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Promoting research and reflective practice in career development

NICEC

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CAREER EDUCATION AND COUNSELLING

NICEC STATEMENT

The Fellows of NICEC agreed the following statement in 2010.

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

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

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

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

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AIMS AND SCOPE

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

- Career development in the workplace: private and public sector, small, medium and large organisations, private practitioners.
- Career development in education: schools, colleges, universities, adult education, public career services.
- Career development in the community: third age, voluntary, charity, social organisations, independent contexts, public career services.

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

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SUBSCRIPTION AND MEMBERSHIP

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

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Overview of this issue

Welcome to the October 2021 issue of the NICEC journal. Following an open call for papers, we received a number of innovative and useful submissions from both experienced and newer writers. We are delighted to open the issue with the winner of the 2021 Bill Law Memorial Award.

Sarah Snape explores women's identity work in career choices and transitions, and discusses implications for coaching practice.

Marina Milosheva and colleagues evaluate the role of information in career development work. Based on a critical review of the literature, they argue for the importance of career information competencies in the career development profession.

Marcus Allen and **Anne Chant** explore the key facilitating factors to achieving the eight Gatsby Benchmarks for careers work in secondary schools in Kent, UK. They argue for stronger linkages between the benchmarks and the achievement of learning outcomes for career education.

Liz Painter reports on her recent fieldwork exploring the role of Enterprise Coordinator. Taking a phenomenographical approach, four categories of understanding are developed: critical friend, matchmaker, collaborator, and reflective practitioner.

Laura Reid Marks and colleagues analyse the intersection of career development and mental health through the lens of Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) theory. They review key components of CIP theory, provide case studies highlighting the integration of career and mental health, and propose CIP-based interventions.

Gillian Yamin uses interpretivist research to understand how female university computing students perceive technology careers. It is argued that societal influences, both prior to university and once employed in technology, are significant factors, and suggestions are made to inform the practice of career development work.

Peter Plant argues that our societies need new visions of a just and sustainable future for all. Green Guidance is proposed as a contribution towards this.

Tristram Hooley and colleagues argue that we need to draw together the various approaches to social justice to offer a framework for practice. Consequently, they propose five signposts for an emancipatory career guidance.

Brittany Shields and **Charles Chen** examine the relationship between work-life conflict and career burnout in a general adult working population. They identify a moderate, statistically significant, positive relationship between work-life conflict and burnout, and proceed to discuss workplace and personal implications.

We are also grateful to Lyn Barham and Michelle Stewart for a topical and thorough book review of the *Oxford Handbook of Career Development* edited by Peter J. Robertson, Tristram Hooley, and Phil McCash.

Phil McCash, Editor

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Exploring women's identity work in career choices and transitions: Implications for coaching practice

Sarah Snape

Career transitions feature frequently in executive coaching sessions. It has been established that they involve identity and identity work, and can be challenging. Identity work in career transitions can be more complex for women than for men, due to biological and gender issues among other factors. Yet coaches are often unaware of what is involved in identity work in career transitions, and what their clients might experience. This study adopts a constructivist, qualitative research approach using Conceptual Encounter methodology to explore women's experience of identity work in career choices and transitions, and the implications for coaching practice.

Introduction

In the fields of career counselling and psychology, researchers such as Ibarra (2003), Ashforth and Schinoff (2016), Brown (2015, 2017), Petriglieri et al. (2018) and Yates (2017) have established that work-related change involves identity change and requires identity work. But until recently, executive coaching has tended to approach career transition from a skills and performance perspective rather than engaging with, and supporting, the more fundamental issue of shifting identities (Parker, 2016). Despite it being a frequent topic in my sessions, the integral identity work associated with career transition, fundamental to achieving long-term desired results (Vahasantanen et al. 2017; Skinner, 2014), was not a topic I encountered in any of my coach training and indeed is rarely acknowledged (McGill et al. 2019; Evans and Lines, 2014). That was the research gap to which I wanted to contribute with my Doctorate of Coaching and Mentoring. I wanted to create a bridge between the theoretical concepts involved in this topic and coaching in practice; to co-create, with working women, an accessible coaching model based on their experiences of identity work in career choices and transitions.

Background to the research

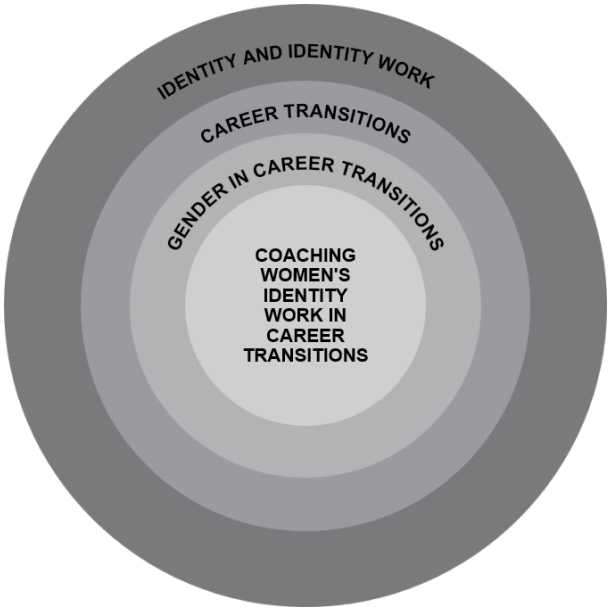
I am often invited to work with clients who are relatively new in their roles on issues such as leadership style, executive presence, or influencing stakeholders. However, once embarked on the coaching, a major underlying issue emerges concerned with identity in their new role – how they see themselves and how others see them. They ask: 'Is this right for me?'; 'What is expected of me?'; 'What are people thinking/saying about me?'; 'How should I behave now?'. They report feeling 'untethered' in their new role or situation. My clients are often embarrassed by their level of doubt, anxiety, and tumult. They feel alone, and uniquely inadequate, and they are reluctant to communicate their feelings to others, having perhaps heralded this event as an exciting achievement.

The questions can be linked to the fundamental and holistic enquiry lying at the heart of career practice (Yates, 2017): 'How can I become who I want to be?'. It's a complex issue. In order to answer it, you have to explore – Who am I now? Who do I want to be? How do I get there? The challenge is not always diminished by the transition being voluntary. Clients may have chosen to move to a new company, or to retrain, or to return to work after maternity leave, or to accept

Figure 1. Literature review schema and key sources.

Identity and Identity work
Ashforth & Mael, 1982
Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982
Marcus & Nurius, 1986
Brewer, 1991
Yost, 1992
Weick, 1995
Baumeister, 1996 onwards
Alvesson et al, 2008
Sinclair, 2011
Watson, 2012
Fachin & Davel, 2015
Brown, 2015, 2017
Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016
Petriglieri, 2010, 2018
Winkler, 2018
Caza et al., 2018

Career Transitions
Bridges, 1980, 1986, 2001
Prochaska et al., 1992
Ibarra, 1999 onwards
Fouad & Bynner, 2008
Kegan & Lahey, 2009
Weinstock, 2011
Savickas et al., 2009, 2012, 2013
Oakland et al., 2012
Evans & Lines, 2014
Fachin & Davel, 2015
Parker, 2016
Yates 2014, 2107
Petriglieri et al., (2018)
McGill et al., 2019



'how work-related identity change occurs remains largely under-studied and poorly understood' (Ibarra, 2005)

'there is a need for a comprehensive understanding of identity dynamics at work' (Caza, 2018)

'there has been an exponential growth in coaching literature but a parallel increase specifically on coaching for transition has yet to emerge and presents as an opportunity for future research…' (Parker, 2016)

Gender
Jorgeson, 2002
O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005
Maniero & Sullivan, 2005
Schein, 2007
Cabrera, 2007
Eagly & Carli, 2007
Motulsky, 2010
O'Neill & O'Reilly, 2010
Leimon et al., 2011
Butcher, 2012
Filsinger, 2012
Sinclair, 2013
LaPointe, 2013
Butler, 2014
Mavin et al., 2013, 2014
Skinner, 2014

Coaching women's identity work
Ruderman & Ohlott, 2005
Eagly, 2005
Hopkins et al., 2008
Benavides, 2008
Galuk, 2009
Florent-Treacy, 2009
Broughton & Miller, 2009
Cox et al, 2010
Bond & Naughton, 2011
Elston & Bonniwell, 2011
Bachkirova, 2011, 2020
Sinclair, 2011, 2013
Skinner, 2014
De-Valle, 2014
O'Neil et al., 2015
Bonneywell, 2017
Winkler, 2018

a senior promotion. But for many of my clients and research participants, while the decision may have been voluntary, the background situations were complex: a financially tempting offer of voluntary redundancy; an unexpected offer of promotion requiring an instant response; a transition from the military to the private sector two years before compulsory retirement; pressure to return to work/stay at home longer with the children; childcare or commuting issues. In my experience, whether the career transition is voluntary or not, many clients benefit from an opportunity to reappraise their sense of themselves, and to actively consider how they can become who they want to be.

Literature review

It was Ibarra's (2003) *Working Identity* that made me realise that this area of identity and identity work in career transitions needed to be in a coach's toolkit. I found that, while there was literature available on identity, identity work, career transitions and gender (see Figure 1), there was very little on coaching these concepts – and even less on coaching these topics with women, for whom, it has been established, the identity work in career transitions is more complex than men's, due to biology and our gendered society (Ely and Meyerson, 2010). Given this, I made the decision to confine my study to women.

Definitions

As a result of an extensive literature review, I use the following definitions of the key terms identity, identity work, and career transition.

Identity

'Contemporary conceptions of identity share four basic assumptions: that identity is dependent upon and formed within multiple contexts which bring social, cultural, political, and historical forces to bear upon that formation; that identity is formed in relationship with

others and involves emotions; that identity is shifting, unstable and multiple; and that identity involves the construction and reconstruction of meaning through stories over time.' (Rodgers and Scott, 2008, p. 733).

Identity work

An ongoing process whereby people strive to shape a relatively coherent and distinctive notion of personal self-identity; a project, rather than an achievement. (Mavin, 2014; Watson, 2008).

Career transition

'A process of disengagement from one situation onto a new situation, with each transition affecting a person's identity, experience and attitude' (Parker, 2016, p. 422)

Common to these definitions is that the concepts are all described as holistic, fluid, multiple, agile, and evolving. They all invite conscious engagement, interaction, ownership, and agency.

Methodology: Conceptual Encounter

My research aimed to discover, test, and generate. De Rivera's Conceptual Encounter methodology invites researchers to 'join with us in mapping personal experience' (de Rivera and Kreilkamp, 2006, p. 1) which matched my motivation for the research. The methodology was also a good fit for my constructivist worldview, adopting as it does a reflexive, iterative approach. It begins with the researcher creating an initial conceptualisation of the experience from the literature review and from personal experience or practice. The interviews begin with an exploration of a research partner's experience of the topic in question. Data is recorded, to be analysed after the interview. In the second half of the interview, the initial conceptualisation is shown to a research partner or focus group, and they are invited to accept, reject, or add to the elements of the model. After the interview, the researcher analyses the data and takes in modifications to the model, and then takes that modified model to the next research interview. In this way, the model iteratively evolves. This process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting the data and integrating experience continues until the model makes explicit what was previously implicit, achieves saturation, and is 'elegant and parsimonious' (de Rivera and Kreilkamp, 2006, p. 8). In this way, the conceptualisation generated by the researcher and her research partners becomes a genuine co-creation and is a synthesis of theory, practice, and evidence. It is an emergent methodology, an iterative process, a negotiated consensus.

Research sample

The research sample (n. 53) comprised 12 coaches who assisted with my initial model and 41 working women. The criteria were women age 25-55, from organisations based in the UK, who had experienced career transitions in the last two years. Participants were representative of those liable to be offered executive coaching by their organisations - the sample was largely highly educated, relatively privileged, high earning, and relatively confident. Only 5 out of 53 participants were from ethnic minorities which is a limitation of this study. However, 'if a given experience is possible, it is also subject to universalisation' (Haugh, 1987 cited in Willig, 2001, p. 17); and this research is intended to be the beginning of a conversation and exploration rather than prescriptive or predictive.

Findings

The findings were revealed in two parts: through an abstract conceptualisation (see Figure 2a), and through a post-interview thematic analysis of the data through the stages of the model.

Findings I: The MAP (Me-As-a-Process) Coaching Model

The acronym MAP (Me-As-a-Process) in the title of the model references both de Rivera's invitation to 'map' human experience, and the ongoing nature or process of identity and identity work (Watson, 2008; Brown, 2015, 2017). The model builds on work by Ibarra (2003), Yates (2017), and many others, and comprises two elements: a spiral diagram, and accompanying coaching questions. The spiral design was a result of influences from Prochaska et al. (1992), whose work showed that people build on earlier experiences, and Ibarra and Barbulescu's (2010) work on the link in identity work

Figure 2a. The MAP (Me-As-a-Process) Coaching Model

Women's experience of identity work in career choices and transitions

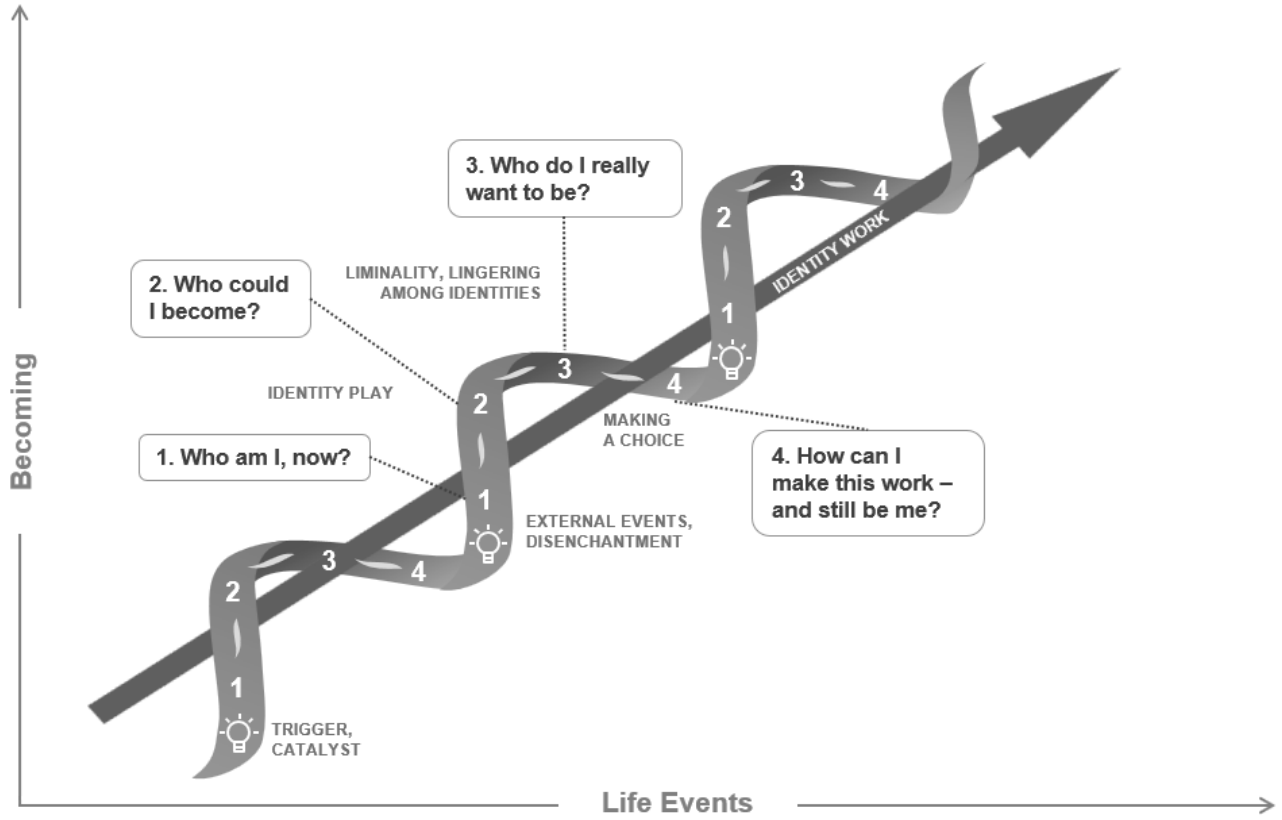


Figure 2b. The MAP (Me-As-a-Process) Coaching Questions

Which questions most resonate for you?

(Stages may be experienced sequentially, concurrently, or haphazardly)

IDENTITY WORK

1 Who am I, now?

- What's my story? (up to this point)
- How do I introduce myself?
- How am I spending my time?
- Am I learning?
- Am I fulfilling my potential?
- Am I living my values?
- How do I see myself?
- How do others see me?
- Who have I been, in the past?
- Is what I do congruent with who I am?
- Who am I expected to be?
- How many 'me's are there, who am I to different people?
- Am I happy (enough?)
- What are others assuming about me?
- What am I assuming about myself?
- What motivates me?
- What are my strengths?
- Is this life right for me?

2 Who could I become?

- Who do I want to be?
- In my wildest dreams, who could I be?
- What do I want in my life?
- Who don't I want to be?
- Who can't I be?
- Who inspires me?
- Who or what supports me?
- Who or what undermines me?
- How would I like others to see me?
- What's leading me to change?
- What's holding me where I am?
- Am I ready to disengage from the past?
- What is in my/outside my control?

3 Who do I really want to be?

- Do I really want this?
- How will I see myself in that role, how will others see me?
- Does it fit my values? Can I be me?
- Does it fit in with my life's purpose?
- Can I be who I want to be?
- Will I have the right amount of growth and stretch?
- How would I need to change?
- What would stop me?
- How could I make it happen?
- What are the pluses/ minuses?
- What are the consequences?
- Could I be happy (enough)?
- Would I be more congruent in this role?
- How shall I explore this more, how can I test it out?
- What changes can I make so that this can work for me?
- Who will support me?

4 How can I make this work - and still be me?

- What is my purpose here?
- How shall I navigate this new environment?
- How will I add value? What are my short- and long-term goals?
- What are the first steps I should take?
- How do I become comfortable with the discomfort of learning and growth?
- Looking back, what patterns do I notice about myself in transitions?
- What is expected of me?
- What do I need to pay attention to?
- What resources will I need?
- Where might I have gaps?
- How shall I create new networks and support systems?
- What behaviours will I need to start/stop/continue?
- Who could be role models or sponsors for me?
- How can I make this be what I want it to be?
- What's my story now?

What emotions am I becoming aware of? What are they telling me?

between past, present, and future. Research participants specifically referenced the value of learning from earlier positive and negative experiences and constructing identity as an ongoing process. The spiral is set in axes which are not strictly logical but which the research partners added in order to contextualise it. The y axis signifies Becoming, the x axis represents Life Events. Participants felt strongly that engaging with the identity work of who we can become was triggered primarily not by time but by events, and our individual responses to them (Willig, 2001).

The spiral diagram depicts four stages in the process of women's identity work in career choices and transitions. While the stages are numbered as if discrete, in practice, they interweave and can be experienced haphazardly rather than sequentially, and often concurrently. Stage one, Who am I now?, represents an exploration of self and an examination of the current situation. This exploration may have been going on for some time before, and indeed continues into, the process of identity work involved in transition. Research partners reported an often lengthy process of examining their current situation and story, and how they had got to where they were: 'It's a bit like getting the ground tilled or ploughed so that it's ready to be able to receive a new idea.' (Alison).

The second stage, 'Who could I become?', incorporates 'identity play' – an enjoyable time of imagining, dreaming, exploring, as described by Amina: 'The world was my oyster; I could do anything…I feel like number two was a fairly long stage'. This stage involves indulging in fantasies about possible or indeed impossible selves. Exploring possible selves (Markus and Nurius, 1986) was a relief from the stresses of working life for the participants. Some expressed fantasies of giving up a lucrative but stressful role in favour of a menial role, representing a desired identity in which the negative trappings of ambition are replaced by a simpler life choice. Others dreamed of more responsibility or expanded horizons. Possible selves in this study included a pilot, an undertaker, a CEO, a full-time mum, a sky-diver, and many others. It is often important for clients to be given permission to entertain an examination of this 'possible self', without having to explore the consequences or take action to pursue it. Most importantly, this stage provides information about what individuals really want, their 'identity motives' (Vignoles et al., 2008). For my research partners, it also reinforced empowerment and control as they realised they had choice in how they lived their lives. Sometimes, considering possible selves resulted in choosing to continue with their current situation for a period with a renewed sense of agency, purpose, and motivation.

In the third stage, 'Who do I really want to be?', choices are narrowed down and subjected to closer examination of whether and how identity can be reoriented towards desired futures from personal, social and practical perspectives. Moving from the inward-looking, reflective stage of 'low-risk' identity play (Parker, 2016, p. 427) to the next stage of actively engaging with activities related to making a change, can be a significant stumbling block. April admitted: 'I love conversations about possibility. The challenge I find is moving on from that, so making a choice'. At this point, clients benefit from a reminder of their motivations, and support with setting themselves step-by-step, achievable tasks involving the testing and exploring of potential futures (Ibarra, 2003). By achieving these tasks, clients increase their sense of agency and raise their levels of confidence and self-efficacy (Leimon et al. 2011). Active reflection on the results from testing and experimenting is key. This challenging stage of the process often led to participants pausing the process, citing reasons such as training, children, location, money, or health. Targeted relational support (Motulsky, 2010), as well as more solution-focused approaches such as goal setting and follow-up, structure and strategy, played a significant role in positive outcomes.

The fourth stage, 'How can I make this work – and still be me?', follows decision-making. It involves the construction of an identity that will offer the best chance of a route to fulfilment of a desired identity, immediately or at some future point. It may be a decision to make significant change, or it may be a choice to continue as before, but with a new purpose and attitude. Characterised by simultaneous feelings of fear and thrill, anxiety and excitement, women in this stage had to become comfortable with the discomfort of learning and growth. Cut loose from evidence of previous success and often feeling alone and challenged, they focused on identity work to become who they wanted to be in the new situation. Revisiting and learning from past experiences of career transition were found to be valuable. This stage can be a period

of active identity construction: identifying role models; assessing and expanding mindsets, skills and behaviours; building relationships and support networks; assessing resource gaps (practical and emotional); and other focused and practical steps to ensure a positive outcome (Ibarra, 2003; McGill & Clarke, 2019).
For some, such as Aria, it was about stripping away inauthentic layers: 'I've been a fake version of myself that my employer wanted me to be, or I thought he did, and now I can shed that skin and the real me, that's always been there, can be more authentic and honest'.

The MAP (Me-As-a-Process) Model: Coaching Questions

Coaching questions are an integral part of this model. This is an amendment to the methodology, which usually features labels rather than questions. However, de Rivera points to the ability of Conceptual Encounter to 'adapt itself to the different personalities and interests of different investigators' (de Rivera and Kreilkamp, 2006, p. 29). Questions are considered a key factor in achieving a positive outcome in coaching (Hardingham, 2004; Schein, 2013), and including them enabled the generation of a practical and accessible coaching tool. There are four sets of coaching questions, one for each of the model's stages, and each question refers to a concept raised in the literature and/or spoken about by one or more participant. Research partners who had been struggling with the experience at a subconscious level (Yates, 2017; Bourne and Ozbilgin, 2008) found the coaching questions helpful in bringing the experience to consciousness, as referenced in this study by Anita: 'Without actually being able to articulate them, it's much harder.'

The MAP Coaching Model reflects the need for both insight and action (Prochaska et al. 1992) in the many transitions that are likely to form part of the lifelong path of 'Becoming'. Its aim is not to develop women leaders, nor even to successfully complete a career transition (although I would be delighted if these were secondary outcomes). Its purpose is to bring the topic into the coaching arena, to encourage conscious engagement with and agency in the process of the identity work experienced in career choices and transitions. Developed in an iterative process, the model and its questions can continue to evolve as wider groups of participants input their experience.

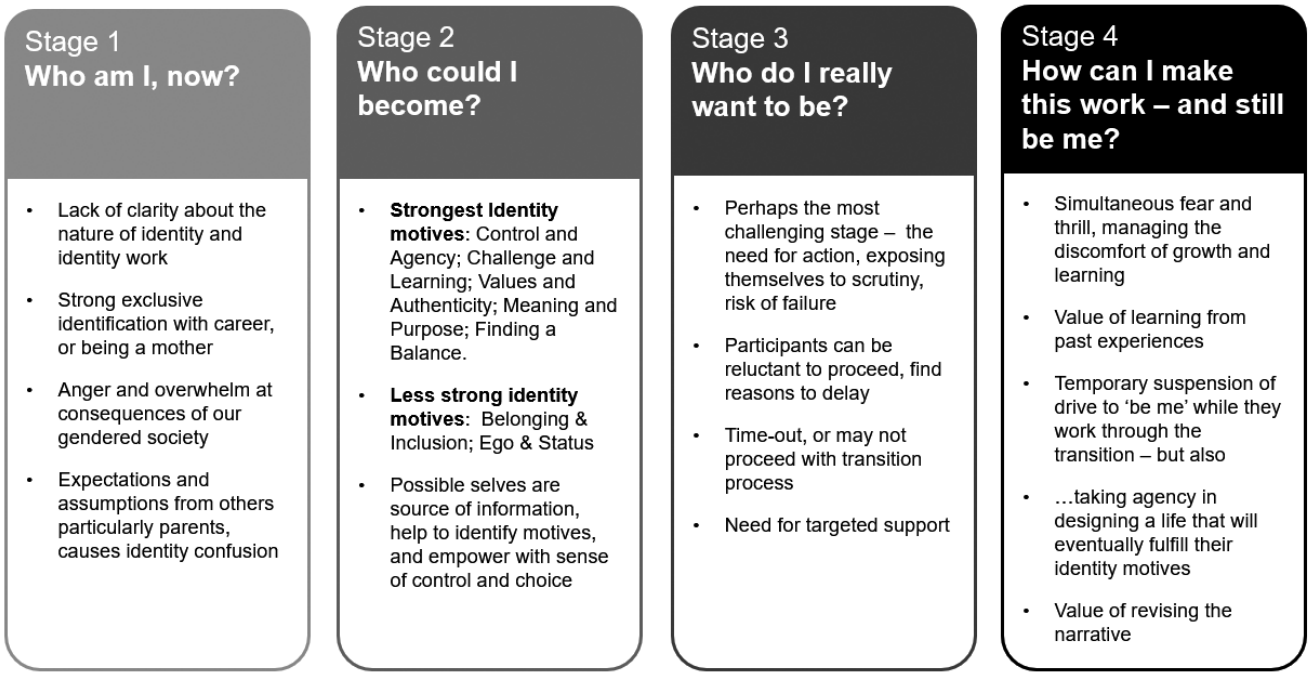
Findings II: Thematic analysis of the data

The interviews were a rich source of personal data which provided revealing insights into the women's experiences of identity work in career choices and transitions. Space constraints for this article are such that the diagram below is the most effective way to convey key findings from this data. One of the most consistent findings, however, was the participants' confusion about the nature of identity and their relief in discussing it. Rather than aligning with the currently prevalent view of identity as holistic and multiple (Fachin & Davel, 2015) they tended to rely on their career for an explanation of who they were, as described by Ava: 'Who am I, without being this role? Because it's a sort of defining, people know me for that, that's who I am' and Anastasia: 'Career has always been at the centre of my identity and everything else I build around that.' The research interview included a brief introduction to the concept of identity as described in the literature (Rodgers and Scott, 2008) and, within that, a discussion of multiple selves (Caza et al. 2018). The idea that a self could include several identities, which can shift and be shifted to accommodate changing circumstances (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016), was a relief to many of the research participants, as expressed by Annie: 'Forty-five minutes ago, I thought I was only my career, now I realise I'm not. A real relief.' The concept of identity work, too, was new to almost all of them, and they responded positively to it and on reflection recognised it as part of their experiences.

Discussion and implications for coaching practice

Identity work in career choices and transitions rarely feature in coaching literature or education (Parker, 2016; McGill et al., 2018). Researchers have noted that identity often forms the subtext or background canvas of a coaching session without being named (Bonneywell, 2016). Yet in a world in which the word 'identity' has been popularised across multi-disciplinary areas (Brown, 2017) research partners relished the opportunity to name and explore it. In her research on the link between identity and coaching practice, Butcher (2012, p. 123) noted that while 'concepts around identity were integral to the coaching process

Figure 3. Key findings for this group of participants



and dynamic', coaches were uneasy about working overtly in the area of identity, traditionally seen as more within the realm of therapy. Many practitioners (Cox et al. 2014; Popovic and Boniwell, 2007) agree that the worlds of therapies and coaching overlap in places, and see this as an opportunity that allows a diversity of approaches to suit clients' particular needs. In coaching identity work, coaches have to be aware of, and respectful of, the potential consequences of uncovering things that might not have been previously seen or understood (O'Neil et al. 2015) and be 'more thoughtful and appropriately tentative' (Bachkirova, 2020, p. 2). As in all areas of coaching, coaches should be alert to potential mental health warning signs (Buckley & Buckley, 2006), and have regular supervision.

Almost all the women experienced volatile emotions throughout the process, aligning with Kidd's (2008, p. 181) finding that 'Emotions are fundamental to careers'. However, for the research partners, it was not possible to determine a pattern to this emotional journey. But if the experience and process of identity work was idiosyncratic, the goal was consistent. The women wanted to create a congruent and dynamically evolving life with control and agency, challenge and learning, meaning and purpose, values and authenticity, and balance. They wanted to work actively towards aligning their career and their identity (Kira and Balkin, 2014), bringing more of themselves to their occupation and 'being me' (Sinclair, 2011), rather than feeling pressured to adopt inauthentic (often masculine) behaviours.

As every person's experience of the process is unique, there is no prescribed coaching approach, solution, technique, or language (Leimon et al. 2011). Coaches should be led by their client in their use of the MAP model. It may be useful to introduce it all at once to the client, or it might be more beneficial to bring in individual aspects of it as appropriate. As coaches, we need to be educated about contemporary views of identity, identity work, careers, and transitions, in order to feel confident about supporting our clients as they strive to become who they want to be.

Conclusion

This study has synthesised existing literature and subjective experience to generate the MAP Coaching Model. It offers coaches a structure, language, and coaching questions with which they can support clients in agentically navigating their unique, ongoing experience of 'identity-in-action' (Brown, 2015) and in the process increase their motivation and satisfaction (Yates, 2017). With the rise in disruptive change faced

in all areas of our society and organisations, individuals will almost certainly benefit from consciously engaging in the lifelong holistic project of constructing a self (Savickas, 2013). In 2005, Butler commented: 'Becoming human is no simple task and it is not always clear when or if one arrives' (Butler, 2005, p. 103). In this study, participant Angela echoes that sentiment: 'It's hard work, being a person.' In my coaching practice, I have found that clients value the model for its effect of normalising their experience, plotting where they are in the process, and providing a language that helps them consciously engage with it. I hope that it will support coaches and clients in embarking on the challenging yet empowering process of identity work in career choices and transitions.

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The role of information in career development

Marina Milosheva, Peter Robertson, Peter Cruickshank & Hazel Hall

The role of information in career development has received relatively little research attention. A literature review completed as part of a doctorate in the first half of 2021 indicates that career information features in only a small number of publications spread across Career Studies, Organisational Studies, and Education in the time period between 2000-2021. In many cases, career information has not been the main focus of these publications. It has, instead, been viewed as a by-product of other phenomena. This article contends that information should be treated as central, rather than peripheral, to career development processes.

Introduction

Information occupies a paradoxical position in the career development literature, identified as central to career processes, and yet rarely a central focus of study. On one hand, making informed career decisions is dependent on having adequate knowledge of available career options and the world of work (e.g. Prvulovic, 2020), and career information is an integral component of career education (Shevlin & Millar, 2006). Information provision is one of the primary functions of career counselling (Osborn et al., 2014). On the other hand, there is limited research into several aspects of career information use, and its role in career development tends to be implicit rather than explicit.

The importance of information in career development is underscored by its prominence within career-related policy. For instance, Career Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) policy – sometimes referred to as 'Career Information and Guidance' (CIG) policy or 'Career Information, Advice, Education, and Guidance' (CIAEG) policy – is part of a network of lifelong learning, skills development, and economic resilience policies worldwide. Ensuring that every individual has access to high-quality and impartial career information about work and education opportunities has long been a pillar of European career policy (e.g. UNESCO, 2000). CIAG policy in the UK stipulates that every young person and their parents should have access to career information and advice, and the introduction of the Gatsby benchmarks in England in 2013 emphasised the importance of linking the curriculum with future study options and labour market opportunities (Department for Education, 2018). The second of the eight Gatsby benchmarks directly addresses information, stating that the information provided in schools should be comprehensive, accurate, and up-to-date, and that young people should be taught how to find and process career information (Gatsby Benchmark Toolkit, 2018, p. 8).

Information features in discussions around technologies, career education, career assessment, and career intervention, however, the emphasis has been predominantly on information provision and not on information use. Here, the treatment of career information in the literature appears to be governed by a 'lack of information' assumption - a belief that insufficient career information is at the root of career indecision, and that the provision of more career information will resolve career conundrums. Increasingly, however, the modern, technologically mediated information landscape is characterised not so much by a lack of information, as by an overabundance of information and misinformation (Owen et al., 2020). In light of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, this overabundance of information has been termed an 'infodemic' after having been referred to as an 'information explosion' in previous years (e.g. Beath et

al., 2012; Germani & Biller-Andorno, 2021). Learners and decision-makers are thus more likely to experience information overload than lack of information (Roetzel, 2019). Yet, the mechanisms by which information behaviours and information skills interface with career development learning, career decision-making, and career information processing in practice are not well understood, both from a self-management perspective, and from a career intervention perspective.

In light of this, an interdisciplinary doctoral project exploring young people's career information literacy and career information use in the context of career development learning and career decision-making is currently being conducted by Marina Milosheva. This project is undertaken in collaboration with Scotland's leading skills agency, Skills Development Scotland, and combines insights from the fields of Career Studies, Information Science, and Information Literacy. The paper presented in this issue reports on the literature review component of this project. Preliminary results of the empirical component of the doctoral project are expected in 2022.

Career influences as opposed to information sources and information behaviours

Multiple formal and informal – otherwise known as 'hot' and 'cold' – information sources are factored into individuals' career development processes at any given time within available opportunity structures (Greenbank, 2009, p. 34). Information can be print-based, web-based, obtained from career services and educational institutions, or obtained from other people (Jenkins & Jeske, 2017). However, the vast majority of research publications that make reference to career information do so in the context of career *influences* rather than information *sources* and information *behaviours*.

For instance, the influence of social actors on career development is well-established (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018), and 'knowing who' is an essential part of building one's career capital (Dickmann et al., 2018, p.9). Different studies reveal different orders of influence of social actors on career decisions: Chin et al. (2019) found that families are more influential than career services, and career services are more influential than impressions gathered through work experience, while Zondag and Brink (2017) found that college professors and courses were rated as the most useful sources of information, followed by career fairs, jobs, internships, and family members. Interestingly, Griffin and colleagues (2010) observed that students in upper grades rated school counsellors and college resources as most useful, while students in lower grades felt that parents, guardians, and relatives were most useful. This suggests that there may be a shift towards the use of more formal resources and a reorientation towards the formation of more realistic representations of the world of work as young people approach crucial transition points. Still, the informational aspects of social exchanges in career development are not well understood, and there are few studies focusing specifically on individuals' information behaviours (Mowbray et al., 2018).

Research in the area of career decision-making styles has alluded to the existence of career information behaviours, however, the units of analysis here have been the attitudinal and affective dimensions of career decision-making rather than its informational determinants. This research makes a distinction along two main types of dichotomies: active (intentional) information seeking versus passive (unintentional); receipt of information, and rational versus affective decision-making. Multiple career decision-making style categories exist, for example: enjoyment-based, ability-based, and goal-based (Jahn & Myers, 2014, pp. 97-99); rational, intuitive, and dependent (Harren, 1979, p. 121); rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, spontaneous (van Vianen et al., 2009, p. 300); and disengaged, fixed, satisficing, validating, and gathering (The Careers & Enterprise company, 2016, p. 8). Still, not much is known about the information seeking patterns associated with each decision-making style or stage. High academic achievement appears to be a precursor to the productive engagement with career information, whereas negative career thoughts explain a large amount of the variance observed in 'lack of information' reporting (Kelly & Shin, 2009, p. 201; Kelly & Pulver, 2003, p. 445). It is possible that high academic achievers experience increased positivity and self-efficacy due to the wide range of options they perceive as being available to them. Those who report 'lack

of information' appear to be doing so largely due to affective factors, which could suggest that they avoid engaging with information even when information is available to them.

Nevertheless, these assertions are speculations which might overstate or overgeneralise effects. The main subject of the decision-making styles reported above is, naturally, decision-making; that means that their focal point is not career information use for the purposes of career development learning or career decision-making. The black box metaphor of systems seems fitting here: the inputs and outputs of decision-making can be observed, but its inner informational transformations remain concealed (e.g. Nugent & Cunningham, 2005). The inputs are career influences, and there are multiple decision-making and affective outputs. Information behaviours relative to information sources are underexplored as part of this decision-making process.

Cognitive information processing in context

While individuals' attitudes to various career influences are reasonably well-documented, little is known about individuals' use of information for the purposes of career decision-making and career development learning. Most career decision-making models assume that individuals gather information about themselves and about potential occupations during the middle stages of the career decision-making process – typically at the point where they explore and evaluate options (Pesch et al., 2018). Here, information is instrumental to other processes, rather than the central focus of conceptualisations. Information use may, in fact, be present at all decision-making stages in some capacity, however, there is not much evidence to that account because a comprehensive theory, framework, or model of career information use for the purposes of decision-making is yet to be developed.

However, there are two models that outline both *what* individuals need to know and *how* they come to know it: Cognitive Information Processing Theory (CIP) (Sampson et al., 2004) and the Decision learning, Opportunity awareness, Transition learning, and Self-awareness (DOTS) model (Law & Watts, 2003). According to CIP, individuals need to learn both about themselves and the world of work, and they do so through a combination of decision-making skills and executive processing. The decision-making skills are Communication, Analysis, Synthesis, Valuing, and Execution (also known as the CASVE cycle), and meta-cognitive processes such as self-talk, self-awareness, and monitoring and control govern the decision-making process. In the DOTS model (Law & Watts, 2003, pp. 1-4), much like in the CIP model, the bodies of knowledge to be mastered are knowledge of the world of work and knowledge of the self. In both DOTS and CIP, there is an understanding of how decisions and transitions are made: in DOTS, these processes are modelled in a non-prescriptive manner, whereas in CIP, they are modelled cyclically. CIP and DOTS are therefore relevant to the study of career information use since they directly address the career development learning process, and learning and information are inextricably linked.

As valuable as they may be, these two models, as well as research applying them to various phenomena, may not encompass the full extent and complexity of individuals' everyday use of career information. Career development processes are complex, integrating individual attitudes and aptitudes with external influences, and knowledge of the self with knowledge of the world of work (McMahon & Patton, 2018). Thus, for example, studies evaluating the effectiveness of career interventions based on CIP (e.g. Osborn et al., 2020) cannot fully account for the means by which individuals navigate complex information landscapes in everyday life. Future research should generate more knowledge of individuals' career information use in context, paying special attention to the structural, affective, and cognitive properties of career development learning and career decision-making. Here, information behaviour stories unfolding over time may help contextualise cognitive information processing stages. Bill Law's "new DOTS" model extends the earlier iteration of DOTS to also include 'sensing', 'sifting', 'focusing', and 'understanding' dimensions, and provides an analytical framework against which actions set in a social context can be studied (Law, 2001; *for an overview of Bill Law's work and legacy, see Plant, 2017*). Not only does the new DOTS align well with CIP owing to its career learning focus; it also offers tools with which to explain why information about careers is sought, as well as where it is sought, by whom, how, and when.

Another analytical tool with which it would be possible to explain how and why information is sought within social worlds is Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent et al., 1994). Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and its associated approaches were recently argued to be applicable to the study of information-centric phenomena in Information Science such as information behaviours (Middleton et al., 2019). SCCT's self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals dimensions can thus integrate cognition, action, and information use within social contexts. Cognitive constructs are present in both CIP and SCCT, and the two approaches used together allow for an integrative understanding of career decision-making to be developed (Bullock-Yowell et al., 2012). SCCT can therefore be used alongside CIP and the new DOTS models to conceptualise information use in the context of career development learning and career decision-making.

Lack of information or cognitive overload?

Historically, career information research has been driven by the conceptualisation and assessment of individuals' 'lack of information' or 'lack of occupational knowledge'. Some empirical studies have assessed a single 'lack of information' variable, while others have expanded the dimension into several variables and clusters such as: lack of self, occupational, and process information (Brown & Rector, 2008); need for information and need for self-knowledge (Kelly & Pulver, 2003); lack of information about the process, the self, occupations, and ways of obtaining additional information; and inconsistent information, unreliable information, internal conflicts, and external conflicts (Gati et al., 1996; Levin et al., 2020). Here, the terms 'lack of information' and 'lack of knowledge' have tended to be used interchangeably and have been employed both in relation to the self and the world of work. They have been positioned as effects that underpin career readiness and career indecision.

The assessment of occupational knowledge has typically been associated with developmental perspectives and has been administered to pupils and adolescents. Some studies have assessed young people's actual knowledge of common occupations and occupational categories (e.g. Ginevra & Nota, 2018), while other studies have also assessed their *perceived* occupational knowledge (e.g. Hirschi, 2011, p. 340; Pesch et al., 2018). For instance, Rohlfing and colleagues (2012, p. 332) studied the relation of occupational knowledge of 'People vs Things', 'Ideas vs Data', and 'Prestige' occupations to career interests and competence perceptions in children, and Cinamon and Yeshayahu (2021) assessed children's occupational knowledge through activities asking them to name and explain occupations. Overall, findings indicate that occupational knowledge increases with age, is gendered, is higher for more conventional and higher-prestige occupations, and enhances career choice readiness. Young people appear to be making career decisions on the basis of the beliefs they have about occupations and their abilities to obtain occupational information, rather than on the basis of any objective informational criteria (Pesch et al., 2018, p.585).

Indeed, not much is known about the means by which young people obtain career information or the means by which they apply this information to their career decision-making. Knowledge of, or information about, common occupational categories might be quite different from information processed through an individual's unique career development worldview. In addition, the reality of individuals' use of career information may be much more complex than the effects described above, and 'lack of information' may be a localised phenomenon rather than a global one. Individuals from under-privileged or minority backgrounds may experience the greatest inequalities in access to information (Moote & Archer, 2016; Puckett & Hargittai, 2012), and some institutions may fail to provide impartial career information and advice (e.g. Acquah et al., 2015, p. 197; Houghton et al., 2020).

There is little research to directly attest to the validity of such assumptions, however, there are indications that new informational phenomena are emerging both at the systemic level and at the level of the individual. At the systemic level, there are challenges around the provision of information in an integrative, personalised, and comprehensive manner. Students find that they have to inquire individually from multiple institutions or information databases in order to ensure comprehensiveness, continuity, and personalisation of information (Herndon, 2012). At

the individual level, the interaction with disconnected information systems and information-rich social environments results in a considerable cognitive burden, which can lead to disengagement or decision paralysis in turn. Young people report struggling with findings answers to fundamental questions such as "What are the possible careers open to me?" and experiencing cognitive overload due to being unable to make sensible comparisons between options (The Careers & Enterprise company, 2016, pp. 4-10). In other words, their cognitive architecture may lack structuring principles and heuristics with which to filter and make sense of the incoming information – which are pillars of efficient cognitive processing and decision-making (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier, 2011; Hills, 2018).

Consequently, it might be most appropriate to state that there is not a lack of information within career development systems per se. Instead, there may be a lack of the right information, at the right time, and in the right format. In addition to lack of information, there may also be cognitive overload and difficulties in evaluating the relevance and quality of available career information.

Information Science and career information literacy

To prevent information overload, researchers have called for the development of occupational information systems and online information sources that are more personalised and integrative (Attwell, 2019, p. 89-90; Borbely-Pecze, 2020). There have been debates as to how ICT should be integrated in career guidance as well (Bimrose et al., 2015, p. 5; Kettunen et al., 2015, p. 43). Overall, dominant narratives pertaining to the role of ICTs in career development have sought to embed digital technologies within the service, design, and intervention traditions of career development, and to provide information to individuals in novel ways. However, little is known about the self-management and career information competencies of individual decision-makers and the means by which they make sense of online career information.

For individuals, digital technologies can fulfil a number of roles: a library; a media channel; a surveillance camera; a marketplace; a meeting place; or an arena where freedoms and power struggles are in a constant push and pull (Hooley & Staunton, 2020, pp. 5-6). With the advent of social media in particular, individuals and those who support them in their decision-making are faced with a number of information quality challenges. Some examples of such challenges are: reduced data quality; a lack of clarity about the context, authorship, and geographic location of information sources; intentional and unintentional reporting biases; and popularity and similarity biases (e.g. Sampson et al., 2020; Sampson et al., 2018). While a host of career management skills exist (Sultana, 2012), few of them directly address the discovery, evaluation, and effective use of information as part of career development learning and decision-making – both with a view towards the challenges of using online information and as a part of wider information landscapes. Of particular interest here is the role of digital literacy in career development, which pertains to individuals' skills in filtering and interpreting online career information (e.g. Hooley, 2012; Staunton, 2018), as well as the role of 'career information literacy', which is an emerging area of interest for librarians, researchers, and career services alike (Lin-Stephens et al., 2019, p. 234).

In Information Science, information literacy is defined as a "set of skills and abilities which everyone needs to undertake information-related tasks; for instance, how to discover, access, interpret, analyse, manage, create, communicate, store and share information." (CILIP, 2018, p.3). This formulation of information literacy includes both *digital information* and *social sources of information*. Accordingly, while some researchers have focused only on the digital aspects of information literacy, others have understood information literacy as either a meta-literacy or as a socially-situated and context-specific 'way of knowing' within information landscapes (e.g. Lloyd, 2006; Lloyd, 2012; Mackey & Jacobson, 2011). When formulated in this way, career information literacy can combine information skills and information behaviours into a common designation: information practices. As part of information practices, information skills are deployed in a certain context, with a certain learning or decision-making goal, and relative to textual, social, and physical sources of information.

Information Science can therefore bring novel insights to Career Studies, and can complement

existing knowledge of career influences and cognitive information processing with information-centric concepts such as information behaviours and information literacy. Career information literacy is a promising area of study which addresses both of the gaps in knowledge identified in this paper – career information skills and career information use in context – and creates interdisciplinary linkages between the two disciplines.

Conclusion

Currently, career information can be found in one of two main roles in the literature. One of its roles is as a peripheral component in discussions of career education, career intervention, and the role of ICT in career guidance. Another one of its roles is as a 'lack of career information' discourse which overlooks systemic information provision and information quality challenges, as well as individual information use and information competency matters. Against the backdrop of technological and socio-economic developments, the role of information in career development is changing. By focussing exclusively on information provision by service providers, there is a risk that some of the fundamental informational determinants of individuals' career development learning and career decision-making would be overlooked.

The development of career information competencies in individuals making career decisions, as well as in the career practitioners who support them, is now more important than ever. More information-centric and interdisciplinary research is needed in order to achieve this. Information Science has much to offer here. The study of career information literacy has the potential to integrate cognitive overload, information validity, information sources, information skills, and information use domains into a cohesive conceptual framework. The study of career information literacy practices, in particular, can generate new knowledge of the role of information at both the systemic and individual level.

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Exploring key facilitating factors to achieving the eight Gatsby Benchmarks in secondary schools in Kent

Marcus Allen & Anne Chant

The 2017 UK Careers Strategy required schools to meet the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. This paper describes a survey of Careers Leaders in schools in Kent which finds that key to success with the Gatsby Benchmarks were support from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), sufficient resources as well as earmarked staff and curriculum time. This was irrespective of school type. The results indicate that SLTs within schools need to engage with career development activities, ensure that they are fully resourced, and allow them to pervade throughout their institutions.

Introduction

The 2014 report 'Good Career Guidance' from the Gatsby Charitable Foundation (Holman, 2014) highlighted a set of eight Benchmarks that could be used in schools against which the content of their career guidance programmes could be audited. The reception of 'Good Career Guidance' has been quite remarkable and it quickly gained traction with both practitioners and policy makers as a basis for a framework for career guidance (The Gatsby Foundation, 2018). The UK Government's latest Careers Strategy (DfE, 2017) and a recent white paper (DfE, 2021) have required maintained schools to use the Benchmarks to develop their career guidance provision. The aim of the strategy was that schools should provide sufficient content to achieve all eight Gatsby Benchmarks by the end of 2020 (DfE, 2018) and there was a commitment to fund a programme of Careers Leader training. While achieving the benchmarks is not a legal requirement, the latest Ofsted inspection framework includes a school's progress against the benchmarks (Ofsted, 2019) and the Gatsby Benchmarks have been integrated into recent Career Development Institute (CDI) frameworks (CDI, 2020; CDI, 2021).

The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) has established online tools including COMPASS, a self-assessment tool whereby schools can compare their current careers programme against the eight Gatsby Benchmarks (Hooley, 2017) and Tracker, an online platform designed to be used to construct and manage a school careers plan once an evaluation of their provision has been made using the COMPASS tool. Aggregated data from COMPASS shows that, since the introduction of the benchmarks in 2014, the average number of benchmarks achieved by schools and colleges has increased from 1.34 to 1.87 in 2017, 3.00 in 2019 and 3.75 in 2020 (The CEC, 2020). However, the tool is unable to indicate which are the critical facilitating factors needed to achieve the eight benchmarks. Recent data from a pilot of implementing the benchmarks in 16 schools and colleges in the North East highlights several key enabling factors which include SLT support, regional facilitators, effective monitoring, and quality of career guidance activities. It also highlights challenges which include fitting these activities in the curriculum, costs and engaging parents (Hanson et al., 2021). This article reports on the regional picture of Gatsby Benchmark achievement in the Kent and Medway area and on some of the factors linked to it.

Concerns about meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks in schools have usually centred around funding from already-stretched budgets and that there may be limited career guidance experience within the staffroom, with teaching staff often being expected to deliver significant careers learning (Hooley et al., 2015). Kent is a county with a wide variation in types of schools including; single sex and mixed selective grammar schools, comprehensive schools, academies,

free schools, and independent schools. COMPASS data show 57% of institutions within the South East LEP completed COMPASS and, on average, had completed 2.8 Benchmarks in 2018/19, below the national average of 3.2 Benchmarks (The CEC, 2019). The proportion of Kent schools and colleges within these data is not identified and the progress against the benchmarks by the different types of institutions in Kent is also unknown. Meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks is challenging for all schools, but whether different types of school had different challenges or perspectives has to date been unclear.

This study therefore investigates career guidance provision within schools and colleges in Kent to determine their current progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks and, importantly, which are the key factors that have an impact on meeting the benchmarks. This will help us understand more about the design, planning, and provision of career guidance, including career learning, how it varies across different school types in Kent and will allow the appropriate, staff, training, resources or time to be targeted in schools to help them move towards achieving all eight Gatsby Benchmarks.

Methodology

Participants

We conducted a survey amongst Careers Leaders in Kent schools using an online questionnaire (Evans & Mathur, 2005) that was sent out to schools by email. Over 100 schools and colleges in Kent were invited to take part in the study. Where possible, a person already identified as a Careers Leader, or having a role in career guidance, or a senior member of staff was targeted. Otherwise, the email was sent to a general administration address.

Questionnaire

Questions were designed to both find out more about the Careers Leaders, their qualifications and time spent on career guidance at their institutions and their progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks. It was intentionally limited to 10 questions and participants were advised that it would only take 10 minutes to complete as a longer anticipated questionnaire completion time reduces the response rate (Galesic & Bosnjak, 2009). The survey was conducted during May and June 2020 when schools were closed because of Covid-19. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire as if there had been no disruptions to education caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The first three questions identified the type of school the respondents worked at, the title they were given and whether they had any formal careers qualifications together with the amount of time spent on career guidance. This allowed subsequent question data to be divided into groups based on school type. One question allowed data collection on current progress towards meeting the benchmarks that could be compared with published data gathered from the Compass tool (The CEC, 2020). This treated the 8 benchmarks as Likert-type items with six rating options for participants to describe their progress; 'not at all well', 'not so well', 'somewhat well', 'very well', 'extremely well' or 'we have fully met this benchmark'. This was followed by a question which enabled respondents to rank the benchmarks from 'easiest' to 'hardest' to meet. Next were mirroring questions which addressed facilitating factors that enabled good progress to achieving benchmarks and those same factors that would help respondents achieve the remaining benchmarks for which they had made least progress. These were a list of factors with Likert-style responses (e.g. 'was most significant', 'helped a lot', 'helped a little', 'made no difference'). The final question was a 'free text' option in which respondents were asked to detail any barriers they had to meeting benchmarks or any significant hurdles overcome to achieve benchmarks.

Results

Survey Respondents

Responses are summarised in Figure 1. Just under half of respondents from maintained schools (18/38, 47%) indicated that they were a 'Careers Leader' or 'Careers Leader and Careers Adviser' and only 16% (6/38) indicated that they were a 'Senior Leader' in the school with responsibility for career guidance. This may reflect the recent adoption of these titles even though legislation required all maintained schools to appoint a 'Careers Leader' by September 2018 as the first step towards achieving the Gatsby Benchmarks (DfE, 2018).

Figure 1. Responses from Careers Leaders in Kent

The 'Other' category comprises three Secondary Modern Schools, two Colleges of Further Education, a University Technical College and a Special School.

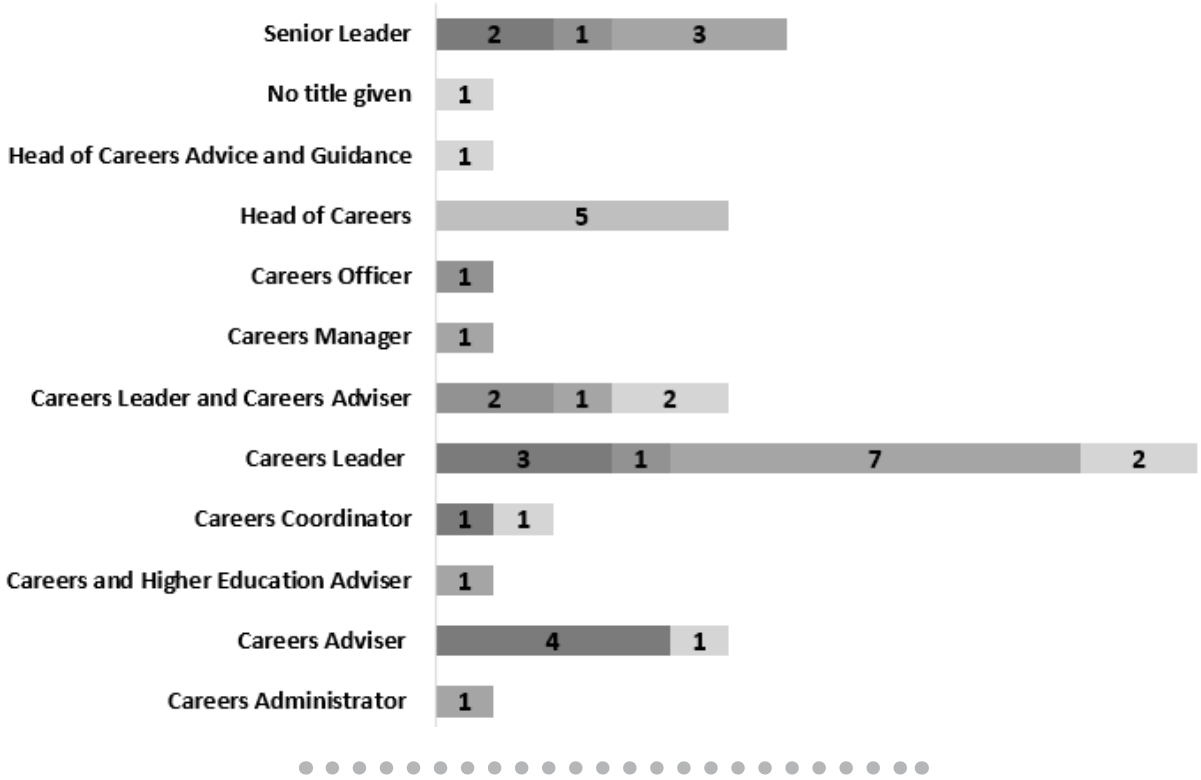
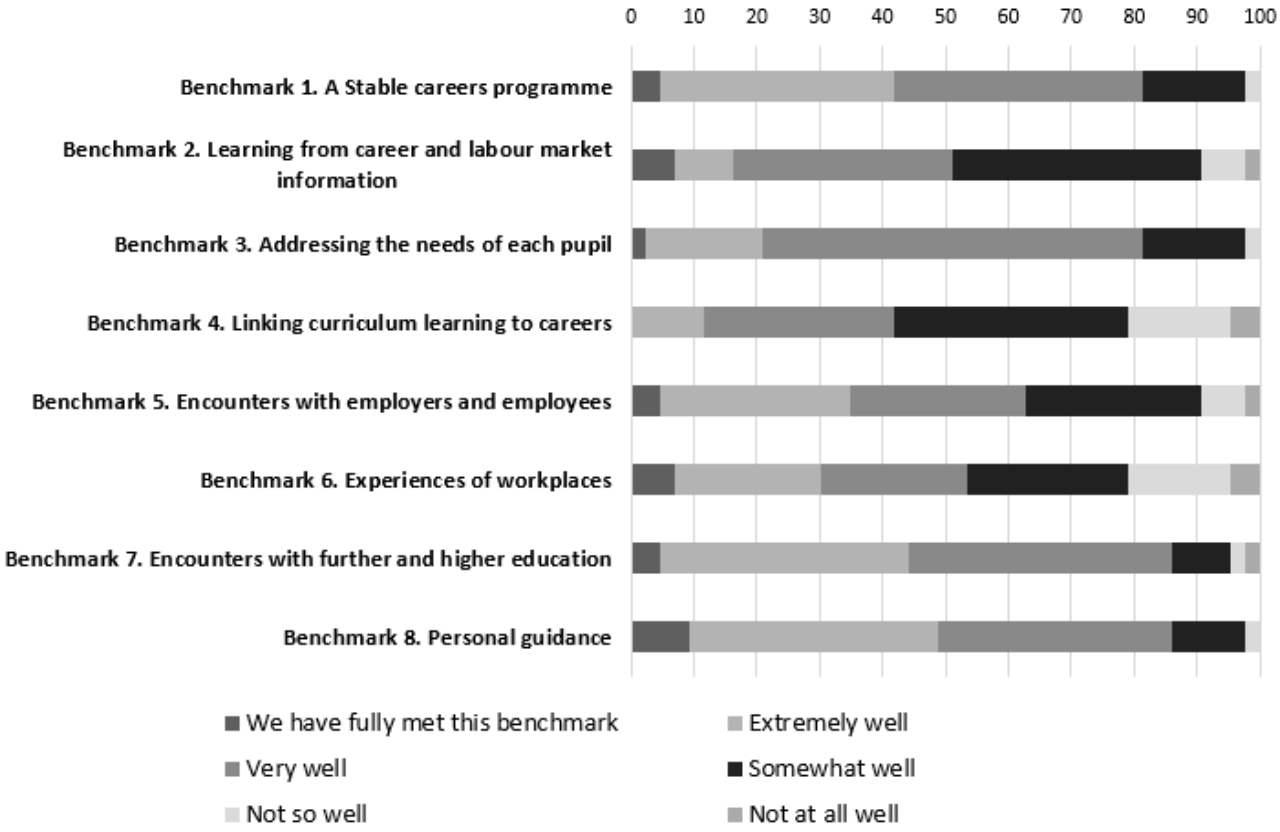


Figure 2. Progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks in Kent Schools



Overall, 14 respondents (35%) had a careers qualification of Level 6 or above including five at Level 7 (Masters) with 3 of these also having gained QCD/QCG. A further two declared a Level 4 diploma in Career Guidance. Only two respondents stated that they had undergone Careers Leader training. Independent schools had the most staff with formal careers qualifications with 60% (3/5) of respondents being qualified to Level 6 or above. From the academies that responded, only 10% (1/10) had a Level 6-qualified Careers Leader and only 10% (1/10) had undertaken Careers Leader training. These data suggest that, across all school types, formal careers qualifications are either not deemed necessary or not available for the role of Careers Leader, or delivery of career guidance. The increased prevalence of formal careers qualifications within the independent sector may reflect the costs to undertake them and a willingness/ability to support staff with these costs.

Current progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks

Government legislation required schools in the maintained sector to meet all Gatsby Benchmarks by the end of 2020, although it is unlikely that there will be any negative consequences for non-compliance given the recent coronavirus pandemic. The respondents were asked to answer as if the pandemic had not disrupted education and 74% were confident that they would have achieved all eight benchmarks by the Government deadline (6-7 months after the survey). This included four of the independent schools who were not bound by the legislation but were clearly working towards achieving the benchmarks.

Respondents were asked how well they thought they were currently meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks using Lickert-style ratings (Figure 2) based on COMPASS or other data and their own judgement. Overall, respondents were cautious in their assessment of having 'fully met' any of the Benchmarks (<10%) compared to the data from the COMPASS tool which shows between 21% and 57% of schools completing the tool had achieved each benchmark (The CEC, 2019). This likely reflects a more nuanced approach by respondents when assessing whether they had met a Benchmark, even though they were told they could use the COMPASS data. Based on the positive responses, >80% of the schools surveyed have a stable careers programme (Benchmark 1), address the needs of each pupil (Benchmark 3), enable encounters with higher and further education (Benchmark 7) and undertake personal guidance (Benchmark 8). The Benchmarks considered to have been least well met were; linking curriculum learning to careers (Benchmark 4) where nearly 60% of respondents indicated that they had met this benchmark 'somewhat well' or worse; Benchmarks 6 (experiences of workplaces) and Benchmark 2 (learning from career and labour market information), where nearly 50% respondents put them in the negative categories. Benchmark 4 was also the only benchmark not 'fully met' by any of the 43 respondents.

Estimation of how easy/hard it is to achieve each Gatsby Benchmark

Respondents were asked to rank the benchmarks from easiest (1/8) to hardest (8/8) to achieve. Only Benchmark 3 was not ranked 1/8 by any respondents and only Benchmark 5 failed to achieve an 8/8 ranking. An average ranking score was calculated for each benchmark (Figure 3). The results suggest that Benchmarks 1 and 8 were the easiest and Benchmarks 4 and 6 as the hardest to achieve ($P<0.05$). This correlates well with the data on progress against the benchmarks with those showing least progress considered the hardest and those showing most progress considered the easiest.

Facilitating factors to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks

From a list of nine possible facilitating factors, respondents indicated whether they had helped to meet the benchmarks or not and which factor(s) were most significant (Figure 4). Of all nine factors, the three that were most significant were, resources (27%, n=41, $\chi 2 = 16.463$ $p < 0.01$), staff time (24%, n=41, $\chi 2 = 8.659$, $p < 0.05$) and support from the SLT (24%, n=41, $\chi 2 = 17.634$, $p < 0.01$). Interestingly staff training was only rated most significant by 5% (n=38) of respondents and was much more likely to be rated as 'helped a little' (49%, n=39). The COMPASS tool was most rated as 'helped a little' (56%, n=41) whereas the Tracker tool was generally considered to have 'made no difference' (58%, n=31).

Figure 3. Ranking of the Gatsby Benchmarks from easiest to achieve (1) to hardest (8)

Error bars are ±SD. Benchmarks ordered from lowest average ranking to highest average ranking.

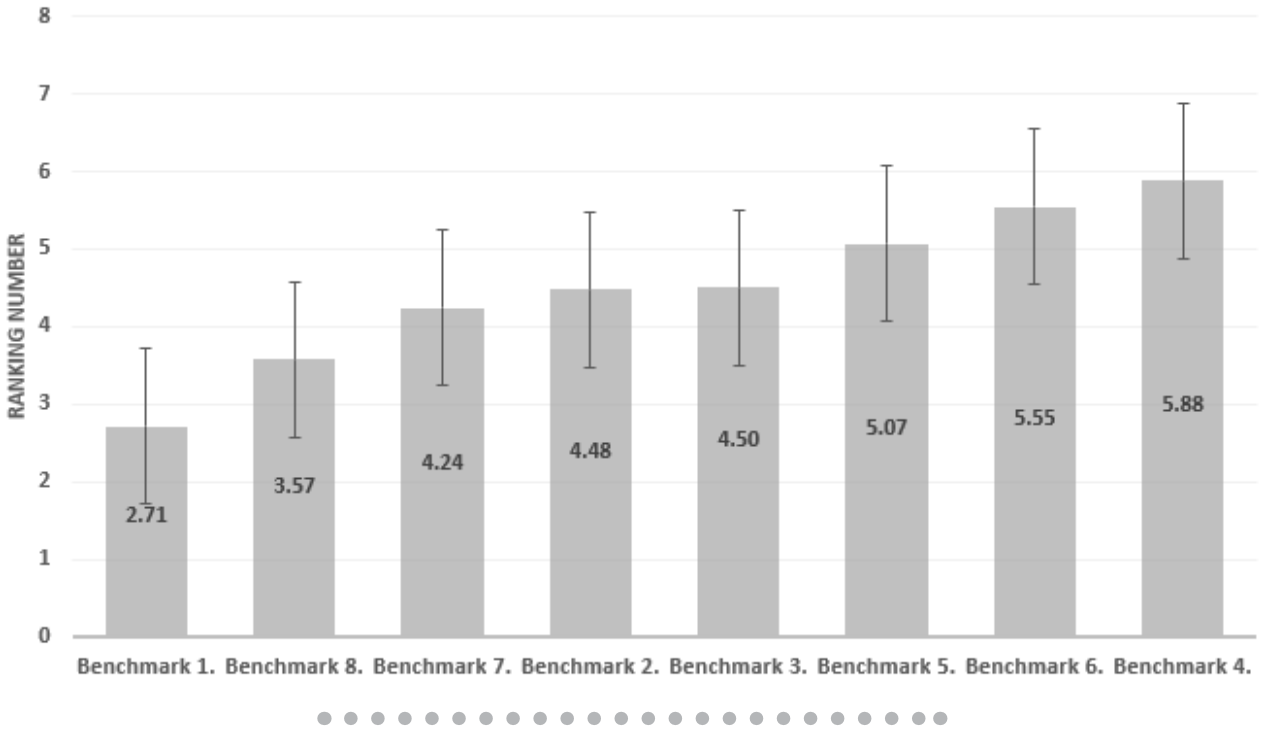
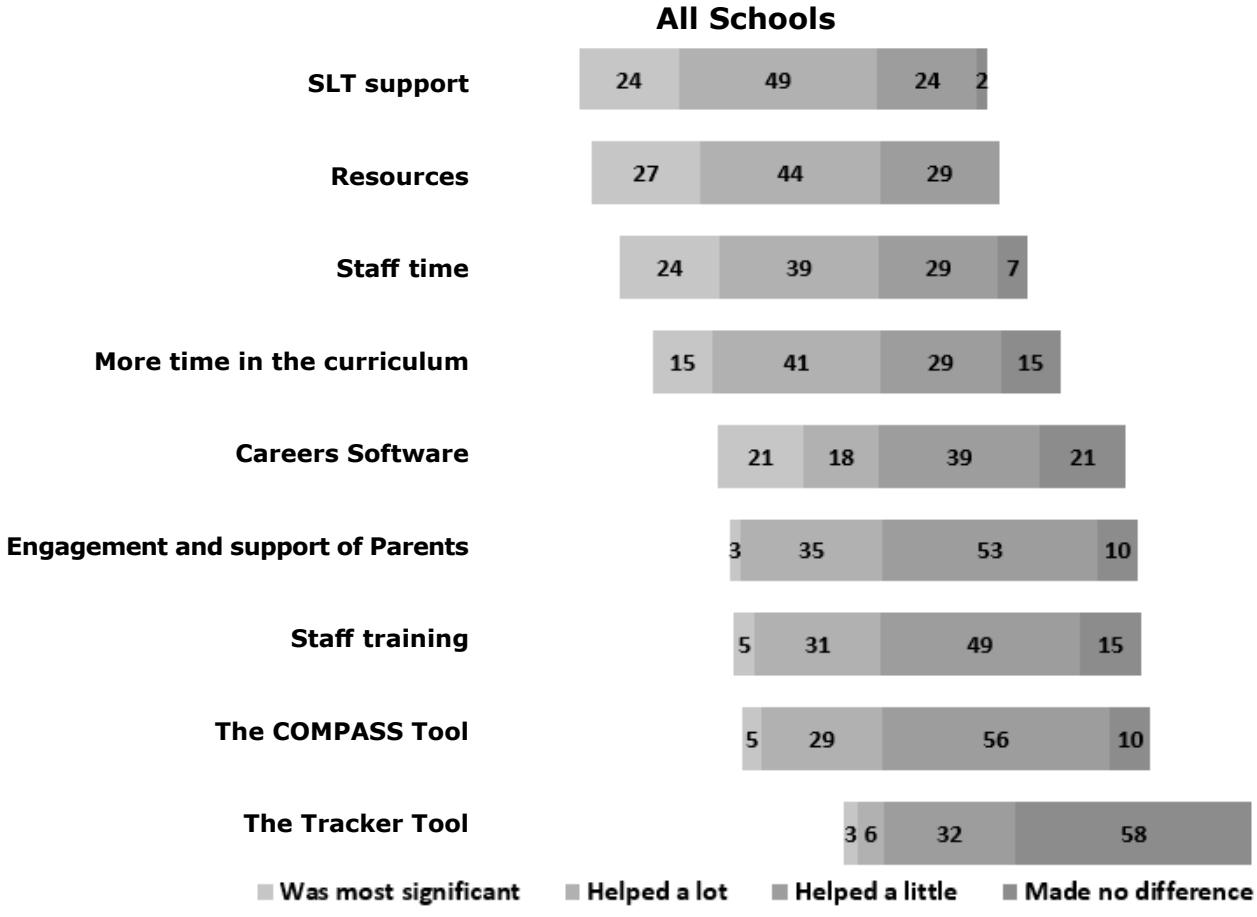


Figure 4. Facilitating factors to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks



With the data divided up by school type there were no differences across school types (see Figure 5), the only exception being staff training which was considered significant only in grammar schools where 64% (n=14) indicated it to have 'helped a lot' or have been 'most significant' in achieving Gatsby Benchmarks.

Facilitating factors important to achieving the remaining benchmarks

Respondents indicated whether the same nine facilitating factors would help 'a little', 'a lot', 'be very significant', or, 'would make no difference' to achieving the Benchmarks that they had made the least progress with (Figure 6). More time in the curriculum (44%, n=39, $\chi 2 = 12.59$, $p < 0.01$) and support from the SLT (44%, n=36, $\chi 2 = 8.222$, $p < 0.05$) were the two factors that would 'be very significant'. Staff time was also considered 'very significant' by 30% of respondents (n=37) and a further 51% (n=37) considered that it would 'help a lot' ($\chi 2 = 17.811$, $p < 0.01$). More resources were deemed important with 46% (n=35) responding that they would 'help a lot' and 23% (n=35) responding that they would be 'very significant'. The COMPASS tool and the Tracker tool were rated as 'making no difference', or 'would help a little' by 77% of respondents. There were no significant differences between school types with the exception of more staff time that would 'help a lot' or 'be very significant' for 93% (n=14) of respondents from grammar schools.

Discussion

Our survey of Careers Leaders in Kent indicates the term 'Careers Leader' has not been fully embraced. While not surprising for independent schools, schools within the maintained sector have been required to appoint a 'Careers Leader' since September 2018. It is a relatively new term (DfE, 2017; The CEC, 2018; Andrews & Hooley, 2018) but has clearly not been fully adopted, perhaps because the careers practitioners who responded consider other aspects as more important, such as their advisory roles, or that the person who is the nominated 'Careers Leader' within their schools is not them.

Significantly less than half of the Careers Leaders surveyed had formal career qualifications at Level 6 or above, 10 years on from the 2010 Careers Profession Task Force report recommendation (CPTF, 2010). The Careers Strategy encourages schools to identify qualified practitioners (DfE, 2017), however, it does not make it a requirement and the Gatsby Report itself (Holman, 2014) also stops short of saying that those providing 'personal guidance' should be professionally qualified. It is therefore not surprising that a significant number of the Careers Leaders surveyed had no formal careers qualifications. Careers Leaders lack recognition in line with other subject leads within schools suggesting that embedding careers guidance in sound theoretical frameworks and principles like other curriculum subjects should enhance professionalism and allow formal qualifications to get the full backing of Government and policy makers. Until then they will remain peripheral to practitioners and their relevance and utility will be missed by school leaders and governors. Research shows that training improves the experience for students (e.g. Kuijpers & Meijers, 2017) and training should enable career learning to happen rather than careers activities to be planned and delivered. It was more surprising that only two respondents had undergone Careers Leader training given that there have now been two tranches of money allocated for these programmes and some of these are run in Kent. Perhaps these programmes need more time to become embedded, or, those who are likely to respond favourably to training opportunities already have a suitable qualification (e.g. a Level 6 qualification). A recent report has outlined the benefits of this training, not only to careers practitioners, but also to schools and particularly gaining the support of the SLT and other staff (Williams et al., 2020). It may take a step-change to enable SLTs within schools to appreciate the link between staff training and career learning rather than focus on the career activities defined by the benchmarks.

A much lower percentage of institutions indicated that benchmarks had been 'fully met' than that based on the COMPASS data (The CEC, 2019; The CEC, 2020). Of note is Benchmark 2 (learning from career and labour market information) where the CEC reports 56% of schools to have achieved it (The CEC, 2020) and the data presented here for Kent schools finds that only 15% of school have 'fully met' or progressed 'extremely well', possibly indicating the difference between the

Figure 5. Facilitating factors to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks by school type

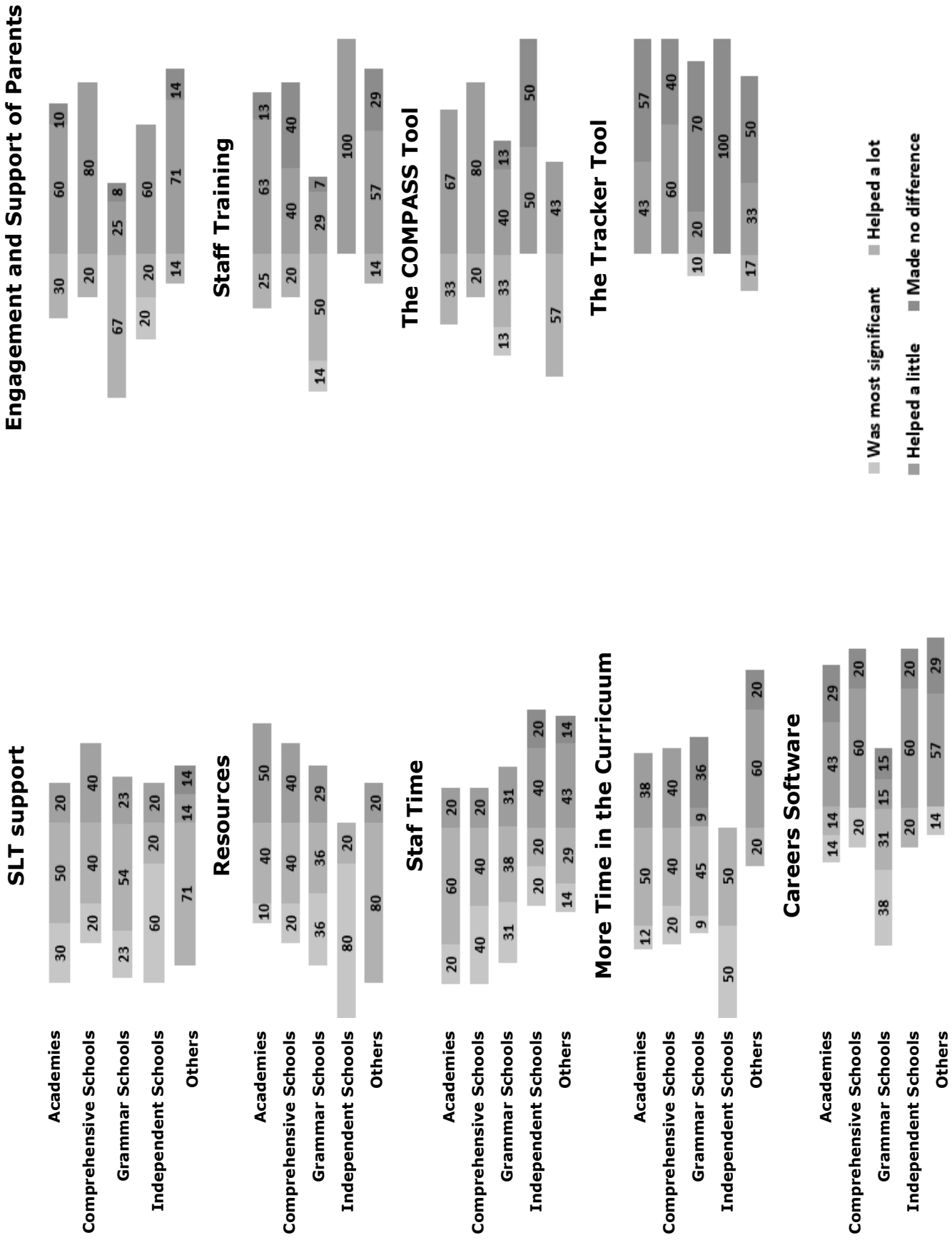
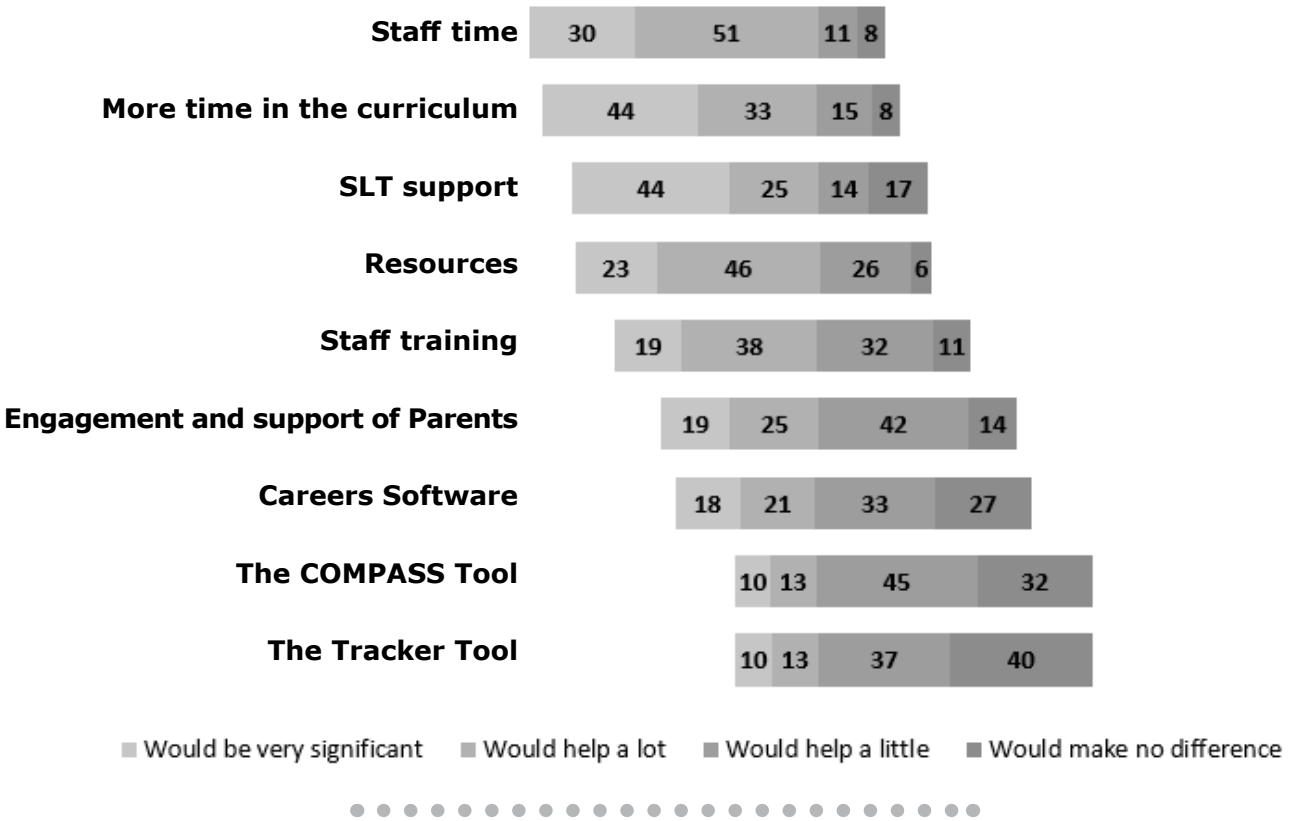


Figure 6. Facilitating factors important to achieving the remaining Gatsby Benchmarks

All Schools



COMPASS tool which monitors whether pupils have access to good LMI and the Careers Leaders surveyed making a judgement as to whether pupils are *learning* from that LMI. This highlights the limitation of the Gatsby Benchmarks as a set of career activities with no learning outcomes and the need to use them in conjunction with the CDI framework (CDI, 2021) to bridge the gap between activity and learning.

The data presented here suggest that Benchmarks 1 and 8 are the 'easiest' to achieve and that the most progress has been made against them. Benchmark 4 (linking curriculum learning to careers) and Benchmark 6 (experiences of workplaces) had least progress made against them. Benchmark 4 was also judged to be the hardest to achieve from the ranking data, which correlates with our data on progress. The North East Gatsby pilot also highlights Benchmark 4 as a challenge for the schools and colleges within it (Hanson et al., 2019, Hanson et al., 2021) and is often perceived as the 'hardest' Benchmark within schools (Davenport, 2019). This benchmark is the only one that implies an aspect of careers education and career learning which makes it harder to achieve than a simple activity defined by other benchmarks (e.g. a stable careers programme). Indeed, Andrews (2019) argues that Benchmark 4 should be re-defined to explicitly include careers education. Achieving the benchmark requires more professional pedagogic understanding and therefore also supports the argument for more qualified staff within schools.

The factors that facilitated strong progress against the benchmarks were resources, staff time, and support of the SLT; and the factors that would ensure they meet the remaining benchmarks were more time in the curriculum and continued support from the SLT. It is clear from our survey that schools that have made good progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks have had a supportive SLT that has provided the resources, the school structure, and the appropriate staff time to allow the Careers Leader to put in place an effective programme of careers guidance. Several of the comments in the 'free text' question indicated the importance of a fully supportive SLT, and Hanson & Neary (2020) make similar conclusions about the

role of the leadership within schools that had made successful progress against the benchmarks. It is also consistent with the North East pilot study (Hanson et al., 2021). Where this is not the case at present, schools will have to change their structure and ethos to ensure that the SLT and governors invest in career guidance, emotionally, psychologically, and monetarily to support their Careers Leader. This strong leadership is pivotal to ensure that the Careers Leader has the freedom and authority to make the changes necessary to implement a programme of career guidance that is embedded within the curriculum and recognised by pupils and staff. This would then, quite naturally, make more time available in the curriculum as the importance of the programme would warrant the attention of key staff such as Directors of Studies and those responsible for curriculum timetabling. Once all staff regard the Gatsby Benchmarks in the same way they do other criteria needed for a successful Ofsted inspection, the outcomes for young people will improve. To achieve this, good quality training for all staff is needed to highlight the importance of the Gatsby Benchmarks and their role in the curriculum; not just training for careers practitioners.

The Gatsby Benchmarks are here to stay as a useful 'check list' of activities for career guidance within schools. Across our dataset, there were no significant differences between any of the school types. Their progress against each benchmark was comparable and the factors that facilitated good progress, or would help achieve the remaining benchmarks, were also similar. This suggests that, irrespective of budgets, ethos, pupil destinations, and culture, it should be possible for all schools to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks as intended by the 2017 Careers Strategy (DfE, 2017). A recent report highlights improved post-16 outcomes with Gatsby Benchmark achievement (Percy & Tanner, 2021). However, ensuring that effective career learning is being achieved in schools is much more problematic. Ultimately, the Gatsby Benchmarks and 'good career guidance' are about learning, so Careers Leaders need to embrace the CDI framework (CDI, 2021) to ensure that the learning is delivered and sustained.

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Employer engagement in education: using phenomenography to find out how the facilitator understands their role

Liz Painter

Enterprise Coordinators play a key role in supporting the careers leader in schools and colleges and facilitating their relationships with volunteers from the world of work. This article explores how Enterprise Coordinators understand their work. Taking a phenomenographical approach, four categories of understanding have been developed ('critical friend', 'matchmaker', collaborator', and 'reflective practitioner') that can be used to guide the training and development of all practitioners tasked with facilitating the relationship between schools and employers. It is hoped that this article can also add to the literature of how to undertake a phenomenographical study.

Introduction

The position of Enterprise Coordinator (EC) was created when the government-funded Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) was set up in England in 2015 as a partnership body to provide support for school and college careers programmes (Andrews & Hooley, 2019). The CEC co-funds the role of the EC, working in partnership with the local authority or other stakeholders.

An EC is a professional, 'who work with schools, colleges, employers and careers organisations to build a local network and ensure that an area has high-quality careers provision. A key responsibility is recruiting Enterprise Advisers (EA) and connecting them to education' (Andrews & Hooley, 2018, p. xii). An EA is 'an employer volunteer who works with a school or college in England to support their careers programme. Enterprise Advisers are usually more senior volunteers who focus on strategic issues' (p. xii). The main contact within schools and colleges for both the EC and the EA is the Careers Leader: 'the individual responsible and accountable for leading a school's or college's careers programme' (p. xi). Based on recent research, this article explores how Enterprise Coordinators understand their work.

Literature review

Several research papers have been published during the last five years which evaluate the effectiveness of the changing landscape in careers education in England's schools and colleges. Focussing on key findings that relate to the role of the facilitator in developing a network and positive relationships between schools/colleges and employers, the literature review found similar enablers and barriers were repeatedly identified. However, while the research had considered the role of the EA, little was known about the work of the EC - who plays a key facilitator role in developing and maintaining relationships between education and stakeholders.

Of note, Hanson et al. (2019), in their evaluation of the Gatsby benchmarks in the North East of England, found the work of a regional facilitator enabled external stakeholders to work efficiently with education providers, the formation of a formal regional network to support the careers leaders, and access to regional schemes and projects. Similarly, a report by Pye Tait Consulting (2017) that reviewed the early Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN) on behalf of the CEC, indicated the importance of the EC role:

> There is a strong consensus that the role of the EC [Enterprise Coordinator] is pivotal to the effective functioning of the EAN. Enterprise Coordinators play a proactive role in building networks and joining the dots.
>
> (Pye Tait Consulting, 2017, p. 10).

Andrews and Hooley's (2019) study of 27 careers leaders in English secondary schools concluded that schools should be encouraged to share good practice by building communities of practice. Likewise, the CEC acknowledges that the organisation and others can develop strategies to bolster the careers leader's role and achieve success (CEC, 2019). Regrettably, the CEC report does not suggest *how*. However, an earlier paper of influence which investigated what empowers a careers guidance programme and how that power is transmitted through the organisation (Watts, 1996) validates the role of an external facilitator in helping the school to access external agencies and, critically, aiding with staff training thus ensuring 'buy-in' from teachers.

Interestingly, Andrews and Hooley (2019) did find challenges to the network in relation to impact on schools' and colleges' careers provision. All have the interaction of the EA and school at their core and include: a lack of engagement from the school's Senior Leadership Team; misaligned expectations between education and employer; that the EA did not expect to be the 'driving force' behind the relationship with schools; and other barriers, such as time, funding, and change of education staff. These challenges are consistent with earlier research and therefore unsurprising. However, whilst recommendations to the CEC were made, none related to the professional development of the EC, despite the identification of the pivotal nature of their role.

Of interest, while there is little direct evidence, the literature review strongly indicates that the EC has an important role to play in the successful implementation of a school's careers programme. They do this by working with the Careers Leader to support the school/college in delivering the Gatsby benchmarks, helping the institution to work with employers, and engage with wider networks. Hence, the review also implies the importance of ongoing continuing professional development in order to be successful in this role.

Taking a phenomenographical approach

Earlier research identified barriers to the successful relationship between education and the world of work, for example, misaligned expectations between teachers and employers. Undertaken in the summer of 2020, the purpose of this study was to explore how ECs understand their role by revealing different ways of successfully doing the job, and to identify and disseminate examples of best practice.

To investigate ways of understanding the work of an EC a phenomenographical approach was adopted. Whilst related to phenomenology, phenomenography is a qualitative research methodology, within the interpretivist paradigm, that investigates the qualitatively different ways in which people experience something or think about something (Marton, 1986). Phenomenography exposes the categories of understanding the phenomenon (the EC's work) not just what it is to be an EC.

Table 1. Research Design

Terminology	Example
Phenomenon	Being an EC
Phenomenology	Focuses on the essence of being an EC (the '*what*')
Phenomenography	Focuses on experiences and perceptions of being an EC (the '*how*')

Requests for participants were posted on Facebook, LinkedIn, and sent via CEC internal communications. From this, eight ECs from across the north and the midlands of England agreed to be interviewed. All were given detailed information about the study and asked to give informed consent by signing a participation questionnaire. Another ethical consideration was to maintain the anonymity of the participants. This was done by randomly assigning a number to each participant and ensuring that no identifying information was included in the published data or quotes used.

Many studies using a phenomenographic research design use three questions derived from Dell'Alba's (1998) study of medical students:

1. When do you feel you have been successful in your work?
2. What is difficult, or what hinders you, in your work?
3. What is the core of your professional work?

Larsson and Holmstrom (2007) used these questions in their informative work that compared phenomenographic and phenomenological analysis for the benefit of social science researchers. The three questions were used during the semi-structured interviews with eight ECs, and further questions were asked in response to the interviewees' answers. This allowed deeper probing of the participants understanding of their work. For example: 'Can you give me an example of…?'; and 'Can you explain how…?'

Larsson's and Holmstrom's (2007) guidance was used to structure the phenomenographical analysis of the interviews. The first stage was to read the transcript and mark where the participant gave answers to the three main questions. In each part of a marked passage two explicit things were looked for, what is the focus of the EC's attention and how do they describe their way of working?

The following excerpt from one interview, talking about what hinders their work, serves as an example:

> I look after 27 schools now, which is a real lot. In terms of my commitments for school, what I always say is an hour meeting each month, me and the careers leader and termly Compass completions with the EA, myself, link governor.
>
> (Participant 4)

The '*what*' is looking after 27 schools. The '*how*' is having a meeting each month with the Careers Leader and having a meeting each term with the Careers Leader, EA, and link governor to complete the CEC Compass report.

The transcripts were repeatedly read to look for non-dominant ways of understanding the work - again scrutinising what was the focus and how the EC described their way of working. Similar descriptions from all the interviews were then grouped into categories and a new descriptor created for each category and a metaphor that sums up the way of working was assigned.

Table 2. Categories

Categories	Metaphor for category
Working with staff in schools to ensure their careers programme progresses.	Critical friend
Working with EAs: recruiting them and matching them to schools.	Matchmaker
Collaborating across the region to reduce workload and share good practice.	Collaborator
Reflects on own practice. Training and developing people.	Reflective practitioner

Key findings

From the analysis, four categories of understanding the EC's professional work were identified. In modelling phenomenographic research, Larsson and Holmstrom (2007) explain that the categories of description are the researcher's way of expressing the variations in the conceptions. The metaphors illustrate the ways of relating to the work, they are not meant to be a descriptive name or typology.

1. Critical friend – Working with staff in schools to ensure their careers programme progresses

The 'critical friend' EC forms a good relationship with the Careers Leader, encouraging them to be critical in their evaluation of the careers provision. As a 'critical friend' the EC understands what the school's needs

and priorities are and where career learning fits in with this. They strive for good working relationships with the headteacher and careers link governor. The 'critical friend' sense checks the information from external agencies that schools can be bombarded with:

> I know that it [Careers Leader] can feel a very lonely position and actually I'm here for you as well if you want to bounce anything off me.
>
> (Participant 1)

2. Matchmaker – Working with EAs: recruiting them and matching them to schools

The 'matchmaker' EC devises strategies for recruiting new EAs, either using their own network, or the network of the wider organisation they are employed in. The 'matchmaker' uses a well-planned induction process to ensure that the EA properly understands their role. The EC carefully matches the EA (considering their skills and industry sector) with the needs and priorities of the school/college. They ensure the school is fully prepared to work with the EA and understand what the EA can offer. 'Matchmakers' invest time to build the relationship between the careers leader and EA. The EC knows when it is not appropriate to match an EA with a school and are prepared to wait until the school is ready:

> It's knowing what the school needs, what they're trying to achieve and it's knowing the EA.
>
> (Participant 2)

3. Collaborator – Collaborating across the region to reduce workload and share good practice

The 'collaborator' EC sees the 'bigger picture' across the region. 'Collaborators' plan regional career events for multiple schools to attend, thus reducing teacher workload and the demands on employers. The EC keeps up to date with their wider organisation's skills and labour force priorities, using this to inform their EA recruitment. The 'collaborator' is aware that their work overlaps with neighbouring regions and they liaise with EC colleagues in bordering regions:

> I'd rather do things centrally than do things, you know, in each school, cause if not we just have 14 or 15 different little events going on, with a big call on employers as well and training providers.
>
> (Participant 3)

4. Reflective practitioner – Reflects on own practice; training and developing people

The 'reflective practitioner' EC is able to evaluate their own performance. They contribute to training materials for colleagues, schools and EAs. 'Reflective practitioners' are able to identify the weaker areas of practice within the local systems that require further development:

> We found we were inducting EAs to a really high standard, but then when they were getting to the school, they weren't having the experience that they wanted because the school maybe weren't fully aware, or weren't prepared enough for what the EA was actually there to do. So we actually now show them [careers leader] the same resource we induct our EAs with, so that our careers leaders understand exactly what our EAs have been inducted to do.
>
> (Participant 8)

To summarise, adopting a phenomenographical approach revealed four different categories of understanding of how to be an EC: 'critical friend', 'matchmaker', collaborator' and 'reflective practitioner'. While earlier research had repeatedly highlighted barriers, such as misaligned expectations between school and employer, this research provided unique insights into *how* to do the work to overcome these barriers.

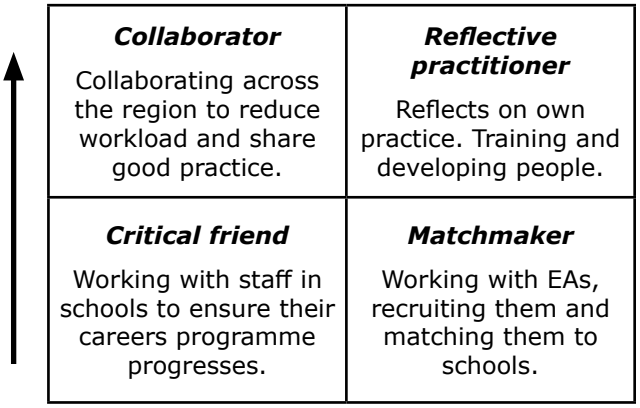
Discussion

From critically reflecting on the analysis, it became apparent that all the categories of understanding have the progress of the school/college (and ultimately the development of the young people) in focus but take differing perspectives. The two most common categories were 'critical friend' and 'matchmaker'.

All the participants had at least one of these as their dominant way of understanding the work and so these are referred to as primary categories. The other two modes of understanding, namely 'collaborator' and 'reflective practitioner', were relatively uncommon, and so are referred to as secondary categories. None of the ECs showed all four categories of understanding.

Further analysis of the categories was completed revealing a hierarchical structure and logical relationship between the different ways of understanding the work of the EC:

Figure 1. The ECs work map, representing the collective understanding of the work of a group of ECs



A hierarchy in the ways of understanding was supported by the evidence, with three of the eight participants revealing 'collaborator' and two participants describing 'reflective practitioner' as their way of understanding the work. Furthermore, in order for an EC to focus on developing the behaviours of a 'collaborator' or 'reflective practitioner', the evidence revealed that they must also be able to operate in the categories 'critical friend' and/or 'matchmaker'. This is because an understanding as 'collaborator' or 'reflective practitioner' developed for all the ECs from their understanding as 'critical friend' and/or 'matchmaker'. Notably the reverse did not occur.

Discussion of secondary findings

More detailed analysis of the interview transcripts identified four main barriers experienced by ECs.

1) The apparent conflicting priorities of schools

This barrier was identified by five of the participants. Reasons for the difficulty in managing the schools were at an organisational level (e.g. careers education was not a priority for the school) or at a personal level (e.g. the careers leader was unable to form a working relationship with the EA):

> It is the most frustrating thing in the job to be honest, like, we have Careers Leaders that literally have two hours a fortnight to do their Careers Leader role, they have no interest in careers.
>
> (Participant 8)

2) Complexity of the organisational structure that the EC 'sits in'

The participants within this study worked out of a range of organisations (Local Enterprise Partnership, Chamber of Commerce, Education Trust, Local Authority, Careers Hub). They explained how the organisational structure was a barrier to their work, illustrating this with reasons such as, working in a fractured team, confusion of their place within the management structure, and what 'powers' they had within the organisation.

3) Expectations of funding organisations

Three of the interviewees described how funding organisations can be disconnected from what is happening with the day-to-day work of ECs and what is happening in schools. One participant talked about funding organisations priority targets changing termly and that this was too soon for changes within schools to have made an impact.

> I don't think that some of them [funding organisations] fully appreciate that schools have got different drivers and different priorities, and yet careers is a definite priority in all schools, but they're not measured by it. And therefore, they're automatically going to have a leaning towards those things that they are measured by, it's human nature, it's organisational nature.
>
> (Participant 3)

4) EA recruitment

Whilst all participants referred to the recruitment of EAs as part of their work, interviewees specifically highlighted this as a barrier. The reasons included: recruitment took time away from working with the schools that actually required the support, the rural location meant that lack of potential EAs and transport links affected recruitment, or that there was no real recruitment strategy within their wider organisation.

Many of the barriers identified in earlier work that are concerned with schools remain. Hutchinson et al. (2019) found that those ECs located in a Careers Hub had greater strategic direction. However, one of the participants in this study who said that the complexity of the organisational structure was a hindrance, works within a Careers Hub. In contrast, a lack of suitable EAs and the difficulty in recruiting them could be connected to the barriers identified in earlier work. For example, if ECs are struggling to form a pool of EAs from which they can choose to assign one to a school, the drivers of achieving targets may cause some ECs to place EAs in a school that they are not well matched to, leading to misaligned expectations.

Implications for practice

The job description and resources for an EC (CEC, 2020) inform '*what*' their role is and '*what*' they are to do, but it gives little guidance about '*how*' to do this. If ECs are to help improve the engagement of the school's Senior Leadership Team, manage the expectations between education and employer, and help the school to understand why time and funding for careers education is important, then the EC must have the behaviours in order to do this.

To support them in this aspect of development, collating examples of good practice for all four categories of understanding provides a narrative that can be used by the EC, or any other facilitator, to strengthen their weaker areas of work. Also, the hierarchy 'map' (figure 1) could be used for the recruitment, training and continued development of ECs and other practitioners whose role involves developing relationships between education and employers. This is because it indicates that ECs should be encouraged to consolidate their practice as 'critical friend' and 'matchmaker' before developing the behaviours of a 'collaborator' or 'reflective practitioner'.

Conclusion

The facilitator plays a crucial role in the successful development of strategic relationships between learning organisations and their stakeholders.
The evidence from this study shows four ways of understanding the work of the EC that can be used as guidance for all organisations who have practitioners involved with developing and maintaining relationships between those in education and the world of work.
In summary, such organisations could consider using the categories from the 'map of the ways of work' as a tool when recruiting and thus aim to have a team with strengths in all four categories. By providing training opportunities for staff to audit their skills ECs can understand their strengths and areas for development, share best practice and develop their 'weaker' ways of understanding the work.

Thoughts on the methodology

This research was undertaken as part of my Master's degree in Careers Education and Coaching. As a former teacher, I was keen to add to the existing knowledge base for improving careers education and employer engagement in schools. Taking a phenomenographical approach uncovered narratives that have been collated to offer guidance for those facilitating employer engagement with education. While other research methods may have uncovered '*what*' the facilitator does and the barriers they face, importantly, phenomenography gives examples of '*how*' they work to overcome the barriers.

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The intersection of career and mental health from the lens of Cognitive Information Processing Theory

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Anxiety and depression have increased exponentially and can be exacerbated by the ongoing individual and combined effects of the pandemic, ongoing unemployment, and systemic racism. Across the globe, career counsellors see the impact of these mental health concerns on individuals as they engage in career-decision making and problem-solving. Cognitive Information Processing theory (CIP; Sampson et al., 2020) can provide a useful framework for supporting diverse individuals experiencing heightened mental health and career concerns. In this article, we review key components of CIP theory, provide specific case examples that highlight the integration of career and mental health, and offer CIP-based conceptualizations and interventions.

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Career counsellors and practitioners acknowledge the connection between career and mental health concerns. Psychological distress (Constantine & Flores, 2006), depression (Cardoso, 2016; Rottinghaus et al., 2009; Saunders et al., 2000), and anxiety (Pisarik et al., 2017; Xiao et al., 2014) have all been demonstrated to negatively affect career-decision making. Cognitive information processing theory (CIP) (Sampson et al., 2004; Sampson et al., 2020) offers a framework for career decision making and problem-solving in a way that integrates mental health and career development concerns. Four models comprise the theory. The first, the pyramid of information processing domains identifies four components for effective career decision making: self-knowledge, options knowledge, decision making skills, and executive processing that includes an ability to manage the career decision making process, as well as the awareness and control of self-talk. The four elements are independent but related (Osborn et al., 2020; Osborn et al., 2021). Mental health is imbedded in and impacts each of these components. For example, depression integrated with career might be expressed as, "I'm no good at anything," or "there are no options out there for me."

The second model is a decision-making process called the CASVE Cycle, comprised of six phases (i.e., communication, analysis, synthesis, valuing, evaluation, and a re-visiting communication). Communication involves identification and exploration of a gap between the client's current situation (e.g., a need to make a decision) and ideal situation (e.g., making a satisfactory choice). A counsellor will examine internal and external pressures that are contributing to the perceived need to make a career decision. Worry is one emotion that should be examined at this point, as Hayden and Osborn (2020) found it to be significantly related to all aspects of CIP-related dimensions (self-knowledge, options knowledge, decision making skills, executive processing) and negative thinking. Analysis includes exploration of self and options knowledge, leading to identification of viable options in Synthesis. Tasks associated with these phases become more complicated and may result in biased outcomes, when impacted by depressive or anxious thinking. For example, a person who indicates on a career inventory they are not interested in nor capable of a large number of task descriptions will receive limited results reflecting their input. Valuing involves prioritization of the options resulting from Synthesis and includes consideration

of what is important to the individual, their significant others, and their community. Someone who feels they do not matter may not fully engage in exploration, whereas someone who places others' values and opinions over their own might ignore their personal values completely. Anxiety may increase if conflicting voices of important people and self are present related to the career decision. During Execution, an individual experiments with their prioritized choice through activities such as job shadowing, taking a course that might be of interest, volunteering in a certain area of interest, or engaging in paid work in a related field. Finally, they revisit Communication to explore whether the initial gap has closed and re-examine the internal and external cues about their career concern.

CIP theory's third model is the Career Decision Making Readiness Model (Sampson et al., 2004; Sampson et al., 2020), aimed at identifying how ready a person is to engage in the process. Capability and complexity intersect to create four types of readiness: low capability/low complexity (moderate readiness); low capability/high complexity (low readiness); high capability/high complexity (another type of moderate readiness); and high capability/low complexity (high readiness). Capability includes internal characteristics including mental health, willingness to honestly engage in the process, etc., whereas complexity involves external pressures such as those created by family, or societal issues such as discrimination, and financial issues.

Depending on their readiness, CIP's fourth model, the Differentiated Service Delivery model (Sampson, 2008, Sampson et al., 2020) suggests services and counsellor support for meeting clients' needs. High readiness individuals need the least amount of support and are most appropriate for self-help delivery. Moderate readiness clients will likely benefit from brief-staff assisted delivery, meeting with a counsellor on a drop-in basis to create and work through an individualized plan. Low readiness clients need the most support and will benefit most from longer-term counselling. Research (e.g., Kronholz, 2015; Osborn et al., 2016; Whiston et al., 2017) has supported the efficaciousness of each of these approaches.

The efficacy of the differentiated service delivery model depends on the accurate initial assessment of readiness for career decision making to determine the amount and type of practitioner assistance needed. For example, if an initial brief screening indicates a potential for low decision-making readiness, a readiness measure such as the Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI) (Sampson et al., 1996) can be used to identify the nature of the mental health concerns that are making decision making difficult (Sampson, 2008; Sampson et al., 2020). Given this understanding, the practitioner and the client can make an initial estimate of the number of sessions needed and start with individual counseling that integrates career and mental health. Additional assessment for anxiety or depression may be needed to better understand the nature and extent of mental health concerns impacting career choices. The efficacy of the differentiated model also depends on a response to intervention model where progress in using career resources is monitored and changes made to the intervention if the client is experiencing difficulty (Sampson et al., 2020). This approach requires that practitioners are trained in both career development and mental health concerns (Sampson et al., 2004).

Research has demonstrated the efficacy of using CIP to conceptualize a diverse range of clients who may present for career counseling in different career-based settings. In this paper we will use CIP to conceptualize individuals experiencing both heightened mental health and career concerns. We provide specific case examples that highlight the integration of career and mental health and offer CIP-based interventions for counsellors working with a diverse clientele.

Case scenarios

Below we present a series of case scenarios with clients who presented with both career development and mental health needs. CIP guides work in each case. The first illustrates the unique circumstances related to career and mental health that military service members and veterans face. The second demonstrates how racial discrimination can influence mental health and career concerns. The third shows an example of a client who presented with both trauma symptoms and concerns about her college major. Finally, the last case portrays a client struggling with psychological distress and who is unemployed because of the coronavirus pandemic, which has had numerous mental health and career-related consequences for individuals across the globe.

The case of 'Najee'

Najee is a 25-year-old heterosexual Black man transitioning from military to civilian life. His job in the military involved explosive ordinance disposal and he is unsure of how his skill set might transfer to a profession in the civilian world. He is married with a young child, which is the impetus for transitioning out of the military as he desires less dangerous work and a more predictable schedule. He has had multiple combat deployments but has not indicated any mental health concerns related to his emotional and mental well-being. He did indicate anxiety about effectively transitioning to civilian work. Given the unique nature of his work in the military, he is uncertain of how to translate his military experience to civilian work and of ways to effectively communicate his transferable skills. He desires a position where he can use skills acquired in the military around engineering, logistics, and technology.

Using CIP to conceptualize Najee's needs, the CTI (Sampson et al., 1996) was administered to identify dysfunctional career thoughts, but no elevations were found. The counsellor assessed for readiness and determined that Najee appeared to have high capability as he seemed to be affectively and cognitively aware in relation to his career concern, and low complexity as he did not have significant external stressors associated with this decision. They explored his anxiety and it appeared manageable.

Najee's level of readiness provided an opportunity for engagement in self-help services related to the career concern. In pursuit of the goal of exploring options associated with his interests and skills developed in the military, the counsellor suggested Najee explore O*NET (National Center for O*NET Development, n.d.) and specifically the military crosswalk feature of the platform. O*NET is a free U.S.-based online resource that allows individuals to explore different career options. Individuals can search for careers by name or career clusters, and it provides information including job responsibilities, educational requirements, and salary for a diverse range of careers. The counsellor offered support to Najee if requested but he expressed confidence in his capacity for successfully utilizing this platform. O*NET directed Najee to various occupations such as emergency management director, occupation health and safety specialist, and detective and criminal investigator. The counsellor discussed the possibility of these options with Najee.

From a CIP lens, this exploration of occupational options from a self-help perspective is associated with options knowledge with limited counsellor involvement based on Najee's indicated readiness.

The case of 'Shavonne'

Shavonne is a 29-year-old Black heterosexual cis-gendered woman attending law school. Shavonne is the first in her family to attend college. After being unable to find a summer internship at a law firm, she decides to accept a position working as a teacher at a local daycare. She has experience babysitting and she completed an undergraduate college minor in child development. She is an "only-child" with a mother who works as a daycare worker and a father who works as a mechanic. During her time in law school, Shavonne experienced discrimination from her instructors, her peers, and during internship interviews. Comments such as, "You are one of the good ones" and "I bet there's a story on how you ended up in law school" are frequent. Racial microaggressions or subtle forms of discrimination such as these have been linked to poorer mental health (Sue et al., 2007) and negative career outcomes (Marks et al., 2020). Shavonne often wonders if her race and sex are part of the reason that she has been unable to secure an internship position. She is concerned about her future ability to secure a job as an attorney. She finds herself blaming her identities for her inability to secure an internship, which makes her feel depressed. It has always been her dream to work in real estate law, but she now worries that may never become a reality. She has been crying daily, having difficulty sleeping, and decreased appetite.

Shavonne presents to the career center to strengthen her resume and identify other internship opportunities. Using CIP, the counsellor assessed readiness and determined that Shavonne appeared to have high capability as she appears to be affectively and cognitively engaged in decision making and high complexity as she has significant external stressors associated with her decision (e.g., racial discrimination and systemic barriers). In line with a brief-assisted approach, Shavonne is seen for two sessions of brief career assistance. During these sessions she is often tearful. Her career counsellor recognizes that Shavonne needs more than career counseling and feedback on her resume. On the day of her second session, she reviews Shavonne's revised resume, which seems highly reflective of her skills. She

provides Shavonne with brochures on the Counseling Center and circles their number and discusses how mental health often does not exist in a vacuum outside of career concerns and encourages Shavonne to engage in personal counseling. She sets a time to call and follow-up with Shavonne to encourage accountability with contacting the Counseling Center.

The case of 'Jane'

Jane, a 26-year-old Latinx female, is seeking career counseling after experiencing a sexual assault one month prior. She reports coming in because her grades were falling due to skipping classes as she could not sit next to male students in her classes. She wanted to change her major, as her major is a very male dominated field, and she did not believe she would be able to maintain focus or be successful in the remainder of classes/studies or her future career. The career counsellor that worked with Jane has training with sexual assault work. Thus, she is assessed for depression, anxiety and suicidality. Jane met Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) criteria, reporting daily crying spells, panic attacks, hyper-vigilance, startled reflexes, nightmares and sleeping less than three hours per night. She denied suicidal thoughts. After ensuring Jane was not suicidal and was able to list ongoing supports for herself, reasons to live, and completed a contract for safety, the career counselor then ascertained more about the career decision processes of Jane before the sexual assault and provided a safe space for her. The counsellor asked Jane to explain her passion for her major. She actively listens and provides the space for Jane to work through pros and cons of staying in her current major or leaving.

Using CIP, the counsellor assesses that Jane had poor readiness, high commitment anxiety and high external conflict as her decision to seek out career counseling were reactionary and secondary to her trauma. Her first session focuses mainly on assessing mental health, safety, wellness and providing resources for the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN; a U.S.-based hotline and online resource for survivors of sexual violence), a local sexual assault center, a suicide hotline, and resources to local counsellors that specialize in sexual trauma). The second session provided Jane with an opportunity to examine her decision-making related to her major. Jane spoke of how from high school, she wanted to work in computer science. The third session explored her motivations for changing majors and introduced the possibility of taking medical leave for a semester to heal some and seek counseling for her sexual assault. During the fourth session, the counsellor asked Jane to consider other possible careers that would make her happy and explored knowledge of options and skills. She challenged her to think about if taking some time off to heal is worth it if it allows her to remain in the field she loves. During the last session, Jane asked for help with the medical leave process, setting up an appointment with a long-term counsellor, and stated she didn't want to immediately change her major or her future plans.

The case of 'Naomi'

Naomi is a 33-year-old, single, heterosexual White woman experiencing worry, financial concerns, self-doubt, and low mood. Her work experience had been in the hospitality industry until the coronavirus pandemic when she was furloughed from her job. Naomi reported that she didn't like the late nights, fluctuating sleep schedule due to evening shifts, low pay, lack of advancement and limited social connection. She stated that she wanted to find a "real job" and had felt this way for several years, however, had not acted nor figured out what that would be. Naomi shared having questions of confidence regarding her abilities as she had been in the restaurant industry since graduating college eight years earlier. Naomi presented for assistance dealing with job loss stress, help identifying a career path, and clarifying her skills and qualifications.

The counsellor met with Naomi for an initial intake and assessment. In addition to career concerns, the counsellor learned that Naomi's mother had a terminal illness and recently experienced a decline in her own health. She reported she often found herself tearful and became anxious at the thought of focusing on her future. Since Naomi was unemployed, she spent her days helping where needed at home, providing care to her mother, running errands for the family, and preparing meals.

Given the high complexity (job loss, caregiving responsibilities, family illness, and financial concerns) and low capability (self-doubt, perceived limited experience and skills, low mood, and worry) for readiness to engage in the process, it was decided that an individual case managed approach would be helpful (Sampson, 2008; Sampson et al., 2020). Naomi completed the CTI (Sampson et al., 1996) to further assess career decision making readiness. The CTI revealed high scores

on the Commitment Anxiety and External Conflict Scales suggesting that she experienced worry about committing to a career choice and was influenced by the thoughts and beliefs of others when considering options. Naomi and the counsellor reviewed the CIP Pyramid of Information Processing and CASVE Cycle to provide a framework for the career decision-making process. Naomi identified all areas of the pyramid (Self-Knowledge, Options Knowledge, Decision Making Skills, and Executive Processing) as possible areas of focus.

After a few sessions, Naomi shared she had been thinking about finding another job for several years but found herself doubting she was qualified or that an appropriate fit existed (Executive Processing). The counsellor and Naomi explored her negative career thoughts and began to challenge and reframe those that were limiting exploration of options and ability to accurately view self-knowledge. They determined that addressing negative thinking impacting mood and readiness for career decision making was an appropriate next step.

As the sessions progressed, Naomi clarified her self-knowledge, exploring her interests and values with greater comfort. Discussion of values revealed the importance of her faith and the need for meaning and purpose in her work. Although Naomi had begun to feel more optimistic, months of providing care to her mother led to feelings of resentment and self-criticism as well as avoidance of occupational exploration. She experienced feelings of fatigue, sadness, frustration, and ongoing worry about her future. These emotions (metacognitions) kept her from exploring options or synthesizing information as a part of the CASVE Cycle. Allowing time to explore and integrate her roles and identities became an important component of the career counselling experience, especially in light of her caregiving role in the family (Richardson, 2011; Richardson & Schaffer, 2013).

Eventually, Naomi decided to delay her search for employment or commitment to an occupational path. Her priority was to provide care/support for her mother and the rest of her family (Valuing). Unemployment benefits and support from her family made this financially feasible. Naomi enrolled in an online course to develop additional computer skills, an acceptable compromise to her, given all the commitments she had. Taking action (Execution) offered her the ability to remain connected to her family during a difficult time and created an opportunity for her to continue moving toward her career goals.

Summary

Internationally, career counsellors and practitioners can use CIP to conceptualize and provide services to individuals experiencing mental health and career concerns. In this article, we reviewed important components of CIP theory and provided four diverse case examples that emphasize the combination of career and mental health. Career and mental health do not exist in their own vacuums, and both need to be considered when counselling clients. These case examples can be used as a resource by career counsellors around the globe as they work with clients who present with both mental health and career concerns.

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Female university computing students' perceptions of technology careers: Interpretivist research to inform careers practice

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The representation of women in the technology sector, reported at 16.4% (Wise, 2020), necessitates investigation. How female university students' perceptions of careers in technology formed can help understanding of the causes of female underrepresentation and suggest possible practice by careers professionals to help redress this imbalance. This research utilised purposive sampling to identify four information-rich participants (Palinkas et al., 2013) for semi-structured interviews, followed by thematic analysis via coding (King & Horrocks, 2010). Societal influences on students' perceptions of technology careers, both prior to university and once employed in technology, emerged as significant factors.

Rationale for this study

News article headlines such as 'Ten years on, why are there still so few women in tech?' (Little, 2020) invite further exploration. My professional background in secondary school teaching meant I knew there had been a perceptible change in some female students' attitudes towards computing, in part due to the new computer science GCSE introduced from 2014 (Williams, 2020). Yet female representation in the technology sector remains low at 16.4% (WISE, 2020), particularly when compared to 46.8% across the UK workforce as a whole (World Bank, 2021). Further, attracting over $15 billion investment, average salaries of £53,318 (+4%) during 2020 and providing 10% of job vacancies during December 2020 (Tech Nation, 2020), the potential of the UK technology sector is arguably even more apparent with the advent of Covid19.

Computing / STEM university students are an important source of workers for the technology sector, though it should be noted that one third of roles within the field are non-tech roles (Tech Nation, 2020). Yet in 2019-2020 only 19.9% of UK university students in computing-related disciplines (HESA, 2021) and 35% of UK all STEM university students in 2017-18 (STEM Women, 2021) were women. The loss of females from technology and other STEM sectors is frequent enough to have been characterised as a 'leaky pipeline' (Grogan, 2018). This suggests the need to attract more female students from a range of disciplines into the technology sector and to retain those currently studying computing-related degrees.

Given my current work as a university careers consultant involves preparing students for their transition into the workplace, the underrepresentation of women in the UK technology sector raised questions in my mind as to why this is the case. What are the influences on female students' perceptions of careers in technology and how have these impacted their career decisions? This research focused on female Masters Computational Arts students' perceptions. Some had not previously studied a computing or STEM related degree, so their perceptions can help inform strategies to increase the representation of women in technology.

Significance of perceptions

Understanding female underrepresentation in technology careers requires comprehension of

influences over female students' perceptual knowledge (O'Brien, 2020), or what they believe they know, about technology careers and how these perceptions effect career choices. Two main perspectives dominate existing literature. First, that UK societal attitudes and '…stereotypes about the type of people who usually fill technology roles put girls off from an early age' (McDonald, 2018). Secondly, that structural inequalities embedded within organisations cause female underrepresentation (the organisational culture approach, Wynn, 2019). These perspectives are actually interrelated given the perceived nature of working in technology organisations influences parents', teachers', and girls' perceptions, and subsequent views as to whether technology careers are desirable. Understanding students' perceptions, the way in which they have internally organised information received from a variety of sources (Epstein et al., 2018), can inform career management support for female computing university students.

Internally held perceptions of what constitutes a suitable career have long been the subject of career theories. Betz and Hackett's (1986) career self-efficacy theory implies female computing students need to believe they can succeed in a technology career before pursuing and persisting within that career. Indeed, imposter syndrome, or '…feelings of inadequacy that persist despite evident success' (Corkindale, 2008), has been identified as prevalent amongst university computing students and poses a threat to continuation: Rosenstein et al. (2020) found that 71% of female computing students suffer with imposter syndrome, compared to 52% of male students.

Recognising the importance of external influences, structural theorists raised the concept of 'horizons for action' (Hodkinson et al., 1996, as cited in Hodkinson et al., 2006): a student's perception of their future career identity is limited by the social situation from which they conceived their options. Further, Coogan and Chen (2007) highlighted the need for students to consider whether gender socialisation has influenced their career choices and perceptions. Certainly, consideration should be given to the idea that the shared habitus and gender socialisation of women through the 1950s to 1980s (Little, 2017), and resultant perceptions of computing, led to the decline of women in technology-related occupations and continue to influence societal views.

Many studies related to perceptions of technology careers look retrospectively, which is valuable for insights into why students have not engaged with the sector and possible actions to remedy this. Yet research considering computing students' expectations of technology careers is necessary if their transition into the world of work is to be supported effectively. Social cognitive career theory emphasises the role of perception, self-efficacy, and habitus in career choice and development (Lent et al., 2000). Their representation of the role of outcome expectations is compelling, that it is how an individual perceives a barrier (or support) that determines its influence on their career. The degree of underrepresentation of women in technology careers suggests a need to equip female computing students with techniques to overcome possible future challenges.

Career management support

Prior research into career management support for university computing students appears limited in extent. Vesisenaho et al. (2009) advocated group counselling with computing students, corroborating studies noting that although computing students are adept at self-directed learning (McCartney et al., 2016) they benefit greatly from peer discussions (Porter et al., 2011). Indeed, learning through conversation with others is a central concept within social constructivism. Commenting upon Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development, Bassot (2011, p. 10) observed '…interactions with others enable the individual to achieve more than they could alone'. Other careers-related research has demonstrated the importance of mentorship for people in STEM disciplines (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, 2019) and supportive communities of practice (Gabbert & Meeker, 2002). So too, the pertinence of networking to develop mutually beneficial professional relationships (Forret & Dougherty, 2001, as cited in De Janasz & Forret, 2008).

A reflexive approach could tackle issues raised by gendered socialisation (Brooks & Forrest, 1994, cited by Bimrose, 2010). Indeed, Bassot (2016a,b) suggested that critical reflection and keeping a reflective journal would raise students' awareness of how they think, feel, act, of their assumptions and also of issues of power in relationships within organisations. Law et

al. (2014) advocated cognitive behavioural therapy techniques to help clients experiencing anxiety over navigating an unpredictable and rapidly changing career landscape (see chaos theory of careers, Pryor & Bright, 2014). These include shared discussions about productive and unproductive worries, thought records, and cognitive exposure to concerns. Another approach, solution focused counselling, involves '…reframing the problem and presenting alternative possibilities, work[ing] towards developing achievable goals (in small, incremental steps) and then develop[ing] a workable action plan to meet the goals' (Reid, 2016, p. 89).

This research considered the appropriateness of different career management techniques through understanding of student perceptions. As such, perceptions can inform university-based careers professionals working to develop career management skills amongst female computing students aspiring to careers in technology.

Outline of research

How do female MA/MFA Computational Arts students in a university computing department in south-east England perceive careers in technology?

1. What do female students in a university computing department in south-east England think a career in technology involves?
2. What do female students in a university computing department in south-east England believe the benefits and challenges of careers in technology are?
3. How could understanding female students' perceptions of careers in technology inform careers professionals' practice?

This research focused on female MA/MFA Computational Arts students' perceptions of careers in technology. The ontological perspective that there are socially constructed multiple realities (Patton, 2002) suggests perceptions exist. Further, the idea that underlying structures impact people, without necessarily determining their actions, meant the adoption of both relativist and critical realist ontologies was appropriate. Multiple realities of technology career perceptions exist, the creation of which might be constrained by social structures influencing students' experiences. As such, an interpretivist epistemology was adopted throughout, that aimed to comprehend the students' understanding and experience of the social world (King & Horrocks, 2010). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2008) was selected to provide a qualitative method of interpreting students' perceptions of careers in technology by looking for conceptual themes influencing them whilst also recognising the role of the researcher in this process. As such, careful practitioner reflexivity to ensure understanding of how social and cultural context influences practitioner beliefs, ideas, and assumptions (Fook, 2015) was integral to this research.

Semi-structured interviews (King & Horrocks, 2010) were utilised to investigate the perceptions of technology careers held by female MA/MFA Computational Arts students. Four students were identified via purposive sampling to ensure information-rich participants (Palinkas et al., 2013). One participant had never worked in technology before, one only had internship experience, and two had previously worked in technology roles. These interviews were conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams, adhering to appropriate ethical considerations.

Data analysis via transcription, noting paralinguistic features (King & Horrocks, 2010), was followed by the construction of biographical pen-portraits (Campbell et al., 2004) to facilitate the creation of a sense of character for each participant (using pseudonyms to preserve participant anonymity). Subsequent thematic analysis via coding (King & Horrocks, 2010) enabled identification of cross-case patterns amongst the students' perceptions of careers in technology. Given this qualitative study sought to inform future professional practice, as great a degree of generalisability from the findings as possible was required. The rigorous analysis undertaken indicated that higher level themes emerged from the students' responses and that the defined codes were applicable when tested via the referential adequacy process (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008). Findings from this thematic analysis form the focus of this article.

Emergent themes

Conceptions of technology careers change when students' experiences broaden.

- Evidence of relatively limited conceptions of careers in technology amongst some students, their families and some friends.

All students spoke at some length about a lack of understanding of what technology careers are amongst people outside the sector. Comments recorded included '…I know I'm having to explain what I do all the time.' When questioned about their conception of technology careers, most students hesitantly referred to its general function and then roles linked to their particular areas of interest.

- Proximal sociocultural factors are central to the formation of students' conceptions of technology careers.

Students linked whether their families had a background in technology to their knowledge of technology careers: '…if [young people] can't see what [technology] is, and if their parents haven't done it, then they definitely can't help [their child] pick this as a career.' Further, several participants viewed the lack of emphasis on STEM related careers at primary school as a limiting factor. All students highlighted the role of peer interactions in their perceptions, both positive and negative: one student commented 'I wouldn't go into game design because of… having heard about crap situations that friends have been in.' Of note, is the role played by one student's STEM undergraduate degree and another's interdisciplinary university studies in the United States, unexpectedly introducing them to the idea of a technology career.

- Varied distal sociocultural factors influence perceptions, particularly through interactions with the technology sector.

One student spoke of the enjoyment she derived from an internship in Greece. However, some technology sector experiences had raised concerns about the skills required, later allayed by an industry article highlighting that '…the skill set is not necessarily abstract mathematics.' Another student referenced the role of fictionalised media representations of technology companies in films and television.

Balancing personal well-being and professional opportunities are core attractions of careers in technology.

- Professional opportunities, in terms of career possibilities and work style.

Contrasting perceptions existed, with one (new to technology) student identifying a key benefit as being '…a clearer route of progression and room for development.' Meanwhile another student (with eleven years of experience in technology) stated 'I think tech is really not a linear path at all, which is exciting…I would be so bored to just stay on the same track.' The fusion of arts and technology was a central attraction and most participants viewed developing their technological skills as increasing their career flexibility.

- Personal well-being, particularly security and self-fulfilment.

All students identified the attraction of personal security, afforded by good remuneration and availability of jobs, as a key benefit. Self-fulfilment derived from intellectual challenge was frequently mentioned: 'I want to have a task that I have to engage with more, that's not easy.'

External and internal perceptions create challenges for careers in technology.

- Attitudes of other people.

Most participants identified other people's attitudes as a significant challenge. The need to prove themselves was commented upon: '…coming to [technology] slightly later and then having a background in the arts, sometimes people don't really take it seriously.' Another student recalled the challenge of convincing clients she had the technological knowledge and skills required, suggesting gender socialisation (Coogan & Chen, 2007) of her clients' attitudes. One student recalled another manager laughingly commenting 'Oh, who's this? Your girlfriend?' when she was introduced. The students were keen to emphasise that such gendered attitudes were only exhibited by a few (often older) male colleagues.

- Stereotypes of women.

Half the students characterised women as commonly found in less technical roles and men particularly dominating gaming. Stereotyping of women by some (older males) had created challenges, such as being told to get the coffee at the start of a meeting. One student mentioned the intersection of age and gender as impacting her salary negotiations.

- Underrepresentation of women.

All the students mentioned the challenge of female underrepresentation within the technology sector, whilst one highlighted the lack of female role models in senior positions. Further, the sense of usually being the only woman in a meeting was remarked upon a few times. One student said she was hoping to be hired because there were so few women in technology, illustrating the significance of individual perceptions of situations as challenges or opportunities (Lent et al., 2000).

- Identifying their niche within the technology sector, finding interesting work and managing workload.

Two students, with technology sector experience, raised concerns over finding interesting work in conjunction with their desire to avoid management roles, with one saying she was '…most interested in the creative elements'. The drive to learn and self-improve was a common characteristic of the students, but that proved a challenge in terms of time management. One student talked at length about the problems of burn-out and workload pressure.

Developing self-efficacy depends upon self-confidence.

- The importance of self-confidence and ignoring imposter syndrome feelings.

All students considered high levels of self-confidence and a belief that they will succeed in their technology careers important. One identified having the confidence to '…say what you think and have your voice heard…' as essential. Another was enthusiastic about finding a supportive community (as suggested by Gabbert & Meeker, 2002): 'I love being in a university situation, when you have people that support you and protect you.' All students indicated that they were trying to ignore imposter syndrome (Corkindale, 2008) feelings.

- The need to build self-confidence, in themselves and others.

The students' passion for mentoring indicated the value they all placed upon learning with other people, particularly female professionals. One student talked about the need for professionals that explain technical concepts without patronising, to build students' self-confidence.

Self-reflection and relationship building are key to career management.

- Developing career self-management through learning, understanding personal career values and understanding the technology sector.

The skill emphasised by all the students was their ability to learn. All the students showed evidence of self-reflection. One student described how reflection upon her life and career values made her realise she was unhappy in her previous (technology) job: 'I just dropped everything and quit my job…decided to go contracting…part-time and to do the MA, to then shift my career completely to something more artistic where I can really combine my love for digital and dance.' This reflects the emergence of boundaryless careers (Arthur, 2014) in technology.

- Network building, strong people skills and openness to opportunities.

All students were keenly aware of the need to build their professional network. One commented, particularly for creative careers, 'I think it's… important to extract yourself from your bubble and reach out to people who might have a different perspective.' They also talked about the importance of strong people and teamwork skills, of being able to '…talk to people, to try to understand what they're wanting and thinking and feeling, and the ability to build a team.' One student also mentioned the importance of being open to different opportunities, reflecting the idea of planned happenstance (Mitchell et al., 1999).

- Limited student understanding of sources of career management support.

Only one student said she understood the concept of career management skills, having recognised their importance whilst previously working in technology. When probed further, another student mentioned building confidence and another mentioned '…taking tests to figure out what your best career would be', suggesting the continued influence of trait and factor matching approaches to career choice (Barnes et al., 2011).

Implications for practice

The MA/MFA Computational Arts students' perceptions of careers in technology provide important insights, with implications for professionals working with university students as well as technology sector organisations and the government. The relatively limited conception of technology careers held by students suggests the need to broaden their sector knowledge of career possibilities (roles and fields of specialisation). Students can then pursue work that aligns with their career values (Gesthuizen et al., 2019) and preferred work style thus reducing the challenge of finding interesting work. Highlighting the personal security benefits identified by students (remuneration and job availability), supported by current labour market information, will also enable students to see advantages of careers in technology. Further, raising creative students' awareness of how their perspective and skill set enables them to compete in the labour market suggests an opportunity to attract more women to careers in technology, particularly if possibilities of combining computing degrees with other disciplines are promoted (as suggested by Funke et al., 2016).

Given some students recognised the role chance had played in their exposure to technology careers, discussing the idea of planned happenstance (Mitchell et al., 1999) is appropriate. Further, encouraging take up of internships and facilitating contact with female role models was highlighted as an important source of sector experience. Indeed, shared learning via mentoring (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, 2019), both being a mentor and getting one, as well as networking (Forret & Dougherty, 2001, as cited in De Janasz & Forret, 2008) was clearly valued by the students as a way of gaining personal support and encouragement.

Having self-confidence and thus career self-efficacy (Betz & Hackett, 1986) was viewed as essential by students. Careers professionals can help students develop self-advocacy techniques and their communication skills, whilst also normalising and helping students ignore imposter syndrome (Corkindale, 2008) feelings. This corroborates the view of social constructivists and Bassot's (2011) observation that people learn best in interaction with others, particularly if careers professionals help students reflect upon and assess the validity of informal proximal technology sector information. This highlights the need for careers professionals to develop students' critical reflection skills and promote the use of a reflective journal (Bassot, 2016a,b). Combining these approaches with strategies to develop teamwork skills and overcome challenges, such as time management, will help students cope with the pressure of technology careers. Further, solution focused careers counselling (Reid, 2016) and the cognitive behavioural therapy techniques suggested by Law et al. (2014) could be considered to help identify ways forward for students facing stereotypes of women in technology.

Conclusion

The idiographic nature of this research into the perceptions of technology careers held by female computing university students has also facilitated insights to the perceived views of women and technology held by others. The gender-based attitudes of some people working in technology, as experienced by these female students, suggests the need for further research comprising an independent review of technology sector organisational cultures and the experiences of women within. However, it is societal influences on perceptions that appear to dominate, suggesting the need for sector wide action to raise the profile of technology careers in schools, improve the wider public's understanding of technology careers and to challenge the underrepresentation of women within. Further, this research suggests the benefit of embedded, holistic programmes of career management skill development to prepare female university computing students for their careers in technology.

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Utopia revisited: Green Guidance

Peter Plant

Utopians have visions for a better society, often with a view to social justice and equality. Some utopians have focused, more specifically, on career development and career guidance. Such visionaries include Charles Fourier, Richard Owen, and Frank Parsons. They are worth revisiting. Currently, our societies need new visions of a just and sustainable future for all. Green Guidance is a contribution towards this, utopian as it may seem.

Introduction

Utopian visions play an important underlying role in career guidance and career development. Utopias are never fully unfolded, but they set out a direction, a vision, often articulated by a small, dedicated group of people. One well-known utopian with a view to career development was Frank Parsons, but there are many others, as demonstrated below, each with their particular contribution.

The flip side of the Utopia is Dystopia. The fine line between the two has been demonstrated, repeatedly, in fictional literature and films: Orwell's *1984*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *The Truman Show*, just to mention of few from modern times. This contribution will not venture further into this maze: there are plenty of dystopias, in reality, as well as in fiction.

Earlier, on a more positive note, in his famous book on Utopia, Thomas More (1516) suggested that every citizen must learn farming, and at least one of the other essential trades: weaving, carpentry, metalwork, and masonry. Unemployment is eradicated: all able-bodied citizens must work. Working hours are six hours a day; many willingly work for longer. And lifelong learning is pivotal as all citizens are encouraged to take part in learning in their leisure time. This is More's vision of career development, aligned with his focus on social justice. 500 years later *Utopia for realists* by Bregman (2017), calls for a re-orientation in terms of work and wages, (re)introducing the concept of a basic citizens' income, as does Guy Standing (2011) with a special view to the Precariat. In my home country, Denmark, similar visions of a just and balanced society including a basic citizens' income, were forwarded by Meyer, Helweg & Sørensen (1981), proclaiming the *Revolt from the Center*, thus venturing into career development in their analysis that decent work, education, and training would hugely benefit from a basic citizens' income.

Parsons and other pioneers

Such visionaries have often indirectly dealt with career development, or directly, as did Frank Parsons (1909). His visions reached far beyond career guidance/counselling itself. Based on 'Christianity and brotherly love', his societal vision was *Mutualism* (Parsons, 1894): he advocated for a balanced, just, and peaceful society. In the career development field he is best known for his three-step matching approach to career guidance. This method resonated with the growing interest in scientific approaches to psychology during this period, including psychometrics. Parsons has been viewed as the Father of career guidance and counselling, but other reformers had dealt with this question, earlier. We will return to this point, below.

Back in Boston, the Civic Service House was opened in 1901, during a period of massive immigration. The North End of Boston was crammed first with Irish refugees of the mid-century potato famine, and later with Eastern Europeans and Italians. They lived in grimy tenement houses: whole families in a single room without sanitary facilities, working 10-12 hours a day, 6 days a week, in sweatshop factories, and in dangerous building trades, as noted by Zytowski (2001). Parsons and others in the Progressive Movement saw this as a waste of resources and as a societal plight. With this backdrop, a workers' institute was established,

i.e. a continuing education centre: the 'Breadwinner's Institute', renamed the 'Vocational Bureau of the Civic Service House' in 1908. Parsons worked at the Bureau less than a year, and wrote *Choosing a Vocation* (Parsons, 1909), published after his death. Several scholars have dealt with Parsons' life and influence on career guidance, including Mann (1950), Davis (1969), Gummere (1988), Jones (1994), Zytowski (2001), and Pope & Sveinsdottir (2005), some of whom viewed Parsons as a 'prophet', or as a 'crusader', no less.

Vocophors

Parsons, however, was not the first to advance a notion of career guidance/vocational counselling. One of his predecessors was Lysander Richards, who published *Vocophy, The New Profession* (Richards, 1881): *vocophers*, i.e. vocational counsellors, career development facilitators, were to be the new profession. Aligned with this, Parsons sketched a training program for counsellors to be taken up by the Boston YMCA alongside planning the Bureau. By 1909, teachers from each of Boston's 117 elementary and vocational schools were trained in vocational counseling. Topics included principles and methods of guidance, and occupational information. Several local progressive groups developed plans for placement services which, hopefully, would have a positive impact on juvenile delinquency. In short, Parsons was part of a broad progressive movement, as noted by Zytowski (2001) and Herschenson (2006)

Moreover, generations before the US-based Progressive Movement, both Robert Owen (1771-1858, Wales/Scotland), and Charles Fourier (1772-1837, France) had formulated societal utopian visions which included elements of career development. They were labelled, rather dismissingly, *Utopian Socialists* by their opponents, one of whom, incidentally, was Karl Marx. Many other spiritual and social leaders could deserve mentioning. Below, however, with relation to career development in particular, we will limit ourselves to explore some of the visions of Owen and Fourier.

Robert Owen

Robert Owen, manufacturer and societal reformer, is viewed as one of the most influential early 19th-century advocates of utopian socialism. One of his main points was the importance of educating the workers as an integral part of the social and industrial welfare programs in New Lanark Mills in Lanarkshire, Scotland. This was one of several such demonstration projects, which all had built-in elements of career development. Thus, Owen's vision was for "New Moral World" of happiness, enlightenment, and prosperity through education, science, technology, communal living, and decent work. Owen envisioned that his utopian community would create a "superior social, intellectual and physical environment" based on his ideals of social reform (Owen, 1813). Owen also sponsored other experimental utopian communities, including New Harmony, Indiana, USA. Robert Owen's son Robert Dale Owen (1801-1877) managed the day-to-day operation of this settlement, and he published widely on these matters, co-editing the *New-Harmony Gazette* along with Frances Wright (1795-1852), one of the few female activists in this field. Emancipation and social justice were pivotal concepts in these endeavors: career development, enlightenment, decent jobs, and healthy living conditions were seen as complementary aspects of emancipation and of social justice, for both men and women.

The New Harmony utopian community dissolved in 1827, but a string of Owenite communities in the United States emerged during the second half of the 1820s: between 1825 and 1830 more than a dozen such colonies were established in the United States, inspired by the ideas of Robert Owen. This movement antedated similar initiatives, inspired by Charles Fourier.

Charles Fourier

Fourier saw work as passion (Fourier, 1848). This was radical idea in the early days of industrialization, in particular for workers. In his ideal world, jobs were vocations, and thus based on the interests and desires of the individual. There were incentives: unpleasant jobs would receive higher salaries, but, overall, mutual concern and cooperation were the pillars of societal success. He was obsessed with numbers: he believed that there were twelve common passions which resulted in 810 types of character, so the ideal *phalanx* would be a group of 1620 people, supplementing each other's talents and passions. He even designed such *Phalansteres*, i.e. buildings which would be the

concrete framework for a just distribution of products according to need; for assignment of functions according to individual faculties and inclinations; for constant change of functions and tasks; and for short working hours. Long working hours would take the passion out of work. Career development was built into the variations of tasks, driven by passion, and thus a pivotal factor in terms of emancipation and of social justice, for both men and women. Fourier, incidentally, is credited for coining the idiom *feminism*.

Interestingly, and focusing again on the USA, Fourier's social views inspired a whole movement of intentional communities, as did Owen. One, in Ohio, was in fact called Utopia; they were to be found all over the USA. Indeed, modern times' Intentional Communities, of which there are thousands all over the world, may be seen as a further development of Fourier's inspiration. Some of his ideas have thus become mainstream; others failed, for instance his vision of six million *Phalansteres* loosely ruled by a world Omniarch or a World Congress of Phalanxes (Beecher, 1986).

Fall and rise

Did they fail, as Utopias tend to do? In some sense, the short answer is yes: the Owenites and most Fourier-inspired initiatives faded away after a few years of existence. Parsons' vision of Mutualism was never realised. But before they are dismissed as irrelevant shadows from the past, let us revisit some of their visions: emancipation, decent work, varied tasks, healthy living conditions, general education, free health services, gender equality, social justice. Such issues resonate with declarations of human rights, with goals of trade unions, with welfare policies, and with career guidance (IAEVG, 2017). Once they were viewed as extreme and radical: now, particularly in welfare states, these ideas are mainstream. They did not come about by the efforts of singular (wo)men: they are the result of combined struggles. We all stand on the shoulders of others: new Utopias are under way, green ones.

Thomas More (1477-1535) wrote of a 'utopia', i.e. a perfect imaginary world, drawing upon the Greek *ou-topos* meaning 'no place' or 'nowhere'. It was a pun: the almost identical Greek word *eu-topos* means 'a good place'. Thus, utopian ideas have nowhere to go, or, on the contrary, they can find a place everywhere. This may, too, be the case of the visons of Green Guidance, i.e. sustainable career development. However, the author of these lines has been an advocate for such ideas over the last 25 years, and initially Green Guidance and its emphasis on the environmental/ sustainability impact of career choices was seen as radical, somewhat far-fetched, and, in short, utopian. Since then, gradually, sustainability has been accepted as an important and virtually mainstream concept, to a degree where, for example, Irish education across sectors cover sustainability as a pivotal component, including career education (NCGE (2021), and the United Nations have adopted the, by now, well-known 17 Goals of Sustainable Development (UN, 2015). These two examples, as part of programmes in many countries on ESD (Education for Sustainable Development), and promoted by Unesco (2018), point to the important links between social justice and sustainable career development. In this context, Green Guidance has moved from a marginal and extreme position to being a vital and, increasingly, mainstream component in developing the concept of future sustainable career development. This vision has been promoted by a number of scholars, notably Barham & Hall (1996); Di Fabio & Bucci (2016); Dimsits (2019); O'Donohoe (2020); Maggi (2019); NCGE (2009); NCGE (2021); Packer (2019); Plant (1996; 1999; 2003; 2007a; 2007b; 2008; 2014a; 2014b; 2015; 2020a; 2020b); Pouyaud & Guichard (2018); and Roe (2020).

On a more analytical note, introducing four aspects in terms of sustainable career development and career guidance, Packer (2019) has developed a 4-field analysis model to distinguish between Light Green and Dark Green approaches, based on Watts (1996), thus differentiating between Radical, Progressive, Conservative, and Liberal approaches, and their respective practical consequences in terms of green guidance practices. In doing so, Packer (2019) helps to distinguish between 'light green' measures within the present society, versus a deeper, 'dark green' approach to rearrange societal structures. In these terms, Dobson (2007) makes a distinction between *environmentalism* and *ecologism*: environmentalism 'argues for a managerial approach to environmental problems' (p. 2). Environmental approaches, in this view, would be seen as socio-politically conservative or liberal. Ecologism, on the other hand, 'presupposes radical changes in our relationship with the non-

human natural world, and in our mode of social and political life' (p. 3). Thus, ecologism is politically radical in nature. With this backdrop, the question remains whether Green Guidance should go Dark Green or Light Green? Thunberg (2019) would not be in doubt: radical approaches are required.

In a broader educational perspective, several scholars and organisations have dealt with environmental education (e.g. UNESCO, 2018), or from a sociological perspective in terms of developing Citizen Green (e.g. Mason, 2013). This points to the need for developing Green Career Education, as noted in examples from Canada, where climate changes and career education programs take their departure from the voices of children (Maggi, 2019).

Conclusions and perspectives: Green guidance and social justice

There is a growing awareness of the clash between senseless economic growth, and environ¬mental/ sustainability concerns (Plant, 2020a). Whereas economic growth in the narrow sense used to be the solution within a capitalistic mindset, it now creates as many problems. Jobless growth, a deterioration of the natural resources, and the undermining of workers' rights and wages: these are some of the present predicaments. Globalisation in terms of global trade with its long-distance transport to/from low-wage areas adds to the problem, as does mindless tourism, and industrialised farming and fishing, just to mention a few. In this situation, guidance must become part of the solution, rather than the problem. Social justice and career guidance are interdependent, and, though obviously embedded in social structures, even more profoundly linked to sustainability issues.

In these terms, an important link between social justice and Green Guidance is established. This aligns with Irving and Malik (2005) who argue that career choices, individual as they may be, have implications beyond the individual, as they are linked to wider societal issues. Similarly, Hooley, Sultana, and Thomsen (2018; 2019) take the social justice discourse further in terms of criticising neo-liberalism: without increased sustainability these will be no social justice. Green Guidance, environmental issues, climate changes, and social justice are critically interlinked. *Ecojustice* has been introduced to the career guidance field by Irving and Malik-Liévano (2019) to capture the links and tensions between environmental concerns and social justice issues.

Green Guidance, with its focus on sustainability in all respects, moves career-decisions centre stage, to a higher note of personal commitment, societal involvement, and meaningfulness. This is, indeed, my position: I see Green Guidance as a window of opportunity to make career guidance, and in particular career education, more relevant in both societal and individual terms. In relation to globalisation, and to social justice, it places guidance in a central global position: environmental issues and sustainability concerns know no boundaries (Hulot, 2006; Monbiot, 2006; Stern, 2006). This is why it is so urgent that guidance workers and scholars make their contribution towards green changes, green career development, and a sustainable future: Green Guidance. Now, how utopian is that.

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Five signposts to a socially just approach to career guidance

Tristram Hooley, Ronald G. Sultana & Rie Thomsen

'Social justice' can mean different things to different people. Such ambiguity does not have to be a weakness as there is value to a diversity of analyses, approaches and suggested remedies to injustice. Interest is growing as to whether career guidance can be one of these remedies by actively taking a stance in support of social justice.

A social justice approach to career guidance is built on three main tenets: *firstly*, that individual's careers are shaped by the contexts and communities within which they live, study and work; *secondly*, that we live in an unequal world which means that the opportunities that individuals have to develop their careers are unequal. Any theory that purports to explain how career works needs to recognise this inequality; and *thirdly*, that career guidance has the capacity to intervene in this unequal world and support people to flourish.

Career guidance is not a magic cure-all that can wash away structural inequalities and oppression, but it can help people to become aware of these structures, navigate them and exercise agency on both an individual and collective basis. We have defined it as follows, highlighting features of career beyond paid work, collective dimensions to careering and the need to recognise power structures.

> Career guidance supports individuals and groups to discover more about work, leisure and learning and to consider their place in the world and plan for their futures. Key to this is developing individual and community capacity to analyse and problematise assumptions and power relations, to network and build solidarity and to create new and shared opportunities. It empowers individuals and groups to struggle within the world as it and to imagine the world as it could be. Career guidance can take a wide range of forms and draws on diverse theoretical traditions. But at its heart it is a purposeful learning opportunity which supports individuals and groups to consider and reconsider work, leisure and learning in the light of new information and experiences and to take both individual and collective action as a result of this. (Hooley et al., 2017a, p.20).

But it is easier to build critiques than it is to create practices that foster social justice. In the final chapter of our second book on career guidance and social justice we asked Lenin's famous question; 'what is to be done?' (Hooley et al., 2018a). One part of our answer was that we needed to try and draw together the various approaches to social justice to offer a framework for practice. This led us to 'propose five signposts to lead us towards an emancipatory career guidance' (Hooley et al, 2018a, p. 255).

A growing movement for change

There are many examples of social justice informed career guidance theory and practice throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. We see this tradition in critical psychology (Thomsen, 2014), sociology (Roberts, 2004) and education research (Law, 1981) and in traditions of practice concerned with marginalised groups and which help people to navigate unequal social structures and find their way to the good life.

Watts (1996/2015) recognised this when he wrote about 'socio-political ideologies of guidance' and identified the 'progressive' and 'radical' traditions

within career guidance that both have a commitment to social justice. In 2004, Irving and Malik published *Critical reflections on career education and guidance* and intensified the argument that a social justice approach to practice, allied with a critical theory informed theoretical perspective, should be key to career guidance.

Since the great recession of 2008, the political economy of the world has been in flux with a wide range of alternate possibilities opening. The Covid-19 crisis has exacerbated this dynamic situation throwing out additional challenges for people's career development and possibilities for society (Hooley et al. 2020). Against this background of social and political change the level of interest in social justice in career guidance practice has been growing.

Our recent books assembled a wide range of scholars and practitioners exploring these issues (Hooley et al. 2017b, 2018b). Since the publication of these books, interest in the area has continued to intensify with many other writers, researchers and practitioners exploring similar issues (e.g. Chadderton; 2020; Skovhus & Poulsen, 2021; Staunton & Rogosic, 2021) including an increasing number of voices addressing these issues from the global south (see Sultana, 2020) as well as a growing interest in social justice within the field's heartland of vocational psychology (Blustein et al., 2019; McWhirter & McWha-Hermann, 2021).

We have tried to capture examples of ways in which people are using social justice within practice on the *Career Guidance for Social Justice* website (https://careerguidancesocialjustice.wordpress.com/) and we have developed the five signposts to offer a framework to support practitioners to engage with social justice.

The five signposts towards a social just career guidance

The signposts point in five directions that summarise the theories, practices and thinking about career guidance and social justice. The five signposts suggest that a socially just form of career guidance will:

- build critical consciousness;
- name oppression;
- question what is normal;
- encourage people to work together; and
- work at a range of levels.

The signposts are not comprehensive and there are likely to be other uncharted paths to a socially just career guidance.

Building critical consciousness

Our first signpost draws on one of the central ideas of critical pedagogy, Freire's (1970/2005) concept of *conscientização* ('concientisation' or the development of critical consciousness). It is about helping people to develop a critical awareness of their surroundings, not just seeing what is happening in their lives and in the world, but also considering why these things are happening and in whose interest.

Critical consciousness is both learning about the world and it is learning by doing. Developing critical consciousness is about supporting people to intervene in their own lives and exercise agency both individually and collectively. Freire argues that the development of critical consciousness cannot be a hierarchical process through which people are instructed, rather it must be a participatory process owned by the learners through which they become producers of knowledge and ultimately of a new social reality.

These ideas resonate with many ideas that have informed career theory and practice. The idea of the individual as producer of their own solutions and the author of their own story resonates with both humanistic counselling (Rogers, 1961/1995) and life design (Savickas et al., 2009). The importance of analysing the world as it is also aligns with the field's interest in labour market information and the role that it can play in informing career decisions (Bimrose, 2021). But, the concept of *critical* consciousness adds new insights, reminding us that the individual and their consciousness are embedded in structures of power and inequality and that these structures can and need to be interrogated through questions like; in whose interest is this and how has this solution come about? The answers are likely to remind the participants in career guidance that the external world (the labour market) is not fixed and rational, but contested and contingent, it is where power is exercised and where it can be challenged.

Delazon's (2020) 'I want to make a difference' workshop provides an example of the kind of intervention that this signpost is pointing towards. The workshop presented labour market data and analysis of the gig economy and the gender pay gap. It used this information to encourage participants to engage in a collaborative learning opportunity looking at how to both 'play the game' and 'change the game' and asked them to consider how they could promote social justice through their career. Other examples are the recognition of the way in which career education can be framed as an anti-oppressive practice (Irving 2010) and the work of the Precarious Workers Brigade (2017) who explore how the discourse of 'employability' can be removed from its neoliberal roots.

Naming oppression

The second signpost argues that career guidance has an important role in helping people to recognise injustice when they experience it and to organise in solidarity with others who are also experiencing oppression. It positions career guidance on the side of the marginalised and disadvantaged and highlights the importance of our services being available to all.

This signpost highlights that our careers are not played out on a level terrain and that many people experience individuals and institutions actively seeking to frustrate their attempt to build a positive career and access the good life. It draws on Young's (1990, p. 42) comment that 'for every oppressed group there is a group that benefits from that oppression and is privileged in relation to that group'. Oppression and inequality are not accidental, nor the result of a deficit within the individual, but are rather the outcome of structures and the enactment of power from which some benefit at the expense of others.

We have used Young's (1990) five faces of oppression to help clients and students to explore oppression (Hooley & Sultana, 2016). This highlights exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence as the main ways in which oppression manifests. Exploring individuals' and groups' experiences of these five faces helps them to put a name to their experience and recognise that they are not to blame for much of what they may perceive as personal failures. The discourse of 'career management' and maximising 'employability' often serves to responsibilise failure, potentially leading people to blame themselves and ignore the inequalities and structural factors stacked against them. A recognition of oppression provides a corrective to this that, when combined with the other signposts, can be empowering.

The response from careers professionals to the Black Lives Matters movement provides a good example of how naming oppression can be brought into careers practice (Majothi, 2020). In the face of systemic racism, it is not possible for careers professionals to take a 'colour-blind' approach to career conversations with black students and clients. It is important to discuss discrimination and micro-aggressions and empower students to challenge this oppression through the provision of advice on employment rights, discussions about how to manage and combat racism and the willingness to provide advocacy and support, for example by challenging employers on discriminatory practices. All of this begins with the willingness to name oppression, discuss it, shine a light on it, and refuse to tolerate it.

Questioning what is normal

The third signpost invites us to exercise critical consciousness by looking at social structures and social interaction and asking 'in whose interests does this work?' One of the insidious ways in which power, domination, and exploitation work is by making socially constructed institutions, relationships, and behaviours appear as if they were 'social facts', and therefore 'natural' and immutable. History is full of examples of how this happens: throughout centuries, having slaves was considered 'normal'; that only those who had property could vote was considered 'obvious'; and that women were subordinate to men was 'common sense'. The list of what was at one time considered to be the norm, but which was in time questioned and challenged, is a long one. It is encouraging that humanity has the capacity to aspire for more equality, more justice, and more fairness. And yet we must not think of history as being linear, or as having reached its apotheosis. There is much about contemporary social arrangements and behaviours that also need to be questioned, even if they appear 'normal' to us.

Since we are born into the world as it is, it can prove difficult to realise that what feels and appears

'right' might in fact be quite 'wrong'. Comparing and contrasting present social arrangements across time and space, that is, developing a historical and anthropological imagination, helps burst the experiential bubble we live in, opening up possibilities for critique.

Problematising the words we use is another way of way of becoming aware of what passes as 'normal', when in fact it is problematic. The everyday terms we use tend to trap us in ways of thinking about things such that these become the 'norm'. Words like 'employability' (as noted earlier), as well as reference to the 'NEET', the 'vulnerable' or the 'at risk' or to 'drop-outs' implicitly trace problems and deficits back to individuals, removing the spotlight from causes that originate in unjust systems. Our well-intentioned efforts to help may end up reinforcing the same injustices rather than challenging or changing them.

As Wikstrand (2019) has argued, questioning the norm can have important implications for the way we deliver career guidance services. Learning, for instance, that there are successful companies based on worker democracy, profit sharing, and co-operative principles challenges many of the assumptions built into career development theories, many of which implicitly take neoliberal ways of producing and distributing wealth and life chances as givens. Becoming aware of systemic responses to inequalities through such initiatives as flexicurity, universal basic income, and global wealth tax is more likely to combat blame-the-victim approaches, and can help us refashion career guidance in quite significant ways. A good example of this can be found in the career education initiative reported by Midttun and McCash (2019) which emphasises the need to help participants to critically understand how work is structured in ways that perpetuate injustice. In contrast, many career management skills programmes are more preoccupied by encouraging individuals to 'fit in', 'to compete', and to 'cope' with arrangements that only work in favour of a few.

Encouraging people to work together

Our fourth signpost encourages people to work together in career guidance activities. The goal is to encourage and facilitate social interaction, collaboration and collective action as part of the career guidance process. Such a goal recognises and responds to the fact that there are many dilemmas that we experience in our careers that cannot be addressed solely through individual action. Many problems are group, community and societal problems, faced by people in similar circumstances which require common solutions, often facilitated by collective action. The process of encouraging people to work together can take place at several intertwined levels. It might include collaboration between career guidance practitioners, fostering co-operation and solidarity between participants in career guidance and forms of collective action involving practitioners and participants together.

Working together as a part of learning and development is at the core of critical pedagogy and critical psychology. Among the methods used to bring this about are action learning, learning circles and practice research. These are characterised by the exchange of personal perspectives and experience, shared identification of new possibilities for action and experimentation. In the article 'cultural action and conscientization' Freire (1970) explains that through the sharing of plurality and heterogeneity of realities the process of liberation will be a process of becoming aware of the different opportunities to live your life that are 'pressed'/presented upon you. That identification and subsequent deliberation on norms and normative presentations of the good life, becomes visible and made concrete through social interaction facilitated as part of career guidance process (Hyslop-Margison & Naseem, 2007). When the pictures and norms about the good life, that are presented through social media (see Buchanan 2018), political communication (Bergmo-Prvulovic 2018), the education system (Rawlinson & Rooney 2019), and even career education and guidance itself (Irving 2010, 2018) are objectified through social interaction and collaboration the participants are given the opportunity to develop their own stances, personally, as a group or a community (Freire, 1970).

As an example, when young people in career education work together to explore their different realities in relation to their future the goal (perhaps described as employability) is not to identify the best, most important or 'normal' way to go about developing a career rather the goal is to include heterogenic and plural standpoints into a 'diverse way' and thereby widen the picture of what is normal or employable. The

exchange of perspectives will also allow for a shared identification of action points for the future that stem from participants lived experience rather than from a predefined model. The role of the career guidance professional is to collaborate with the participants in the exploration of problems experienced in their lives, and to offer different perspectives on these problems.

This shared exploration takes place in groups or communities and can be organised and facilitated by the career guidance professional or by the participants themselves. Inspiration for how this can draw on a range of resources for guidance and counselling in groups (Rogers, 1971; Westergaard 2010), practice research (and research circles) (Poulsen, Skovhus, & Thomsen, 2018) and especially from career guidance in communities (Thomsen 2012; Thomsen 2017). Within such approaches the practitioner is viewed as one that facilitates exploration, problematisation and learning processes through shared exploration and exchange of personal perspectives and experience among the participants, in contrast to models that view the career practitioner as the expert with the answers which will fall short even if the group is seen as the base for delivering the answers.

There are many forms that encouraging students to work together might take. It could be as simple as linking clients and students with similar problems together on the basis that 'a problem shared is a problem halved'. In this situation the practitioner is decentring themselves and helping students to build networks that provide them with resources. In other possibilities a link is made more explicit between individual career management and community or collective organising. Career guidance works with individuals and groups to help them to see what is possible through taking individual action (e.g., getting promoted or finding a new job) and what might be possible through collective action (e.g., engaging in collective bargaining to increase pay and conditions for all workers or in mobilising people around an issue of education politics). Both individual and collective strategies are recognised as legitimate areas to be explored in career guidance.

Working at a range of levels

What we have referred to as 'emancipatory career guidance' requires us to work at different levels.

Much of our professional training has prepared us to work with individuals and groups, and our field has developed impressive funds of knowledge that help us connect with others, relate to them with empathy and understanding, helping them work through challenges that present themselves at different stages of their life. There is no doubt that there is nobility in this work, and there is surely a multitude of persons out there who have benefited from such skilled support.

Career guidance is more likely to be emancipatory when we become more aware of the intimate, often complex relationship between internal psychological states, and the external structures that give rise to them. Understanding, for instance, the frustrations of a person with disability, or with a migrant background, in finding work does not merely entail building up 'resilience' and more effective 'career management skills.' It also entails acknowledging that such frustrations are caused by workplaces that are far from being inclusive, and by labour laws that do not take difference and diversity into account.

Being an emancipatory career guidance practitioner is not about choosing whether to work at the micro (individual and group), meso (institutional and organisational), or macro (social and political system) level (Thomsen, 2012). It is about keeping all three levels in mind, even if one might feel more ready or more able to work at one level rather than another at a particular point in time. Awareness and analyses of the larger picture will inevitably affect the way we work with individuals and groups, just as meaningful interaction with individuals and groups gives us a much better feel for systemic injustices.

Emancipatory guidance is also about understanding professionalism as a commitment to addressing structures and systems that are the source of the problems that individuals often experience as self-induced. Such a commitment speaks to our role as active citizens, when we work to the best of our ability to advocate for change, to mobilise support for worthwhile causes, and to speak truth to power. Such activism understands that social justice is not attained via one route: rather, it is by constantly fighting battles on many fronts and at many levels, and by making alliances with other, related professions, that we are most likely to be successful in making a positive difference for the people we serve.

Several more recent career guidance approaches suggest how all three levels can come together to articulate a more powerful way of working with individuals and groups. Blustein et al.'s (2005) *Emancipatory Communitarian Approach*, for instance, makes it a point to take social and economic forces into account, and not just internal psychological states and resources, when trying to understand the positions that people occupy inside, at the edge of, and outside the labour market this. Advocacy here becomes part and parcel of the design of services purporting to support vulnerable and vulnerabilised groups, acknowledging the many contextual barriers that constrain career development in and through work, while highlighting the resources that individuals and groups bring to the complex and multi-faceted transitions they need to affect.

Where next?

Next up is a wide scale sharing of practices and research related to the five signposts. It can be new developments, but we also hope that the five signposts can serve as a lens through which theories, models and methods can be re-interpreted, re-developed and related to the social justice agenda in career guidance.

It is important to emphasise that the mounting concern with social justice issues in the career guidance field, as much as in other related professions, is not just another passing fad nor the latest in a long line of career theories to be taught as part of a menu of approaches for practitioners during their initial training. It is a genuine response to well-documented increases in the gaps between the haves and the have nots.

The signposts point towards a better world in which career could be an expression of individuals' creativity and imagination, rather than one in which people's careers are characterised by struggle against a system that is stacked against them. We hope that you will be interested in exploring where they lead.

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Examining the relationship between work-life conflict and burnout

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The present study empirically examines the overarching research question: what is the relationship between work-life conflict and career burnout in a general adult working population? A sample of eighty-nine participants completed an online questionnaire. The results suggest a moderate, statistically significant, positive relationship between work-life conflict and burnout. For workplace implications, the results highlight the importance of employers understanding work-life conflict and career burnout among employees. For personal implications, the results capture the significance of engaging in recovery activities to decrease work-life conflict and career burnout. Counselling implications include facilitating client self-understanding of role importance to cope with work-life conflict.

Introduction

Work-life conflict

Balancing work and personal life can be a complex task. Indeed, many individuals find it increasingly difficult to balance workplace demands with non-workplace related responsibilities and activities and thus boundaries between work and personal time may become blurred. This is known as *work-life conflict*, which is defined in the literature as 'a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and life domains are mutually incompatible in some respect' (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77). According to the American Psychological Association (2017) 24% of employed Americans experience work-life conflict. Unlike, the more common concept, work-family conflict, which typically denotes family as a structure with a child and/or spouse, the term work-life conflict encompasses work and family as well as other areas of life, which may include but are not limited to personal interests, leisure activities and socialization that is unrelated to family. In this study, the term work-life conflict is preferred, as it is more inclusive of individuals who do not live within a family structure that involves a spouse or child.

Current trends and changes in the workplace have altered the way many employees complete the duties and tasks of their role and may contribute to work-life conflict. Technological advances and organizational policies such as email, smartphones, internet access, video teleconferencing platforms and work from home policies allow for work to be completed at any time and from any geographical location. These changes in the workplace may diminish psychological and physical boundaries between work and life and increase the potential for work-life conflict and its related negative outcomes.

According to past research, work life conflict is related to numerous negative outcomes in four dimensions: work, psychological, physical, and interpersonal. Firstly, work-life conflict is correlated to negative work outcomes such as job dissatisfaction (Allen, et al., 2000), decreased job performance, workplace stress (Frone, et al., 1997), employee turnover (Yavas et al., 2008), and burnout (Dyrbye et al., 2011). Work-life conflict is also correlated to negative psychological outcomes such as life dissatisfaction (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998), psychological distress (Major et al., 2002) and substance abuse (Frone et al., 1993). Furthermore, work-life conflict is associated with decreased overall physical health outcomes (Frone et al., 1996). Lastly, work-life conflict is correlated to negative interpersonal outcomes, such as marital dissatisfaction and dysfunction (Bagherzadeh et al., 2016) and family difficulties (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999).

Burnout

Burnout is an occupation related state of ill-being that is defined as a three-dimensional syndrome of exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy (Maslach et al., 1996). Currently, burnout is not recognized as a clinical diagnosis in the 5th edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* or as a primary diagnosis in the *International Classification of Diseases (ICD)*. However, May 2019 the World Health Organization (2019) included burnout in the ICD-11 as an occupational phenomenon that influences health, but not as a primary diagnosis. According to Shanafelt et al. (2015) research which surveyed 5392 employed non-physician Americans, 28.4% of participants experienced burnout. Unfortunately, a significant replicated finding in the literature indicates that burnout is a relatively stable phenomenon, with longitudinal data indicating stability of burnout over five, ten and even fifteen years (Schaufeli et al., 2011).

Burnout is correlated to numerous negative outcomes in three dimensions: work, psychological and physical. Firstly, in terms of work consequences, burnout is correlated to job disssatisfaction (Shanafelt et al., 2009), turnover and turnover intention (Leiter & Maslach, 2009), absenteeism (Hallsten et al., 2011), presenteeism (Demerouti et al., 2009), diminished work performance. (Shanafelt et al., 2010) and work-life conflict (Dyrbye, et al., 2011). Psychologically, burnout is correlated to sleep difficulties. (Brand et al., 2010), depression, psychological ill-health (de Beer, et al., 2016; Madsen et al., 2015), suicide (van der Heijden, et al., 2008) and cognitive dysfunction. (Deligkaris et al., 2014). Lastly in terms of physical health, burnout is correlated to health declines (Kim et al., 2011), low levels of daily energy (Leone et al., 2009), cardiovascular disease (Toker et al., 2012), dysregulation of the neuroendocrine system (Michel, 2016), changes in brain structure (Savic, 2013), severe injuries (Ahola et al., 2013), mortality below the age of 45 years old (Ahola et al., 2010) and participation in unhealthy behaviours such as an unbalanced diet, sedentarism, smoking and increased alcohol consumption (Cecil et al., 2008).

Objective and hypotheses

The overall objective of this study is to empirically investigate the relationship between work-life conflict and burnout in a general adult working population. This objective is important as described above work-life conflict and burnout have extensive and robust negative correlates across multiple facets of an individual's life. This research could provide a more thorough understanding of the relationship among these variables and provide empirical research required for creating effective interventions.

Below is a breakdown of the operational hypotheses that will be tested. These hypotheses have been extensively supported by past literature; thus, the goal of these hypotheses is to replicate past study findings.

Hypothesis 1. A positive correlation between work-life conflict and burnout (total scale score and personal/work related subscales).

Hypothesis 2. A negative correlation between work-life balance and burnout (total scale score and personal/work related subscales).

Methodology

Participants

The final sample consisted of eighty-nine North American participants. Study participants were recruited through an online advertisement placed on Mechanical Turk. To be included in the study, participants had to be over the age of 21 and work at least twenty hours per week outside the home for pay.

Preliminary analyses of participants' demographic variables. One hundred and twenty-five participants initially completed the study. However, thirty-six participants were excluded in total; thirty-four participants did not work over twenty hours a week outside the home for pay, one participant failed two or more of the validity questions and one participant completed the survey twice.

The final sample consisted of eighty-nine participants, forty-nine of which were males and forty of which were females. The participants had an average age of 34.6 and completed on average 16 years of education. The sample consisted of 5 students, who spent an average of 16.2 hours per week on schoolwork and an average of 29.4 hours per week on paid employment and 84 employed individuals who spent an average of

42.3 hours per week on paid employment. In terms of relationship status there were 29 singles, 17 dating and living apart, 42 married or common law and 1 separated. Participants in a current relationship, had been with their current partner on average for 7.8 years. The sample consisted of 29 individuals with children with an average of 2 children in the household. Canadian gross annual income average = 63,977.00 (personal) and 99,397.00 (household) and US gross annual income average = 42,135.00 (personal) and 56,073.00 (household).

Measures

Background questionnaire. This was used to gather demographic information.

Adapted Work-Family Conflict Scale of Netemeyer et al., 1996 (Waumsley et al., 2010). This was used to assess work-life conflict. It contained 5-items with alpha coefficient of .94. Waumsley et al., (2010) adapted version of Netemyer et al., (1996) work-family conflict scale was used because a) it uses wording that is more inclusive of individuals who may not have a spouse and/or child and b) its factor structure supported the same two-factor solution as the wording developed and validated by Netemeyer, et al. (1996).

Work-Family Balance Scale (Allen et al, 2000). This was used to assess work-life balance. It contained 5-items with alpha co-efficient of .89. Based on the results from Waumsley et al. (2010) as discussed above, the wording of this scale was also adapted to be more inclusive of those who do not have children and/or a spouse.

Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (Kristensen et al., 2005). The personal burnout and work-related burnout scales were used from this inventory. A composite score included thirteen items from these two scales with a alpha coefficient of .91. The client related burnout scale was not used as it is not applicable to participants who do not work with clients.

Instructional Manipulation Check (Oppenheimer et al., 2009). Four items were inserted to ensure participants were paying attention and not responding randomly. Participants were excluded from the study if they failed two or more of these items.

Procedure

Consenting participants completed the survey online. They first completed the background questionnaire and then all other measures in random order.

Results

Pearson product-movement correlations were computed to assess the below hypotheses. Descriptive statistics such as minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation for all key study measures are presented in Table 1. The correlations between key study variables are listed in Table 2.

Hypothesis One: work-life conflict and burnout. For the first hypothesis, a positive correlation between work-life conflict and burnout was predicted, such that those high on work-life conflict would have higher levels of burnout. This analysis is a replication of past study findings, as this relationship has been well documented in the literature. Pearson product-movement correlations were computed to assess this relationship, with scores on the work-life conflict scale, and scores on the a) burnout full scale score, b) personal burnout subscale score, c) work-related burnout subscale score, as the dependent variable.

Work-life conflict scale and burnout full scale. As predicted, there was a positive correlation between the work-life conflict scale and the burnout full scale. The results suggest a moderate, statistically significant, positive relationship between the two variables, r (87) = .66, $p < .001$, two tailed, such that increases in work-life conflict were moderately correlated with increases in overall burnout.

Work-life conflict scale and personal burnout subscale score. As predicted, there was a positive correlation between the work-life conflict scale and the personal burnout subscale. The results suggest a moderate, statistically significant, positive relationship between the two variables, r (87) = .56, $p < .001$, two tailed, such that increases in work-life conflict were moderately correlated with increases in personal burnout.

Work-life conflict scale and work-related burnout subscale score. As predicted, there was a positive correlation between the work-life conflict scale and the work-related burnout subscale. The results suggest a moderate, statistically significant, positive relationship between the two variables, r (87) = .67, p < .001, two tailed, such that increases in work-life conflict were moderately correlated with increases in work-related burnout.

Hypothesis Two: work-life balance and burnout. For the second hypothesis, a negative correlation between work-life balance and burnout was predicted, such that those high on work-life balance would have lower levels of burnout. This analysis is a replication of past study findings, as this relationship has been well documented in the literature. Pearson product-movement correlations were computed to assess this relationship, with scores on the work-life balance scale, and scores on the a) burnout full scale score, b) personal burnout subscale score, c) work-related burnout subscale score, as the dependent variable.

Work-life balance scale and burnout full scale score. As predicted, there was a negative correlation between the work-life balance scale and the burnout full scale. The results suggest a moderate, statistically significant, negative relationship between the two variables, r (87) = -.60, p < .001, two tailed, such that increases in work-life balance were moderately correlated with decreases in overall burnout.

Work-life balance scale score and personal burnout subscale score. As predicted, there was a negative correlation between the work-life balance scale and the personal burnout subscale. The results suggest a moderate, statistically significant relationship between the two variables, r (87) = -.49, p < .001 two tailed, such that increases in work-life balance were moderately correlated with decreases in personal burnout.

Work-life balance scale score and work-related burnout subscale score. As predicted, there was a negative correlation between the work-life balance scale and the work-related burnout subscale. The results suggest a moderate, statistically significant relationship between the two variables, r (87) = -.62, p < .001, two tailed, such that increases in work-life balance were moderately correlated with decreases in work-related burnout.

Summary

As predicted there was a moderate, statistically significant, positive relationship between work-life conflict and a) overall burnout, b) personal burnout and c) work-related burnout, (hypothesis 1) and a moderate, statistically significant negative correlation between work-life balance and a) overall burnout, b) personal burnout and c) work-related burnout (hypothesis 2).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Work Family Conflict Scale Score	89	5	35.00	29.3371	8.08329
Work Family Balance Scale Score	89	5.00	35.00	21.7416	7.45826
Burnout Full Scale Score	89	16.00	58.00	36.7753	9.75117
Personal Burnout Subscale Score	89	7.00	29.00	17.6180	4.84652
Work Related Burnout Subscale Score	89	7.00	31.00	19.1572	5.56347

Table 2. Pearson's Correlations for Work-Life Balance and Burnout

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Work Family Conflict Scale Score	-				
2. Work Family Balance Scale Score	-.673**	-			
3. Burnout Full Scale Score	.662**	-.596**	-		
4. Personal Burnout Subscale Score	.563**	-.493**	.927**		
5. Work Related Burnout Subscale Score	.670**	-.615**	.945**	.754**	-

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

The overall objective of this study was to empirically investigate the relationship between work-life conflict and burnout in a general adult working population. More specifically the main research question is, is burnout negatively correlated to work-life balance and positively related to work-life conflict?

Theoretical Implications

These findings are expected and corroborate past research which has examined the association between work-life conflict and burnout. Numerous previous studies have reported an association between work-life conflict and burnout (Dyrbye et al., 2011; Farhadi et al., 2013; Lingard, 2004; Sholi, et al., 2011; Wang, et al., 2012). Overall, the results from this study replicate the findings from past research and suggest that work-life conflict is positively correlated to burnout.

Practical Implications

Workplace implications. The results obtained from this study may be beneficial to work-place administrators and human resource departments, which aim to understand work-life conflict and burnout among their employees. Stress-related illnesses, such as burnout are estimated to cost American businesses between fifty billion and one hundred and fifty billion dollars a year (Hatfield, 1990). Furthermore, research suggests work-life conflict and burnout are associated with decreased job performance, absenteeism and turnover, all which contribute to financial loss for businesses (Allen et al., 2000; Demerouti et al., 2004; Frone, et al., 1997; Hallsten, et al., 2011; Leiter & Maslach, 2009; Shanafelt et al., 2010; Yavas, et al., 2008). Thus, it is in the best interest of employers to use the results from this study, which highlight the importance of reducing employee work-life conflict and burnout to instill an understanding of these concepts and develop interventions to prevent them. This will ultimately increase business revenue and employee well-being.

Employers may want to consider incorporating the following strategies in their workplace to decrease work-life conflict and burnout. Firstly, facilitating a workplace with supportive supervisors and coworkers and flexible and predictable work schedules is linked to lower work-life conflict and burnout (Byron, 2005). Research also suggests a relationship between decreased levels of burnout and servant leadership characterized by stewardship, empowerment, and accountability (Babakus et al., 2010). Increasing work engagement is also an effective method to reduce employee burnout (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Work engagement can be increased, and thus indirectly decrease burnout, through job crafting, which involves customizing aspects of a job to improve the fit between a job and an individual's values, interests, personality or skills (Tims et al., 2013). This may include job crafting tasks, work relationships, the environment, or employee's perceptions of work

(Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Based on the cost of stress related illnesses for businesses, it is in a workplace's best interest to incorporate strategies to decrease work-life conflict and burnout.

Personal implications. Around 24% of Americans experience work-life conflict (American Psychological Association, 2017) and 28.4% experience burnout (Shanafelt et al., 2015). Work-life conflict and burnout are correlated to many negative personal outcomes such as life dissatisfaction, psychological distress, suicide, cognitive dysfunction, substance abuse, decreased physical health, sleep difficulties, marital dissatisfaction and dysfunction, and family difficulties (Bagherzadeh et al., 2016; Brand, et al., 2010; de Beer et al, 2016; Deligkaris et al., 2014; Frone, et al., 1993; Frone et al, 1996; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Kim et al., 2011; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Madsen, et al., 2015; Major et al., 2002; van der Heijden, et al., 2008). Thus, in terms of personal implications, individuals may want to consider the following strategies to decrease work-life conflict and burnout. Firstly, engaging in recovery activities, which promote personal well-being is a critical strategy to decrease work-life conflict and burnout. Recovery activities include participating in self-care, low-effort activities, personal interests, physical activities, and fostering relationships. These activities facilitate relaxation and psychological detachment from work, which in turn increases future work engagement (Ten et al., 2012). Furthermore, while job crafting is an evidence based method to reduce work-life conflict, if this is not possible in a role, an individual may be able to reduce work-life conflict and burnout by adding new satisfying roles to their life, improving the interaction between roles and expanding, increasing or improving the quality of time in an existing satisfying role (Brown, 1995). In sum, because individuals experience various negative impacts of work-life conflict and burnout it is important to develop personal strategies to alleviate related outcomes.

Counselling implications. Counsellors can assist clients to reduce their work-life conflict and burnout. For work-life conflict, counsellors can help by first facilitating client self-understanding of values, role importance and role conflicts and then discussing how to prioritize time and energy when role conflicts arise (Perrone & Civiletto, 2004). While it is important for counsellors to assist in self-understanding, it is also important to understand client role expectations and to help clients realistically negotiate competing roles and then facilitate the creation of realistic role expectations, goals and action plans that incorporate individual values, role salience, outcome expectations and goals (Sharf, 2006). Lastly, research suggests that time management skills, coping skills and training in mindfulness-based stress reduction is associated with lower levels of work-life conflict; thus, it would be helpful for counsellors to provide associated psychoeducation and skill training to clients who struggle with work-life conflict and burnout (Fortney et al., 2013).

Societal implications. Excessive work has been referred by Robinson (2000) as "the best dressed mental health and family problem of the 21st century" (p. 34). Similarly, Porters (2004) indicates that "society supports [excessive work], as it does no other addiction. One might question to what extent [excessive work] has become the new norm, making it even more difficult to determine whether anything in today's model can be labeled excess work" (p. 436). Together these quotes highlight how society valorizes productivity, busyness, and emphasizes the importance of work and deemphasizes the importance of work-life balance and considering the impacts of burnout. The societal acceptance of excessive work deters individuals from forming open dialogues about the negative impact of work-life conflict and burnout and further refutes acknowledgement or treatment of a behaviour that is so admired and sought after. Overall, the results from this study further emphasizes the consequences of engrained societal messages, which support excessive work and may contribute to work-life conflict and burnout.

Limitations

A limitation of this research is that online questionnaires through Mechanical Turk were employed to gather data. One of the limitations of using self-report measures is that participants may exaggerate their answers, answer in a way to portray themselves positively, forget pertinent details, be biased based on their mood during the survey or may not be fully paying attention to each question. Since participants can complete questionnaires at their

own convenience, they may be distracted by their environment and may not fully pay attention to each item in the questionnaire. However, this limitation has been addressed by incorporating instructional manipulation checks to assess reading attention and to ensure participants were not randomly responding. Participants that made two errors on the instructional manipulation checks were not included in the data analysis.

Furthermore, since the data was collected through an online sample, there may be reason to believe that the sample's attitudes and demographics are different than what would be expected from participants in an in-lab sample. However, a number of studies have now demonstrated that Mechanical Turk is a reliable and valid method for conducting psychological research (e.g., Paolacci & Chandler, 2014). In fact, the sample characteristics of Mechanical Turk is more diverse (in terms of age, education, socioeconomic status, and ethnic composition) than college samples, a group that is frequently recruited for psychological research.

Conclusion

The present study sought to explore the overarching research question: what is the relationship between work-life conflict and burnout in a general adult working population? A sample of eighty-nine participants completed an online questionnaire. The results suggest a moderate, statistically significant, positive relationship between work-life conflict and burnout. This research has important theoretical and practical implications for employers, individuals experiencing work-life conflict and burnout and counsellors who have clients experiencing these difficulties. This research furthers the literature which supports a relationship between work-life conflict and burnout. Thus, it is important for future researchers to extend these findings to identify further evidence-based interventions to address work-life conflict and other correlates of burnout.

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Book Review

Oxford Handbook of Career Development, edited by Peter J. Robertson, Tristram Hooley, and Phil McCash, Oxford University Press, 2021, pp. 528, £115 hardback, £62.29 kindle edition, ISBN Number: 9780190069704 (hardback) 9780190069711 (ebook)

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The *Oxford Handbook of Career Development* comprises a series of essays from leading figures in the careers world, uniquely bringing together the multiple traditions and international perspectives that now characterise the field. It will be of interest to career practitioners at all stages in their careers, and to lecturers, researchers, and policy advisers.

The editors of the handbook are: Peter J. Robertson, a qualified career adviser and a chartered psychologist. Peter teaches career theory and policy to postgraduate students at Edinburgh Napier University; Tristram Hooley, a researcher and writer specializing in career and career guidance. Tristram is Professor of Career Education at the University of Derby, Professor II at the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, and Chief Research Officer at the Institute of Student Employers; and Phil McCash, a qualified career development practitioner with experience of working with young people and adults in a variety of contexts and settings. Phil currently works as an Associate Professor at the University of Warwick's Centre for Lifelong Learning where he is Course Director for the Master's in Career Education, Information, and Guidance in Higher Education and Director of Graduate Studies. All three are Fellows of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (NICEC).

The handbook is broken down into three interrelated sections. The first offers a critical examination of the economic, education, and public policy context for practice. The second explores key concepts and the theoretical landscape. The final section considers the translation of ideas into action. Topics extend from professionalism to economic outcomes, cross cultural career psychology to evidence-based practice. The philosophy underpinning the handbook, its aim, and layout is clearly explained in the introductory chapter, where career is eloquently defined as '*The moving perspective through which all individuals interpret the meaning of their lives*' (p.5).

Throughout, there is a sense of a strong editorial hand guiding this volume; providing a consistency in quality and a coherency of approach with contributors stretching their examination of career development to consider what else could be. In this respect it is a 'troubling' volume in the very best sense (as Roland Sultana uses the term): it 'troubles' any complacency with the current state of career development work, but also offers '*territories of hope*' (p.88). Robertson's visionary exploration into widening the remit of career development in chapter 8 exemplifies this excellently. Framing this contribution against the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) he specifically addresses not just those goals directly related to work but considers how 'career' can contribute to many other SDGs. He argues that the potential impact of career development can be extended to contribute to health and wellbeing goals, to environmental goals and to peace and justice. Further examples include: Mackenzie Davey's examination of organisational career development and the ideological focus on individual agency and organizational processes (chapter 10), stretching us instead to celebrate richness and diversity of approaches; Ribeiro's challenging critique of Global North theories and their applicability to different social, cultural and economic conditions of the Global South, alongside the lack of the reverse South to North flow

(chapter 16); and Percy and Dodd's critical analysis and pragmatic three tier conceptualisation of financial metrics and economic outcomes (chapter 3).

Woven within the chapters are direct and implied references to the 'added value' of career practitioner support: the greater value of career assessment when mediated by a professional (McIlveen et al., chapter 22); the increased value of LMI when interpreted by career experts (Bimrose, chapter 20); and the enhancement of outcomes when expertly facilitated (Whiston, chapter 24). This phenomenon is encapsulated by Barnes (chapter 11) where he defines the ability of career practitioners to design career learning experiences that bring about change as 'transformative'. Recognition of 'added value' is fundamental to understanding the interactive relationship of career development with digital technologies and their role as tools and in shaping society, (Barnes, chapter 11, and Hooley & Staunton, chapter 21). These and other chapters offer a rebuttal to the darker side of career development policy, which fosters an illusion of democracy and empowerment, and challenge the rather tiresome reductionist assumption that careers work could all go online.

Underpinning this exposition of career development, we discover the bedrock of career theory; its rationale and application so clearly expressed by Yates (chapter 9) and supported in subsequent chapters that provide more detailed accounts of specific theory, concepts of social justice, and cultural dimensions which are both integrative and practical. The high level of critique and intercultural dialogue illuminates well established accounts of career development and synthesizes them with more contemporary understanding, preserving valuable insights of the past and without disdain for traditional theory or methods. As such, the contributors challenge our views, develop our understanding, and consequently, increase our effectiveness as career practitioners.

As reviewers, stand-out chapters were those that broke new ground, stretching beyond restating what has been published previously. Beyond those already detailed above, personal highlights for the reviewers included chapter 4 in which Hooley invites consideration of the interrelationship between career theory/practice, education, and human capital theory. Drawing on examples from policy instruments, funding regimes and public rhetoric, he contends that the hold of human capital theory on career development is problematic. Rather, career development practice should be considered as a process of education and learning, with a contribution to human agency far beyond the individual's economic role. Hooley acknowledges that wholesale change is not imminent but argues that small steps towards change are possible. Another stand-out chapter was the persuasive argument of Sultana in chapter 6, where he highlights '*a narrative that serves to mask system failure or to lay the cause of failure at the wrong door*' (p.82), exposing and challenging the authenticity of work education in education settings which familiarity causes many of us to accept without question.

Highlighting a few chapters does not imply other contributions are poor. Indeed, they are of great value and encourage us to reflect on and extend our understanding of career development – as Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) so aptly said, 'The mind, once stretched by a new idea, never returns to its original dimensions.'

The handbook can be read in part or in whole. Its strength is that its 25 chapters form a cohesive volume, not a mere collection, yet different chapters will be of interest to different readers and stand successfully alone. It succeeds in providing an integrative dialogue across the transdisciplinary field of career development with each contribution well informed and cogently argued, exemplifying that '*career is a conversation between the present and the future. Our pasts frame the way in which this conversation can happen*' (p.8). A limitation is restricted access. Confining subscription to 'Oxford Handbooks online' only to learning institutions, alongside the high cost of purchasing a copy, will impede readership. The handbook makes a strong case for career development, providing an understanding of what it does, and how much more it could do to improve the wellbeing of individuals and communities, and support the development of economic systems that respect our humanity. We would strongly urge you to pool your resources and secure joint ownership of this seminal volume and encourage libraries to subscribe to 'Oxford Handbooks online' so you can read it for yourselves.

Call for papers

Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling: April 2022 Issue

Editor: Pete Robertson

In order to enable a wide and varied spectrum of contributions, papers are invited on *any* aspect of career development.

For this issue, we will be prioritising articles that relate to the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for individuals, for career education and guidance services, and for how we think about career development.

Potential authors should note the following deadlines:

Deadlines for submission	
Expressions of interest supported by an article title and brief abstract (100 words)	19th November 2021
Full draft article	14th January 2022
Final corrected manuscript	18th February 2022

For enquiries, expressions of interest, and submission of articles, please contact the editor:

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

Forthcoming events

NICEC Events

The NICEC Events are likely to take place via Zoom for the foreseeable future. Please register your interest when the events are promoted to receive the login details. Details for the NICEC events calendar are kept up-to-date on the website http://www.nicec.org/ Please send any queries to Claire.m.nix@gmail.com

Topics	Contributors & Themes	Dates & Times
Cutting Edge Event with the CDI: **How to evolve your practice**	An event run in partnership with the CDI, led by Rosemary McLean with Gill Frigerio, Julia Yates, and Janet Sheath (CDI). This session will be interactive and stimulating and offer a range of ideas for how you can develop your practice. https://www.thecdi.net/Skills-training-events	Wednesday 10 November 2021 9.30am-12,30pm
Seminar: **Career development support for children from military families**	Siobhan Neary in partnership with the SCPA (Service Children's Progression Alliance)	Thursday 25 November 2021 (Time TBC)
Bill Law Awards	Organised by Nicki Moore and NICEC Fellows	13th June 2022 5-6.30pm

Seminars and Network Meetings:

- Included in membership fees for NICEC Fellows and members.
- £25 for seminars and £40 for Network meetings for non-members wishing to attend.

The Cutting-Edge events are free to CDI members and NICEC Fellows and members.

CDI Events

A full list of CPD events, as well as further information about them, is available on the CDI website at https://www.thecdi.net/Skills-training-events
The various types of training on offer include webinars, digital bytes, expert training online, conferences and accredited courses through the CDI Academy.

All our CPD webinars are free to members – please register your interest for each session so we can send you the joining link. Non-members can also join these sessions by registering and paying online.

Members can also view any webinar in our back catalogue, through our YouTube channel which contains over 100 webinar recordings. This is accessed through the members' area of the CDI website www.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 growing membership of 4500 individual members and affiliate organisations and speak with one voice for a lively and 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 services for all throughout the UK.

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

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

Below are a few of our major achievements:

- A powerful brand supported by an evolving website **www.thecdi.net**; social media (Twitter and LinkedIn) presence; and quarterly magazine *Career Matters*;
- A schedule of CPD, skills training, webinars and conferences based on market analysis and members' training needs;
- A growing media and lobbying presence with the CDI recognised as the *expert voice* in the field; advising politicians, speaking at conferences and commenting on policy;
- The establishment of the UK Career Development Awards – ten sponsored awards including *Careers Adviser/Coach of the Year* and *Careers Leader of the Year and Lifetime Achievement Award*;
- Clear focus on professional identity and increasing the professionalism of the sector through our influence, ownership and development of the QCD and QCG/D and the CDI Academy including the new *CDI Certificate in Careers Leadership*.

ASSURING QUALITY

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

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

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

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EDITORIAL

ARTICLES