- *They tried doin' somethin' different the followin' year, 1988. The FÁS[8] was set up*

- mergin' guidance, placement an' trainin'

- *Still a backdrop o' risin' unemployment headin' inta the 1990s but, so the European Council reoriented their fundin' programmes to modernise employment, trainin' an' education systems so EU member states could develop active labour market policies*

- Ah, so instead o' the usual programme-led response…

- *…they recommended a client-centred approach… developin' a personal action plan based on a professional assessment o' **individual** needs…*

- A renewed emphasis on guidance…an' Ireland reclaimin' its client-centred identity!

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4   Based on provision of labour market programmes involving education, training or subsidised employment
5   A Government directive that 150,000 people on the Live Register were to be put through a compulsory process and "offered" scheme or jobsearch training opportunities
6   Objections to the stark language of activation are widespread (Grimshaw & Rubery 2012; Wright, Marston & McDonald 2011). Claims are made that it reinforces stereotypes (Boland & Griffin 2015), limits agency and conveys a message of "catching out" rather than supporting (Brodkin 2014), problematises welfare as generous (Dukelow & Constantine 2014), and communicates the necessity of punishment to motivate claimants (Anaf et al 2013; Handler 2003)

7   Criticisms of the "work-first" approach abound, including how it fails to promote investment in human capital (Van Berkel 2010), equates to social discipline (Brodkin & Marston 2013), exempts employers from having to offer good conditions or competitive wages (Boland & Griffin 2015), should be balanced with other active labour market policies (e.g. a train-first approach) in a constrained labour market (European Commission 2013), and is anti-competitive, subordinating the development of the person to the development of the economy (Torfing & Triantafillou 2013)
8   FÁS Training & Employment Authority was established by the 1987 Labour Services Act, a merger of the National Manpower Service, Youth Employment Agency and AnCO the Industrial Training Authority

- *The objective o' the national development programme o' the time was to ensure effective operation o' active labour market policies an' adopt a coherent Programme Framework to promote them, includin' counsellin' an' placement services (Government of Ireland 1994: 37)*

- Did tha' framework happen?

- *Yeah, increased operational effectiveness o' the National Employment Service formed the centrepiece o' the response…establishin' a dedicated guidance service in the FÁS…an' a clamour for supportive labour activation for long-term unemployed (NESF 1994)*

- So the Local Employment Service Networks were set up in disadvantaged areas?

- *Didn't think the FÁS could do supportive activation…*

- Musta been confusin' them wi' the Social…

- *Then 1997 White Paper on Human Resource Development (DEE 1997) reinforced tha' state trainin' support for an individual would be based on agreed needs o' the client*

- The official mandate to implement a client-centred approach…

- *An' the rest is history…Professional Diploma in Adult Guidance an' Counsellin'…investment an' growth… White Paper on Adult Ed (DES 2000) reaffirmin' tha' effective service required trainin' in guidance an' counsellin'*

- Musta been a great time to be a practitioner…

- *Fulfillin'…a great time for guidance…but…in 1998 the EU requested each member state to report on a National Employment Action Plan (EAP)…a preventive strategy o' systematic engagement wi' people at an early stage o' unemployment*

- How did tha' work?

- *State agencies collaboratin'…mandatory selectin' an' referral by the Social to the FÁS for guidance*

- Sounds like tha' JobSearch to me…

- *FÁS didn't like tha' mandatory aspect … counsellors didn't fancy bein' police for the welfare…luckily OECD (2004) are still all abou' guidance…country*

- *reviews[9]…seein' how guidance services advance public-policy objectives, lifelong learnin' goals, an' how career guidance could help in implementin' active labour market policies*

- I remember tha' Lisbon Agenda (European Council 2000), lifelong guidance for lifelong learnin', Ireland enterin' the knowledge age…ah 2004, still a Celtic Tiger[10] then…no one thought tha' would end either…

- *No' tha' we took proper advantage of it, mind…loads o' jobs goin' spare…bu' no' much implementin' active manpower policies…labour shortages managed usin' inward migration…anyway, I digress…tha' OECD report was a catalyst for change…tellin' countries to develop lifelong guidance systems an' revealin' tha' policy makers had long-standin' expectations o' career guidance servin' labour market goals[11] (OECD 2004)*

- An' sayin' tha' active, mutual obligation approaches to welfare dependency require a career guidance input (OECD 2004: 23)…wi' policy attention on guidance, they musta all jumped on tha' bandwagon

- *2004 was a boom year for guidance alrigh'…Ireland President o' the EU an' **two** Ministers launched The National Guidance Forum to ensure tha' guidance became central to the public policy process in education an' the labour market…they got busy… produced a competence framework for practitioners; plus an integrated framework for guidance (National Guidance Forum 2007)*

- Advocatin' an enablin' model…a lifelong learnin' an' guidance approach for EAP activation?

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9   Fourteen OECD countries took part in the review: Australia; Austria; Canada; the Czech Republic; Denmark; Finland; Germany; Ireland; Korea; Luxembourg; the Netherlands; Norway; Spain; and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

10 The Celtic Tiger refers to the period 1995-2007 when the Irish economy experienced a rapid growth

11 The contribution of guidance provision to a range of public policy (labour market, economic and social) goals and outcomes is highlighted not only by OECD (2004), but also more recently by NESC (2011) and ELGPN (2015). NESC (2011) draw attention to the significant economic and social benefits that publicly funded job-placement and career guidance services provide and how they are cost-effective when compared to intensive activation, supported by ELGPN (2015) which credits guidance as one of the few active labour market measures that have an impact on labour market outcomes for citizens

Articles

- *Exactly. Tha' didn't suit everyone, but…the EAP was slated by an evaluation (ESRI 2011) commissioned by the Social…recommendin' a fully compulsory activation programme includin' sanctions…*

- The ol' welfare discourse creepin' back…they got their wish alrigh'…hello INTREO

- *They couldn't have known tha' the FÁS would shoot itself in the foot[12] just as the economy was collapsin' an' Ireland lost its sovereignty…an' then 2010 hit an' all tha' palaver wi' the IMF emergency financin' mechanism*

- All them terms an' conditions

- *You bet…National Recovery Plan as the basis o' the fiscal programme…indicatin' specifically savings to be realised from welfare an' labour market reform[13]… with the aim o' reducin' the unemployment rate*

- Ah unemployment…tha' common denominator

- *The Government said it'd achieve them reforms through "an improvement in activation procedures to strengthen job search conditionality" (IMF 2010: 27)*

- Tha' regulatory welfare discourse rearin' its oul' ugly head again…

- *Hear **this** bu'…with the improvements to be delivered via "better identification of jobseekers' needs and increased counseling activities at the beginning of the unemployment spell" (IMF 2010: 27)*

- Counsellin'? They saw MORE counsellin' as the way to reduce unemployment an' deliver us from the evil o' the IMF loan?

- *Told the IMF as much…better identification o' client needs by the PES…structural reform mergin' the PES an' the Social…*

- no' the first time **tha'** idea had been floated (Grubb, Singh & Tergeist 2009)[14]

- *Except, in 2012 the PES was subsumed inta the Social…no' really a merger…more a takeover…no' the way it was presented to the IMF*

- Importin' supportive practices an' client-centred philosophy inta a regulatory environment…musta forgot tha' guidance an' welfare aren't birds of a feather

- *Square peg in a round hole…manpower policy back under the control o' the Civil Service…job placement back in the employment exchange…after all them reports an' bad experiences…them corporate memories sure are short…NESC (2011) warned 'em but[15]*

- Policy reform isn't jus' abou' formally changin' the content, it's operational too (Van Berkel 2010)…

- *Yeh, so wi' the new "work-first" agenda, they spat out guidance…like a body's immune system rejectin' a transplanted organ…if yer workin' towards the Minister, yer workin' **away** from the public…immune to the needs o' the client…no place for guidance*

- An'thin' related to the FÁS musta been toxic to the Social…definitely didn't want any "touchy-feely"…bu' why didn't any o' the old FÁS-heads fight tha' corner?

- *Prob'ly tryin' to dissociate from tha' scandalous stuff… save their own necks…denyin' their origins…and dissin' guidance*

- Judas Iscariots! Wonder who's speakin' up for guidance at corporate level now?

- *Sounds like no one…reminds me o' that Martin Niemöller bloke…*

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12 A series of revelations emerged during 2008/2009 about extravagant expenditure by FÁS senior executives and seemingly unrestrained expenses budgets, leading to the resignation of the Director General and precipitating a decision to break up the organisation. The timing was most inopportune. The demise of the Celtic Tiger and soaring unemployment rates meant public sympathy for those with "safe" jobs in public service in general (and FÁS in particular) was at an all-time low
13 Including structural reform, creation of a National Employment and Entitlements Services (NEES) by merging The Department of Social Protection and FÁS Employment Services. NEES was later branded INTREO

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14 The OECD, believing Ireland to be soft on implementation of activation policy, had previously recommended amalgamating the PES, Social Welfare and LES
15 In the context of establishment of NEES, NESC identified the challenge for guidance provision facing INTREO (as the new PES), noting that staff from even closely allied activities elsewhere in the public service would need significant further training to work as career guidance professionals, and that the PES would need to put in place appropriate institutional supports necessary for staff to provide quality guidance services

- Huh? Tha' Pastor chap?

- *Yeah him…Lutheran guy…gave speeches an' lectures an' tha', abou' Nazi occupation…lamentin' not speakin' up when he had the chance…serious consequences for stayin' silent…for his conscience like*

- Didn't he write tha' poem abou' it:

  First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out
  Because I was not a Socialist

  Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out
  Because I was not a Trade Unionist

  Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out
  Because I was not a Jew

  Then they came for me
  And there was no one left to speak for me

- *Don't know wha' the oul FÁS-heads'll do when they need someone to speak up for 'em…they'll hafta examine their own conscience on tha' one*

- Hope they can find it…

- *Find wha'?*

- A conscience…

- *Tha's their lookout…there's bigger fish to fry… like how is public service adult vocational guidance for unemployed citizens goin' to emerge from these wilderness years?*

- Well I've been hearin' a clamour o' voices o' late…emotive public discourse abou' the hiatus in school guidance in disadvantaged areas…it's all "damage inflicted on those at the bottom of the pile" (O'Brien 2016: 14)…an' similar abou' adult educational guidance…fragmentation in quality o' delivery…commitment to reform guidance systems an' develop an integrated guidance strategy for the Further Ed and Trainin' (FET) sector (SOLAS 2014: 31, 32)

- *They'll have their work cut ou' for them…delivery o' adult guidance is so fragmented…an' since the*

establishment o' INTREO there's been no adult guidance in the Trainin' Centres tha' useta be the FÁS…

- Well, wi' adult ed pledgin' to start from the viewpoint of the end-user…takin' a client-centred approach…isn't that a bit o' good news?…voices representin' lifelong guidance for learners gainin' attention?

- *It's good alrigh'…bu' voices for guidance for unemployed citizens are still absent from public discourse*

- In the context o' ongoin' denial o' guidance, could this signify persistence o' a perception o' unemployed people as undeservin'?

- *I'd hate to think tha'…bu' evidence shows otherwise… the "work-first" focus o' the activation agenda suggests tha' not only have the Social consigned the concept o' lifelong guidance to the bygone decade o' the "Lisbon Agenda" bu' they're also failin' to appreciate the additional onus on 'em, as the PES, to actually set quality standards in lifelong guidance policy an' provision[16]*

- Do they think guidance has jus' gone away? Don't they realise tha' lifelong guidance policies have been identified as key elements in makin' the employment targets of the current EU ten-year jobs an' growth strategy "Europe 2020" (European Commission 2015) a reality

- *an' the importance o' PES as an integral part o' national lifelong guidance strategies has also been emphasised (Borbély-Pecze & Watts 2011: iii)*

- Long live lifelong guidance, wha'…doesn't anyone recognise tha' staff competencies are critical to the quality o' PES services?

- *They sure do…Ireland's particularly strong model around 2009 was referenced (Borbély-Pecze & Watts 2011: 9), bu' tha' was when the FÁS was the PES… before the marriage' wi' the Social*

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16 The Lisbon Council was adamant that despite privatisation of guidance counselling in many member states, it remained the responsibility of the Public Sector to set agreed minimum quality standards and define entitlements

Articles

- shotgun weddin'!…seriously bu', FÁS guidance counsellors were pivotal in Ireland's national lifelong guidance strategy…all the more lamentable tha' resource isn't utilised or valued. All tha' investment…squandered…

- *There's still a chance to learn from history…50 years o' manpower policy is a good foundation…*

- I dunno…are the Social still tryin' to come to terms wi' their new identity?

- *Or have they lost their way?…at the conceptual stage, Irish labour market policy envisioned a truly integrated service, intervenin' promptly wi' unemployed citizens, providin' intensive guidance counsellin' (IMF 2010: 27)*

- An' now it's fallin' to the Social to manage the unemployment situation, when they useta just pay 'em…somethin' hasta be done to lessen tha' framin' o' unemployment as an individual problem (Herr & Cramer 1996) rather than a social one (Brodkin 2014)

- *Tha's where guidance comes in…diminishin' the disregard for the lived reality (Hearne 2014)… affordin' an alternative to the judgemental discourse o' deservin' and undeservin'*

- Tha' Social needs to evolve…adapt to the new reality…tha' mono-cultural identity is changin' by default regardless…wha' did they think would happen…importin' a client-centred philosophy…

- *Yeh could understand the reluctance, but…just as conditionality is anathema to a client-centred philosophy, a concept of unconditionality is surely threatenin' an' underminin' to a framework o' control*

- Sure the internal dynamic musta altered, even in the face o' opposition an' resistance, I'm no' sure wha' all the fuss is abou' anyway…it wouldn't be disavowin' the Social identity…incorporatin' guidance would be recognisin' the need to reshape it, providin' resilience an' relevance in the new operatin' environment

- *Well, all I'm sayin' is…it's high time to start thinkin' abou' Europe again…we need to be conformin' wi' the European Social Charter…somethin' **else** good we did 50 years ago…Article 9 enshrines a fundamental right to vocational guidance…*

- Righ'…wi' a view to helpin' citizens choose an occupation suited to their personal aptitude an' interests…

- *the original intent behind active labour market measures…a client-centred approach*

- Back to enablin' rather than work-first!

- *Exactly…anyway our non-provision o' vocational guidance breaches fundamental rights*

- What consequences, but…is the voice o' unemployed citizens little more than an echo in tha' void o' public service vocational guidance?

- *…it's abou' changin' the discourse…supportive manpower policy hasn't actually metamorphosed into a punitive labour market regime y'know*

- No, the disciplinary focus is attributable more to the architecture, as policy is interpreted an' implemented by the Social, wi' its regulatory mindset…wha' can we do but?

- *We can keep on talkin'…don't forget the power o' language in constructin' social reality (Richardson 2005)…meanings are made accordin' to the available discourses … we're creatin' a space o' resistance… we're providin' an alternative discourse*

- We **are** an alternative discourse…

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A professional identity for career guidance practitioners?

John Gough

This article summarises the key findings from my PhD which has been conducted at the Institute for Employment Research at the University of Warwick. Using Grounded Theory Method, its aim was to explore the nature and extent of a common professional identity of careers guidance practitioners in England in the wake of rapid policy change. My conclusions are that practitioners do share a professional identity, and tell a different story of their agency and esteem. In this way, my research also contests the pessimistic discourses that inform much of the recent literature concerning the profession (and professions more widely).

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Introduction

Since the advent of the Connexions service in England in 2001, much of the *discourse* regarding career guidance has been concerned with the deleterious effects of policy on the profession and its professionals. Colley et al. (2010) identified the unbecoming and deprofessionalisation of the new service on (formerly-named) career guidance practitioners. More recently, Watts (2014) has been particularly scathing about the ways in which the Education Act (2011) betrayed the profession. Roberts (2013: 251) went further, and labelled the government's approach to career guidance as 'attempted murder.' Bimrose et al. (2013) also expressed a persisting view of career guidance: that it is fragmented and Balkanised, with *organisationally-defined* practitioners who lack a common professional identity.

These discourses could indicate a weakened profession and demoralised practitioners. There have

been positive developments, e.g., the establishing of a (more unified) professional body in the Career Development Institute (CDI) in 2013; and, revised statutory guidance for schools and colleges in England (DfE, 2015a; 2015b). However, as Gough (2017) argues, there is a complete lack of any workforce development for career guidance in England.

Where does this context leave career guidance professionals? Bimrose and Hearne (2012) identify the ways in which practitioners can develop resilience in the face of change and performativity. Mulvey (2013) encourages practitioners to adopt a kind of existentialism (a 'bloody-minded' adjunct to resilience). Neary (2014) examined the role of continuing professional development (CPD) in reclaiming practitioners' professional identity (though, in my view, this assumes a general rather than a more specific definition of identity as it relates to career guidance). These choices reflect a kind of retreat to the idea of 'work fit' practitioner: resilient, independent, and doing her or his best within their service setting.

An alternative perspective; and a different story to tell

As a former practitioner, service manager, senior member of a professional body and now an educator, my reaction to the arguments above was: there has to be a different story to tell about the profession and its practitioners. The discourses and perspectives above were, for me, too limiting, informed by objectivist, deterministic principles, or by a kind of ontology in general (Stones 2005) that assume more general definitions of professionalism and professional identity. My PhD has sought to address these issues: I wanted to find out if practitioners shared a common

professional identity; what its features may be; and the extent to which they were still exercising their agency, and constructing meanings from their everyday practices (Giddens 1984).

My theoretical approach to addressing these questions was based on strong structuration (Stones 2005) – that is, the *precise* nature of the relationships between agency and structure, and the *particular* meanings that are both generated and expressed. The advantage of strong structuration (ibid.) is that it extends beyond the limitations of Giddens's (1984) and Bourdieu's (1989) concepts to offer a more sophisticated model that considers wider societal factors, day-to-day organisational structures, the actions taken by people in their context, and the meanings that are generated (Stones 2005).

Methodology and Methods

As the aims of my PhD were concerned with exploring the lived experience, I adopted an interpretivistic methodology (Sarantakos 2005). Further, the *generative* aims of exploring and defining a shared professional identity, meant that Grounded Theory Method (GTM) was the most appropriate for developing a substantive theory from the ground up, so to speak. As for the particular discipline of GTM, the Strauss and Corbin approach (1990; 1997) offered a combination of a rigorous method and a set of procedures for translating data into codes that could form the basis of my theory.

To elicit the data, I chose semi-structured interviews as my method, particularly as my skills as a practitioner would transfer to the data gathering process. This method, too, is flexible enough to allow the researcher to explore points offered by the participants, whilst still offering a consistent framework to enable data analysis (Rubin and Rubin 2005).

My purposive sampling (Bryant and Charmaz 2007) was consistent with my chosen method; and the criteria was based on the following:

- Practitioners who delivered careers information, advice and guidance in schools; FE colleges; HEIs; and adult guidance settings in the West Midlands. This geographical region is

diverse and features a wide range of services

- Individuals who held a variety of career *guidance* qualifications, including the NVQ 4 in advice and guidance (in its various iterations); the DipCG; the QCG; and also the AGCAS Diploma

- I did not insist on a minimum period of experience, since I was interested in how perceptions of professional identity arose from those who were newly qualified, as well as being more experienced

A key procedure in GTM (Strauss and Corbin 1990) is *theoretical* sampling. I operationalised this by selecting five participants from those who I recruited in accordance with the above criteria. After interviewing each, I analysed the data for any emerging patterns, or initial open codes (ibid.). In line with GTM, I then sampled further participants who met my criteria, and whose narratives may also develop, enhance and challenge my initial codes (Charmaz 2014). Sampling and coding continued until I reached theoretical saturation with my data (Strauss and Corbin 1990); that despite seeking exceptions, I was receiving consistent responses to my interview questions. My final sample size was 19 participants, composed of three from HE; four from FE; five from schools; six from National Careers Service; and one from a targeted service aimed at disadvantaged young people.

Generating my substantive theory drew on Strauss and Corbin's (ibid.) approach to coding. In particular, I was interested in the *axials*, or dimensions, of the emerging categories are explored. From the final stage – selective coding – I generated the higher level of categories on which to base my thesis. There were: motivation to enter the profession; job satisfaction and dissatisfactions; and professionalism (foundations, definitions and making meanings); with the very latter aspect being crucial to the generation of the substantive theory.

Data and discussion

Researchers often attest to the sense of humbling privilege afforded by listening to participants' narratives (Rubin and Rubin 2005). I did not meet practitioners who seemed beaten down by the

sovereign forces of policy and managerialism (Mackey 2007). For the following categories, I have identified some of the key highlights from the data.

Motivation to enter the profession

Career guidance appeared an attractive profession to the participants. Over half (n=11) sought an active change to their career, by moving from work that they felt was too managerial, to a career that valued people. Just under one-third (n=6) also indicated the positive effect of encountering careers practitioners on their decision to enter career guidance. Far from being put off by any negative views of the profession, the participants saw it as representing more ethical and simply more interesting work. As one participant noted: "I had a bit of a change in my life goals…I was looking to give something back rather than making loads of money." Of further interest was that those who worked in schools (n=5) did so because of a positive choice to work with young people. One participant expressed this in proud, almost defiant terms: of how much she liked the work despite the "negative press schools and young people get…I love it…I love the environment."

In addition, some of the participants (n=5) volunteered the view that part of the appeal of career guidance was that, in their view, it is a *profession*. As one participant who had moved from a business environment indicated, "careers (sic) guidance seemed a profession, offered a training route and progression, a portable qualification, and could work in different contexts." Once again, I was surprised how esteemed career guidance as a profession was by the participants.

Job satisfactions and dissatisfactions

As I began the interview process, I expected to hear a fair degree of dissatisfaction from the participants, either with their job, the profession, or both, in line with the discourse highlighted earlier. Yet, I simply didn't find this, with only a small minority (n=2) expressing any equivocations about their role. All expressed very readily that their main satisfaction was in enabling and supporting clients to make appropriate choices. This view is but one example of the sentiments I heard: "it's feeling like I have helped

someone at the end of the day and had quite a bit of success getting people into job outcomes and getting positive feedback from clients." This comment, too, summed up a view shared by all the participants: "It's just about making a big, big difference and I love it."

One satisfying aspect that *was* common to all participants was negotiating with managers, teachers, academics and other service professionals to agree the purpose and nature of service delivery. Indeed, all expressed a strong sense of satisfaction in promoting the profile and importance of career guidance to their respective institutions, even if, as one participant from a school confirmed, the prospect of negotiating with quite senior managers could be daunting. Interestingly, those in schools (n=5) held a common sense of pride in agreeing the services individually: that is, each practitioner was on her or his own in the school to lead the charge for guidance. This is in contrast to those from FE and HE (n=7), whose sense of satisfaction was also found in the feeling of collegiality and support from being part of a wider service. This commonly-held view in these settings was illustrated by one participant, who felt a strong sense of being part of a "professional community" where "peer discussion and support are quite open."

Only three participants expressed any sense of dissatisfaction with their role. One participant from HE felt a little constrained by the "conveyor belt of CV and application form checking", especially during the autumn term. Two participants from NCS settings highlighted what might be seen as *predictable* dissatisfactions, with the pressure of performativity regimes leading to a sense that clients were becoming the means by which the service earned its funding. This was in contrast to their strongly-held belief in client-centred work. Indeed, client feedback helped to keep them motivated.

Professionalism: Foundations

This next category concerned the participants' perceptions of what defined and constituted professionalism. What struck me here was how consistent and firm the responses were to the question of what underpins their work. All noted the role that qualifications played in their sense of being a professional. As might be expected, those with the

QCG or DipCG (n=12) were very clear about the importance of the qualification to their practice. Here are some examples of their comments:

"The QCG underpins everything I do" – from a HE setting

"Careers guidance theories almost natural within me now, especially reflective practice when interviewing clients" – from an FE setting

"A lot of it (the QCG) underpins my interviews…I always think about what I want to achieve in terms of interview styles, what level of learning I am looking to achieve with the client." – from a school setting

What might be expected is that those with NVQ or QCF level qualifications might not feel as qualified or credentialised. Indeed, one participant from an FE setting, who had gained the NVQ4 rather quickly when working for Connexions, felt that it was delivered in a "tick box way as if I just had to get it out of the way because the employer needed me to do it." As a result, she felt that it was a lesser qualification in comparison to colleagues with the QCG. However, those with the QCF at level 6 or NVQ 4 (n = 7) did express the value of these qualifications to their work with clients, and in ways that were similar to those with the QCG as noted below:

"It acts as a source of reference that I have standards to work to in everything I do, I try to match my work to the standards and it keeps me on my toes." – from an FE setting

What I found common to all accounts was the importance of qualifications to the growth of a professional core: one where client-centred, ethical, reflective practice was absolutely paramount. The participants articulated the importance of the qualifications to developing ethical practice, rather than any allegiances to particular theories of career choice. When asked about the latter, one participant indicated that these theories were important to developing a client-centred approach, because they "make you think about how complex things, choices

are…you can't put people in boxes, you have to listen to their stories and make sense…it is more ethical that way."

Professionalism: Making Meanings and Identity

Having explored the importance of qualifications to the participants' sense of professionalism, I then discussed their perceptions of the profession and their professional identity. All of them believed that career guidance is a profession; and without exception, all of the responses were positive and immediate. Similarly, they all felt that they had a professional identity, as illustrated by one participant: "Because you have to have professional qualifications to get to that level, higher level qualifications, and I guess you are perceived by others as a professional and part of a wider profession."

As well as ethical and client-centred work, one aspect of their professionalism and professional identity that was shared by all was the nature of their expertise. Again, one of the participant's views best sums up those held by all:

"I think everybody thinks they can give careers guidance, and everybody tries to, but careers guidance is completely impartial and independent and…can give the full picture of labour market information, and full consideration of the personal circumstances so that they can navigate their pathway, whereas unqualified people don't have the right information."

For the participants, this knowledge did three things. Firstly, it allowed them to establish a profile of expertise in their organisational setting. Secondly, this profile allowed them to feel similarly esteemed, particularly in educational settings, to teacher, lecturers and managers: put simply, the practitioners felt that they 'knew things' that other professionals did not. And thirdly, in the words of one participant, this expertise allowed practitioners to "add value to the success of the organisation, for the outcomes of young people, and I am recognised for my role as an expert as well as being for the learners."

Linked to this notion of ethical expert – and this feature of identity also surprised me – is the extent to which practitioners acted ethically in all areas of their

work, not just with clients. The values underpinning respectful, client-centred practice were also embodied in the ways in which the participants worked with colleagues, partners, managers and stakeholders. As one participant from a school setting put it: "so maybe it isn't just about the job, it's how other people see how I *do* the job." This individual was very clear that, when negotiating a service level agreement in a school, she did so with high personal authenticity and integrity. She was *professionally identified* by these beliefs and her ways of acting and being.

A shared sense of professional identity?

Seen through the lens of strong structuration (Stones 2005), these stories captured the ways in which knowledgeable, committed, and motivated individuals actively engage and shape their everyday contexts to develop a common professional identity. This identity is the 'different story', with the following common elements, whatever the context:

- A common motivation to work more authentically and ethically to support people with career choices in ways that benefit society;
- Shared job satisfactions in implementing these motivations and values;
- The belief in the importance of high-level qualifications, delivered ethically, to the profession and practitioners;
- The importance of deep and broad expertise in careers information and LMI;
- The certainty that career guidance is a profession; and that each has a professional identity
- Embodying ethical practice in all areas of work, not just with clients

All of the participants recognised how influenced their work was by government policy, especially those in schools. However, this seemed a realistic and not a pessimistic view, given the high level of motivation and satisfaction that featured in the participant's narratives. That one participant based in a school could say "I love my work, I love all of it, working with the young people, making a difference…I just love it" captures much of the identity and *spirit* of practitioners whatever their context.

Conclusions

My thesis makes an important contribution to advancing our knowledge of career guidance, the profession, its development and its practitioners.

My contention is that much of the discourse concerning the profession has tended to focus on rather deterministic and structural perspectives. These consider career guidance as being subjected to fluctuating policies and governmental expectations, with little control or political leverage. Further, the research has tended to focus on practitioners in school settings, without an overview of the profession as a whole. Practitioners may therefore appear subject to the sovereign forces of policy and managerialism (Mackey, 2007); with few options other than to develop their resilience or existentialist ontology.

By contrast, my thesis has used the concept of strong structuration (Stones 2005) to challenge more generalised assumptions about practitioners' identity and morale, and to explore the *precise* relationships between agents and their contexts. In so doing, I adopted a rigorous research method (GTM), to explore and develop from the ground up, and from an ontology in situ (Ibid.), the meanings that practitioners produce and express from their everyday contexts. Far from being a fragmented, Balkanised (Bimrose et al. 2013) profession, all the participants expressed a strong and common sense of a professional identity. I consistently encountered highly motivated and organisationally savvy practitioners rather than demoralised or de-professionalised individuals. Further, my research has considered practitioners from a variety of contexts, and still found a shared identity. I recognise that the study still has limitations, in that it didn't involve practitioners from private practice, outplacement or talent management; and the identity of latter offers further avenues for research.

The existence of a common professional identity surely tells a story of career guidance practitioners that challenges the prevailing discourse considered in the introduction. They are knowledgeable social actors, not cultural dopes (Giddens 1984), who are aware of their expertise, influence and professional identity.

Perhaps our challenge as researchers, educators and members of a professional community is to

tell a different story about the profession, and the professionalism and the professional identity of those who work within it.

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Fog in the Channel – Continent cut off: the implications of Brexit for career guidance in the UK[1]

Tristram Hooley

The decision taken by the British people to leave the European Union (EU) took many people by surprise. The macro economic, political and social implications are still unclear, but as the negotiations begin the post-Brexit world is beginning to take shape. In this article I will argue that Brexit has a number of implications for those involved in career education and guidance. It will explore how the development of the EU since Maastricht has resulted in substantial shifts in the opportunity structure. Out of these changes there have been both winners and losers. Within this context Brexit can be seen as a consequence of the failure of the neoliberal approach taken by the EU to guarantee career development for all. The paper goes on to explore what the implications of Brexit are for individuals' careers and for the field of career guidance.

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Introduction

As an A level student, I studied the entry of Britain to the Common Market in 1973. One of the stories that our teacher told us to encapsulate Britain's troubled relationship with Europe was of a newspaper headline supposedly from the 1950s which read 'fog in the channel – continent cut off'. Although by the time that I was studying my A levels, Britain had been 'in Europe' for almost 20 years I still didn't get the joke. The idea that Britain was a relatively small part of a much larger political entity, culture and labour market was difficult for me to comprehend. Historian Niall Ferguson (2016) says that this headline was actually a

product of wartime Nazi propaganda and was designed to show that the English were insufferably arrogant. But, apocryphal or not, following the 2016 referendum a large proportion of the British population seem to view cutting off the continent as their clearest route to a better future (or at least as the best way to punish the political class for failing them).

Through my involvement in career guidance I have had the opportunity to work within Europe, often on projects funded by the European Union (EU). I have been privileged to work with fantastic colleagues and makes friends across the continent. I have also been convinced through my work with the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network[2] that it is possible to have a common European conversation about career guidance.

When I was a careers practitioner I mainly worked with university researchers. Amongst this group European mobility was a lived reality. Many of my clients had moved to England to study a PhD and went on to pursue their careers in a range of countries. I learnt about the programme funding and EU instruments that existed to support this international mobility such as: the Euroguidance network[3] which provides career guidance to support European mobility; Europass[4] which has attempted to standardise the formats of C.V.s across Europe; and a host of funding opportunities for researchers which

2 Between 2007-2015 the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (http://www.elgpn.eu) worked with member-countries and the European Commission to develop European co-operation on lifelong guidance in both the education and the employment sectors.
3 For more information on Euroguidance visit http://euroguidance.eu/
4 For more information on Europass visit http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/

are designed to encourage mobility and knowledge exchange.

A willingness to consider living and working in other countries opens up huge opportunities for individuals and requires careers professionals to both understand the process of mobility and to help individuals to think through the consequences of becoming internationally mobile. However, while I have found European mobility to be liberating the Brexit vote revealed that inward mobility is perceived by some as a threat to their careers and livelihood.

The shifting role of the EU

My experiences with the EU, with European mobility and in close working relationships with other Europeans have made me take pride in my identity as a European. Yet, while I was studying my A levels it had not occurred to me that I could pursue my education or career within Europe. This was not simply a failure of my career imagination but was also because the UKs relationship with Europe was fundamentally different at that time. Between the year when I took my A levels (1992) and the Brexit vote (2016) the size, responsibilities of, and vision for, the EU developed considerably (Watts, Sultana & McCarthy, 2010).

The Maastricht Treaty (1992) established the monetary union that would ultimately lead to the foundation of the Euro and supporting institutions like the European Central Bank. Maastricht also brought education into the purview of the EU and established the concept of common European citizenship thereby enshrining European mobility and the free movement of labour. Vocational education, and with it some aspects of career guidance, had been in scope since the Treaty of Rome in 1961 (Watts, Sultana & McCarthy, 2010), but Maastrict broadened this across the rest of the education system. The development of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000 then placed lifelong learning at the centre of the EUs political and economic strategy (Dehmel, 2006).

The memorandum on Lifelong Learning (European Commission, 2000) argues that the EUs interest in lifelong learning is driven by 'two objectives of equal importance', firstly 'the promotion of active citizenship' and secondly 'the promotion of vocational skills in order to adapt to the demands of the new knowledge-

based society and to allow full participation in social and economic life.' Policy has often articulated both a broad humanistic understanding of the value of education as well as a narrower economistic vision. Gravani and Zarifis (2014) argue that in practice the economistic understanding of education has often predominated and has viewed education as a mechanism through which individuals can be transformed into whatever capital and the state need.

The European project is no longer simply a way of managing trade and international relations. It has become a new form of supra-state complete with a range of social and cultural programmes, labour laws and a labour market and economic strategy which emphasises skills acquisition, the economic importance of education, mobility and labour market flexibility. The referendum vote of 2016 suggests that many in the UK populace did not feel that they had assented to these changes and that they longed for the fog to once more come down in the channel. Indeed, the British Social Attitudes survey shows a steady rise in Euroscepticism as these changes have taken place over the last twenty years (Swales, 2016).

Streeck (2014:103) argues that as the EU grew it increasingly functioned as a 'liberalisation machine' which primarily served the interests of the capitalist market often at the expense of local democracies. From this perspective the EU's increasing focus on education, skills acquisition and geographical and labour market mobility serves to place responsibility onto the individual. Streeck views this as part of a broader adoption by the EU of neoliberal ideology as the fundamental basis of policy. Harvey (2005:2) defines neoliberalism as 'a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade.' He goes onto argue that neoliberalism has been the dominant global ideology since the late 1970s and notes that despite its often destructive consequences it has 'become incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world' (p.3).

Both the EU and the UK have been strongly influenced by neoliberal political ideas with UK governments

often driving EU policy in this direction. This means that rather than focusing on the creation, reform or development of structures like public services or on the regulation of oppressive institutions or employment relations the answer to social problems has been held to lie in developing the skills and capabilities of individuals. Such individuals are encouraged to forge protean careers (Hall, 1996) building their human capital to transact to their best advantage in the boundaryless global marketplace. The consequence of such neoliberal individualism is that while some people will make advantageous educational choices and strategic geographical and labour market moves, others will not. Dreger et al. (2015) provide evidence of this noting that income inequality across the EU has increased markedly since the mid-1980s exacerbated by the hollowing out of the labour market which has meant that skilled and educated workers have been able to outperform their unskilled colleagues. A neoliberal Europe is therefore one in which there will be winners and losers and without policies to guarantee social mobility the division between the winners and losers will open up over the generations.

One analysis of why substantial numbers of people decided to vote for Brexit is that they felt themselves to be the losers in this kind of 'knowledge society'. Warhurst (2016) highlights the poor job quality that characterises much of the lower end of the British labour market. Since the crash British workers have been more likely to find themselves in low-skill, low-pay jobs with little or no opportunity for advancement. In such a situation it is unsurprising if people seek to change one of the key institutions that they perceive to be accelerating their disenfranchisement (Fevre, 2016). It was exactly this group of poorer, less educated, less mobile and less flexible workers who voted for Brexit (Swales, 2016). Such an analysis puts the concept of 'career' at the heart of an understanding of the Brexit vote. If career describes the individual's passage through life, learning and work and is concerned with the relationship between individuals and social institutions the decision to pull down such institutions is a likely consequence of people seeing no viable career pathway and perceiving that such institutions typically work against them. In such an analysis Brexit becomes a consequence of society's failure to guarantee meaningful careers for all.

The EU cannot reasonably shoulder the full blame for neoliberalism. The Brexit vote took place in a period after a major economic crash and during a range of global economic disruptions and wars that resulted in rising global mobility and stagnant incomes (Watkins, 2016). The fact that there was no viable progressive alternative opened up the space for populist movements such as UKIP in the UK, Trumpism in the US and the Front National in France to make political advances based on a critique of key elements of the neoliberal consensus. Within Europe the EU has become strongly identified with this consensus. It is important to note that the UK under Conservative, Labour and Coalition governments has also pursued the kinds of policies that are associated with neoliberalism. In fact, the UK has consistently exerted pressure to drive the EU in a more neoliberal direction. Nonetheless the existence of the EU has long served as a convenient scapegoat for UK governments seeking to explain the negative consequences of neoliberalism.

It is important to recognise that the scapegoating of the EU is only part of the story. The EU has always had a range of political traditions within it. It is not a straightforward standard bearer for neoliberalism. It has also sought to increase the spaces for democratic citizenship and for a cultural European identity (Seddon & Mellors, 2006). At times, most notably through the idea of 'a social Europe' (Rinaldi, 2016), the EU, or actors within it, notably social democratic political parties and the trade union movement (Watkins, 2016) have sought to use the EU as a bulwark against the excesses of unregulated neoliberal capitalism.

The impact of Brexit on individuals' careers

It is difficult to be clear on what the full implications of Brexit will be. In the immediate aftermath of Brexit I wrote a gloomy article about the prospects for graduates (Hooley, 2016). So far I have been proved wrong (although Brexit is yet to actually happen). While there has been a substantial drop in the value of the pound (BBC, 2016), the impact on jobs has so far been minimal (ONS, 2016).

The lack of catastrophic economic consequences in the immediate aftermath of Brexit vote is at least in part because Theresa May's government has approached negotiations with considerable caution. So far nothing has changed. However, there are now clear signals that Brexit will gather pace throughout 2017. Andrew Haldane, the Bank of England's chief economist acknowledges that economists have recently had a poor track record of predicting the future, but, when pushed, still concludes that the economic outlook for a post-Brexit Britain is bleak (Inman, 2016). It is also important to recognise that the way in which these macro-level changes in the economy filter down into individuals' careers will be complex and differentiated by socio-economic status, sector, region and nationality.

Critical to the negotiation of a Brexit will be the deal that is struck on the preservation of the 'four freedoms of movement': capital, goods, services and people. The free movement of people (mobility) is the most politically sensitive of these. Union leader Len McCluskey argues that 'workers have always done best when the labour supply is controlled' (Topping, 2016). But this is contestable with much of the evidence indicating that the net impact of immigration is positive (Wadsworth et al., 2016). Preston (2016) argues there will be economic consequences if Brexit does have a negative impact on migration as migrants are typically younger people with better skills and qualifications and a greater likelihood of working.

Individuals must negotiate these shifts as they unfold. Even if we make the improbable assumption that there will be no negative consequences for the overall economy when exiting the EU there will still be considerable labour market reorganisation. For example, the loss of EU labour law may result in many British workers' employment situations becoming more precarious. The loss of EU funding within higher education and the wider public sector is also likely to have a considerable impact on jobs. For those working directly in career guidance there are also likely to be consequences as many local careers initiatives are dependent on the European Social Fund[5] (Hooley, 2015).

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5   The European Social Fund (http://ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp) is a EU funding stream designed to support employment, mobility, education, opportunity and better public services.

Improving things for the 'just about managing'

As well as its economic impacts the Brexit vote has also had major political consequences. New Prime Minister Theresa May has sought to reconnect with those who voted for Brexit and to convince them that Britain is 'a country that works for everyone' (May, 2016).

May's rhetoric recognises that opportunity is not equally available to all and has repeatedly promised the group which she describes as 'just about managing families' that she will do something to improve their circumstances. This term has echoes of Standing's (2016) 'precariat', a group which he defined as being those who do not have 'the anchor of stability' and who he warned are 'prone to listening to ugly voices, and to use their votes and money to give those voices a political platform'. For those people who are just managing, living precarious lives and who see few career opportunities for themselves or their children, Brexit seems to offer some hope. May's government has heard this message and is, in rhetoric at least, seeking to address the grievances of this group. Whether May's government will be able to deliver on these promises is unclear and there are plenty of critics like The Observer's Sonia Sodha (2016) who are arguing that the government is failing those who are 'just about managing'.

The implications for career guidance

Brexit has three main implications for career guidance policy and practice: (1) the loss of the European policy context; (2) the change in the domestic political context; and (3) the change in the opportunity structure.

Many European states have long traditions of career guidance (Sultana, 2004). From long before Maastricht the EU has had an interest in career guidance and has sought to foster its development and support policy sharing (Watts et al., 2010). The focus on career guidance accelerated after Maastricht (1992), Lisbon (2000) and the adoption by the Council of Education Ministers of a Resolution on Lifelong Guidance

(2004). Throughout this period guidance became increasingly seen as an instrument of the policy of the EU particularly with respect to the development of lifelong learning, active labour market policy and European mobility in learning and work (Sultana, 2004; Watts et al., 2010).

The European Union has sought to support and foster the development of career guidance in three main ways.

- Providing direction and frameworks for the integration of career guidance into the policies of nation states.

- Supporting collaboration between nation states and practitioners across the EU to enable the lending and borrowing of policy and practice.

- Providing funding for career guidance initiatives including research, development and delivery initiatives.

UK engagement with EU initiatives around career guidance has been sporadic, but the loss of this wider context is still a problem. The existence of frameworks and directives offered a point of reference for policy development and critique. A European community of practice also supported the development of the UK career guidance system through knowledge exchange at a range of levels and its loss risks creating a more inward looking less innovative sector. Finally, the loss of direct funding both through the European Social Fund (which has been used to support career guidance provision in local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships) and through other funding channels such as Erasmus+[6] (which has funded career guidance projects across the life course) has the potential to have a major impact on a resource poor sector like career guidance.

With respect to the domestic political scene the position of career guidance has not changed much. Several promised developments, such as the publication of a new 'careers strategy' were put on hold following the change of government. However, at present there is little evidence that there will be a major shift of policy on career guidance between

the pre- and post-Brexit governments. As, already discussed there are clearly major policy themes around which the government is acting ('a country that works for everyone' and 'just about managing families') that offer potentially fertile ground for career guidance. Although viewing career guidance primarily as a tool to address social exclusion has an inglorious history and clearly needs to be handled carefully (Watts, 2015a). More promisingly, Robert Halfon, the new minister for careers began 2017 by stating that he would be 'pushing ahead with plans to ensure that everyone, no matter what age or what background, can rely on excellent and consistent careers advice.' As 2017 develops we will be likely to find out more about what these plans involve and how far they do increase access to career guidance.

Beyond these policy shifts Brexit will change the nature of the conversations that careers professionals are having with their clients. The lack of clarity about what is going to happen highlights the importance of practitioners attending closely to both the policy environment and to labour market information. Depending on how Brexit plays out there could be both large and small changes that could make profound differences to the opportunity structures which people are attempting to navigate.

While it is not possible to predict the future, inequality of opportunity is likely to continue to be an issue. Brexit was one consequence of a country in which educational and career opportunities are hoarded by the wealthy and the privileged (Kirby, 2016). In such a situation career guidance is presented with a dilemma as to whether it should try and encourage people to accept inequality, to navigate inequality or to challenge inequality (Watts, 2015b). The Brexit vote suggests that there may be serious social, political and economic consequences if this issue is bypassed.

Conclusions

Over the last 40 years the EU has exerted a growing influence on both the careers of individuals and the organisation of career guidance in the UK. For some people this has been a liberating experience which has opened up a continent of opportunities. However, the prevailing neoliberal orientations of both UK

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6   Erasmus+ (https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/) is a European programme which is designed to support mobility, collaboration and knowledge exchange within the education system.

government and the EU have resulted in education and employment policies which have not worked for everyone.

The Brexit vote highlighted the ways in which demographics, ideologies and politics intertwine. People were not voting on an abstract constitutional question but rather to try to create the circumstances within which they could best develop their careers and ensure their livelihood. As both Davies (2016) and Fevre (2016) have noted in desperate times people are likely to turn to desperate measures and react against the present even where it might bring about an uncertain future.

Following the Brexit vote the issue of social and economic inequality has risen to the top of the political agenda. How far Theresa May's government will make any inroads into this inequality and how willing they will be to tackle privilege remains to be seen. There is also an important question as to how far such rhetoric about addressing historic wrongs plays into populist nationalism in the way that Trumps administration in the USA has enthusiastically embraced. However, if we take May's concern about 'just about managing families' at face value there is good reason to argue that career guidance should be part of any strategy to address inequality and some reason to be optimistic that the current government might agree.

If career guidance is to play a more central role in moving people out of the 'just managing' category there is a need to continue to develop the theory and practice on which the field is based. Unfortunately, the withdrawal from the EU diminishes one source of new ideas and innovations. Finding ways to continue a European dialogue within the field through the fog of Brexit should be a key task.

Brexit has been enormously polarising. It is easy to fall into the habit of viewing it as either salvation or disaster. It will likely be neither, but it will present new challenges for individuals and British society. Career guidance offers a powerful set of practices which can help to address exactly these kinds of challenges but it will require ongoing support from policy and a willingness by practitioners to reimagine their practice for a new environment.

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Resources and Readiness: the graduate capital perspective as a new approach to graduate employability

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This article presents a new perspective on graduate employability based on a graduate capital model which emphasises the significant role that various forms of capital can play in the development of their employability. We define these forms of capital here as key resources that potentially empower graduates and equip them for managing the transition from HE to the labour market. The article explores the various forms of capital which make up the model and illustrates why and how these are applicable for graduates. We finally consider the practical potential of this approach and how practitioners might be able to work with it in order to help students and graduates during and beyond higher education.

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Introduction

The role that universities can play in enhancing graduates' post-university employment outcomes continues to be of great interest to multiple stakeholders – policy-makers, employers, careers practitioners, programme designers, senior managers and, not least, students and graduates themselves. The need to work creatively towards effective employability approaches, which are also conceptually-informed, has perhaps never been greater. In the English HE context, recent market-driven reform proposals have made stronger links between graduate outcomes and the quality of their institutional provision (DBIS, 2016), bringing new challenges for the practitioner community.

This article presents an alternative approach to understanding graduate employability, one which departs from the dominant skills and attributes approach so common in much thinking and provision around this issue. This approach is based on a graduate capital model which provides a broader, more holistic understanding of graduate employability. This approach also enables us to work through the challenges of facilitating graduates' transitions and early career management. Many of the dominant HE-level approaches have tended to depict employability as the acquisition and transfer of additional 'key skills' and 'attributes' which can be formally acquired in HE. These have helped promote ways of thinking about graduate skill development, but have also been criticised for being somewhat descriptive and for not capturing the relationship between skills and future employability (Mason et al. 2009; Holmes, 2013; Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011). The graduate capital model provides a firmer context to graduates' educational and wider life experiences, as well as the changing graduate labour market they are entering.

Capitals are conceived here as key resources that confer benefits and advantages onto individuals, enabling them to be more equipped and ready to negotiate the challenges of entering the labour market. The concept of capital, in particular cultural capital, is mainly associated with the work of Bourdieu (1986) who conceived capitals as socially and culturally-derived assets which help reproduce educational inequalities. Whilst the model takes some inspiration from Bourdieu's theorising, it is not confined this approach and draws also on other scholarship, including approaches to capital which are not referred to in his work.

The resources constituting each form of capital encompass a range of educational, social, cultural and psycho-social dimensions and are acquired through graduates' formal and informal experiences. They also interact and potentially feed into each other. The main forms of capital which are integral to the model are: human, social, cultural, identity and psychological. Whilst each of these components relate to different properties, they overlap to some degree and their boundaries are fairly fluid. The capital approach essentially posits that the formation and deployment of forms of capital can play a considerable role in shaping graduates' transitional experience and early employment outcomes.

Whilst there are inevitable differences in the extent to which graduates acquire different forms of capital, we believe there is scope for them to be further enriched and utilised in ways that serve graduates during and beyond HE. The model depicts two important dimensions for each form of capital: firstly, the key resources constitutive of each form; and, secondly, how they may be utilised by graduates when entering the job market. The development of forms of capital through and around HE is important, as is knowledge of how these have purchase and can enhance graduates' entry to the labour market.

The capital model presents a new vocabulary around graduate employability which can be eventually integrated into careers education, information and guidance. We also believe there is a wider role amongst graduate employers in understanding and recognising these forms and to be more attuned to how these can be enhanced by graduates in their early career stages. Thus, whilst the enrichment of capital presents some challenges for graduates, there is a shared responsibility amongst all stakeholders to find ways of promoting these in practice. For instance, graduate recruiters are also in a strong position to harness forms of capital against organisational demands, as well as looking more holistically at graduates' profiles beyond basic check-lists of core 'attributes' and purported skill-sets. Unlike many dominant approaches to employability, this approach also emphasises the processual nature of graduates' interactions and engagement with the labour market, including the role of significant others (see also Holmes, 2013)

This article provides an overview of the different forms of capital within the model and illustrates their core components and impacts. The final part of the article points towards the practical applications of the model and how practitioners can work with its various components.

Human capital: technical knowledge, hard skills and career-building

Human capital is the hardest form of capitals that graduates are likely to have acquired. It is built around graduates' level of knowledge and skills, acquired through their formal educational experiences and beyond and is formalised through educational qualifications. Human capital is the closest to skills approach, both in relation to specific occupational domains and more generally. Human capital is strongly associated with the work of economist Gary Becker (1993) who conceived education as a form of investment from which individuals accrue clear returns in the labour market. According to Becker's theory of human capital, this investment entails the enrichment of economically-valuable and productive forms of knowledge and skills which individuals effectively own and draw upon for personal gain. For some graduates, subject-specific knowledge is a strong component of their employability if there are close synergies between curricula content and future occupational task domains. If target employment necessitates the matching of subject knowledge to job demands, human capital will be very foundational to graduates' outcomes.

Human capital can be broken down to two main dimensions. The first is 'hard' skills which are acquired through formal educational learning and the formation of technical, subject-specific and occupational knowledge. For some graduates, subject-specific knowledge is a strong component of their employability if there are close synergies between curricula content and future occupational task domains. If target employment requires the matching of subject knowledge to job demands, human capital will be foundational to graduates' outcomes. However, even in specialist fields this is often insufficient and

is clearly less applicable for graduates from more generalist disciplines, for who a degree subject is a threshold qualification.

The second refers to softer forms of human capital which can be couched in terms of graduates' skills and abilities in navigating the labour market. This relates to the 'career-building' skills outlined by Bridgstock (2009) which have a significant bearing on the ways graduates negotiate access to work. These are based on types of knowledge (and related awareness) of not just employment-specific requirements but also wider labour market knowledge. Relevant career-related skills include familiarity with one's target labour market (including trends, data, skills demand) and knowing how to apply for and access work (including CV development and entry requirement), as well opportunity awareness and exploitation.

Overall, the significance of human capital lies in the application of both formally-acquired ('hard') skills and technical knowledge, as well as more fluid career-relevant skills. The need to firmly and contextually-align these to specific job markets is therefore important.

Social capital: networks, bonding and social relationships

Social capital is defined as the sum of relationships and networks that help mobilise graduates' existing human capital and bring them closer to the labour market and its opportunity structures. It is through the enhancement of social capital that graduates can gain better access to opportunities and understandings of potential job market openings. Social capital is essentially the sum of graduates' social relations which enhances their knowledge of, and access to, target employment. The social relations graduates are able to form before, during and beyond university help generate greater information and knowledge about employment and related opportunities. Prominent scholars associated to this concept (see Coleman, 1988; Granovetter, 1985) have highlighted the significance of bonding and bridging activities between education and work settings. This essentially refers to interactions and relationship formations between individuals and an external group that bring an

individual closer to members in that group, including its main gate-keepers.

The concept of 'weak ties' (Granovetter, 1985) is also relevant and constitutes the relatively thin spread of social contacts and connections individuals acquire to help broker trust and gain information and insider knowledge. Whilst in some senses 'strong ties' (e.g. family members) can facilitate immediate access to employment openings, weak ties based on wider associations, networks and newly formed relationships can be also be very gainful. For many graduates this may be fairly emergent, based newly formed relationship with target employers. This can nonetheless be a significant first step towards establishing stronger ties and insider knowledge about job opportunities, as well as knowledge formation about target employment and how best to tailor their profiles.

The key to social capital development is therefore developing appropriate social relations and ties with significant others. This not only helps graduates become known by employers but also strengthens their knowledge and confidence, in turn facilitating access to employment.

Cultural capital: cultural knowledge and confidence

Whilst a broad concept, we refer to cultural capital as the formation of culturally-valued knowledge, dispositions and behaviours that are aligned to the workplaces that graduates seek to enter. Its strength lies in the ways in which graduates are able to acquire, and also transfer, appropriate cultural, interpersonal and symbolical qualities that signal the alignment of the graduate to a target organisation. One of the issues facing graduates is the declining cultural currency of degree qualifications in mass higher education. Graduates now have to do more to signify the value of their credentials and not just their formal ones. At one level, there is further symbolic value and 'distinction' to be derived from wider sets of achievements and experiences which help differentiate them from others. This is particularly so when these signal wider skills and dispositions which may be valued in specific organisational contexts. It is therefore important

for graduates to cultivate cultural knowledge and awareness, including the rules of engagement and modes of behaviour within target organisations.

The other key component to cultural capital formation is cultivation of the appropriate embodied capital in the form of behaviours, dispositions and interpersonal qualities that signal their desirability and likely 'social fit' within organisations. Embodied capital conveys behavioural qualities that can present graduates in an advantageous light, particularly in organizational contexts where these come to the fore (i.e. dealing with customers, negotiating, presenting ideas). The closer this is referenced against the context in which it will be deployed and practiced, the greater is likely to be its value. This clearly represents challenges for some graduates, particularly those with less formally-derived cultural capital, for example those first-generation or lower SeS students (see Burke, 2015 and Bathmaker et al. 2013). Yet finding ways of enriching this is part of the challenge for practitioners (see later discussion).

Identity capital: self-concept and personal narratives

Identity is a significant, albeit fairly personal, form of capital. Identity capital refers principally to psycho-social aspects of a graduates' biography and lived experiences and the extent to which an individual invests in, and defined themselves, in relation to their future employment. The self-perceptions and self-concepts graduates form around future work can provide a significant frame through which they may be able to channel their experiences and profiles and align theses to the types of employment they are interested in. The relative strength of a graduate's emerging career identity can have a significant impact on how they approach future careers and align their aspirations towards targeted job areas. This partly feeds into graduates' goal-setting capacities and strategies for managing their early experience in the labour market. The establishment and maintenance of emerging career identities is important as this may enable graduates to reflect upon and think through their profile and how this aligns to anticipated future careers. Previous research on student orientations (Tomlinson, 2007) indicates that those whose

projected future selves are very much bound up in careers had developed a stronger level of identity capital.

The importance of identity has been demonstrated in a range of research (Hinchliffe and Jolly, 2011; Holmes, 2013; 2015; Jackson, 2016). A further significant component to identity capital is also the extent to which graduates can package and present a personal narrative that captures what they are about as individuals. This may be via traditional means such as CV building or via online profile building such as LinkedIn or through portfolio creation. Graduates' marketability is increasingly based on the extent to which they can present a compelling employability narrative that conveys their identities. Holmes (2013) has referred to this has the active 'warranting' of an emerging identity, that has to be understood and approved by employers. Jackson (2016) has highlighted the significance of forming a 'pre-professional identity' which is partly derived from students' formal involvement in work-related learning that promotes emergent professional identities and related dispositions. This is also developed in the wider learning communities of higher education, including extra curricula activities and other forms of employer engagement.

In summary, identity capital is significant resource as it can strongly influence how graduates think about themselves in relation to future employment, as well as understand and articulate an employability narrative that captures what they are about and wish to become.

Psychological capital: resilience and adaptability

The enhancement of a graduate's psychological capital is also an important element in their relationships with the job market. Psychological capital is broadly defined as the capacity for individuals to adapt to challenging personal and job market circumstances and establish a relatively high locus of self-control and persistence. This involves the maintenance of a relatively positive, proactive and resourceful mind-set in challenging environments and the ability to sustain career goals. Stronger levels of psychological capital can equip

graduates better for the transition to employment by enhancing their self-perceived employability, promoting more proactive and engaged job search pursuits and beneficial coping strategies.

Two key areas are significant to this capital form. The first is self-efficacy which is based on the confidence individuals have to approach and negotiate a task successfully and the positive level of self-attribution over the capacity to succeed. This is clearly important in terms of graduates' self-perceived ability to accomplish career goals but also the capacity to withstand adverse conditions.

The second concerns graduates' level of career resilience which may also depend on the extent to which they can endure and withstand on-going

pressures and disruptions in the initial stages of their careers in a potentially uncertain and volatile climate. Stronger resilience enables graduates to adapt to challenging labour market situations, including periods of unemployment and under-employment. A related theme is adaptability in terms of developing strategies that expand the scope of employment opportunity and respond to a changing job context (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). As these authors and others have shown, higher overall levels of career adaptability can enable individuals to more readily re-orientate goals and make more proactive decisions when encountering de-stabilising job market experiences.

Psychological capital is potentially significant for helping graduates more proactively adapt to the challenges of a changing and fluid professional labour market.

Figure 1. Graduate capital model

Practical implications of the graduate capital approach

Working with any employability model presents both opportunities and challenges in finding practical ways forward. Moreover, given the multiple pressures facing current students, there is clearly a need to think proactively around the affordances of the higher education experience and what universities can do for students who may feel less equipped in making the post-university transition. There are a number of overlapping issues in the current model and these principally concern:

- The importance of students and graduates being able to access and articulate formal skills and experiences and present these as meaningfully applicable to target employment;

- The importance of students fully capitalising upon the multi-faceted offerings of the university experience. This includes building experiences and understanding and articulating their significance. The role of work experience is significant and clearly cuts across all the main forms of capital;

- The importance of students thinking proactively about themselves as a future employee and engaging in early career formation, either formally or more ideationally;

- The need for students to be anticipative of likely transitional and early career challenges and hurdles and to start working through strategies to negotiate these;

- The need for students to begin the process of employability development and emerging career formation fairly early into their higher education.

The distinction between the 'possession' of any formal technical or generic knowledge and skills and their active exemplification and application has been highlighted by various scholars in the field (Holmes, 2013; Tymon, 2013). Any skill or competence that graduates have acquired needs to be demonstrated, or at least convincingly articulated and given a meaningful context, so that employers are confident that these

are aligned to their organisation. This also extends to the types of claims graduates may make about what type of person they currently are and wish to become.

Course leaders need to work in partnership with careers practitioners to ensure that formal curricula are able to emphasise links with related industries. Careers services may be well placed to provide current and relevant links with employers. Furthermore, course teams and careers practitioners need to work together to enable students to be fully aware of and showcase their skills. This might entail encouraging students to be familiar with labour market trends, skills demands and specific professional requirements via formally assessed curriculum interventions.

In thinking about social capital and network formation, there are a number of ways forward, particularly in relation to encouraging graduates' social relationship development through early forms of employer engagement and interaction. These enable better bridging between higher education and graduates' employment.

Students can be encouraged from early stages to make themselves known, or at least visible, to a range of employers. One is through direct contact with employers in ways that facilitate some level of reciprocal knowledge between an employer and graduate. Direct employer engagement through career fairs, employer visits on campus and online profile building (e.g. LinkedIn) enable students to develop early bridging and generate better understanding of what a particular employer represents and can potentially offer. An even more direct way is through actual work experience which not only provides direct insider knowledge of the workings of a job and industry, but also a stronger sense as to how to break into it and better tailor their profile. Careers services can play an important role via the creation of short internships, volunteering roles and consultancy projects; particularly in providing a stepping stone for those students who lack social capital.

In terms of the enhancing students' existing cultural capital there is also scope here for developing ways of enhancing students' cultural confidence. One of the key issues highlighted in related

research is the importance of developing students' cultural understanding and knowledge of targeted organisations, including how it aligned with their own profiles. The latter involves awareness of cultural practices and orientations as well as values and behavioural mores. This in turn can expand students' horizons and potentially unfreeze (mis) perceptions about cultural fit. Some of the work on widening participation points towards ways forward in strengthening students' cultural confidence towards environments in which they are less familiar. Yet it may be the case that employer engagement in some institutions can go some way towards graduates becoming more aware of, and presenting more effectively, wider life and employment experiences in advantageous ways. Similarly, coaching and mentoring offers a potentially strong way forward in helping build graduate capital with employers being trained to enable students to reflect upon, identify and prioritise gaps in their capitals.

There is also scope for practitioners to help students build their existing identity and psychological capital. One of the key challenges is helping graduates to lay claim to the kinds of emergent identities they are forming around future employment and also to help gain social recognition of this. This clearly extends to helping students to present evidence of experiences or performance that capture important aspect of themselves as individuals. In this regard, the CV becomes a potentially potent medium through which individuals can capture an emerging employability narrative through their accounts of their employment, and related autobiographical, experiences. The accumulation of work-related achievements and experiences in turn become markers of potential organisational value. Practitioners can help students harness their achievements and experiences, including extra curricula activities, so that this best captures emerging employability narrative and provide a competitive advantage.

Whilst it is not always easy to directly enhance a student's career adaptability and resilience, practitioners are nonetheless in a good position to highlight their significance in managing the post-university transition. Their role can be to help manage expectations and raise awareness of the importance of resilience in the face of potential job market adversity.

Related to this is encouraging students to develop contingency plans and measures if their initial job outcomes are not favourable.

Taken together, we see this approach as an effective way forward - one which can help both practitioners and graduates develop key resources that enable them to be more ready to meet the challenges of a current graduate labour market. Whilst the model is based on an extensive literature and current thinking in the field, there is further work to be done to apply it and explore its efficacy. In support of this, a bank of learning outcomes have been developed by colleagues within the Careers and Employability Service at the University of Southampton. These are being used to support the development of three careers education modules, all of which will form detailed case studies next year. Colleagues have also developed a self-diagnostic test, 'The Career Readiness Test', which will enable students to self-assess their progress against the model and identify action going forward. The views of employers are being sought via a Learning Gain project (which the authors at this institution are co-investigators on with a range of other HEIs). In the early stages of this research, the employers who have been interviewed have already indicated the importance of these forms of capital and how they are reflected in the assessment process.

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Articles

Group guidance – is it time to flock together?

Susan Meldrum

This article calls for delivery models which encourage the collective career learning of groups to be brought to the centre stage of career guidance practice. It challenges the long term focus of the sector on the one-to-one guidance interview and considers why group work is seen as a support activity for the majority of practitioners. The group integrative narrative approach (GINA) which was developed by the author will be introduced as a model of small group work and its potential to act as a vehicle to steer group career learning will be discussed.

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Introduction

There is an emerging interest in group guidance in various forms being used as a contender to challenge traditional one-to-one approaches to career guidance. The one-to-one guidance interview has been the delivery model of choice in the career guidance profession for over forty years in the UK and elsewhere but despite a body of evidence to support its efficacy (Whiston, Sexton and Lasoff 1998; Maguire and Killeen 2003; Brimrose, Barnes and Hughes 2008; Hughes and Gration 2009; Hooley 2014), it is considered a costly and labour intensive delivery method.

Thomsen (2012) sees the one–to-one interview as placing too much importance on the individual and makes a call for approaches which encourage collaborative problem solving being brought into sharper focus. Westergaard (2013) sees the emphasis on one-to-one approaches as a 'lost opportunity to seek and challenge new and innovative ways of

working' (2013: 175). Di Fabio and Maree (2012) want to start a 'global recognition' that group based career guidance models can develop career learning skills.

Career learning involves the lifelong process of individuals, groups or communities building, knowledge, skills, and attitudes through a range of activities, experiences and interactions to enable them to take charge of their career development.

This article will consider the progress of the group work movement in the career guidance field, its potential to develop career learning and the attempts to bring it closer to the centre stage of practice. It will then introduce the group integrative narrative approach (GINA), a model of group guidance developed by the researcher and will draw on evidence from group counselling approaches in the wider field of counselling and the initial results of a pilot study using the model in two secondary schools in Edinburgh to support its efficacy.

Whilst it is anticipated that the one-to-one approach will be dominant for many years, it is suggested that group approaches which have the potential to draw on the skills of practitioners and develop the collective career learning skills of groups should play an increasingly important role.

Group work effectiveness

Group work has been used extensively as a guidance activity in the UK and elsewhere for over forty years. However, in contrast to the one-to-one approach there has been a lack of clear guidelines or approaches to support the delivery of group work. Offer (2001)

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thought that group work in schools for instance could be 'anything on a continuum from public speaking to interventions very close to individual interviewing' (2001:60).

Career guidance practitioners are highly competent in the use of counselling and coaching skills such as active listening, questioning and paraphrasing and are quickly able to build up interpersonal relationships with clients. These skills do not always transfer easily to group work and working with young people in schools in a classroom based environment for instance requires practitioners to be adaptable, resilient and confident enough to deal with the challenges of behaviour, group dynamics and the differing needs of learners.

A resistance and lack of confidence amongst practitioners to fully utilise group work has been the case for many years and Higgins and Westergaard (1998) believed that if group work is to become more than a support activity it needs to be 'in style, content and aims more similar to the guidance interview than is currently the case' (1998:4).

In Italy narrative approaches more associated with one-to-one interviewing such as Savickas (2012) have been used with groups. In one such study with a group of adults (Di Fabio and Maree 2012) it was highlighted that the group approach was effective at being able to draw on other group members for peer support and feedback. This led to the study group displaying a significant decrease in career decision making difficulties compared to the control group.

In Denmark there is an emerging interest in group and collective approaches challenging the traditional individualistic approaches to practice. Thomsen (2012) in Career Guidance in Communities carried out empirical studies to examine the effectiveness of group approaches in two 'communities' in Denmark – with young people in a high school and with adults in a factory. It was found that people saw each other as resources and coped with their issues and challenges collectively. The goal of career guidance is seen here to be moving towards developing the career learning of communities.

In the UK personal learning and development (PLD) group work has been developed for use in in the field

of career guidance in recent years and Westergaard (2009) introduced the FAAST model. The FAAST model (focus, aims, activities, structure, and techniques) is considered 'guidance' group work as there is an emphasis on the building up of interpersonal relationships within the group by using counselling and coaching techniques and the structure is based on one-to-one approaches. It bears some resemblance to models from the field of teaching and training by encouraging the use of a pre-prepared lesson design and activities.

A small scale study with a focus group of practitioners using the FAAST model (Westergaard 2013) indicated that the model increased confidence levels of practitioners. In addition practitioners felt that the model was able to make participants feel that 'they were not alone' and highlighted the sharing of ideas with each other as another benefit of the approach. However the practitioners felt that for the groups to work well they needed to have a common task or concern, otherwise some of the pupils could feel stigmatised. Practitioners felt that the attention and time were not shared equally between participants and some would gain more from the sessions than others. Further research with groups of practitioners would strengthen the potential of this model.

The FAAST model of PLD group work and the approaches from Italy and Denmark appear to be promising moves towards bringing group work closer to the centre of practice. However, certainly in the case of the FAAST model, it is questionable whether a pre-planned lesson design would offer many opportunities within the group work to build up meaningful interpersonal relationships and the approach seems aimed at class sized groups of ten or more. An adapted model with a more fluid agenda for use with smaller groups would seem to be of benefit.

Small group work

Small group work, which according to Law (1996) 'straddles the boundary between group work and one-to-one interviewing' (1996: 212), could be a bridge between the two approaches. It offers the benefits of group work such as peer support and group learning coupled with the potential to build up high quality interpersonal and social interactions usually only

possible with the one-to-one approach. However, the potential of small group career guidance to innovate practice has so far been largely overlooked.

There is very little evidence which looks at the effectiveness of small group guidance in the field of career guidance. That which does, a meta-analysis comparing group counselling with structured class group work (Whiston, Brecheisen, Stephens 2001), suggests that structured groups produce better outcomes than non-structured career counselling groups. However the unstructured group counselling in the studies appeared not to follow any model or structure.

Turning to the wider field of counselling provides more promising results and there is a substantial body of evidence to suggest that group guidance and counselling can be as effective as, or more effective than, one-to-one approaches (McRoberts, Burlingame and Hoag 1998; Smith, Glass and Miller 1980; Toseland and Sporin 1986).

Models adopted tend to be modified one-to-one models from the field of counselling rather than group work planning models from teaching and learning. Carl Rogers (1961) adapted his person centred approach, initially as a saving of time, to group work and this was instrumental in the development of the group work movement in the 1960s.

A number of studies have been carried out over the years looking at the effect of group dynamics on individuals within a group. Bales (1950) found that group members displayed helping behaviours and sharing of ideas which was above average compared to one-to-one interactions in terms of quality of decisions and the effectiveness to take action. However it was cautioned that 40-50% of comments were consistently made by the most talkative individual within the group and 25-30 % by the second most talkative.

Taking these limitations into consideration there is evidence from the wider field of counselling that small group guidance has the potential to be an as effective or more effective mode of delivery as the one-to-one approach.

The model

The GINA model was developed by the researcher by a combination of research in the field, observations over many years of working as a guidance practitioner and more recent experience teaching counselling and coaching skills to students.

The model uses a theoretical integration of counselling and coaching models (Rogers, 1961; Kidd 2006; Whitmore, 2002; Savickas, 2012) with learning theory (Kolb, 1984) and PLD group work (Westergaard 2009). It draws from group counselling models taken from the wider field of counselling which use modified one- to-one approaches rather than models from the field of teaching or training. The model is outlined in figure 1 below.

The GINA model is underpinned by a constructivist approach, based on narrative life design counselling using the Career story interview (Savackis 2012). Traditionally the field of career guidance has used a positivist approach with the career practitioner as the expert and the client as the passive receiver of advice. A constructivist approach, on the other hand, is the 'the merging of the social and the psychological worlds through experience and co-operation' Young and Collin (2003). In other words, seemingly random social interactions and experiences (or threads) from an individual's personal and work lives start to form interconnecting patterns and hold meaning. A small group counselling and coaching model benefits from taking this approach as the practitioner and the group members act as the co-facilitators within the group each taking an active part.

The Career Story Interview (Savickas 2012) offers clients the opportunity to explore the connections between personal characteristics, developmental processes and life 'stories' or events that people repeat, revisit and retell to take a different path or way forward. It explores six main questions - role models, television shows or magazines, hobbies, school subjects, recollections of earliest memories and a life motto. Each question has a clear purpose, for instance, the question related to role models can bring out how the client sees themselves and their approach to life. Narratives discussing early memories can reveal

Figure 1. The Group integrative narrative approach (GINA). Adapted from Kidd 2006; Kolb 1984; Reid 2016; Savickas 2012; and Whitmore 2002.

Building the Relationship

- Seek consensus to try 'something unusual'

- Outline GROW stages and narrative approach

- Agree working alliance/session timing/ confidentiality/ ground rules

- Group discussion to identify joint goals of group [flipchart]

Telling the Story

- Explore questions [written exercise]

- Role models – admire/ cool characters

- Hobbies/ interests

  - Magazines/ TV

    - Books/ films – plot

      - Earliest memories

        - School subjects

          - Summarise stories, restating key words/ verbs used

Concrete experience

GOAL

REALITY

Active experimentation

Reflective observation

WAY FORWARD

OPTIONS

Abstract conceptualisation

Actions

- Revisit goals, summarise whole discussion and allow space for group to reflect

- Agree with group what they should be doing next

- Realistic relevant targets with timescales

- Evaluate – using ratings scales how useful has group found session? How motivated are they to act?

Retelling the Story

- Group work collaboratively and as 'audience' to help each other form patterns and themes between stories

- Relate back to goals

- Group 'playful' exploration of new ideas using tools such as visualisations, cards, diagrams

- Group work together to build new goals or 'themes'

major life concerns or preoccupations which could be blocking progress; favourite television shows can offer insights into the clients preferred job roles or environment, for instance exploring the outdoors, or a fast paced office environment. Taken together, by forming patterns, threads and inter-connections, clients should begin to be able to build up a 'meta-narrative' or 'multiple-life stories' of their self within society.

This approach has been used in the UK by Reid and West (2011) and initial research with the use of the

life design model on a one-to-one basis suggest that it helps people think in deep and unexpected ways about their concerns and approach to life. More recently Reid (2016) has adapted the approach and some of the questions following further research and feedback that clients find some of the questions challenging to answer.

Career learning is achieved by the career practitioner or facilitator encouraging participants to learn co-operatively. Group members use each other as a

resource; evaluate each other's ideas, stories and choices and work together to achieve shared goals. This form of experiential learning is based around the Kolb (1984) cycle. The participants actively come up with joint goals for the session (concrete experience) followed by taking part in the narrative written exercise. These experiences form the basis for reflection and the group members have the opportunity to discuss each other's stories (reflective observation), and retell their stories, evaluate their ideas and help each other achieve their goals (abstract conceptualisation). The GINA model is explained to the participants making it possible for group members to continue to retell their stories and re-evaluate their options by a cyclical pattern of previous experience, thought and reflection (active experimentation).

The career management skills framework (Skills Development Scotland 2012) is a career learning model which aids the career learning process by offering a scaffold of competencies to build on. These competencies involve developing four broad themes - a sense of self within society; awareness of skills, strengths and achievements; broadening horizons; and developing support networks and relationships. This framework is widely used in Scotland and was influenced by international 'blueprint' models in Australia, USA and Canada.

The GINA model uses person centred counselling techniques (Rogers 1961) including building a counselling relationship with a number of 'core conditions' of empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence and using a range of skills such as active listening, asking open questions, and reflecting back feelings to encourage open dialogue.

The structure of the approach is based around the GROW coaching model (Whitmore 2002) and adapted to the career guidance field by Yates (2014). The structure includes agreeing a purpose or contract or goal, followed by exploring the story, exploring options and action planning. This type of structure is used extensively by guidance practitioners and in Scotland a coaching approach to guidance (Skills Development Scotland 2012) is used for one-to-one interactions.

The research

The GINA model was piloted in small scale study using participatory action research (PARS) based on the Kemmis (1982) model. A group work session was offered to two small groups of S5 pupils (age 16-17) in two separate secondary schools in Edinburgh followed by a focus group a week later. The research sought to answer the following questions -

- To what extent does the model develop the career management skills of the young people?
- What are the potential benefits and limitations of career guidance delivered in a small group?

The group work sessions appeared to develop the *sense of self and skills* career management competencies. The use of the career construction questions and in particular discussing role models seemed to draw out patterns between qualities participants admired and who they were or would like become. For instance, although two participants admired same person, the footballer Ronaldo, when probed by the facilitator to tell the story of memorable football match one used verbs such as 'exciting and entertaining' while the other focused on him being 'fit, skilful and driven'. This led onto discussions about work environments and preferences.

Another participant admired the actor David Tennant in his role as Dr Who. He told the story of him being 'energetic, on his feet, funny, doing amazing things, saving people and being a bit crazy' (participant 2). Later in the session others group members helped him see the links between these qualities and his idea of working in emergency services.

The groups seemed to be able to help each develop *horizons and network* competencies by building narratives, seeing patterns emerge between a range of experiences, interactions and interests and working together to identify action plans for each other. For instance one participant when asked about a favourite magazine told of reading *PC Gamer* magazine and from a young age liking 'building things and learning how things work' (Participant 3).

Another group member identified engineering and added –

> My dad does software engineering at the place with the planes, Selex. They put him through university. Before that he was programming for radars and stuff but that is still engineering. My dad now has school leavers working for him and they go to university two days a week like he did.   (Participant 1)

Participant 3 later commented in the focus group –

> I would never have thought about computing or engineering or something like that, I would not go into that detail but it was cool and for someone who didn't know what they wanted to do…it was well interesting as I was able to know what other people were like. The group makes people think about career paths that they hadn't thought about.   (Participant 3)

There was a sense that the group were able to come up with a higher number and a higher quality of options compared to one-to-one interactions as Bales (1950) found in his groups. However it is difficult to draw a clear conclusion from this without a direct comparison with one-to-one interactions. This would merit further research.

In relation to the second research question, the majority of the participants appeared to benefit from sharing ideas, thoughts, and feelings with their peer group. In the focus groups comments such as 'you work as part of a team so come up with more ideas' (participant 2) and 'we have all worked well together. I think we get more sympathy that way' (participant 5). There was a sense of feeling that others were experiencing the same issues 'makes you feel that you are not alone in feeling a certain way' (participant 4). The majority commented that felt more confident, motivated and had changed their attitude towards making decisions for themselves. 'It has been quite useful to get me to understand where to go as I really wasn't thinking about it' (participant 3). This supports the evidence from the use of the FAAST model (Westergaard 2013) and Di Fabrio and Maree (2012).

However there were a number of limitations found in the pilot study. It was noted, similar to Reid's

(2016) finding that some of the participants found the questions difficult to answer, 'I don't think about these things on a daily basis' (participant 8) and others group members expressed difficulty coming up with what they thought in group situation. Like Westergaard (2013) they found it difficult to ensure that the discussions were relevant for whole group and there were some compromise with the level of 'depth' of discussion in the groups compared to one-to-one interactions.

More significantly, a small minority of group members expressed feeling uncomfortable in the group situation and appeared to contribute very little. This supports the evidence from Bales (1950) and Westergaard (2013) who found that some would gain more from the group experience than others. This creates a challenge for the facilitator and highlights the need for training in the use of the model. The session should begin with clear expectations and ground rules for each of the participants. This should include individuals being able to express if they feel uncomfortable during the session and the right to leave the session when they want. This also throws up the suggestion that small group work is less suitable for some and alternative larger group or one-to-one options should be available.

Despite an even spread of gender being recruited for each group, there was a minority of females who then took part. It is difficult to conclude whether this had a positive or negative effect on the dynamics within the group. The female in the first group seemed to play a significant part in co-facilitating the session but in the second group the female contributed very little. This would merit further research.

From the results of this initial pilot study, the GINA model was seen to be effective at developing the group's career management skills, easing the pressure of participants through empathy, the sharing ideas and through peer support. This in turn was seen to possibly lead to higher quality decisions, improve motivation, confidence, attitude and effectiveness to take action. The model also has the potential to enable participants to think in new or unexpected ways about values and outlook on life. However there are a few limitations and the approach will not be suitable for all.

The results of this research should be treated with caution, however, as it has so far only been piloted with two small groups of school pupils. It would benefit from further studies being carried out over longer periods of time with a larger number of groups. A comparison of the GINA model with the one-to-one approach would also be of benefit as would the use of the model with different client groups.

Conclusion

The long term focus of the career guidance sector on the one-to-one interview is costly to the sector and inhibits the development of new and emerging approaches. Group guidance is one such emerging approach and this article has discussed its potential to develop the collective career learning of groups.

There are a number of new group approaches globally such as career guidance being used to connect people and their experiences to their communities in Denmark (Thomsen 2012), using a narrative approaches in Italy (Di Fabio and Maree 2012) and the development of personal learning and development group work in the UK (Westergaard 2009). These are a few of a number of approaches which have the potential to steer the group work movement and bring it closer to the centre of practice than is currently the case.

The GINA model which was heavily influenced by the above approaches and from group counselling models in the wider field of counselling was introduced as a model of small group guidance. It was suggested that it is able to bridge the gap between group work and the one-to-one approach by using high quality interpersonal collaborative interactions to develop group learning. Initial pilot findings indicate that it is effective at developing the career learning skills of the group.

Looking forward it is anticipated that the above approaches will play an increasingly important role in career guidance practice but only if researchers, practitioners, policy makers and guidance providers support their ongoing development.

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Experiential work-based learning as a social mobility mechanism for widening participation students

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This paper evaluates the impact of an award-winning experiential work based learning programme aimed at enhancing the career development and social mobility of disadvantaged cohorts. Led by the careers team at a Russell Group Institution, the programme, financially supported by a leading graduate recruiter, involved facilitating teams of students from low-income backgrounds to conduct mini-consultancy projects with local businesses. Students were also provided with wrap-around support from careers staff. 83% of surveyed participants agreed the programme made a difference to the types of jobs or placements they would apply for in future and increases in employability-related self-efficacy scores were identified.

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Introduction

Experiential Work-based learning (WBL), in its many forms (Tully and Avramenko 2015) can provide experiences which enhance employability skills for graduates (Mason et al. 2009; Lowden et al. 2011). Offering opportunities for work-based learning can be a key way for employers to provide greater employment opportunities to less advantaged students and graduates (Pennington et al 2013). Evidence suggests experiential WBL, (e.g. placements) can enable students to *test* their career ideas (Wilton 2012; Little and Harvey 2006), thereby improving and increasing their employability (Yorke and Knight 2006). Jackson (2016) suggests that graduate employability should 'encompass the construction of pre-professional

identity (PPI) during university years' (Jackson 2016: 2). This emphasises the role of HE as providing a 'landscape of practice' (Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner 2015: 15), incorporating a varied mix of interacting and relevant communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991), from academics to careers services, from student societies to employers, which all provide a context for the student's learning. Supported WBL can enable students to begin to construct their pre-professional identity and enhance their employability.

Conceptually experiential WBL is underpinned by the work of Dewey (1916, 1933, 1938), Kolb (1984), Schön (1983, 1987) and more recently Lester and Costley (2010). Aspects of the action learning model (Revans 1980), such as learners gaining insights through real world issue discussion are relevant to WBL. The constructivist concept of the independent learner making sense of her or his context and role (Tennant 2004) is also highly relevant to WBL. WBL also links to the notion of regarding one's experience as a prime careers learning opportunity (Mitchell and Krumboltz 1996). There is evidence that students recognise the potential of WBL as a way to enhance their CV or resume (Bachman and Eliason 2012; Curiale 2010; Feeley 2007; Lancaster and Baker 2010). Cruz (2010) also found that students often regard work placements as a prime way of solving the 'no experience, no job' conundrum.

WBL can be transformative for the participants. Mezirow (1997) argues that transformative learning can effect 'change in a frame of reference' (Mezirow 1997: 5). Providing a student with a first-hand insight into an unfamiliar professional landscape can change the way they approach their future employability.

WBL can also have a wider transformative impact on the host workplace itself. If we consider workplaces as 'complex interpersonal environments' (Eraut and Hirsch 2010: 35), the presence of WBL can emphasise learning in a wider context across the organisation.

For many years UK Governments have argued that universities have a social mobility function which exceeds their role as providers of quality higher education. In 2012 the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission described universities as 'the gatekeepers of opportunity and the main pathway into careers in the professions' (Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission 2012: 12).

The capacity for universities to encourage social mobility is significant as the UK has been persistently poor at producing intergenerational income mobility (Ermish et al. 2012). Crawford and Erve (2015) found that high paying and high status roles are still dominated by the more advantaged cohorts within society. Other research (Macmillian et al. 2013), found that privately educated graduates are a third more likely to enter into high-status occupations than state educated graduates, predominantly due to differences in educational attainment and university selection.

Crawford and Erve argue that in order for HE to 'truly level the playing field' (Crawford and Erve, 2015: 410) more policymaker attention needs to be focused on the employment destinations of graduates from different socio-economic backgrounds. A large study led by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (2016), which used anonymised student loan records and tax data for 260,000 students up to ten years after their graduation, found that graduates from richer family backgrounds earn significantly more after graduation than their poorer counterparts, even after graduating with the same degrees from the same universities.

The role of our social capital (Bordieu 1977) in shaping our future career paths has been well documented. Recent Future Track studies (Purcell et al. 2012) have identified the persistent role and value of social capital within the graduate labour market, above and beyond the possession of a degree. The role of networks has been identified as a prime way to access both valuable work experience opportunities (Francis and Sommerlad 2009) and high status occupations

(Coleman 1990). This is particularly pertinent in the context of high salary roles, where recruiting businesses seek high quality information on the likely performance of any suitable applicants (Marsden and Gorman 2001).

Balta et al. (2012) identify a range of barriers that less advantaged students perceive in terms of pursuing a long term placement, such as feeling that they could not afford to delay entering the graduate labour market. Short term placements or internships are often unpaid which leaves many financially disadvantaged students unable to pursue such opportunities (Curiale 2010). This has longer term implications on their graduate employability due to a lack of relevant experience and social capital.

With 26.5% of graduate positions filled by people who had previously worked for the same employer (e.g. placements or internships) (AGR 2015), the accessibility of work experience opportunities from a social mobility perspective is pertinent. As many internships are unpaid, this significantly limits their accessibility to more advantaged students, who are already in positions of greater social, cultural and financial capital than their more disadvantaged peers (Macmillan, Tyler and Vignoles 2013; Macmillan and Vignoles,2013). This emphasises the need for additional WBL opportunities to be supported and enhanced by the careers services within universities.

Evidence suggests that less advantaged students do not traditionally use their careers services, instead choosing to refer to their own, often limited, informal contacts (Greenback 2011; Simpson 2013). Christie (2015) argues that HE careers professionals are aware of the 'structural constraints' (Christie 2015: 12) in which their clients operate. For these reasons proactive delivery of careers and employability education, such as through the curriculum, is increasingly prioritised over the students' voluntary use of careers services on campus. Piazza (2011) identifies support from the careers service as a means of developing the student's strategic career planning, which will benefit their lifelong learning.

It is within this context that a Russell Group Higher Education Institution based in London established a new employability initiative targeted at their less

advantaged students. This institution has a significant widening participation student population with 42% of UK Undergraduate students in academic year 2014/15 in receipt of a university bursary. Data from the Destination of Leavers of Higher Education (DLHE) survey showed that six months following graduation, bursary holders were 14% more likely to be unemployed and 30% more likely to be in non-graduate jobs than their more privileged counterparts.

To address this the university partnered with a leading graduate recruiter from the financial sector who invested in the development and piloting of a specific WBL initiative. This targeted initiative offered bursary holding students the opportunity and support to conduct paid mini-consultancy projects within local growth sector businesses. This initiative combined employer partnerships, student work experience and wrap-around careers support. The local businesses worked with careers staff to devise bespoke briefs for actual mini consultancy projects which would genuinely enhance the work of the business.

The consultancy projects ran for five weeks during term time, with students working in teams of five, each spending four hours per week on the project. Students were paid the London Living Wage and the hours were flexible to accommodate other study, work or home responsibilities. All bursary holders received a targeted recruitment email to maximise applications from this cohort and written applications were shortlisted based on evidence of any transferable skills, rather than previous experience. Any strong applications made by bursary holders were prioritised and candidates were invited to an assessment centre. The successful applicants were then allocated to cross-discipline and cross-graduation year teams, which also included a blend of complementing skills-sets and personalities.

The participants attended a range of skills sessions with a Careers Consultant where they received project management, consultancy and professional communication training. These sessions were delivered across the lifespan of the project and included a pre-project induction, a midway check-in session and a final skills debrief. Each individual participant also had the opportunity to have a 1:1 session with a Careers Consultant. Additionally, support was provided by the employers involved in the programme. Each team was

allocated a mentor from the corporate partner's staff, who met with the students to offer advice and insight. The teams were also allocated a key contact within the local businesses and at the end of the project the teams presented their findings to both the local businesses at their premises and at the corporate partner's premises.

Between June 2015 and March 2016, 80 students were recruited to the programme and 78 completed it. These students worked on sixteen discrete projects for fifteen different local businesses (eight start-up businesses, six SMEs and one large business). All of the businesses were in growth sectors, predominantly based in East London and 13 of the 15 businesses had not partnered with the university prior to this project.

Methodology

We posed two research questions:

1. Did engagement in the experiential work based learning scheme produce positive social mobility outcomes for less advantaged graduates in terms of their work experience?

2. Did engagement in the wrap-around support of the scheme produce positive learning outcomes in terms of career development?

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected through surveys to measure any changes in the students' employability skills and the numbers of students engaged in meaningful next step employment (e.g. graduate job, student internship, post-graduate study). In-depth semi-structured interviews were held with 15 participants who had completed the programme.

Student record data was used to identify what percentage of students within the institution could be described as from a less advantaged background. Furthermore, national survey data such as the DLHE survey was also used to ascertain the graduate destinations (e.g. graduate level employment) of distinct cohorts.

This analysis showed that 42% of home country Undergraduate students in academic year 2014/15 were in receipt of a bursary from the university.

Bursary holders' distribution	%
Full bursary holders (household incomes under 25,000	80%
Part bursary holders (household incomes between £25,001 - £42,600)	20%
Bursary population	4547

The WBL programme was launched in March 2015 with the objectives to evaluate the impact of this intervention with regard to producing social mobility outcomes for less advantaged graduates. The impact measurements used included any changes in the students' employability skills and the numbers of students in meaningful next step employment (e.g. graduate job, internship, post-graduate study).

Students were surveyed four times during the programme yielding the following response rates:

Table 2. Survey response rates of programme participants

Survey point	Respondents	Response Rate
Immediately pre-project	78	100%
Immediately post-project	73	96%
3 months post project	48	89%
6 months post project	27	82%

Additionally, 40 minute reflective in-depth interviews were held with 15 of the students who completed the programme.

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Findings

Changes in employability-related self-efficacy through WBL

Directly before and after their placements, students were asked to rate their confidence in nine employability skills areas identified by the careers team of the institution as important for graduate employability. Students rated their confidence on a scale of one to five – one being not at all confident and five being very confident. Table three shows the average self-ratings of the students participating in the programme for each employability skill area both before and after completing the programme, and the change in student's average self-efficacy ratings in each of the skills areas.

Employability skill	Mean score pre placement skills rating	Mean score post placement skills rating	Difference between mean skills ratings pre and post placement	t-Stat	p=0.05
Conducting research	3.21	3.74	0.53	3.80	0.01*
Communicating with professionals	3.52	3.95	0.42	3.58	0.01*
Coming up with new ideas	3.4	3.76	0.37	2.41	0.02*
Presenting to an audience	3.52	3.9	0.38	2.64	0.01*
Working in a team	3.73	4.28	0.55	4.64	1.56
Confidence in a career context	3.61	4.06	0.44	3.39	0.01*
Thinking logically	3.69	4.01	0.32	3.38	0.01*
Creating solutions to problems	3.62	3.89	0.27	1.67	0.10
Knowing what's expected of me in a professional work setting	2.69	4.24	1.55	11.67	4.38

*=significant at 0.05 level (alpha 0.05)

Table 3. Average student employability skills self-efficacy ratings pre and post placement

Paired-samples t-tests were conducted to compare average self-efficacy of employability skills scores of participants before and after participating in the WBL programme. Overall there was a positive change in mean student self-efficacy in all nine employability skills categories, with the biggest increase in 'knowing what's expected of me in a professional setting' (t=11.67), however, this was not significant at the 95% confidence level, so we cannot be sure that the difference was not due to chance, and further investigation with a larger sample would be useful to substantiate this.

During the final skills debrief session, careers staff showed the participants their own initial self-assessment skills rankings (completed before the project) and compared these to their post project self-assessment skills rankings. Students were often surprised by the fact that they had sometimes ranked themselves *lower* in skillsets post project despite the fact that they thought that they had developed and improved in these areas. For example: *"I thought I knew what team work was; now I actually know."* These insights illustrate the transformative potential of WBL (Mezirow 1997) as a way to reassess oneself against different working environments.

Evidence of positive learning outcomes

Post placement interviews were conducted with 15 students. Analysis of these interviews identified five recurrent themes which reflect positive learning outcomes for the students, relating to social capital (Bourdieu, 1977). These themes were: confidence in a careers context; increasing professional networks; differences in employability; communicating with professionals and expectations of a professional setting. The following five extracts respectively illustrate these themes:

i.   'It has definitely increased my [career thinking] confidence; I always thought 'I'm not good enough' or 'I'm not equal to others'. Now, having done this project and got so much good feedback, I think 'maybe I can do that too!' I feel confident and entitled to go for other things which I wouldn't have before.'

ii.   'Met another mentor at the presentation – this experience taught me that it's about

stripping down the barriers, it's not about where you come from its more about the effort you put in.'

iii. 'I now have now secured a Graduate Role as a Tax analyst at one of the Big 4 firms. I had to do a presentation as part of my final interview, having worked with my client (micro business) and also [leading financial institution], and gaining a mixture of both presenting formally and informally helped me. I think it enhanced my confidence.'

iv.   'I learnt to maintain and act in a professional manner – I learnt to always be honest and never to over exaggerate what the team could and could not do.'

v.   'I can talk about a real life experience where I have actually dealt with a real client… If I am applying to internships I have actually done something real. [The programme] has formed a significant part of my CV…Consultancy has now become a real career option for me.'

Evidence of impact on social mobility and engagement with employability

34 out of 48 student respondents in the three month follow up survey confirmed their experience on the programme had made a difference to the types of jobs or placements they have been applying to or to their professional networks. 47 out of 48 students felt the programme would have a lasting impact on their employability, in terms of improving their CV, affirming their skills and providing examples of competencies for future applications. 10 out of 48 of the respondents had engaged further with the HEI's Careers services within three months of completing their placement. The six month follow up survey yielded 27 responses including 22 respondents who also completed the three months post placement questionnaire. 18 out of 27 students had used examples from their programme experience on applications and in interviews. 9 respondents had not used examples, but planned to in the future.

Discussion

Our results, both qualitative and quantitative indicate that there is evidence of positive social mobility outcomes for less advantaged students who participated in the programme in terms of specific employability elements. It is clear from our findings that the less advantaged students who participated in the scheme were able to identify specific ways through which the scheme had enhanced their employability. These ways included improved professional development skills, such as networking, to the generation of strong examples of transferable skills and competencies which will be significant for their future recruitment. This translation from vague and generic claims about one's employability, to specific evidence of particular skillsets is articulated by one participant:

> 'I think my employability increased because when you write a CV you tend to make claims about yourself, like "I am an ambitious individual" but now I can really back that up.'

The positive social mobility outcomes which we found were not only significant by their breadth but also by their depth. Following completion of the programme, 18 out of 27 students in the six months follow up survey reported continuing some form of employability activity, (such as internships, further study, volunteering, working or additional engagement with the university careers service) following completion of the programme. This implies that there are longitudinal benefits of such a WBL scheme, with participants identifying a sustainable impact on their ongoing employability and career development:

> 'Looking back on it I think having not done [the programme] I would have been less ambitious with my careers prospects.'

> 'It's all about powering through potential self-limiting beliefs, learning as much as you can and growing as both person and a professional.'

Limitations of the study

Our results are based on one WBL scheme with a small cohort within one institution. To draw stronger conclusions we would need to significantly expand the cohort either within the institutions or with similar widening participation cohorts within different institutions.

The lack of longer term evaluation data from the participants involved in the initiative has limited the conclusions we can draw about the positive impact on the student participants' long term employability and career development.

Conclusions

We conclude that such experiential WBL schemes with wrap-around support can have a significant impact on the career development and social mobility of university students from widening participation backgrounds. This WBL scheme (Yorke and Knight 2006) clearly cultivated a productive relationship between the careers service on campus and less advantaged students, who typically engage with university careers provision, less than their more advantaged peers (Greenback 2011; Simpson 2013).

The targeted and wrap-around support from careers professionals enabled participants to identify how they had developed specific skills during their placement, which has implications for their long term career management (Wilton 2012; Little and Harvey 2006). This illustrates how such schemes can be used strategically by HE careers services as an innovative way to engage traditional non-user cohorts.

In light of the social mobility objectives of the proposed Higher Education and Research Bill (2016), this project can be seen as one way that institutions can address the social capital needs of their disadvantaged students. This study also exposes the level of effort, including resourcing, required by institutions to fulfil their responsibilities to those students. The significance of this effort is underscored by graduate employability metrics such as the DLHE survey and its future iterations and the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) data. Such datasets will continue to affect an institution's position within sector wide league tables, which use such data in their criteria. More research needs to be done to assess the longer term impact of such experiential WBL from the perspective of the employability of less advantaged students.

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Disney strategy for Japanese university students' career guidance: a mixed methods pilot study

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The Disney strategy, a neuro-linguistic programming skill, has been reported to be useful for career guidance by qualified career consultants in Japan. This mixed methods pilot study aimed to examine the effects and the experience of using this strategy for career guidance in Japanese students. Six students responded to four job-search-related scales at pre-training and post-training, and were interviewed. Students' self-esteem and job-search self-efficacy increased significantly in the short-term. Thematic analysis of the interviews revealed three key experiential features: body movement; clear vision; and positive emotions. These promising findings suggest the Disney strategy should be examined in larger, longitudinal studies.

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Introduction

Career guidance is increasingly important in Japan. A qualification for career consultants was developed in 2002, and their number has been increasing in recent years (2006: 43,000; 2008: 53,000; 2012: 81,000; Asano, 2013). In April 2016, this qualification was recognised nationally, and accredited by the government. In higher education, almost all universities in Japan (97%) provide career guidance (Watanabe 2013).

At the end of the 20th century, Japan underwent great socio-economic changes including the revision of a lifetime employment approach and diversification of individuals' careers (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare [MHLW] 2007a). Because of these changes, individuals needed to be equipped with competencies in career development, in order to adapt to the shift from 'career in organisations' to 'career out of organisations' (Watanabe-Muraoka 2007): 70% of full-time employees reported they want to plan their own career development (MHLW 2007b). These changes delineated the need for support in people's own career development (Watanabe-Muraoka, Michitani, & Okada 2009).

In higher education, although career guidance was introduced at almost all Japanese universities (Watanabe 2013), it has some recognised problems (Adachi 2004). While the rate of students who obtain a full-time permanent employment has been relatively high (70% in 2014), about 20% of students have no employment at all (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2014). Even though the majority of students indicate they are in full-time permanent employment, 30% of them will have left that job within three years (MHLW 2015). To counter these problems, the Japanese government developed policies including attempts to increase the number of career counsellors in higher education (Mochizuki, 2015).

Recent research on career guidance has emphasised personal responsibility for one's own career. More individual-oriented approaches such as the life-design approaches (Savickas 2010) or integral approaches (Zunker 2002) have been applied to practice. 'Private logic' (Savickas 2009), how an individual constructs meaning and identity in their career subjectively, is essential in career guidance. Therefore the practitioner's focus tends to be on narrative truth rather than factual truth (West 1996). This trend

suits neuro-linguistic programming, NLP, as it focuses on subjective experience (Alder 2002; O'Connor & McDermott 2001).

Factors affect job-search quality

Recently the quality of job-search has been scientifically investigated, because it has become more common in today's rapidly changing job market (Côté, Saks & Zikic 2006; Manroop & Richardson 2015; Saks 2006). Job-search refers to information gathering for potential job opportunities, obtaining and comparing offered jobs, and choosing the best from the offered jobs (Barber, Daly, Giannantonio & Philips 1994). The quality of job-search relates to proximal outcomes (invitation to job interviews and offers) and distal outcomes (employment and it's quality) (van Hooft, Born, Taris, van der Flier & Blonk 2004; Saks 2005; Schwab, Rynes & Aldag 1987).

Self-esteem has been related to the quality of job-search (Holmstrom, Russell & Clare 2013). Specifically, self-esteem has been associated with individuals' social skills (Berger 1955; Rosenberg 1965) and work behaviour (Korman 1970). Without high self-esteem, job seekers may not believe they have the skills or quality the employer wants, so may reduce their effort. Brown, Cober, Kane, Levy and Shalhoop (2006) reported that self-esteem was a crucial psychological antecedent of self-efficacy and the success of job-search. Ellis and Taylor's study (1983) of 86 university students found that self-esteem was significantly related to number of offers, acceptance of a position, and intended length of tenure.

One of the most studied job-search constructs is job-search self-efficacy (JSSE; Saks, Zikic & Koen 2015). JSSE is the belief that one can take necessary job-search behaviors and get employed (Saks & Ashforth 1999). Saks' study (2006) with 225 recent university graduates revealed that JSSE was a significant predictor of interviews, offers, employment status, and personality-job fit. Brown et al.'s study (2006) with 180 university students reported that JSSE was associated with proactiveness, job-search effort, behaviour, and outcome. These studies illustrate JSSE is related to the job-search success.

Both job-search intensity and clarity (JSI and JSC) are also related to the success of job-search. JSI refers to how frequently they engage in behaviors that are aimed for employment (Saks 2006). JSC is defined as the degree of clarity in job seekers' job-search objectives and the type of career, work, or job they are aspired to obtain (Wanberg, Hough & Song 2002). Unsurprisingly, JSC and JSI are positively correlated with one another (Côté et al. 2006). A high level of JSC leads a job seeker to focus on his/her job-search more (Wanberg et al. 2002), and to have clearer goals, which support his/her motivation (Côté et al. 2006). Côté et al.'s study (2006) of 123 university students found that JSC predicted JSI, which in turn was related to number of invitation to interviews, offers received, and jobs obtained.

Despite these promising findings, studies exploring interventions to enhance these factors have been limited and focus on self-reported outcomes. For example, a behaviour-modelling workshop enhanced general self-efficacy among unemployed people (Eden & Aviram 1993).

NLP application into career consultation

Commonly, career consultants are trained to offer advice and counselling, and much of their training uses a counselling framework (MHLW 2007a). Anecdotally, NLP has been applied to career consulting recently, particularly in Japan (Kotera 2017); NLP is an applied psychology used to study excellence through subjective experience (Alder 2002; O'Connor & McDermott 2001). Although only one study has focused on NLP in qualified career consultants to date, the Disney strategy was reported to be the most useful among the Japanese consultants (Kotera 2017). Indeed, some of the career consultants reported they already taught this skill to university students as part of the university career module. The Disney strategy, developed by an NLP trainer, Robert Dilts, was modelled from Walt Disney's thinking strategy (Dilts 1998). When creating a plan to achieve his dream, Disney and his colleagues examined it from three different perceptual positions; the dreamer, realist and spoiler. Dilts made this process into an NLP skill, 'the

Disney strategy'. The career consultants noted this three-position-system was one of the strengths of this skill, as their clients often took only one position to think about their career. By examining their career from the three positions, the clients are able to think about their career more holistically (Kotera 2017). In that study, qualified career consultants identified that the Disney strategy was one of the most useful skills to their clients. Given that no study has examined the effectiveness of the Disney strategy and the promising results reported, the first aim of this study was to examine the effects of the Disney strategy in career guidance for Japanese students. The second aim of this study was to explore the clients' experience of the Disney strategy. In order to analyse in an enriched and elaborated manner, mixed methods were employed (Greene, Caracelli & Graham 1989).

Method

Study design

A convergent mixed methods design, collecting qualitative and quantitative data concurrently, was employed (Creswell 2014): online scales before and after training, with an in-depth, semi-structured, individual interview after training. Quantitative analysis addresses the first aim of this study, to examine the effects, and qualitative analysis corresponds to the second aim of this study, to explore the experience of the Disney strategy. The online scales were used to examine the levels of the Japanese university students' self-esteem, JSSE, JSI, and JSC. The interviews were conducted via Skype with the first author, who was not involved in training. Throughout the study, the first author was introduced to the students as a psychology researcher, instead of an NLP trainer, to limit biased responses. Ethics approval was obtained from the university research ethics committee.

Participants and trainers

Participants were recruited by a non-profit organisation that supported university students in career guidance. Seven Japanese students aged 18 years or older attended the career training, and six of them agreed to participate in the study. They had not previously learned NLP. The demographic information of the six participants is in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographics of the participants

	Gender	Age (years)	Major	Year*
Participant 1	F	20	Economics	2
Participant 2	M	20	Intelligence and Information	3
Participant 3	F	20	Clinical psychology	3
Participant 4	M	21	Business	3
Participant 5	F	22	Global and Regional Studies	4
Participant 6	M	20	Economics	2

* Bachelor's programmes in Japan consist of four years.

Two trainers provided the training together: Trainer 1 was a qualified career consultant and NLP master practitioner, who has been supporting university students' career for fifteen years; Trainer 2 was a certified NLP trainer, and has fifteen years of career consulting experience.

Training

The training comprised one six-hour long session, and began with the introduction of NLP and the Disney strategy, followed by an explanation of each perceptual position, and practice of the Disney strategy. The training contents were reviewed and approved by two certified NLP trainers.

In the Disney strategy, clients create these positions in the room, and physically move to each position to focus on one thinking pattern at a time for approximately five to ten minutes. In the dreamer position, the clients hold their head and eyes up and dream as if nothing was impossible. Next, the clients move to the realist position, and turn their face and eyes straight ahead. In this position, they plan by thinking about what steps need to be taken in order to achieve their dreams. Finally, in the spoiler position, the clients keep their eyes down and tilt their head down, and, in that position, search for any gaps in their dreams and plans, and between them. If the clients consider their plans not to be realistic, they move back to the realist position to reconsider the plans they have made in order to make new plans that are more realistic; alternatively, they may subtly revise their plans to resolve any gaps (Dilts 1996).

Questionnaires

For the quantitative analysis, the university students were asked to complete the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), Job-Search Self-Efficacy Scale (JSSES), Job-Search Intensity Scale (JSIS), and Job-Search Clarity Scale (JSCS). The validity and reliability of the Japanese version of RSES have been confirmed (Mimura & Griffiths 2007). The rest of the scales were translated into Japanese by the first author and two other psychology master's degree holders who were Japanese-English bilinguals, through back-translation and a meeting to ensure the original meaning was captured in the Japanese version.

RSES is a ten-item scale to measure students' self-esteem (Rosenberg 1965). Items include 'On the whole, I am satisfied with myself'. Students rate how strongly they agree or disagree with each statement on a four-point Likert scale ranging from '1' being 'Strongly disagree' and '4' being 'Strongly agree'. Items 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9 are reverse-scored. The internal consistency of the scale was high (.77 to .88).

JSSES (Vinokur, Price & Schul 1995) measures students' job-search self-efficacy: their confidence in successfully performing job-search activities (Saks 2005). Students rate 20 items on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from '1' being 'very poorly' to '7' being 'very well'; for example, 'Giving the best impression of yourself in a

job interview'. The internal consistency of the scale was acceptable (.71).

The updated version of JSIS (Wanberg et al. 2002, adapted from Blau 1993) is a ten-item scale, in which students rate on a five-point Likert scale indicating how many times they had performed the various search activities over the past two weeks: from '0' being 'never' to '5' being 'very often (ten times)'. The ten items include 'Used the Internet to locate job openings'. JSIS has good internal consistency (.82).

JSCS is a four-item scale with good internal consistency (.82; Wanberg et al. 2002). Items include 'I have a clear idea of the type of job that I want to find'. The response choices were adapted from the two choices of 'agree' or 'disagree' to a five-point Likert scale: '0' being 'strongly disagree' to '4' being 'strongly agree', in order to know the degree of their job-search clarity.

Qualitative analysis

Semi-structured interviews were conducted online and transcribed by the first author. The advantages of online interview include being economical and geographically flexible, while the challenges include technical problems and ethical issues (Saumure & Given 2010). To counter these challenges, the quality of video and audio was examined before the interview questions, and the approved ethical procedures were followed. Each interview explored topics such as reasons for attending the training, the perceptual position they found the most familiar with and useful to their career guidance, and what part of the Disney strategy they found the most helpful for their career guidance.

The interview questions were adapted from the Helpful Aspects of Therapy Questionnaire (HAT; Llewelyn 1988), as HAT has been used in various studies to evaluate the experience of training (e.g. Smith 2011). These questions are simple, elicit information less intrusively, and allow interviewees to focus on the helpful aspects of training (Elliott 2012).

Thematic analysis was used because of its appropriateness to explore this underdeveloped area (Braun & Clarke 2006). Thematic analysis apprehends

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the important concepts and patterns of experience within data by segmenting, categorising, summarising, and reconstructing a dataset. This analysis allows researchers to describe these patterns and common themes within them (Givens 2008). The procedure described by Braun and Clarke (2006) was followed: familiarising; generating codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; and defining and naming themes. An investigator triangulation (Hales 2010) was employed for transparency and coherency, by having an NLP researcher and non-NLP researcher review the data extracts of each theme made by the authors. They also examined the first author's translation from Japanese to English.

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Results

Quantitative analysis

Data analysis, primarily paired t-tests (after assumptions were checked), was performed with SPSS version 23.

The results of the quantitative analysis are described in Table 2. There was a significant increase in self-esteem and JSSE from pre-training to post-training. In contrast, there were no differences in JSI and JSC between pre-training and post-training.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations of each scale at pre-training and post-training

Scale (Range)	Pre		Post	
	M	SD	M	SD
S-EM (10-40)	13.67[a]	5.09	19.00[a]	2.10
JSSE (20-140)	53.67[a]	12.80	70.80[a]	10.89
JSI (0-50)	23.50	10.71	20.40	7.30
JSC (0-16)	8.67	3.44	8.83	2.93

S-EM = self-esteem, JSSE = job-search self-efficacy, JSI = job-search intensity, JSC = job-search clarity.

Superscript (a) indicates there is a significant difference between the two groups.

Qualitative analysis

First, students' purpose of attendance, and most familiar and useful positions were summarised (see Table 3). Students who reported they were familiar with the realist position found the dreamer the most useful, and vice versa. Many students described they had chosen to take the training to clarify their future vision.

Table 3. Purpose of attendance, most familiar and useful position of participants

	Purpose of attendance	Most familiar	Most useful
Participant 1	Find the centre of my life	Realist	Dreamer
Participant 2	Make a vision for the future	Realist	Realist
Participant 3	Be positive about my job-search	Dreamer	Realist
Participant 4	Have a clear plan to achieve my dream	Dreamer	Realist
Participant 5	Clarify what I want to do in my life	Dreamer	Realist
Participant 6	Make a vision for the future	Realist	Dreamer

Three themes emerged from students' experience of the Disney strategy: body movement, clear vision, and positive emotions.

Body movement

Although it was new to the students, all of them found the body movement very useful. The Disney strategy entails various body movements including walking to each position, and making the postures. These helped the students focus on one thinking mode at a time.

> **Participant 2:** I found the body movement in the realist position most useful…This really helped me tap into my planning mode. Also physically being in the realist position helped me focus on planning.

> **Participant 3:** I found the Disney strategy dynamic. I moved to each position, made the poses, and responded to the questions. We did this process a couple of times to sink the whole thing in our body.

Students reported that by using the body movement, they were able to imagine their dream and milestones more in-detail. This enhanced their motivation in job-search, and students were hopeful that their motivation would last long.

Clear vision

All of the students mentioned that the Disney strategy helped them have a clear vision. For example, Participant 1 described she was able to dream as if nothing was impossible in the dreamer position. Participant 5 described how the Disney strategy helped her focus on the future.

> **Participant 1:** It was most useful to me to be in the dreamer position, and think about what I really want from my life as if nothing was impossible…This process of verbalisation and visualisation clarified what I want to do.

> **Participant 5:** What I want to do in the future became clearer. I really didn't have time to work on it until the training: I didn't have time to dream, make plans for the dream, and review them.

Students noted the following parts of the Disney strategy helped them have a clear vision: dreaming as if nothing was impossible; dreaming with five-sensory information; dreaming with specific contexts; backward planning; milestones; the order of thinking modes

(dream, plan, then review critically). Of the three positions, the dreamer position was described as being most related to a clear vision.

Positive emotions

Though four students reflected that they used to perceive job-search as stressful, all of them reported their perception of job-search has become more positive. This accords with the quantitative data indicating that JSSE increased.

> **Participant 4:** I feel confident and excited about my job-search now…I had been stuck with ways to achieve my dream, but the realist position helped me come up with steps to achieve it.

> **Participant 6:** My view on job-search is not stress-based any more, and now it's pleasure-based… The dreamer position helped me think of my dreams, and experience the pleasure I will feel by achieving them.

The emotions or feelings students experienced during the Disney strategy were: hope, confidence, excitement, curiosity, happiness, self-acceptance, courage, balanced, stable, committed, safe, motivated, less stress and anxiety. A variety of positive emotions were experienced.

Discussion

This study examined the effects and experience of the Disney strategy for career guidance of Japanese university students. The Disney strategy enhanced students' self-esteem and JSSE from pre-training to post-training significantly. Students decided to undertake the training to clarify their vision, and found having both the dreamer and realist positions useful. The body movement was another notable experiential feature of the Disney strategy, which helped the students have a clear vision and positive emotions for job-search.

All of the students reported body movement helped to access each thinking mode. This supports findings from previous studies where different postures created different thoughts (Petty, Wells, Heesacker,

Brock & Cacioppo 1983; Wilson & Peper 2004). Thus, the body movement might have helped the students envision clearly and have positive emotions, including self-esteem and self-efficacy. The relationship of these themes should be examined in future studies.

There were no significant difference in JSI and JSC between pre-training and post-training. This may be explained by the quality of the participated students. They were the students who had registered themselves to a career support organisation, and decided to attend a six-hour session of training on a Saturday. Their scores in these scales were already high at pre-training; ceiling effects might explain the lack of significant changes. Also the items in JSI focus on the external behaviours, such as looking at ads on newspaper or using the internet to find job opportunities, which are unlikely to have changed over the 6-hour session. As the students reported, the brief effects we have observed of the Disney strategy seemed to lie in the internal: self-esteem and self-efficacy.

There were several limitations in this study. The sample size was small, and the participant recruitment was opportunity sampling, which may have created bias. The time span of this study was very short, changes from pre-training to post-training; longitudinal studies are needed. Moreover, controlled or comparative groups would be helpful in elucidating causality in addition to understanding whether changes are sustained. As JSIS and JSCS were developed in the western countries, some of the items in these scales might not be appropriate for Japanese students. In Japan, students start job-search and start working at the same times. Therefore, items such as Item 7 of the JSIS, 'Sent a resume to a possible employer or turned in a job application', may not apply to them. It would be worthwhile to conduct this study with students in the West.

The Disney strategy, a dynamic NLP skill, helped Japanese university students have a clear vision and positive emotions for their job-search, including self-esteem and JSSE. Further investigation of this strategy for career guidance needs to be conducted, with the aim of establishing a new approach to counter today's job-search problems. Indeed, it may be useful to test the use of embodied turn-taking, such as the Disney

strategy, in the classroom as well as specific career workshops.

The practitioners all said they would use the approach with university students to improve the quality of their career learning and development.

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Meditation on motherhood: multiple-identity negotiations within a changing sense of self

Ananda Geluk

Conceptualised as a bid to explore the experiences of mothers returning to the workforce following the transition to motherhood, this research uses an heuristic inquiry approach, relying on an autoethnographic study of my own embodied experience of negotiating the competing demands of motherhood and career, complemented by narrative interviews with other mothers. The heuristic research methods used draw on my experience of balancing mothering with other aspects of life: negotiating multiple identities as mother, learner and careers practitioner. A central theme of this study is the importance of a robust, multifaceted self-concept and its significance in relation to increased personal resilience.

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I just want to sleep. I just want to sleep – and she just wants to nurse… and nurse, and nurse! And then it dawns on me… My needs don't come into this picture – it is all about her needs right now. The humbling experience of birth was just the beginning of the dismantling of who I consider myself to be. This journey of motherhood will be a long process of annihilation of my ego.

(Autoethnography excerpt)

Introduction

Following the transition to motherhood, most mothers are faced with a choice, often dependent on socio-economic circumstances, as to the level at which they continue to engage in paid work. While social norms and familial set-ups are changing, and while it is now more common for men to be primary caregivers than in previous generations, in contemporary Ireland 'those looking after home/family are overwhelmingly female' (CSO 2011: 10). While there is certainly merit for further research exploring the experiences of fathers and their stories of negotiating competing demands, as a mother, I have the richness of my own story to draw upon and this study makes no apologies for looking exclusively at the experience of mothers in this context. I chose participants or 'co-researchers' (Moustakas 1990: 45) for my study who had similar experiences to my own, in that they were mothers breastfeeding children for an extended period (beyond one year). I worked on the assumption that this would give me access to a group of participants who valued the mother-infant bond highly and prioritised their relationships over careers (Ryan 2003), finding creative ways to fit their paid work around their mothering work.

In researching the story of my own negotiation of multiple identities, I realised I was rebuilding my sense of self. In the course of my studies, I have marvelled at the lack of emphasis in lifespan career development theories (Boyd & Bee 2006; Sharf 2006) on the transition to parenthood as a major, life-changing event. Oberman and Josselson's (1996: 344) recognition of the experience of motherhood as 'a significant and multifaceted stage in the course of a woman's development' endorses my own sense of the enormity of the transition that motherhood represents. They have identified a matrix of tensions amid which mothers struggle to balance themselves, with one of the primary issues identified in their model of mothering being that of 'loss of self/expansion of self' (341).

The topic of balancing motherhood and career seems almost to have chosen me, more than I have chosen to study it. I began my adult guidance and counselling

training as a mother of a two-year old daughter, hopeful but unsure of how I could manage anything external in addition to mothering. I had given so much to my mother identity that most other aspects of myself had been significantly diminished, if not lost altogether. The dynamics of this negotiating act were intensified for me as I gave birth to my second child after my first year of training and undertook the second year of my studies with my infant son accompanying me to all of the workshops. Figuring out how I could be both a mother and a learner, as well as a guidance and counselling professional, was an integral part of this research and my emerging new identities contributed to a more rounded sense of self.

Motherhood and identity in the literature

Motherhood and mothering

In the emerging area of motherhood scholarship, an important distinction is made between the socio-cultural role of motherhood and the actual lived experience of mothering. Andrea O'Reilly (2006, 2004) has championed the importance of this distinction initially made by Adrienne Rich in *Of Woman Born* (1977). O'Reilly (2006: 11) differentiates between 'the patriarchal institution of motherhood which is male-defined and controlled and is deeply oppressive to women' and 'women's experiences of mothering which are female-defined and centred and thus potentially empowering to women'.

O'Reilly argues that Rich's distinction enables feminists to recognise that 'motherhood is not naturally, necessarily or inevitably oppressive' (ibid: 11) and that mothering can be a potentially empowering experience and even a catalyst of social change. This insight has broadened my understanding of the oppressive and un-chosen nature of the role of motherhood and has led me to a powerful realisation regarding my relationship with my own mother. What I had perceived as rejection as a child was more likely to have been my mother's understandable rejection of the oppressive role of motherhood. O'Reilly discusses mother-blame and how recognising the error of blaming one's own mother for issues more accurately concerned with patriarchal values can lead to healing

within mother-daughter relationships (65). I had been aware that I was partly motivated to provide the most perfect emotional foundation that I could for my daughter in response to my own experience of being mothered. However, I had not seen that the feelings of failure and frustration I struggled with at times might be a response to the role of motherhood as currently constructed by society.

Identity and self

The dictionary definition of identity strips it down to 'the fact of being who or what a person or thing is' and gives a second definition which refers to 'the characteristics determining who or what a person or thing is' ('Identity' 2012). Motherhood, as a socially-constructed role that mothers identify with to different extents, is a prime example of identity as an aspect of the self: informed by society and culture and absorbed into our self-concept.

One's identities contribute to one's 'idea of the self', the dictionary definition of self-concept, 'constructed from the beliefs one holds about oneself and the responses of others' ('Self-concept' 2012). Super (1990) also recognised the relevance of vocational identity to self-concept, which he understood to be supported by the twin pillars of personality and society (cited in Sharf 2006). Gottfreddson (1981) associated social influences to self-concept and formed a 'circumscription and compromise' developmental theory regarding the impact of society on self-concept. More recently, Savickas (2011) has connected the relevance of identity work (Sveningsson & Alvesson 2003) and self-construction to narrative approaches to career counselling.

Watson (2009: 426) also connects the three concepts of identity work, narrative and the social construction of reality and uses the term 'self-identity' to describe 'the individual's own notion of who and what they are'. Similarly, Guichard, Pouyaud and Dumora (2013: 58) echo the recognition of the importance of identity work, narrative and self-construction in career counselling, recognising it as the major issue in career counselling and guidance in society today. Their assertion that 'individual subjectivity is multiple' is crucial to their central concept of a 'subjective identity form' which they describe as 'a set of ways of being, acting and interacting in accordance with a particular

way of representing oneself – of conceiving oneself – within a given context' (ibid: 59).

This constructed self, fluid, multi-dimensional and responsive to social and cultural influences, can be fragile or robust. It is critical to how we navigate transitions and make sense of our experience. Self is one of the four key elements of Schlossberg's (2011) transition model, with the other three elements that influence the potential resources we bring to a transition being situation, supports and strategies. Guichard et al. (2013: 61) connect self-construction to the fluidity of multidimensional identity and assert that 'individual reflexivity plays a major role in the construction of the self'. They refer to the importance of reflexivity in the process to accurately describe what I have experienced and conceptualised as identity negotiations. They describe a dual process involving 'synthesis and stabilization (of multiple identities)' on the one hand, and, on the other, 'self-transcendence and seeing oneself from different perspectives' (ibid: 61).

This research naturally demanded a reflexive approach and the description of a dual process is accurate. The deep introspection needed to become familiar with the multiple identities featuring prominently within my self-concept during this study was complemented and enhanced by a self-transcendent approach. Heuristic research, with its emphasis on intuition and tacit knowing, presented itself during the course of this project as a method that would give a more expansive perspective over the experience of self-construction.

Methodology

Heuristic research provided a key for me to understand that my study of the phenomenon of the interface between motherhood and the world of work needed to focus on my embodied experience of early motherhood. The term heuristic originates from the Greek word *heuriskein* meaning 'to discover' and it 'refers to a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience' (Moustakas 1990: 9). Heuristic research methods, as presented by Moustakas, helped me to realise that rather than searching for alternative ways of combining paid work with mothering work and making them visible to other mothers, the purpose of this research

project could only be to authentically present my experience of engaging in balancing mothering work with the rest of life.

'The passionate search for the illumination of a puzzlement' (ibid: 54) led me to notice and reflect on changes regarding my sense of self and how I have managed identity negotiations on my journey through early motherhood. Moustakas describes heuristic research as a 'way of engaging in scientific research through methods and processes aimed at discovery; a way of self-inquiry and dialogue with others aimed at finding the underlying meanings of important human experiences' (ibid: 15). The primary data in heuristic inquiry is to be found within oneself (ibid: 13), and I used two methods, reflexive journaling and autoethnography, to access my own experience of early motherhood.

I primarily relied upon reflexive journaling to record my lived experience of studying while mothering, including undertaking this research and the transition back to work following my second maternity leave. It was also the main method I relied upon to capture illuminations and insights that helped me to reach the deeper essences and meanings of this experience. I used autoethnography to draw upon my past experience of my initial transition to motherhood and my return to work following a period of intensively mothering my first child and wrote rich, present-tense depictions of moments along that journey. To create an autoethnographic account, the researcher uses 'systematic sociological introspection and emotional recall' to understand an experience lived through and then writes her experience as a story (Ellis 1999: 671).

I then used the technique of narrative interviewing and conducted conversations with three other mothers as co-researchers to gather data on their experience of balancing motherhood with paid work. Although heuristic research can be undertaken with only one researcher, 'a study will achieve richer, deeper, more profound and more varied meanings' (Moustakas 1990: 47) when it also draws upon the experiences of others. In order to extract the themes emerging from the other mothers' stories, I listened to each of the interviews repeatedly, noting down key words and statements and connecting recurring themes. When it came to writing an account of each mother's

story, I tried to access a receptive and intuitive state, in an attempt to draw on tacit knowing to capture 'a sense of the wholeness or essence' (ibid: 21) of the person and their story, incorporating both immediately obvious and more subliminal factors. I then gave the co-researches an opportunity to review the transcripts and respond to the thoughts and feelings they shared in their accounts, and incorporated the few minor amendments that they suggested.

Themes and essences

The key themes of this research revealed themselves consistently throughout the inquiry through the heuristic processes of focusing, indwelling and self-searching (Moustakas 1990). The primary illumination came in the form of a metaphor for my experience of early motherhood, which, in my case, certainly was an experience that caused me to lose my shape[1] (Cusk 2001: 91) and not have a solid sense of self for a considerable amount of time. The metaphor of losing and later rediscovering my shape provides a way of understanding this experience of self-construction in its wholeness and allows the meanings and essences of the other key themes to emerge.

Demands of motherhood

O'Reilly (2006: 46) argues that patriarchal motherhood makes mothering deeply oppressive to women because, in order to fulfil the demands 'expressed in the ideology of intensive mothering', 'the mother must repress her own selfhood'. This assertion has come to the fore in this research in terms of identity loss leading to a shaken sense of self, encapsulated in the concept of a loss of one's shape.

> I've been thinking that it might actually be better for me to let go of the idea that I'm an organised person', I confess to Anya (one of my 'yoga mum' friends, who is so gracious about her lack of sleep and seems to keep on top of everything with her three boys). 'Not being able to live up to that idea

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[1]   In her painfully honest account of early motherhood (which I read when I first became a mother), Cusk (2001: 91) referred to her nine-month-old daughter having 'lost her shape' when Cusk and the baby's father went on holidays without her for a week; my research connects this 'loss of shape' to the concept of not having a solid sense of self.

of myself is probably harder than just letting go of it.

(Autoethnography excerpt)

Rich (1977: 15) evokes the effects of the demands of motherhood in eloquent terms, referring to living through something 'considered central to the lives of women' and remembering 'little except anxiety, physical weariness, anger, self-blame, boredom and division within [her]self': a division made more acute by moments of passionate love and delight in her children and their unconditional love for her.

One of my co-researchers described her experience of early motherhood as being like a 'fall from grace' when her baby struggled for many months with an undiagnosed food intolerance that led to sleepless nights and frustration – absolutely not fitting in with the idealised notion of the 'good baby'.

> Why does it take so much effort? How could I fulfil this role with more ease? It seems like we have to fulfil this huge ideal with little or no support…I experience such deep, profound, true love for which I am deeply, deeply grateful. But the efforts involved still overwhelm me…Why do I find this so hard?
>
> (Research journal, 5 August 2015)

Multiple identities

My discovery that this research was, in fact, a study of engaging with multiple identities in an on-going process of self-construction gave me the perspective I needed to make progress with the inquiry and begin to uncover deeper meanings. My co-researchers' stories also highlighted the presence of multiple identities: 'Kate' mentioned a 'gut instinct' or drive to be with her babies and paid work becoming less important as voluntary work fulfilled the need for novel and stimulating projects; 'Maria' mentioned gaining strength and confidence from her career that helps in her role as mother; 'Lucy' spoke of a need for time and space to enable her to put a 'game-face' on. Their statements indicate some of the ways the conflict between loving and wanting to be with one's children and needing other avenues of self-expression manifests in identity negotiations.

Time spent with children feels very busy… It contrasts sharply with how I felt during a day at work – competent, well-presented, relaxed, getting things done (satisfied), composed…I'm grateful, I know I'm lucky to have a nice job… It is the opposite, really, at home. I feel dishevelled, invisible, unappreciated…

(Research journal, 13 January 2016)

This week, I've been noticing how my work identity is taking up more space. I could actually feel it happening. I have been doing the work I enjoy – careers adviser instead of my admin role and I feel the difference in me. I noticed coming home feeling happier, lighter, more patient with the children. More fulfilled. I'm feeling more positive about myself in general, my ability to cope, my acceptance of the lack of control over completing housework…

(Research journal, 5 February 2016)

In witnessing the positive effects of getting a sense of satisfaction from my work identity, I came to understand that it was contributing to a more robust sense of self, and that I was rediscovering a shape I could recognise and feel comfortable in.

Sense of self

One of the key themes that emerged later in the research was the importance of multiple identities in contributing to a solid sense of self. One of the changes I was asked to make to a co-researcher's story was to broaden the definition of her in the opening line of her story, to include all of her work roles and her voluntary work, indicating once again the relevance of these multiple identities to her sense of self.

As mentioned previously, other researchers (Guichard et al. 2013: 59) recognise the multi-dimensional aspect of identity, which they conceptualise as 'subjective identity forms', that contribute to how one represents or conceives oneself within a given context. In other words, they and others (Savickas 2011; Watson 2009) also connect the concept of identity negotiations to the process of self-construction.

The value of a solid sense of self…that would be the main message that I would be getting across

if working with a group of new mothers or mothers wanting to return to work…That was what helped me to feel strong and capable taking on Year 2 of my studies with a tiny infant – a solid sense of self that encompassed being mother, learner, guidance counsellor and everything in between.

(Research journal, 11 April 2016)

Resilience

The value of maintaining and nurturing a solid sense of self, and the role of multiple identities in providing that solidity and strength, coming to the fore in the research led me to understand that a coherent self-concept brings with it greater resilience, or capacity to maintain one's 'core purpose and integrity in the face of dramatically changed circumstances' (Zolli & Healy 2012: 7). Resilience, the human capacity to recover quickly from difficulties, can also be described as the ability of an object to spring back into shape ('Resilience' 2012).

What is relevant is how I was more resilient when I had [my second child] because I had work to help me maintain my shape (my sense of self) and the change of circumstances wasn't as dramatic.

(Research journal, 11 March 2016)

Conclusion

This research began with a question of passionate concern and a desire to bring about change in the world by exploring it from what I considered a positive angle: mothers successfully balancing mothering work with paid work. Adopting a heuristic research approach brought me back to my lived experience and, in a sense, to the darker side of this phenomenon, including the struggle to maintain a solid sense of self. When one considers the social context of motherhood as an oppressive patriarchal role, it is not surprising that a study of the interface between motherhood and self brought me to a place of overwhelming demands and frustration.

The main illuminations of this research concerned the importance of keeping one's shape and engaging in

multiple-identity negotiations to regain and maintain a coherent sense of self. This, in turn, increases the capacity to overcome difficulties and spring back into shape. I would argue that the importance of a robust sense of self in navigating transitions (Schlossberg 2011) is even more pertinent when one considers the significant loss of identity, possibly a feature of all transitions, that accompanies the transition to motherhood in particular.

The small-scale nature of this research means that the findings are particular to the experience of this small group of co-researchers. However, the depth of the heuristic method may have allowed essential, perhaps even universal, meanings of the experience of motherhood and self-construction to emerge. This piece of research has, on a small scale, answered the call for further research to 'explore how it is that women negotiate the balancing act of mothering; how they integrate their diminished former selves with their evolving mother-selves' (Oberman & Josselson 1996: 357). I believe that the rich material presented here supports the case for larger scale studies in a similar vein.

The themes and essences that emerge in this research also make a case for careers practitioners working with mothers to be cognisant of the identity negotiations mothers may be involved in when returning to the workplace. Oberman and Josselson's (1996: 357) declaration that 'only with a clearer reading of the phenomenology of the experience of motherhood [can] we hope to arrive at a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of this aspect of women's development' can equally be applied to the role of the careers practitioner in supporting mothers in constructing and maintaining a robust sense of self in the face of competing demands. Careers practitioners can provide an exploratory space for identity work to take place and can also be mindful of the concept that the workplace can either support the traditional socio-cultural role of motherhood or, potentially, an empowering experience of mothering.

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Book review

GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY IN CONTEXT: THEORY, RESEARCH AND DEBATE

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Much ink has been spilled on the concept of employability. From my own position as a former practitioner and manager in higher education careers work, and now course leader in career development professional programmes, it's a word that has become most familiar to my spellchecker. Many of the publications I've come across that have employability in the title have been dangerously lightweight. This one is resolutely not: it's a weighty tome in every way.

Michael Tomlinson and Len Holmes are already significant names in academic discussion of graduate employability. Tomlinson's (2007, 2012) research on student perspectives has identified an 'ideal type' model of orientations that has become well known in higher education careers work. Perhaps even more usefully, he challenges us to pay attention to how students construct their own narratives of employability, rather than accept an imposed framework. Holmes (2001, 2013) also rails against such frameworks, highlighting the process of becoming employable through assuming a graduate identity, rather than taking possession of a list of skills.

In this new publication, Tomlinson and Holmes have pulled together 15 chapters exploring the subject from a variety of angles, bookended by their own contributions which map the territory and set an agenda for continued work. A selection of social scientists subject the term and its baggage to a series of contrasting heuristic devices, slicing and dicing along the way. I enjoyed reading the book, considering in particular its potential value to a higher education career development practitioner. It is established early on that there are problems with current associations and uses of the term. The introduction and opening chapter do a great job of reminding us of some of the terms of the debate. Employability is contrasted with employment, we are reminded of distinctions between relative and absolute employability, considering the role of employers and the labour market and ways of unpicking the currency of qualifications, before an overview of the contributions is given. Fifteen chapters follow by a range of single or multiple authors: twenty three in total. Some names were familiar to me from the UK context such as Rothwell, McCash, Greenbank, Burke, Baruch, Scurry, Hinchliffe, Bridgstock and Dacre Pool, but others were refreshingly new, such as Nilsson, Cashian, Coetzee, Li and Siivonen, and give a useful international dimension.

At the outset, Tomlinson set us off on a sociological footing, using Bourdieu to unpick the role of various 'capitals', and big sociological names are referenced throughout with Tholen, Archer and Giddens also regularly cited. Non sociologists might want to read with an introductory reference guide to one side. Burke, Scurry, Blenkinsopp and Graley use social theory to consider social class in relation to the graduate labour market, exploring the role of higher education in increasing inequality, focusing attention on the congruence of Bourdieusian concepts of 'habitus' and 'field' and in particular how individuals reason when the field changes. Key concepts introduced here are Margaret Archer's morphogenesis (practices emerging from the interactions of structure and

agency) and insights into the 'internal conversations' we all might have with varying degrees of reflexivity.

Given the promise of that, I was disappointed that there was not more reflexivity throughout. Only Paul Greenbank and Phil McCash wrote themselves into their accounts at all. Although some of the concepts discussed such as capitals are now well used in practitioner discussions, there are few mentions of career development practice and little consideration of how practitioners might work with this material. I think there is space for subsequent publications to do just that.

As an edited collection, there are by necessity many voices within and the change of tone and pace between chapters makes for a few lurches along the way. This introduces the potential for inconsistency. For example, I found it slightly incongruous that despite being critical of a possessional approach to atomised 'employability skills', the possession of two such attributes (judgement in Hinchliffe and Walkington's chapter and emotional intelligence in Dacre Pool's exposition of CareerEdge) are the subjects of whole chapters.

Tomlinson has set out in his introduction the importance of considering the concept from three perspectives: the 'macro' or wider system level, the 'meso' or institutional level and the 'micro' or individual level. The collection does deliver on this. Nilsson's labour market analysis and other theoretical perspectives looking at professional learning. The 'meso' is covered by a consideration of the institutional responses of Edge Hill University which raises some pertinent ethical issues. The 'micro' is accounted for in Coetzee's chapter on 'psycho-social career preoccupations', reporting on the use of two quantitative tools.

As well as practitioners, students do not feature highly. The only student voices present in any substantial sense are in chapter 10, 'Cultivating the Art of Judgement in Students' by Geoff Hinchliffe and Helen Walkington, and I would have liked to have seen more of this.

This text can certainly assist the reader in understanding graduate employability in context

and theorising in new ways to challenge entrenched positions uncritically espoused. There is still further nuance possible, however. What distinction do we notice between the use of the term 'employability' use in companion to 'career' or on its own? Why the particular focus on graduate employability? For academic authors, I sometimes wonder whether their proximity to students and their stake in higher education informs their focus.

This stimulating read deserves a readership who will no doubt identify further nuance, and ink supplies will continue to be needed.

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Forthcoming events 2017

Call for Papers: NICEC Journal - October 2017

Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, October 2017 Issue.

This is an open call. Papers are invited on any topic of current interest to practitioners and academics working in the field of career development. Papers may relate to theory, policy, research or practice, in any aspect of careers work.

Potential authors should note the following deadlines for submission:

- **Expressions of interest:** 22nd May 2017
  supported by an article title and brief abstract (100 words)
- **Full draft articles:** 19th June 2017
- **Final articles:** 14th August 2017

With enquiries and expressions of interest, please contact the editor, Pete Robertson: p.robertson@napier.ac.uk

NICEC Events Calendar

Date and Time	Event	Place
Thursday 11 May 2017 5pm-6.30pm	*Seminar:* The Success Code: self projection for the modest (John Lees)	Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, Euston, London (Room 1)
Monday 19 June 2017 5pm-6.30pm	*Seminar:* Using metaphors to aid understanding of career (Peter Harding)	Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, Euston, London (Room 9)
Tuesday 19 September 2017 2pm-5pm	*Network meeting:* Joint session with Employment Research Institute, Napier University (Pete Robertson) *Possible topics:* Social media and Careers The Capability Approach	Napier University, Edinburgh
Thursday 23 November 2017 5pm-6.30pm	*Seminar:* Career guidance for refugees (Hazel Reid)	Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, Euston, London (Room 9)
Event Costs:		

Seminars and Network Meetings:
- included in membership fees for NICEC Fellows and members.
- £20 for seminars and £50 for network meetings for non-members.

Forthcoming events

CDI Training and Events Programme

Training and Skills Events		
Insight into Labour Market Information	Leeds NCVO Centre, London	Wednesday 10 May 2017 Wednesday 11 October 2017
An Introduction to Careers Work in Schools and Colleges	London	Thursday 18 May 2017
Advanced Career Guidance and Coaching Skills	Novotel City Hotel, Sheffield NCVO Centre, London Jurys Inn, Southampton	Thursday 22 June 2017 Friday 29 September 2017 Friday 8 December 2017
Motivating Clients – Inspirational and Creative Techniques	Birmingham	Friday 7 July 2017
Conferences, Exhibitions and Shows		
Student Conference & Exhibition 2017	Coventry University: Richard Crossman Building, Priory Street, Coventry, CV1 5FB	Wednesday 12 April 2017
Webinars (Free to Members)		
Introduction to Using Webinar Technology	Monday 3 April 2017, 16:00 – 16:45 Monday 8 May 2017, 16:00 – 16:45 Monday 12 June 2017, 16:00 – 16:45	
Navigating UCAS - Introduction to the UCAS 2017 Application Process	Thursday 27 April 2017, 14:00 – 15:00	
Using the Careers, Employability and Enterprise Framework	Wednesday 10 May 2017, 16:00 Wednesday 4 October 2017, 16:00	
Writing an Effective Personal Statement	Thursday 18 May 2017, 14:00 – 15:00	

For details and booking of all CDI events visit the CDI website at:
www.thecdi.net/Skills-Training-Events

Events: £145 for members, £195 for Non-Members & £60 for student members
Webinar Events are free of charge to all members; £40 to non-members

Please note that the CDI has now launched a brand new online event booking system. This enables booking of multiple delegates, a clean new interface and the ability to pay online by Paypal or Credit/Debit Card.

If you are looking for training and CPD opportunities that are not currently available here, we can create events and courses to meet your needs. Please contact sarah.garratt@thecdi.net

ABOUT THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

The Career Development Institute (CDI) is the UK-wide professional body for the career development sector. We have a rich heritage, bringing together the membership of ACEG, ACPi (UK); ICG and NAEGA to create a single voice for a diverse sector.

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 opportunities for all throughout the UK.

We have a strong and growing membership of individuals, students and affiliate organisations – all of whom subscribe to a Code of Ethics and are committed to continuous professional development. We are also the custodians of the UK Register for Career Development Professionals and the National Occupational Standards for the Career Development sector.

We have established:

- 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 events and conferences based on a training needs analysis of members and an Annual Conference and Exhibition;

- A media presence with the CDI as the *expert voice* in the field; advising politicians, speaking at conferences and commenting on policy;

- The UK Career Development Awards celebrating the best in day to day practice, including *Careers Adviser/ Coach of the Year* and *Careers Teacher of the Year*;

- Business development success winning several major tenders including the National Occupational Standards and projects with the Skills Show;

- A platform for a career progression pathway for the sector.

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 Guidance (Development in Scotland) 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 future research-focused events in the career development sector and now have a seat on the NICEC Editorial Board.

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

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