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***Show me the evidence! Considerations for
practice and policy in Ireland***

National Forum on Guidance
Dublin, April 5th 2017

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Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies (2008)

PRIORITY AREA 3: DEVELOP QUALITY ASSURANCE IN GUIDANCE PROVISION:

- Improve quality, ensure objectivity of career information & advice in line with users expectations & labour market realities
- Ensure intervention tailored to individual's needs
- Relate information on options to local area
- Enhance professional standards, competences and skills of practitioners
- **Measure effectiveness of provision, collect data, assess benefits from users perspective in medium term**
- **Develop quality standards pertinent to service provision**



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Quality Assurance in Guidance

- European policy developments (Common Reference Points, CEDEFOP 2004)
- Collaborative approach did not result in national ownership and poor uptake
- ELGPN (2010, 2012, 2014) QAE framework matrix

(Hiebert et al. 2014)



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Quality Assurance in Guidance

Rationale:

- ✓ political (*justification of service*);
- ✓ funding (*worthiness*);
- ✓ measurement of client progress (*advancement*);
- ✓ service improvement (*standards*);
- ✓ monitoring (*what is happening*);
- ✓ strategic planning and practice/policy development (*improvement*)

(Sultana, 2008; Hearne, 2009)



Quality Assurance in Guidance

- **“Quality assurance:** Activities involving planning, implementation, evaluation, reporting, and quality improvement, implemented to ensure that guidance activities (content of programmes, design, assessment and validation of outcomes, etc.) meet the quality requirements expected by stakeholders” (ELGPN, 2014, p.74).
- Use of quality systems & quality standards through audits, checks or evaluation
- PI’s and Benchmarks determine impact and set standards that need to be sustained



Quality Assurance in Guidance

“Quality-assurance framework: Set of common principles, guidelines, criteria and tools adopted by a group at a local, regional, national or international level in order to develop and assure quality in guidance delivery and in relation to the qualification of guidance practitioners” (ELGPN, 2014, p.74).



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Evaluation and Impact in Guidance

- Historic process: rudimentary activity (number counting) to client satisfaction measurement (questionnaires) to:
- Increasing requirement to ‘prove it works’
- Focus on ‘value for money’ in publicly funded services
- Practitioners now required to show ‘added value’ – policy outcomes (economic and social)
- Conflict: market model (commodification) vs value to receivers (clients)
- Gap: limited research on **causal link** between career services and impact on clients lives or economy and society
- Approaches: Research-oriented (Canada) and Policy-driven (Europe)

(Hiebert et al, 2014)



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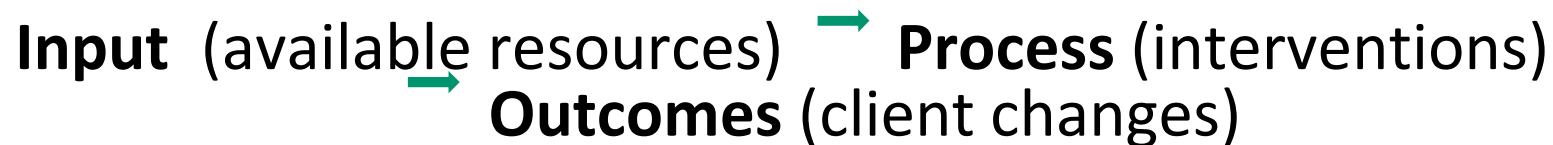
Evaluation and Impact in Guidance

- Controversial: purpose, power relationships and methodology used (DePoy & Gilson, 2008; Hearne, 2009; Killeen, 1996)
- (Almeida et al, 2014):
 - phobia of accountability;
 - seen as a one time event vs. 'ongoing' requirement built into professional practice;
 - ethical responsibility and practice;
 - lack of national policy on metrics and indices in some sectors (e.g. schools)
 - objectivity of activity – practitioners more orientated to service delivery than to rigorous research methods (quality of data issue)



Evidence Based Frameworks

- New trends: outcome-focused intervention and evidence-based practice
- Outcome-focused: change in clients
- Evidence-based: types of interventions in particular contexts to bring about change
- CRWG Framework:



(Hiebert et al. 2014)



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Underlying Assumptions

- Privileging: Tangible (hard) **vs** intangible (soft) outcomes
- ‘Progression’ is primarily linear, emphasis on upward mobility
- *Employment (tangible)* represented as most significant indicator of individual progression
- *Personal development (intangible)*: difficult to measure and thus marginalised
- *Process* aspect overlooked in standardised measurable parameters
- *Prominence* of quantitative methods: capturing of individual variables and contextual factors diminished
- *Targets* achieve evidence (issue - gaming)

(Hearne, 2009)



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Evaluation in Guidance Services: Types of Data

- Needs assessment data
- Process data
- Use-of-time data
- Perception data
- Outcome data
- Disaggregated data

(Foxx et al, 2017)



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Evaluation in Guidance Services: Types of Data

- Needs data:
student/client needs from service
- Use of time data:
time spent in intervention work (e.g. one to one, group work, administration, LMI sourcing)
- Process data:
evidence of specific activities provided by guidance service

(Foxy et al, 2017)



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Evaluation in Guidance Services: Types of Data

- Perception data:
data from key stakeholders (students/clients, teachers, parents, management)
- Outcome data:
impact of various activities on students/clients
- Disaggregated data:
global school system (attendance records, standardised test scores, completion rates)

(Foxx et al, 2017)



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Constructivist Evaluation Framework

- Construct: client change (progression) involves *process* and *outcome*, non-linear, cyclical, zig-zag, retrospective
- Change is *subjective* process, *objectively* measured
- Multi-faceted and *context* specific
- Intrinsic (psychological) and extrinsic (sociological) variables

(Hearne, 2009)



Matrix of Outcomes in Adult Guidance (Hearne, 2009)

Hard Outcomes	Soft Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Education/Training: <i>from entry to completion, full-time/part-time/modular/distant/flexible</i>▪ Qualifications: <i>level, full/part qualification, accredited/non-accredited</i>▪ Employment: <i>full-time/part-time, self-employment, voluntary sector</i>▪ Training/Job Placement Initiatives▪ Specific Career Change▪ Internal Promotion▪ Retirement Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Self-concept: <i>confidence levels, self-esteem, self-worth</i>▪ Attitude change: <i>open-mindedness, clarity of options, motivation</i>▪ Choices: <i>education, career, lifestyle</i>▪ Personal satisfaction: <i>contentment, achievements, dreams realised</i>▪ Agency: <i>personal and structural mobility</i>▪ Opportunity awareness: <i>education, training, employment, voluntary</i>▪ Wellbeing: <i>health, changes in lifestyle</i>▪ Change in circumstances: <i>personal, social, economic (e.g. financial)</i>▪ Personal relationships: <i>family, friends, work, community</i>▪ Goals: <i>present, future, specific</i>▪ Skills: <i>learning-specific, work-specific, career management, decision-making, self-management, creative, problem-solving, listening, time-management</i>



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Considerations for Practice

➤ **Guidance Service:**

recognition that it is a 'core' professional activity;
time allocation and management required;
financial cost, human resources (more with less),
relevant training/CPD for guidance counsellors;
appropriate data gathering methods and data management systems;
usage of collected data;

➤ **Professional Capacity:**

constraints of resources **vs.** immediate guidance needs of students and clients



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Selected References and Reading

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