

Career Research & Development

the NICEC journal: making practice thoughtful and theory practical

**Exploring Career
Well-being in Two Cultures**

**Career Guidance in the United
Arab Emirates**

**Career Decision Making Self-
efficacy and Decision Making
Styles of Higher Education
Students in Greece**

**Transition in Organisations:
1 – Valuing Career
Prospectives**

**You Can't Be Serious!
Support Career-related
Learning in Primary Schools?**

**The Development of Quality
Standards for Career
Guidance in the United
Kingdom**

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Career Research & Development

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David Andrews and Jenny Kidd at the John Killeen Memorial Lecture.

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Guidelines for contributors

Contributions are welcomed. Main articles should normally be 1,000-3,000 words in length. They should be submitted to the editor by post or email at the above address. Taped contributions are welcomed.

Career Research and Development: the NICEC Journal is published by CRAC (Careers Research and Advisory Centre), an independent educational charity founded in 1964. CRAC aims to promote the importance of and encourage active career development and career-related learning for the benefit of individuals, the economy and society.

Aims and scope

Career Research and Development: the NICEC Journal is published for:

- Career practitioners working in schools, colleges, Connexions/IAG services, higher education careers services, adult guidance agencies, companies, community organisations, etc.
- Trainers, lecturers, advisers and consultants working with career practitioners.
- Individuals working towards qualifications in career education, career guidance and career management.
- Government departments and business and community organisations with an interest in the work of career practitioners.

It sets out to:

- Promote evidence-based practice by making theory, policy and the results of research and development more accessible to career practitioners in their day-to-day work.
- Encourage discussion and debate of current issues in career research and development.
- Disseminate good practice.
- Support continuing professional development for career practitioners.
- Help practitioners to develop and manage career education and guidance provision in the organisations in which they work.

Careers across the Sectors

Anthony Barnes

The broad theme of an issue of the journal is sometimes planned in advance and sometimes it has to reveal itself when the articles have been submitted. The previous issue focused on careers education and guidance in secondary schools and the next issue will be devoted to careers in the higher education curriculum. This issue, you will already have guessed, is an eclectic mix; but its unifying theme is that it has articles that span all sectors; and it has an underlying theme related to the significance of cultural context. If you identify any further themes, I am happy to start a discussion forum on the NICEC website!

Jennifer Kidd's opening article is based on the John Killeen annual memorial lecture given in October this year. Jennifer co-authored a number of influential reports with John including their review of the learning outcomes of guidance for the Employment Department in 1991. This year's lecture was a wonderful tribute to John's memory and the talk engaged and stimulated the audience with its fresh perspective on the emotional components of career well-being and its challenge to our assumptions about the kinds of interventions which are necessary and effective.

My article on the development of a career guidance culture in the United Arab Emirates also touches on the need to understand that the systems and models that might be appropriate in one's own culture may not be appropriate in a different culture. Taylor (1990) has set down some of the principles involved in understanding another culture. One of them is that 'personal observations of others about another culture should be regarded with scepticism'. I have not set out to be an unreliable witness, but not everyone will agree with my analysis. It has been fascinating to be both a player and a spectator at the time when the UAE is discovering a need for career guidance. I am struck once again by the complexity of progress - how difficult it is to design systems and models and make them work.

The article by Despina Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou and Katerina Argyropoulou investigates the relationship between career decision making self-efficacy and decision making styles of higher education students in Greece. It suggests that students with a high degree of self-efficacy are more likely to use a rational decision-making style with

its attendant advantages while those with a low level are likely to use a dependent style. It is research that could usefully be replicated with students from a more strongly collectivist culture in order to find out if there is a correlation between low self-efficacy and the dependent style in higher education students in that society. Ian King has written the first of three articles on the career transitions of staff in professional service firms. Traditional notions of career and organisational development are changing and with it the ways that we think about managing career development within organisations. He argues that careers education and management need to be woven into the social fabric of the organisation to better reflect the nature of career and the needs of the individual.

We have a timely reminder of the value of beginning career development learning in primary education from Barbara McGowan. She sets out the case for starting early and then urges the new policymakers in children's trusts to make it an explicit part of the local *Every Child Matters* agenda. The rationale for career development learning seems to be everywhere and nowhere in the five outcomes. It ought to be but isn't a headline outcome under 'Enjoy and Achieve'. Most people will locate 'careers' under 'Achieve economic well-being' although the problem here is that this outcome seems to have been largely taken over by economic, financial and enterprise awareness. Careers education merits not a single mention in the 2006 Annual Report by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools. As the personalised learning bandwagon continues to gather momentum, perhaps we should reinvent CEG as 'personalised work-related learning' and make sure that we start early enough!

Finally in this issue, Leigh Henderson explains how career guidance quality standards for the adult guidance sector were developed for the UK. He illuminates the transition from 'NQSLW' to 'matrix' and what was gained and lost in the process. The insights he provides make fascinating reading for those like me who are waiting to see the final shape of the proposed Quality Standards for IAG for Young People (due in April 2007) and how they will work out in practice.

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Exploring Career Well-being in Two Cultures

The Third John Killeen Memorial Lecture, October 2006

Dr Jennifer M. Kidd, *Department of Organisational Psychology, Birkbeck, University of London*

For some time now, psychologists have been interested in people's attitudes to their work, and there has been sporadic attention to emotions in the workplace. The classic work by Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman (1959) is an example: they asked employees regularly to rate their feelings, and this research led to Herzberg's well-known theory of job motivation. But emotions at work have only received concerted attention in the last 15 years or so. Emotional intelligence, a notion first introduced by Salovey & Mayer (1990), has become a popular concept. In addition, there has been a lot of interest in emotional labour in the service sector – the ways employees manage and display their feelings to meet the requirements of their job (Hochschild, 1983).

The two studies described in this article focus on people's experiences of emotions at work, and people's feelings of well-being in relation to their careers. Ideas of well-being at work are often conflated with notions of job satisfaction and career satisfaction. But assessing how far people are satisfied with their job or career seems rather superficial, since these general states do little to capture the range, richness and intensity of emotional tones at work.

Career well-being in the UK

The first study explored emotional aspects of careers with a UK sample. One aim of the study was to explore career well-being, and the lack of it, by identifying the career experiences people describe when asked to give accounts of times when their career was going well, and times when it was going badly. A second aim was to assess how far accounts of particular career experiences involve specific emotions. For example, what kinds of emotions are involved when someone is going through a career transition – a change of job or a move to a different organisation? The third aim was to look at the reported consequences of these experiences and emotions. How do the feelings produced by negative career experiences, for example, not getting a promised promotion, affect attitudes to work and career?

The sample comprised 89 employees, aged 24 to 69, employed in a range of managerial, professional and administrative jobs. 65% were female, and about half were in part-time post-graduate education. The respondents were emailed a questionnaire comprising open-ended questions about times when their careers were going particularly well or particularly badly and how they felt at these times.

Facilitators and threats

The questions about positive and negative career experiences produced responses that could be grouped into a range of what I have called 'facilitators of' and 'threats to' career well-being. These in turn were grouped into seven broader career categories. They are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Features of career well-being

Career characteristics	Conditions facilitating well-being	Threats to well-being
Career transitions	Opportunities for voluntary mobility, successful adjustment to new role	Involuntary mobility, lack of opportunities for mobility, problems adjusting to a new role
Interpersonal relationships	Support, feedback and recognition	Interpersonal difficulties, lack of support, feedback or recognition
Relationship with organisation	Autonomy, power	Adapting to organisational change, alienation, inequitable treatment
Work performance	Using skills, performing well	Dissatisfaction with performance, overload
Sense of purpose	Purposeful, optimistic orientation	Pessimism, uncertainty about the future
Learning and Development	Developing skills	Lack of challenge, lack of opportunities to develop
Work-life issues	Work/life in balance	Difficulties with personal life spilling over into work

The main facilitators in the broad category *career transitions* were moving into and adjusting to a new work role, or having a new career pattern, for example, working freelance. So people may need career mobility for career well-being, in the sense of opportunities for making transitions into roles which give them new challenges. The greater mobility that some commentators argue is becoming more common (e.g. Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) seems to be psychologically beneficial. Not surprisingly, threats to well-being in this category involved being made redundant, redeployed or not having a contract renewed, difficulties adjusting to a new role, and disappointment at not being promoted or being unsuccessful in a job application.

The category *interpersonal relationships* involved the facilitators of gaining support and recognition from others: either general support or feedback on performance. Difficulties in this category included conflict, lack of support and lack of feedback or recognition.

Facilitators in the category *relationship with the organisation* concerned being given the freedom to work autonomously or having the power to influence others. Threats included problems that arose from organisational change, feelings of alienation or inequitable treatment.

Work performance referred to times where the individual had been effective in fulfilling the demands of their role. On the negative side, issues were mainly concerned with having too much work to do or feeling that they had performed poorly.

Positive aspects of a *sense of purpose* involved making a career decision, or having a positive, purposeful or optimistic approach to a career. In contrast, having a negative, uncertain or pessimistic attitude seemed to be a threat to well-being.

The category *learning and development* included the development of knowledge and skills through participating in education or training or simply the prospect of learning new skills. Negative experiences in this category involved feeling stuck, unchallenged or bored or being unsuccessful in the attempt to learn new skills.

Lastly, *work-life issues* involved achieving a balance between work and personal life or problems with this as well as having personal or health problems.

Several of these features of career well-being support recent writings about career satisfaction and success. For example, Hall (2004) has described the importance of a 'protean' orientation to career, involving continuous learning and feelings of autonomy and Kram (1996) has emphasised the significance of people's connections with others in the workplace.

Emotions linked to career well-being

The emotions that respondents associated with significant career experiences were wide ranging – a total of 39 different emotions were described. Over one-third reported more than four emotions. The emotions most frequently reported were: excitement, pride, happiness, confidence, anxiety, unhappiness, frustration and anger. So career well-being seems to involve a wide variety of emotions, indicating the richness of feelings that arise as people pursue their careers. The challenge for career theory is to incorporate these emotions into models of career development.

Unsurprisingly, when their careers were going well, people tended to describe positive emotions. But in many cases, good feelings were tinged with anxiety and worries about performance. This was particularly common when the positive career experience involved taking on a new role. For example, a practice education facilitator employed by a health authority described how she felt when she was told that she had succeeded in getting a new job:

'...I learned that against all my expectations I had succeeded in getting a new post. These posts were for a new service across the country and this was (I felt) my opportunity of a (career) lifetime. My feelings included ...: disbelief, joy, pride/smugness, fear of the unknown, fear of not being 'up to it', determination.'

Interestingly, women were more likely than men to report anxiety in response to a positive career event. This is consistent with the literature suggesting links between feminine traits and low self efficacy (e.g. Choi, 2004). Positive career experiences often involve new challenges, and some women may have lacked confidence in their ability to cope in these situations.

Sample size only permitted thorough exploration of relationships between career experiences and emotions for the positive experiences of moving into a new role or career pattern, and recognition or feedback from others, and for the negative experiences of interpersonal difficulties, and being unchallenged.

The emotions most frequently linked to moving into a new role or career pattern were excitement, anxiety, pride, happiness and confidence. For example, one respondent reported how she felt when she moved to a new organisation:

'I felt very confident and happy and really felt I was making a mark on the organisation and that my presence was noted and valued... I held my head up high and lived up to my own and others' expectations of me.'

Few accounts of moves to a new role involved promotions, but many of the respondents who did experience promotion reported intense and diverse emotions. One wrote:

'I was really happy – felt proud, cheerful and motivated. Everything seemed more positive and I was invigorated... The only slight downside to these positive emotions was a twinge of guilt that a good friend of mine had not been successful, and feeling of annoyance with another colleague who was so cheesed off with their own failure that they couldn't bring themselves to even speak to me and another successful colleague who was younger than him. In a funny way it also made me feel older and more responsible... It also felt slightly embarrassing at the time to take up the role.'

Pride was often reported as the dominant feeling when the positive career experience involved recognition or feedback from others, followed by excitement.

A range of emotions were linked to interpersonal difficulties. They included sadness, lack of confidence, frustration, anger, anxiety, guilt, irritation, depression and feeling upset. One respondent gave an account of a time when she was working for a manager whom she disliked and mistrusted, and who would challenge her publicly in front of her staff:

'I went from being a respected manager who knew how to do my job, to someone with no confidence... I felt deeply unhappy and inadequate, to the extent that I underwent counselling to enable me to continue work.'

Another seemed to have allowed herself to be convinced by her unworthiness and incompetence:

'...a new boss completely dismantled my self confidence by going over my previous performance appraisals and claiming that the positive statements were all untrue. ...I ended up believing him as he was very forceful... I was left completely devalued and worthless... in a way my greatest fears were realised (that one day someone would find out that actually I'm not good enough) and, therefore, I just shrunk and let him completely deconstruct me.'

Reports of being unchallenged were linked to emotional states of low arousal and symptoms of physical tiredness. For example, one manager wrote:

'My circumstances are such that my current job is comfortable, well paid, convenient in terms of work-life arrangements and generally unchallenging.... I've almost felt myself becoming 'greyer' by the day, lacking vitality. Lack of

challenge seems to be producing very negative 'symptoms' such as physical tiredness, mild depression, sleeplessness, lack of ambition.'

Consequences of experiences and emotions

The most commonly described consequence of feelings about good and bad career experiences involved relationships with others. After a good experience some said they had become more sociable, some had worked more with others, and some had done more to help others in their place of work. For about one-fifth of the sample, negative experiences were reported to affect their relationships with others: for example, they engaged less with them, or were less agreeable. This suggests the importance of understanding careers in terms of social relationships. Relationships give rise to emotions and their quality is affected by them.

For nearly half the sample, having a negative career experience seemed to have some form of adaptive function. This commonly involved reconsidering their career, or deciding to develop new skills, perhaps by enrolling on a course. It was noteworthy that those whose emotional response to a negative career experience included anger were twice as likely to experience some positive consequences as to see only negative consequences. Perhaps anger serves an energising function in career development, mobilising career resilience.

Career well-being in Taiwan

The second study of career well-being, carried out in collaboration with Peter Yang, involved a sample of respondents from Taiwan. In contrast to the UK, which is seen as an individualist culture emphasising achievement, competition, freedom and autonomy, Taiwan is viewed as collectivist, characterised by attitudes that favour interdependence and values associated with duty, obedience, and in-group harmony (Hofstede, 1991). It has been estimated that around 70% of the world's population is collectivist (Triandis, 1995), and so it is important that theories and models developed in individualistic, western nations are examined for their applicability to collectivist cultures.

The aim of this study was to examine similarities and differences in the components of career well-being and associated emotions in Taiwan and the UK. In contrast to the UK, career well-being in collectivist cultures such as Taiwan may be influenced more by interpersonal aspects of work, such as support and recognition from others, and development activities and task outcomes that are socially oriented. It may be less influenced by having autonomy at work. Previous work (e.g. Triandis, 1995) has suggested that the emotions of collectivists tend to be other-focused (e.g. anger, gratitude and shame), and so we predicted that the Taiwanese sample would report other-related emotions with greater frequency than the UK sample.

A sample of 56 Taiwanese employees responded to the same questions about significant career experiences and the emotions associated with them as the UK sample. Their responses were compared to those of a sub-sample of the UK employees in the original study, matched by age, gender, occupation and the proportion engaged in part-time postgraduate study.

Findings showed that the main components of career well-being were similar for the two groups, with differences in emphasis. Although interpersonal relationships were equally significant, support from supervisors was more frequently mentioned in the Taiwanese sample. Two features of well-being seemed more important for the Taiwanese sample: performing well and social aspects of learning.

The importance of performing well could be explained by the fact that in Taiwanese culture, having a high level of achievement is important in order to conform with parents' expectations of a secure career. Also, achievement is a means of promoting the family's 'face' and it makes them proud. In contrast to the UK respondents, the Taiwanese group frequently reported that the outcomes of effective work performance involved benefits for others as well as the respondent. As one army officer wrote:

'I played an important role in several projects. High-level supervisors praised my performance. I was immensely proud of myself and in doing these tasks I learned several skills. I was filled with happiness and a sense of achievement because I controlled key processes and others relied heavily on my work.'

The Taiwanese respondents were more likely to describe social aspects of learning, such as learning in collaboration with others, learning that helped others improve, and the development of social networks as an outcome of learning.

For the Taiwanese, career well-being seemed less likely to involve opportunities for career mobility, and reporting problems with career transitions was fairly uncommon. At the heart of career mobility is change, for which a degree of risk taking is needed. However, a cultural value widely held in Taiwan is work security. As well as feeling pressure to meet parents' expectations for a secure career, individuals have a strong sense of duty to their family when they get married, and may be reluctant to make job changes that might not work out.

Another difference between the two groups was that the Taiwanese respondents were less concerned with having autonomy and power at work, as might be predicted on the basis of norms of collectivity. Also, this group were much less likely to say they felt 'stuck' or unchallenged in their career. One possible reason for this is that people from collectivist cultures may be less likely to seek to actualise their personal potential and aspire to a career

that matches their interests. Moreover, people may perhaps be inclined to put up with unsatisfying work to a greater degree than those from individualistic cultures, since being unemployed could lead to the family 'losing face'.

In relation to reported emotions, the Taiwanese sample did not report other-related emotions with greater frequency than the UK sample. The main difference between the two samples was in the frequency with which the Taiwanese group reported having a sense of achievement. The UK group, while not mentioning this as such, commonly described pride. The career experiences linked to these emotions seemed similar in the two groups, however, in that recognition by or praise from others seemed to be intrinsic to the experience.

Some of the findings relating to career well-being therefore support the literature on the attitudes and values of collectivist nations, and they lend weight to calls for career theories to be more culturally sensitive. However, the results relating to reported emotions could be interpreted as casting doubt on some of the differences between the two cultures as represented in the literature.

Conclusions

In interpreting the findings of these two studies, we have to be careful not to assume that the experiences and emotions reported by the respondents reflect what they actually went through and felt at the time. (However, it is unlikely that people's recollections of emotionally-laden experiences are completely unrelated to what actually happened.) It is also, of course, impossible to conclude that there were any cause and effect relationships between experiences and emotions. Another limitation of the studies is in the nature of the samples. The respondents were all working in managerial, professional and administrative occupations, and women were over-represented. This limits the generalisability of the findings.

However, this model of career well-being and the emotions linked to it provides a starting point for exploring emotional aspects of career development. In particular, this research suggests that social relationships at work are key to well-being in both cultures. Career counselling often focuses on helping people choose occupations which match their interests, abilities and values, and differences between occupations are emphasised. These findings suggest that there are certain features of careers that are particularly important for well-being, irrespective of person-occupation fit. Therefore career practitioners working with young people and others going through career transitions might usefully help individuals assess how significant these features are to them personally, and examine how far the careers they are considering have these characteristics. In particular, practitioners need to help clients attend to the social context of work, so that they are better prepared to manage relationships and cope with interpersonal difficulties.

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Career Guidance in the United Arab Emirates

Anthony Barnes

Introduction

At what point in the evolution of a country's economy and society does the need for career guidance services become desirable? This article examines the factors influencing the emergence of a career development and guidance (counselling) culture in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It also explains the systems and structures that are beginning to develop in response to the needs identified by a range of stakeholders including federal and local governments, employers and employers' organisations, education providers and community organisations.

The UAE context

UAE's population continues to grow rapidly. Eighty per cent of its 4 million people are under the age of 40 which is a key factor in the need for services that will help young people to chart their course through the education system and labour market. Fewer than 9% of the population are Emiratis or 'locals' (also known as 'Nationals'). This means that the UAE in common with several of the Gulf States is an example of extreme dependency on expatriate labour. The policies that have been adopted to manage this situation have strongly influenced the way that career guidance services are developing.

The political system

The UAE is a federation of seven emirates presided over by the ruler of Abu Dhabi from the Al Nahayan family. The prime minister is the ruler of Dubai from the Al Maktoum family. The political system is stable and relatively conservative but open to change as evidenced by the holding of the first elections for a federal council in December 2006. Not only does the country maintain an external balancing act between the Arab and the western worlds, but internally, the powers of both federal and local emirate governments are held in balance. A key issue for the development of publicly-funded career guidance services for Nationals is determining the respective roles of federal and local bodies.

At the federal level, a major step forward was taken with the establishment of the National Human Resource Development and Employment Authority or Tanmia (the word means 'development') in 1999. Tanmia's mission is:

'The provision and development of qualified and well-trained National manpower that is capable of contributing effectively to the comprehensive development of the UAE and whereby Nationals are capable of taking up public and private sector jobs to ensure economic, political and social stability in the country.'

Tanmia is currently organised into three centres. The Employment and Skills Development Centre is the largest centre and provides employment services across the UAE. The Centre for Labour Market Research and Information provides a specialist research arm to inform policy-making in this area. The Centre for Career Guidance and Planning which opened in Sharjah, the emirate to the north of Dubai, in April 2003 has the potential to become the career guidance service for the UAE.

In addition to federal Tanmia, there are also local services in Sharjah (the Department of Human Resources - local Tanmia) and Dubai (the Emirates National Development Program - ENDP) in Dubai. Support for and confidence in federal Tanmia has tended to fluctuate over concerns about its perceived lack of progress in tackling the stubbornly high number of job-seekers despite the buoyancy of the labour market. Yet on the evidence of other indicators such as its work with schools, higher education institutions, employers and other government bodies it has made considerable progress in a short time. Hence, it remains to be seen whether the UAE will evolve a centralised, devolved or mixed system of employment and careers services for the National population

Religion, culture and society

Islam is the official religion of the UAE; but with the high expatriate population there are many adherents of other faiths including Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Christians. Although it is economically liberal, socially it is relatively conservative with some differences between the emirates. Families in Dubai and Sharjah, for example, are generally more progressive than in the other emirates, especially in their attitudes to women's participation in public life.

For many families, 'career', 'career development' and 'career guidance' are relatively new concepts but they have found ways of assimilating them which are consistent with their faith and culture. They are more at home, for example, with collectivist (e.g. family-based) rather than individualistic models of career decision-making. Duty and obedience to parents and senior male members of the family is generally expected but the wishes and happiness

of the individual are also prominent. Although their faith teaches them that an individual's destiny is pre-ordained, this does not remove from them the duty to make the most of their talents; and there is a specific prayer for those seeking Allah's help in reaching a decision.

The role and position of women is one aspect of social life that is undergoing the greatest change. The progress made by women in education and higher education is one of the success stories of the UAE (77% of the students at UAE University are women). With encouragement from the country's leaders, more and more families are supporting the idea of women working, although the role of 'wife and mother' is still held up as the ideal. Women and their families may set conditions for their participation in the labour market such as being allowed to wear the veil or to take a job in a same-sex environment which cannot always be accommodated, but the statistics show that more women are working than ever before (14% in 2005, up from 5% in 1995). Inevitably, this has given rise in the media to a 'Can women have it all?' debate. Many women are determined to participate fully in the country's economic and political life in ways that are consistent with their traditional roles and obligations. This was the gist of an essay by Noura al Darmaki, an IT student at UAE University, arguing for more to be done to break down obstacles to women's participation in the labour market (see Women in Engineering and Technology Forum website, <http://www.cit2.uaeu.ac.ae/wet/problems.php>, accessed 19th March 2005.)

Education

Investing oil wealth in the education of both men and women has been given a high priority by the rulers of the UAE.

The public education system (for Nationals only) is highly centralised. Until recently, pedagogy relied heavily on rote-learning and memorisation, but new methods and critical thinking skills are being introduced into the curriculum.

Although careers education is not part of the mandated curriculum in primary or secondary schools, there has been some discussion about the future provision of personal and social education. Tanmia, which has close ties with the Ministry of Labour, has started to co-operate with the Ministry of Education and to explore the possibility of developing careers and work-related education including enterprise. The Tanmia Centre for Career Guidance and Planning has even produced some draft guidelines for careers education in schools modelled on the Ministry's own 'scope and sequence' curriculum documents as a basis for future discussion. When and if careers education is formally established in the curriculum, its priorities will need to include raising awareness of work possibilities in the private and mixed (as well as the public) sector and preparing young Nationals for earning a living in a multicultural work environment.

One of the shortcomings of the secondary education system is the lack of provision of technical and vocational education which has some bearing on the problem of boys' underachievement. The Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT), the Institute of Applied Technology and the training establishments in the protective services (armed services, police, etc.) try to compensate for this. This situation is partly a cultural phenomenon as Nationals tend to shun manual and service jobs which are perceived as low status; but attitudes are slowly changing. Nationals will consider employment in the service sector if the company is reputable, if it employs other Nationals and if the employment conditions and remuneration are attractive.

English is the language of instruction in further and higher education in most subjects. While this puts additional pressures on students whose secondary education was in Arabic, it gives graduates a huge advantage in employment terms as English is an important language of business in UAE and globally.

The economy

The economy has changed out of all recognition in the last thirty years. Until the mid-twentieth century the area depended on general trading, farming, fishing and pearl diving; but the discovery of oil in the 1960s transformed the wealth of the country. The leaders have used this wealth to develop the economic infrastructure. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Dubai which has pursued a vigorous policy of economic diversification to compensate for the depletion of its oil reserves in 15-20 years' time. Even Abu Dhabi whose reserves are expected to last another 90 years, has begun to diversify its economy too.

Although tourism, property development and retailing have grabbed the headlines, the economic development in Dubai is also strongly focused on trade and transport, manufacturing and financial services. It is this policy of economic diversification that has triggered the need for career development and guidance services. Previously, understanding and choice of occupations and livelihoods were passed down through the family. However, parents may know little about the wide range of opportunities that exist for their children in the expanding economy. Career guidance and employment services offer an information and brokerage role between families and the providers of new opportunities.

The federal government is also aware of the value of having employment and career guidance services. It is concerned that key sectors of the economy will be run by expatriates thereby endangering national security. The Government is aware that the distribution of the National work force in the labour market is heavily skewed towards the public and semi-public sectors. Although the private sector constitutes 52.1% of the labour market, fewer than 2% of UAE Nationals work in this sector.

The response of the federal government has been to pursue a vigorous strategy of Emiratisation. Since 1999, banks have been required to increase their employment of Locals by 4% each year. They have been achieving just under 3% each year. Trade and insurance also have emiratisation quotas and there are targets for other sectors such as public relation, secretarial jobs and human resources managers.

Labour market difficulties

The UAE labour market is a very difficult one for all young people – both Nationals and Non-nationals. For skilled jobs, leading companies scour global labour markets to recruit ‘ready-formed’ and ‘ready-to-go’ employees. A culture of training and workforce development is beginning to emerge which will eventually benefit fresh graduates and school leavers, but they often find it takes time to get their first job.

Young Nationals face particular difficulties. Recruitment into the public sector is becoming harder as e-government initiatives take effect. Seeking employment in the private sector is still regarded as a less attractive option. Initial pay is less good, the work is often more stressful and hours are longer leading to a worse life-work balance. The work environment is also more alien where Nationals are in a minority. Tanmia and various employers’ groups have produced reports and held conferences which have discussed strategies for changing the career and human resources development practices of companies. They have also focused on the need to change young people’s understanding of how to behave in relation to the labour market. Staying at home until the right job comes up is not a substitute for pro-active job-seeking strategies. There are practical and ethical difficulties involved in relying on favours and influence (known as ‘wasta’ in the UAE). Unrealistic aspirations and lack of staying power and application is evidence of a poor work ethic. These messages are getting through to young people but stereotyped views of the behaviour of Nationals in the labour market will be slower to change.

Measures to improve labour market conditions for Nationals include several schemes to promote business enterprise (e.g. *Intilaq*, *the Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Establishment for Young Business Leaders*, etc.), some of them targeted specifically at the needs of women. A study by Tanmia (2004b) found that the majority of women-managed small enterprises are part-time, low capital investment, based on traditional home-based activities (perfume mixing, handicrafts, etc.) for the ‘National’ market. Typically, women faced a number of obstacles including limited access to networks, household obligations, problems recruiting workers and getting in touch with clients, competition from other small firms and unhelpful banking policies. The Tanmia study highlighted the need for more policy support to establish better ways of helping women entrepreneurs.

Progress in the development of career development and guidance services for Nationals

Secondary education

Tanmia’s survey of 87 government and private schools in four emirates in March 2003 revealed that only two schools in the private sector had no careers provision at all. Activities were mainly focused on the final three years of secondary schooling and with students’ higher education choices. Some help was given to students with choosing occupations and employment. Schools, especially in the government sector, relied mainly on talks by outside speakers.

Just over a quarter of schools, mainly those in the private sector, mentioned senior management involvement in organising careers activities but the main organisers of careers activities in all types of schools were the social workers (social counsellors) and psychologists. Over two-thirds of government schools and just under a half of private schools stated that the social worker was responsible for running careers activities. The social worker is mainly concerned with ensuring the health and well-being of students and helping those experiencing particular problems or difficulties.

Over a third of schools felt that the careers provision had a high or fairly high level of impact. They tended to define this in terms of ‘practical’ or ‘economic’ outcomes, e.g. students making the right choice of higher education, employment or career. Only a few schools evaluated their impact in terms of career development learning outcomes, e.g. enhancing students’ career management and employability skills.

The survey also revealed the limited availability of print-based and ICT-based careers information relevant to the UAE education and labour markets.

Tanmia has led a number of initiatives to enhance careers information, advice and guidance for National students. They launched the careergate website (www.careergate.ae) with information for young people and their advisers. It also includes a phone and e-mail guidance facility. Tanmia has also published several guides such as a job-seekers’ guide and collaborates with partners on various careers fairs held in different emirates. Education-business links are also being developed to bridge the gap between the worlds of work and education through specific targeted career activities.

Higher education

The UAE has a diverse further and higher education sector. As well as a flourishing private sector, the government sector for Nationals comprises the Higher Colleges of Technology on 14 campuses (including a men’s and a women’s college in each of the six largest cities), UAE

University (for men and women) and Zayed University (for women only).

In recent years, the government sector has had sufficient places for about 11,000 of the 15,000 school leavers seeking to enter higher education. The cost of private higher education can be considerable and students wishing to defer their entry have a very low chance of being accepted in a government institution the following year. Admissions are handled centrally by the National Application Processing Office (NAPO). The minimum entry requirement for bachelors degree courses in most subjects is a 70 per cent pass in the school leaving certificate, but it is higher in some subjects. In medicine, for example, the official requirement is 80 per cent but the pressure for places means that only those with 95 per cent stand a chance of being accepted.

Tanmia, NAPO and the higher education institutions themselves has been proactive in addressing young people's career guidance needs. In 2003, for example, Tanmia produced the first annual table of courses and in the following year, they published a guide to choosing higher education which complements NAPO's own guide. In addition, they collaborate annually with NAPO on a programme of visits to schools giving advice on higher education decision-making.

All government higher education institutions and most of the private ones have careers advisory services to help students with their choices of courses and with finding work experience and employment. Tanmia organises four professional development meetings a year for careers advisers/counselors.

Adult and employment settings

The UAE has a number of work preparation and work readiness schemes to try and tackle the problem of unemployment among Nationals. The Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce, for example, has run a 'Work Passport' programme over a number of years and the Centre of Excellence for Applied Research and Training (CERT) runs work readiness programmes which have enabled young people to find jobs. The Dubai Task Force for Hotel and Tourism has also been successful in boosting recruitment in those sectors. Tanmia too maintains an extensive programme of job-seekers' training and career guidance programmes. Some sectors are less pro-active - a survey by Tanmia of desk jobs in construction industry (2005) found that only 29% had career development programmes and only 6% had special career development programmes for Nationals.

Some schemes are specifically targeted at the needs of women such as the small business start-up scheme run by the Women's Federation and the initiatives to promote women in business by the Emirates Business Women's Council and the Women's consultative commission for the banking sector).

In the private sector, a number of businesses have begun to establish themselves offering career coaching and career assessment and development centres.

Creating a career guidance infrastructure

Tanmia

Tanmia has begun to develop a career guidance infrastructure for the UAE although the main driver of public policy in this area is securing employment for Nationals. This helps to explain why assessment of individuals, job-seekers career guidance workshops and employment information and advice are key priorities. Resources are directed at frontline activities to tackle unemployment. Nevertheless, Tanmia has allocated significant resources to the development of career guidance services. In 2003, Tanmia commissioned a report from VT Careers Management on a national strategy for career development in the United Arab Emirates (Tanmia, 2004a). A further contract was awarded to VT Careers Management in 2004-05 to help Tanmia strengthen its careers service provision. The project covered a wide range of areas including strategic planning, quality assurance, training and professional development, work with partners and the development of new resources including a directory of occupations.

In 2004-05, a contract was also awarded to Tecslut to develop a series of tests which could be used to assess the interests, aptitudes and work values of clients.

Career development and career guidance professionals

The lack of a mandated curriculum for careers education means that the role of 'careers teacher' does not exist in the secondary public education system. This is not to say that it could not emerge at some time in the future; but no decision has been taken at federal level yet on a workforce structure for the careers education and guidance sector.

At present, careers education and advice is most likely to be provided on a voluntary basis by a social worker or interested member of staff. The drawback of this situation is that not all social workers are interested in taking on a careers role and even fewer have the time or have been trained to do so. In 2004, the Tanmia Centre for Career Guidance and Planning developed a careers manual for social workers and with the support of the Ministry of Education held the first of a number of training course based on it for officers responsible for social workers in the local education zones.

In private schools in the UAE, it is interesting to note that the workforce structure tends to follow the country of the curriculum they follow. Thus in an English curriculum school they may have a careers co-ordinator, while in an American curriculum school they are more likely to have guidance counselors and/or education advising professionals.

A Central Careers Unit for HCTs and Universities in the UAE

The higher education sector has made most progress in embedding career development learning and advice in its provision. The Higher Colleges of Technology (HCTs) have led the way in setting up careers advice centres and developing activities for students such as the use of e-portfolios for careers (e.g. at Sharjah Women's College) and the staging of careers days and careers fairs. Zayed University has been a leader in showcasing the talents of its students to potential employers.

Collaboration between higher education institutions on careers matters has developed to a certain extent. Tanmia has facilitated networking between practitioners and in 2005 drafted proposals for a central careers unit for HCTs and universities in the UAE that have yet to be presented formally to the sector.

Training and professional development

Considerable progress has been made in establishing counselling and career counselling as a professional specialism in the UAE. The Higher Colleges of Technology established the first BEd programmes in Career Advising and Counselling at the women's colleges in Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah. Graduates from these programmes are now working in human resource departments, Tanmia, schools and higher education. As yet, there is no comparable opportunity in the men's colleges.

The second major advance has been the launch of the annual Counselling Arabia conferences. Each year, the scale of the event has become more ambitious and during 2005-06 the organising committee took the tentative steps towards establishing itself formally as an association for both general and career counselling professionals. The leading light in these developments was Gillian Johnston, a Canadian Career Counsellor educator, who ran the BEd Career Advice and Counselling programme at Sharjah Women's College from 2003-2006. Counselling Arabia aims to be inclusive reaching out to both Nationals and non-Nationals working in the various counselling and career counselling sectors. Its website is at <http://www.counsellingarabia.org/index.html>

Future challenges

A career guidance culture and infrastructure in the UAE has begun to emerge through a combination of bottom-up and top-down initiatives to meet a range of perceived needs. The challenge for the future will be to make progress and create a durable system.

A number of difficulties still have to be resolved. The foremost is how to achieve an equitable system involving private and public sector solutions that meets the needs of the whole population – Non-nationals as well as Nationals.

The creation of a long-lasting system needs to have built into it a capacity for managing change. In the years ahead, the UAE is likely to see a further growth in the demand for career education and guidance for students, support for career development for employees and a growing need for Third Age guidance. These different groups will also expect quality services, well-trained staff and more personalised forms of support, including the ability to access services through the use of ICT.

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Career decision making self-efficacy and decision making styles of higher education students in Greece

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The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between career decision-making self-efficacy and decision-making styles in a group of higher education students. The present study aims to address two questions, namely (1) Is there any relation between career decision-making self-efficacy and decision-making styles? (2) Are there differences in career decision making between the higher education students in the sample?

The role of self-efficacy as a fundamental influence on career development has been stressed by empirical research spanning the last 20 years. The construct of self-efficacy elaborated by Bandura (1997) relates to judgments on the skills a person engages in order to successfully complete a task. In short, perceived efficacy is concerned not with the number of skills you have, but with what you believe you can do with what you have under a variety of circumstances. According to theory and research, self-efficacy makes a difference to how people feel, think and act. Bandura argues that self-efficacy has an important role in influencing the types of activities and environment in which people choose to participate. Hence, different people with similar skills, or the same person under different circumstances, may perform poorly, adequately or extraordinarily depending on fluctuations in their beliefs of personal efficacy.

Betz and Hackett (1986) encouraged investigations of the process of how career decisions are made from a self-efficacy perspective; and Betz, Klein & Taylor (1996) affiliated the concepts of career decision-making and self-efficacy to explore the effect of self-confidence on an individual's ability to successfully carrying out the activities required in career decision-making. According to the literature, the five career choice competencies that form the basic components of an efficacious career decision are: (1) goal selection, (2) occupational information, (3) problem solving, (4) planning, and (5) self-appraisal (Crites, 1981; Taylor & Betz, 1983). In short, a successful career choice does not only depend on the development of the relevant competencies, but also on the confidence of the individual in these skills.

The study of individual differences in career decision-making focuses on the manner in which decisions are approached. Any individual constitutes a single entity with their own features and their own developmental dynamic. However, despite their individuality, it is confirmed that the same types of personality, when approaching decisions, display in their behaviour certain common features, especially when their decisions are similar. The typological approach to career decision making identifies defined models of behaviour that individuals will demonstrate in making decisions (Arroba, 1978). These models comprise strategies or styles which indicate the cognitive and emotional dimensions of behaviour involved in trying to achieve the best possible outcomes from their choices (Slaney, 1988).

According to Harren (1979), individuals use three strategies or styles of decision making: the rational style, the intuitive style and the dependent style. The rational style involves an awareness of the effect of prior actions on subsequent ones such that the decider accepts responsibility for choice and is active, deliberate and logical. This particular decision-making style takes into account both our self-awareness as well as awareness of our environment. Our choices when making rational decisions usually fit better the demands and conditions of our life. The intuitive style involves a focus on emotional self-awareness as the basis for choice, little anticipation of the future and little information seeking or logical weighing of alternatives. Although nowadays intuition is held in higher esteem compared to the past, still it is wiser for individuals not to make decisions based on their emotional responses, provided they can gather all the necessary information. Finally, the dependent style is one in which the responsibility is projected outside of the self, such that the choice is based on the expectations or advice of others. However, if we assign the decision-making responsibility elsewhere, the responsibility for coping with the consequences of any decision still remain with us (for a review see Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, 1993, pp. 23-33).

The literature indicates that self-efficacy influences career decision-making. According to research studies, career decision-making self-efficacy is correlated negatively with career indecision (Betz & Luzzo, 1996), influences the level of exploratory career behaviours (Blustein, 1989) and determines the range of commitment and motivation in career decision making (Giannakos, 1998). Nevertheless,

the study of career decision-making self-efficacy in strategies or styles of decision has not been examined sufficiently. To address this shortcoming, we considered it interesting to investigate the relationship between decision strategies and career decision-making self-efficacy.

Method

Participants

The sample for this study comprised 292 undergraduate students of the University of Athens. Out of these, 150 were women and 142 were men. Participants represented a variety of majors (Education 34.6%, Computer Science 18.5%, Science 17.1%, Medicine 12.3%, and Culture/History 17.5%). The average age was 22.57 years.

Instruments

Two instruments were used:

Career decision-making self – efficacy scale (CDMSE). This 50-item measure (Taylor and Betz, 1983) assesses self-efficacy percepts with regard to career decision-making. The CDMSE contains five 10-item subscales reflective of career choice competencies: goal selection, gathering occupational information, problem solving, planning for the future, and accurate self-appraisal. Respondents indicate, by using a 10-point scale ranging from *No Confidence* (0) to *Complete Confidence* (9), their level of confidence in their abilities to successfully complete the tasks. Scores for each subscale are obtained by totalling responses to the 10 items; a maximum score is 90. Totalling the subscales scores yields an overall CDMSE score; the maximum score is 450. Taylor and Betz (1983) reported coefficient α of .97 as an internal consistency estimate. Reliabilities (coefficient α) calculated for the five subscales revealed values of .87, .89, .86, .89, and .88 for goal setting, occupational information, problem solving, planning, and self-appraisal, respectively.

Assessment of career decision making (ACDM). This 30-item measure (Harren, 1979) assesses the degree to which individuals rely on each of three decision-making styles: Rational (R), Intuitive (I), and Dependent (D). Each style was measured by a separate 10-item scale considered relatively independent. Harren (1979) reported the test-retest reliabilities for these scales to be 0.85 for Rational 0.76 for Intuitive, and 0.85 for Dependent.

Analysis procedures and results

First, the following scores were computed for each subject: a) the score of each of the five subscales of CDMSE representing the five career choice competencies, b) an overall CDMSE score, c) the score of each of the three subscales representing the three decision-making styles of ACDM. Next, we computed the Pearson r correlation between the CDMSE scores (subscales and total) and the three decision-making styles of ACDM. ANOVA and t-test were performed to determine whether there were significant differences by social-demographic variables on the five career choice competencies, the overall CDMSE score, and the three decision-making styles.

A univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether significant differences existed among the five scientific fields on the basis of ACDM. The result was significant on 'Rational Style', $F(4, 287) = 2.39$, $p < .05$. Specifically, students who attend 'Education' demonstrated a higher mean of 'Rational style' ($\bar{X} = 7.83$) than students in 'Computer Science' ($\bar{X} = 6.98$) who, in turn, scored higher than those in 'Science' ($\bar{X} = 6.70$) (Scheffé's test).

A univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether significant differences existed among the five scientific fields on the basis of CDMSE. The result was significant on 'Problem Solving', $F(5, 286) = 2.67$, $p < .05$. Specifically, students who attend 'Science' demonstrated higher mean of 'Problem Solving' ($\bar{X} = 67.31$) than those in 'Education' ($\bar{X} = 66.07$), who, in turn, scored higher than those in 'Medicine' ($\bar{X} = 64.56$) (Scheffé's test).

T-test revealed age differences at the level of 'Goal Selection' and at the level of 'Planning for the Future'. Students up to 21 years had significantly higher scores on 'Goal Selection' [$\bar{X} = 71.57$]: $t(290) = 2.27$, $p < .05$] and on 'Planning for the Future' [$\bar{X} = 70.11$]: $t(290) = 1.98$, $p < .05$] than students above 22 years.

The correlations matrix between the CDMSE scores and the three decision-making styles of ACDM are displayed in table 1. Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy overall score is significantly correlated with the *rational* style ($r = .24$, $p < .01$) in a positive direction and with the *dependent* style ($r = -.30$, $p < .01$) in a negative direction.

Table 1

Representative Correlations of CDMSE with Career Decision-making styles questionnaire

CDMSE		Rational style	Intuitive style	Dependent style
Goal selection	Pearson r	.143*	.015	-.283**
	Sig.	.014	.804	.000
	N	292	292	292
Occupational information	Pearson r	.157**	-.064	-.229**
	Sig.	.007	.279	.000
	N	292	292	292
Problem solving	Pearson r	.190**	-.020	-.260**
	Sig.	.001	.731	.000
	N	292	292	292
Planning for the future	Pearson r	.328*	-.123*	-.298**
	Sig.	.000	.036	.000
	N	292	292	292
Accurate self-appraisal	Pearson r	.188**	-.088	-.257**
	Sig.	.001	.132	.000
	N	292	292	292
CMSE score	Pearson r	.238**	.067	-.298**
	Sig.	.000	.255	.000
	N	292	292	292

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

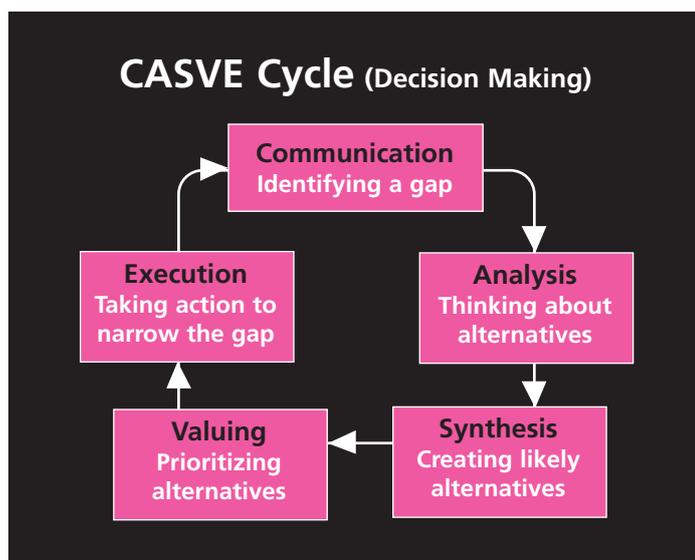
Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that the 'rational style' influences the career decision-making of undergraduate students in Greece. This result reaffirms the findings of recent research which shows that undergraduate students tend to use this style when they are approaching a career decision (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, Argyropoulou & Pavlopoulos, 2006). A possible explanation of our result is that the demands of the labour market oblige higher education students to use elements characterising rational decisions. The rational approach does not discredit personal emotions regarding the choice (intuition) or the opinions of experts and 'significant others' (dependence); on the contrary, it takes into consideration information from both internal and external sources, assesses the value of such information, and, if necessary, invests time on further exploration (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, 1993).

In practice, that stresses the need for career counsellors to recognise that students' career decision making is inextricably linked to additional psychosocial, personal and developmental beliefs and to encourage students to take

advantage of timely involvement in career decision making and career planning activities (Miller, 2001).

It was also of interest to find out about the differences among the scientific fields in relation to the 'problem solving' career choice competency. As Betz, Klein, and Taylor (1996) suggest, the five career choice competencies provide clients with a useful framework for understanding the knowledge and skill components as well as the stages of the career decision-making process. Thus, the reinforcement of the skills of career decision-making (i.e. problem solving) by career counsellors would help higher education students to avoid the pitfalls of poor decision-making. Particularly, in a recent article, the authors have applied the cognitive information processing approach to employment problem solving and decision making. At the risk of oversimplification, this approach includes several key concepts, which describe the processes by which problem solving and decision making can be facilitated. This set of processes is called the CASVE cycle (the Communications, Analysis, Synthesis, Valuing, Execution Cycle) (Sampson, Lenz, Reardon, & Peterson, 1999).



One of the main question of our research is the relationship between career decision-making self-efficacy and career decision-making styles. The findings of this study suggest a moderately strong relationship between the two variables. Students who are more confident in their ability to complete the tasks and behaviours required for effective decision-making (goal selection, occupational information, problem solving, planning for the future, and accurate self-appraisal) are more likely to use the rational style in their decisions. On the other hand, students who lack confidence in their ability to complete decision-making tasks tend to use the dependent style. Thus, stronger self-efficacy expectancies would be an antecedent of a 'good' or 'logical' decision. This finding is consistent with the findings of others studies, which assessed decision making and career development (e.g. Niles *et al.*, 1997; Salami, 2004) showing the utility of career decision-making self-efficacy in career choice and behaviour. In counselling settings, syntheses of research and specific research studies have shown that career counselling interventions were effective in advancing students' career decision making, career maturity and self clarity (Garis & Niles, 1990; Johnson & Smouse, 1993).

Implications for practitioners

Self-efficacy enhancing interventions could probably benefit almost all students in higher education because they help them to assume more responsibility for their career decisions, to engage more systematically in career exploration and planning activities and to increase their chances of experiencing satisfaction, stability, and success. Taking the four basic sources of information on self-efficacy (performance accomplishment, vicarious learning, anxiety management, and verbal persuasion and encouragement) career counsellors will be able to design interventions and workshops reinforcing personal decision-making competencies and skills (Bandura, 1997). In a truly comprehensive career guidance programme, provision will be made to achieve occupational and employment decision-making readiness by assisting students to:

- Understand the relationship between self-knowledge and career choice
- Establish short-term and long-term career goals
- Explore a full range of career and work possibilities
- Make reasoned and informed career choices based on accurate self-knowledge and accurate information about the world of work
- Conduct values clarification exercises as they relate to career planning and decision making
- Arrange panels composed of various majors to talk about their studies and aspects of making decisions
- Use electronic bulletin boards on the Internet to disseminate career information
- Write vocationally relevant autobiographies
- Engage in decision making activities
- Develop career portfolios (Herr, Cramer & Niles, 2004).

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Transition in Organisations:

1 - Valuing Career Perspectives

Ian King

This review looks at how organisations, specifically professional service firms (PSFs), facilitate individual transition. PSFs need skilled individuals who are capable of delivering a high quality service to their clients, and global consulting organisations are continually seeking to secure talented employees who can consult on a range of corporate assignments. However, as this need to recruit and retain talent grows, so too does the uncertainty of long-term job security, resulting in ever changing career patterns and loss of career stability. This first paper considers the context of organisational transitions within PSFs and the implications for organisational career(s) education in the 21st century; two further papers will review the application of career development models and the importance of career skill repertoires in professional service organisations.

The importance of career education in professional services

In formal terms, a career is defined by King and Harrison as “the total sequence of employment-related positions, roles, activities and experiences encountered by a person” (1998, p. vii), a definition that encompasses the organisation’s perspective of what a career means. From an individual viewpoint Hirsh *et al.* define it as “the sequence of work experiences which individuals have over their working lives (1995, p. 11). But what is meant by career in professional service firms (PSFs)? Traditionally, a formal career was the means by which a trainee acquired the skills and expertise necessary to become a ‘professional’ and then continue to practise their professional expertise throughout their working lifetime. Over centuries, professionals had an expectation that, provided they gained the necessary qualifications and experience required, they would advance their career becoming recognised professionals and, for many, partners (and consequently part owners) of their professional practice.

This anticipation is reflected in a model of career stages first proposed by Dalton *et al.* (1977) who found that individuals within professional environments progressed through four career stages described in “primary relationship” terms as “apprentice, colleague, mentor and sponsor” (p. 23). This model was adapted by Rennekamp

and Nall (1994) who “suggest that there are four distinct stages in extension careers ... labelled entry, colleague, counsellor and advisor” (p. 2). In a firm of consultants that I formerly worked for, these four stages were represented by consulting assistants (apprentice/entry), consultant (colleague), senior consultant and associate (mentor/counsellor) and partner (sponsor/advisor). These models suggest progression from one stage to the next, but also acknowledge that some professionals, although moving out of the entry stage, would not necessarily progress through all four stages.

Whilst recognising the importance of the career concept within professional organisations, these models also typify the traditional picture of career as being long term advancement and progression, an illustration acknowledged by Irving who, citing Watts (1991), noted that “... the concept of career has been constructed around progression up an ordered hierarchy within an organisation or profession” (2005 p. 14); although traditionally true for PSFs, this has never been so for unskilled or semi-skilled workers who are more likely to have experienced ‘sideways’ career moves, rarely moving up an organisational ladder.

In their article, Rennekamp and Nall (1994), noting the recommendations of the Extension Committee on Organisation and Policy (ECOP), suggest that “career development and enhancement for the individual employee are part of the overall (change). To move through the 1990s, this part of human resource management should be synchronized with other organisation restructuring strategies” (p. 1). This recommendation acknowledges the important part that career education should play in organisational development strategies and encapsulates the hope held by many employees over successive generations; but what actually is the experience of a professional in a 21st-century organisation?

Maister (1997) suggests that individuals need to make a choice:

‘the choice to be made is not what you want to do with your entire career, but which next challenge would fulfil you... careers are built by moving from one challenge to the next’ (p. 35).

This acknowledges the importance of a professional’s personal choice in determining future career direction, but often there is no choice particularly where an organisation is restructuring or delayering to adapt to new market conditions. This organisational environment, therefore, influences how professional organisations think about careers and manage career education programmes.

The challenges for career transition

Within PSFs organisational careers are changing and the traditional patterns of professional employment are no longer available to most professionals. Many writers (Arthur et al., 1999; Hirsh et al., 1995; King and Harrison, 1998) recognised that, pending the close of the 20th century, the need for an organisational career system has fragmented or evaporated altogether; but what is contributing to this changing practice? In her research report, Holbeche (2000) identifies the following challenges to the premise of a stable career:

- Global economic trends – globalisation and the desire amongst professional organisations to have a global service capability,
- Workplace practices – more flexible approaches to designing and delivering core services, market repositioning and consequent changes to the employer/employee relationship with regard to commitment and loyalty,
- Technological impact – in the knowledge economy, organisations are using technology to share knowledge and develop client solutions more effectively,
- Organisational structuring – network and cellular organisations change the way in which an organisation manages its client, and consequently employee, relationships,
- Mergers and acquisitions – amalgamations and strategic partnering result in re-defined markets and service offers, and
- Work flexibilisation – changes to more flexible working patterns result in different working (e.g. job share, part time or telecommuting) practices.

These challenges have implications for the careers of those affected, which, in the 21st century, is nearly everyone whether employed, non-employed or self employed. In PSFs, these challenges are making a significant impact as larger global organisations are continually restructuring to adjust to the ever-changing demands of the global economy. These organisational changes impact the permanence of career structures and mean that individuals now face very different career patterns to those they might have expected no more than 20 years ago.

The traditional careers of the mid-to-late 20th century were dependent on what Arthur et al. describe as:

‘strong situations... characterised by clear structures and salient guides to behaviour; the scope for individual variation in response is minimal... (whilst) in weak situations there is less

prescription of individual behaviour and people are better able to choose among alternative actions’ (1999, p. 13).

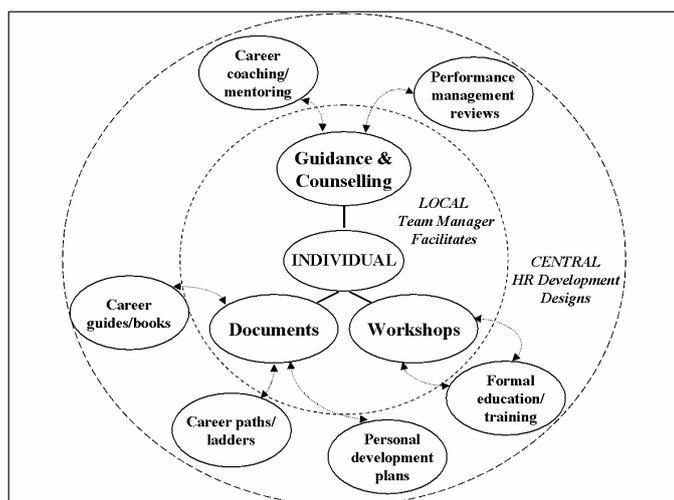
As organisations restructure to adapt to market demands so their hierarchical structures ‘weaken’ and the traditional career languishes as moving up an organisational ladder is replaced by the need to respond to more flexible working practices; this notion moves the responsibility for career decision making to the individual and diminishes the requirement for structured organisational careers.

Savickas (2000) suggests that people need to draw “meaning from the role of work in their lives, not from an organisational culture. Career must become more personal and self-directed to flourish in the post-modern information age” (p.59). This reflection is increasingly apposite for all workers who experience a fragmented career as a consequence of organisational restructuring, delayering, etc. and to others, including women, who face a variety of personal career choices (e.g. balancing work and family commitments) throughout their lives. Through his definition, Savickas refocuses the responsibility for career to the individual rather than the organisation to which they are contracted.

The definitions presented so far introduce the idea of an objective–subjective continuum of approaches to careers thinking. Some approaches are distinctly ‘objective’ (Dalton et al., 1977; Rennekamp and Nall, 1994; Watts, 1991) in that they show the ‘career actor’ (i.e. the person who owns their career) progressing through defined stages. Other approaches (Maister, 1997; Savickas, 2000; Guest and Williams, 1973) suggest a more ‘subjective’ approach by encouraging the ‘career actor’ to reflect on the meaning, work/family events and challenges that will influence their career direction. This differentiated approach to career thinking may help the ‘career actor’ to see that career is more than their experiences in the work environment alone. Arguably, it is the totality of their experience throughout their period of contribution to/participation in society i.e. their lifetime. So how do professional organisations help individuals think about their career options and make the right career choice? What are the different career interventions that PSFs adopt?

An overview of career practice within a professional community

Organisations provide a variety of opportunities to reflect on personal career choice; figure 1 identifies the possible elements of an organisational career system. It shows the career strategies and practices that PSFs may use to set up a career education and development framework.



The career practices illustrated in this map include some practices noted by Gutteridge, Leibowitz & Shore (1993) and Baruch & Peiperl (2000) and show an array of career strategies together with tools available to contemporary organisations. The comprehensive nature of this 'career system' highlights the variety of approaches/interventions available for career development and education within an organisational setting; but how effective are they in facilitating career transition? In their study, Mabey and Iles (1994) reported that "... development centres, psychometric tests with feedback and career reviews with superiors seem particularly well regarded" (1994, p. 130). These findings suggest that employees participating in career interventions prefer those approaches that involve social interaction rather than those more structured techniques, such as career and self-assessment information, which do not involve personal counselling.

This overview illustrates the possibilities for career development activity within organisations, but Doyle (2000) extends this perspective suggesting that "in addition to career management being viewed as a series of functional activities and processes designed to meet organisational and individual needs, it must also be viewed as an integral part of the complex framework of social interactions that define work organisations" (p. 232); career management is an integral element of a larger organisational system and should be included within the social dialogue of the organisation, not just handled as a series of disconnected activities. This proposition suggests that career education and management should be woven into the social fabric of an organisation and highlights one of the main challenges facing professional organisations who understand the value of providing effective career education in the 21st century.

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Note

The next paper in this series will look at the application of career development models within professional service organisations. It will appear in the summer 2007 issue.

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You can't be serious! Support career-related learning in primary schools?

Barbara McGowan, *NICEC Senior Fellow*

Shouldn't children have their childhood?

But you can't stop them thinking about growing up. Natural maturation does not wait for 13 years before engaging with some of the key roles that young people will occupy. It is evident from play that during early and primary years children are developing impressions of the adult world they don't yet belong to, anticipating their role relationship with it, and building internal constructs about it. This includes the world of work. Why is this not attracting appropriate attention from policy makers and practitioners?

Practitioners

As far as practitioners are concerned, it is not an entirely neglected area: there are teachers in primary schools building some of this thinking into their curriculum planning and development.

Earlier this year, the Head teacher of Hilltop Infants School, Wickford, Essex, Mrs Celia Ebrahimi¹, said:

'We have been very aware that although many of our pupils achieve well academically, they do not appreciate the choices and options that are available to them. Few of our parents were able to access further/higher education courses and many of the children see themselves following the same paths as their parents/carers ... we wanted to raise awareness about choices and options for the future before children's views have become fixed, and to challenge stereotypes ... we wanted children to realise that everyone can enjoy activities that they might have previously thought were only for boys or for girls.'²

As a result of this thinking, the school set up a Young Engineers Club in association with SELEX Sensors and Airborne System (previously BAe Systems) for six-year-olds. The objectives were to:

- enable children to know they have many choices ahead of them not determined by gender or class;

- help them to find out about more kinds of work than their family might think about;
- raise aspirations - help children to understand they do not have to do what parents/siblings do now;
- show them that they have skills and abilities that they can use in the future;
- encourage them to value themselves, their abilities and potential, and to value others similarly.

This was not careers education for 6 and 7 year olds, but it was concerned with laying some foundations that could be usefully used in that later learning. It built confidence in children across the ability range, and helped them to develop skills involved in communication, working in teams, leading, listening and seeking advice. This was not about jobs; it was more about transferable skills – the absence of which would severely limit the ability of children to function in any future organisation.

Most teachers in primary schools readily recognise that even without any adult interventions, children constantly assemble impressions of the world of work. A lot of children's play anticipates work, as they act out work roles and practise work-related skills. Their attitudes to the world outside school are also being formed through the impact of the media, and the views and values of the people at home and around them. As children's constructs about work, the working world and their role-relationship with it are developed, the foundations are laid for their later learning. Some of the early learning is clearly a good foundation - "I'm going to play with a computer when I grow up"; but much reflects a young mind in the making - "I'm going to have a band when I grow up"; and can include constructs that might be difficult to challenge later – "Nobody in our house goes to work" (McGowan, 2000). Broadening children's horizons and experiences can support the development of rich and positive constructs about work, thinking that will enable and extend future choice. And it does not involve asking teachers to do a great deal more – very largely this is about doing the same things, but a bit differently.

What happens if children don't have enough useful learning to go on? Good careers education, advice and guidance 13-19 can help to increase motivation and raise aspirations; but teachers and personal advisers say much of their work is concerned with unpicking unhelpful 'learning' that young people bring to future planning, e.g. "I'm not

¹ Now Associate Senior Adviser, School Development, Essex

² First published in Newscheck November 2005 "I want to be a pop star – and an engineer in my spare time" Barbara McGowan

that good”, “I expect I’ll do what my sister done – she’s OK hairdressing”, “I probably won’t get a job – you don’t need one, do you?”

Young people need to be inspired and excited about their future; laying some foundations for this in primary school is to enable them to perceive that there may be many more options accessible to them than may emerge from their immediate family and community setting. Within three years of leaving primary school someone will talk to them about choices at 14+ - decisions that have career consequences. The decisions they make will be influenced by what they, and their parents, think they already ‘know’ – about themselves, about work and about the job roles open to them.

Policymakers

So what about the policymakers? We have a National Framework of learning outcomes for CEG that relate to young people in Key Stages 3, 4, and post-16 (DfES, 2003). Why don’t we have one for the Foundation Stage, and Key Stages 1 and 2? Using the same format, the following outcomes from *First Impressions: career-related learning in primary schools* (DfES, 2001) might be a useful ‘starter for ten’. This is not intended to be a definitive list, but is offered as a starting point to stimulate discussion about ‘What are the career learning needs of children of primary age?’ and ‘What outcomes are/should we be helping them to work towards?’

Foundation Stage	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
<p>Self-development</p> <p>Pupils need to learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to be excited, interested and motivated to learn • be confident to try new activities, initiate ideas and speak in a familiar group • have a developing awareness of their own needs, views and feelings and be sensitive to the needs, views and feelings of others • interact with others, negotiating plans and activities and taking turns in conversation 	<p>Self-development</p> <p>Pupils need to learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise and take pride in their achievements • develop confidence in their own abilities • develop communication skills – listen to others and respond appropriately • be sensitive to needs and feelings of others and share fairly • express personal preferences and identify a personal goal or target for improvement • develop skills to work in a group or alone to complete a task satisfactorily • value themselves and see worth in others 	<p>Self-development</p> <p>Pupils need to learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a developing sense of their own strengths and weaknesses • are able to identify what they are good at and what skills they need to develop • are able to co-operate with each other and work in a team • talk and listen to adults other than teachers in a variety of situations • recognise and use opportunities when they arise

Foundation Stage	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
<p>Career exploration</p> <p>Pupils need to learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use language to imagine, recreate roles and experiences • use their imagination in play, role play and stories 	<p>Career exploration</p> <p>Pupils need to learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand adults take on different roles • investigate traditional and non-traditional roles in the home and school • are aware of a variety of occupations • through simulation, role-play and visits, imagine doing different jobs • gain increasing independence and be increasingly able to cope with change 	<p>Career exploration</p> <p>Pupils need to learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • show a growing awareness of the world of work • have knowledge of a wide range of occupations and how these may change over time • begin to develop concepts and a vocabulary to describe ideas about work • are aware of the importance of health and safety • understand what is meant by stereotypes • are developing broad horizons about the world of work
<p>Career management</p>	<p>Career management</p> <p>Pupils need to learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ask for help when they need it • organise, plan and record work which the teacher has asked them to do • demonstrate independence in choosing an activity or resource • manage their own physical needs • behave appropriately in front of others • adjust to new situations with ease 	<p>Career management</p> <p>Pupils need to learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • draw on the help and support available to them • make simple action plans and carry them through to completion • show self-reliance in finishing work • make reasoned decisions and choices based on information they have gathered • understand what is meant by transition and can cope with preparing for and making changes

Needs will always be mediated through context and locality, and can only ever be defined by those who work with children and young people. The National Framework is offered as guidance, the ultimate arbiter of its value are those who work with it, adopting or adapting it to the needs of the young people they seek to support, in curriculum and other settings. The same needs to be true of the above.

Most of the factors unconsciously affecting the career choice of young people are in place by the time they are 13-years-old. This earlier work ensures that children have opportunities to develop positive constructs about the world of work, and experience learning as relevant. It helps them to build sufficient building blocks for future life and

work. Introducing contexts from the world of work to support the curriculum brings relevance into learning, enhances the experience and makes it more likely that children will use what they have learned, both now and later. Children now will need to be able to deal with more change in their working lives than any of us to date have had to encounter. Children need help to prepare for that kind of future. The price for not doing so is too high – for young people, for our society and for the future economy.

Are we about to miss an opportunity to support this work? Children's trusts bring together all services for children and young people in an area, underpinned by the Children Act 2004 duty to co-operate on improving outcomes for all children and young people. These are focused around:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

“The five outcomes are universal ambitions for every child and young person, whatever their background or circumstances. Improving outcomes for all children and young people underpins all of the development and work within children's trusts ... the evidence shows clearly that educational achievement is the most effective route out of poverty”³.

Educational achievement is motivated by aspiration – to succeed, to move on, and to reach goals that may not have been envisaged before. At primary school, what children see and hear and experience helps to shape their beliefs and attitudes. If children are enabled to pick up that the adult world can offer them all sorts of chances and choices then that is how they will behave when they are older. If they don't, then parental wishes, careers education and guidance at secondary school, and policy initiatives to create opportunities for learning and work will have only a limited impact on their thinking, actions and decisions (McGowan, 2001a). This is not how it is intended to be, but without some policy support for this learning too many young people will slip through the safety net of learning.

The responsibility for the education and welfare of all children and young people aged 0-19 falls now within one unified structure. Included within that remit is the responsibility for careers work – support for careers education and guidance (CEG) within 13-19 institutions and the provision of impartial career information, advice and guidance (IAG) from a source external to them. This latter may continue to be delivered by a Connexions service, or whatever it has metamorphosed into. In many instances this will continue to be based on a partnership role between the Local Authority and a careers company. This means that in some areas the ability to offer support for this area of learning in primary schools is already present. There are a number of professionals in career companies who have this expertise, but have found it increasingly difficult to find resources for it within the Connexions' agenda. Local Authority Children's Trusts have the opportunity to change that from April 2008 – and to begin planning for its development and resource allocation in 2007.

There are some challenges:

- Who in children's trusts will take up the responsibility for this work?

- Will QCA recognise that this work is a critical foundation for careers work 13-19 and that without it resources for this older age group are unnecessarily used in remedial learning?
- Will DfES respond to this evident need and enable resources?
- How and when can this be embedded within the policy framework of the primary strategy?

Change can be uncomfortable, and challenges can provoke negative responses. Worse than both of these is apathy – leave it long enough and it will go away. Leave it long enough and another generation of children will have been denied the opportunity to access future life chances that at present appear largely invisible to them. We need to get serious!

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Notes

The list of published resources in *Opening Doors: career-related learning for primary and middle schools* has now been updated and is available electronically on the NICEC website: www.nicec.org.uk/publications/publications (2006)

The CRAC Information Guide *You can't be serious – career-related learning in primary schools!* is available from NICEC, Sheraton House, Castle Park, Cambridge CB3 0AX on receipt of a SAE.

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³ See *Every Child Matters: change for children* <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/aims/outcomes/>

The Development of Quality Standards for Career Guidance in the United Kingdom

Leigh Henderson, *NICEC Fellow*

This article outlines the process of developing the National Quality Standards for Learning and Work (NQSLW) by the Guidance Council from 1997 and identifies some of the lessons learned in the process. The NQSLW were later redesigned as the matrix quality standards for information advice and guidance (See <http://www.matrixstandard.com> for further information).

Introduction and Background

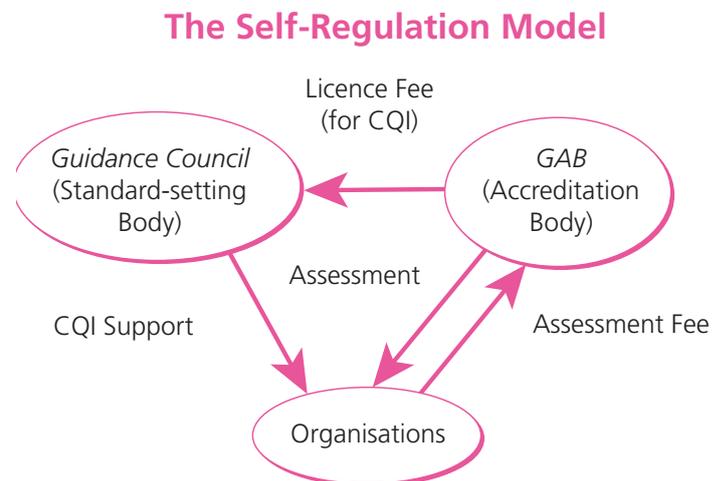
The NQSLW were initially developed as a Guidance Council project, following the publication of the Council's study of quality assurance arrangements for career guidance in the UK. At the outset in 1994, the Guidance Council was a project of the Royal Society of Arts, Commerce and Manufactures (RSA), later (in 1999) becoming an independent charity and company limited by guarantee. The Council was always a representative body for organisations with an interest in career guidance in all its forms – with a particular focus on ensuring that the interests of users are recognised and protected. The Guidance Council was wound up in November 2006.

The then Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and the local Training Enterprise Councils supported the development of the NQSLW. The DfEE funded the bulk of the development work.

The Quality Assurance Model

The NQSLW were intended to be part of a self-regulation model for career guidance services throughout the UK. The project grew out of the recommendations of the Guidance Council's 'First Steps' report which identified a possible framework for "quality standards framework for guidance across all sectors" (Hawthorn, 1995). Once established, assessment and accreditation against the Standards were carried out by an independent Guidance Accreditation Board (GAB), with 14 per cent of assessment fees being paid to the Guidance Council to promote continuous quality improvement (CQI).

Figure 1 illustrates the model:



Assessment was conducted primarily through desk audit. Applicant organisations would submit a portfolio of evidence to GAB, whose assessors would request additional information where necessary. Random site visits would be undertaken to verify that the portfolio reflected the true position on the ground.

The model was designed to be self-funding over a period of about four years. This goal was not achieved for at least two reasons:

1. There was resistance from some organisations to the CQI fee element for the Guidance Council, as it raised the cost of accreditation which was £550 per day plus expenses (typically two days were needed). The CQI element amounted to £77 per day.
2. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES), which replaced the DfEE and which owned the copyright, decided to make accreditation against the NQSLW a contract compliance requirement for adult guidance contracts in England. This changed the nature of the model and removed the founding principles of self-regulation and voluntarism. The introduction of compulsion meant that organisations who were not convinced of at least parts of the model were not going to be influenced by peer pressure or later evidence that the innovative elements, such as client feedback and mystery shopping, were of benefit. Compulsion secured greater income earlier, but the self-regulation business model was designed for break-even over a four-year period.

The National Quality Standards for Learning and Work

The project was funded by the Department for Education and Employment. The Standards themselves were based on good practice identified by practitioners from a wide range of settings including schools, FE and HE institutions, careers services, libraries, voluntary and community organisations, internet and computer based services. These were then analysed and expressed as criteria under 28 different standards. Any particular organisation would work to the standards specified for their organisation type. One of the development groups consisted of employers. They developed a set of good practice guidelines rather than standards, feeling that these would be more appropriate.

The Standards were founded on the Guidance Council Code of Principles (NACCEG, 1996). The Principles were developed by the Guidance Council's members and were referenced in the original version of the *matrix* Standard until replaced by the DfES Principles for Coherent IAG Delivery (DfES, 2003).

The NQSLW listed four categories of measures:

Measure	Definition
1 Audit	A factual "YES" or "No" test by self assessment that the required activity or evidence is in place
2 Client Feedback	Evidence from clients (service users) that the required threshold has been met
3 Staff Feedback	Evidence that staff know and understand policy and procedures
4 Mystery Shopping	This process was adapted from widely used anonymous survey work used in other service industries. It became commonly referred to as 'hidden' or 'briefed' customer, using real users briefed prior to receiving the service.

Each standard would use one or more of the measures. The table below shows how part of the standard for guidance interviews was expressed.

Criteria	Measures
1 Any preparation a client needs to do before the guidance interview has been carefully explained to them ahead of time	Mystery Shopping Q1: Did you need to do any preparation for your appointment? Q2: if YES, were you given enough details of what to do? Q3: Did you know what was expected of you?
2 Clients are given clear reasons if the appointment they have for a guidance interview is delayed or cancelled	Audit Policy statement Mystery Shopping Q1: Was your appointment delayed or cancelled? Q2: If YES, were you given a clear reason why and alternative arrangements agreed?
3 The structure of the appointment is negotiated and an agreement, including confidentiality, is made between the adviser and the client	Client feedback 90% of respondents say GOOD or VERY GOOD to each part of: Q: How would you rate the session on the following: a) Agreeing what you wanted to discuss at the start of the session? b) Discussing your needs and interests? c) Providing you with information? d) Discussing the alternatives open to you? e) Helping you decide what to do next?
4 The process focuses on the needs and interests of the client	
5 The process enables the client to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore a range of possible options • identify and consider information relevant to their own needs and circumstances • make decisions about their learning, work or careers options 	

The Standards pack included extensive guidelines and case studies to illustrate best practice. Continuous quality improvement was encouraged by Guidance Council publications disseminating good practice as it came to light, together with workshops for delivery organisations. Discussions were held with other standard-setting bodies with a view to helping organisations that might have to work with more than one set of standards. This work was not completed until after the introduction of the matrix Standard, when a series of booklets outlining how best to work between different standards including Investors in People (IiP - www.investorsinpeople.co.uk), the Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations (PQASSO - www.ces-vol.org.uk) and the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM - www.efqm.org) was published.

Issues and Observations

1. Given the Standards' foundation on good practice, they were primarily about inputs and outputs rather than outcomes. Some felt that this gave rise to a 'checklist' mentality, where organisations simply had to 'tick boxes' to gain accreditation. However, the NQSLW project was based on the notion of self-regulation and included checks and balances, the most important of which perhaps was the 'mystery shopping' process.

Whilst the process was not fit for purpose as a contract compliance tool, many organisations did feed back that the NQSLW 'checklist' served as a good and helpful tool where there had been no prior experience of implementing quality standards and accreditation processes.

2. The menu of Standards was confusing for some organisations. Within workshops and consultancy visits, the Guidance Council's quality consultants were frequently asked to interpret specific items within the Standards in relation to the enquirer's work situation. This question was commonly countered by encouraging the enquirer to imagine themselves as 'client' and to form an answer based on that perspective. The work surrounding the Standards therefore encouraged a shift to a user focus, reflecting the Guidance Council's particular emphasis on "ensuring that the interests of users are recognised and protected".
3. Client feedback was based on questions and thresholds specified in the standards and was designed to collect an immediate reaction to the service. Feedback was gained through questionnaires, telephone follow-up and focus groups. Obtaining feedback in a structured way was new to most organisations; most found it to be a valuable process and workshops facilitated the exchange of good and interesting practice, although some expressed the opinion that client feedback was expensive to collect in terms of time and other resources.

4. Staff feedback was included to ensure that staff understood the organisation and its policies and practices.
5. Mystery shopping provided an informed response to the user's experience of the service received. It was, however, controversial. Many practitioners viewed it as an intrusion into the private relationship between them and the client, and were especially concerned that it was based on a constructed scenario and therefore not a true client need. Some local networks outsourced mystery shopping, and there were examples of colleges using students to undertake the surveys as a research project. Others used real service users, briefing them on the questions that needed to be answered.

Some continued to use adapted forms of mystery shopping after the introduction of the matrix Standard, even though it was no longer required, and the practice may still exist.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of mystery shopping to quality assurance is the opportunity to have clients' experience IAG services with a framework for judging the quality of the delivery. Given the lack of understanding of what represents a 'good' service, it would seem that more development of the practice would be worth considering.

6. Within CQI workshops and consultancy visits, the Guidance Council quality consultants were frequently asked to interpret specific items within the Standard in relation to the enquirer's work situation. This question was commonly countered by encouraging the enquirer to imagine themselves as 'client' and to form an answer based on that perspective. The work surrounding the Standards therefore encouraged a shift to a user focus, reflecting the Guidance Council's, "particular focus on ensuring that the interests of users are recognised and protected".
7. A major challenge throughout the development process was to capture the best practice across a wide range of sectors. This led to an extensive menu of standards and a complex process of selecting the standards appropriate to any one organisation – ranging from schools and colleges (career education), through voluntary/community organisations and training organisations, to specialist career guidance services. Stronger buy-in from the career guidance community to the concept of self-regulation might have found ways to simplify the model. In the event, the DfES decided to replace the NQSLW before the full range of standards could be successfully deployed in all sectors. In practice, the standards were primarily, but not exclusively, used in adult guidance settings in England.

8. Devolution militated against the NQSLW being accepted as a UK-wide system. The matrix Standard is currently used in England only, primarily with career guidance for adults. However, Careers Wales is considering adopting the matrix Standard as an element of its quality-assurance framework, and there has been a pilot in Northern Ireland.
9. The NQSLW 'reach' included employers. The employers' development group decided, as a first step, to draw up 'Good Practice Guidelines for Individual Development in Organisations'. These were not developed further before the introduction of the matrix Standard. However there was a DfES project that explored the use of matrix by employers (unpublished research), and some 30 employers worked with the Standard – most to accreditation.
10. The NQSLW included standards for 'third parties', i.e. those providers that have a vested interest in the outcome of service delivery. Examples included colleges delivering a service in the context of a financial interest in recruiting or retaining students, and outplacement services to employers.
11. The NQSLW included standards for staff competence, development and supervision. These required that staff were recruited and selected according to the prevailing legislation and good practice. They referred to the national occupational standards in respect of staff competence, according to the service in question.
12. The matrix Standard was based on the work that led to the NQSLW, but expressed in a very different way – based more on outcomes than the older standards. The simpler model also removed the need for complex choices with regard to the relevant standards to be followed. However, the opportunity to establish a baseline for all career guidance activity, in the context of lifelong learning, that could then be used to clarify the similarities and differences between work in different contexts, was lost as was the opportunity to develop a self-regulation model for the career guidance sector.

Summary and Conclusion

How should the NQSLW initiative be judged in retrospect?

As a minimum, the NQSLW provided valuable learning which was carried forward into the development of the matrix Standard, and therefore still has impact today.

The NQSLW Standards were overly focused on inputs and the accreditation process was probably insufficiently robust, being based largely on desk audit. However, the model was designed to be part of a self-regulation process and had checks and balances built-in. A major element of the checks and balances was to obtain client feedback and mystery shopping data: engaging clients in quality assurance has since become a major element in the Connexions Service for young people in England.

While no specific parallel process, other than the matrix Standard, is formally in place for adult guidance services, the experience of using NQSLW has probably contributed to a shift in mindset amongst providers towards a greater awareness of the experience of clients using services.

Another check was the programme of random visits by GAB (calculated to be at the rate of once every four years). Feedback from practitioners indicated that the mere possibility of a 'mystery shopper' intervention or a GAB random visit was sufficient to keep compliance with the Standards as a high priority.

It may be that had more focus been placed on gaining active support for the underpinning model rather than simply the Standards themselves, the outcome might have been different. A lifelong, UK-wide process could have been achieved. In any event, it is likely that the NQSLW would have been simplified and become more outcome-based over time; the process of self-regulation model would have led to questioning of purpose and intended outcomes. As it turned out, the matrix Standard was developed as a contract-compliance tool and, as such, is well regarded in England and further afield.

The matrix Standard is more in tune with current thinking on quality-standard models. It addresses the issue of quality in a different context from the NQSLW self-regulation model, but the detailed development of the matrix standard was undoubtedly influenced by experience with NQSLW.

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