

# NCGE CPD PROGRAMME IN PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING: REVIEW REPORT

National Centre for Guidance in Education,  
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Lárionad Náisiúnta um Threoir san Oideachas  
National Centre for Guidance in Education

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## Background

NCGE designed and developed a CPD programme in psychometric testing, for guidance counsellors working in schools, in response to the *findings of a survey on the continuing professional development needs of guidance counsellors working in second level schools*. The *Report of the Findings* can be found on the NCGE website [http://www.ncge.ie/uploads/NCGE Report of the Findings of CPD Survey.pdf](http://www.ncge.ie/uploads/NCGE_Report_of_the_Findings_of_CPD_Survey.pdf). The CPD programme was designed and developed in collaboration with the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) and the CPD facilitators.

The CPD programme was delivered to 195 guidance counsellors on twelve occasions from November, 2014 until December, 2015. The programme employed a social constructivist pedagogical approach and a blended learning approach i.e. a combination of e-learning (pre-workshop preparation) and a face-to-face (f2f) workshop. The purpose of the online component (content included reading, viewing a video and posting an introduction to oneself and a reflection to a forum) prior to the workshop was to prepare guidance counsellors for the f2f workshop so that workshops could maximize the opportunity for practice based discussion, group work and skills development. The pre-workshop aspect enabled guidance counsellors to re-familiarise themselves with the theory underpinning the practice of psychometric testing, consider and reflect on their own practice of testing, and to identify their own learning needs prior to the workshop. Posting reflections to the online forum also provided participating guidance counsellors with the opportunity to introduce themselves to their peers, and enabled the programme facilitators to note and respond to articulated needs during the workshops. Workshops were held in eight locations nationally - Athlone, Cork (including a centre in Fermoy), Dublin, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick and Sligo. An evaluation of each CPD offering was undertaken at the end of each workshop.

NCGE has undertaken a review of the CPD programme delivered to guidance counsellors in schools and the findings of the review are presented in this report. The review consisted of an analysis of written feedback provided by guidance counsellors at the end of each workshop (for each of the twelve workshops) and an analysis of the findings of a survey distributed in May, 2016 to guidance counsellors who participated in the CPD programme.

It is envisaged that the findings presented in this review report will inform the design, development and delivery of subsequent NCGE CPD programmes.

## Methodology

### Feedback from Workshops

Feedback forms were distributed to guidance counsellors at the end of each workshop (twelve in total). Almost all guidance counsellors completed the forms anonymously and returned to NCGE. NCGE prepared a synthesis of the feedback received after each workshop

which the CPD facilitators reviewed. The feedback received informed the design and delivery of subsequent workshops and changes were made as appropriate.

For the purposes of this review NCGE prepared a synthesis of feedback received over the course of the twelve workshops for three questions (see Appendix I). A discussion of this feedback is presented in the next section.

### **Survey**

The survey was created in Survey Monkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)) and distributed to guidance counsellors who had participated in the CPD through the email system of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The email was sent in May, 2016.

The survey consisted of six questions. Question 1 asked guidance counsellors to indicate when and where they participated in the CPD programme. Question 2 invited guidance counsellors to report their expectations of the CPD and if these were met. Questions 3 and 4 explored the learning that occurred on the programme and invited guidance counsellors to report how this learning informed their practice (sub-headings were provided as prompts). Question 5 asked guidance counsellors if they would recommend the CPD to their colleagues and question 6 invited additional comments if any. All questions were open ended to provide opportunities for additional feedback if needed. An analysis of the responses to the survey can be found in Appendix II.

### **Response Rate**

There were nineteen responses to the survey which represents a ten percent response rate.

### **Survey Analysis**

The survey analysis was conducted by Survey Monkey and the analysis is included in this report.

### **Limitations of the Survey**

A limitation of the survey is the response rate of ten percent. However, data obtained from the workshop feedback adds greatly to the data obtained from the survey. The timing of the survey more than likely impacted on the response rate.

## Review Findings and Discussion

### Workshop Feedback

For the purposes of this review responses to three key questions on the feedback forms were explored. These questions included:

- What worked well in today's workshop?
- What did not work so well?
- What have you learned from this workshop?

Responses to each question are presented below.

#### What worked well in today's workshop?

Guidance counsellors reported that the workshops provided an opportunity for discussion, the sharing and exchange of practice. Working in groups, interaction and collaboration with peers was seen as hugely beneficial and a major strength of the workshops – the majority of comments referred to group work and interaction. Comments reflecting the value of group work and discussion were made as follows *“Sharing of ideas in groups. Mixing among groups to get the chance to share info with and learn from others”, “group work and general sharing of ideas was hugely helpful”, “Small group dynamic worked very well. Time for discussion. Very practical”* and *“Listening to feedback from all teachers – what works and what does not in schools – the group worked well – changing groups for different tasks”* and *“Plan for day was adapted to meet our needs – active learning – small groups.”*

Other strengths of the workshops included facilitation of the workshop, captured by comments such as *“great presentation & explanation”, “Very good facilitation”* and *“Well-structured and ordered – clear objectives set out early on and looked at on several occasions. Good interaction between facilitators and guidance counsellors – activities had clear focus/goals”*. The delivery methodology of the CPD programme and the content were also seen as working well. Guidance counsellors stated *“The group work and opportunity for discussion. The sheets on the wall. The different type of learning styles”, “The setup of the environment. The flipchart. The use of tables for a ‘ready-made’ group. Use of paper sharing of ideas around the room. The PowerPoint presentation, video (best practice). Practical exercises.”* and *“Different mix of activities – worked well. Experiential learning – kept session very interesting.”*

Feedback relating to the content covered on the day included *“The feedback on ability testing. The Sten/raw score/percentile conversion tables are excellent. Feedback exercises were very helpful”, “Showing us the Stens, percentiles etc and how to see them in context”* and *“Role play of individual feedback”*.

### What didn't work so well

There were a variety of comments made in response to this question, some of which were positive statements such as *"This was one of the best workshop I have ever been at. The supporting material is very helpful and the presentation was professional"*. A number of comments related to the duration of the workshop, some felt it was too long and stated that they were tired by 3pm, while others stated that more time was needed. A number of responses expressed frustration about implementing best practice in schools with limited resources. Reference was made to the 'guidance cuts'. One guidance counsellor stated *"It was frustrating initially to hear about the ideal situation yet being unable to implement such practices on the ground due to lack of time or support from school management"*. Another guidance counsellor stated *"We began venting our frustrations on guidance cuts – maybe if this was acknowledged a few times initially it would have made us more open to hearing about feedback."* For the facilitators, managing such feedback was at times challenging. Some changes were made to the sequencing of content in subsequent workshops to allow time for guidance counsellors to reflect on best practice and how this could be implemented at school level – a best fit model. The facilitators also encouraged guidance counsellors to reflect on the purpose of testing and why schools were engaging in testing when limited resources were available to do so, especially since information is available from other sources such as the results from attainment tests undertaken in school i.e. examinations and from *The Education Passport* for incoming first years [http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum\\_and\\_Assessment/Early\\_Childhood\\_and\\_Primary\\_Education/Primary-Education/Assessment/Report\\_Card\\_Templates/transfer/](http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Early_Childhood_and_Primary_Education/Primary-Education/Assessment/Report_Card_Templates/transfer/).

Two comments made by guidance counsellors referred to peers not engaging with group work – *"group work – not all participated fully"* and *"One of my group was negative about being here today, we deflected from the session. This made the group work a one man show/two man show"*.

A number of guidance counsellors at the initial workshops seemed confused about the purpose of the workshops and this was expressed by one guidance counsellor *"Some participants were not fully aware of the aim for the CPD"*. A number of guidance counsellors expressed interest in learning more about the range of tests available and were disappointed that this was not covered in depth *"Would have liked to get an opportunity to get information on suitable psychometric tests to use for L.C. students"*, *"Would have liked clearer recommendations regarding what test"* and *"I would like more resources e.g. sheet with suggested careers based on DAT results etc, samples of the various tests would also be useful"*. In response to the lack of clarity at the initial workshops NCGE updated the pre-course information to make it more explicit that the CPD would not be focusing on individual tests and providing training on such tests, explaining why this was the case. Reference was also made to existing resources, such as the Department of Education & Skills list of assessment instruments <https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active->

[Circulars/cl0034 2015.pdf](#). The facilitators also provided time at the end of subsequent workshops for guidance counsellors to share information on the tests that they find useful.

Lastly, a number of comments referenced bad weather, traffic, gender (NCGE is unsure what the comment 'gender' was referring to, as clarification was not provided) and lack of parking at some of the workshop venues.

### **What have you learned from this workshop?**

Guidance counsellors reported a wide range of learning at the workshops. This learning included, *"Professionalism around testing administration and feedback"*, *"How to feedback more effectively. The advantage of using raw scores for feedback instead of percentiles"*, *"How to interpret scores..."*, *"Effective feedback"*, *"Policy making on data protection. The importance of individual feedback"*, and *"Need to look at our testing policy: If we have one!"* One comment stated *"A lot! Difference between aptitude and attainment – how to communicate effectively around testing, how to read a test appropriately and focus on raw scores and attempts! To question testing and always be able to give a valid and professional reason for doing so"* and *"The importance of managing expectations – the purpose of testing – informed consent. Importance of school having a testing policy"*.

Some guidance counsellors reported insights gained at the workshops *"I did not appreciate the significance of the cluster around average. Reliance on percentiles can be quite misleading"* and *"To think why am I testing"* and *"Ok not to test, be clear of purpose of test. Ensure informed consent"* and *"Am now looking at testing in a different way e.g. never focused on raw scores and attempted Q before"*.

Guidance counsellors highlighted that their learning in some instances would inform their practice and this is captured by *"Idea of best practice and best fit – will use this to review policy in psychometric testing"* and *"Need to reassess our testing policy and the reasons why we are testing"* and *"Need to talk to management and begin policies on Data"*.

Guidance counsellors valued hearing from their peers and the inputs from facilitators. This is captured by *"I got idea of practice from colleagues but also very specific information about feedback from the presenters"*.

### **Survey**

19 guidance counsellors responded to the survey. These guidance counsellors participated in the CPD programme at different times and in different locations, hence the feedback reflects the entire CPD offering delivered from November, 2014 until December, 2015. The feedback presented and discussed below is organized under different headings which correspond to the questions asked (see Appendix II).

## Expectations of the CPD Programme

Of the 19 guidance counsellors who responded to the survey the majority reported that the CPD programme met their expectations. Comments included *“yes it was a very comprehensive and professional course”* and *“yes I felt fully briefed on my objectives of going to the CPD”*. Another guidance counsellor reported *“yes these expectations were met. Great facilitation on the day – provided overall perspective on testing I needed. Open mike or questions and answers session allowed for sharing of information between guidance professionals”*. Expectations were reported as *“...sharing of best practice”*, *“...renew my knowledge on analyzing psychometric tests”*, *“new ideas re best practice. New ideas re the weaker student most especially”*. These comments reflect those discussed earlier under workshop feedback.

Two respondents indicated that they thought the CPD would cover tests they should use and when to use them *“I thought we were going to be told what the bests tests to use are and when to use them”* and *“would have expected more on tests available...”*. The two respondents participated in the CPD programme in late 2014 and early 2015 and reflected feedback presented in the workshop feedback forms. Documentation circulated to guidance counsellors prior to and during their participation on the CPD programme highlighted the learning outcomes of the programme. The learning outcomes did not make any reference to exploring and discussing individual and specific tests for use in schools. However, it was not explicitly stated that NCGE would not be providing professional development in this area. Subsequent programme documentation and communication stated explicitly that NCGE would not be providing professional development in relation to specific tests, as the information is available elsewhere through the Department of Education and Skills list of assessment instruments [https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0034\\_2015.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0034_2015.pdf) and from the test publishers themselves. However, NCGE and the facilitation team followed up on requests for information re tests at workshops by providing guidance counsellors with some time towards the end of workshops to have a discussion (in small groups) on the tests that they use in schools. This was well received.

The 17 respondents who reported that their expectations were met reported in some instances that they would have liked more time spent on certain areas of content. Such comments included *“to learn more about delivering results to students. I felt more time could have been spent on this”* and *“I hoped to gain a better understanding of Stanine, Sten etc. These were covered but I would have liked more practical examples e.g. these are X results and this is what they tell us”*. In light of such feedback, taking into account time constraints during workshops, perhaps there is an opportunity for follow-on CPD or the development of an online forum (online community of practice) where guidance counsellors can continue to share and exchange practice and have the scope to develop their practice through dialogue.



## Learning from the CPD

All 19 guidance counsellors highlighted some learning arising from their participation on the CPD, though one respondent reported *“not a lot new”* and another *“I’m not sure I learned anything new but I felt much more confident that I was using psychometric tests in a correct manner”*. The first comment suggests there was some learning, but there is not enough information provided on what this learning may have been. The second highlights, that while little additional and new knowledge was gained, confidence in one’s own practice increased after participating in the CPD. A feeling that one’s own practice has been affirmed, in itself, can be a very valuable and worthwhile experience.

The learning reported by the remaining 17 guidance counsellors included, good practice in the provision of feedback to students, test score interpretation, ethical practice and data protection considerations and best practice in psychometric testing. This learning is captured through comments such as *“the ethics issue of doing testing but not giving back results to individuals within a reasonable time, we stopped administering the DATS as a direct result”* and *“a lot about testing, legal information, data protection, storage, and feedback on testing”*. The first quotation highlights the impact of participating in the CPD on practice also, in that the guidance counsellor concerned reports that (s)he is no longer administering the DATS. Some may question the appropriateness of this change, however, if students are not receiving feedback in a timely manner one has to ask why such tests are being employed and who the beneficiary is. Overall, this feedback is positive for NCGE in that the learning reported relates to the learning outcomes of the programme i.e. we can state that the learning outcomes have been achieved.

Other learning reported reflected a sense of comfort been gained through participation in the CPD, such as, *“that I wasn’t alone in my questions and concerns re testing”* and *“that it’s ok not to test, if only testing because I felt that I should test as many guidance counsellors test”*. Learning from other participants was also reported *“I learned about different ways different schools make use of testing...”* and *“...I learned a lot from others’ experience”*.

## Impact of the CPD on practice

Eighteen guidance counsellors responded to this question. A number of headings were provided to serve as prompts to guide responses. The majority of respondents made comments under each heading.

### Psychometric test administration (17 responses)

Nine respondents highlighted that the practice of administering psychometric tests in their schools had been informed by participation in the CPD programme. Comments included *“more organized as a result my students benefit to a greater degree”* and *“new testing introduced for first years this year and will be introduced for 5<sup>th</sup> years next year”*. Three respondents highlighted that they were now more confident, felt more at ease or had been reminded of best practice as a result of the CPD. Four respondents reported that there had been no change in practice with one respondent stating *“Very little. In this school there is no*

*regard taken of having any qualifications to do testing*". In terms of this feedback it is hoped that the DES Circular Letter 0034/2015 [https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0034\\_2015.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0034_2015.pdf) has clarified the DES position on this *"The administration of ability tests in schools should be restricted to appropriately qualified personnel who have been specifically trained in specialised psychometric testing"* (DES, 2015; pg. 3).

### **School policy and data protection considerations (16 responses)**

Thirteen respondents reported some change in practice or that their practice had been informed through their participation in the CPD. Insights gained included, *"need to be careful with results and storing"*, *"more aware of policy in the school"* and *"learned a great deal around data protection and reporting results"*. Changes in practice included *"updated policy"*, *"reviewed and updated our data protection policies"* and *"I recommended to the school to develop/review policy around testing"*. Three respondents indicated that there had been no change, with one highlighting that this was *"an issue that has yet to be discussed and resolved"*.

Personal data includes psychometric test results and as such data is held by the school the school is obliged to process this data in line with data protection requirements (Jones, 2013). As data controllers schools are required to have a data protection policy. From the above comments made by respondents it is evident that the CPD provided opportunities for awareness raising regarding schools' obligations under data protection legislation.

### **Test scoring and presentation of test scores to students (18 responses)**

Nine responses highlighted learning that had occurred as a result of the CPD. Such responses highlighted the importance of presenting test scores to students in a way that they are understood, that it should be the guidance counsellor who provides the information to parents and students as *"there are issues to be considered and the GC is well aware of these concerns"*, and the need to take a student centred approach when presenting test scores to students. In terms of impact on practice, three responses highlighted a change, these included re-introducing the DATS, introducing psychometric testing to incoming first years and *"changed my wording on reports.."*. Six respondents highlighted that there was no change in practice as a result of the CPD with one response highlighting a resource issue in terms of continuing existing practice *"have to take same approach due to lack of guidance hours. Done on a class basis with individual meetings with any students who request extra input"*. Employing class or group feedback is a challenging practice, as the guidance counsellor and school has to ensure that it is carefully and sensitively managed, especially in terms of students who may not have performed well. Is there a risk that a student may feel distressed or embarrassed in front of peers? This practice is not recognized as good practice and the question has to be asked as to why schools employ testing if resources are not available to employ it appropriately, and to the maximum benefit of the student – who is the practice serving, is it in the best interest of the student and is it potentially damaging to a student? Such issues and questions are explored and addressed in the DES CL 0034/2015

referred to above and in articles published in the NCGE School Guidance Handbook (*A Guide for post-primary schools in developing a policy for the use of assessment instruments and Best Practice, Legal and Ethical Considerations in Psychometric Testing for Guidance Counsellors*). Re the instance cited above, there is a wealth of information available concerning student attainment through the results of class tests, school examinations, State Examinations and *The Education Passport* for incoming first years.

#### **Provision of feedback to students (18 responses)**

Most responses highlighted learning arising from the CPD rather than a change in practice. Such learning highlighted included, feedback *“needs to be clear, positive focused and carefully presented”* and *“useful to be reminded of best practice here”*. Other learning indicated the need for more practice. Some responses stated that existing practice will be continued *“will continue to provide report, explanation to parents and students”*, and the challenge of time constraints and resources in providing feedback to students.

#### **Communication strategy (13 responses)**

Again under this heading most responses concentrated on learning arising from the CPD rather than a change in practice. Respondents highlighted that skills had been improved, the importance of providing results in a way that is easily understood, and the usefulness of being reminded of best practice. Two respondents indicated a change in practice, in one case a handout is now provided which explains the results, and another states that there is an individual meeting with students when returning results.

#### **Other (2 responses)**

Cost factors and an updating of the DATS were highlighted under this heading. It is not surprising that cost was raised as psychometric tests can be expensive to purchase. Often test publishers charge for the test, report and manual.

#### **Recommend CPD to other guidance counsellors**

There were 17 respondents to this question with 16 indicating ‘yes’ they would recommend the CPD to other guidance counsellors and one indicating ‘no’. 18 responses were recorded under ‘please explain your answer’. The guidance counsellor who indicated ‘no’ reported that (s)he *“didn’t learn a lot”*.

In terms of the 17 respondents who reported that they would recommend the CPD to other guidance counsellors, a number of comments highlighted the role of peers in the learning process *“it is a wonderful opportunity to get together to share experiences and worries”*, *“it was great to network”* and *“I feel the CPD is good practice and it can help practitioners exchange ideas and knowledge in translating theory to practice”*. Respondents also highlighted the importance of keeping up-to-date and up-skilling *“good to upskill and provides opportunity for reflection on current practice”*, *“you need to stay up to date, working on your own a lot you can begin to develop a middle ground which is not wise...”* and *“there was much to be gained by participating, my skills needed refreshing and updating”*.

Another respondent reported that (s)he thought the CPD was a “*good opportunity to share experience and benchmark own practice*”. These comments very much capture the essence of a social constructivist pedagogical approach to CPD. Such an approach provides opportunities for participants to co-create knowledge, reflect on and critique practice. This approach to CPD, which NCGE employs, is consistent with the standards set out for teachers’ learning in The Teaching Council’s (2012) *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers*. A social constructivist pedagogical approach can be particularly valuable for guidance counsellors, who often are the sole guidance counsellor in a school and thus, may experience a sense of isolation. Guidance counsellors, thus may not have the opportunity to reflect on, critique and ‘benchmark’ practice with another colleague on a day-to-day basis. It can be reassuring to hear that others share the same concerns and challenges. One respondent, for instance, reported feeling reassured as a result of the CPD “*I don’t feel worried about not testing anymore as stated at CPD it’s not necessary unless I have a valid reason to test*”. CPD can also provide opportunities to consider and question the practice of another. One respondent indicated for instance that (s)he was “*..surprised that results are not provided by all schools to parents*”.

### **Other comments**

Twelve responses were made to this question of which four stated ‘no’. One comment highlighted a change in practice since the CPD “*we now spend more time on interest inventories and skill identifying programmes which are more useful in career choices and more affirming of my students*”. Three respondents thanked those involved in providing the CPD and another indicated that it should be offered as an in-service through all the IGC branches which further endorses the value of the CPD programme. The remaining comments highlighted the need for more training, information on the range of tests available and the need to conduct research into how and why tests are used in schools, and if a correlation exists between performance in an ability test and State Examinations results.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The findings from the workshop feedback forms and the survey highlight that guidance counsellors value the opportunity to avail of CPD, especially CPD that provides opportunities for sharing, exchanging and reflecting on practice. The findings suggest that NCGE should continue to provide CPD which employs a blended learning methodology (a combination of online learning and a face-to-face workshop) as this offers opportunities for sharing, reflection, critique, evaluation and development of practice i.e. a social constructivist pedagogical approach. While the response rate to the survey was ten percent the findings of this survey are supported by the workshop feedback. Almost all guidance counsellors who participated in the CPD programme took the time to complete the workshop feedback forms.

In terms of CPD organized by NCGE for school guidance counsellors, this historically has been designed and developed collaboratively in response to national priorities and training needs analyses (TNA) undertaken by NCGE. The design and development process involves:

- identifying a CPD need and priority;
- developing learning outcomes to address the need;
- employing an appropriate pedagogical approach and methodology (blended) to deliver content and learning activities which are aligned to the learning outcomes;
- employing an appropriate pedagogical approach and methodology appropriate to the needs of guidance counsellors and schools;
- including 'assessment for and as learning' activities which are aligned to the learning outcomes;
- sourcing appropriately qualified personnel to deliver the CPD in association with NCGE.

The findings of this survey suggest that guidance counsellors value the pedagogical approach employed by this CPD programme which provided opportunities for peer learning and the development and critique of practice. Comments made throughout the survey highlight that the learning outcomes of the CPD programme have been achieved and that there has been some impact on practice.

A consideration for the future is how NCGE can provide ongoing support and follow-on CPD for guidance counsellors in areas such as psychometric testing so that the learning is sustained. The importance of CPD is captured in the words of guidance counsellors *"you need to stay up-to-date, working on your own a lot you can begin to develop a middle ground which is not wise"* and *"... it's easy to forget and form habits etc over the years. It's good to refresh and up-skill from time-to-time"*.

## References

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- The Teaching Council (2012). *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers.* Kildare: The Teaching Council.

## Appendix I: Workshop Feedback

*NB - Each participant was assigned a colour so as to easily distinguish the responses of individuals throughout the feedback form.*

### What worked well in today's workshop?

- Exchange of information – hearing what others are doing.
- Exchange of Information. Reflections of other GC's.
- A. Great Presentation & Explanation. B. Great Participant Discussion.
- People's opinions and responses.
- The discussion groups
- Openness in discussion. Pace of delivery was good.
- People's opinions – Group discussions. Very good techniques & examples.
- Very good presentations. Handouts, slides, etc. interaction with others and sharing of experiences and work practices most valuable.
- Working in groups. Sharing concrete info and examples of what practice is going on in other schools.
- Good range of topics covered; active presentation and resources; great moving around in different groups; exchange of ideas.
- Interaction with others, learning about issues in other schools.
- Hearing about best practice in other schools. Moving people around in to different groups by giving each person a number.
- GC's sharing practice with other GC's facilitated.
- Group work, discussion, variety of activities.
- Group work, changing groups around. The first exercise – writing on the wall sheets. Hearing others experiences, sharing of ideas.
- Collaboration with other G.C. to utilise everyone's knowledge.
- Everything. I liked the changing of groups and moving around. There is a huge wreath of info in the group.
- Well prepared, well ran, good mixing of groups.
- Small numbers, interactive nature.

- The scoring interpretation information sheet excellent meeting G.C. that I did not know previously.
- Listening to feedback from all teachers- what works and what does not in schools – the group worked well – changing groups for different tasks.
- Declan and Evin were knowledgeable and engaging. It was great to get the opportunity to get feedback of ideas from colleagues.
- Group works and mixing groups up quite often.
- Sharing of ideas in groups. Mixing among groups to get the chance to share info with and learn from others.
- Looking at feedback relating to testing group-work. Knowledge from other members in the group.
- Open forum throughout – to hear from colleagues.
- Everything – the activities were very useful but also so were the presentations. Questions were answered separately and in a considered way.
- Group work, sharing existing knowledge and changing groups around – working on flip chart sheets.
- Group work and general sharing of ideas was hugely helpful. Flow of the workshop for the day worked – it kept moving on. Area of feedback.
- Engaging participants. Listened to participant's expectations and queries. Did best to respond to them.
- Interaction with others on tables. Group work.
- Learning about other schools and their problems with testing.
- Discussions about whether to use psychometric tests in TY. Group work.
- Discussions, brainstorming.
- Factual, to the point, cleared up doubts, specific.
- Group work, topics discussed very relevant.
- Great learning.
- Great discussions, sharing of ideas.
- It was a good day. I am not a statistician – guidance counsellors are not occupational psychologists.
- Group work and sharing of ideas and group discussions.



- Group discussion very useful. Excellent lunch. Aptitude profile interpretation tool.
- The group work and opportunity for discussion. The sheets on the wall. The different types of learning styles.
- Meeting up with other guidance counsellors to discuss psychometric testing.
- The setup of the environment. The flipchart. The use of tables for a 'ready-made' group. Use of paper sharing of ideas around the room. The PowerPoint presentation, video (best practice). Practical exercises.
- The opportunity to share experiences, the opportunity to reflect on our 'purpose' in testing.
- Practical input- placed huge emphasis on the decision around to test or not to test for vocational guidance.
- Small group dynamic worked very well. Time for discussion. Very practical!
- Discussion and sharing.
- The opportunities for discussion were most beneficial.
- Sharing experiences in a focused, lead way.
- Well-structured and ordered – clear objectives set out early on and looked at on several occasions. Good interaction between facilitators and guidance counsellors – activities had clear focus/goal.
- Group work enabled brainstorming and discussion on topics.
- The feedback on ability testing. The Sten/raw score/percentile conversion tables are excellent. Feedback exercises were very helpful.
- Showing us the Stens, % etc. and how to see them in context.
- Some sharing of info/revision.
- Ethical practice. Feedback suggestions.
- Very practical – good suggestions for use in work.
- The entire day was very worthwhile and provided very solid information.
- Interaction worked very well.
- Video, STEN feedback – sheet. Posting comments beforehand.
- Feedback, interaction with others/bouncing ideas, different brands available.
- Opportunity to discuss issues with other GCs and learn from them.
- Lots of interaction and sharing.
- Listening and sharing.

- Sharing ideas on feedback and different tests.
- Good mix of expert advice with our shared experience of guidance practitioners.
- Role play, case studies and scoring info.
- The facilitator's knowledge. The practical approach – informal.
- The use of testing; interpretation and feedback was good. I felt that the checklist used in combination with role play was very relevant.
- Delivery method and group dynamics. Size of group was intimate enough for sharing.
- The feedback sessions in the afternoon including role play.
- The feedback techniques for students with weak scores. The workshop was very good and helpful in many ways.
- Group work. Discussion around rationale, resources needed. The use of the test as a self-awareness tool. Inspiring board for discussion. Role play, use of real scores in feedback.
- Group activity – policy/ rationale. For testing – good group discussion.
- The feedback session in the afternoon.
- Role-play.
- Role play of individual feedback. Different resources to be used when giving feedback e.g. actual score sheet etc.
- The student/guidance counsellor role play.
- Answering questions from the participants throughout the workshop. Group work, role play.
- Group work – Posters on wall – moving around in different groups.
- Good workshop – mostly worked well.
- The input form facilitators and non-facilitators.
- Group work and watching / discussing feedback.
- The discussion, opportunity to participate. The facilitators very informed and clear which was very helpful.
- Group discussion.
- Discussions!
- Mixture of different styles of imparting information. Very good facilitation. Very active.
- Sharing of ideas. Facilitation. Group work activities.
- All aspects – especially the small group work following important sharing information. School policy on testing + Data very useful.

- Not working with other GC's. Clarifying issues around Data. What is expected from psychometric testing.
- Interaction with colleagues on various topics presented – practical element to workshop.
- Peer and self-reflection and self-evaluation.
- The group discussion was very useful and I learned a lot from the role play.
- Collaboration of ideas, group work on feedback, self-reflection and peer reflection.
- Presentation of workshop. The idea sharing from each guidance counsellor.
- The focus and presentation, the movement.
- Presentation of workshop. Different feedback from different guidance counsellors.
- Group work, atmosphere, staff very welcoming on entry. Variable activities.
- Overview of types of tests, exercise on communicate strategy- makes you think about who/why testing. Pre-workshop work, feedback exercise very good.
- Different mix of activities – worked well. Experiential learning – kept session very interesting. Observing Declan and Evin's role play was very useful.
- Experimental work – I enjoyed the interaction with fellow participants.
- Information on feedback. Why we test. E
- Listening to feedback from participants from various schools. Encouraged nice atmosphere, open. Good concrete examples for e.g. when giving feedback.
- Feedback examples and focusing on the student interacting how they got on and look at raw scores/attempts. Meeting others – discussing etc.
- Consultation with other colleagues on the workshop – funding out about practices in other schools. The open forum in the workshop which discussed DATA protection guidelines, giving of feedback on tests. The individual student profiles – four in total and advice on how to interpret them I found really useful.
- Interactive discussions with colleagues.
- Case studies.
- Aptitude profile graph.
- Peer learning, sharing of practice.
- Plan for day was adapted to meet our needs – active learning – small groups.
- Group work and general discussions. Sharing of ideas and facilitator's input.

- Much clearer idea on feedback, which was the area I was most interested in. Good to exchange practice with other colleagues.
- Session on feedback – looking at the different case studies. ‘Aptitude Profiler’ hand out – v. useful.
- Group work.
- Excellent facilitation by Declan.
- Networking with other GC’s
- Clarity on why testing and to whom and how to provide effective feedback given time constraints. Group based activities, sharing and information, concrete examples – very beneficial discussing end person’s assessment.
- Looking and examining why we test! And what we do with it. Also it was useful to talk to other GC’s and see what they are doing.
- Liaising with colleagues – discussion, learning from others.
- Sharing of information.
- Role play of feedback to weak students.
- Group work, mock interviews.
- Discussion on testing policy – rationale etc. Video role play – learning in it for me on how to give feedback.
- Engaging in discussion and focusing on testing was refreshing and engaging.
- Opportunity to discuss.
- Middle part worked well. 11-12.45. Last part worked well. Even though to practice on one student, same energy not there for second one.
- Group work – talking with other GC’s about their work.
- Listening to others/getting another perspective/purpose.
- Discussion and networking with colleagues.
- The interactive work and reflective practice.
- Practical elements, hands on, relevant.
- Discuss at table, break and lunch with other guidance counsellors. Feedback session in afternoon worked well.
- Giving feedback to students from testing.
- The tutor was enthusiastic.

- Collaboration and sharing of knowledge amongst like-minded professionals.
- Different approach to giving feedback.
- The small group activities.
- Chance for discussion with fellow practising guidance counsellors and difficulties encountered.
- Got the opportunity to talk to other guidance counsellors.
- Discussion with friends and colleagues, open and frank.
- Interactive nature of workshop – sharing of knowledge by colleagues and discussion.
- Hearing the different experiences, priorities of others in difficult schools settings.
- Interactive nature, sharing of info, feedback session was great.
- Hearing from other GCs what worked for them and what didn't.
- Sharing of best practice examples – adequate time for discussion.
- Linking in with other practitioners. Good discussion/presentation on giving feedback.
- It was very useful to hear different ideas and methods used by other schools.
- Evaluation of different tests, info re: profiles and feedback.
- Looking at different tests being used in variations in schools.
- Interaction/discussion with others.
- Group work very valuable. 'Alek' feedback session worthwhile. Video clip very worthwhile.
- Talking to other GCs.
- Working in groups – feedback. Content of workshops, discussion.
- Group discussions, role-play regarding TY student.
- Pre-work – helpful. Small groups.
- Active participation, other teacher's experiences and ideas.
- The group worked really well together, people were giving with their information and sharing. Facilitators very good.
- Sharing with fellow guidance counsellors and learning from what works well for them.
- Presentation and group work. Good link in with other GC and get feedback on their experiences.
- The time allocated to discussion – great opportunity to hear the variety of ways schools approach/regard testing.
- Time allotted to working in groups or pairs. Learned from each other.

- Discussions around tests other GC's use. Providing feedback to students – very good. How to write a school policy.
- Sharing of expertise and knowledge, use of different groupings.
- Well organised, relevant, meeting other guidance counsellors, keeping to timetable while being flexible re what covered.
- The shared experiences of others through group work.
- Getting new resources. Evaluation of results – how to communicate. Results – very good, the interaction.
- Group work. Sharing of ideas.
- Group discussions, excellent facilitators.
- Sharing of information, learning from each other.
- Listening to others – handouts on scoring. Explanation of tests and scores.
- Talking to other GCs.
- Affirmation that testing should only be done for the right reasons. Interview with 'Grace'.
- Excellent in all respects. Character profiles for feedback practicals very helpful as aptitude profiler and peer-peer observation checklist presenters really engaged those present etc.
- Group work on looking at pros and cons of testing. Presentations clear and informative. Practice interview very effective. Aptitude profiler excellent.
- Info on scores – the different types. Hearing about how others use/do not use the testing.
- Plenty of time for participant feedback and discussion. The initial discussion was the most beneficial part of the day.
- Quality of presentation and engagement of course participants worked very well. The format and structure was well pitched.
- We were given the mental space to reflect on what 'best practice' can mean in a guidance context, especially when giving feedback to clients.
- Role-play, very good rapport with group.
- Explanation of different scores. Aptitude profiler.

### What did not work so well?

- Small group meeting – led to more sharing

- N/A
- N/A
- N/A
- Would have liked exercise to focus on learning outcomes.
- Weather
- N/A
- The day was slightly too long – while afternoon sessions were excellent, interacting, we were getting v. tired by 3pm.
- I felt the section on policy left me still unclear.
- All went well.
- I don't think we dealt enough with the ethical side of testing.
- Nothing.
- Good to have us reflecting and pooling our experience but may need more directive information from the presenters.
- A tea break in the afternoon would have been most welcome. The participants were flagging a bit.
- Very intensive late in the day, would have liked this in the morning.
- Nothing – all worked well.
- We could have looked more on practicing feedback for high performing students.
- Giving standard info such as costs of tests that we can access/could be provided with more accuracy.
- This was one of the best workshops I have ever been at. The supporting material is very helpful and the presentation was professional.
- Nothing
- Role plays in the afternoon. People very tired after lunch and may be more suited to morning.
- Show video or do role play. No need for both. We are well used to delivering 1 to 1 sessions.
- Maybe selected re video/role-play. The video – remember to mention that it is vocational guidance session.
- Video.
- Lack of time.
- Being called Career Guidance Teachers – sorry ....!

- Maybe too much group discussion.
- Minor: the facilitators understanding of the 'guidance counsellor' role.
- NA.
- Inner city traffic caused a lot of stress before arrival.
- The day was excellently managed – no suggestion for improvement.
- n/a.
- Perhaps an email of notes/posters generated would be good (even post these online so we could download them).
- Some of the session was very basic. I would prefer if the session was aimed a little higher – assuming we know the basics.
- Too long for some exercises.
- Need clarity in terms of best practice and best fit in current environment.
- n/a.
- n/a.
- Need to rotate groups.
- Second half – initially tired but movement worked.
- Would like more time.
- Nothing really but it was evident that more training like this is needed.
- Happy with the day.
- n/a.
- n/a.
- n/a.
- I thought there would have been more information on testing at further education given the broad age profile and pre course activities.
- The exercise where we broke up in to groups and spoke/presented about transition year testing. I didn't learn a lot from this exercise.
- n/a.
- n/a.
- Shorter introduction as most people would have read information on forum about each person in advance.
- n/a.



- n/a
- Maybe slightly long, but all session were busy. I would prefer a little more lecture style.
- The location. Very difficult to find. No parking.
- n/a
- Was overall excellent.
- n/a
- Happy with content.
- n/a
- n/a
- I found all valuable.
- n/a
- N/A.
- The concrete application and specifics familiar to school.
- Only one type of feedback looked at – the one to one interview.
- Didn't start on time, hope we don't finish late as a result.
- N/A.
- N/A.
- Gender.
- I found morning session left me quite cross i.e. time-feedback etc. Substitution no cover.
- Initial piece looking at 1:1 feedback as best practice and our interpretation of what we should be doing vs. what we can do.
- It was frustrating initially to hear about the idea situation yet being unable to implement such practices on the ground due to lack of time or support from school management.
- I would advise starting with communication and them moving to feedback. Given the ex-quota cuts time for meaningful one to one feedback has been eroded significantly which causes stress for GC's and students.
- We began venting our frustrations on guidance cuts – maybe if this was acknowledged a few times initially it would have made us more open to hearing about feedback.
- I'm still waiting for the role play of feedback sessions!
- One of my group was negative about being here today we deflected from the session. This made the group work a one man show/ 2 man show.

- Spending so much time on communication strategies - I feel we could have been given these.
- Would like more time.
- Time- too little/short
- Rushed answering 10 questions – more time, clearer instruction.
- Off topic sometimes.
- Group work – not all participated fully.
- Went off track at times.
- The thought process, leading to a good discussion on relevance of testing in general.
- The morning part. Putting up stuff on wall. Learned nothing from it at all. Here to learn.
- I think today was advertised as something else – I thought there would be more time to talk about various tests, their advantages and disadvantages etc.
- Getting time out of school is v difficult even though we clearly need this type of CPD.
- Too much of one presenter and his opinion which in my opinion did not marry well in to a day in the life of a GC.
- It felt repetitive at times.
- Some participants were not fully aware of the aims for the CPD.
- Thought there would be more general group discussions about school experiences.
- Time to discuss certain type of tests which I thought in-service was about. The strengths and weaknesses of each test.
- Too much information and no practical testing.
- Too much group work, drawing out our knowledge as opposed to a focus on the psychometric tests which I can utilise within my school.
- Not enough detail on different tests.
- Second and third facilitators should have been given more scope to speak.
- Did not get chance to discuss what tests and what levels as expected and outlined in pre-course forum.
- Would have liked to get an opportunity to get information on suitable psychometric tests to use for L.C. students.
- Too much time on what we are already doing i.e. we are testing as guidance counsellors. Needed more time on test types.
- Too much time spent on interactive native, more.

- Role plays.
- Lack of actual clarity on what to do.
- N/A.
- Everything went well.
- More time regarding test info and relevant to different areas and new tests.
- I had hoped we would have come away with testing policy template (I appreciate that the guide questions before lunch were helpful).
- N/A.
- No real information given – much of what was gained is what we would get at a cell meeting.
- N/A.
- Would have liked clearer recommendations regarding what test.
- Repetitive in some areas – move quicker in general discussions.
- No real answers or recommendations.
- Everything was very worthwhile.
- I would like more resources e.g. sheet with suggested careers based on DAT results etc. samples of the various tests would also be useful.
- Think all learning is beneficial.
- N/A.
- N/A.
- Too much group work. A lot of 'fillers'.
- Distance from N. Inishowen to Sligo in dreadful weather/roads.
- Felt nothing. Day very well organised and structured and informative. Well presented.
- All ok.
- The practical/practice feedback sessions were difficult to do – maybe needed more time. Any value in sending this hand-out in advance of the workshop and get participants to try one in advance?
- For me personally it was the fact that I have been uncomfortable with our 'in school' procedures.
- Too much time on memory session – school policy to test a group or not can be drawn up by g/counsellor and other school staff.

## What have you learned from this workshop?

- A greater (clearer) understanding of scores and their interpretation.
- Best practice regarding communication strategies and feedback regarding role-plays.
- More of an awareness of the importance of feedback.
- Professionalism around testing administration and feedback.
- The informed consent – not currently part of my practice in school.
- An affirmation of what's being done, albeit a long way from last practice.
- Importance of feedback to relevant people regarding feedback. Importance of seeing tests as only a snapshot.
- To minimise the importance of the test.
- Importance of informed consent.
- How to feedback more effectively. The advantage of using raw scores for feedback instead of percentiles.
- How to provide feedback to clients.
- Value of other scores.
- Approaches to giving back feedback. Using raw scores as opposed to percentiles. Time to be given to giving feedback.
- Gave a great overall view categorising tests and use purposes.
- That up-skilling in visiting is vital in the role of guidance counsellor.
- How to give feedback effectively and appropriately. The value of raw scores as opposed to percentiles.
- How to interpret scores from different tests. This sheet will be an invaluable resource going forward.
- Importance of how we present the value of these tests. To subject parents and board of management.
- Reason of interpreting scores/ data. Giving feedback.
- To be able to give feedback more thoroughly and affirming.
- Effective feedback.
- Policy making on data protection. The importance of individual feedback.
- Psychometric tests are not the most important aspect of guidance counselling. That the use of information obtained from aptitude tests is more important than choice of aptitude tests.

- How to give feedback in relation to psychometric testing. Importance or non-importance of testing. The use of raw scores.
- Need to look at our testing policy: If we have one!
- A good deal - have some new ideas to try out for testing.
- Loads!! Policy importance. Function or purpose of testing in first place.
- I have learned a lot around the practice of testing and creating a policy.
- Huge amount. Importance of knowing the test, what they do + not do. Importance of explanation + feedback to students.
- A lot of thought provoking discussion especially re policy. Very helpful.
- Test Policy – need for one & template. Interesting topics.
- A lot of information about tests, policies, communication around tests with all stakeholders.
- The need for a school policy on assessment + data. How to best feedback results from testing.
- Testing policy. Feedback Interview format. Data. General understanding of testing.
- A lot of new info on administering + giving feedback on test instruments.
- Giving effective feedback to individual students.
- Am now looking at testing in a different way for e.g. never focused on raw scores and attempted Q before.
- That I will not post results - I need time to give feedback if others want the tests done. NB: Attainment vs. ability.
- Tests used in other schools.
- How to give ethical feedback to students.
- Value of focusing on raw scores and questions attempted rather than on stats and percentiles.
- Made me focus on why we test in the school.
- How to reframe/redesign my approach and the school's approach to feedback and testing.
- The importance and usefulness of raw scores – what's happening with ERC attainment tests.
- Importance of feedback, communication, consent.
- Developing a policy for our practice.
- To question more what is actually happening. WHY TEST?
- The importance of feedback.

- Best practice. Importance of feedback. Why test? Interpretation – much improved understanding. Using the raw score and the average raw score 30-70 most fall. As put of feedback.
- Usefulness of raw scores when giving feedback fact that I need to get more information on understanding the tests for myself.
- A lot! Difference between aptitude and attainment – how to communicate effectively around testing, how to read a test appropriately and focus on raw scores at and attempts! To question testing and always be able to give a valid and professional reason for doing so.
- I came here wishing to see best practice/alternative methods of testing in different environments.
- Best information on feedback results of testing especially using the raw scores and not necessarily letting them with the numerical stats.
- Availability of other tests that I wasn't familiar with. Advantages/disadvantages of testing and/or specific test.
- Importance of having a testing admin policy, using test scores within their limitations, learned about other tests i.e. Rothwell-Miller, Eirquest. Providing feedback to weaker students.
- That I need to write a policy re: testing. The importance of using other information as well as test scores.
- Use of raw scores along with average raw scores very useful in particular for students who have low scores.
- Up to date info re data protection, practice in other schools.
- Clarification about policy, data protection and ownership of test results (the need to share information with test taker).
- How to communicate results more effectively.
- Best practice, what tests to administer, how to give feedback.
- So so much, very practical and relevant.
- Different rationale for testing, feedback, data protection.
- Use of raw scores in feedback. CAT 4 – what's in it.
- That it is important to give positive feedback, use raw scores in necessary.
- How to frame poorer scores in a more positive way. Questioning... 'Why test' – what we use them for.

- There is no one-size-fits-all.
- M.B. place more emphasis and value on other score measures (e.g. raw scores).
- Good review of CAT4. Also learned that DATS will not be continued next year and DATS for guidance is very expensive.
- To make more use of raw scores when giving feedback. Try to give more time to giving feedback.
- More informed regarding the other tests I don't use and on feedback checklist.
- Looking at raw scores when giving feedback.
- Refresher on Ability and Attainment tests and networking.
- Benefits/disadvantages of different tests.
- More factual, less group work.
- More additional info on best practice
- Best practice when testing, regarding need to develop a clear policy on testing.
- Sharing info. Will have discussion with school management about should I be testing – time constraints.
- To think why am I testing?
- A lot of information tests – positive and negative. Many questions as to value of tests.
- Love the table of results – very close to compare different types of scores.
- Think about how feedback results, think about need for testing.
- Sharing of ideas re the altering work being done. Revisiting a lot of topics.
- Loved the sheets on the aptitude profile interpretation tool – great help.
- I learned more about giving feedback; interpreting test results.
- Reach + use STEN and SAS instead of percentile.
- I learned about reflecting on the whole area of testing.
- Give feedback using questions attempted. Use STEN/Stanines rather than percentiles.
- A lot of tips for feedback and data protection. Simplifying the process of feedback and the importance of preparing students beforehand. Also tests used by other guidance counsellors.
- More information on best practice, how to give feedback, how to interpret scores.
- Importance of the Q why test? And that we are not testing because it's done in all schools we need to have our own reasons.
- That I need to re-appraise a number of things within my current practice.

- Skills and testing/feedback, networking, ethics/data protection.
- Learnt about different ways of giving feedback, learnt about new tests/materials I can use.
- A lot: what I am doing is good but I know how to improve now with the tips and ideas from others.
- How to give feedback, the advantages and disadvantages of different tests.
- How to improve my testing practice especially feedback to students.
- How to give feedback.
- More about data protection and ethics re: testing. Also good solid advice on giving
- Best practice for testing, refresher on what works well when giving feedback.
- Best fit does not equal best practice necessarily always!
- So much! I got ideas of practice from colleagues but also very specific information about feedback from the presenters.
- Working on testing of all the aspects – especially communication and feedback.
- Variety of tests available. Difficulties around percentiles and alternative options e.g. raw scores and Stens. Idea of best practice and best fit – will use this to review policy in psychometric testing.
- I did not appreciate the significance of the cluster around average. Reliance on percentiles can be quite misleading.
- Raw scores for feedback.
- Opinions, learning from others.
- How to give feedback gently to test results and new ways of expressing it.
- That 'best practice' is essential when administering tests and giving feedback.
- The aims/functions/successes of different tests.
- Good practice.
- I'm surprised at G.C.s aren't having issues with testing and how tests results. Raised issue – why have we stopped testing. No – best practice, maybe if can still test and modify feedback. Stens.
- Raw scores are of good use for explaining results to lower achievers.
- Others have very different issues. Need to go back to my school and tell colleagues why we test v. how we feedback.
- Yes.



- Most of us have issues with the provision of feedback. Helpful providing feedback on how to deliver results.
- Questioned the purpose of DATS.
- Need to reassess out testing policy and the reasons why we are testing.
- More holistic way of reporting back low aptitude results.
- It was very re-assuring.
- Ability testing is a speed of processing test.
- Re-assess testing policy – re defining and clarification for best practice to happen
- I found the benefit of other people’s experience really useful. I really liked the concept of using raw scores as opposed to percentiles.
- Use booklet for feedback. Set context better. Mind myself. I need to go back and talk to management about our policy and purpose and clarify. Recommend Stens.
- The importance of feedback and the use of Stens in particular.
- More than one way to give feedback using for e.g. raw scores rather than percentiles.
- Comparison of different tests, feedback process/methods, data management.
- I need to question why I used tests and weigh up pros and cons and not do something for the sake of it.
- Clarity on standard scores, raw scores etc. informed on standardised attainment tests.
- The fact that there is conflict between SEN dept., guidance dept. regarding testing – guidelines needed.
- Clarified attain/ability and how little we know on SIGMA WRAP NERT MALT.
- How to approach feedback in more meaningful way.
- New perspective on testing. Regarding the evaluation of language around testing. More confident around feedback.
- More detailed feedback on testing. Need to talk to management and begin policies on DATA.
- Good approach to giving back feedback to students whose DAT results are low.
- Better way to give feedback, different brands.
- Feedback and policy.
- Whole new approach to feedback – CAT 4 G.
- Suggestions around giving feedback to students. Think about tests I can do with my students and the usefulness of such tests.

- About different tests and how to provide constructive feedback.
- Excellent information on scoring, feedback, policy, ethics and best practice.
- Refresher on what terminology means i.e. sten, stanines.
- How to relay information to students in relation to exams.
- Excellent responses scripts to use in feedback.
- The importance of 1:1 when giving feedback to students regarding results of psychometrics. More time needed on this. Trying to empower students in the process.
- The importance of managing expectations – the purpose of testing – informed consent. Importance of school having a testing policy.
- The need to check the testing policy in each school I substitute in.
- Some good tips. This workshop was created based on what NCGE felt would work best..... sharing stories very beneficial.
- It's okay not to test, look at policy if data storage in school etc.
- To clear the cobwebs and look at the purpose of the test. Difference between screening and vocational guidance.
- That it is OK not to test/need to review policy on testing.
- Set pre-expectations with st.
- Feedback element was most useful.
- Other tests used in schools, need for testing policy and informed consent for guidance.
- School policy needs to be in place for testing/guidance. How to give feedback to weak students.
- Very little.
- Guidelines re: school policy. How to deliver feedback – useful.
- Easier to give feedback.
- To be firmer regarding tasks. To opt out of sections of tests if you want.
- Tips on feedback, policy formation, aptitude profile interpretation tool.
- I got a better insight in to the use of feedback.
- Profile feedback – new language. Data protection – need of policy in school.
- Ok not to test, be clear of purpose of test. Ensure informed consent.
- When to test – rationale/reason for doing so. How to deliver feedback.
- Reaffirmed the positives of one to one interviewing. Template for this interview around subject choice/reporting on test results.

- I feel that I will be much more confident in relation to giving feedback re: test results.
- Giving effective feedback. Important to focus on strengths and minimise the harm. Framework for giving feedback very important.
- Learned the value of using raw scores in feedback.
- That it is ok to test and ok not to test – you just need to be clear in your reasons for why?
- That there's a way to feedback results without doing harm to students, but not easy to master.
- Fundamentally that it is ok to question why we test, how we test, and the score by which we report back to our clients.
- Aptitude profiler. Most useful thing. Role-play.
- That testing is 'best' done in classroom situation, even if it takes 4/5
- Need to get informed consent from parents and to draw up policy. Also I thought about the need / or not for testing all.
- The importance of policy formation who, when, what etc – the legislation around testing.
- 1. Data Protection. 2. Policy re Testing.
- That other guidance counselors have the same fears as myself.
- Importance of assessment policies. Better ways of results feedback.
- Policy, policy, policy.
- How to report back to my students in relation to test results.

## Appendix II: Survey Findings

## Q1 When and where did you participate in the CPD in psychometric testing?

Answered: 19 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	Dublin, 2015	5/16/2016 10:39 AM
2	cork branch organised CPD for Level A and Level B accredited by the BPS which I completed. the last one was about 5 years ago	5/16/2016 10:13 AM
3	Limerick	5/16/2016 9:33 AM
4	Cork Academic year 2014/2015	5/16/2016 9:24 AM
5	PCI offices May 2015	5/13/2016 10:45 AM
6	Athlone Centre in 4th, December	5/13/2016 9:52 AM
7	December 2014 Co.Cork	5/12/2016 5:15 PM
8	2015. IPS head office.	5/12/2016 2:28 PM
9	Cork education Centre	5/12/2016 12:05 PM
10	Athlone Education Centre Co Westmeath. Friday 4th December 2015	5/12/2016 10:26 AM
11	NCGE Parnell St in Late Jan	5/12/2016 10:26 AM
12	2015	5/12/2016 9:50 AM
13	Academic year 2014-2015	5/12/2016 9:16 AM
14	Cork 2015	5/12/2016 1:05 AM
15	Cork Education centre 2015	5/11/2016 9:27 PM
16	aprox 4 years ago	5/11/2016 8:19 PM
17	I attended a workshop in galway last year and I also attended a day long refresher course hosted by our IGC branch	5/11/2016 7:22 PM
18	sligo	5/11/2016 7:07 PM
19	Kilkenny education centre last april	5/11/2016 6:02 PM

## Q2 What were your expectations of the CPD programme? Were these met? If yes, how? If no, why not?

Answered: 19 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	upskill and refresher on how to use tests/what different tests were used for	5/16/2016 10:39 AM
2	I wanted to make sure I complied with any regulations and that I was professionally competent to administer tests in school. So it achieved that.	5/16/2016 10:13 AM
3	Peer-mentoring and shared practical experiences; My expectations were met because I was able to listen to others and contribute to group discussions/exchange of ideas	5/16/2016 9:33 AM
4	I expected to discuss the different options for psychometric testing and how they would be useful in our schools. Yes this was met however I would have liked more time to discuss the actual tests as this is what we use and if we know what we want to measure but don't know how to measure it, it is a difficulty.	5/16/2016 9:24 AM
5	I hoped to gain a better understanding of Stanine, Sten etc. These were covered but I would have liked more practical examples e.g. these are X results and this is what they tell us	5/13/2016 10:45 AM
6	I was hoping to update my skills in evaluating the reports.	5/13/2016 9:52 AM
7	I thought we were going to be told what the best tests to use are and when to use them-A plan for the school on psychometrics	5/12/2016 5:15 PM
8	Would have expected more on tests available and more shared experiences	5/12/2016 2:28 PM
9	Yes it was a very comprehensive and professional course.	5/12/2016 12:05 PM
10	To learn more about delivering results to students. I felt more time could have been spent on this.	5/12/2016 10:26 AM
11	Yes i felt fully briefed on my objectives of going to the CPD	5/12/2016 10:26 AM
12	more awareness of testing tools available, how other schools approach testing, feedback on usefulness of testing, current research and academic feedback on testing in secondary school sector... Yes these expectations were met. Great facilitation on the day - provided overall perspective on testing i needed.' Open mike' or questions and answers session allowed for sharing of information between guidance professionals	5/12/2016 9:50 AM
13	New ideas re best practice. New ideas re the weaker student most especially.	5/12/2016 9:16 AM
14	Interpretation, sharing best practice, revision on how to apply. Expectations were met, in particular sharing of best practice	5/12/2016 1:05 AM
15	I wanted to renew my knowledge on analysing psychometric tests. Especially around the reporting and delivery. Wanted to see what other schools were doing in terms of best practice	5/11/2016 9:27 PM
16	hoped that my guidance planning skills would improve	5/11/2016 8:19 PM
17	The one in Galway run by Ncge was not at all what I expected as it only dealt with giving feedback etc but the one hosted by our branch was very good and informative.	5/11/2016 7:22 PM
18	I had concerns about testing and in fact like a number of my colleagues, I stopped testing two years ago. I found it extremely difficult to give results to those whose scores were very low.	5/11/2016 7:07 PM
19	I thought it was about different types of tests but it was more about policies and uses and sharing experiences which was great	5/11/2016 6:02 PM

### Q3 What did you learn from the CPD?

Answered: 19 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	feedback tips helpful also, didn't matter so much what test you were using, was more about the feedback and presentation of results to students	5/16/2016 10:39 AM
2	the ethics issue of doing testing but not giving back results to individuals within a reasonable time. we stopped administering the DATs as a direct result.	5/16/2016 10:13 AM
3	I learnt about different ways different schools make use of Testing; popular test instrument; research on Data protection and best practice	5/16/2016 9:33 AM
4	I learned the advantages and disadvantages of psychometric testing. Also how this can be transferred to my work in school	5/16/2016 9:24 AM
5	A little more about Stanine, Stens etc and also the sharing of best practice was very useful	5/13/2016 10:45 AM
6	I learned form other teachers experience	5/13/2016 9:52 AM
7	I learned they all do a pretty similar job. It's okay not to give students back percentiles-ranking is okay	5/12/2016 5:15 PM
8	Not a lot new.	5/12/2016 2:28 PM
9	I'm not sure I learned anything new but I felt much more confident that I was using Psychometric tests in a correct manner.	5/12/2016 12:05 PM
10	The relevance of testing and also I learned a lot from others experiences.	5/12/2016 10:26 AM
11	A lot about testing Legal information Data Protection Storage and feedback on testing	5/12/2016 10:26 AM
12	That I wasn't alone in my questions and concerns re testing...	5/12/2016 9:50 AM
13	The cost of our testing was way above other schools- we use COA. We have recently changed to CAT 4 levels E and G. this will help with tracking and targeting students.	5/12/2016 9:16 AM
14	that practice differ and that many schools administer test but do not share results with students. No research on correlation of dats with performance	5/12/2016 1:05 AM
15	Reporting on psychometric tests. What tests schools are using Best practice around delivery tests in school	5/11/2016 9:27 PM
16	my evidence based practice was greatly improved	5/11/2016 8:19 PM
17	I had a complete refresher course on Level A psychometric testing	5/11/2016 7:22 PM
18	That it's ok not to test if only testing because I felt that I should test as many Guidance Counsellors test. If I were to test again I am more confident about giving poor results to students from observing the role play activity.	5/11/2016 7:07 PM
19	Dont administer tests if you cant give one to one feedback. Results are valid for 18 months. Look at raw scores as well as percentiles	5/11/2016 6:02 PM

**Q4 How has this learning informed and developed your practice or that of the school's? You may wish to use the headings below when responding.**

Answered: 18 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses
Psychometric test administration	94.44% 17
School policy and data protection considerations	88.89% 16
Test scoring and presentation of test scores to students	100.00% 18
Provision of feedback to students	100.00% 18
Communication strategy	72.22% 13
Other	11.11% 2

#	Psychometric test administration	Date
1	more at ease	5/16/2016 10:39 AM
2	not an issue	5/16/2016 10:13 AM
3	From the training, I learnt that it is not best practice for the school to ask any teacher/SNA to administer Testing, it is in the remit of the guidance counsellor	5/16/2016 9:33 AM
4	It was good to be reminded of best practice	5/13/2016 10:45 AM
5	Very Little. In this school there is no regard taken of having any qualifications to do testing.	5/13/2016 9:52 AM
6	I had been avoiding DATs because of effect of poor results on self esteem	5/12/2016 5:15 PM
7	No change	5/12/2016 2:28 PM
8	alot more confident in approaching testing	5/12/2016 10:26 AM
9	Competent	5/12/2016 10:26 AM
10	I don't have full control over this , my colleague is responsible and i'm delighted to see after the workshop he is now more cogniscent of the need to follow outlined procedures of test administration	5/12/2016 9:50 AM
11	New testing introduced for first years this year and will be introduced for 5th years next year.	5/12/2016 9:16 AM
12	no change in administration	5/12/2016 1:05 AM
13	I have updated our Cats to level 4 now	5/11/2016 9:27 PM
14	more organised as a result my students benefit to a greater degree	5/11/2016 8:19 PM
15	DATs and other forms of testing	5/11/2016 7:22 PM
16	We no longer administer DATS	5/11/2016 7:07 PM
17	yes	5/11/2016 6:02 PM

#	School policy and data protection considerations	Date
1	need to be careful with results and storing	5/16/2016 10:39 AM
2	an issue that has yet to be discussed and resolved	5/16/2016 10:13 AM
3	I recommended to the school to develop/review policy around Testing	5/16/2016 9:33 AM
4	when and what tests to use has changed	5/16/2016 9:24 AM
5	This has proved useful when speaking at a staff meeting when there was a drive on to share students CAT & Dats results with all members of staff	5/13/2016 10:45 AM
6	I use my own discretion in data protection and keep my results locked away.	5/13/2016 9:52 AM
7	No change	5/12/2016 2:28 PM
8	more aware of ploicy in the school	5/12/2016 10:26 AM

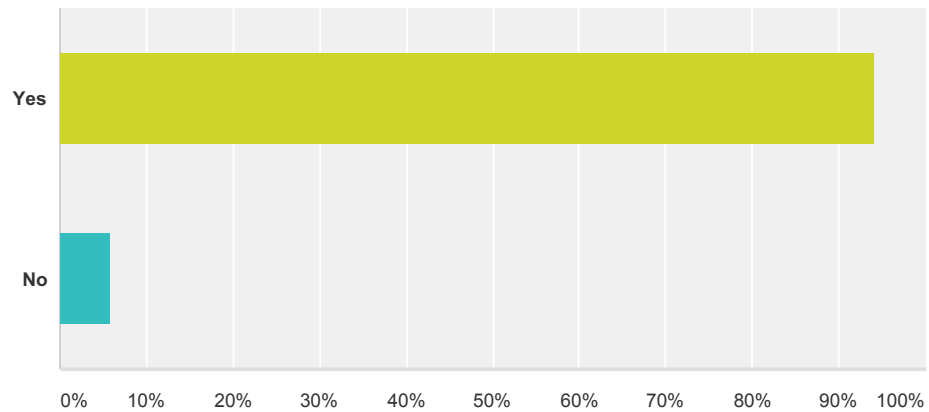


9	Updated policy	5/12/2016 10:26 AM
10	This is something I have become more aware of in terms of the potential pitfalls and	5/12/2016 9:50 AM
11	Reviewed and updated our data protection policies.	5/12/2016 9:16 AM
12	no change in policy	5/12/2016 1:05 AM
13	Learnt a great deal around data protection and reporting results. How to deliver information to parents on results	5/11/2016 9:27 PM
14	have a greater knowledge of same	5/11/2016 8:19 PM
15	It covered all protection issues	5/11/2016 7:22 PM
16	In Whole School Guidance Plan I have only included the RACE TESTING administered by the Learning Support Coordinator and the confidentiality of the results.	5/11/2016 7:07 PM
<b>#</b>	<b>Test scoring and presentation of test scores to students</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	need to be presented in a way students will understand	5/16/2016 10:39 AM
2	not an issue	5/16/2016 10:13 AM
3	Reporting or giving Information about Test results to either students or parents should be conducted by the Guidance counsellor because there are issues to be considered and the GC is well aware of these concerns	5/16/2016 9:33 AM
4	give the actual results to students	5/16/2016 9:24 AM
5	Good to have a spreadsheet to help explain	5/13/2016 10:45 AM
6	We are introducing Psychometric testing to incoming first years for the first time.	5/13/2016 9:52 AM
7	Re-introduced DAT's for guidance	5/12/2016 5:15 PM
8	Kept existing practice	5/12/2016 2:28 PM
9	would like more training on this	5/12/2016 10:26 AM
10	Competent	5/12/2016 10:26 AM
11	Again the workshop affirmed the need to take a professional and student centred approach	5/12/2016 9:50 AM
12	Have to take same approach due to lack of guidance hours. Done on a class basis with individual meetings with any students who request extra input.	5/12/2016 9:16 AM
13	will continue to provide detailed report to parents in 1-1 setting	5/12/2016 1:05 AM
14	I have changed my wording on reports from what I learnt at course	5/11/2016 9:27 PM
15	n/a	5/11/2016 8:19 PM
16	It dealt with this in detail and gave good guidelines	5/11/2016 7:22 PM
17	No longer	5/11/2016 7:07 PM
18	yes	5/11/2016 6:02 PM
<b>#</b>	<b>Provision of feedback to students</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	needs to be clear, positive focused and carefully presented	5/16/2016 10:39 AM
2	time issues as we are back in the classroom	5/16/2016 10:13 AM
3	Provision of feedback to students is expected to be empathetic.	5/16/2016 9:33 AM
4	individual feedback	5/16/2016 9:24 AM
5	Useful to be reminded of best practice here	5/13/2016 10:45 AM
6	I need to learn more on how to do it.	5/13/2016 9:52 AM
7	Returned in ranked order	5/12/2016 5:15 PM
8	Confident our feedback is effective	5/12/2016 2:28 PM
9	more practice needed on this	5/12/2016 10:26 AM
10	Competent	5/12/2016 10:26 AM
11	The constraints of time available to SGC really makes this difficult to do as professionally as I'd like	5/12/2016 9:50 AM
12	As above	5/12/2016 9:16 AM
13	will continue to provide report, explanation to parents and students	5/12/2016 1:05 AM
14	I do one to one feedbacks with students and combine results with other tests they have done	5/11/2016 9:27 PM

15	improved my practice	5/11/2016 8:19 PM
16	As above	5/11/2016 7:22 PM
17	No longer	5/11/2016 7:07 PM
18	yes	5/11/2016 6:02 PM
<b>#</b>	<b>Communication strategy</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	again, needs to be clear and parents need to be informed in a way they will be able to understand and interpret the results	5/16/2016 10:39 AM
2	is an issue that has not been agreed upon	5/16/2016 10:13 AM
3	Communicating Test scores in terms of strengths and areas that need improvement as opposed to weaknesses	5/16/2016 9:33 AM
4	result plus a handout explaining the results	5/16/2016 9:24 AM
5	Useful to be reminded of best practice here	5/13/2016 10:45 AM
6	individual brief meeting with students to return results	5/12/2016 5:15 PM
7	improved my skills in this area	5/12/2016 10:26 AM
8	Competent	5/12/2016 10:26 AM
9	This heading is confusing!!	5/12/2016 9:50 AM
10	Group context - this has always been done	5/12/2016 9:16 AM
11	Report looks at strengths and wording is positive	5/11/2016 9:27 PM
12	more confident with the uses of virtual learning	5/11/2016 8:19 PM
13	No longer	5/11/2016 7:07 PM
<b>#</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	cost factors and the introduction of online testing	5/16/2016 10:13 AM
2	DATS is outdated, change is needed	5/12/2016 1:05 AM

## Q5 Would you recommend this CPD programme to other guidance counsellors?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	94.12%	16
No	5.88%	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>17</b>

#	Please explain your answer.	Date
1	good to upskill and provides opportunity for reflection on current practice	5/16/2016 10:39 AM
2	you need to stay up to date. working on your own a lot you can begin to develop a middle ground which is not wise. with current constraints it makes testing in school more challenging.	5/16/2016 10:13 AM
3	I feel the CPD is good practice and it can help practitioners exchange ideas and knowledge in translating theory to practice.	5/16/2016 9:33 AM
4	I felt it was beneficial to hear from other people. From this I was able to assess my own reasons for psychometric testing	5/16/2016 9:24 AM
5	It was useful but as I said above I would like to see a more example based approach. It was also a very useful networking opportunity with other Guidance Counsellors .	5/13/2016 10:45 AM
6	Yes	5/13/2016 9:52 AM
7	While I wanted it to be more prescriptive-it was still useful	5/12/2016 5:15 PM
8	Didn't learn a lot	5/12/2016 2:28 PM
9	It is a wonderful opportunity to get together to share experiences and worries. people who are using the testing method each year and can offer supports is a great resource to have. also the facilitators were excellent in delivering the workshop.	5/12/2016 10:26 AM
10	feel more able to administer and execute testing fully	5/12/2016 10:26 AM
11	Yes	5/12/2016 9:50 AM
12	Very clear. Good opportunity to see what was operating in other schools and get ideas from them. Well facilitated.	5/12/2016 9:16 AM
13	good opportunity to share experience and to benchmark own practice. I was surprised that results are not provided by all schools to parents	5/12/2016 1:05 AM
14	I learnt a lot on the day and it is good to refresh your knowledge on testing.	5/11/2016 9:27 PM
15	There was much to be gained by participating, my skills needed refreshing and updating	5/11/2016 8:19 PM
16	I would recommend the refresher course as it's easy to forget and form habits etc over the years. It's good to refresh and up skill from time to time.	5/11/2016 7:22 PM
17	I don't feel worried about not testing anymore as Stated at CPD it's not necessary unless I have a valid reason to test.	5/11/2016 7:07 PM



## Q6 Are there any other comments you would like to make?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 7

#	Responses	Date
1	thanks for the opportunity	5/16/2016 10:39 AM
2	we need access to training without having to pay large sums of money in a range of new tests.	5/16/2016 10:13 AM
3	No	5/16/2016 9:33 AM
4	I would encourage the NCGE to put on more CPD specifically aimed at G.C. s . Thank you	5/13/2016 10:45 AM
5	I think it should be offered as an In-service to all Guidance Counsellors through the branches.	5/13/2016 9:52 AM
6	Would like more on the variety of tests available to us and for what. More exposure required.	5/12/2016 2:28 PM
7	No	5/12/2016 9:50 AM
8	Thanks to all involved in it's organisation.	5/12/2016 9:16 AM
9	It would be great if some specific research was completed on why/how psy test are used in schools and if the specific scores correlate in any way to specific subject performance at exams	5/12/2016 1:05 AM
10	No thanks	5/11/2016 7:22 PM
11	We now spend more time on interest inventories and skill identifying programmes which are more useful in career choices and more affirming of my students.	5/11/2016 7:07 PM
12	No	5/11/2016 6:02 PM