



National Centre for Guidance in Education

Lárionad Náisiúnta um Threoir san Oideachas

# NCGE *news*

Summer 2012 / Issue 37

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Research On  
The Practice  
Of Counselling  
By Guidance  
Counsellors In  
Post Primary  
Schools

Helping Adult  
Learners  
Achieve

Youth  
Information  
– A Key Link in  
a Chain of  
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Guidance and  
learning in the  
virtual world

The cover illustration features a stylized tree with a brown trunk and branches, set against a light blue sky with two white clouds. The tree's canopy is composed of a dense pattern of green dots, forming a circular shape. The ground is a solid green horizontal band at the bottom.

Confidence  
through Evidence

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# Director's Note



**Welcome to the Summer Edition of NCGE News. The theme of this issue is Confidence through Evidence which provides an opportunity to look at how data, evidence and research on practice can influence policy and inform the ongoing development and provision of quality guidance.**

All recognised schools and centres for education in Ireland, are regulated by the Education Act, 1998. Pertaining to the function of a school in relation to guidance in education, Section 9 of the Education Act states that *'A recognised school shall provide education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs and, ... it shall use its available resources to—*

*(c) ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices.*

Looking to European policy, the EU Council 2008 Resolution on *Better Integrating Lifelong Guidance into Lifelong Learning Strategies* recommends that EU member states support the integration of lifelong guidance into lifelong learning and that a core work of guidance is the development of career management skills.

While these policies provide direction in the changing landscape, they can raise questions for us too. For instance, how do we know that, what we as guidance providers are providing

- (a) is what the client/student needs,
- (b) is of benefit to them,
- (c) is guidance?

Another question raised, is how can we differentiate between the input of one-to-one guidance as opposed to group guidance?

Recent government decisions within the overall budgetary strategy, has altered the provision of resources for guidance to schools. Post primary schools and Colleges of Further Education will, from September 2012, have the autonomy to manage the guidance provision within their school. Whole school guidance programme planning, which has been a policy of the DES for several years, supports clarification of the guidance provision in the school or college and the roles and responsibilities of all those involved.

So, what do we mean by confidence through evidence? It is no longer the case that a qualification for a role is enough of a guarantee of quality. However *it is a vital starting point*. We must be clear on what guidance is. Understanding the developmental theories and pedagogical approaches behind the guidance provision in one-to-one and group sessions is key to quality provision. Guidance provision is not just a chat with a student/client. We must be clear on how we can document and measure the guidance delivered. Ensuring the quality of the guidance provision requires data and evidence with a focus on the supports to, provision of and outcomes of guidance. Providing information leaflets on courses available is not enough to support the evaluation of

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/104236.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/104236.pdf)



skills and interests and the development of career decision making, it is only one element of guidance provision. Support of management for provision of impartial information, on-going attendance at essential continuing professional development and guidance counselling supervision, and a record of these activities is essential.

Recently, NCGE published Research on the Practice of Counselling by Guidance Counsellors in Post Primary Schools to provide relevant stakeholders with information on the nature, scope and context of counselling practice by guidance counsellors in schools. The research findings and recommendations provide stakeholders with information on the nature of counselling within the guidance programme. These findings can contribute to and encourage further dialogue on policy, delivery, supports and training and continuing professional development in this area.

Working with a guidance client or group session, good practice would require that guidance counsellors confidentially record the assessments completed, the interests identified and the issues arising of a personal counselling nature. This informs the preparation of class/group work, the next one-to-one session, the information required by the student/client. In essence, it informs provision.

The gathering of information from representatives of 31 countries at the sixth International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy held in 2011 highlights the changing role of guidance provision in 21st century. The communiqué from the symposium represents a summary of the collective conclusions of those present at the event and is addressed primarily to policy-makers. The communiqué highlights *'A strong research and evidence base is also an essential underpinning for good practice in career development delivery'*. Data gathered in guidance can have various purposes including informing service delivery, strategic

planning and service improvement. This same gathering of data can support and develop quality of guidance interventions, and can be used to inform policy makers and funders. It allows for strategic planning for changes when necessary. In this issue of NCGE News we have examples of how career guidance services in other jurisdictions are looking at how to measure the impact and effectiveness of guidance, and how career guidance services can adjust and develop programmes specifically targeted to the needs of clients based on information available, sometimes in emergency situations (such as the New Zealand earth quake). We highlight some recent research which can inform future practice and developments.

Gathering data on guidance provision requires strategic planning from policy makers to review existing accountability frameworks as well as 'buy-in' from practitioners. Education training focuses on reflective practice. While the guidance community within the education sector is preparing for potential changes to provision and service delivery, it may be time for us all to take stock and use this opportunity to shape the future of guidance to include the gathering of evidence as an automatic element of service.

We need to step back and start to see the wood from the trees. Producing evidence in guidance, measuring inputs, outcomes, and provision will not work if it remains a top-down approach. By attaining data on guidance we are offered a chance to clarify the role of guidance and the benefits of guidance both to the person and to our wider society.

Gathering evidence provides an opportunity for guidance practitioners to document their commitment and dedication to provision of appropriate, quality guidance to students and clients and to highlight this nationally.

***Is mise le meas***

***Jennifer McKenzie***

***Director***

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.iccdpp.org/Portals/1/Documents/Symposia/IS2011/IS2011%20Communique.pdf>



## General

# Leading by Example - Guidance Exchange in Limerick City

**Academia – European Exchange of Guidance Counsellors is funded by Leonardo da Vinci Mobility as part of the Lifelong Learning Programme and organised by the National Centre for Guidance in Education. Celebrating twenty years of the exchange this year, more than a hundred Irish guidance counsellors have participated in the week long exchanges in the last decade. The impact for those who have visited guidance services all over Europe has been the exchange of best practice, the introduction of new know-how and a chance to gain insights into other EU guidance and education systems. It is also a chance to make new friends, to see new places and return to the workplace with increased motivation and ambition. Similarly, more than a hundred guidance practitioners have visited Ireland over the years to witness how guidance operates ‘on the ground’ and spent their time visiting schools, colleges and adult educational guidance services within the Greater Dublin area. This year, NCGE working closely with the Limerick City Adult Guidance Partnership (LCAGP) hosted the incoming group of 12 European Guidance Counsellors on a programme looking at adult guidance provision in the city.**

In the introductory session Geraldine Lambert outlined to the European guests the mission and agreed aims of the LCGAP which is to promote an understanding of adult guidance while also promoting an integrated approach to its provision in the Limerick area. Members of the Partnership include the City of Limerick VEC Adult Guidance Service, Employment Services, Department of Social Protection, PAUL Partnership, Local Employment Service, University of Limerick Co-operative

Education and Careers Division, Limerick Institute of Technology Careers Service, and the Downtown Centre Guidance Service. Over the course of the next four days, the visitors from Spain, Finland, Estonia, France and Luxembourg would have the opportunity to visit many of these organisations to learn more about the specific adult guidance taking place.



*Participants discussing what adult guidance means to them.*



*Geraldine Lambert, LCAGP.*





*Academia participants 2012*



*Mary Hamilton, Limerick Adult Education Service, and Johanna Backman, Finland*



*Academia participants with Lorraine O' Donohue, Adult Education Information and Guidance Service, Limerick*



*Paul Taylor, LES pictured with Academia 2012 participants.*

The group were welcomed to the University of Limerick by Patsy Ryan, Careers Advisor for Mature Students and met with staff from the Co-Operative Education and Careers Division. It was at this session, the group began to get a sense of the high rate of unemployment that exists in the Limerick region. The group would hear of the impact of the loss of 1900 jobs in the Dell factory closure two years previous. Against this backdrop the group heard of the University's Mature Access programme, visited the Careers Resource area and had the opportunity to meet with mature student Frank Daly who gave a first-hand account of his experience of returning to education. The group met with researcher Dr

Jennifer Liston who gave a presentation on her doctoral research on the professional practice of graduates from the Grad Dip in Guidance and Counselling. They met with Dr Lucy Hearne who presented on her current research study entitled *'The Resilient Adult Guidance Practitioner'*. The ideas around 'High-Touch Work' led to a sharing of their collective experience in a discussion held by the group later that day. The group were delighted to attend a lunchtime concert of traditional Irish dance and music performed by students from UL and UCC in the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance (IWAMD).

General **Leading by Example - Guidance Exchange in Limerick City** *continued*



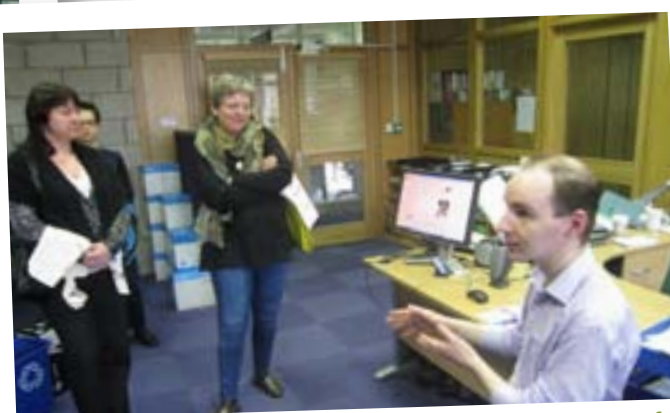
*Evi Štukert, Estonia and Deputy Mayor Diarmuid Scully*



*Breda Flynn, FÁS speaking with Academia participants*



*Academia participants with Catherine Carroll, Adult Education Information and Guidance Service, Limerick*



*Visiting the Careers Resource Centre, University of Limerick.*

Midweek for the group proved to be a very busy day as Paul Taylor, Julie Barkman and colleagues welcomed the visitors to the Limerick Local Employment Service. The services offered at this central office include job mediation, career guidance, information provision, access to an employer liaison officer and a jobs club. The rising unemployment situation in Limerick city was clearly evident as the number of new LES clients registered in 2011 was 2063 of which 560 were long term unemployed. During the morning's visit, the group met with Yvonne Lane of Paul Partnership who highlighted the importance of non formal and informal learning and outlined some of the key community based adult education programmes being fostered and developed by the Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN). The group visited one of the LES City Outreach Points in Moyross, to speak with staff about the types of cases and guidance needs being

encountered in this area and to hear about the work of the 'Regeneration Limerick' programme. The day continued with a visit to the Moyross Community Centre whose mission is to provide local based affordable community facilities and improve employment opportunities for residents of Moyross. The group saw the playground, the community garden, the training facility and had a tour of the creche, and to hear of the efforts to network with the local school and parents to make this the vibrant, well organised and lively resource on view. Paddy Flannery, the manager of the Centre welcomed the group to questions and answers and here he openly spoke of the challenges of those living in the area, the inspiration of local rugby hero Keith Earls as well as the success of the Centre's training activities including their eight week summer camp for local teenagers.



General **Leading by Example - Guidance Exchange in Limerick City** *continued*



*Hélène Sauvage, France with Deputy Mayor Diarmuid Scully*



*L to R – Emma Maher (Adult Education Information and Guidance Service, Limerick), Rhona McCormack (Downtown Centre), Deputy Mayor Diarmuid Scully, Jennifer McKenzie (NCGE) and Ursula Kearney (NCGE).*



*Academia participants visit Moyross Community Centre with Paddy Flannery.*



*Domingo Muñoz Sánchez, Spain with Deputy Mayor Diarmuid Scully*

Next the group had the opportunity to meet with Rhona McCormack at the Downtown Centre Guidance Service, a city centre location in which adults can seek information and guidance on progressing to third-level education and can attend information seminars and workshops to support them in making their decision about their third-level learning options. On this particular evening, the visitors were invited to sit in on an academic writing workshop for adult learners with tutor Laurence Cleary.

While the economic situation of the mid-west region and the 'regeneration' of Limerick were reference points during the week, the group would also encounter a sense of change and transition in the structure for provision of adult guidance. On Thursday, while visiting the Limerick City Adult Education Service, Mary Hamilton presented to the group on the Changing Further Education and Training Landscape in Ireland in 2012. She

explained to the group that 33 Vocational Education Committees would be rationalised into 16 New Local Education & Training Boards (LETBs). In turn, the FÁS Training Services and Adult and Further Education Services provided through VECs would be merged under the new entities. Some of the group shared that they were experiencing the same sense of change in their own countries and it highlighted the importance of networking more than ever. Returning to the holistic model of guidance with the client at the centre, the team at the Adult Educational Guidance Service led the visitors on a series of short workshops throughout the VEC building. Emma, Lorraine, Catherine, Siobhan and Donna shared with the group the online tools used by the Adult Educational Guidance Counsellors as well as seeing the classrooms, offices and information centre they work from. They also arranged an opportunity to meet and speak with students who were completing their Career Action Plans as well as providing evidence both written and recorded of



the impact that having access to adult guidance can have on an individual's life plan.

Later this same day, the group visited the FÁS training centre in Raheen and heard from Fiona Casey and Breda Flynn of the FÁS training programmes on offer and the methods used by the Employment Services Officers to 'hear the Jobseekers Story'. The group were shown round the FÁS workshops and classrooms which provided the visitors an opportunity to compare and contrast the facilities on offer for apprentices to those on offer in their own regions. The stops at the hairdressing salon, the electrician's workshop, the mechanics garage, the carpentry and welding workshops and the CAD computer rooms amongst others led to many questions and requests for information among the group.

This describes the major site visits of the week but in addition to these busy days, were workshops and demonstrations provided by NCGE on using digital technology in guidance provision such as the virtual learning environment of Second Life and the Adult Guidance video resources developed to date. The group presented to each other on their own places of work and structure for guidance in the regions they came from. When the working days drew to a close, this intrepid band of guidance practitioners visited Killaloe for a traditional homemade dinner in the home of a Guidance Counsellor, explored the historic landmarks of Limerick city and managed a whirlwind trip to the Cliffs of Moher and Doolin. The week drew to a close with the visitors drawing upon the similarities and differences they had encountered in the provision of guidance for adults in the Limerick area. Deputy Mayor Diarmuid Scully spoke to the group about how the city of Limerick has had to reinvent itself over the years and in a similar way people must do the same.

*"The job for life is gone. The work that is done by all the various members of the LCAGP is helping adults to realise that it doesn't matter what age you are, you can re-orientate your career, you can change direction and you can strike out for new things".*

Leaving the last word to the visitors, the feedback from the group included the following *"I was impressed by the warm welcome, it's very special for Ireland, so open and friendly with us and patient, and patient with the clients"; "From a professional point of view I was very impressed by the sharing of information, by the networking and the collaboration of the organisations we met. Everyone works hard but in harmony. In France we call this 'Zen-itude'.* Another participant explained that his ideas about Limerick were informed by Frank McCourts writing but after his Academia week what he found *"most important was that everyone was working very hard to change historic circumstances"*. The participants shared that they would be bringing back various ideas to their own places of work and as a group they had witnessed in Limerick *"that even if the economic situation is not easy, or the sky is grey, adults looking for guidance are met with a smile and a positive attitude"*.

NCGE would like to thank all those who helped to make the 2012 Limerick Academia visit such a success.

### Additional Information

If you are interested in participating or hosting Academia – European Exchange of Guidance Counsellors in 2013, please contact [ncgeinfo@ncge.ie](mailto:ncgeinfo@ncge.ie) or visit [www.ncge.ie](http://www.ncge.ie)

To view the types of exchanges on offer please visit <http://www.academia-europe.eu/index/>



## Primary

# Learning about the jobs people do - a child's view



The National Guidance Forum 2007 agreed a national lifelong guidance framework which outlines the knowledge, skills and competencies that guidance aims to develop among individuals at different times of their lives. The first stage of the framework is linked to the age group from 0 to 6 years and outlines the development of knowledge, skills and competencies in the family setting, in early childhood and an early introduction to 'career' development. By introducing methods for personal development and learning, *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* can encourage the development of these skills and an understanding of career and work from a very young age. In this article, we meet with the Senior Infants of Rathmicheal National School in Shankill, Co. Dublin and their teacher, Katie Fox. They demonstrate the benefits of the *Aistear* programme, which incorporates play to achieve its learning and development themes.



The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) developed Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework in partnership with the early childhood sector. Aistear is the curriculum framework for children from birth to six years in Ireland. It describes learning and development through the four interconnected themes of Well-being, Identity and Belonging, Communicating, and Exploring and Thinking. Four sets of guidelines, focusing on different aspects of pedagogy, describe how the teacher can support children's learning and development across these themes. The guidelines focus on:



- Building partnerships between parents and teachers/practitioners
- Learning and developing through interactions
- Learning and developing through play
- Supporting learning and development through assessment.



The guidelines describe good practice and use a number of learning experiences to show what this practice might look like. While these learning experiences usually focus on a particular age group of children and a particular type of setting, many of them can be adapted to suit other age groups and other settings. A set of guidelines entitled Thinking about my practice include questions which help the teacher to reflect on what he/she does and says to support children's learning and development.

There are many connections across the four sets of guidelines. For example, many of the learning experiences in an individual set can support practice in the other, including age appropriate learning about the world of work.

'I have been using the Aistear programme with my Senior Infants class since September. The Junior Infant teacher and I have found this programme excellent. It has been extremely beneficial to the

children's personal development. The children have had to learn to work as a team, compromise with others, listen to others, express opinions, practice sharing and turn-taking, consider other views and develop a sense of personal identity.

All the subjects we explore in the Aistear programme are part of the Primary School Curriculum. At the moment we are looking at the Identity and Belonging theme. In part of this programme, we focus on people who work in the local community and people who help us. The children learn lots about the jobs people do. Every month we have a guest speaker in to tell the class about the job they do. This speaker relates to some aspect of the topic that we are cover. So far we have had a pilot, a farmer, a marine biologist, a conservationist and a physiotherapist in to tell us about their jobs. The children really enjoy this and it encourages them to think about their future careers and it exposes them to jobs that they wouldn't have known about.'



## About the Author

Katie Fox is the Senior Infants teacher at Rathmichael National School, Shankill, Co. Dublin. She trained in Church of Ireland College of Education and has been working as a permanent teacher in Rathmichael since September 2005. This is her third year teaching Senior Infants.

## References

The National Lifelong Guidance Framework can be viewed in the National Guidance Forum report (page 15): Guidance for Life, An Integrated Framework for Lifelong Guidance  
[http://www.nationalguidanceforum.ie/documents/NGF\\_Guidance\\_for\\_Life%20final.pdf](http://www.nationalguidanceforum.ie/documents/NGF_Guidance_for_Life%20final.pdf)



## Additional Information

The theme Identity and Belonging, referred to above, focuses on developing a positive sense of who the child is and the feeling that they are valued and respected as part of a family and community. Roles and careers within the community are explored as part of this.

For more information on this theme, visit  
[http://www.ncca.biz/Aistear/pdfs/PrinciplesThemes\\_ENG/ID&Belonging\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.ncca.biz/Aistear/pdfs/PrinciplesThemes_ENG/ID&Belonging_ENG.pdf)



For more information on the Aistear programme, visit  
[www.ncca.ie/aisteartoolkit](http://www.ncca.ie/aisteartoolkit)

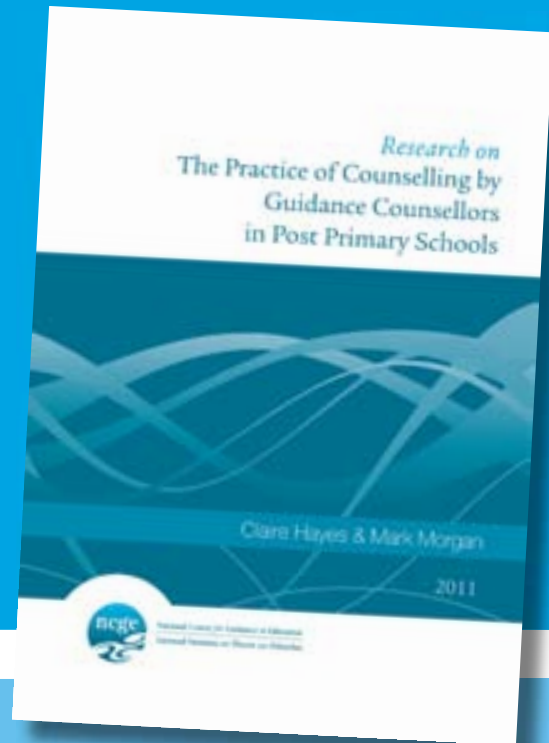


Rathmichael National School has obtained the necessary permission from the parents/guardians of the children photographed in this article and provided NCGE permission to use same.





# Research On The Practice Of Counselling By Guidance Counsellors In Post Primary Schools



## OVERVIEW

**NCGE on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills commissioned Claire Hayes and Mark Morgan to undertake the above research in 2009. The definition of counselling employed for the purposes of the research was ‘counselling provided to students to support them in their personal development and/or with their personal difficulties.’**

The aims of the research were to:

- Investigate the current nature, scope and context of counselling provided by guidance counsellors in post primary schools.
- Inform and make recommendations to key guidance stakeholders about the practice of counselling in post primary schools.
- Investigate perceptions regarding counselling practice as exemplified in the Review of Guidance in Second Level Schools (Department of Education and Science, 2006).

NCGE convened a Steering Group consisting of representatives from the Directors of Studies in

Guidance Counselling, the Department of Education and Skills, the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC), a research psychologist and NCGE to provide advice and support to NCGE during the research process.

The research which consisted of a mixed methods approach was undertaken in 2010. The mixed methods approach included:

- A questionnaire for the guidance counsellor’s attention distributed to 300 schools (response rate of 36%);

- Four focus groups consisting of guidance counsellors who were working in second level schools (25 participants);
- Six consultative groups with identified stakeholders: the Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling, the Guidance Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills, the IGC, NCGE, the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) and the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

Note: 'n' denotes the number of respondents to a particular question and this is indicated below as appropriate.

### A) Questionnaire: respondents - guidance counsellors

#### Qualifications and Professional Development

93% of respondents (n=103) reported that they had acquired their initial guidance counselling qualification in Ireland with half obtaining their qualification prior to 1999.

59% of respondents (n=101) stated that their initial education in guidance counselling prepared them 'a lot/a great deal' for the counselling aspect of their role.

62% of respondents reported that they had undertaken additional professional development in counselling since their initial training.

#### Approaches to counselling, number and type of counselling sessions

The majority of respondents reported using person-centred counselling (32%), and reality therapy (26%) when working with students (n=106).

Over 68% of respondents (n=106) reported (a lot – a great deal) that they feel comfortable, confident and competent with the counselling aspect of their role.

A substantial variation was reported by respondents (n=101) in relation to the number of students presenting for counselling each year (the largest average reported was 12 students for 6th year, with the range from 6-44 students).

A substantial variation was reported by respondents (n=102) in relation to the nature of counselling sessions with students each week with the greatest concentration reporting preventative and individual counselling sessions. On average 11 students were seen individually for counselling each week (range: 6-27 students).

#### Nature of issues in counselling

Respondents (n=103) indicated the main three issues presented by students as follows: 64% family issues, 35% bullying issues, 33% mood disturbance.

Respondents (n=100) reported the three most challenging aspects of the counselling role as: time and space (32%), difficult students (30%) and lack of recognition (10%).

The three referral agencies most frequently used were reported (n= 102) as NEPS (45%), GP (16%) and social services (10%).

### Supervision

82% of respondents to the study reported that they had been involved in supervision.

Respondents (n=98) indicated that they had attended 1-2 sessions of supervision (58%), 3-4 sessions (19%), 5 or more sessions (5%) with 18% reporting that they had attended no supervision.

### School Policy

53% of respondents reported that there was a school policy in relation to counselling.

Respondents (n=102) indicated that the school has a policy in relation to consent (39%), confidentiality (56%) and record keeping (46%).

Respondents indicated that the guidance department has a policy in relation to consent (63%), confidentiality (82%) and record keeping (69%).

## B) Focus Groups - guidance counsellors

The findings emerging from the focus groups were as follows:

- The counselling aspect of guidance practice is an integral part of the guidance role.
- The term 'counselling' is used in different ways to mean different things according to the training and experience of the guidance counsellor.
- Practice in referring students to the guidance counsellor varies, with students self-referring in some schools and being referred by teachers and/or parents in others.
- Opposing views were expressed regarding the dual role of guidance counsellor and teacher.
- A lack of time for counselling was reported as giving rise to enormous pressure.
- More support in the counselling aspect of the role was reported as needed.

## C) Consultative Groups with Identified Stakeholders

The following themes emerged as key areas of stakeholders' concern:

- The need for counselling to be available for second-level students.
- The personal qualities required by guidance counsellors.
- The need for high standards in initial training.
- The lack of clarity regarding the counselling aspect of the guidance role.
- The importance of supports for guidance counsellors to receive in their counselling role.
- The need for the views of children and parents as key stakeholders to be considered.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the researchers the researchers made the following recommendations:

### Role

That the Department of Education and Skills clarifies what exactly the practice of counselling by guidance counsellors involves, its limits and how it can be supported, evaluated and developed.

### Referral

That representatives from the DES, the NCGE, the IGC, NEPS and the NAPD meet with representatives from the HSE and other key referral agencies to agree a policy on referral, communication and feedback.

### Support

That the DES maintains and strengthens the guidance counsellor's practice of counselling through additional supports such as reducing the ratio of students to guidance counsellor, providing regular supervision and CPD, and acknowledging and formally rewarding the additional training.

### Training

That guidance counsellors be given continuing professional development to ensure that they work with models of best practice in line with their code of professional ethics and that they refer to other agencies when appropriate.

That the issues which students present to guidance counsellors for counselling be monitored on an ongoing basis so as to inform the course content of initial and continuing professional development education courses.

That existing providers of programmes for the education of guidance counsellors should be encouraged to collaborate with a view to providing a post-graduate programme that is particularly geared to the needs of guidance counsellors with regards to counselling.

### Policy

That attention be given to co-ordinating the SPHE programme with guidance counsellors' work in counselling.

That all guidance counsellors have a written policy on their counselling role.

### Evaluation

That Whole School Evaluations should include a focus on the practice of counselling by guidance counsellors.

That the views of students and their parents be considered in future in evaluation of and research on the counselling practice of guidance counsellors.

## PUBLISHED REPORT

NCGE published the research report in December, 2011 and it is available to download from the NCGE website [www.ncge.ie](http://www.ncge.ie). On consideration of the research evidence and findings, the Department of Education and Skills issued a response to the recommendations, with an indication of issues to be addressed. The Department of Education and Skills' response to the research recommendations is also available from the *NCGE website*. NCGE will be working with the Department as outlined in the Department's response to address the recommendations of the report.





# Guidance Provision in Post Primary Schools from September 2012



**Following the government budget changes and the resulting cut to the ex-quota allocation for guidance counselling in schools, the Department of Education and Skills issued Circular 0009/2012**



This circular states that guidance provision is a statutory requirement for schools and the function of the school as stated in the Education Act 1998 'to ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance ...' remains in place.

School management should pursue the development of a whole school guidance plan, to ensure that the guidance needs of students are met. The guidance counsellor is central to this process; however the guidance programme can include contributions from other staff members. The DES *Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the Implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education Act 1998, relating to students' access to appropriate guidance* (2005) will continue to inform school management on appropriate guidance activities.



The Circular requires that a school will manage its available resources through prioritising issues such as classroom based guidance delivery thus supporting

- the use of group facilitation and discussion groups for students;
- use of ICT in guidance thus supporting the students self-management skills;
- liaison with other subjects such as SPHE which can ensure that issues arising in class discussions

of a personal development nature may later be addressed with the guidance counsellor;

- ensuring time for one-to-one guidance counselling for those students in need of counselling thus clarifying the personal counselling element of the role of the guidance counsellor;

Schools are encouraged to maximise the role of the pastoral care/student support team, which guarantees a whole schools approach to supporting students' needs.

In short, guidance is not the provision of CAO classes for sixth years, but based on DES and NCGE guidelines developed since 2004 and 2005, it is a whole school approach to support the development of student's personal, social, career and educational choices from first to sixth year. It is vital that when school management are clarifying their whole school activities and thus prioritising the whole school guidance programme and plan that the qualified guidance counsellor is central to the process. With the clarification of roles within the student support/pastoral care team, the qualified guidance counsellor is best placed to support students to consider their aptitudes, interests and personal development issues and link these with previous educational and work experiences in order to make genuine well thought through career and/or education plans for post-secondary school and into adult hood.

# Guidance and learning in the virtual world – the Careers New Zealand story



Careers New Zealand is the government agency responsible for leading career development in New Zealand with an innovative and integrated approach to delivery of services. The majority of individual services are now ICT-based, through the use of web-based tools and communication through web chat, text and social media. Virtual modalities are used to extend its reach and provide career support to all New Zealanders. A key target group for Careers New Zealand is youth – those engaged in lifelong learning through schools and tertiary level study and into the workforce. Combined data sources indicate that approximately 20% of individual clients seeking information, advice and guidance are making a tertiary (higher education) decision, with approximately 8% identifying as currently being in tertiary/higher education. The agency also support the learning journey of influencers such as career practitioners, teachers, and family/whanau<sup>1</sup> members who support young people with career decisions or facilitate career development programmes. In this article, Gill England and Julie Thomas of Careers New Zealand outline the web-based tools developed to support their target groups.

## Leading the career system and sector

What is clear to Careers New Zealand in our leadership role is that New Zealanders are technologically savvy and fast adopters of new technologies and applications. Recent research confirms our views about client interaction with the Careers New Zealand website and social media spaces:

*“Use of the Internet in New Zealand has continued to rise, reaching 86% of New Zealanders in 2011, ... Usage of smart phones and hand-held devices has grown”<sup>2</sup>*

E-learning is one of the key ways we can extend our reach, at any hour, and in any location including our remote rural settlements. For us, e-learning comprises all forms of electronically supported learning and teaching. It can be self-paced or instructor-led. Information and communication systems, whether networked or not, serve as media to implement the learning process.

<sup>1</sup> Whanau is a term to describe a family unit linked by genealogy/ancestry, culture and language/dialect, and groups of people who share a common purpose [www.educationcounts.govt.nz](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz)

<sup>2</sup> AUT/National Library of New Zealand joint research project: World Internet Project



The Christchurch earthquakes illustrate the importance of e-services during the hugely significant event in the lives of our clients and those working with them. The quake of February 22, 2011 rattled us as a nation. Thousands of students and workers needed speedy and smart-thinking responses to meet their immediate career needs in the face of redundancies and disrupted learning, and longer term career planning around the rebuild of the city. Our staff lost access to their work premises and were able to quickly establish e-services from their homes.

Given the pressures placed on young people and those working with them in the Christchurch region, it was a significant milestone when the Career Education Benchmarks were launched by the Minister of Education in Christchurch in October 2011.

These benchmarks provide secondary schools and those in the sector with a framework to measure the effectiveness of career education and are a tool to assist with the development of highly effective career programmes and services for learners. Included in the secondary benchmarks are Information and Technology domains. Based on the successful uptake of the secondary level career education benchmarks, benchmarks for the tertiary sector are in development.

## Reaching our clients online

Approximately 1.9 million New Zealanders are now using social media. That's 42% of our population. Last year the Careers New Zealand website received 3.2 million New Zealand visits. Forty three percent of our online clients want to find out about careers via social media<sup>3</sup>. Facebook is the fourth highest referral source to our website, a 39% increase in the last year. We are interacting with our clients on Facebook, Twitter and converse with clients in others' career-related or job forums. We have launched a blog, *Work, Life, Career*. Being part of this web of conversation does more than just drive more clients to our services

– we are facilitators of the learning experiences of others in this space, sharing expertise and expecting commentary from other users, instead of simply conveying information or data. There is a lot to learn, and we are beginning to measure the impact and benefits of participation.

Building on a well-established web chat and phone career advice service, in 2007 telephone guidance was introduced with web chat guidance phased in from July 2010. Since then our traffic has been steadily growing, with our clients coming from all over New Zealand. Training and coaching for consultants has included an online learning forum and online resources.

We use online questionnaires to gauge how our clients have viewed our services. This, along with our client relationship management system, gives us rich data on our client groups, their locality and the difference we are making to our clients. We consistently receive excellent feedback from our clients and know that we are reaching clients who would not normally access career guidance through face-to-face delivery.



<sup>3</sup> OnLine Buzz Channel 2012

I enjoyed the candid style of discussion, I never felt pressured but enjoyed being challenged to think about the skills I have and what I want from a role. The service is excellent and exceeded my expectations. I felt supported to take control of my own career planning journey.

It's now up to me to do something about my career change.

As a result of today's session, I am going to look at the different jobs that I mentioned today to see what I like about them.

... selected comments from Online guidance client evaluation February 2012

## Helping others work with clients

A new section on the *Careers New Zealand website* has been developed to point influencers, facilitators and helpers of our clients to the essential "tools of the trade".



To bring the blended approach to building capability in others in career development support, a new web chat mentoring service has gone live for key career influencers as part of building their capability for the career development work they do with their clients students and families.

In social media spaces, especially Twitter, Linked In and our new blog we are also engaging and networking with others in the careers sector, and related sectors, nationally and internationally. It is here that we are building online communities of practice, inviting others to use the tools and resources we have online and to join in dialogue around key issues.

## Self-help packages and online tools

A simple self-paced online learning experience called the *Six Step Career Challenge* was developed to encourage young people to use online tools and resources. Sixteen thousand Christchurch students received a mail-drop invitation to take up the Challenge and students from around the country have taken up the Challenge. Career consultants have used the Challenge in their delivery to groups, successfully blending group work with the self-paced modules.

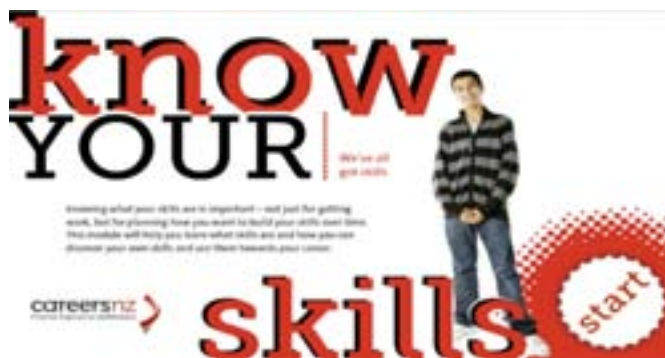
The first of a series of on-line self-help packages has been launched. *Know Your Skills* assists people to find out what a skill is and what their own skills are. It is targeted at young people aged 16-24 but can be used by people of all ages and career stages. Facilitator and teacher guides are also available online, so that as with the *Six Step Challenge*, teachers and career practitioners can use it as part of a blended learning experience for clients and students. The average time spent on *Know Your Skills* is just over fifteen minutes. This shows us that clients progress through the sequenced on line learning activities. A second complementary module, *Know Your CV*, is currently in development.



Very helpful. I did not think I had skills

(I) gained more confidence by looking at examples

I know exactly what to do to apply for the job



... Feedback from Know Your Skills users in online survey.

## Where to next

The use of the internet to support learning is a given. For Careers New Zealand, we are looking at the next steps we can take with an e-learning strategy, and best ways we can collaborate with other agencies to deliver career development learning, making use of existing e-learning platforms. We will continue to develop self-help tools online, integrated with our direct delivery to clients and in the support of their influencers. Alongside and a key part of this is participating in the range of social media platforms available to us to create and grow opportunities for our own and others' learning.

## About the Authors

Gill England, Practice Advisor and Julie Thomas, Products & Services Manager. Gill and Julie are experienced career practitioners now leading the development of new services such as the technology-enabled guidance service and the Careers New Zealand blog. They are currently involved in developing careers benchmarks for the tertiary sector, and piloting workplace assessment of a new careers sector Diploma.

## Useful Contacts

Find out more about Careers New Zealand and view their online tools at [www.careers.govt.nz](http://www.careers.govt.nz)



## Adult

# Helping Adult Learners Achieve

*“Self-actualization is not a matter of one great moment. It is not true that on Thursday at four o’clock the trumpet blows and one steps into the pantheon forever and altogether.”*

*Abraham Maslow: The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*

**Abraham Maslow’s approach to self-actualisation is redolent of how our Adult Education Guidance Service engages with adults who are embarking on programmes of further education. There are many steps in lifelong learning and an adult reaching his or her potential is not defined by a single moment. Through the range of reasons necessitating study, from unemployment to a quest for knowledge, it is often the quiet counsellor who can help boost and sustain a person’s efforts.**

The ‘work-a-day’ view of educational guidance might be that of student and counsellor reviewing the former’s previous study, training and work experience, finding a course based on practical choice and closing the session. However, first choices do not always work out as envisaged. How does a person pick themselves up if, for example, they fail to gain entry into a specific programme? This is where ‘follow-up’ contact can be of real value in supporting adults to rethink possibilities and modify their initial plan. For guidance counsellors, building in flexibility and a capacity to change direction, if so required, is very useful. There are many reasons why someone may need to change course including family commitments, finance, not currently reaching the course criteria or discovering a better fit elsewhere.

In South Dublin Adult Education Service<sup>1</sup>, the Adult Education Officer, Adult Education Guidance Co-ordinator and Adult Literacy Organiser had a meeting to discuss how we could help applicants who were not accepted onto our Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) programmes, following the summer 2011 intake. We decided that the Guidance Co-ordinator would make contact with the original applicants, who had been unsuccessful in their initial application for VTOS programmes. For our service, this was an appropriate and responsible measure to

take. Within our remit, we support individual adults in their quest towards further education, which may enhance their opportunities in accessing the world of work.

Within our Adult Educational Guidance Service, we are mindful of the fact that people who are attempting to embark on an educational course and do not achieve entry the first time round can feel rudderless or worse, inadequate and upset. So, in this instance, the Guidance Counsellor initiated follow-up contact and offered a group session to discuss the educational needs of the clients and also one-to-one counselling.

This work was carried out over the course of two months as a mini-project and the following emerged:

- Some people had found employment while others had sourced an alternative course.
- The remaining people attended a group session for the purpose of brainstorming training ideas and discussing other course options. Some people felt the need for literacy support or to return to study by attending a gentler or more flexible part-time course.
- Information was exchanged freely and people learned, for the first time in many cases, how to

<sup>1</sup> Co. Dublin VEC –  
[www.learningsouthdublin.ie](http://www.learningsouthdublin.ie)



negotiate their way around the landscape of further education and training.

- One-to-one guidance sessions emerged from the group coming together, and people were provided with an opportunity to map out and plan the steps necessary for gaining a solid qualification.
- Some people who originally wanted to commence on a VTOS programme but were not accepted, realized that by taking a step back and joining a part-time Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) course, that this could lead to a VTOS or other full-time programme eventually.
- We found that staying in touch with people through follow-up contact acted as a safety net which supported adults returning to education and put an emphasis on life-long and life-wide learning, thus enriching the guidance experience for these people.

The diagram below attempts to illustrate very simply how the Guidance Service operates within and between the programmes in the Adult Education Service.



We hope that South Dublin Adult Educational Guidance Service is seen as a dynamic link between potential learners and the range of courses available to them. In particular, our policy is to support adults who have not gained entry onto their original programme of choice. For example, a number of the people contacted had no idea that they could study a single module or full FETAC Award. BTEI courses offer great flexibility and are offered at various levels. Also, many adults were unaware of the number of learning supports on offer via the Literacy Service.

Having been relatively successful in our efforts to help adults through follow-up contact and guidance, who might otherwise have fallen through the net, we intend to incorporate this model into our practice. This approach fits into our ethos of opening up the whole panoply of options to individuals and creating a broader vision of possibilities for our adult learners.

## About the Author

Elizabeth O'Doherty works as an Adult Educational Guidance Co-ordinator in the South Dublin Adult Education Service. She has been involved with the AEGI since its inception in 2000. She participated in a number of European Guidance projects over several years. Her primary degree was awarded by University College Dublin in Psychology. After working and travelling in Australia, she returned to Ireland and obtained an MSc in Work & Organisational Psychology in Dublin City University.

## Non-Formal

# Youth Information – A Key Link in a Chain of Access

**Susan Scott is working as Youth Information Officer with Clondalkin Youth Service in West Dublin for the last 12 years. CYS is a joint project of Catholic Youth Care (CYC) and County Dublin VEC. Susan has a background in formal education, guidance, and community arts and has worked in a development capacity with VSO in Bangladesh as vocational training advisor to a women's centre. She submitted a thesis titled 'Youth Information - A Key Link in a Chain of Access' as part fulfilment of the M.Sc. in Guidance and Counselling in DCU in 2011. The purpose of this research was to generate an understanding of the role of Youth Information as an informal educator, exploring in particular the processes of empowerment and enhancement of social mobility opportunities for young people who use the service.**



Youth Information as a 'free, confidential, and non-directive' community based resource for young people has been around in Ireland since the late 1980's. As a national service it is anchored within the Youth Work sector and provided primarily by voluntary Youth Work organisations.

Youth work is recognised in The Youth Work Act (2001) as providing '*a planned programme of education ... for the purpose of aiding and enhancing ... personal and social development of young people through their voluntary involvement*' ... which complements their '*formal, academic or vocational education and training*'.

This research conducted among Youth Information practitioners suggests that the process of engagement and information sharing, works most effectively when centred on the voluntary

participation of young people, which is in keeping with the principles and practices of Youth Work.

Basic counselling and listening skills, quickly building rapport and an empathetic approach were defined by the research participants and appear to constitute core professional helping skills in this work.

The practical examples given in the findings support the belief that Youth Information with its guided discussion and process of empowerment promotes access to new opportunities for young people which increases their life choices and mobility prospects. It also equips them with the skills to be able to answer future information queries for themselves. Youth Information was described in this context as a 'key link in a chain of access.'





The notion of a broad guidance remit in Youth Information provision was explored in this research. This uncovered a variety of guidance type activities, including direct career, education, training, and employment information and support, which are offered in conjunction with mentoring, facilitated discussion, and active referral to more specialist services.

The collaborative nature of Youth Information work with its emphasis on networking and outreach activities allows practitioners to develop and maintain contacts and share expertise and resources with other formal and non-formal education and service providers within the community. It also raises awareness of the availability of the Youth Information, encouraging schools and other providers to refer young people to the service, particularly over the summer holiday period.

What seems to be coming through in this study is that Youth Information is seen as an enabling process, which supports exploratory discussions around life choices, while encouraging young people to embrace new opportunities and helping them to raise their expectations and discover what they want to achieve in their lives.

This research suggests that Youth Information is already strategically positioned to assist in achieving the vision of quality guidance in a variety of contexts throughout the life span, which is proposed at national and European level to support young people to fulfil their economic and social potential.

These aspirations are coupled with a belief that access to impartial, quality information provided by professionals is a right for all young people if they are to be given the chance to develop a critical voice and participate fully in society. *ERYICA*, the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency documents these rights, as well as the proposed benefits of access to quality Youth Information provision in their Starter Kit for YIC's (2010).



One of the difficulties of measuring the benefits of Youth Information is that while information can be provided in answer to specific queries, the choice to act on that knowledge is left to the young person. It is not uncommon to meet a person when they are older and find out that they have used information and improved their life prospects in some way, when the time was right for them, but this aspect can't be captured retrospectively or anecdotally for the statistical returns.

A recently heard quote suggested that 'if you can't measure something, it can't be valued, and if it can't be valued, it can't be funded'. It is hoped that this research will increase understanding of what Youth Information is and what it can do for young people, while drawing attention to the wide range of guidance and generalist youth information supports currently provided by the service.

### Additional Information

For more information about this research please contact [ncgeinfo@ncge.ie](mailto:ncgeinfo@ncge.ie)



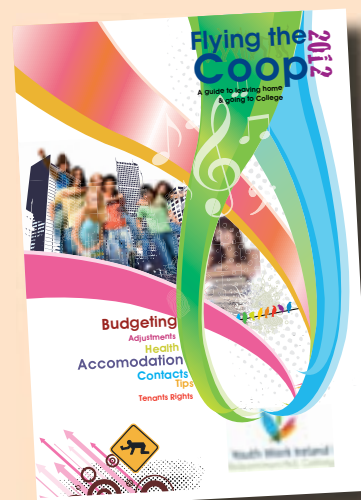
# Flying the Coop

Flying the Coop (FTC) is a publication researched, updated and published every year by the Youth Information Service of Youth Work Ireland Roscommon/N.E. Galway - which is a non-profit voluntary Youth organisation. Flying the coop has been available since 1997 and has grown and become more comprehensive each year, due to recommendations arising from the annual evaluations and feedback from colleges, students and school sector. FTC is sold at 50c per copy (and P&P) to ensure everyone can afford the information they require.

Flying the coop provides the school leaver with information on such issues as:

- finding accommodation,
- what are the costs,
- checklists of what to do/not do,
- budgeting
- Health & Well Being & Staying Safe
- Adjusting to college life
- Useful contacts
- There are 30 Youth Information Centres around the country who promote and distribute FTC locally. It is also available to second level guidance counsellors as well as being distributed through information centres such as MABs and Citizens Information

To find out more or to make an order Guidance Counsellors should contact <http://www.roscommonyouth.ie/>



## Research

# Teachers' Perceptions of Cyberbullying and the Role of the School Community in Addressing it

**Guidance supports the student's personal and social development and their coping skills. One issue facing students can be cyberbullying. Pádraig Mac an Bhaird works at Coláiste Choilm CBS in Swords, Co Dublin. He completed the MSc in Guidance and Counselling at Dublin City University in 2011. The title of his thesis was 'Teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying and the role of the school community in addressing it.' Literature on the subject recommends a whole school approach to dealing with bullying in all its forms. Perceptions can influence behaviour and from the perspective of guidance Pádraig was interested to see what teachers' attitudes to cyberbullying were and also their attitudes to tackling it.**

Bullying has been an on-going topic of research for a number of decades. The rise in electronic communications has given rise to a new form of bullying in recent years: cyberbullying. Researchers argue that the school community has a responsibility to address this form of bullying and have made various suggestions on how to do this. Teachers are a vital part of the school community and their commitment is essential to ensure the success of any efforts to counter cyberbullying. Since teachers' perceptions are an important factor in shaping their commitment to tackle bullying, an examination of these is required. The study examined teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying, along with their perceptions of the role of the school in addressing cyberbullying.

The research was carried out with teachers working in an all-boys school in Dublin. A mixed methods approach was used when conducting the research to acquire a more holistic view of teachers' perceptions. 37 teachers answered a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five teachers, and an additional four teachers took part in a focus group. The data was triangulated and analysed. The findings demonstrate that teachers defined many cyberbullying behaviours correctly with some notable exceptions, in particular exclusion. A majority of teachers were concerned about cyberbullying but held different attitudes on how prevalent it is.



A number of issues related to teachers' perceptions of technology contributed to their perceptions of the prevalence of cyberbullying. Personal experience of the technologies also influenced teachers' perceptions. In relation to the school's responsibility in dealing with cyberbullying, a majority of teachers accepted that the school had a responsibility to address it and also expressed support for a variety of measures to counter cyberbullying. Teachers indicated a low level of confidence in addressing this form of bullying and expressed a need for training on the issue. A high level of support was also expressed for punishing perpetrators even though many teachers did not appear to have a good awareness of the effects of cyberbullying on perpetrators. This suggests a lack of awareness among teachers of the complexity of cyberbullying. Support among teachers for educative measures was also high, although a number of concerns were raised about educating students on cyberbullying.

There was a mixed response among the teachers regarding whose role it is to address cyberbullying. Many did not appear to perceive the importance

of a whole-school approach or the role they could play as individual teachers. The findings suggest there is a clear need for training for teachers on cyberbullying. They also suggest that further guidance to schools on how to counter this form of bullying is needed if it is to be dealt with on a whole-school level. For example, the design of materials which could be introduced in various subject areas would help individual teachers address cyberbullying more. Since the teachers in this study were from an all-boys school, it is recommended that further research be carried out with teachers from all-girls and mixed gender schools to provide greater insight into teachers' perceptions of this issue. Parents' perceptions of cyberbullying and the role of the school should also be examined since they too are a crucial part of the school community.

### Additional Information

For more information about this research please contact [ncgeinfo@ncge.ie](mailto:ncgeinfo@ncge.ie)





## Research

# How does the dual role of Guidance Counsellor as a subject teacher impact on male students' participation in personal counselling?

**Caroline McPhillips graduated from UCD in 2006 with a HDip in Education. She went on to complete the M.Sc. in Guidance Counselling from DCU in 2011 and is currently a guidance counsellor in a South Dublin secondary school. Caroline submitted a thesis titled 'How does the dual role of Guidance Counsellor as a subject teacher impact on male students' participation in personal counselling?' as part fulfilment of the M.Sc. in Guidance and Counselling in DCU.**



This research was undertaken in an attempt to gain an insight into male students' views and experiences of the dual role of the guidance counsellor as a subject teacher, and how this dual role impacts on their participation in personal counselling. Forty students completed questionnaires for this research and five students were interviewed using a semi-structured interview format. All of the participants were 5th year students. The research was undertaken in a single all boys voluntary secondary school where one guidance counsellor is also employed as a science teacher.

A number of themes emerged from the research findings:

### **'Feeling Known' by the guidance counsellor**

Eighty per cent of students interviewed stated that they would be more likely to seek personal counselling if they 'felt known' by their guidance counsellor, a view also reflected in the research

of Howieson and Semple (2000). Feeling more comfortable, more likely to open up to the guidance counsellor and an increase in trust were commonly cited as illustrations of feeling known by their guidance counsellor. However, it is worth noting that others concurred with Fox and Butler's (2007) finding that talking to a stranger can be an advantage when seeking personal counselling. It emerged from the research that a number of participants didn't necessarily equate class contact time with feeling known, but instead indicated that a guidance counsellor's willingness to take the time to talk and get to know the students would help to build trust, with one student stating that guidance counsellors would have more time to engage with and know students if they weren't teaching. Students articulated with great clarity that 'feeling known' was more about the quality rather than the quantity of contact. These findings substantiate Howieson and Semple's (2000) argument that the feeling of being known is a more complex matter than having regular contact with students.

## Relationship with the guidance counsellor and the willingness to seek personal counselling

Another important theme that emerged in the research was the type of relationship students share with their guidance counsellor and how this impacts on their willingness to seek personal counselling. A number of researchers argue that teaching outside the counselling office should be embraced and that it will in fact enhance the relationship with the students (McLaughlin 1999; Morrill and Oetting 1970, cited in Pershing and Demetropoulos 1981).

However, the findings from this research highlight that teaching a mainstream subject doesn't automatically enhance the relationship, but could in fact be damaging. Participants explained that the nature of this relationship depended on a number of factors, including how the teacher treats students in class and teacher effectiveness in respect of their subject. This may indicate that guidance counsellors who teach mainstream subjects are more susceptible to relationship problems with students, on the premise that positive relationships are contingent on the ability to teach.

## The different roles of the teacher and the guidance counsellor

Another theme emerging from the research was the view that the role of the teacher is different to that of the guidance counsellor. This view is reflected in the research undertaken by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (2001) which recommends that counsellors should not adopt a 'dual role' in a school due to the differences between the two roles. Differences between the desired characteristics and approaches of a guidance counsellor and those of a teacher were apparent from this research. Participants expressed concern that guidance counsellors would treat students with personal difficulties differently in class and this differentiation was deemed to be uncomfortable for

students. Overall, 67% of students who completed the questionnaire felt that guidance counsellors should not teach mainstream subjects; with 32.5% of these stating that guidance counsellors should only have one role within the school.

This data suggests that the dual role of the guidance counsellor as a subject teacher can either help or hinder students' participation in personal counselling, but it is contingent on the guidance counsellor, and the manner in which they conduct themselves in both their guidance counselling role and teaching role.

## Limitations and Recommendations

This research is limited by the focus on male students from one year group within one secondary school. It is also limited by the small number of participants and therefore does not claim to generalise findings to a larger population. Future researchers in this area would benefit from widening the research field to a number of schools and ensuring that both male and female perspectives are sought. Further research should also include schools

- (i) where the guidance counsellor performs the dual roles of subject teacher and guidance counsellor.
- (ii) where the guidance counsellor does not adopt the dual role.
- (iii) where the guidance and counselling role is divided between two guidance counsellors with one person on educational and career guidance and the other on personal counselling.

This may provide further insight and potential for greater analysis on the research question posed in this study. It is recommended that future research explores how the role of the guidance counsellor with classroom guidance contact time impacts on students' participation in personal counselling. This could help to identify whether the examinable nature of a taught subject by the guidance counsellor influences students' participation in personal

counselling. Exploring this issue was beyond the bounds of this research as it was a small scale study and conducted by a single researcher.

In light of the research findings, the issue of 'feeling known' by the guidance counsellor merits consideration. Students highlighted the need for guidance counsellors to take an interest in them and to get to know them in order to build trust and enhance the likelihood of seeking personal counselling. The researcher of this study believes that a system which helps students to 'feel more known' by their guidance counsellor would help alleviate some of the anxieties surrounding personal counselling. The researcher recommends guidance counsellors take a more pro-active approach to their guidance counselling work, whereby they seek out students rather than wait to be approached. The need to create opportunities for "quality contact time" with students cannot be overestimated, for example, five minute one-to-one meetings with students or the value of casual and meaningful interactions with students outside of formal class with the emphasis here on quality and not quantity of time. More interaction with Junior Cycle students is also recommended as this input during these early school years could help to establish a relationship between the guidance counsellor and their students.

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## Additional Information

For more information about this research please contact [ncgeinfo@ncge.ie](mailto:ncgeinfo@ncge.ie)



**Have you recently completed a research thesis as part of a post graduate programme in Guidance Counselling? Would you consider writing an article for NCGE News based on your research findings? If so please contact NCGE on [ncgeinfo@ncge.ie](mailto:ncgeinfo@ncge.ie)**



# Encouraging Movement with Mol@m



euro | guidance  
IRELAND



Education and Culture  
Youth in Action



**Euroguidance Ireland hosted in NCGE, provides information on opportunities to study in Europe. Many students require information on working abroad. Travelling to another European country for employment is becoming increasingly popular. It can be challenging to find a one stop shop to assist guidance professionals in supporting the client in their decision to move abroad. The Mol@m project aims to address this and to promote travelling to other European countries for employment by providing careers advisors with a better knowledge of EU labour markets.**

The main purpose of the project is to create an interactive tool for careers advisors. The tool will help them support adults, in particular those with few qualifications. A draft tool has now been developed and includes information guides for the 6 countries included in the partnership (UK, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Czech Republic and Germany) with links to useful websites containing information on job searches, health and safety information, workplace laws and housing arrangements. There is also a useful reading list which indicates which books might help in preparing for work in the destination

country. The tool also includes useful addresses and contact details for twelve countries – ten of which are regarded as the top ten destination countries across Europe. These include services like drop-in centres for migrants that could help with problems which may arise once in the destination country and employment agencies to assist in finding a job. The Mol@m tool also includes case studies of people who have already moved to another European country to work as shown in Figure 1.1. These stories give a real insight into what moving to another EU country for work is really like.

Departure Country: UK

Arrival Country: Spain

Former and current job field: mechanic/working with motorcycles

Duration of stay (in years): N/A

*[...] I like Spain. Rural Spain is mucky, dirty and cheap and I love it. A bit of sunshine is always nice too. I came here first in 1994 to race motorcycles and I loved it. So it was the sunshine and the desire for change that first motivated me. But I very quickly realised that living and working in Spain was going to be very different from going on holiday there. [...] The most exciting thing about living in the middle of rural Spain is discovering the 'real Spain'. It is not the same experience as a holiday. It has been hard work but finding out about the culture has been really exciting. It is a culture I respect. I feel that the Spanish culture is nicer than English culture. [...] the language has been more of a barrier than I expected. It is entirely my fault as I didn't try to learn it before I went out to Spain! But I am learning it now and I have a real motivation to learn. [...]*

[see full version here](#)

Fig 1.1 Case study



The partnership countries have tried to make the tool as easy as possible to navigate with clear instructions. Below are some screenshots taken from the interactive tool to illustrate this.

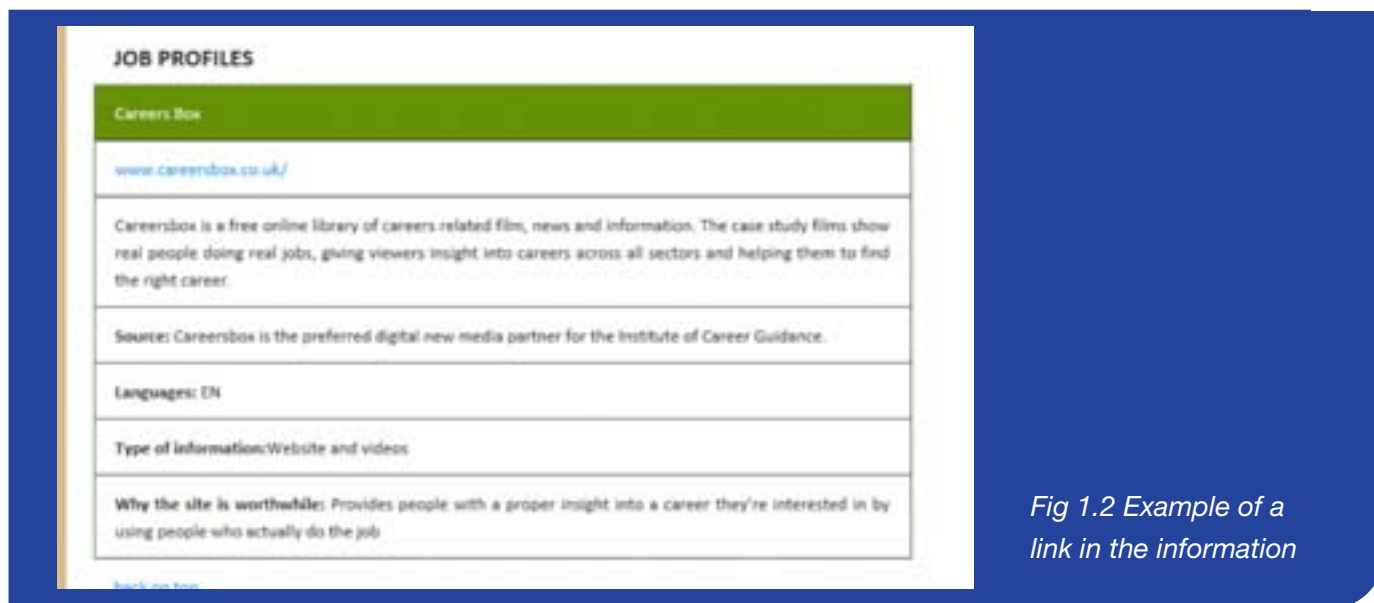


Fig 1.2 Example of a link in the information

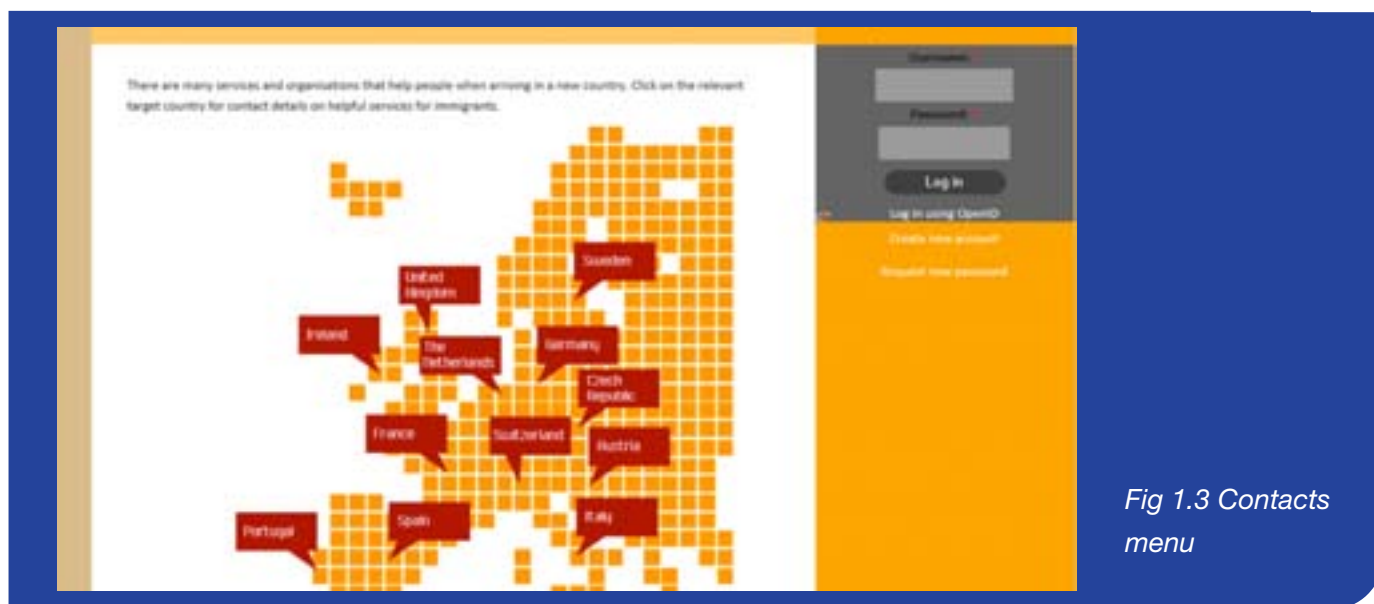


Fig 1.3 Contacts menu

The prototype of the online tool is almost ready for pilot testing and has been developed by Careers Europe, the Euroguidance Centre for the United Kingdom. As the Euroguidance Centre, it provides guidance professionals with information on living and working in Europe, in a way which is accessible. To meet this aim they also produce EXODUS – a database providing up to date information on living, working and studying abroad. The Mol@m project will develop an online tool that is complementary to the EXODUS database.

## Additional Information

Visit the Mol@m website at [www.spi.pt/molam](http://www.spi.pt/molam) for more information about the project.

To ensure that the tool is user friendly, all feedback is appreciated. The full version of the prototype tool is available at <http://www.spi.pt/molamtool/>.

Guidance Counsellors interested in obtaining more information or who wish to comment on the interactive tool should contact Katie Peyton – Lister in Careers Europe ([katie.peyton-lister@careerseurope.co.uk](mailto:katie.peyton-lister@careerseurope.co.uk).)



# Evidence through Observing Practice



Education and Culture  
Youth in Action



The Euroguidance (EG) Ireland Centre at NCGE received a request to host a study visit for six Finnish guidance professionals in late 2011. Hilary Lynch on behalf of EG Ireland welcomed the group to NCGE on in early March. Having read extensively on the guidance system in Ireland, the group wished to observe it in practice. In line with their areas of specific interest, guidance for students with special needs, EG Ireland, in co-operation with AHEAD (Association for Higher Education Access and Disability) arranged for the group to see the results of the system in practice.



*From L to R - Hilary Lynch (NCGE), Sirpa Komsa, Pekka Visuri, Pasi Frilander, Vesa Kostamo, Jennifer McKenzie (NCGE), Kim Karlsson*

Appointments were arranged at the Access Office at University College Dublin, the Education Department at Trinity College Dublin, Killester College of Further Education, AHEAD's Willing Able Mentoring (WAM) service, AHEAD's Head Office and NCGE. The visitors also actively participated in debate at **AHEAD's 2012 Conference on Access to Teaching for Students with Disabilities**, held in Dublin Castle.



Throughout their week the participants met with course directors, teachers of students with disabilities, guidance professionals, conference delegates and students. In their review session, they illustrated how they might directly transfer the learnings of the week to their individual roles. They made direct correlations between gaps in their own system with solutions from the Irish context. The group will submit an official report highlighting these solutions and applications to their daily work.

One theme which was consistent throughout the group was the benefit of observing guidance in action in order to best 'translate' best international practice to one's own role.

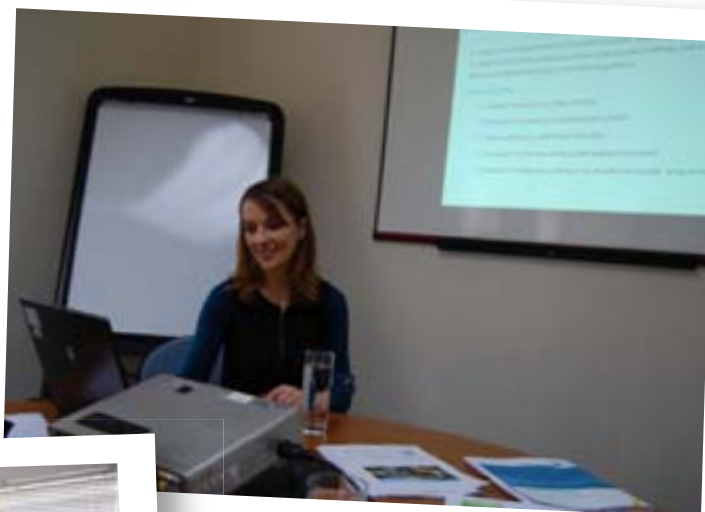
Euroguidance Ireland Centre at NCGE hosts study visits from guidance professionals each year and recent study visits include guests from Germany and United Kingdom. NCGE and the Euroguidance Ireland Centre have produced a short video based on these visits – <http://youtu.be/kmtGLtm57y4>



*Vesa Kostamo and Pasi Frilander attending the Ahead Conference*



*Dr Helen O' Sullivan,  
School of Education, TCD*



*Hilary Lynch, Euroguidance Ireland  
Centre, NCGE*



*Rory O Sullivan, Killester College of Further  
Education, with Pekka Visuri.*

**Would you like to host an international group of guidance professionals to your school, college or education centre? If so, contact the Euroguidance Ireland Centre at NCGE - [hilary.lynch@ncge.ie](mailto:hilary.lynch@ncge.ie)**

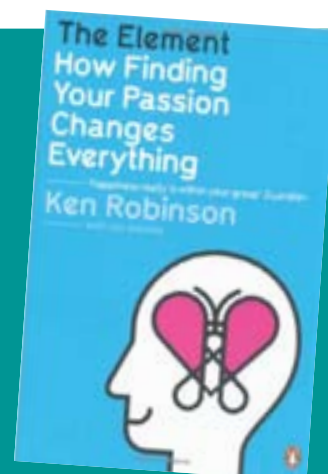


## Book Review

# The Element - How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything

**Ken Robinson**

Penguin Books 2009, 260 pages



The Element- How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything is aimed at anyone interested in looking at their own potential and the potential of others. As it is about passion, the imagination, creativity, values, luck, influences on career decision making and education, it is a book that would capture any Guidance Counsellor or Educator.

In his book, Ken Robinson shares a wide range of stories of how different people such as Paul McCartney, Paolo Coelho, Meg Ryan, Gillian Lynne and Matt Groening found their element. He describes element as 'the place where the things you love to do and the things you are good at come together'

Indicators of 'the element' have two main features and two conditions:-

- aptitude (I get it),
- passion (I love it),
- attitude (I want it),
- opportunity (where is it).

As a guidance counsellor, I found these indicators useful barometers of career direction. I could imagine using these words within our 'one to one' and group work as part of discovery and joyful career direction with our clients.

In terms of career planning, I feel that some of the stories are very inspirational and good for group discussions. There was one particular story of a girl whose parents thought she had a learning disorder and brought her to a psychologist. However, the psychologist pointed out that this girl 'had to move to think' and that she did not have any learning difficulty. The girl in question is Gillian Lynne who discovered dance within her own life and went on to be a world class choreographer. This story reminded me of my kinaesthetic learners. The author also gave a great array of stories of people who overcame adversity, physical disability and those who

did not make the grade at school yet went on to achieve great things. Overall, the author gives a message that all barriers are surmountable, once we have found our path or element.

As an Adult Guidance Counsellor, I was particularly interested in the great examples of late bloomers and those who also have their element 'on the side' while keeping the day job. I thought that this section is a great reference point, when working with adults who have a concern about their age. The author cited the example of Khaled Hosseini, who wrote the book entitled The Kite Runner whilst working full time as a doctor.

On a personal level, I was struck by the section on Finding Your Tribe and how competitors and collaborators can help shape our element. Having recently attended the IGC conference in Trim, I am reminded of the importance of connection, tribe and the creative exchange of ideas. The author also emphasised the important role of mentors in terms of recognition, encouragement, facilitating and stretching people. Perhaps, this is something we could factor into careers education? Equally, the author's section on the circles of constraint, barriers to element which are personal, social and cultural was insightful.

Along the way, Ken Robinson critiques school systems for creating a hierarchy of subjects and killing creativity. He calls on us to develop the powers of our imagination and creativity within a different human purpose. He argues that each of us need to individually and collectively discover our element. For guidance counsellors and educators who are energised by the creative and believe that a person's career direction is linked to their passion, this book could be an excellent resource.

*Reviewed by Dearbhla Kelly, Adult Educational Guidance Counsellor, Donegal Adult Learner Guidance Service.*



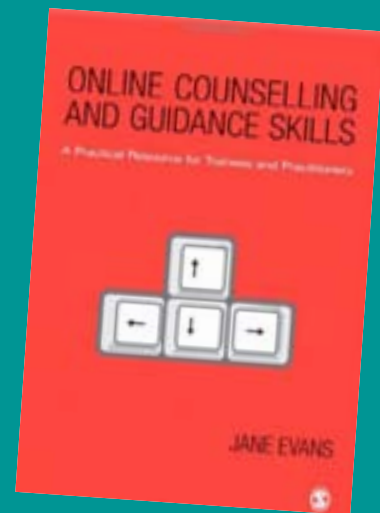
## Book Review

# Online Counselling and Guidance Skills A Practical Resource for Trainees and Practitioners

*Jane Evans*

208 pages

SAGE Publications Ltd



This book aims to help practitioners explore and evaluate how they can adapt their counselling skills to an online environment.

As a career counsellor in practice within the third level educational sector and with on-going engagement with second level students in a guidance capacity I found this book both thought provoking and very useful in many practical ways.

The book starts on a practical note with basic questions for anyone considering developing or expanding an online practice. Essentials such as the importance of conducting a realistic self-assessment of our technical skills and our ability to troubleshoot are addressed. It poses important self-searching questions for us as counsellors to ask ourselves; about our suitability to work online with clients, to work alone and interact effectively without the physical presence.

This book has a well balanced mix of deeper questions to address such as our understanding and expectations of what comprises a person's 'presence'. The author affirms that 'presence' can be transmitted online and emphasizes what conditions need to exist to experience and express online empathy.

Using a combination of practical guidelines, step by step procedures, case examples and 'points for

consideration', Evans guides us through the inclusive process of; establishing a relationship, expressing ourselves effectively, maintaining and building on dialogue and communication, transferring listening skills and attunement to clients to the online medium, dealing with the important practical issues of initial assessment; contracts; risk assessment; confidentiality; administrative resources and support.

At times, I found the detail in the text a little tedious and almost laborious, however the book contains good 'user friendly' visual aids for the busy reader, in the form of tables, framed synopses, summaries of each chapter and points to consider in the form of thought provoking questions. If I were the publisher of this book, I would almost certainly have produced it in a workbook format, making it far more accessible and easy to work with.

This book is a valuable asset and 'bible' for those embarking on establishing an online counselling service. As a profession, we are firmly rooted in the person centred realm and naturally gravitate towards client centred interaction. Many of us will find the certain and impending progression to online practice and support service, at least in part a challenge, this book will equip us to transition.

*Reviewed by Mary McCarthy, Careers Advisor, University College Cork.*

General

# News from NCGE

## European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network



Attendees at the ELGPN WP4 Synthesis Meeting held 21-23 March 2012

### Latest update

The next Plenary meeting of the ELGPN will be held in Copenhagen in April as part of the Danish EU presidency. Work packages 1 to 4 have met in the last few months to continue drafting their various agreed documents.

The meeting of Work Package 4 – Quality Assurance and Evidence Based Practice was hosted in Dublin in March by NCGE. Fourteen Member State countries were represented by 23 participants at the three day meeting held in the Department of Education and Skills, Dublin. This working group has been ably co-ordinated and lead by the Hungarian representative Dr Tibor Bors Borbély-Pecze with Dr Deirdre Hughes, OBE as the external consultant and facilitator for the group.

A draft framework for quality assurance and evidence based practice has been developed by the group for inclusion in the proposed ELGPN ToolKit.

The EU Commission has confirmed continued funding for the ELGPN for 2013-2014. Ireland will host the ELGPN Plenary meeting during the Irish EU Presidency in February 2013.

**Congratulations to** Dr Deirdre Hughes, who was recently awarded an OBE in the UK New Years Honours list in recognition for her services to careers. Deirdre was recently appointed as Commissioner at the UK Commission for Employment & Skills.

## Review of Guidance Counselling Provision in Second level schools

NCGE distributed a questionnaire to school Principals regarding the current provision of guidance counselling in schools. Principals were asked to return completed questionnaires to NCGE by the 26th March and we would like

to take this opportunity to thank all those who participated in this research. The aim of the review is to provide the NCGE Management of Guidance Committee with information concerning the current provision of guidance in schools. NCGE will follow up on this survey in late September with a similar questionnaire with the view to undertaking a comparative analysis on guidance provision. This will enable NCGE to appropriately plan for supporting guidance counsellors from October onwards. More details will be made available on our website [www.ncge.ie](http://www.ncge.ie)

### Congratulations!

The winner of the Euroguidance 'Win an iPod' draw is **Eimhin Gaynor**

Visit Euroguidance Ireland on Facebook to access the latest information and resources for studying in Europe. It also contains news, views and upcoming competitions.



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