

# guidance Generalce

## Getting to Know the Staff in NCGE

As Vivian Cassells moves on to yet another new phase in his distinguished career the staff in NCGE would like to thank him and wish him well. During his term as Director (Temp. Acting) from November 2001-2002, Vivian successfully steered NCGE through many important projects. Vivian is currently working with the NCCA where his expertise will be as highly valued as it was in NCGE.

A new Director (Acting), Eileen Fitzpatrick was appointed in November 2002. Eileen has wide experience of guidance provision in different education sectors. She was Head of the Careers Service in DIT from 1992, has also worked as a guidance counsellor at second level and spent some time in youth work. Eileen completed her MA in Careers Guidance in UCE, Birmingham and her Diploma in Career Guidance (DCG) in UCD.

NCGE now has five fulltime and one part-time staff working to support and develop guidance in education and to advise the Department of Education and Science on policy related to guidance. While all staff service the post-primary guidance sector, staff members have other specific responsibilities.

*Sarah Ryan*, Senior Project Officer, joined NCGE in 1998, after two years working in a research company. A graduate of TCD (B.A. Psychology and Sociology, Post-graduate Diploma in Statistics), she is currently a student of the M.Sc. in Educational Guidance and Counselling (TCD). In addition to her contribution to the overall NCGE programme, Sarah has special responsibility for NCGE research activities, NCGE's EUROGUIDANCE centre, liaison with the non-formal education sector (e.g. YOUTHREACH) and more recently NCGE News. Her work has included activities with all NCGE client groups.

*Síle Sheehy*, National Co-ordinator AEGI, joined NCGE in 1999. She is a graduate of the

DCG course in UCD and has extensive experience as a guidance counsellor in second level. Síle spent over ten years with the Irish Times where she worked on the Education and Living and College Supplements, the Higher Options Conference, and Careers World. She has also worked in research and in third level education. Síle's role in NCGE is in the area of adult educational guidance. She co-ordinates 25 adult educational guidance projects nationwide.

*Natalie Rooney* is a Project Officer working mainly in the area of adult educational guidance. Natalie has a B.A. in Psychology and Philosophy and in 2000 she received an M.Ed. (Guidance and Counselling) from TCD. Before coming to NCGE, Natalie worked in the TCD Counselling Service in research and developing the peer support programme. In NCGE she works with Síle Sheehy co-ordinating the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative.

*Linda Darbey* is a graduate of UCD where she received a degree in Psychology. She also completed the M. Ed. (Guidance and Counselling) in TCD in 2000. Linda has worked as a Project Officer with NCGE for over two years focussing on post-primary and third level. Her work to date has included participation on various committees/working parties in both areas of guidance, and involvement in drafting the forthcoming Guidelines on Guidance Programme Planning in Schools and the Irish response to the OECD



NCGE team: Back row left to right Sarah Ryan, Eileen Fitzpatrick, Síle Sheehy, Front row left to right Yvonne McCarthy, Linda Darbey, Natalie Rooney

National Questionnaire on Policies for Information, Guidance and Counselling Services.

*Yvonne McCarthy* joined NCGE in September 2002 as Office Administrator. Yvonne graduated with a B.A. in Anthropology and Geography from NUIM in 1996. She has previously been employed by the CDVEC where she worked in a number of administration roles throughout different settings including Youthreach and Adult Education. In Yvonne's role as office administrator, she is responsible for arrangements of conferences / exhibitions, processing accounts, liaising with suppliers, updating website and providing general admin support to the NCGE team.

NCGE recently said goodbye to Janine Strong. Janine worked in NCGE for one and half years as Office Administrator and has moved with her family to a new life in Donegal. We wish her every success.

### Readers .....

Are you involved in a Guidance related project that might be of interest to other readers? Have you completed research in a guidance related area that you wish to publicise?

NCGE welcome input from all readers (Guidance practitioners, trainers, educators, teachers, tutors and those in other related roles) on their own areas of expertise, current developments in the Irish guidance sector, suggested topics of interest etc.

Please contact Sarah Ryan, NCGE sryan@ncge.ie

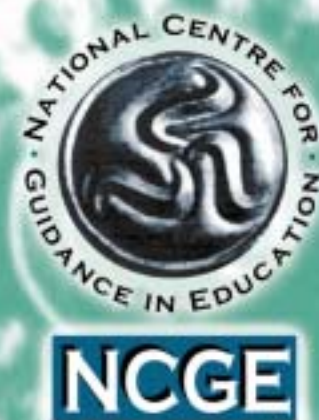


### Supplements for the Guidance Counsellor's Handbook distributed to Post Primary schools with this issue

- Supplements:**
- Interculturalism and Intercultural Counselling (Dr. Michael O'Rourke)
  - Subject Choice (Vivian Cassells)

### FACTSHEETS:

- Mathematics - Foundation Level at Leaving Certificate
- Irish - Foundation Level at Leaving Certificate
- National Educational Psychological Service
- NEPS Model of Service



National Centre for Guidance in Education  
Lárionad Náisiúnta um Treoir San Oideachas

# NCGE news

Spring 2003 / Issue 17

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[www.ploteus.net](http://www.ploteus.net)

Asylum Seekers in Adult Education

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# TRANSITION

# guidanceEuro

## European Policy Developments

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### Education and Guidance: Analysis 2002

Their long-term goals, both job related and social, as well as acquiring specific skills for finding work. The development of these characteristics-such as the ability to plan and think ahead-will depend not only on early experience at home, but also on the active role of schools and colleges in nurturing these abilities. Carrers education and guidance can be central to this, and needs to support long-term learning strategies, and work with other influences, including those of family and peers. The wider concept of human capital helps bridge the gap between those who emphasise education's economic mission, and those who emphasise broader social and personal benefits. This chapter proposes policy directions for building wider human capital, and outlines a supporting research and evaluation agenda."

The full report can be downloaded from the website of the OECD [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org) (May require a fee)

### Meeting of the Expert Group

European Social Partners. The remit of the Group includes the development of lifelong models of guidance addressing issues such as quality of provision, access to services, and the European dimension of both. At the first meeting on December 12 and 13, 2002 the EU policy context and the results to date of the OECD international review of career guidance were presented to participants as were comparable data from both EU and future Member States that did not take part in the OECD Review. It is envisaged that the Group will meet four times in 2003. From March 10th, Readers who wish to follow and/or contribute to the work of the Expert Group can join the Virtual Community that has been established to support the Expert Group. The address is: [http://cedefop.communityzero.com/lifelong\\_guidance](http://cedefop.communityzero.com/lifelong_guidance)

### Guidance in EU Programmes 2003-2004

The priority actions in guidance, supported annually by EU Programmes, reflect the importance attached to certain aspects of education, training and employment policy at the time of the Call for Proposals for such programmes. Currently the following should be of interest to readers:

**COMENIUS (SOCRATES)** Support is provided for multilateral cooperation projects concerning interalia "training activities and information exchange concerning school management and related services such as guidance and counselling".

**GRUNDTVIG (SOCRATES)** Support is provided for transnational projects and initiatives that seek to promote "the development of information and support services for adult learners and for providers of adult education, including services related to guidance and counselling".

**Accompanying Measures (SOCRATES)** Community financial assistance may be awarded under the Accompanying Measures action for other initiatives aimed at promoting the objectives of the programme that would not be eligible under the other seven actions including for "transnational activities carried out by associations and other non-governmental bodies active in the field of education, as well as bodies concerned with educational guidance and counselling".

#### LEONARDO DA VINCI Programme

Support is provided for pilot projects focusing on :

- Training of counsellors
- New approaches in systems and methods to help individuals achieve employment and employability through personal lifelong learning guidance
- Improving careers information on new occupations through the exchange with labour market information providers and identification of transferable skills to broaden career choices for individuals
- Innovative partnership approaches to providing career and learning

development plans, in particular for workers in need of re-training or up-grading of their skills in view of career development and for older workers.

For Reference Material projects the following will be supported:

- Evaluation of existing resources : definition and development of methodologies and experimental tools for analysing needs and resources at regional level
- Comparative analysis of Member States' guidance systems, with a focus on innovative practice
- Comparative analysis of Member States' investment in guidance activities
- Analysis of the impact of guidance provisions on pre-defined target groups.

One hopes that the current importance attached to guidance as a priority for action in EU Programmes and policies will be matched by expressions of interest by guidance practitioners, trainers, associations, organizations and policymakers at national level throughout Europe. The national agency for the SOCRATES and LEONARDO Programmes in Ireland is Leargas.

*John McCarthy is currently on secondment from NCGE to the Vocational Training Policy Unit of the Directorate General for Education and Culture. He works on policy development and programme administration.*

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# guidanceEuro



## PLOTEUS

### A Guide to Navigation!

#### Portal on Learning Opportunities Throughout the European Space

In addition to standing for the 'Portal on Learning Opportunities Throughout the European Space', the name **PLOTEUS** chosen for the portal indicates a guide to navigation in ancient Greek. What better name for a portal linking to learning opportunities in all EU, EEA and pre-accession countries. As a member of the EUROGUIDANCE Network funded by the Leonardo da Vinci programme, EUROGUIDANCE at NCGE staff have been busy classifying links to all learning opportunities in Ireland. Links to Universities, Institutes of Technology, Teacher Training Colleges, and HETAC accredited Higher Education Institutions are classified by subject, education level and location. Databases of training and education opportunities are presented where relevant (Department of Education and Science Education Provider Locator, FÁS etc.). General information links in relation to the structure of the Irish system and studying in Ireland are also classified for the searchable portal.

All countries are presented in the same manner and users can search throughout Europe for a course in a specific area – bringing a new meaning to broadening your options! Ploteus will not only be useful to guidance counsellors and citizens looking for opportunities in other countries but also as European citizens looking for opportunities in their own countries.

Formally launched on the 5th March 2003, PLOTEUS is a resource for all the citizens of Europe and beyond. EUROGUIDANCE at NCGE would appreciate your feedback as users! For further information, a European Commission information note on PLOTEUS is available from NCGE. info@ncge.ie

www.ploteus.net



### European Policy Context for National Strategy Development in Guidance

Very significant attention has been paid to the need for quality guidance provision in Member States in policy statements emanating from the Commission since 2000. Both the Memorandum (2000) and Communication on Lifelong Learning (2001) identified guidance as a key component of any national lifelong learning strategy and as a priority for action. This was also reflected in the European Report on Quality Indicators of Lifelong Learning (2002). A work programme agreed by Member States to improve the quality of education and training systems in Europe (with guidance as an integral part), known as the Objectives (2001) process, was approved by the heads of EU governments meeting in Barcelona last March.

Member States, future Member States and EEA Countries have endorsed the lifelong learning approach, the Objectives approach, and the need for increased European co-operation in vocational education and training through Resolutions and Declarations at meetings of European Ministers of Education. On November 30 at Copenhagen the Declaration of Ministers of Education called, inter alia, for the strengthening of policies, systems and practices for information, guidance and counselling as an initial priority. The role of guidance in workforce competency development was stressed in the Action Plan for Skills and Mobility (2002). The recent Joint Employment Report 2001 highlighted the need for Member States to pay attention to measures such as advice and guidance services and such is also reflected in the Joint Statements of the European Public Employment Services (2002).

These statements provide the EU policy context and framework within which Member States, future Member States and EEA draw up their own national strategies and policies. They also provide the framework for action at European level such as those outlined here.

## Guidance:

### Central Role of Careers OECD Education Policy

The following is a summary extract from the recently published OECD analysis of education policy, Chapter Five, entitled Rethinking Human Capital:

"Investment in human capital is now seen as central to the development of advanced economies and democratic societies. This chapter suggests that there is more to human capital than the more readily measurable and very important literacy, numeracy and workplace skills. Educational attainment and readily measurable skills account for less than half of individual wage differences in OECD countries. Part of the remainder may be explained by a "wider" form of human capital, defined as the characteristics that allow a person to build, manage and deploy his /her skills. These include the ability and the motivation to learn, effective job search skills, and personal characteristics that help one work well, as well as the capacity to blend a successful life with a good career. Individuals need to learn how to manage

### Lifelong Guidance: First European Commission's

Arising from the European policy context for lifelong learning, for the improvement of the quality of education and training systems in Europe, and for increased co-operation in Europe in the field of vocational education and training, the European Commission has established an **Expert Group to examine issues relating to the provision of lifelong guidance services in the Member States and Candidate Countries** in a lifelong learning framework. Twenty five experts from the Member States and Candidate Countries were invited to participate representing a range of stakeholders such as education and labour ministry officials, International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance, European Parents Association, European Consumers Association, European Youth Forum,

# guidanceGeneral

## So What do You Think?

### Results of Customer Satisfaction Survey for Post Primary Guidance Counsellors

The results of the customer satisfaction research focusing on clients at post primary level are in general positive for NCGE. While there are specific recommendations for improvement of services and for focus on particular areas, the message emerging is very encouraging. 87 questionnaires out of a possible 750 were returned, giving a response rate of 12%. Though this may seem quite low, postal questionnaires without follow up calls and reminders do not normally yield a high response rate.

#### Information, Advice & Support

Two thirds of respondents have accessed NCGE for information, advice or support on a guidance/education issue. The average satisfaction rating for this service was high at 3.35 from a possible 4. Over half of those who rated their satisfaction with the service gave it a 4 out of 4 rating. Many of those who had not accessed the service, felt they had no need to as yet (access information directly from relevant source, receive adequate information from NCGE). However for some, confusion over NCGE's role and services provided has prevented them accessing the services. This need for clarification is addressed under the recommendations below. Comments received on the NCGE information, advice and support service were in general very positive e.g. 'very supportive', 'more than helpful and informative', 'I was ecstatic about the answers I was getting'.

#### NCGE Publications

NCGE publications proved an essential part of the NCGE service to guidance counsellors at post primary level. A small number of respondents had not accessed NCGE's information, advice and support service, as they felt that they received adequate information from NCGE through mailings etc. The most widely known publications are the Guidance Counsellor's Handbook, Guidelines for the Practice of Guidance and Counselling in Schools and NCGE News. All three receive very high usefulness ratings. 11 of the 13 publications listed received an average usefulness rating of 3 or more out of

a possible 4. 86% of respondents who chose to comment on the publications either made positive comments on existing publications or requested more frequent information/updates or copies of the material.

#### www.ncge.ie

60% of respondents had accessed the NCGE website. It received a usefulness rating of 2.7. The questionnaires were returned over a time period when the NCGE website was re-developed, therefore it is unclear whether respondents were referring to the current or previous website. However, all suggestions and comments have been taken on board to formulate recommendations for the improvement of the website.

#### European Activities

A need for relevant promotion of NCGE's European activities emerges from the lower levels of awareness and usefulness ratings for the EU funded projects and other European activities. This aside, it is positive to note that nearly two-thirds of respondents are aware of the Leonardo da Vinci 'Exchange of Guidance Counsellors' mobility project and 40% were aware of the EU funded 'Virtual Learning Environment' pilot project. Over half of the respondents are aware of NCGE's role as a member of the Leonardo da Vinci funded EUROGUIDANCE Network of National Resource Centres for Guidance. 14% of guidance counsellors have accessed information on opportunities in other European countries through NCGE's function as a EUROGUIDANCE centre.

#### Future Publications

There were 92 suggestions for future publications. Some of these topics are previously covered through NCGE publications, are part of work-in-progress or can be sourced from other organizations. An appendix to the full report deals with each individually, with recommendations for NCGE where appropriate.

#### General Recommendations

General recommendations include the following:

- Development of an active PR strategy defining NCGE's role, targeted at new and existing guidance counsellors
- Development of agreed standards of provision for advice, information and support role to guidance counsellors
- Development of the NCGE website as an active resource for guidance practitioners (explore possibilities of publishing NCGE News and the Guidance Counsellors Handbook online)
- NCGE's European activities (including it's role as a EUROGUIDANCE centre) should be included in the overall PR strategy. Information should concentrate on the relevance of EU projects for Irish practitioners.
- Existing NCGE publications should be directly promoted (focusing on the relevance of content) to all guidance counsellors through regular mailings, to newly appointed guidance counsellors and also to students of guidance and counselling.
- NCGE's role and activities should be clarified in the light of requests for specific careers and course information. Specific information materials in the GC Handbook and other publications (useful websites etc.) should be updated regularly.

These recommendations have emerged from each section of the research results. In particular they have emerged from focusing on: suggestions given for improvement, reasons why guidance counsellors have not used NCGE's services and negative comments on the service. While the results in general are very encouraging, in order to maintain and indeed improve customer satisfaction levels, these recommendations will be considered carefully and acted upon.

For a full copy of the report and recommendations contact: info@ncge.ie

NCGE welcome feedback on any of its services at any time.

Contact: info@ncge.ie  
NCGE (01) 8690715

# guidance Primary - Post Primary

## 'Moving In' and 'Moving Out' - Transfer

Transfer from first to second-level schooling has been shown to be a demanding time for both students and their families (Naughton 1998, Reay and Lucey 2000). For students it involves a triple transition: the move from the familiar school culture to a new one, the informal move from established friendships and peer groups to new peer groupings at second level and the coincidental, developmental move from childhood to adolescence (Hargreaves, Earl and Ryan 1996). Yet, little attention has been paid to the issue of transfer in the academic and educational discourse in Ireland although elsewhere it has been shown to be a complex process. It is a process that is mediated by a complex web of in-school and out of school factors. It is characterised on the one hand, by structures at national and local level and the particularities of individual schools (Hargreaves, Earl and Ryan 1996). It is also shaped by students' own individuality, their social class, ethnicity, gender and the resources of their families (Reay and Lucey 2001).

Department of Education and Science funded research explored parents', teachers' and students' perceptions of the transfer from first to second-level schooling in a variety of types of schools and locations. This study sought to understand how students perceived the academic, emotional and social challenges that they had to negotiate as they left their familiar primary school and moved into territory of the second-level school. It also listened to how teachers at both first and second-levels felt about their students' transition and the difficulties that they believed characterised this move. It drew on the experiences of parents as they supported and managed their children through this educational disjuncture. In this short article we will just highlight some of the key findings of the study in relation to this complex transition.

### • School Choice is starkly shaped by classed identities

Social class boundaries are re-produced and institutionalised rather than transformed at transfer. Students in 'advantaged schools' and from more middle-class type backgrounds maintain social and academic

advantage by moving into second-level middle-class schools even if or when this means travelling distances and making the difficult choice of going it alone. Students from working-class backgrounds invariably moved to the local; from the disadvantaged primary schools to designated disadvantaged second-level schools with their peer groups from primary school. Although the social was regarded as important by all students it was of critical importance to working-class students. They needed familiar faces at transfer for both their sense of safety and for their sense of identity in moving to an unfamiliar institution and system.

### • The Organisation of Learning at Second-Level: Loony or Swot

At primary level it is uncommon for schools to stream students although setting does occur and was found in one large primary school in the study for English, Irish and Maths. Second-level schools varied considerably in how they allocated students to classes in first year. Indeed quite a number of students and their parents were unclear about these procedures. Of the thirty-five schools in our sample, boys single-sex schools were the most likely to differentiate students on the basis of academic ability in first year and girls single sex-schools were the least likely with the community schools varying according to the class composition of the school. Students in lower streams in their new second-level schools frequently expressed feelings of low-esteem and a sense of academic and social exclusion from their schools. They used words like 'less bright', 'stupid' and 'slow' to characterise themselves and this tended to be reinforced by their peers in higher streams. The data indicates that allocation of students to classes on the basis of ability grouping on transfer is emotionally, academically and socially risky (see Lynch and Lodge 2002). Students internalised these constructions of their abilities and identified themselves as other or less worthy. Even though schools must cater to a wide range of academic abilities, such institutionalised discrimination is not helpful to students at this time of challenge and adjustment. Working-class students are

vulnerable to exclusion and to alienation from the academic and in order to preserve their self-esteem 'moving on' may lead to a need to 'move out'; the transfer experience may lay the seeds of this exclusion.

### • School Transfer Programmes, Communication and Transfer Experiences

It was clear from students', teachers' and parents' perceptions that schools varied in the attention they paid to the transfer process, the resources that they had at their disposal to focus on student transfer and the knowledge they had about the impact of their policies on the process. It was clear that disadvantaged schools which were a part of the Home/School/Community Liaison Scheme had implemented transfer programmes to support students to settle into their new second-level schools. The focus of these schemes was to work with parents to create awareness about the transition and its importance in their children's education, to work with school staff to explore and create strategies that would support students, and most importantly, to act as a liaison and to increase communication between the primary and second-level schools. This was a highly important task as teachers frequently indicated that there was an absence of meaningful dialogue between first and second-level schools, lack of clarity and understanding of each others roles, and lack of information about the operation of the two school systems. Teachers suggested that this posed a serious barrier to how well students transferred to second-level and their subsequent progress at school.

### • Social Hierarchy, Patriarchy and Intimidation

The social relations in all second-level schools were visibly hierarchical and first years were left in no doubt that they were at the bottom. This behaviour was not confined to particular types of schools nor was it gender specific. Students, regardless of their gender, and the gender of their school, were subjected to verbal and physical intimidation. First years were skipped in line for lunch, pushed around in locker areas, toilet spaces and play and recreation areas. This was often done at a subtle level and first years would

# guidance Euro

## Why Not Volunteer?

### Áine Byrne, Léargas, overviews European opportunities to volunteer.

In 2002 the International Year of Volunteering, the Volunteer Resource Centre' produced a publication called "social climbing?" the purpose of which was to promote "Volunteering", specifically targeting young people. This is the opening paragraph from that publication.

*"If you think "social climbing" is about Prada, BMW and WAP mobiles you are wrong. And whoever said "you can't blame the system" was right. Social climbing is a matter of individual integrity rather than competition to amass materials, and we are responsible for the system by which we live, so we can hardly blame anyone else for that."*

In this context, 'volunteering' can be seen as a challenge to a selfish world and empowers people to make positive choices about the kinds of lives they want to lead and the kind of world they want to live in.

Volunteering has many guises, everyone is different, and the voluntary commitments which people are in a position to make, will vary from person to person.

Based in Léargas - The Exchange Bureau, one programme which receives funding from the European Commission promoting the volunteering ideal is called "European

Voluntary Service" or EVS. This is an initiative which promotes volunteering on the international level, and offers young people funding for their travel, food & accommodation as well as a pocket money allowance during a period of volunteering abroad.

The target audience for EVS are young people between eighteen and twenty-five at the time of application and who must become a volunteer for a period of between six and twelve months. There is also the provision (where a young person is considered disadvantaged) for a shorter volunteering period.

One Irish Volunteer after six months in Holland with EVS, had the following to say about his experience; *"To try and evaluate my experience in a few words is not possible, I can say that the EVS experience should be realised by all young people. To live in and experience a different culture and their methods of working is something that will only help you in the future and I believe, make you a better person"*.

European Voluntary Service is a great option for young people who are not sure what exactly they want to do in life, and also for those who do; for those who just want a change in life; for those with definite skills, and those who

haven't yet learned to appreciate the skills which they have. It is by no means the only option for young people to enter the world of volunteering and it won't suit everybody. However for young people who avail of this chance, as with all volunteering ultimately you gain more than you give.

**Volunteering In Ireland**  
[www.volunteeringireland.com](http://www.volunteeringireland.com) A useful starting place with links to hundreds of voluntary organisations, and a matching service between prospective volunteers and voluntary organisations.

[www.comhairle.ie](http://www.comhairle.ie) national support agency responsible for the provision of information, advice and advocacy to members of the public on social services.  
[www.2003worldgames.com](http://www.2003worldgames.com) Volunteer for the Special Olympics in Ireland

**International Volunteering & Information**  
[www.leargas.ie/youth](http://www.leargas.ie/youth) Information about the Youth Programme & EVS in Ireland  
[www.sosforevs.org](http://www.sosforevs.org) Database where hosting projects in all the EVS participating countries can be found  
[www.sunset-blvd.org](http://www.sunset-blvd.org) Information website to inform and prepare European Volunteers  
[www.sciint.org](http://www.sciint.org) The Voluntary Services International website  
[www.unesco.org/ccivs](http://www.unesco.org/ccivs) Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service  
[www.avso.org](http://www.avso.org) Association of voluntary service organisations  
[www.yap.org](http://www.yap.org) Youth Action for Peace

1 - The Volunteer Resource Centre was set up in 1997 by Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups, Ireland's largest centre for Voluntary Organisations.

## Home and Away ..... Useful Resources for Guidance Counsellors in Ireland and Abroad

A copy of the EUROGUIDANCE at NCGE leaflet 'Ireland: Researching your Options, Higher Education, Further Education and Training Opportunities' was sent to every post primary school in Autumn 2002. The leaflet is intended as a resource booklet for those who are exploring their third level options in Ireland. It is targeted at citizens in other European countries who are considering pursuing third level opportunities in Ireland. By giving an overview of the types of education and training available, the leaflet sought to bridge the information gap until the launch of PLOTEUS - Portal for Learning Opportunities Throughout the European Space (see article on Ploteus) which will provide similar information on Ireland in a searchable format. The leaflet gives websites for colleges, universities, training providers and the Central Applications Office (CAO) which can provide more detailed information on the opportunities available. Copies of 'Ireland: Researching your Options'



have been distributed to more than 50 EUROGUIDANCE centres in 30 countries to spread the word on third level education and training opportunities in Ireland.

For Irish Guidance Counsellors, the leaflet is

a useful resource for distribution at Junior Cycle when young people are beginning to think about third level education and training opportunities. For this purpose the text of the leaflet can be viewed on the NCGE website <http://www.ncge.ie> (under EUROGUIDANCE) and the leaflet itself can be downloaded in PDF format for photocopying purposes.

Also of interest to guidance practitioners both at home and away is the series of EUROGUIDANCE at NCGE factsheets including the following:

- Applying to College in Ireland
  - The Education System in Ireland
  - Guidance in Ireland
  - Working in Ireland
  - English Language Requirements
  - Comparability of Irish and UK Qualifications
- All are available on the NCGE website under EUROGUIDANCE



## www.youthinformation.ie

The Youth Information Website is an informative and visually attractive web site that provides information to young people and to those working with them, on a wide range of subjects. These subjects include careers, education, employment matters, rights and entitlements, leisure, sport, travel and European opportunities.

It has direct links to all Youth Information Centres around the country and has an impressive interactive map that outlines your nearest Youth Information Centre. These centres are a valuable resource to any young person seeking information, on any subject interest or concern. For those unable to physically access their nearest centre, this web site provides links to the centres web sites and provides an e-mail address where you can process your query. Having tried this out, I found the response rate to be surprisingly quick. For those browsing the site, take a look at Dunlaoghaire Youth Information Centres web-site link, there are some really great publications on it, which can be easily downloaded, for example: their 'Going to College 2003' is an essential resource for any student and Guidance Counsellor alike!

You will find many essential links to websites, providing practical information about training, working and living abroad as well as details of European programmes and opportunities for young people. The Education & Work Section of the web site links up to many career web sites. It also gives an A-Z of careers and for those working within the adult guidance sector provides information on graduate careers.

The search mechanism within the web site covers many areas of interest. This web site is easy, versatile and very user friendly. So if you want to travel, know your rights, find a flat, do voluntary work or access education, this web site will certainly keep you up to date, informed and provide you with virtually any information need you or your young people may have.

Caroline Duffy  
Adult Educational Guidance Co-ordinator  
Tallaght Adult Guidance Service



## www.skool.ie Review

Skool.ie is an award winning website. A collaboration between AIB Bank, The Irish Times, and Intel Ireland, it is aimed principally at Second level students and their parents. Its declared aim is to be the best interactive online learning resource for Irish students and teachers.

For students, the site certainly has engaging interactive lessons in a limited range of examination subjects, although more are planned. There are comprehensive notes available for a bigger range of subjects at each level, and a useful examination guide, as well as Revision Planners – a great idea. It also offers advice on budgeting and other financial matters.

For teachers, there is an ECDL teaching pack (annoyingly requiring a password from your principal- why not direct access?), some computer tutorials and a range of links to useful sites (the NE Health authority site for young people is worth a look). Parents have access to articles on parenting and third level, and a database of all the second level schools in the country. Probably wisely, it does not give the numbers of students from each school who gained a place in a university last year!

The Career Matters channel has a range of information that could be usefully downloaded by the guidance counsellor. The Irish Times careers articles, and the recent "Going to College" articles are here. A nice feature of the website the "Printable Page" button on each page, for easy and accurate printing.

There is a section on the CAO application process and college website links. There is a search engine for college courses, but it is very disappointing. It just lists all the courses at degree or diploma level in the requested college. It is not possible to find a list of courses across colleges by study area. It would be far better to direct the user to the Qualifax website. There is also a rather random "List of Institutes" offering careers information, which leaves out many important contacts. It has DIT but not DCU, and some ITs, but not others. This should either be improved or wiped.

In summary, this is a site well worth recommending to students looking for study resources. Careers articles apart, it is of more limited use to guidance practitioners.

Arthur Dunne  
Guidance Counsellor  
St. Mary's Diocesan School, Drogheda



## www.education.ie Department of Education and Science Web-Site

Education.ie is clear, accessible and easy to navigate. It branches out into several sections of interest to all partners in education: Parents and Community, Higher Education, Further Education and Government organisations etc. The main page consists of four sections

1. Information by Topic:  
Includes information on:
  - Exams (General information, papers, marketing schemes), Examiner Reports, Syllabus, Curriculum and Teaching Guides.
  - Reports, Publications, Statistics, Legislation and European Programmes
  - And of particular interest to the guidance counsellor, Youth Affairs, Children with Special Needs, NEPS, Social Inclusion
2. Education Provider Locator: a database of providers at all levels
3. What's New? An up-to-date briefing on recent developments, appointments and reports of the DES
4. Highlights e.g. examination time-tables for 2003, DES circulars etc.

The section on NEPS contains information on the scheme for the commissioning of individual psychologists and includes a panel of approved psychologists, particularly relevant to school guidance counsellors. The Special Needs sections deals with resource teaching, special needs assistants, the special education needs of children with disabilities and reports on Dyslexia, Autism, etc. Disadvantage and the Home School Community Liaison Scheme, Special Schools for Young Offenders, the "Stay in School" retention initiative, the Local Drugs Task Force and other similar topics feature under the heading of Social Inclusion.

Education.ie is a web-site you can dip into. Using the search facility you can look up a topic of your choice resulting in various sub links which allow you to check out any subjects related to education. As one would expect there is also a 'Leagan Gaeilge'. The Department encourages users to suggest links that could be made to other sites and there is a facility for feedback on all aspects of the site.

On the down side, for those of us not too computer literate, the computer language might sound like double-dutch. Some documents were not available in electronic form. The documents are available in PDF format and one would require Adobe Acrobat Reader to access these files.

Happy Surfing!  
Muriel Hogan, Guidance Counsellor, Ballinteer Community School

## from First to Second-Level Schooling

not approach teachers in relation to these abuses for fear of being labelled 'a rat'. What is most worrying about these relations is that students were reluctant to name the acts as intimidation or to express their outrage, and although clearly uncomfortable, often reduced this treatment to "just messing" or "it's what they do to first years". Despite the efforts of the schools to implement pastoral care programmes, mentoring and buddy programmes, and prefect systems, interference, disrespect and intimidation towards first years were still routine occurrences.

### • Discipline and Control of the Body

Discipline at primary school was perceived to be a simpler and more relaxed matter. In their last year at primary school, these students had been the "big girls and boys" and were regarded as responsible and grown up at primary school. They were now at the "bottom of the school" and experiencing less control and freedom over their movements. At second-level, first year girls and boys, and in particular those in all-girls' secondary schools, were conscious and sensitive to the policing of their bodies through the strict emphasis on school uniform, hair-style and body jewellery. Trousers for example were unacceptable for girls in secondary schools but were permitted in the community schools with the exception of one community school in a middle-class area. In this study, it appears that while working-class girls found a degree of acceptance in their primary schools due to an accommodation by schools to local and community styles and practices, they are pushed into resistance or conformity on transfer to second-level schools and particularly in single-sex convent schools. Some working-class girls resist attempts to reclassify their feminine identities according to traditional conceptions of femininity and much of this resistance is fought on the site of clothes and appearance.

### • Coping with the Academic after the School-day

One of the commonly mentioned anxieties expressed by students pre-transfer was that they would find it hard to cope with the demands of extra homework and study on entering the more academically oriented second-level system. Indeed, many students

were pleasantly surprised in the first term and acknowledged that in the first few weeks that teachers were probably going easy on them. However, as the year progressed it was clear that more was expected of the first years and the way students met these demands was shaped by their liking of the teacher and/or subject, their fear of the teacher, their parents' expectations and the other demands on their lives outside of school. While not wishing to be over simplistic, the homework issue followed along the lines of social class. All parents wanted the best for their children but middle-class parents had direct experience of the system themselves and also had the resources to help their children with schoolwork. Working-class parents were afraid to push too much. They are well aware of the social cost of academic success in moving away from family and peer group practices (Walkerdine et al 2002). Apart from the psychological and cultural obstacles to working-class students being studious, there are also material obstacles. Students living in poor conditions or in areas where night-time activity was noisy and dangerous and visibly criminal had grave difficulty focussing on their studies. After school groups for homework have some potential but are not immediately attractive to working class student identity.

**In conclusion** we suggest that transfer to second-level schooling is not a process to be taken lightly or indeed for granted. It is a complex transition and can only be understood in terms of its multifaceted nature. It is essential to frame this transition both in terms of structural considerations; the social class of students, the types and nature of school provision and the nature and orientation of the second-level curriculum and modes of assessment and from the point of view of each students individuality; their gendered identities, their emotional and social responses their varying talents and abilities. The data gathered in this study suggest that currently this is not the case. Transfer is a time of emotional and social challenge for many students, but particularly those without the necessary capitals. Although individual schools have implemented policies to settle their first year students, the weight of classed identity is huge. Transfer can herald a step towards moving out while others move on.

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Maeve O'Brien has taught at primary level and been a home/school/community liaison co-ordinator. She is currently one of the Educational Research team at the Marino Institute of Education and pursuing doctoral research in the area of mothers' work in relation to education.

# Guidance Primary - Post Primary

## A Transfer Programme in Action

Guidance Counsellors, Mia Delaney and Della Kent outline the transfer programme run in St. Dominic's in Ballyfermot

The school transfer programme has been devised and organised by the Home School Liaison Co-ordinator in St. Dominic's in conjunction with the H.S.L Co-ordinators in the three Dominican primary schools in Ballyfermot. The transfer programme involves a whole-school approach involving management, staff, parents, guidance counsellors, Transition year students and the Ballyfermot Youth Federation.

The Transfer programme aims to:

- (1) Prepare the students for the challenges they will experience in the transfer from primary to secondary school.
- (2) Mingle and mix groups so that students from different classes and schools get the opportunity to meet and work together.
- (3) Ease the transition process to ensure that students are happy in First Year and make good progress with their studies.

### Before entering First year at St. Dominic's:

(1) **The Transfer programme for incoming first years (March and May)** consists of two strands:

- Small Group Work in St. Dominic's School: Home School Co-ordinators from St. Dominics and the primary schools work with the Ballyfermot Youth Federation to explore three main topics with the students: Change, Friendship, Choices and Consequences. These topics are explored through small group work/ice breakers/games facilitated by Transition Year students over three sessions. For the older students, their participation is related to the Community Care module they cover during Transition year
- Visits to the Primary Schools  
St. Dominics Home School Co-ordinator and some Transition Year students visit the pupils in their primary schools. The subjects including staff roles and day-to-day activities.

The participation of Transition Year Students is vital to this programme. The 6th class students are more likely to talk openly to them. It is also helpful for them to know senior cycle students when they

start in secondary school (role models/mentoring).

### (2) Including Parents of Incoming First Years

An information meeting for parents of incoming first years covers a wide range of topics including: self esteem, role of tutors and year heads, range of subjects, guidance counselling and other supports and after school activities etc.

These presentations are followed by small group work focussing on the hopes/expectations/concerns of parents of incoming 1st year students. Senior students then bring the parents on a tour of the school. After the Parents' Evening - the Principal and Vice Principal have individual meetings with parents.

### (3) Activities with Incoming First Years (May-June)

During the month of May all incoming First Years are brought on a tour of the school. In June, a fun day for all incoming first years, is organised by the HSL Co-ordinator and run by the Transition Year students (games, sports etc.)

### (4) Year Head Liaison with Primary Schools

Year Head visits primary schools in May to meet teachers and students.

### The Role of the Guidance Counsellors in the Transfer Programme:

Both Guidance Counsellors are actively involved in the Transfer Programme.

- Results of the entrance assessments are discussed with primary class teachers to check the reflection of students' abilities. The Primary school teacher also gives background information about students.
- Guidance Counsellors visit primary schools to introduce the concept of Guidance & Counselling - this consists of an activity-based class, helping



'First year students of St. Dominics'

students to start to focus on their futures.

- The guidance counsellors liaise continuously with Principal, Vice-Principal, Year Heads, Tutors, Teachers, Home School Liaison Co-ordinator and Parents during the first year.
- A study skills programme for first years, developed by the Guidance Counsellors, is delivered by Tutors.
- All First Years follow a Guidance Module during the first term and are interviewed by Guidance Counsellors.
- The Principal, Guidance Counsellors, Family Therapist, Bereavement Counsellor, Home School Co-ordinator meet as a counselling team every fortnight to share information and discuss how we best help any student who is experiencing difficulties.
- First Years are encouraged to participate in the New Era Achievement Awards (part of the UCD Access programme).

### While Students are in their First Year:

- (1) *Tutors and Year Head* meet on a weekly basis to discuss students' progress.
- (2) Fifth Year students (previously involved in the pre-first year transfer activities) act as Mentors to First Year classes.
- (3) A *Homework Club* is organised by Mentors to help any one experiencing difficulties with a subject.
- (4) *Credits* are awarded for good behaviour and work- Certificates are presented at the School Awards Ceremony.
- (5) All First Years are encouraged to become actively involved in at least one *after-school activity*.
- (6) All First Years follow the *SPHE programme* - they also have a Drug Awareness and a Bullying Day accompanied by a follow-up programme in the classroom.

The programme is evaluated annually. Suggestions made by current first years will be incorporated into the programme for next years first years.

# Guidance Review

each of the occupations. I did not find some of the suggested occupations very accurate which may have been affected by the time problems experienced by the students during the ability section.

Students can then be given a "Life Planning Guide" to help them carry out further research on possible careers e.g. checklists in researching potential career options, as well as indicating what a candidate may need to develop to take on a chosen career. The Life planning Guide is not included in this review.

On the whole, the majority of the students found the assessment useful, in particular they felt they knew more about themselves.

Gary O' Donovan  
Guidance Counsellor  
Firhouse Community College, Dublin

## Lost for Words, a Practical Guide at Second-Level



By Wyn McCormack  
Published by Veritas.

A newly revised edition of the book, *Lost for Words, a Practical Guide to Dyslexia at Second Level*, the only book on the topic of Dyslexia in Irish Education has just been published. Its objective is to provide practical advice and support for students with dyslexia, their parents and teachers. Although written on dyslexia, much of the content would also be of interest to parents of children with other learning difficulties such as Asperger's Syndrome, Dyspraxia and Attention Deficit Disorder.

The author Wyn McCormack, is a Guidance Counsellor/Resource Teacher, member of the National Executive of the Dyslexia Association of Ireland and a parent of sons with dyslexia. This book is based on her personal and professional experience.

Since the first edition of the book was published in 1998, there have been developments such as new legislation and the Report of the Task Force on Dyslexia. The

Education Act 1998 lays out the principle of equality of access and participation for all students. The report of the Task Force makes recommendations which, when implemented would radically improve the educational experience of students with learning difficulties in Irish schools. This book outlines these new developments.

The book sets out to give parents clear and practical advice on the following:

- Criteria for choosing a second-level school
- Educational Choices, option choices, levels of papers in state exams, choices after the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate
- The student achieve her their potential at second-level
- Support services such as exemptions from available in state exams, the provision of learning support and resource teaching in schools.
- The range of computer programmes and assistive technology available with (websites addresses aand contacts) names.

It discusses the possible support services school should offer including:

- Screening for identification of learning difficulties.
- The development of school policies which include:
  - o Improving communication among staff on individual needs of students
- Alternatives activities for students exempt from Irish
- Assistance at entrance assessment and house exams.
- Study Skills and training in the use of assistive technology if appropriate

Teaching strategies which might help the student's achievement.

For the senior-cycle and third-level student there is a chapter discussing personal strategies for learning.

*Due to unforeseen circumstances it was not possible to have this book reviewed in time for the publication of NCGE News. Instead we have provided a summary of the contents.*

## What do Irish Graduates do?



By Seamus Mc Evoy, Head of Careers UCC.  
Retail Price €14.95.

If as a Guidance Counsellor or Careers Advisor you have ever been asked the following questions: Are there any jobs available? And how much will I expect to get paid? then this book seeks to answer both these and other questions. The book is also beneficial to those students considering applying to third level, or currently studying at third level and serves to inform them about the job prospects pertaining to their qualifications. The statistical information contained in this book is derived from the Higher Education Authority (HEA) report "First destinations of award recipients in Higher Education (2000)".

The first section contains information on the outcomes for all students who graduate, broken down by level of award, i.e. Certificates and Diplomas, Primary Degrees and Postgraduate courses. In the second section the author takes a closer look at the information under general subject groups.

Each subject grouping contains an important resume of factors to consider when choosing for example a science qualification. This is a well thought out summary, which seeks to inform what the job prospects are and indeed what sort of person would best succeed in the given area.

The book includes bar charts and pie charts which speak for themselves. Each section deals with the information under such headings as: what did the class of 2000 do? and what were the starting salaries? to mention just two of the headings.

In summary I would recommend this book for an accurate and up to date overview of employment trends since 1990. The book also provides invaluable information regarding the first destination of graduates at all level in 2000, and outlines clearly what jobs they got and also their starting salaries. This information is crucial to those practising in the area of careers advice.

Jane Byrne,  
Guidance Counsellor,  
Castleknock College.

# Non Formal

## Positive Evaluation of Software Tool for Practitioners in Non-formal Education and Youthwork

Results of a small-scale evaluation of a software tool for practitioners in the non-formal education sector suggest that such a tool in the Irish context could benefit motivation levels in addition to providing useful tips and ideas for work with young people.

Based on career counselling theory, the Canadian 'Career Development Foundation's Circuit Coach software offers information on various themes, activities to use with other staff and also activities to use with the young people themselves. The software aimed at practitioners working with young people in the non-formal sector includes:

- a tutorial on how to respond to an issue
- activities for the practitioner to try themselves or with other staff
- activities you can use with youth

The modular basis of the programme means the user can go through the programme at their own pace.

Samples of the software were sent to 17 youth organisations (YOUTHREACH centres, regional youth federations, youth information centres, youth services, traveller training centres, youth groups). Seven organisations returned an evaluation of the software. It was the aim of the evaluation to explore whether similar software would be useful as an induction/development tool for tutors and youthworkers.

Six of the seven respondents claimed the use of the tool would affect their work. Comments included the following:

- Has provided very useful tips and motivation, and evidence for the existence of "hope".
- Good reminder to refer to theory more often when searching for good practice method.
- I intend to use most of the activities with the trainees in guidance class as an exercise.

- Very pleased about the variety of ideas they presented.

All seven respondents agreed that the process of working with Circuit Coach had been useful to them.

Apart from comments on time constraints for practitioners, and some suggestions on the design of the tool, overall evaluation comments were positive. Again the positive aspects such as stimulating questions, influencing positive mental attitude, increasing motivation, and suggesting good ideas, emerged from responses. It was suggested that the product should focus more on activities and be adapted to the Irish cultural context. Finally, all respondents said they would recommend the use of such a training tool to other practitioners working with young people.

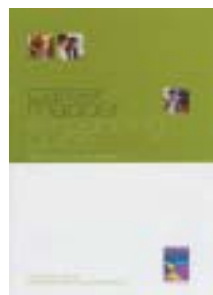
### CONCLUSION:

- **A software based induction tool for youthworkers and tutors working in YOUTHREACH or similar programmes could be very useful. All seven of the respondents felt using the present tool was a useful experience for them, all seven would recommend it to others working with young people.**
- **The main impact of the tool was to stimulate thought and new ideas, and also to motivate practitioners.**
- **A similar tool with Irish content could be useful to practitioners working in the non-formal education and youth sector.**

**Overall, the small evaluation project supports the use of a software based induction and training tool for those working with young people, the tool should include both theory and practical activities and should be focussed on the Irish context.**

# Review

## Career Mapper Prevue 2000 Assessment Test



Distributed in Ireland by Goldsmith Fitzgerald, Arran Quay, Dublin PH: 01 8726656

Career Mapper has been developed from an assessment tool called Prevue 2000. It is widely used by managers in the work place to support human resource management decisions around selection, training promotion and team building. It can be used with students aged 16 and older.

The Prevue assessment is designed to measure a number of important factors relevant to the workplace – abilities, interests and personality. The ability test consists of three sections: numerical ability, verbal and abstract reasoning. I used the test with 10 leaving certificate students all of whom are hoping to attempt at least 4 higher level papers. Students found the standard of questions satisfactory but all had difficulty completing them on time e.g. 48 verbal reasoning questions to do in 8 minutes. However, each of the ability tests are designed so that most people taking the test will not complete all questions. The interest test was satisfactory and measured students suitability in working with people, data and things. The personality test measured 12 scales on the themes of independence, conscientiousness extroversion and stability. Working characteristics measured attitudes to risk, change and to the world of work as well as to work itself.

The test took approximately 90 minutes to administer at a cost of €50 per student. The test can be scored very quickly using the software which costs €127, a one off cost. Each student received a detailed 12 page report which I found very useful. A manual is available for guidance counselors who would like to give feedback to students in a group setting.

Career Mapper compares the results of the evaluation with the requirements for the variety of jobs described in "Occupations 2000". Percentage scores were given indicating the degree to which results match

# Post Primary

## TESTING: Training, Training Needs and Usage

Issue 16 of NCGE News featured a positive evaluation of the assessment testing process by senior cycle students. In general, students enjoyed completing the tests, considered results and feedback useful and found the process of completing assessment tests and receiving results and feedback a useful experience for them (see issue 16).

A questionnaire focussing on the training of guidance counsellors in assessment testing, their current usage of tests and their training needs was distributed with the same issue of NCGE News. The questionnaire was distributed to 750 schools and 20% (148) of guidance counsellors responded to the questionnaire. This is considered to be a good response rate for a postal survey and indicates the importance guidance counsellors attribute to the area of testing.

### TRAINING AND TRAINING NEEDS

89% of guidance counsellors who responded, report having had initial training covering at least one of the aptitude tests listed in the questionnaire. 72% reported initial training in at least one of the interest tests listed and 74% in the personality tests listed. In relation to in-service training in the tests listed, 15% of guidance counsellors who responded received training covering at least one of the aptitude tests, 36% covering at least one of the interest tests and 38% in the personality tests.

Respondents were asked to rate in order of importance their training needs on five different elements of tests training: Test Administration, Test Scoring, Reliability and Validity, Test Feedback and Test Report Writing. Figure 1 shows the result.



Fig 1.

From the graph test feedback and test report writing emerge as the areas where there is the biggest need for training. However, all of the categories received a rating above 2.5 which indicates that all are important to guidance counsellors.

A wide range of tests were suggested under 'like to use' and 'require training in'.

Reasons indicated for wanting to use these tests can be categorised into four areas:

- Helping students to make informed decisions
- Getting a full profile of the student, his/her abilities, interests and personality,

- Identification and support of weaker students and students with behavioural difficulties

- As a tool in the counselling process – problem identification, referral.

### TEST USAGE

89% of guidance counsellor respondents are using at least one of the aptitude tests listed currently, 80% at least one of the interest tests listed and 44% the personality tests. The most commonly currently used tests (from the list of tests provided) for each category are detailed in the tables below.

(Continued on Page 8)

Aptitude Tests	
Test	% using
Differential Aptitude Test (DATS)	71
AH2/3	52
Drumcondra Reasoning Test	30
AH4	15
Non-Reading Intelligence Test	10
Drumcondra Reading Test	8

Interest Tests	
Test	% using
Rothwell Miller Interest Blank	47
Career Interest Inventory	24
Rothwell Miller Values Blank	19
Jobscan	12
Discourse	11
Centigrade	10

Personal Problem Resolution / Personality Tests	
Test	% using
Mooney Problem Checklist	9
The Porteous Checklist	7
Beck Depression Inventory	5
Myres Briggs Type Indicator	3
16PF	3
Problem Analysis Checklist	2

# guidance Post Primary

(From Page 7)

## Guidance Counsellors' Comments on Testing

The last section of the questionnaire asked for any additional comments in relation to testing. Comments can be categorised under a number of headings:

### Suggestions (further training)

- Test administration, feedback and interpretation
- Report writing
- Legal issues
- Confidentiality issues
- Guidelines to assist guidance counsellors identify appropriate tests
- Updates and handouts on training through the Inspectorate and NCGE
- In-service on the most used/valid/reliable tests
- Refresher courses
- Training in tests for identifying learning difficulties and literacy problems
- Evaluation of interest inventories being used

### Suggestions (resources)

- Establishment of cell groups of guidance counsellors to pool resources
- Revision of grant allocation to schools from the Department of Education and Science

### Suggestions (tests)

- Establish Irish norms for tests
- Norms on existing tests to be updated

### WHAT NOW?

NCGE would like to thank all the guidance counsellors who returned the completed questionnaires. The findings of the questionnaire will inform discussion at meetings of the trainers, DES, IGC and the NCGE.



## Guidance Enhancement Initiative: Briefing Seminar for Principals

### BACKGROUND

103 schools benefited from the Guidance Enhancement Initiative (G.E.I.) in Autumn 2001. The posts were allocated under three strands

- Promoting the uptake of science at senior cycle
- Establishing links with businesses and the local community
- Targeting disadvantage in the school.

One year after the Initiative commenced it was considered timely to organise a Seminar for Principals of Schools participating in the Initiative as each school was in the process of reviewing and evaluating the Initiative. The Seminar served as a forum for the exchange of ideas and development of best practice in the implementation of the Initiative. The School Guidance Planning formed an important part of the Seminar as planning is an essential part of the Guidance Enhancement Initiative, and also the provision of guidance in general.

### BRIEFING SEMINAR

The Briefing Seminar was held in All Hallows College, Dublin on the 26th September 2002. Principals of all the schools participating in the initiative were invited to attend the Briefing Seminar. Sixty seven attended. The Seminar was opened by Ms. Sile de Valera, Minister for State at the Department of Education and Science, who said "the initiative is an acknowledgement of the critical role that guidance and counselling plays in providing students with an understanding and experience of the potential of further education, the world of work and the changing nature of the workplace."

Presentations on the Role of the Principal in the GEI and School Guidance Planning were made by the National Association of

Principals & Deputies (NAPD) and School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI). In addition, three of the schools (one representing each strand of the Initiative) each gave a 10 minute presentation on how the Initiative was being implemented and progressing in their schools. It was hoped that this would provoke discussion and serve to fuel new ideas. In the afternoon the group was divided in three subgroups each subgroup examining a strand of the GEI: promoting science, links with business and local community and targeting.

### OUTCOMES

Principals found the Briefing Seminar to be very useful and worthwhile. There was a great exchange of ideas and many reported that they had much to take back to their schools. The presentation on School Guidance Planning was reported as especially useful and many Principals left the Seminar with a better understanding of the need to plan and the importance of evaluation and monitoring of the Initiative.

Further information concerning the Seminar is available from Linda Darbey, Project Officer, NCGE.



Sile de Valera, Minister for State of the Department of Education & Science

# guidance Non Formal

## Focus on Guidance for Social Inclusion - Guidance for Young People outside the Formal Education System

It is now two years since the NCGE/YOUTHSTART conference 'Future Directions: Guidance as a Force for Social Inclusion' in Malahide (2000). NCGE's 'Focus on Guidance for Social Inclusion' was aimed at providing a forum for practitioners and policy makers to discuss developments in the two years since then, and to focus on current issues in this area. NCGE chairperson Ed Riordan introduced the seminar by giving a brief overview of the recommendations of the conference - the Malahide 10 Commandments.

An overview of research on the provision of guidance for young people outside the formal education system, and initiatives aimed at training those who work with early school leavers and young people at risk in non-formal guidance and counselling skills, was given by Sarah Ryan of NCGE. The four-tier model of guidance provision proposed in the NCGE/YOUTHSTART research 'Reaching Out' was discussed. The model proposes that each project or programme should have access to the following elements of guidance:

(1) Modules based on personal and social development, career information, job search skills and work experience as part of the programme. Training in frontline guidance and counselling skills for staff, information on relevant community agencies and services.

(2) Access to career guidance and counselling and personal counselling by qualified personnel who visit on a regular basis. Guidelines and standards on acceptable qualifications and quantity of provision.

(3) Access to specialised psychological services on referral as an integral part of provision. Clear access routes and access procedures

In addition, a fourth 'community' level is included in the model, which looks at the wider community and possible links and networks with other organisations, who either provide for the same target group or provide some aspect of guidance and counselling to a related or wider target group.

Working with young people outside the formal education system was presented from the view of guidance practitioner Lucy Hearne. Lucy gave an overview of her work in 3 YOUTHREACH centres in Clare which included:

- provision of the LCA guidance module and FETAC (NCVA) personal effectiveness programmes



- one-to-one guidance counselling
- education, training & careers information
- networking & developing referral systems
- being an active member of 3 YOUTHREACH staff teams.

Currently Lucy works as an Adult Educational Guidance Worker in the Regional Educational Guidance Service for Adults in Waterford, and drew comparisons between working with young people outside mainstream education and working with adults. Provision must be long-term and consistent in order to have impact - 'We are Empowering people to take control of their learning'

Taking a more long-term view was also one of the challenges to policy makers presented by Dermot Stokes, National Co-ordinator of YOUTHREACH. Following an overview of 'what we have learned' so far, three sets of challenges were presented to policy makers, for systems and for practitioners. For policy makers the challenges include: building an integrated system, recognising new roles and qualifications, staff induction training and ongoing staff development and adequate resources.

Issues such as staff burnout, boundaries for practitioners, supervision and family counselling were brought up at the open discussion and addressed by panel members. The importance of pre-entry and post-exit guidance for young people in this target group and also for adult returners was emphasised. Although not the focus of the seminar, initiatives to prevent the social exclusion of young people and prevent early school leaving were briefly discussed.

### Available from NCGE:

- Future Directions - Guidance as Force for Social Inclusion (Conference Proceedings)
- My Name's Not Down - Video produced by young people who have left school early on their experience of guidance (shown as part of the above conference)
- Reaching Out ..... Analysis of the Provision of Guidance and Support Services by Projects/Programmes for Early School Leavers and Young People at Risk in Ireland - NCGE/YOUTHSTART Research Report
- Training YOUTHREACH Staff in Non-formal Guidance Skills - NCGE/YOUTHSTART Final Project Report
- Database of Guidance and Support Services for Young People - available as part of NCGE's website <http://www.ncge.ie>

### Other useful resources

- [Http://www.youthreach.ie](http://www.youthreach.ie) National Website of the YOUTHREACH programme
- 'Summary of All Initiatives Funded by the Department to help alleviate Educational Disadvantage' - Downloadable from <http://www.education.ie> Document Bank
- <http://www.sttc.org/> National Co-ordination Unit for Senior Traveller Training Centres
- <http://www.fas.ie> Information on FÁS community training workshops
- <http://www.breakingthrough.org> An all-Ireland network to promote effective interventions with young people at risk



# guidance

## Non Formal

### Youthreach: Programmes, Progression, and Guidance

Research on the provision of certification by VEC YOUTHREACH centres, Community Training Workshops and Senior Traveller Training Centres has revealed the popularity of practically oriented subjects, and a shift from labour market to education/training in the destination of Junior Certificate students. The research published by the National Co-ordinators of YOUTHREACH focussed on three areas: provision of programmes towards certification in all three strands of YOUTHREACH centres, results obtained by those sitting the Junior Certificate in 2001 and current status of the trainees who sat the Junior Certificate in 2001. Similar research was carried out based on the 1998, 1999 and 2000 exam years and research results are compared throughout the full report.

#### Junior Certificate

28% of the centres surveyed provide a programme leading to the Junior Certificate examination. Though the provision of the Junior Certificate programme has suffered a decline over the four years of the research, the average number of subjects taken by each trainee has increased. The core subjects of English and Maths along with practically oriented subjects (materials technology, home economics, art, craft and design) are the most popular with trainees. Many trainees receive high grades: in Maths, 16% of trainees achieved A grades, in Materials Technology 10% achieved an A grade, in History 9% and in both English and Art, Craft and Design, 7% of trainees achieved A grades. Over the four years of this research, 100% of the trainees who sat the Junior Certificate paper in Materials Technology achieved a grade D or higher – there has been a zero failure rate. This high pass rate compares favourably with the Department of Education and Science figures on Junior Certificate Materials Technology examination results based on all examination candidates in 2001, where there was a 4.5% failure rate (Source: Department of Education and Science Statistics section, 2002).

#### Progression: Education Vs. Labour Market

12% of trainees who sat Junior Certificate examinations in 2001 were at the time of the survey, participating in a programme toward more Junior Certificate exams. This reflects the unique way in which

YOUTHREACH centres can accommodate the needs of young people that cannot be responded to by the mainstream system (e.g. taking junior certificate subjects in a staggered way). In all, 40% of trainees who took Junior Certificate Examinations in 2001 were involved in some sort of education or training at the time of the survey (Junior Certificate, Leaving Cert Applied, FETAC (NCVA), Further Education and Training, Leaving Certificate or other certification). When compared to the previous years results, this figure represents a swing back toward education and away from the labour market as a destination for post Junior Certificate trainees: In the previous year, 34% of trainees whose results and current status were analysed for the research, were in some type of employment after their Junior Certificate. After Junior Cert 2001 only 22% were in employment. In all 40% of trainees are in some type of education after Junior Cert 2001, this has jumped from a figure of 27% after JC 2000.

#### FETAC (NCVA)

The NCVA programme has proved to be the most popular certification provided. Modules leading to FETAC (NCVA) certification are provided by over four-fifths of centres surveyed. 78 different modules are offered in the 94 centres providing modules towards NCVA certification. When looking at the modules provided, certain subject areas emerge as more popular, in particular modules relating to 'personal, social and health development/education' and 'maths and IT'. Again the leaning toward practically oriented subjects is evident in the take-up of FETAC (NCVA) modules.



Students from Kilkenny Youthreach receiving certificates (pictured with Mayor of Kilkenny & former Youthreach Co-ordinator Pauline Stone)

#### Guidance

Four of the FETAC (NCVA) modules provided are career related. Preparation for work is provided by 25% of centres, Work Orientation is provided by 19%, Career Information by 15% and Work Experience by 14% of the centres who responded. There is an emphasis on labour market preparation in this group of modules. This reflects findings of NCGE's research into the provision of guidance and counselling for early school leavers (Reaching Out, 2000), where the majority of respondents were providing careers information, job search skills, and work experience (91%, 94% and 95% respectively), however the level of provision of career counselling and psychometric testing to aid in career choices was much lower (39% and 38% respectively). Whereas the information was readily available, it is the guidance in making these choices, which was found to be lacking. Given the 'swing' towards progression to further education and training rather than the labour market, information on, and exploration of educational and training options is also essential.

The full report 'Provision of Junior Certificate, NCVA and Leaving Certificate Programmes 2001 in VEC YOUTHREACH Centres, Community Training Workshops & Senior Traveller Training Centres' is available on the YOUTHREACH website <http://www.youthreach.ie>

# Higher Education

### Higher Education Careers Services and the Transition to College Life.



**Loretta Jennings, Chair of AGCSI, gives us an overview of support available to first years in Higher Education**

Most HE Careers Services provide support to First Years and prospective students to ease the transition from school to college. As well as taking part in School Liaison activities such as The Higher Options Conference and College Open days, careers services are involved in a number of activities designed for First Years.

#### All Students

Careers Services deliver brief introductory talks to first years during Orientation Programmes on the range of services available and on Subject Choice. Many offer one-to one guidance for students having difficulties with choosing subjects.

- **Personal Tutors**

Some universities, including NUI Maynooth and DCU, have introduced a Personal Tutoring system, while others such as TCD have had a long history of assigning each student to an academic available for consultation on academic and related matters. The Open University offers advice from pre-degree through to 2 years post degree. Every student has ongoing support through their yearly tutor and advisers.

- **UCC** publish "Making Summer Work for You" which is mailed to every first year student detailing the benefits of work experience and outlining summer work opportunities in Ireland, the UK, Europe and America.

- Both DCU and NUI Maynooth have dedicated staff whose role is concerned with initiating, improving and evaluating student support measures such as orientation, personal tutoring and peer mentoring, and with carrying out research into student retention and attrition. They are also the point of contact for students who feel that they may not be in the right course or the right university. Issues such as transfer options can be explored and students are facilitated in making an informed decision within a supportive environment.

- **Peer Mentoring**  
Peer assisted learning (or peer mentoring) has been introduced to a number of Schools at Dublin City University.

- **Transition Courses**  
Courses such as study skills, time management and third level life skills are

also provided at many colleges with most available on an open access basis, though additional programmes such as NUI Maynooth's Study & Examination Skills for Science Students, have been developed for specific disciplines.

#### Students with Disabilities

UCC's Careers Service in conjunction with the Disability Support Service has a dedicated careers adviser available to see students with disabilities, pre-entry, throughout their course and on graduation. Students with disabilities are assisted in sourcing undergraduate work placement opportunities.

UL's Careers Service has introduced an employer mentoring programme to support students with disabilities in their career planning and preparation. Students are matched with an employer from the local business community. Both parties agree on their goals and objectives and design a programme which suits the career interests of the students. The programme includes a series of workshops on topics such as: Disability Awareness Training, Induction Training, Effective Interview Skills and Positive Disclosure.

#### Access Programmes

The University sector run a number of Access Programmes which provide an entry route for socio-economically disadvantaged students to these HE institutions. These students link closely with the Access Office and have a range of post-entry supports available to them, including:

- **Orientation course** on campus, before registration
- **Financial support** annually to support student costs (approx €1300 per year)
- **Academic Mentoring /Tuition** in new and challenging subjects
- **Seminars/Workshop** on study techniques in a 3rd level environment
- **Links to and Information on other Student Services**
- **Social Events**



Members of AGCSI & GTI at the launch of gradireland.com

### THE ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE CAREERS SERVICES IN IRELAND (AGCSI)

AGCSI is the professional association for careers services in higher education in Ireland, north and south.

Founded in 1969, AGCSI's mission is to lead, support and develop collaboration among HE careers services in the development and delivery of high quality careers guidance for students and graduates, and in their work with employers and academics. In addition to the production of a range of careers publications for students and graduates its collaborative activities include the development and maintenance of Gradireland - the **only** graduate careers website to be endorsed and promoted by all HE careers services in Ireland.

AGCSI as an organisation, recently underwent major restructuring and is currently run by an Executive Committee comprising of a representative of each member organisation, chaired by Loretta Jennings, National University of Ireland Maynooth, with John Hannon, National University of Ireland, Galway as Deputy Chair. Activities and products of the organisation are mainly organised via a number of Committees as follows:

- Careers Information
- Careers Management
- Employment Opportunities
- Information Technology Strategy
- Training & Development

#### New Partnership means better opportunities for graduates throughout Ireland

Last year AGCSI went into partnership with the international careers publisher GTI to re-launch its portfolio of products, starting with the directory previously known as **Graduate Opportunities in Ireland** and the website **gradireland.com**.

Now in its 12th year, **Gradireland**, as it is now called, is the only all-Ireland careers directory and the 2003 edition contains innovative features for students and new advertising opportunities for employers and course providers. 20,000+ copies are distributed to students each year by careers services, the largest circulation of any careers publication in Ireland.

Other publications include **Postgraduate Study in Ireland**: a directory of taught courses available to graduates in Ireland available as a searchable database on the **gradireland.com** site and a series of career information booklets also available on **gradireland.com** in pdf format

## Launch of Adult Educational Guidance Initiative and Handbook

The Adult Educational Guidance Initiative was formally launched on November 5 2002 by Ms Síle de Valera, Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science. This event also coincided with the launch of a Handbook for use by project staff.

This Initiative funded by the Department of Education and Science with the assistance of the European Social Fund is part of the National Development Plan 2000-2006 for which € 44.5 million has been provided.

The following are the objectives of the Initiative:

- to provide adult educational guidance to support participants in adult literacy, VTOS and Community Education programmes;
- to develop and document models of good practice which can be mainstreamed and will impact on future policy
- to address gaps in the provision of adult educational guidance
- to build local capacity and to develop support structure and to encourage local partnerships.

There are currently 25 adult educational guidance pilot projects nationwide.

An Advisory Committee was set up by NCGE representing a broad spectrum of interests in adult education and guidance. NCGE technical support include staff development for the overall programme, a framework for networking with other projects an in-service training programme and visits to provide advice and support. The projects are evaluated externally by the Open Campus Learning Centre of Glasgow Caledonian University.



Pictured at the launch of SAGE ( Stigo Adult Guidance Service ), from left to right Anna Marie Kinsella, SAGE Information Officer, Carmel Hunt an adult client of SAGE, the Minister for Education and Science Noel Dempsey, and SAGE Guidance Counsellor Josephine McGread.

The Minister commented on the key achievements since the beginning of the Initiative which include:

- Meeting the needs of the three target groups as well as demand from outside groups such as refugees, asylum seekers and Travellers;
- The development of job profiles for project staff and a Service Level Agreement for providers of the service;
- A series of in-service training for frontline staff
- The development of effective personal

links as well as official strategic links between project staff and outside agencies;

- The marketing of the service through local networks such as regional radio, posters in relevant local offices and public centres,

The Handbook which is available in CD Rom format includes topics such as staffing and staff training, record keeping, client tracking, networking, referral, quality service delivery and multicultural issues.

## Work of Sub Groups in Adult Guidance

There are four subgroups working on issues which need to be addressed in adult guidance, with particular reference to the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative. These issues have become more evident as the Initiative has progressed over the last few years. The sub groups are:

- **Qualifications** (members: representatives of the Advisory Committee, project staff, Adult Educational Guidance Association (AEGA) and NCGE). Having reviewed the job profiles of the project staff, the subgroup aims to establish the qualifications and experience required for carrying out and fulfilling the requirements of each role- that of co-ordinator, guidance counsellor and information officer. It aims to transform the job specifications into learning outcomes and to assess current availability in guidance and counselling courses in terms of meeting the training needs of project staff.
- **Client Database** (members: representatives of project staff, Adult Educational Guidance Association (AEGA) and NCGE) Based on the experience of project staff 'on the ground', a good model is in the process of being prepared for a client information management system. Once approved by the Further Education Section of DES the model will be piloted in a small number of AEGI projects. If all goes well, we should have a Client Database that will take the pain and frustration out of the Performance Indicators Section of the Quarterly Reports by summer. In addition, it will clarify and streamline the data recorded by all projects.



Staff of AEGI Projects at a recent training day

- **Local Education Database:** (members: representatives of project staff, Adult Educational Guidance Association (AEGA) and NCGE) A third subgroup is working on the streamlining of a model which could be used by all AEGI projects in providing data on local education and training opportunities. Many projects have made great progress in this area and what is needed now is to streamline the process so that local data can be collected on line and fed into a national database, when such is available, using the same fields of information.
- **Application System for Mature Students:** A fourth sub group is working on a Common Application System for Mature Students. This group is more widely based because this aspect of educational opportunity for adults reaches across a wider spectrum than just AEGI projects. The group including guidance counsellors from the AEGI projects, those working in PLC Colleges, and those in the Partnerships and NCGE staff are currently discussing ideas for a more accessible application system for mature students to form the basis of a proposal to the Admissions Officers Association.

## Asylum Seekers in Adult Education A Study of Language and Literacy Needs

In the White Paper on Adult Education, "Learning for Life" (2000), section 8.13 proposed asylum seekers would have "free access to adult literacy, English language and mother culture supports" and that the capacity for providing a national programme of language provision through the vocational education committee's/ other education providers should be explored. In direct response, the City of Dublin VEC, in collaboration with County Dublin VEC initiated a needs analysis research to assess the language/ literacy needs of asylum seekers with a view to formulating an integrated community-based approach to adult education service delivery.

In 'Asylum Seekers in Adult Education', Tanya Ward, Development and Research Officer with the City of Dublin VEC, succinctly profiles the asylum seeking population within the Dublin area and based on the findings of the study, argues for a whole-organisation approach to ensure the successful implementation of the recommendations put forward. Adopting a whole organization approach ensures that the focus shifts from the adult learner adapting to an existing learning environment to that of the education providers implementing a comprehensive range of teaching and ancillary supports to facilitate the integration of the adult learner. The advancement and development of the adult education sector relies on the commitment and expertise of the education providers to incorporate these recommendations into the strategic plans of the respective institutions. In this way, the adult education programmes can strive to meet the learning needs of asylum seekers fulfill their educational potential.

This is a significant piece of research, as to date, aside from basic needs analysis and audits carried out by community development organizations (An Siol, 2000 and West Tallaght Resource Centre, 1997), profiling of the asylum seeking population for education programmes has not taken place. This research is therefore, the first time state education providers have attempted to profile the asylum seeking population. It is a comprehensive study providing a forum for all stakeholders and



Promotional leaflet of the South County Dublin Adult Educational Guidance Service includes information in English plus five other languages.

service users alike to voice their perceptions and experiences of the adult education sector. The report is written from the perspective of those most fully involved: adult learners, staff and education managers who will ultimately inform/ implement future actions. The findings of this report can therefore impact most significantly on the development of the adult education system and is a first step to ensuring the delivery of a quality service to adult learners. Furthermore, the outcomes of this research study will inform models of good practice for education providers on a national basis.

From the perspective of the guidance counselor, recommendations related to guidance, personal and learner support will be most pertinent. Through the target client groups of adult literacy, VTOS and community education, members of the asylum seeking community have come forward to the AEGI projects and have availed of the guidance service. In order to overcome the language barriers associated with guidance provision for adult learners with limited English language skills and unfamiliar with educational terminology, the report recommends that:

- All information on courses and guidance sessions is translated into key languages
- Guidance officers receive specific training to deliver sessions to minority linguistic groups which takes account of linguistic, cultural and emotional issues.
- Black and ethnic minorities are trained in non-formal guidance skills to deliver basic guidance sessions to their communities.

The Government made a commitment to promote equality and interculturalism in the White Paper on Adult Education (2000). Based on the principles of equity and respect for diversity, the White paper calls for a significant move forward in the provision of appropriate structures, resourcing, national policy and attitudinal change, in order to ensure an enabling environment for all adult learners, particularly members of the asylum seeking community.

If you would like to obtain a copy of this report, contact (01) 874 6047 County Dublin VEC / City of Dublin VEC