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plus

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and lots more!!



**Maximising
Guidance Provision
- a team approach**



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Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap



In the last issue of NCGE News we looked at Career Guidance and policy in relation to the recent OECD review. Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap has recently been published by the OECD and will be of interest to anyone working in the area of guidance.

'The publication explores how the gap between career guidance services and public policy might be narrowed. It advocates improved national co-ordination arrangements and greater attention to research and data collection to inform policy makers. It also promotes the development of improved and more specialised training programmes for practitioners and the creation of more specialised career guidance organisations for the delivery of services.' (quote from the OECD website) the publication is available to browse or purchase on www.oecd.org,

ISBN: 9264105662, Price: €35.00

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National Guidance Forum

Background

A National Guidance Forum, supported by the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, is currently being established. This initiative is in response to emerging priorities in guidance at both national and international level. These include:

- The Departments' endorsement of the role of lifelong guidance in lifelong learning and employability
- The importance of guidance in supporting Ireland's move towards a knowledge based economy
- The impact of guidance on people's capacity to attain personal, social, educational and career goals, with special emphasis on social inclusion.
- The implications for guidance in the EC Communication on Lifelong Learning and the agreed Employment Guidelines.
- The outcomes of the reviews of guidance policy and practice carried out across 36 countries by the OECD, EC and the World Bank (See NCGE News, Winter 2003)

National Guidance Forum Working Party

NCGE convened a Working Party in August 2003 to begin the task of setting up the National Guidance Forum. It includes representatives from the National Centre for Guidance in Education, the Department of Education and Science, FÁS, Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment and the Institute of Guidance Counsellors.

The remit of the National Guidance Forum is to explore how individuals, at any point throughout their lives, can access quality guidance appropriate to their needs, to identify collaborative action across the guidance continuum and to agree recommendations in collaboration with other stakeholders. Reports and recommendations from the Forum will be submitted to the two Departments.

Pre-Forum Consultative Meeting

On the 3rd March approximately 35 representatives of a wide range of guidance stakeholders attended a Pre-Forum Consultative meeting hosted by the

Working Party in the Clock Tower in the Department of Education and Science premises in Marlborough Street. The purpose of the meeting was to inform stakeholders about the Forum and to get their feedback on the initiative.



The National Guidance Forum working party with Phil Jarvis at the consultative meeting

Eileen Fitzpatrick, NCGE Acting Director, provided background information on the Forum and this was followed by a presentation by Phil Jarvis, Vice President of the National Life/Work Centre, Canada who placed the Forum in the context of the international guidance perspective. Phil spoke about the paradigm shift in guidance from enabling people to make the right occupational choice to equipping them with skills to make the myriad choices necessary throughout their lives to become healthy, self-reliant citizens in a constantly changing world.

He identified the cornerstones of the career management paradigm as the 'high five' principles. These are as follows:

- Know yourself, believe in yourself and follow your heart
- Focus on the journey, not the destination. Become a good traveller.
- You're not alone. Access your allies and be a good ally.
- Change is constant, and it brings with it new opportunities
- Learning is lifelong and it's good. We are most alive when we are learning.



Phil used Canadian statistics to demonstrate the costs to individuals, business productivity, international competitiveness, education and health care systems, social services and government revenues of people trying to cope with the

stresses of being in work settings that they do not like. He maintains that excellent career, learning and labour market information and mastery of career management skills can enable people to have enough focus and direction for career stability and enough flexibility and adaptability for change along the way.

He highlighted the need for a common framework of career management skills to avoid ambiguity among guidance practitioners, educators, human resource specialists, policy makers and the public. The development of such a framework has been undertaken in the US and Canada. The result is the Blueprint for Life/Work Designs which identifies core competencies with associated performance indicators for each competency at four developmental stages across the lifespan. The core competencies are the basis upon which career development programmes can be designed and the performance indicators can be used to evaluate the success of these programmes. Further information is available on www.blueprint4life.ca. The Real Game is one such programme that is used widely throughout the US, Canada and other parts of the world. Further information on this programme is available on www.realgame.com

Feedback from Stakeholders

The participants at the consultative meeting welcomed the establishment of the National Guidance Forum and expressed enthusiasm for The Real Game as an effective career management programme. Feedback raised the need to learn from other such forums at national and international level and to ensure that the number of members on the Forum maximised efficiency. Concern was expressed that representation would include the primary education sector because it is at that level that many lifelong attitudes to work and life are established.

Next Steps

Letters of invitation to prospective participants on the Forum will be issued jointly by the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment and the first meeting is planned for late April. A complete review of the work of the Forum will be carried out in autumn 2006. The next issue of NCGE News will inform readers of the objectives and work plan of the Forum and of mechanisms for input by all stakeholders.





GENERAL

Update on changes in the qualifications system!



In the Autumn 2003 edition of NCGE News, plans for major changes in the qualifications system were outlined. It was pointed out that the process of change was already under way, and that the key element in the process would be the introduction of a National Framework of Qualifications, providing a single structure in which all learning achievements can be measured and related to each other in a coherent way and in which the relationship between all education and training awards can be defined. Most guidance practitioners will be aware that the Framework is now a reality, having been launched in October 2003.

The framework is a structure of ten levels. For each level, standards of knowledge, skill and competence have been set out in generic ranges. The standards associated with each level define the outcomes to be achieved by learners seeking to gain awards.

The ten levels will accommodate awards gained in schools, the workplace, the community, training centres, colleges and universities, from the most basic to the most advanced levels of learning. All learning can thus be recognised, including that achieved through experience in the workplace or other non-formal settings.

The intention is not just to provide a frame of reference for existing awards. New awards are being developed on the basis of 'learning outcomes' defined in terms of standards of knowledge, skill and competence. This introduces a new approach to the meaning of an award, that an award will recognise learning outcomes – what a person with an award knows, can do and understands - rather than time spent on a programme



The diagram illustrates the National Framework of Qualifications. The 10-level structure is shown as segments in a 'fan'. The Framework contains an initial set of 15 award-types for which descriptors have been published. The award-types are listed in the outer rings of the diagram.

The diagram also illustrates the various awarding bodies whose awards are included in the Framework. These are shown as coloured bands extending across the levels of the Framework as appropriate.

It is important to note that the timescale for these changes is short, and that the effects of the introduction of the Framework will be visible almost immediately. HETAC and DIT are undertaking a rapid transformation of their awarding systems, and new higher education awards will be in use from the autumn of 2004 – Higher Certificate, Ordinary Bachelors Degree and Honours Bachelors Degree. At the same time, awards previously in use, such as National Certificate and National Diploma, will no longer be available.

The new FETAC awards will take somewhat longer to come on stream, and in the meantime FETAC will continue to make awards as before.

A significant recent development, of interest to guidance practitioners, is the placement in the Framework of a number of awards previously made by HETAC, notably the placement of the National Certificate at Level 6, and the National Diploma at Level 7. These placements are fully set out on the website of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, www.nqai.ie

Further development of the Framework is anticipated in coming months, and guidance practitioners are urged to use the Authority website to stay in touch with these developments. A dedicated website for the National Framework of Qualifications is under construction, and will be available online at www.nfq.ie by early May 2004.

The Authority is committed to assisting the guidance community to familiarise themselves with the changes taking place. For example, briefings have taken place at the Higher Options event in 2003 and at the recent IGC conference, as well as at several IGC branches. Further briefings can be arranged and copies of the relevant documentation can be acquired by contacting the Authority:

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PRIMARY

Guidance and Counselling in the Primary School Sector: Some Personal Reflections

by Ann-Marie Bourke



I have been a Primary School Teacher in Kilmacanogue National School since 1991. In 1995 I returned to college for the M.Ed. Degree in Guidance and Counselling at Trinity College Dublin. I enjoyed a wonderful course of studies in Counselling Psychology, Counselling Skills Training, Vocational Guidance, Psychometrics, Adolescent Psychology and other subjects. I was lucky at the end of Year One of the M.Ed. Programme to obtain a scholarship to study at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. This experience allowed me to deepen my professional training in Counselling theory and practice. I specialised in Multicultural Counselling and worked as a shadow elementary school counsellor for a full semester. Indeed, I was fortunate to have as my supervisor, Professor Allen E. Ivey the distinguished psychotherapist and theorist of Multiculturalism and Multicultural counselling.

Having returned at the end of two years of study and in-career development to Kilmacanogue National School, I was greatly energised and reinvigorated and I embarked on the writing of a major thesis on MCT and Intercultural Counselling. I now work as a resource teacher in Special Needs Education and the above professional enhancements have been invaluable to me in this demanding yet enjoyable role as an RTSN teacher.

Teacher and Counsellor:

This writer is of the view that the roles of teacher and counsellor are synonymous and interchangeable. The ideal teacher is one who embodies the unity of both functions. Nurturing relationships between teacher and pupil, empowering and allowing each child and pupil to achieve some success each day are key concerns in the exercise of duty; building self-confidences and in the words of Poet, Brendan Kennelly, "coaxing out the ego of the pupil into the light of day," are essential elements in the role of teacher, counsellor. Teaching and counselling must be primarily based upon a psychology of

optimism and hope. Building up self-esteem and providing an emotionally secure base in the classroom help to make schooling a particularly exciting experience for each child. The distinguished psychiatrist, Irvin Yalom, reminds us that "making the world a better place for others is surely a powerful source of meaning."

Elementary School Guidance and Counselling in the United States: A Comparative Perspective:

Elementary school guidance and counselling has been well established in the United States for many years. Federal grants made available from 1960 to 1970 resulted in a substantial growth in the number of counsellors. By 1967, there were 3837 school counsellors in 48 states; this had increased to 10,770 in 50 states by 1975. The Elementary School Counselling Act of 1993 called for expansion of programmes throughout the United States. It recommended: that school counsellors work with school psychologists and social workers; that student-counsellor ratios would be not more than 250 pupils to 1; 85% of time would be devoted to developmental and preventative programming with some administrative tasks. Today, the model has a strong emphasis on developing programmes in order to prevent children from experiencing difficulties at an early stage. Health education, self-esteem programmes, anti-bullying programmes, curriculum initiatives for poor achievers, guidance and counselling are all part of the role of the counsellor in the elementary school classroom.

Guidance and Counselling at Primary School Level in Ireland:

During the 1970s, there were strong advocations for the introduction of guidance and counselling to the primary school sector and in 1975, the National Advisory Council on Education stated "that teachers and school policies should reflect a pastoral concern for the developing child and his needs and especially to help the child make the transfer from primary education to secondary education." An innovative report of 1990 entitled, The Report of the Primary Education Review Body, acknowledged the effectiveness of early intervention and suggested that counselling should be made available to pupils when required and when recommended by teachers. Also called for was the establishment of a structured psychological service for primary school and "in addition, we recommend that suitably qualified teachers with relevant experience be given special in-service training on the administration of screening tests, in counselling methods and in classroom management." This was a radical document at the time. However, the 1995 White Paper on Education, *Charting Our Education Future* showed less awareness of the importance of early intervention and the document refers merely to "the need for more emphasis on educational guidance at both levels and a greater integration of the work of psychologists and teachers."



Teachers Adopting Counselling Approaches TACA:

TACA was formed in 1994 by a group of primary teachers in order to deal with the many behavioural, social and emotional problems of pupils in their care. With the strong backing of the INTO, TACA became more formalised and this resulted in many well organised workshops and summer courses throughout the mid 1990s. In response to a 1995 INTO Congress



resolution twenty-seven teacher counsellors were appointed to primary schools where there were large numbers of children with behavioural difficulties; these schools were largely in disadvantaged areas.

The role of teacher-counsellors was similar to their counterparts in U.S. elementary schools. Teacher-counsellors helped pupils to deal with personal problems by enhancing self-esteem, increasing their sense of security and above all developing their personal and social abilities. This work centred on self-esteem programmes, anti-bullying initiatives, curriculum initiatives with weaker pupils, preventative work based upon positive counselling strategies. It should be noted that the introduction to the Primary School Curriculum of the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme, 1999, embodies many of these objectives.

Resource Teacher for Special Needs:

In my work as a Resource Teacher for Special Needs, there is both continuity and similarity to the role of the teacher-



counsellor. Counselling skills have been an invaluable asset to me in my new role which is both preventative and developmental in caring for children's personal and social development and in the advancement of their academic attainment. Teaching and counselling as I have already noted are interchangeable concepts. The relationship is one of pure dialogue; it must also be a relationship of respect and acceptance of each pupil with all their strengths and weaknesses. All good teachers are counsellors and their roles are very much dependent upon the installation of hope and optimism, of listening and attending. The Primary School Teacher is indeed responsible for the laying of many key foundation stones at a vital early stage on the journey of life! March, 2004

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POST-PRIMARY

Educate for Inclusion



REHAB GROUP

A ground-breaking disability awareness programme developed for schools as part of Rehab Foundation's contribution to the European Year of People with Disabilities will be made available to transition year classes throughout the country early next year. The programme, which will be launched shortly, has completed a successful pilot phase involving six secondary schools in the greater Dublin area.

Titled 'Educate for Inclusion', this is the first cross-category disability awareness programme ever developed for school pupils in this country and is now available free of charge to the country's 550 transition year schools. The programme is also being used by many Rehab Group centres around the country as part of their own disability awareness activities in the community.

Funded by the Department of Education and devised by former RehabCare employee, Mary Keogh, the programme is made up of eight lessons on CD-ROM



Pictured at the launch of the pilot phase of Rehab Group's Educate for Inclusion programme (from left to right): Mary Keogh; Rita Kelly, Rehab Foundation; Minister for Finance, Charlie McCreevy, TD, and Stephen Farrelly, chief executive, Rehab Foundation.

which address all of the big issues facing people with disabilities in their everyday lives. These comprise: Terminology and Myths; Etiquette and Language; Mobility Disabilities; Sensory Disabilities; Speech Disabilities; Hidden Disabilities; The Irish Government and Disability; along with a specific section on the work of the Rehab Group. Each lesson includes case studies

and assignments, whilst there is also a comprehensive resource pack containing back-up resource material for teachers.

According to Rehab Foundation chief executive, Stephen Farrelly, the programme will provide students with a "unique opportunity to build their knowledge of different disabilities".

"Our intention has been to provide a dynamic new approach to learning about disability issues. The programme takes each student through a step-by-step guide on different disabilities. It explains the everyday terms associated with disability and looks at the different issues facing people with disabilities in Ireland today.....the programme will also show students how, with adequate facilities and support, people with disabilities can live equal lives."

Further information on the 'Educate for Inclusion' programme is available from Rita Kelly, email: rita.kelly@rehab.ie or tel: 01-205 7331 www.rehab.ie



POST-PRIMARY

School Guidance Programme Planning - A Practitioner's experience

By Eamonn Mulvihill

The following is a brief outline of a practicing Principal's experience of school guidance review and planning which was carried out in St. Joseph's Academy Kildare Town, a small De La Salle boy's post-primary school, in 1999/2000. The school had three advantages in undertaking this review:

Firstly, it was led by the Guidance Counsellor and Principal who initiated a whole staff review of the guidance service in the school but the principal was also a former guidance counsellor.

Secondly, the Principal had been the Joint Managerial Body (J.M.B.) representative on a group which drew up guidelines for the practice of guidance and counselling in schools over a two year period previously (1997-1999).

Thirdly, the school was invited to participate in a pilot programme with eight other schools in carrying out the review and the full support and assistance of the National Centre for Guidance in Education was available to the pilot schools. All of the schools met in December 1999 for a review day following consultations and feedback from staffs.



The process of Guidance Programme Review and Planning was based on guidelines drawn up by representatives of various educational groups including, JMB, IVEA, ACS, ASTI, TUI, IGC, Association of Education Centres and the Department of Education and Science (Psychological Service and ICPU). This was explained to all staff members at the initial meeting in the review and planning process. The staff were also informed that the twin aims of the process were:

1. To establish the career, educational, personal/social needs of pupils and the services in the school that were currently meeting these needs and
2. To identify the needs in the guidance field that are not currently being met and to develop a plan to meet these needs.

At the initial meeting which had been structured by the Principal and Guidance Counsellor there was a brief general introduction by the Principal outlining the background and rationale for the review. Then the guidance counsellor outlined the many and varied ways in which guidance and counselling needs are being met at present and how many of these needs inter-relate with the work of teachers through their subject teaching, guidance, pastoral care and advice.

There followed some discussion on 'guidance' as a general term and many subject teachers did not really relate in their minds the directive role that they undertook as being synonymous with the word 'guidance'. So it became necessary to clarify and define 'guidance' for the staff in general. Fortunately, the guidelines had defined guidance for the purpose of the review and planning and these definitions proved helpful to staff. 'Guidance' was defined in three categories as follows:

- (a) Personal and Social Guidance:
 - personal and social guidance, activities such as class/group work, interpersonal skills, decision-making, self-awareness and the ability to plan.
- (b) Educational Guidance:
 - including decisions on subject choice, levels, motivation, study skills and examination techniques.
- (c) Career Guidance:
 - which would include counselling, career searches, employment experience work and other life roles as well as choices of courses in colleges and training institutions.

Teachers were provided with questionnaires at the initial meeting but requested a week of time to fill out the details of the perceived met and unmet needs of the year groups in the school. Teachers were also asked to state what resources would be necessary to meet these needs ie. finance, time, personnel etc. All staff responded at the end of the week. It should be noted that other schools in the pilot project did not require as much time initially defining what 'guidance' meant. As Principal, I began to wonder if being a former guidance counsellor was in fact a disadvantage in trying to empathise with the perceptions of subject teachers who were not formerly "guidance counsellors".

Some of the issues raised by staff as 'met needs' included the areas of initiation for first years, anti-bullying systems in place for younger students, prefect responsibilities, evening and mid-term study, school tours and sport, especially gaelic football. Staff became aware of the whole school responsibility



for guidance and it was decided to incorporate into all staff-meeting agendas in future some issue or issues that would be relevant to guidance. In the following years these issues included home-school liaison issues, student health problems, special needs and drugs awareness. On the 'unmet needs' list staff included drugs awareness, remedial education services and school choir. They also mentioned the need to expand the curriculum.



Between 2000/2001 and 2003/2004 a home-school liaison service and choir were established with the assistance of the De La Salle Brothers who provided funding. Guitar music lessons were set-up after school. Co-operation began with Kildare V.E.C. to accommodate students in Technology (Metal) and Technology (Wood) which our school did not provide. Adult Education was also identified by staff as an unmet need in the school and night classes developed in Computers, First Aid, Aerobics and Spanish. An Adult Education Co-ordinator post was established and night classes are ongoing. The school has become more open to the local community through use of its facilities for conferences during Feile Bride, The Derby Festival and the Kildare town Twinning Festival. Students participate in these festivals as part of their extra-curricular activities. The staff also requested an In-Service Day on 'Stress in Teaching' so the review brought up issues which were ancillary to the 'met needs' and 'unmet needs' of students! This request was also met. However, as the Guidance Counsellor became Adult Education Co-ordinator it became clear that the role of the guidance counsellor can easily become 'over loaded' due to the wideness of the brief.

The guidance counsellor drew up a questionnaire for students in 3rd year and 5th year to establish their perceived needs which were met and unmet. The questions ranged over a wide variety of issues such as:

- Did you feel welcome when you came into St. Joseph's Academy?

- Were you bullied at any time since your entry?
- What do you think the school should do for you that it is not doing now?

There were also questions on homework, discipline code, drugs and physical needs. The student responses were generally very positive on issues such as bullying, school initiation procedures, sport and homework demands. They proposed that a mains water tap be installed for student use, some office space be provided for the Student Council and an "idea box" be placed on the corridor. The data became a very useful resource for 'guidance review and planning'.



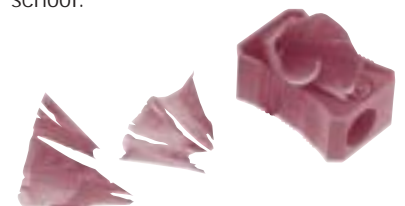
The Parents' Council were also consulted and suggested that needs unmet included study skills, drugs awareness and they suggested parental involvement in the Debs Committee. They also suggested summer scholarships to the gaeltacht to encourage senior students. An 'unmet need' in their view, was guidance in careers for junior students. Over the following two years, the Deputy Principal in the school liaised with Kildare Community services to provide ongoing drugs awareness talks for both students and their parents as well as special talks and training for community leaders who work with young people. Guidance in careers for junior students was more difficult to develop because the school is allocated .5 of a teacher in guidance time, which limits what he can do after attending to the career guidance needs of 3rd, 5th, and 6th yrs. The parents council now funds two summer scholarships in French / Irish and is proactive on the Annual Debs Committee.

The chaplain, who is the Parish Priest, was also interviewed by questionnaire. His response was more philosophical.

For example, he wondered how 1,000 hours of T.V. unreality could help students interpret reality? He also posed the question 'How does a small school be all-inclusive and yet cater for the best students?' Such questions were challenging, yet consoling because they enabled staff in the review process to accept that some issues were simply dilemmas that one had to live with rather than solve neatly.

Altogether, the process was time-consuming, taking up most of a year, but it fed into the planning process of the whole school and helped clearly to identify issues and shape priorities up to 2003/4. Next year there is scope for further evaluation and review. The Board of Management was made aware of the issues and priorities that were emerging from the initial review in 1999 / 2000 and the support of the De La Salle Brothers was important financially in solving some of the issues that were identified.

Finally it is worth noting that the perceived 'unmet needs of students' did not always coincide in student responses with unmet needs of students as perceived by staff although there were some similarities in the curricular area. In the pilot schools review day, having shared experiences, some schools regretted confining the review to staff only and resolved to consult more with parents, students and chaplain in any future review. In St. Joseph's Academy, the review produced results that had implications for personnel, training days, curriculum change, facilities, resources, finance and links with the local community. For any school setting out on whole school planning, Guidance Review and Development would be an interesting and wide-ranging first-step. The experience has proved to be so in our school.



Eamonn Mulvihill is Principal at St. Joseph's Academy Kildare Town and a former Guidance Counsellor. He is also a member of the Management Committee of NCGE.



NON-FORMAL

The Clondalkin Youth Support and Training Unit



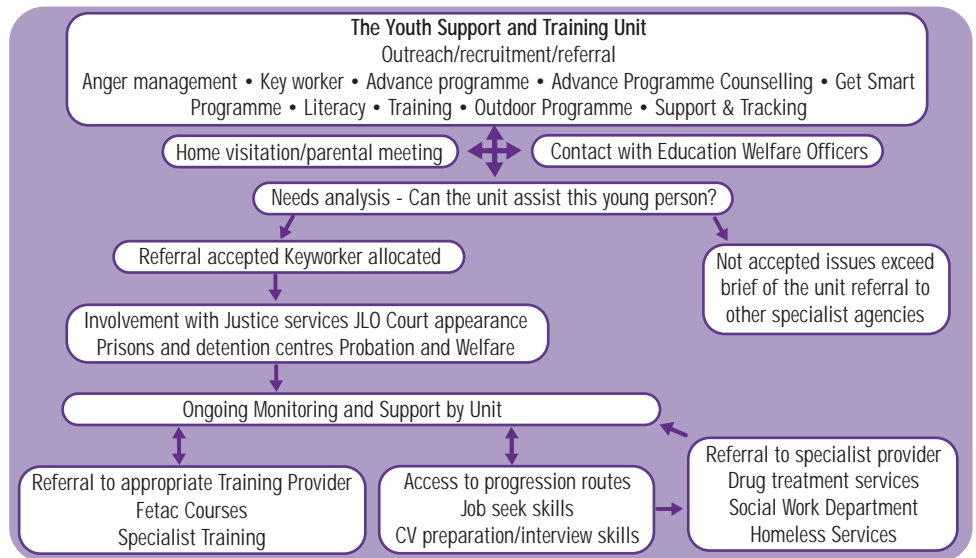
Youth Support and Training Unit
Unit 5, Oakfield,
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Ph 4579444 Fax 4579422
Email: Clondalkinystu@eircom.net

The Youth Support and Training Unit was established in 1997 as a two year pilot project under the south Dublin urban initiative. Its aim was to identify early school leavers in the Clondalkin area and bridge the gap between leaving school and taking up second chance education. In January 2000 the project received mainstream funding from the Department of Education and Science and is managed by County Dublin V.E.C under the auspices of its Youthreach programme. Since then the programme has gone from strength to strength

The Team consists of a coordinator, an administrator and four outreach workers. One member of the outreach team works specifically with under 18s who are misusing or at risk of misusing substances, this position is funded by the Clondalkin Drug Task Force.



County Dublin Vocational Education Committee
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Once a referral has been made the Outreach workers continue to work with the young person for a period of two years (this may be extended) assisting them to deal with difficult situations as they arise, and identifying individual progression routes for them. The outreach workers will track and monitor young people in a variety of settings and many visits are made to Drug treatment services, prisons, places of detention and other residential placements.

The unit also conducts a number of personal development programmes which are designed to assist young people in maintaining their placement and developing their social skills. These programmes include:

Anger Management a multi-agency programme to assist young people in managing their anger.

The Advance programme aimed at assisting young people to explore the negative impact of addictive behaviour.

The Get Smart Programme for young people whose placement has broken down or is at risk of doing so.

The Outdoor pursuits programme aims to encourage young people to seek alternative leisure pursuits.

Challenges faced by the unit

There are many difficulties faced in running such a service: Firstly one of the challenges is that in working with such large numbers and such high levels of crisis we need to ensure we provide a high quality service to all our clients. Each outreach worker has a caseload of forty young people and it can very easily become a case of the squeakiest wheel getting all the oil. It is only through continuous review and development that we can endeavour to avoid this.

Secondly the number of placements currently available for the most marginalized of these young people is not adequate to meet the demand and as a result many young people can be placed with services that cannot meet their needs. While many Youthreach centres and Community Training Workshops provide more comprehensive education and Training Programmes to early school leavers we must also face the reality that some young people will not survive even in alternative education. While local justice projects pick up a lot of these young people we need to ensure that we are not referring young people to already overstretched services.

The new Education Welfare Act should go a long way to combating some of the problem. The Youth Support and Training



Young people from the unit participate in the outdoor pursuits programme

The Outreach Team works in pairs two evenings a week in the community in order to engage young people in their own environment. This involves walking the streets and identifying young people at street corners or local shops etc. Young people are also referred to the Unit by parents, social workers, probation officers, schools and youth services while many young people also self refer through the drop in service.

Once a young person engages with the Unit they are allocated a key worker. The key worker aims to identify the needs of each young person and will refer them to the most appropriate service. While the focus of the Unit remains on education and training many young people present with a range of difficulties which must be addressed before the young person can be placed.

Unit in its role will work as a complementary service to the work of the Education Welfare Officers. The outcome of this looks promising.

On a final note as has been previously mentioned the unit is very much a referral

and support agency and the district approach of many agencies such as Local Youthreach Centres, the Youth Services, County Dublin V.E.C, Department of Justice Programmes, Drug Treatment Services, Drug Task Force projects and the local schools have played a large role in

supporting the success of the Youth Support and Training Unit.

Eimear O'Rourke is Co-ordinator of the Youth Support and Training Unit.

For more information call 01 4579444 or email clondalkinystu@eircom.net



NON-FORMAL

The Children Act, 2001 and family conferencing

The Children Act of 2001 is of interest to anyone working with young people. The introduction of family conferencing by health boards is an important part of the act.

The Children Act, 2001, introduces a wide range of innovative measures that provides a statutory framework for the future development of the juvenile justice system in accordance with modern thinking and best international practice. A key aim of the Act is to retain the distinction between offending children and non-offending children by providing two distinct pathways for addressing their needs:

- a) a juvenile justice route which emphasises a diversionary and restorative justice approach;
- b) a health board welfare route which emphasises a care and protection approach. The purpose of this is to ensure that care is provided to each child appropriate to their individual needs.

The Act is a very complex and comprehensive piece of legislation thus provisions under the Act are being implemented on a phased basis, as was envisaged at the time of enactment. Responsibility for implementing the Children Act, 2001 lies with three Departments, Justice, Equality and Law Reform and Education and Science in respect of juvenile offending, and Health and Children in respect of children who are non-offending but out of control. The National Children's Office is co-ordinating the cross departmental aspects of the implementation of the Act.

The Children Act 2001 must be viewed in the wider context of the National Children's Strategy, which reflects the philosophy of prevention and early intervention. For instance, family welfare conferences provide a mechanism for early intervention at an inter-agency level for children at risk. The Conference is a decision-making forum about a child's welfare, which makes appropriate plans in partnership with families and

agencies. This partnership approach empowers and encourages commitment from families, including young people.

Garda Conferencing is already in operation as part of the Diversion Programme, which was placed on a statutory footing in May 2002. The statutory scheme operates similarly in many respects to the administrative scheme, but the incorporation of restorative cautioning and a Conference into the scheme are new features. The Conference formulates an action plan for the child, which could include actions such as reparations to be made, an apology to be made to the victim, or the participation of the child in an appropriate recreational or sporting activity.



Family Welfare Conferences provide a mechanism for early intervention at an inter-agency level for children at risk. They are to be convened by the health boards. The function of the Conference is to decide if a child is in need of special care and protection, and if so, to recommend the appropriate order to be sought by the health board from the court. Health boards have run pilot programmes of Family Welfare conferences and work is at an advanced stage with a view to full commencement of these sections of the Act.

The third type of conference provided for under the Act is the **Family Conference**, which is convened on the direction of the court by the Probation and Welfare Service. The resulting Action Plan is enforceable by the Court. Nine additional Probation and Welfare Officers took up duty in September 2003 and further recruitment is underway,

which will substantially clear the way for commencement of these sections.

Conferencing is only one aspect of the Act and the three Departments continue to work towards its full implementation. Parts 2 and 3, to be commenced shortly, provide a statutory scheme for non-offending children in need of special care or protection to be placed in special care units, in appropriate circumstances as a last resort. Such placements will be on foot of a special care order made by the District Court and for as short a period of time as possible. The Special Residential Services Board, established on a statutory basis on 7 November 2003, ensures the appropriate use of children detention facilities and Special Care Units.

Part 10 of the Act provides for the establishment of Children Detention Schools to replace the existing reformatory and industrial schools. These provisions are dependent on the establishment of separate detention facilities for 16 and 17 year old offenders. The primary objective of these detention centres will be to provide a secure but supportive environment in which young offenders can develop the personal and social skills necessary to avoid future offending. The Act envisages committals to custody of young offenders being availed of only in situations where other alternative diversions and community-based options have been resorted to and have failed.

It is likely that the full implementation of the Act will not be achieved until 2008 but progress is being made and over the coming year the full range of family conferences will be developed.

Éimear Fisher is Deputy Director of the National Children's Office which has responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the Children Act. For more information on this and the other work of the office please refer to their website: www.nco.ie or call 01 2420000



HIGHER EDUCATION

Institutes of Technology Careers Advisers' Network ITCAN

For a number of years now the Careers Officers in the Institutes of Technology throughout Ireland have been meeting on an informal basis to discuss and advance issues of mutual concern. In an era of professional development and networking we have been addressing the issue of putting a more formal structure on our grouping that is aptly called **ITCAN** (Institutes of Technology Careers Advisers' Network). The reader might be interested in why the Institute of Technology careers services sector should go in this direction, who will benefit in practice, and how might these benefits contribute to an increased demand for a holistic and seamless system for lifelong learning and sustained employability for all.

The Institutes of Technology (IT) have a unique perspective on vocational and educational training in the regions throughout Ireland. Students of mixed ability and socio economic background have often looked to the Institutes as their only 'real' opportunity for tertiary education. In recent times more students are actively choosing courses in the Institutes over other tertiary programmes, as they are seen to satisfy their vocational and academic appetites as well as fulfilling their career ambitions. Students can dip in and out of the IT system at a rate and pace that suits their individual circumstances, gaining qualifications that can enhance their career progression along the way. The Institutes take pride in this progressive and flexible learning model. However, it does place unique demands on the general academic and student services functions, and particular demands on delivering effective career development services.

Good careers education, information and guidance are essential at all stages of the education continuum. The Institutes careers services have an open access policy to assist students before, during and after qualification. Because most

services have limited resources, with one Careers Officer in each Institute, it has become increasingly wise to work in closer collaboration with our IT colleagues. Our aim has been to maximise the strengths that exist in our number and gain insight into developing best practice for the benefit of the tens of thousands of students who participate in Institute of Technology programmes each year.



Photograph from a recent gathering of Careers Officers in Athlone IT representing nine of the Institutes in ITCAN: In photo L-R: Catherine Lyster (Letterkenny), Mary Egan (Athlone), Frances Egan (Limerick), Maria McRoberts (Carlow), Tracy Ryan (Tralee), Marie Kielty (Tallaght), Angela Collins (Waterford), Dan Collins (Cork), Andrea McCarthy (Cork) and Harriet Andrews (Dundalk).

Absent members Bridie Killoran (GMIT) and Adette Ring (Sligo IT)

Career guidance within the tertiary education sector is not always seen as the public good that it is. Career Guidance is intrinsically linked to learning, to the labour market and to social equity. Any narrower view of the guidance function does not serve our clients or our masters well. Nor will it serve the public good. Those charged with the critical role of managing and developing effective careers services, in no matter what context, are facing enormous challenges, and must work with players at all stages in the provision of seamless guidance services. Life long learning and life long guidance are two sides of the one coin.

Whilst the former is well articulated as a public good, the latter has yet to be fully appreciated and developed. In addition, the coin itself must provide good value to the learner and the taxpayer alike.

Many benefits can derive from the existence of **ITCAN** as a professional network, some of which have already materialised: collective careers information resources have been developed; a national database of regional employers is more easily accessed and job vacancies advertised; graduate destination statistics from individual colleges can be compared and combined; professional training has been organised; greater collaboration with other careers and counselling associations, including AGCSI, IAUCC, AGCAS and FEDORA has been achieved, and so forth.

The network includes Institutes of Technology in Athlone, Carlow, Cork, Dundalk, Galway-Mayo, Letterkenny, Limerick, Sligo, Tallaght, Tralee and Waterford. We represent a substantial percentage of students in tertiary education in Ireland. As Careers Officers we are particularly mindful of the fact that enhanced co-operation means, above all else, a better service to our clients who seek to negotiate the minefield of informed career decision-making at different stages in their lives.

ITCAN is in the process of further formulating its mission and objectives over the coming months so that it can better serve the Institute of Technology sector and our key stakeholders. It appreciates the support of colleagues who are engaged in policy and practice. We would very much welcome the views of all those who might be interested in our role and responsibility, including guidance professionals and principals in schools, colleagues in universities, employers, policy makers, and of course, our students.

Harriet Andrews, MSc in Educational Guidance and Counselling (TCD), is Careers Officer in Dundalk IT and is Acting Spokesperson for ITCAN. Please address your comments to harriet.andrews@dkit.ie



HIGHER EDUCATION

WIT Business & Enterprise Week 23rd-26th February 2004



Ashley Dunne, Chairperson of the WIT Business Society tells us about this project which represents co-operation between the college and the business community.

The year 2004 marked the eighth successive year of Business and Enterprise week at Waterford Institute of Technology. Speakers in past years included Ms. Mary Harney, Tanaiste; Mr Charlie McCreevy, Minister for Finance; Mr. George Lee, Economics Editor RTE; Mr. Finbar Flood, Chairman of the Labour Court and Mr. Noel Dorr. The high standard continued this year with speakers such as Jim Power, Chief Economist with Friends First; Caroline Nash Director of the Export Orientation Programme; Dr. Gerald Farrell, Managing Director Eli Lilly and Company Ireland

Ltd.; Michael Daniels Director Slushee and Senator Joe O'Toole.

The basic ideas behind the week are as follows:

The event is run in conjunction with the Careers Centre and the Business School and is a great example of teamwork and careers education. Being involved in an event like this students get an opportunity to develop their transferable skills such as Oral Communication, Time Management, Team work, Networking, Presentation Skills, Planning, Coping with multiple tasks and many more.

Benefits of the week include a facilitation of the exchange of ideas on business issues. For WIT – it allows the college to



Senator Joe O'Toole pictured with lecturers and students from the WIT Business and Marketing societies. From left: Laura Forsey, Senator Joe O'Toole, Ashley Dunne. Back row from left: Angela Collins, Careers Office; Ger Long, lecturer; Derek O'Byrne; Michael Kennedy; Kerrie Sweeney; Daniel Cowman; Grace Mulhall; Paschal Browne and Tom Grant (photozone)

strengthen its links with the business community and it enhances the development of the college as a centre for business excellence.

For further information contact the Careers office, Waterford Institute of Technology, ph 051 302038



HIGHER EDUCATION

Access to Third Level Education for people with disabilities

On the 5th February the Able 4 College conference took place in the Dublin West Education Centre, Tallaght. The conference was part of the HEA funded project 'Improving the Retention of Students with Disabilities in Third Level Education' and was organised in response to findings of research carried out as part of the project. Among those attending were post-primary guidance counsellors, careers advisors and access officers from 3rd level. Minister Brian Lenihan, TD opened the conference and speakers included Dr Mary-Liz Trant of the newly formed National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education, Rory O'Sullivan of Killester College of Further

Education, Dr. Michael Shevlin of the Education Department in Trinity College Dublin and Jim Jordan the Project Officer heading this project.

All of the presentations given at the conference were pertinent from a guidance perspective. What was very clear overall was how far we have come in improving access for people with disabilities at third level, yet a gap in resources at second level is still preventing many students from continuing.

Two students with disabilities spoke of their experiences at second and third level; both identified the lack of resources in post-primary schools as a barrier for people with disabilities in accessing third level education. They said that once they reached a third level institution they noticed a huge improvement in awareness and support – in the form of Access Officers and Disability Officers as well as improved access to assistive technology.

In his presentation 'Towards an Inclusive Model of Education' Rory O'Sullivan Principal of Killester College spoke about their efforts to become a more inclusive service. He had lots of practical ideas

including improving physical access, provision of staff education and a re-evaluation of the college's equality policy.

Problems identified during group discussions included the lack of communication between post-primary and third level education in relation to access for people with disabilities. For example guidance counsellors mentioned that they are not aware of the supports available for students at third level – if more information was available to them it would help in the provision of guidance for students with disabilities. Guidance counsellors also felt that they did not have enough resources and training to allow them to provide effective guidance for this group, for example information on how a physical disability may affect a student's ability to pursue a particular education or career path.

Recommendations for improvements included the introduction of Disability/ Access Officers across the whole education sector and an improvement in the links between post-primary and third level educators. This HEA funded project will continue until July 2005 and hopes to influence change to address some of the deficits.

Further information on the project, conference papers and emerging issues are available on: www.it-tallaght.ie/able4college.

Jim Jordan Project Officer would welcome your comments and suggestions and is particularly interested in hearing about models of good practice in this area. E-mail Jim at: jim.jordan@tcd.ie



(r-l) Rory O'Sullivan, Michael Shevlin and Vincent Lennon listen to Minister Brian Lenihan TD speaking at the conference



Community-based Outreach Guidance in Limerick City



The Limerick Adult Educational Guidance Service was established as a direct result of needs identified through the RAPID process, and is led by the City of Limerick VEC, in collaboration with the Department of Social and Family Affairs and the PAUL Partnership.

This new service aims to consolidate existing guidance provision within VEC Adult Learning Programmes and the Local Employment Service, while also introducing two new strands of provision: (1) Community-based Outreach Guidance (2) A Professional Information Service

The Outreach strand of the Service seeks to widen participation in life long learning to those most educationally disadvantaged, by addressing the key issues associated with learner access, participation and progression

The outreach strand serves 3 RAPID designated communities :

1. City centre, (St. Mary's, Kings Island)
2. North City (Moyross, Kileely, Ballynanty)
3. South City (Southill, Janesboro, Our Lady of Lourdes and Ballinacurra)

Each of the three communities benefits from the services of a part time Guidance Counsellor, who is available to provide educational guidance and information to any adult currently involved in a learning programme, or thinking about becoming involved.

How has the Outreach Service Developed?

The planning and delivery of outreach guidance services across the city of Limerick is a continuously evolving process presenting new questions at each stage of development. The aim was to develop the service from the ground up, keeping learner needs at the core. This required a planned approach, coupled with a degree of flexibility that would allow change of direction as deemed

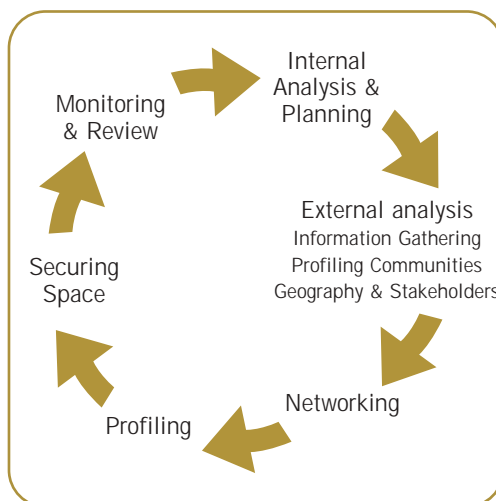
necessary. The questions we posed to ourselves were endless: How do we really get to know the area? How do we get to know the influential people in the local communities? How do we find suitable space to meet clients when we don't have the financial resources to rent rooms? If these questions sound familiar, our experiences to date may provide food for thought on the process of developing Outreach Guidance Services for Adults.

So What Did We Do?

- We reflected upon ourselves as a service
- We examined: learner needs, local communities, geography of the areas
- We met with the key stakeholders
- We developed a process for delivery that was relevant to the local settings.

- A multi-agency Steering Group has met on a regular basis.

How Did We Do It?



Internal Analysis and Planning:

- Induction Training for City of Limerick VEC Adult Education staff and management, to disseminate information on the nature and extent of the service.
- 11 Strategic Planning sessions, involving all CLVEC guidance staff and facilitated by the Adult Education Service Development Team, allowed us to clarify and agree the focus of our service. It also enabled us to pinpoint our goals, objectives, actions and acknowledge our limitations.

External Analysis:

Scale and location of community based education and development programmes was mapped. We developed a site-visit form to help gather base-line information on geographical areas and boundaries, target groups (profiling on age, gender, education level, employment) needs/gaps and client views.

Getting to know the local communities required that team members hit the streets on a walk-about in their respective communities. RAPID Co-ordinators, acted as guides, ensuring that the staff got a real grasp of the local geography, landmarks and some of the local issues. At community development and education venues we were introduced to many of the key stakeholders, activists and 'gatekeepers' working on the ground.

Local Networking

Having a team of five, we were able to link with a large range of stakeholders, including but not limited to: community representatives and leaders, Tutors, learners, Home School Liaison Coordinators and complementary support agencies. The challenge now is to maintain and further develop these partnerships. We have found that linking at local level can sometimes mean taking a few minutes out to join people for

coffee, simply keeping an ear to the ground on local happenings or attending community events, presentations or meetings.

Profiling of the Service

Visibility was key to getting the service off the ground, so we visited classes, attended coffee mornings and had a presence at practically every event hosted in the local communities.

Later, more formal methods were employed such as presentations to a number of key services across the city, information sessions, distribution of flyers and posters and a targeted media campaign.

We formally launched the service in Nov 2003 and invited guests from all the communities to attend the event.

Space

Guidance counsellors have secured rooms in community centres for two half days each week in their respective communities. These locations are familiar to local people as many attend Community Education Programmes, Adult Literacy Classes, or training within these centres.

The rooms used are small but serviceable. No nice, comfy surroundings,

storage space, Internet access or even a phone but through being mobile (mobile phone, laptop, big bag etc.) we get by.

Monitoring and Review

Use of a service quality questionnaire has provided invaluable information for ongoing service development. Client comments have been used to help promote the service.

A Snapshot of Achievements to date
Jan 2003 – Jan 2004

- AEGS Strategic Plan 2003 – 2005 launched.
- Service developed in direct response to local needs
- Value of the service acknowledged by local communities. Successful application submitted to Dormant Accounts Funds, from three local RAPID groups, for additional funding for the service.
- Increased referrals from tutors and community personnel
- Service integration within local communities evidenced through invites to the many important local educational and sporting events
- Group Guidance modules delivered in all communities

- Introduced an Adult dimension to the Mid West Educational and Career Exhibition. Organised this in association with the IGC. Arranged buses from all local communities to ensure access to and from the venue.

- Involved in a range of inter-agency initiatives including:
 - Presentations on Adult Learning Options to FAS CE participants.
 - 'Men and Health Programme' for MILES (Men in Limerick Experiencing Separation)
 - Personal Development module for the FAS/VEC 'Return to Learning Programme in the South City, formulated and delivered with the Adult Literacy Guidance Counsellor
 - Pilot programme on community activism entitled 'Making our own futures'

Our energy is high and we are constantly planning new interventions within community settings. However, amid the flurry of development the challenge is to create a balance between what we strive to achieve and what is feasible with the resources at hand.

Laura Brady is Co-ordinator of the Limerick Adult Education Guidance Service, ph 061 310880



Formal opening of the Adult Educational Guidance Service, Dublin City South West



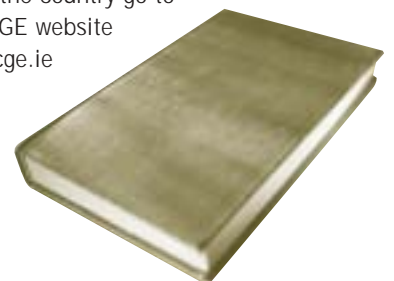
Caption: Minister Sile DeValera pictured with Adult Learners and their tutors at the launch of the Dublin City South West Guidance service

On 22nd January Sile DeValera, Minister of State for Further Education officially opened the Guidance Service at Crumlin College.

There are now 25 pilot projects around the country, which aim to provide a quality educational guidance service for adults. The service is freely available to adults who are taking a VTOS, literacy, community education or other adult education course. Information, advice and guidance on a one to one and group basis are available to help people to make the best possible choice for learning.

For further information about the service in Dublin South West consult their website www.adedguidance.org, contact Cathie Hogan at 01 4540704, or email aegs@ccfe.cdvec.ie.

For information about the services in the rest of the country go to the NCGE website www.ncge.ie





RESEARCH

A synopsis of:

An Understanding of the peer-to-peer concept in 2nd and 3rd Level Education Systems in England, Ireland and the USA

By Justin Connolly

The concept of peer support had its beginnings in 1939 with the establishment of Alcoholics Anonymous; the belief was that people who had experienced the problem of alcoholism and overcome it would be more effective in assisting others who were trying to do the same. The peer-to-peer concept has grown over the years to numerous settings and issues.

At Secondary School level there is a relevant need for peer-support, at least where the main areas of concern are bullying and exam results. The peer supporter would require training in communication skills (especially active listening), assertiveness, and the ethics of a helping relationship. Individuals who are to function as peer supporters should possess certain personal qualities such as emotional stability, maturity, self-reliance and a sense of security and confidence. They should also understand the limits of their responsibilities. Knowing when to refer is a must. For example, issues such as substance abuse, threats of violence and threats of suicide must be referred without hesitation.

The following examples give an idea of various peer-peer initiatives currently in motion in England, Ireland and the U.S.A.:

- In Canada, at Runnymede Collegiate Institute in Toronto, students wishing to become peer helpers go through a vigorous selection process
- IN COMMON is a peer counselling group program at Harvard University, in the U.K. Staffed by Harvard graduate students, trained in peer counselling they deal with issues such as academic pressures, suicide, relationship issues, life away from home, loneliness and problems adjusting to graduate student life

- PAL is a student-to-student support scheme for academic and personal development that was implemented in 2001 at Bournemouth University and since then has spread to various other universities throughout the U.K.
- In February 2001 the Student Counselling Service in Trinity College, Dublin began researching a peer-programme to suit the needs and culture of TCD. The Peer Buddy Network was launched in October 2002. Once training is completed students have the opportunity to apply to become a peer support volunteer (Peer Buddy)

The term 'peer counsellor' sometimes overlaps with the term 'facilitator', 'mediator', 'helper', 'advisor', 'mentor', 'support volunteer' 'buddy' etc. Student counsellors theoretically may be involved in a 'peer support programme' which in practice filters down to a mentorship or mediation-type role; more 'informal care-giving' rather than actual counselling (Bor et al, 2002).

Actual peer-peer counselling is limited by the following conditions:

- Students are not qualified counsellors and may not have the required training to deal with sensitive, and critical issues that could be raised in a 1-1 session
- Boundary issues can arise – if the problem is very personal there may be a concern that private information might find its way to other acquaintances in the school; how do you measure the integrity of a peer-counsellor?
- How does even a trained student with basic experience identify low-risk counselling against high-risk counselling?
- The non-professional aspect of peer counselling means that it lacks

consumer safeguards which prescribe minimum standards of education, training, experience, and supervision for certification and/or licensing

- It could be difficult to establish accountability in the case of negative outcomes
- Peer counsellors may mix their personal problems with those of the 'client' student. Other ethical concerns are dual relationships, autonomy, privacy, and confidentiality
- Peer-to-Peer Counselling is possible where a qualified counsellor is present (usually this will be the School Guidance Counsellor). However, the concept of 'supervised' peer-peer counselling though a novel idea is limited by the fact that a counsellor is required during the session anyway

Given these concerns, there appears to be a need to define peer counselling more explicitly. The use of a term with less of a psychological connotation, such as 'supporter' or 'adviser' would be appropriate. This change in terminology would eliminate any suggestion or expectation that the relationship involves more than information giving, listening, and referring to a teacher when appropriate.



RESEARCH peer-to-peer article *continued*

The following are some suggestions that may help to minimise the negative potentials of peer counselling:

- Training of peer counsellors should cover which issues must be referred and what the signs are for potential referable problems
- Conduct regular meetings with peer counsellors to review 'client' student progress and to determine if referable issues are evident
- One-on-one peer counselling relationships should be time-limited (10 to 12 weeks maximum). Reassign 'client' students to other peer counsellors if necessary. Favour "group" sessions over "individual" sessions. This reduces the chances of

dual and/or dependent relationships forming.

In reality, peer-mediation and peer-facilitation have proven to be successful ventures in this country. St. Andrew's College, Blackrock and Patrician College, Finglas are exemplary in their achievements to date in peer-peer initiatives in second level Irish colleges. These and other ventures help in the development of the individual student volunteers involved in these programmes and free up valuable time required by school guidance counsellors.

However, due to the ethical and legal risks involved in peer-peer counselling more research and empirical analysis

would have to be undertaken before the term 'student counsellor' could be truly acknowledged; and where a decision might be made in the future to implement such a programme the culture and philosophy of the individual school would have to be amenable to such a venture.

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Justin Connolly is a student on the Higher Diploma in School Guidance and Counselling course at NUI Maynooth.



EUROGUIDANCE

FEDORA - European Guidance and Counselling network in Higher Education

FEDORA is the European network of guidance and counselling professionals in Higher Education. Like the EU, FEDORA will have 13 new participating countries in its family from 1 May 2004. The population of the EU will increase from 375.3 million to 545.1 million. The new Europe faces even greater complexities of social, economic, industrial and educational systems. This brings an increased richness to the FEDORA network and a major opportunity to heighten knowledge and interest in good practice in guidance and counselling in tertiary education in an expanded Europe. Fundamentally, students' needs are similar everywhere. However, the diversity of cultural, economic and educational structures of a greatly expanded Europe must challenge us to aspire to the highest, and not the lowest, common denominator.

FEDORA aims to provide an effective professional organisation and network to support higher education student advisers across Europe. Its members provide advice and support to higher



education students through a number of specialist functions including educational advice and counselling, psychological counselling, special needs / disability advice and career guidance. The focus on the perspective of students and their educational and personal development in higher education is a key cornerstone of all FEDORA activities.

The network is made up of four newly reconstructed working groups:- The Educational Guidance and Counselling working group; The Psyche working group; The Employment working group and the Disability and Special needs working group. All members are

encouraged to get involved in one working group, and where possible there is a named national contact person for each working group.

You can Join FEDORA by logging on to the website www.fedora.eu.org (an annual subscription fee applies)

Upcoming FEDORA events

- Biannual executive committee meeting of all national co-ordinators in Dundalk IT from 1-4 April, 2004
- FEDORA Employment Group Conference 2004, "Graduate Recruitment and Employment across the Enlarged European Community", College of Europe, Warsaw, Poland 30 June – 2 July.

Harriet Andrews, Careers Officer in Dundalk Institute of technology is the newly elected national co-ordinator of FEDORA for Ireland. If you would like any further information please contact Harriet on harriet.andrews@dkit.ie



EUROGUIDANCE

Higher Education and Careers Fair 2004 in Amiens, France

Ireland was one of 12 European countries represented at the Higher Education and Careers Fair in Amiens in France on January 8th and 9th of this year.

20,000 students attended the 2-day event, seeking information on career and educational opportunities both within France and in the European Union. The event is the brainchild of M. Pierre Huchette who introduced the European dimension 16 years ago. Belgium, France's near neighbour was the first European country to take part in the exhibition. Today England, Ireland, Spain, France, Germany, Italy, Greece, Denmark and Finland sit side by side marketing their country to French students, teachers and lecturers alike.

Mary Farrell, manager of the Adult Educational Guidance Service in Longford was invited by the NCGE to represent Ireland at the European Forum.

Ireland is undoubtedly a popular destination for French students, many of whom have already spent study periods here as part of the Erasmus programme. Mary spoke with Bac plus 4 students who

had completed a 10month placement in Carlow IT and were eager to pursue postgraduate studies in Ireland. Students in Premiere and Terminale who presented at the Irish stand sought information on a myriad of courses ranging from Physics and Astronomy, Law with French, to Agriculture and Fine Art.



*Mary Farrell,
Manager of the
Adult Educational
Guidance Service
in Longford,
advising on career
options in Ireland
at the Higher
Education and
Careers Fair in
Amiens, France.*

Not all the French students were academically orientated, many simply wanted to take a year or two out and roam the Irish countryside in an attempt to improve their language skills. Some

students sought a more structured approach to learning English and left armed with information on Au Pair agencies in Ireland.

It wasn't just students who expressed an interest in Ireland, teachers from Marseille, Lyon and indeed the Picardie region were strong in their praise of our country and were actively encouraging their students to consider Ireland as a venue for further study. College lecturers were interested in forging links with businesses and industries in Ireland in order to facilitate student placement, which is part of their college programme.

What do they say, think globally, and act locally? Maybe we should embrace this concept and introduce the European dimension to the Higher Options in September!

Mary Farrell, Manager, Adult Educational Guidance Service, Longford



EUROGUIDANCE

Problem SOLVE

(Problem Student Orientation and Language preparation for Vocational Experiences)

The Problem SOLVE project is being developed, designed and tested as a multi-lingual, multi-cultural preparation module for students undertaking mobility placements in vocational training. The module will consist of language and cultural exercises in a number of virtual situations in user-friendly CD-Rom format. The primary objective of Problem SOLVE is to encourage students to interactively troubleshoot potential challenges they may face while on placement in a different country. In addition to better language skills for students who complete this module, they will also have an increased cultural and practical knowledge of their host country.

The idea for this project came through feedback at the Mobility Co-ordinators Annual meeting with Hibernia Learning Partnership in September 2002. These guidance councillors identified the need for a preparation tool for students to use prior to departure. Language skills relating to practical issues and cultural problem solving abilities were identified as the main areas of development.

Now in month five of a two year project the partnership has identified the main subject headings to be included on the CD-Rom (and website). The headings are as follows:

1. Travelling
2. Accommodation & Living
3. Work
4. Socialising
5. Emergencies

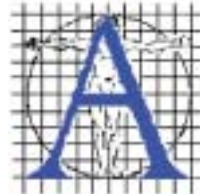
If you would like more information on the Problem SOLVE project, or would like to be involved in having potential students test the CD-Rom please do not hesitate to contact :

*Hibernia Learning Partnership
Tel: 01-8851340
Fax: 01-8851305
Email: info@hlp.ie*

HIBERNIA 
LEARNING PARTNERSHIP



EUROGUIDANCE Academia 2004



During the week 8-12th March NCGE hosted 8 guidance counsellors from France, Norway, Spain, Italy, England & Wales as part of the Academia programme for the exchange of Guidance Counsellors.

The visiting guidance counsellors all found the programme to be very informative and enjoyed their week. A big thank-you to the people who hosted these visitors in their workplaces, they were: Jill Collins of the Connolly centre, Eamonn O'Boyle of De La Salle Dundalk, Susan Tanner of Kings Hospital and Peter Brown of Amien Street LES; thanks also to everyone else who helped out.

I would definitely recommend this exchange. It is not all work, you have the opportunity to see a little part of another country and by meeting delegates from other European countries you learn about their systems, training and day to day work. I found that sometimes one part of a system seemed better than others but the ideal one would be a combination of all the good bits of each system!

The programme included presentations from each country on their guidance and education systems as well as a more in-depth look at the Irish system. During my work shadowing I had a chance to learn about the work, meet clients and to hear some of the solutions used here. At Trinity College we went to a very inspirational talk in which learners explained how education and the right support is enabling them to reach their true potential. We also visited a technical college and UCD. I discovered that there is a very different system in Ireland to the UK.

On our final day we had a chance to meet up and compare our experiences and share the highlights of our week. In the afternoon we did a bit of sight seeing too.

Overall it was great to feel part of Europe and to make new friends, the informal conversations were great. I'd recommend it.



Academia participants compare their experiences in Ireland on the last day in Dublin

Jackie Carlton from Connexions Devon and Cornwall was among the group, she tells us about her experience on the Academia exchange programme:

“Thank you for arranging an interesting week for me in Dublin. I realise now how great it was to escape and learn about guidance within another education and employment system. I applied for the Academia programme to have the

opportunity to learn about guidance and possibly bring some innovative ideas back to my own company. The programme was really varied and it was a great mixture of presentations, visits and work shadowing. The informal conversations were also very enlightening. All week I had an internal dialogue going on inside my head thinking “this happens here and has this consequence but we do that.”



www.guidenet.org

GUIDENET is an EU Leonardo da Vinci funded pilot project which aims to establish a European Network of expertise in the field of Guidance. The primary target groups for Guidenet are guidance counsellors, guidance organisations, policy makers and other actors in the guidance field at all levels national and transnationally.

Benefits of the Guidenet Project and becoming a member

The GUIDENET Website offers guidance organisations, practitioners, trainers, policy makers from all over Europe the opportunity to:

- Learn from innovative projects. The Guidenet website hosts a database of best practice where one can view details of guidance projects at national and transnational level.
- Disseminate innovative practices and projects - Members can add projects which they are involved in to the database of best practice.
- Voice an opinion - Members can join discussions taking place on the ICT Platform. Key themes include Social Inclusion, Developing Guidance Networks, ICT in guidance and Training in Guidance.
- Make links with other countries - Guidenet offers Irish guidance practitioners and related organisations an opportunity to network and establish links with a wide range of guidance and education organisations throughout the EU, EEA and pre-accession countries.

Would you like to become a member of the Guidenet project?

NCGE now invites guidance practitioners and organisational representatives of guidance organisations in Ireland to join the project. For details of becoming a member contact Yvonne Mc Carthy in NCGE. Ph: 01 8690715 / Email: ymccarthy@ncge.ie



REVIEWS



PUBLICATION & WEBSITE REVIEW: Employing People with Disabilities. A Practical Guide for Managers and Employers

(2003, A4 size, 32 pages), produced by
Irish jobs.ie/ www.irishjobs.ie



This guide was published by Irishjobs.ie in 2003 as part of its recognition of the European Year of People with Disabilities. It aims to show employers the benefits of employing a person with a disability.

The publication focuses on employer information and case studies and has a useful publications and contacts section at the back.

The Guide is designed for accessing specific information rather than reading from cover to cover. It is easily identified by its distinctive cover. It has a clear contents page and is well laid-out.

Information is provided for employers on definitions of disability, workplace accessibility issues, employment procedures, disability proofing, and the range of disability-related employment supports available. More information on how to access these supports would be of benefit. The service of Job Coach mentioned under the Supported

Employment Programme heading can be of great importance when working with a person with disability seeking employment.

Six case studies are outlined, mostly from Irish employees with physical disabilities. These describe how physical access improvements and assistive technologies have enabled them to work more effectively. Aer Rianta mentions that as well as making physical changes they also made many changes in the area of culture and job design. This is something that would have benefits across the broader range of disabilities.

The website www.irishjobs.ie has features to make it accessible to people with disabilities.

It also has an online guide "Finding a job - a practical guide for people with disabilities" which is a support for finding suitable work. The link to this guide is in the "Career Paths" menu of the site. It has five sections. The job-seeking section is

particularly good, with useful advice on issues around disclosure.

In the area of general information, the website has up-to-date articles from employment specialists in a format which can be adapted for use in the guidance process.

Importantly, Irish Jobs are promoting the idea of acting as a facilitator between jobseekers with disabilities and potential employers.

Irishjobs.ie are definitely following through on their aim to help and "encourage people with a disability to pursue work in their chosen careers".

*Deirdre Johnston, Co-ordinator and Guidance Counsellor
Discover Guidance – Dun Laoghaire Adult Education Guidance Service*



REVIEWS



How to Get a Job You'll Love By John Lees

Published by McGraw-Hill ISBN 0-07-710382-3 £12.99 sterling

John Lees' book provides career guidance to those beginning their working life and also to those who are bored with their line of work and are in need of a change. Being a recent graduate, I've found choosing a career quite a chore, but this book has made the decision-making easier.

The book touches on every aspect of job hunting and career choice. The opening chapter introduces the reader to career management and explains its importance. From the start the author explains the need for creativity in choosing one's line of work, and then throughout the book he sets exercises such as Gardner's intelligence test that help the reader to be

creative and discover the career most suited to them.

The author frequently stresses the importance of self-motivation. He emphasises the need for preparation when it comes to job interviews, and the completion of his exercises is essential for those serious about their career choice. However for those looking for a quick fix, this book is also useful as one may pick and choose chapters and topics to study that he or she may find most relevant.

All in all it's a wonderful book. The information contained, including excellent tips on interviews, networking, CV writing



and pages full of other helpful websites, books and contacts is worth purchase alone. But the fluidity of the writing, the layout and the inclusion of many humorous quotes (ranging from Henry Ford to Mark Twain) make this essential reading for anyone who is unsure about their career's direction.

Reviewed by Colm Reidy, a recent graduate of Waterford Institute of Technology.

Institute of Guidance Counsellors Annual Conference, March 2004

The NCGE attended the IGC National Conference: Breaking Down Borders - Maximising our Resources held in

Donegal on the 4-6th March.

Professor Tony Watts, who is a self-employed consultant and Life President of the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling in Cambridge, delivered the keynote address highlighting key findings of the OECD study on guidance and the many future challenges for guidance.

The Conference was a busy one for the NCGE with two workshops on guidance planning provided by Eileen Fitzpatrick (Acting Director), Linda Darbey (Project Officer) and Colum Layton (Guidance Counsellor, Carrigaline Community School) and the exhibition stand manned by Sile Sheehy (National Co-ordinator, AEGI) and Natalie Rooney (Project Officer) who also attended workshops at the Conference. Both workshops were very well attended and many issues were raised and discussed. For guidance counsellors who did not have the opportunity to attend the workshops the presentation slides are available from the NCGE website www.ncge.ie

Updated supplements and other materials were distributed to Guidance Counsellors at the exhibition stand; these have also been mailed out to schools.

Survey of Support Teachers' Needs

A survey was distributed by NCGE to Support Teachers in February to identify the needs of Support Teachers and ways in which NCGE can respond to these needs. To date 15 responses (representing a 36% response rate) have been received.

An initial review of the questionnaires revealed that one perceived need is for additional support. The setting up of an association or formal network is seen as a way of addressing this need. Some Support Teachers also indicated that they were unaware of the work of NCGE and of other support agencies. A full report of the results of the survey will be available in the next issue of NCGE News.

Responses to the Survey are still being received by NCGE

Research

It has come to our notice that there is a wealth of guidance related research in Ireland, largely being carried out by students and recent graduates. Most of this research remains unexploited as a resource for guidance practitioners. For this reason we have decided to dedicate a section of NCGE News to Irish Guidance research. If you have carried out research which you feel may be beneficial to other guidance counsellors please contact Jane Beatty at NCGE, jbeatty@ncge.ie, ph 01 8690715

Supplements

3 new supplements to the Guidance Counsellors handbook are now available on our website www.ncge.ie - they are:
 -Legal and Ethic Considerations in Psychological Testing
 -Guidance Programme Planning
 -The Adolescent Self

Regional Offices of Department of Education and Science

Introduction

The concept of the Regional Offices emerged from two concerns – the need to make the Department of Education & Science more accessible to the public and the need to free the Department of Education & Science from excessive preoccupation with details of the operation of the education system. Preoccupation with details of service delivery was deferring the Department's attention from policy and strategic issues. The Regional Offices should also be seen as a further expression of the Department of Education & Science's commitment to openness and transparency.

Functions of the Regional Offices

The Regional Offices will

- Provide a single point of contact for information and advice on the education services available in each region
- Act as a first point of contact for interests at regional level wishing to address educational disadvantage
- Ensure the complementarity of various regional initiatives to tackle disadvantage
- Work closely with County Development Boards, the Vocational Education Committees, Area Partnerships, Drugs Task Forces, Education Centres and other service providers.

- Represent the Department of Education & Science at regional level at the fora listed above and input into these fora in relation to existing policies and provision and the planning of future needs on an area basis
- Ensure greater dialogue between educational institutions at regional level and develop area-based approaches to monitoring of provision
- Monitor the delivery of agreed regional area plans in so far as education is concerned
- Build on the community fora developed by the County Development Boards and engage in appropriate dialogue with a wide range of local interests on matters pertaining to educational disadvantage

In short, the Regional Offices will facilitate a two-way information flow between the educational users in the region and the Department of Education & Science as well as promoting networking between the different educational partners within the region.

Ian Murphy
 Assistant Chief Inspector
 Directorate of Regional Services

