



National Centre for Guidance in Education

Lárionad Náisiúnta um Threoir san Oideachas

NCGE *news*

Winter 2015 / Issue 44

Leading and Shaping Guidance Practice



THE ROLE OF CPD

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Approach to
CPD

Professional
Identity:
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Director's Note



Welcome to the 44th edition of NCGE News, Winter 2015.

In this edition we are focusing on the theme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in lifelong guidance. We highlight different examples of how CPD can be provided and experienced by guidance practitioners and, indeed, how CPD can inform policy and practice.

Essentially, there is broad agreement on the importance of CPD for the continued provision of a quality guidance service. But what exactly do we mean by Continuing Professional Development and why do we need it? Is it on-the-job training? Work-based learning? Professional skills development? Peer learning/sharing? Peer mentoring/supervision? Completion of courses and attaining more qualifications? Referring to guidelines and handbooks to inform practice? Attendance and/or presentations at conferences/seminars? Which of these is more important?

Working in the guidance sector we are aware of how the world of education and work are ever changing. However, let's reflect for one moment on the skills developed in our initial training/education programme to become a guidance practitioner. Asking ourselves questions such as those posed here can prove revealing: How long ago did I complete my training? Was it a six week or six month course - or a Postgraduate programme? How has the world changed since then? Did I learn about guidance for people from multicultural backgrounds? Was delivery of guidance through ICT or social media part of my training? Did I begin my guidance practice pre or post 'Google'? What issues are my clients facing now in education and career planning?

There was a time when the guidance practitioner was considered the oracle of information and application processes for

education or job search. Personally, I began working in guidance when phones were not so 'smart' and course information was posted out to guidance services in a CD-ROM! So much is available online now that clients can access information and complete application forms from their own homes, or even on the bus! So our role has changed to one of supporting our clients to develop their own skills, to manage their own career paths.

As guidance practitioners we encourage and promote participation in lifelong learning. We act as advocates for our clients, and therefore seek to learn more about how we can serve those clients best. What research has been carried out to inform our practice? Who has piloted and developed new processes and delivery practices? Can we share that information and learn from each other? By keeping these questions in mind we are opening ourselves to providing the best possible experience for our clients.

CPD is one element of lifelong learning. But what do we get out of attending CPD for ourselves? Well, it provides a chance for guidance practitioners to learn about new research and methodologies, reflect on our own practice and assimilate and integrate (or not) the new learning into our practice. Is a qualification in guidance from 5, 10 or 15 years ago enough to ensure that we are providing a quality service to meet the needs of our clients in 2015? Would we trust a doctor who had not kept up with new medical practices and treatments? The articles within this issue of

NCGE News suggest that CPD allows for the further clarification and professionalism of the role of the guidance practitioner in itself and should be a requirement for registration with professional guidance associations.

Is mise le meas,
Jennifer McKenzie
Director

"Professional development is not a product, devised by training providers and academic institutions. It is a mindset, a habit to acquire."

*John Wilcox, from
Developing Professional
Skills (p.6).*



ELGPN



The 18th Plenary meeting of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network was held in Luxembourg on 28th and 29th September. This meeting marks the penultimate meeting of this work programme. The agenda and discussions focussed on the proposal for future co-operation in lifelong guidance across Member States. The ELGPN Co-ordination Unit confirmed that the various outputs of this work programme – the ELGPN tools - were completed and have now been forwarded for full publication. We are grateful to the Unit for allowing us a sneak preview of the publications, which will be available

The publications, which reflect the work of the Member States in the Testing of the European Resource Kit and the recommendations arising from this work, include:

- Guidelines for Policies and Systems Development for Lifelong Guidance
- Designing and Implementing Policies Related to Career Management Skills (CMS)
- Strengthening the Quality Assurance and Evidence-Base of Lifelong Guidance.



to download from the end of November (www.elgpn.eu) following the final meeting of the ELGPN in Finland.



This two-page excerpt from the forthcoming ELGPN publication, *Strengthening the Quality Assurance and Evidence-Base of Lifelong Guidance* (below) details five key, interconnected quality elements. It is in considering each of the five elements, not in isolation but as a group, that “a common language can be identified for continuous improvement of lifelong guidance systems and policies”.

Strengthening the Quality Assurance and Evidence-Base of Lifelong Guidance

Using these five quality elements, a common language can be identified for continuous improvement of lifelong guidance systems and policies.

Citizen/User Involvement

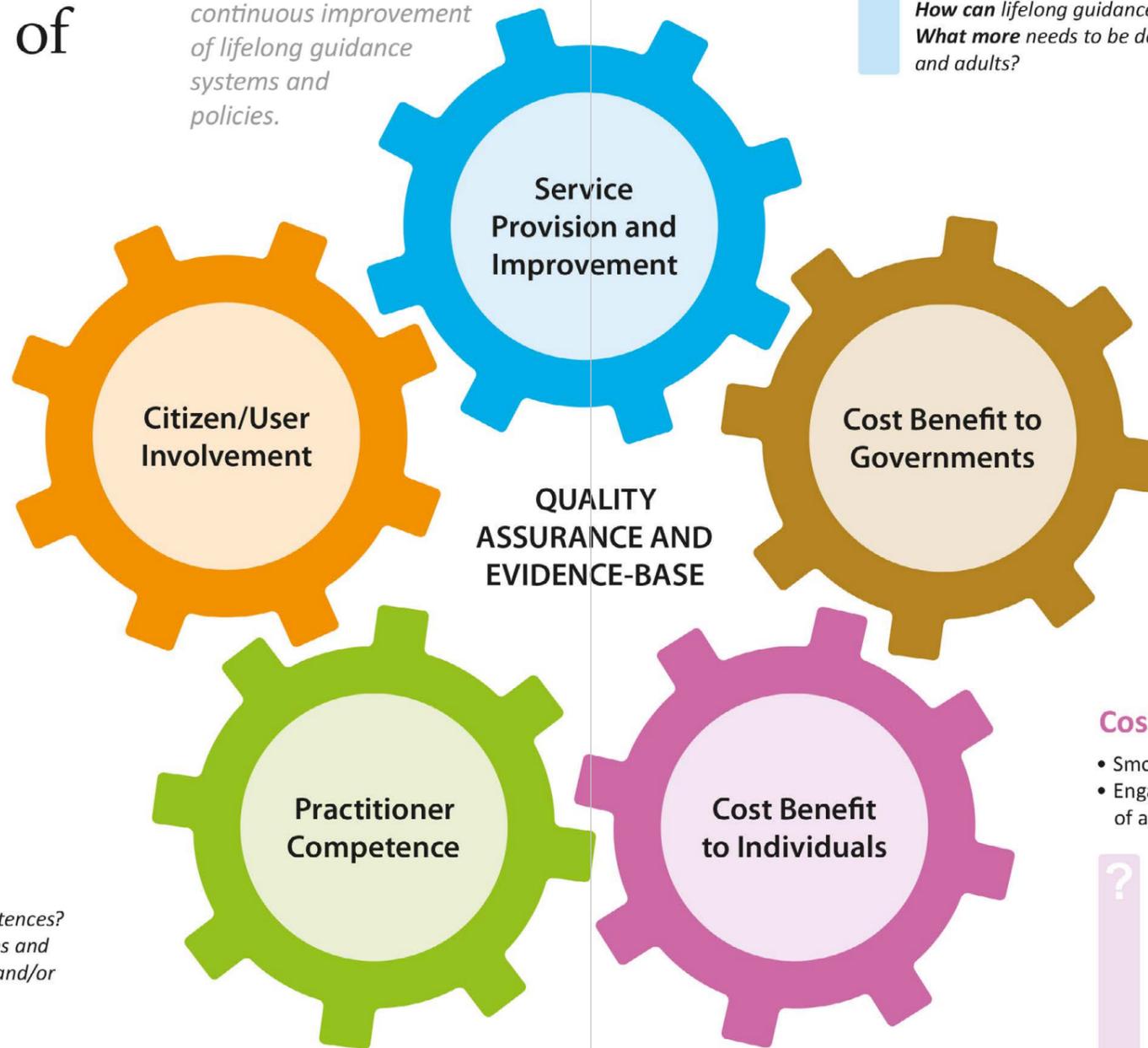
- Improved user experience
- Development of effective and efficient services
- Strengthening accountability
- Contribution to social justice

KEY QUESTIONS:
 ? **What strategies and approaches can be used to engage more citizens in lifelong guidance and in the shaping of guidance services?**
What role should government and other key actors perform in relation to citizen/user involvement in lifelong guidance?
What more needs to be done to focus on citizen/user involvement in lifelong guidance?

Practitioner Competence

- Assuring practitioner professionalism
- Ensuring access to services relevant to citizens’ needs
- Supporting practitioners’ continuous professional development

KEY QUESTIONS:
 ? **What evidence is available on practitioner competences?**
What information is available on the qualifications and training of careers counsellors, guidance workers and/or work coaches?
What more needs to be done to improve quality assurance and the evidence-base in the area of practitioner competence?



Service Provision and Improvement

- Access to quality assured guidance as a public and private good
- Key policy imperatives: promotion and provision of career management skills, optimising channel mix (face-to-face, contact centres, distance services via internet, telephone & email), skills profiling and effective matching

KEY QUESTIONS:
 ? **What is needed to quality assure service provision and improvement?**
How can lifelong guidance services be improved and how can its impact be assessed?
What more needs to be done to improve lifelong guidance services for young people and adults?

Cost Benefit to Governments

- Justification for expenditure of lifelong guidance services
- Need for analysis of immediate, medium and long-term calculated savings in terms of economic and social returns

KEY QUESTIONS:
 ? **What is the value-added proposition for Governments to invest in lifelong guidance?**
How can impact assessment and cost benefits result in robust and useful quality-assurance and evidence-based policies and practices?
What are the policy challenges and likely future demands requiring new forms of cost-benefit analysis?

Cost Benefit to Individuals

- Smoother transitions
- Engagement and motivation to learn stemming from alignment of aspirations and personal development plans

KEY QUESTIONS:
 ? **What is the value-added proposition for individuals to invest in lifelong guidance?**
How can policy makers and organisations that employ career counsellors, work coaches and guidance workers best communicate the added-value benefits of lifelong guidance for individuals?
What more needs to be done to develop and promote cost benefits and other added-value returns to individuals?

General

Higher Options

NCGE joined with 170 Colleges, Universities and Institutes of Further Education to take part in the Irish Times Higher Options event at the RDS in September.

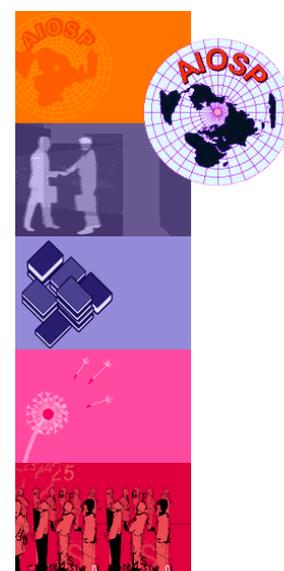
Higher Options is one of Ireland's biggest student events and has become an annual fixture on the Education calendar. Held in association with the IGC, the three day event provides thousands of students with the opportunity to meet and speak directly with representatives from all of the main Irish universities and colleges, as well as many from the UK, Europe and further afield. NCGE hosts a stand each year at the event and we were delighted to meet the many Guidance Counsellors and students who visited both our stand and the Euroguidance stand in search of new and developed resources to support their practice.



At the NCGE stand at Higher Options, L to R: Jean Rafferty, NCGE, Linda Darbey, NCGE and Betty McLoughlin, President of IGC.

International approaches to CPD

The 2015 International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) International Conference was this year held in Tsukuba, Japan and took **Restructuring Careers Over Unexpected Powerful Forces** as its title.



NCGE's Director, Jennifer McKenzie, was invited to present in a symposium on the key theme of *Assessment, Measurement, and Evaluation: What We Know Works* with colleagues from Japan, USA and Europe: **Deirdre Hughes**, Warwick University, England; **Professor Teruyuki Fujita**, University of Tsukuba, Japan; **Dr Rie Thomsen**, Southern University, Denmark; **Professor Dr. Marinka Kuijpers**, The Open University/Hague University, The Netherlands, **Zi Chen**, PhD Student & **Scott Solberg**, Boston University, School of Education, USA and **Judith Langner**, Nationales Forum Beratung in Bildung, Beruf und Beschäftigung, Germany.

Jennifer's presentation, titled *Evidence based policies and practices in Ireland: developing a cross-sectoral approach*, centred on how evidence-based

policies and practices in adult educational guidance services are informing dialogue, discussion and future developments. The presentation is available to download from the NCGE website:

<http://www.ncge.ie/ncge-attending-external-events>.



Coinciding with the theme of this issue of NCGE News, another symposium at the IAEVG event focused on the key theme of *Professional Development: Preparation and Training for the Career Teacher and Practitioner*. Chaired by Roberta Neault from Canada, *Reflections from a Global Perspective: Career Development Training, Certification, Supervision, and Professionalisation of Practice* provided an opportunity for those attending to hear the different approaches to CPD requirements, provision and delivery across several countries.

General International approaches to CPD *continued*

It was evident from the presentations and discussions that initial training and in-service CPD varies across jurisdictions, sometimes even within larger countries. Initial training for guidance skills ranges from two weeks to Master's Degree programmes. The general consensus, however, remains that initial training in guidance skills is necessary to support clients in making career decisions. While one speaker questioned the necessity for supervision in guidance practice, there was general agreement on the necessity for opportunities for peer learning and the need for CPD to support ongoing practice. Reference was made also to the links between attendance at guidance supervision and CPD and that peer learning is an important part of CPD, whether formal or informal.



Mount Tsukuba, Japan.

It was suggested also that professional associations should require evidence of CPD programmes for continued registrations within the association.

Further information on the IAEVG conference is available from:

<http://www.iaevgconf2015.jp/>



Delegates at the IAEVG Conference in Tsukuba, Japan.

Post Primary

CPD and the Guidance Counsellor: Why Bother?



Professional organisations for those working in the guidance profession support and encourage their members to attend CPD programmes, whether this is directly related to their work place, or for their general professional development and continued membership of that institute or association. In this article Mary Egan, Chair of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) sub-committee on CPD, outlines the importance of CPD to one such professional body, the IGC, in Ireland.

As those of you working at the coalface realise, it is quite a daunting task to provide and maintain a professional, holistic and inclusive service for all the stakeholders in your schools, further education colleges and community settings; one that is in keeping with the legal requirement stated in Section 9 of the Education Act (1998):

A recognised school shall use its available resources to— (c) ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices.

Guidance counsellors design and deliver activities to assist students to make choices about their lives in three key areas: Personal, Educational and Vocational. We are required, to the best of our ability, to adopt an “open door” policy with all the stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, Year Heads, Parents’ Associations, Boards of Management, outside agencies and others.

In particular we are expected to provide a professional service in the following key areas:

- **Counselling:** we provide a caring context for the provision of guidance counselling to young people to support their personal, social, educational and career development, and during moments of personal crisis. We need to be fully

cognisant of our legal and ethical requirements while doing so.

- **Consultation:** we engage in a two way process of consultation with parents, teachers, school management and referral agencies in a timely and procedurally correct manner.
- **Assessment:** we should be competent in using a wide range of psychometric tests for a variety of purposes. The provision of feedback is vital.
- **Information dissemination:** we identify comprehensive sources of useful information; set up systems for acquiring, storing and disseminating this information; and show students how to process and use the information.
- **Classroom/group guidance activities (personal, social, educational and vocational development and preparation):** we need to be able to facilitate the learning and development of new skills such as decision making, opportunity awareness, digital career literacy, personal awareness, study skills etc and to provide appropriate experiences to support students’ personal, educational and career development e.g. mock interviews, employer visits, work shadowing/placement, attendance at exhibitions such as Higher Options

- **Referrals/reporting procedures require strict legal procedural guidelines:**

- Referrals by the Guidance Counsellor: The Guidance Counsellor must be able to recognise the boundaries of his/her competence and employ referral procedures when appropriate.
- Referrals to the Guidance Counsellor: while teachers, school management and parents may refer students to the Guidance Counsellor, the Guidance Counsellor must ensure that the referred student is a voluntary participant in the guidance counselling process.

- **Record-keeping procedures and dissemination:**

we must keep detailed personal records of:

- Personal counselling and careers/vocational guidance interviews,
- Results of psychometric tests undertaken

The data must be stored securely.

- **Guidance programme planning:**

The Guidance Counsellor is instrumental in collaborating with school management and relevant staff in drawing up the school guidance programme and in reviewing its operation.

To maintain a professional service in the above areas demands continuing versatility and upskilling on the part of the Guidance Counsellor. It is essential that as professionals we are aware of our ethical and legal requirements at all times. Yet we operate in a constantly changing and time-challenging work environment with an increasingly diverse student base. We are dealing with unprecedented complex social and economic issues such as mass unemployment, family break-up, asylum seekers/refugees and mental health issues, which place a huge demand on the school guidance service. In addition, guidance counsellors need to keep pace with legal and technological developments which require ongoing upskilling.

In short, guidance counsellors operate in a constantly changing world. To quote Plato: All entities move and nothing remains still. To ensure that we keep up-to-date with change and meet the complex and diverse needs of students it is essential that we regularly attend CPD.

Indeed, to maintain qualified membership of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors, a chartered Member must complete a minimum of 10 hours of in-service training annually (IGC Constitution and Code of Ethics 2004). However, this minimum requirement may not suffice to ensure that guidance counsellors stay abreast of the constantly changing demands of our profession. CPD provides guidance counsellors with the opportunity to learn and develop new skills and also provide us with a wonderful opportunity to meet colleagues and share information. This is very important as many guidance counsellors are the sole practitioner in the school.

Current situation

The current situation regarding the funding and resourcing of the guidance service and provision and uptake of CPD varies greatly depending on the context in which guidance counsellors find themselves. The IGC and NCGE are constantly working to provide meaningful CPD for those working in guidance in the school and FET sector that responds to the profession's needs as expressed by Guidance Counsellors themselves. The Department of Education and Skills in Ireland provides funding for some of these workshops and many outside agencies also cooperate with the IGC.

Most CPD workshops are currently delivered at IGC branch meetings, at the AGM and through NCGE. However, despite the recommendations by all of the above bodies, many guidance counsellors report being unable to avail of CPD due to time-table arrangements in the school sector. This places such guidance counsellors in a "catch 22" situation; trying to cope with increasing demand, in reduced time, in an every changing environment, without the benefit of upskilling or networking with colleagues on latest best practice.

Future of CPD

For many years, guidance counsellors, myself included, have felt that the nature of IGC workshops are too constricted by time logistics. Trying to fit workshops in after branch meetings or within the confines of an AGM timetable meant that we tended to get quick “snapshots” of the material which, while helpful, did not really provide a level of training about which one could feel confident. As a result of this, the IGC National Executive subcommittee on CPD is looking at changing the way CPD is delivered.

The IGC hopes to work with local branches and provide more comprehensive training in key areas prioritised from feedback from our members on future training requirements. Every IGC Branch has been contacted via the branch secretary and requested to provide suggestions on what members would like. We also consulted feedback sheets from the last four IGC AGM’s. From this we’ve compiled a “wish list” for future CPD. This is an ongoing process and we would ask Branch secretaries to continue the practice so we can make future CPD as relevant as possible.

The IGC is proposing to provide in-depth training in key areas which will take place over an extended period of time. At the end of workshop sessions guidance counsellors will receive meaningful accreditation which will go towards a hierarchy of qualifications on which they can build. Eventually, it may be possible to obtain a Master’s qualification when enough credits are amassed. The most important thing is that we will feel much more confident in using what we’ve learned to guide our professional guidance practice. For example, many members expressed an interest in obtaining further training in Mindfulness. Instead of just doing a two hour workshop, it is proposed that we provide a training course involving the requisite hours to entitle successful candidates to a recognised Certificate in Mindfulness. The logistics of how the course will be delivered will be based on the most convenient delivery method in terms of accessibility and cost. Some may be carried out over several afternoons or over a certain number of weekends or in some other way.



The cost of such a course will be obviously more expensive than a single short course but the IGC hopes to assist local branches in funding. This process is still in a gestation phase but we plan to move on it very soon. The IGC has met with a Higher Education Provider to look at ways of delivering a high quality, meaningfully accredited CPD service to all IGC members throughout the country. We hope to start rolling out courses in many of the requested key areas. The university has expressed a strong interest in working with us in providing a quality standard. It’s a very exciting development for our profession but we would request that all Guidance Counsellors be in a position to avail of this training

In summary, CPD is as essential to the professional Guidance Counsellor as it is to other key professionals. We have a duty of care to our students and clients, some of whom are very vulnerable and marginalised. We owe it to them to provide the best service possible. We need to ensure that our knowledge and skill sets match the demands of a constantly changing market place. We also owe it to them, and to ourselves, to operate within strict legal and ethical guidelines that are also subject to constant change. In effect, CPD is our means of maintaining a Quality Assurance and Evidence Informed Service.

About the Author

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For further information about the IGC: www.igc.ie



Higher Education

The Importance of CPD in Shaping Guidance Policy and Practice



The Association of Higher Education Careers Services (AHECS) is committed to the highest ethical and professional standards in the delivery of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) to students in Universities and Institutes of Higher Education. This aspiration is easily and readily expressed but of course verifiable delivery is far more difficult.

Careers Services in HE institutions, like all public services, face the twin challenges of ever-increasing demand for those services and the pressure to maintain and deliver them with little or no increase in human, physical or financial resources. Continued growth in third level student numbers is a welcome development but the resource constraints that frustrate us all pose a serious risk to the delivery of the high quality careers services to which AHECS aspires. This is the background and context against which the AHECS Continuous Professional Development Task Group has drawn up its Strategic Plan for 2015.

The CPD Group’s mission is “to provide opportunities for members to upskill to ensure highest standards of delivery” in areas such as:

- Guidance Practice
- Employer Recruitment Methodologies
- Bursaries for individual training and development
- Labour Market Information
- Social Media Personal Brand Management.

As one would expect from staff working in research intensive settings there is a very real appetite amongst AHECS Careers Professionals for information on the latest research on all the areas above and one of the challenges for our organisation is to find ways of disseminating the latest findings in a way that is

timely, effective and comprehensive. A recent survey of careers staff by AHECS as part of the redesign of our website found that what they value most is the opportunity for development, networking and information sharing that we provide. AHECS training events and Biennial Conference are always well attended and many colleagues also travel to the UK to attend AGCAS (Association of Graduate Careers Services) Annual Conference. The University of Warwick’s Career Guidance Qualification is valued by careers professionals and is an excellent example of their commitment to CPD. The Institute of Guidance Counsellors is also a provider of CPD events that inform our practice and guide policy.

As mentioned earlier, careers services are under increasing pressure to deliver quality guidance to increasing numbers. This gives rise to an understandable tension between quality and quantity. For example, many institutions have been forced to limit the number and duration of one to one guidance sessions in favour of more general or generic careers guidance to groups through workshops and larger class room/lecture hall based events. It is therefore critical for careers professionals to continuously reflect on their guidance practice and to ask if it is meeting students’ needs. This reflection must take account of contemporary research and developments in fields such as psychology, education, sociology and IT.

The vast majority of the CPD initiatives delivered by AHECS are demand led, i.e. the members have identified issues or topics they wish to see covered by the speakers who are themselves experts in their field. The quality and credibility of these events is what makes them influential in shaping guidance practice and policy. It is fair to say that AHECS members are a discerning and demanding audience, but it is also true that AHECS members are skilled at incorporating the latest research findings into their guidance practice.

Some brief examples of the areas where research based CPD has influenced guidance practice and policy:

Building partnerships:

Careers services professionals have identified the importance of building partnerships with Academics and HE Management as critical to the delivery of quality services. Demonstrating impact, value for money and student satisfaction is now a key performance metric for careers service and collaborative working is essential to ensure best use of scarce resources. It is also a vital part of formulating bids for resources to senior management.

Employability:

The goal of embedding employability in our guidance practice and the wider curriculum is a constant struggle for careers professionals. Some academics are reluctant to see student employability as part of their remit and finding ways to address this concern is a real challenge. It is noteworthy that many UK careers services have migrated from the traditional careers and appointments model to one of skills and employability and more recently to student development and employability. This is much more than a change of title. It is a re-focus of mission, function and form with significant implications for careers services.

Harnessing IT:

The use of IT in the delivery of career guidance is ever evolving. Students consume huge swathes of information via a plethora of devices and platforms. Keeping pace with digital natives and the rapid pace of technological change places ever more demands on careers services. Social media in all its forms is a

marvellous communication tool but daunting for those of us not familiar with it. Harnessing IT to deliver self-contained online careers modules represents a real opportunity to ensure our resources are contemporary and fit for purpose while being available on a 24/7 basis. We need to become familiar with technologies such as blended learning, flipped classroom, mobile learning and collaborative workspaces.

Coaching:

Many careers professionals have a talent and affinity for coaching. The depth and variety of our experience working with students gives us an excellent foundation for the coaching role and it is an area where some careers professionals might wish to specialise in the future.

Other CPD themes of major interest to AHECS careers staff are “understanding the millennial generation”, an endlessly fascinating, some would say frustrating, area of research and “cross cultural awareness and training”. There is some very interesting sociological and psychological research on the millennial generation that has implications for our practice and interaction with them. Similarly our client base is increasingly diverse in terms of age, socio economic background, ethnicity and cultural mores.

The range of subjects covered and the clear and proven appetite of AHECS members for a thorough immersion in all of them shows the multi-faceted nature of the problems and challenges facing careers services. AHECS will continue to support upskilling and development of careers professionals and will lobby HE employers to provide more funding to meet this ever increasing need.

About the Author



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Adult

Professional Identity: What's that and what does it have to do with me?



With changes occurring within the Further Education and Training sector in Ireland, job roles and required activities may change too. Within this context, Dr Siobhan Neary recently provided CPD to the staff of the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (see her presentation [here](#)) on maintaining clarity about their own professional identity – a key issue for CPD. In this article, she expands on the theme of the importance of reflection on professional identity and how that identity impacts on practice.



When someone asks you what you do for a living, what do you tell them? Do you say: 'I am a guidance counsellor; I work with unemployed adults' or 'I work with adults returning to education', for example? Although this sounds like a simple question, it often has quite a complex answer.

How we describe what we do is a powerful way of promoting our profession and the work we do. Professional identity is the concept that describes how we perceive ourselves within our occupational context and how we communicate this more broadly (Neary, 2014a). This is important, because it helps us to locate ourselves within our practice, both individually and collectively. We are not just one person doing this role, but many.

Ibarra (1999) suggests that our professional identity is formed through socialisation and observation of peers. It is through mirroring different aspects of people we look up to that we create it. We emulate those we admire. She argues that, as professionals, we become defined by what we do, our working relationships, the professional groups we engage with and the formative events in our lives or, as she describes it: 'the story that links who we have been

and who we will become' (Ibarra, 2003:18). Our professional identity is, therefore, constructed of a range of experiences, both internal and external, that collectively define us as the professionals we are.

Professional identity is not static. It is a fluid concept and therefore can be influenced, both negatively and positively. As guidance counsellors, we provide a conduit between the worlds of education and work, both of which are evolving at a phenomenal pace. To be effective requires us to ensure that our practice is continually evolving to meet the needs of our students and clients. Who would want a doctor treating them who hadn't updated their practice since the 1970's, for example?

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) supports us, not just to be highly effective practitioners; it also contributes to the maintenance of our professional identity. In a journal article written for the British Journal of Guidance and Counselling (Neary (2015b), I present CPD as contributing to professional, personal and social capital, professional autonomy, intellectual engagement, empowerment and professional pride. It provides us with a vehicle to reflect on practice, develop new techniques and strategies and to engage

with other professionals. This last activity is vitally important. Engaging with our colleagues helps us to shape our professional identity, through providing a collective and shared sense of what we do. There are a number of other key factors which contribute to its establishment. These include: job titles, shared ethics and values, professional associations and societal recognition.

Beijaard, Verloop and Vermunt (2004), in their research, examine three key components that, they believe, contribute to shaping professional identity:

- **Self-image** – how the professional sees him/herself influences practice and their view of professional change.
- **Role** – how the professional defines it to others, and
- **Conceptions and expectations of others** – what others think that the professional does?

These three components suggest that how we see ourselves is related to both our role and the expectations of others in relation to that role. The concepts are inter-related. If we present our roles negatively or undermine our role/s, then we contribute to broader negative images of who we are and what we do. Potentially, this can then influence

our own self-image negatively. That is not to say that everything is always perfect, it rarely is. Particularly in times of change, it can be difficult to always be positive. However, we do have control in managing the external image we present to stakeholders, clients and policy makers.

It is important that we are able to articulate who we are and what we do, in a way that is both accessible and meaningful. In the article mentioned earlier (Neary, 2014b), I present research in the UK as to how careers practitioners define their role. Findings include:

- those who are clear and confident about what they do;
- those who change their definitions depending on who they talk to, and
- those who have multiple roles and find it difficult to define any of them.

Within these three scenarios, it is apparent that:

- The first group offers a clear sense of self and definition of what they do that is consistent and helps others to understand their role and what they offer. This presents a clear and confident professional identity, 'I am a careers adviser'.



- The second group highlights the importance of being able to communicate with a wide range of individuals. However, potentially, this may cause confusion as the definition is continually changing. Therefore, there is no consistency or coherence.
- The third group also offers confusion and concerns about professional boundaries if their many roles are acted out simultaneously.

We need, as a profession, to present a consistent definition of who we are and what we offer. This will then help us to educate and promote the powerful and important work that we do. Our role is increasingly important as the world of work and learning becomes broader and more globalised. We offer a unique service, which supports individuals in navigating the complexity of modern life, enabling them to achieve their potential. Unfortunately, the level of understanding about what we do professionally is not as clear as it may be for teachers, nurses or bus drivers. We all have responsibility for shaping our individual and collective professional identity. If we don't, who else will?

Every time we explain what we do, we contribute to shaping external perceptions and expectations of our role. This cannot be left to one individual or one professional grouping. That is not to say that professional associations and bodies do not have an important role to play, they do. However, it is up to each of us, individually, to take responsibility for promoting our profession. Every time we introduce ourselves and what we do, we contribute to building the picture of the guidance counsellor.

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About the Author

Dr Siobhan Neary is Principal Researcher and Deputy Head at the International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby. She leads the Centre's CPD, workforce development and teaching activities.

Siobhan has a particular interest in the area of professional identity for guidance practitioners.

Non-Formal

A Multimedia Approach to CPD

Agencies working together



Film is one of the three universal languages, the other two: mathematics and music.

Frank Capra

http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/film_5.html



We all recognise how important it is to stay informed of developments within our profession and to continue to upgrade our skills through the range of professional development opportunities available to us. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) may include short or long term programmes, which may be accredited or non-accredited. Programmes may be designed to bring new learning or share practice. At the heart of our CPD is an aspiration to enrich and advance the theory and practice of career development and a multimedia approach may offer a cost effective and creative way of peer sharing and skill development. In this article, we offer an example of how Kilkenny AEGS (Carlow and Kilkenny ETB) and the Department of Social Protection (DSP) in Kilkenny worked with NCGE in creating a short film which informed a CPD day for adult guidance counsellors and adult guidance information officers in the summer of 2015.

Participating in a CPD Day is common practice for most of us. We may enjoy presentations, discussion groups, experiential learning and, most importantly, networking with peers. However, when it comes to exploring complex issues involving more than one stakeholder, client in-put, practitioner expertise, local experience and opportunity, there may be a value in taking a multimedia approach. This is exactly how NCGE, Kilkenny and Carlow ETB and Kilkenny DSP approached their task of exploring the DSP – ETB Interagency Protocol in readiness for a National CPD Day for guidance counsellors and adult guidance information officers.

In early 2012, the Department of Education and Skills issued Circular 0076/2011 (download [here](#)). This Circular addressed the whole area of inter-agency referral between the then VECs (now ETBs) and the DSP, in line with the roll out of SOLAS and the National Employment and Entitlements Service. Fundamentally, this Interim Protocol aimed to ensure that people seeking



employment, enterprise opportunities, upskilling, training and/or education would be advised effectively by the various agencies. This would mean informed referrals and ensuring that people were not constantly moving between agencies without consistent action steps.

Putting together an effective Interim Protocol for Kilkenny required a sharing of expertise and experience between the two key stakeholders, the ETBs and DSP, over a two-year period. Concerns, cultural differences between agencies, data protection, client confidentiality, client agreement and client engagement were all part of the areas for discussion. Following the clarification stage was an implementation phase. During this phase, case officer numbers increased and numbers of clients referred to all adult education programmes and the Adult Educational Guidance Service increased. Local Review Meetings took place and direct links were created between the Case Officers and the Guidance Counsellors.

Non-Formal A Multimedia Approach to CPD *continued*

Some of the positive outcomes of the work of these two agencies included

- an effective model of interagency collaboration which set out to support the client on their educational/career progression.
- an interagency Protocol as a formal agreement, ensuring consistency of understanding, information, communication and interaction.
- trust, which was built between the two agencies.
- a user-friendly and time efficient referral form.
- a transparent relationship between the client, INTREO and the Adult Educational Guidance Service.
- clients receiving a comprehensive and timely educational guidance counselling intervention.
- engagement of the client, which fulfilled the job seeking obligation.
- a high level of compliance, which satisfied DSP conditions.
- very low levels of DSP payment reduction or withdrawal.

Bringing all of the above to a National CPD Day could prove quite costly. Many clients who will not necessarily be free to travel to a central location and give up an entire day to share their experience. How can you realistically get a flavour of the ‘local scene’, what it is to be unemployed or seeking education and/or upskilling in the small City of Kilkenny? Also, how can you showcase some of the excellent facilities which are available both through DSP and the Adult Educational Guidance Service?

A 15-minute film, set in Kilkenny, was made by the key stakeholders, including clients. Thus, participants at the national CPD Day were given an overview of the core components of the work through the medium of film. The video captured the work of the two agencies, which took place over two years. Most importantly, the clients expressed personal responses on film about what a difference the inter-agency work had made to their lives. Seeing how people’s lives were

touched is invariably going to be of immense value to all of the practitioners present on a CPD Day. It is essentially a motivating factor in terms of enriching and advancing practice nationally.

The short film was followed up by a joint presentation from DSP and the Adult Educational Guidance Service. This video remains available on public access for a range of stakeholders. It captures quite succinctly how two agencies formed a strong working relationship which benefitted their mutual clients.

To view the film: <http://www.ncgeadultguidance.ie/7-resources/74-toolbox-talks/toolbox-talks-2>



Bernadette O'Rourke:
Co-ordinator,
Kilkenny AEGS
(Carlow and Kilkenny
ETB)



Fergal Blanchfield:
Case Officer,
Department of Social
Protection.

Euroguidance

Time to Move: national event on EU opportunities for young people



Opportunities for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) can come in many guises and attending or presenting at conferences, seminars and exhibitions can often be extremely rewarding. Presenting is, of course, the more formal aspect of this CPD but attending can present numerous opportunities to engage and learn in less formal situations. One such opportunity was the Time to Move event from which Shivaun Gallagher, on our *Euroguidance* stand, returned impressed by the exchange of information enabled by this type of setting.



Time to Move is a Europe-wide campaign organised by Eurodesk to inform young people about opportunities abroad and ways to access international information. Euroguidance Ireland attended the *Eurodesk Ireland* National Event to answer questions from attendees on studying and training opportunities in Europe.



Launching the event was Kevin Humphreys, Minister of State at the Department of Social Protection with

Special Responsibility for Activation who said, “One of the advantages that being part of the EU brings is the opportunity it provides our young people to travel and work across Europe, to broaden their horizons and to gain invaluable life experiences. Eurodesk plays a crucial role in this regard, operating as an invaluable free resource for young people who are interested in working, studying, volunteering, or more generally travelling across the EU.”



*Kevin Humphreys,
Minister of State at
the Department of
Social Protection and
Shivaun Gallagher,
Euroguidance.*

Former volunteers shared their experiences of volunteering in Europe. Youth workers, youth information providers and guidance counsellors also shared their experiences of supporting European mobility of young people and the benefits, as well as some challenges, that these exchanges can bring.

The event was a joint initiative of Eurodesk Ireland, Youth Information Services, Europe Direct Information Centres and SpunOut.ie. One of the objectives was to inform young people about diverse mobility opportunities in Europe including volunteering, working and studying abroad.

As a support organisation to the EU education and training programme Erasmus+, Eurodesk provides comprehensive and accessible information on

learning mobility to those who work with young people. Eurodesk youth workers always make sure that the information they channel is relevant and timely. Information points can be contacted via the Eurodesk.eu website.



For further information, contact:

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Youth and Adult Education: 01 887 1260



Online CPD opportunity: Mobility Guidance Counselling course

NCGE/Euroguidance is currently developing an online course in Mobility Guidance Counselling. The course focuses on developing a set of skills that Guidance Counsellors can use to support a client in their quest to study abroad.

Information is provided on how guidance counsellors can motivate students in finding appropriate international opportunities to work and study abroad. The course also aims to provide the guidance counsellor with a set of tools that will be useful in supporting the student before, during and after an overseas stay.

The course will be launched in Spring, 2016. We are currently recruiting guidance counsellors, both school-based and from the FET sector, to participate in a preliminary trial and focus group in November 2015 in order to evaluate the online CPD module. Excellent ICT skills are not required, but basic skills would be an advantage. If you are interested in participating in this trial please contact: ncgeinfo@ncge.ie

We look forward to hearing from you.

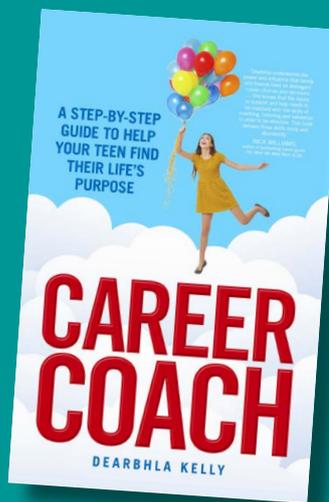


Book Review

Career Coach: A Step-by-Step Guide to Help Your Teen Find Their Life's Purpose

by Dearbhla Kelly

Published by Gill & McMillan Ltd (2015)



Dearbhla Kelly

Career Coach is a guide for parents who are looking for practical advice and tools to help direct their teens towards a fulfilling career. The guide is packed with tips and exercises to encourage self-knowledge in teenagers, as well as practical information and suggestions on choosing work experience, applying for third-level education, and acquiring the self-motivation and confidence to pursue one's dreams. Guidance Counsellors would be doing parents a service by recommending that they use this book as a resource to help them navigate this complex area.

Kelly advises that the starting point to helping your teen discover their path is to maintain good dialogue, noting that 'communication is the bedrock on which career conversations are made'. She offers positive examples of conversations to have around common areas of conflict, such as homework and time management, and recommends focusing on listening, asking open questions, and offering choices rather than ultimatums.

To clarify your teenager's natural talents, Kelly suggests open-ended questions, the responses to which can be distilled down to focus on a career area that aligns with your child's interests. Each chapter includes an interview with a successful individual who pursued their passion and now works in a fulfilling career. The stories illustrate the variety of paths which can lead to different jobs: hairdresser and business owner Robert Chambers worked as an apprentice fitter at 16, Lieutenant Sinead Hunt studied mechanical engineering, and garden designer Diarmuid Gavin started out as a commis chef. This diversity of careers and pathways reflect the guide's focus on developing practical, technical and personal skills, and recognising that each individual possesses multiple intelligences, gaining this self-knowledge will help your teen to make an informed and fulfilling career choice.

Career Coach sets out to help your child discover 'the work they were born to do'. However Kelly

emphasises that dreams and passions can only become reality through motivation and action. She lays out a template plan for your teen, breaking down each goal into achievable steps and giving tips and advice on unlocking the inner motivation needed to succeed.

While the guide outlines many practical exercises and templates for parents to follow, the emphasis is on supporting, rather than controlling your child. Kelly remarks, 'As a parent, your most important task is to train your child to seek their own inner guidance and wisdom'. A key step to achieving this independence is to equip your teen to deal with adversity, and Kelly presents a variety of strategies and exercises to help in developing inner strength and resilience.

This guide is helpful to parents of teens at all stages, but would be particularly useful to parents of those just starting out in secondary education, who may need some extra guidance when choosing subjects and building confidence in a new environment. Whether used as a step-by-step programme, or as a guide to dip into as your teen progresses through school, Career Coach is a practical and engaging resource for parents and all those interested in guiding teenagers to reach their full potential.

Eadaoin Patton is mother to two school-going children as well as being a Freelance Copy Editor and Proofreader.

Noticeboard



Assessment instruments

The Department of Education and Skills has published a Circular Letter 0034/2015 on assessment instruments (including tests and web-based resources) approved for use for guidance and/or learning support in post-primary schools which has been informed by the work of the Advisory Committee on Psychometric Testing. The Circular highlights good practice in relation to the selection, administration, interpretation and retention of assessment-related information and the provision of feedback to students. It can be accessed at:

https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0034_2015.pdf




Extra studies for professional development

When considering taking up a CPD programme we tend to look at courses directly addressed to guidance counsellors. However, it can also be worthwhile looking at other types of course that may be related to our work or that may help to inform our practice. Information on courses available at all levels can be found at www.qualifax.ie, or alternatively guidance practitioners should contact www.ncge.ie or their own professional body (e.g. www.igc.ie, www.ahecs.ie) for further information.



One such course, currently offered by the Adult Continuing Education (ACE) department at UCC, is the Certificate/Diploma in Autism Studies. The course, which has been shortlisted for an Aontas STAR Award, has proven to be popular with parents of children with autism and with those who work with people who have autism, as well as with adults who have a diagnosis of Asperger's or autism themselves.

ACE has now launched the Level 7 Diploma in Autism Studies in Dublin. The qualification is designed to give adult learners a broad understanding of the many different aspects of autism as well as the different perspectives on autism and Asperger's syndrome.

The course is offered in two Dublin venues: St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, and Griffith College, South Circular Road, as well as centres throughout the country. Further details on how to apply can be found on the UCC website:

www.ucc.ie/en/ace-daus/.



For those who prefer the flexibility of online learning the course will also be made available online in January 2016 – further details can be found at

www.ucc.ie/en/ace-caus/.





NCGE Updates

- latest news on the work of the organisation

NCGE Management of Guidance Committee

In recognition of the lifelong guidance approach required for DES policy on guidance and to support the strategic objectives of the NCGE, the Minister for Education and Skills has nominated a representative of Education Training Boards Ireland to the NCGE Management of Guidance Committee. Membership of the Committee reflects the key stakeholders in guidance policy, provision and practice, with representation from the Departments of Education and Skills and Social Protection, Institute of Guidance Counsellors, Adult Educational Guidance Association of Ireland, Directors of Studies of Guidance Counselling, Higher Education Authority National Access office, SOLAS and Education Training Boards Ireland.

NCGE Strategic Plan

The NCGE Management of Guidance Committee has approved the Strategic plan for NCGE for the next 3 years. Click here to download it:

http://www.ncge.ie/uploads/NCGE_-_Strategic_Plan_FINAL_27.5.15.pdf



This Strategic Plan and subsequent annual work plan activities of the NCGE reflect the changes in the education and FET sector in Ireland since the establishment of SOLAS and ETBs. The key objectives agreed for NCGE include, to

- (i) inform and support the development of DES lifelong guidance policy in the education and training sector.
- (ii) develop and support quality guidance practice in post primary schools and the FET sector.
- (iii) promote and support a national and EU focus to guidance policy provision and practice.



NCGE CPD provision

One activity designed to help achieve the objectives of the strategic plan is the co-ordination and provision of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for guidance counsellors and practitioners in post primary schools and FET. From 2015, NCGE will focus on a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of CPD across schools and FET utilising a blended learning approach with online learning, face to face workshops, where appropriate, and provision of resource materials via the schoolguidance and adult guidance handbooks:

<http://www.ncgeadultguidance.ie>

<http://www.schoolguidancehandbook.ncge.ie>



NCGE informing policy and practice

In continuing the role of NCGE in informing and supporting DES policy on guidance in education and the FET Sector, we have worked closely with DES on the development of the Course Recognition Framework. The DES consultation with key stakeholders, begun in summer 2015 and continued in November, to ascertain the views and comments of those involved in the initial education of qualified guidance counsellors who wish to work in the education and FET sector. The consultation document recognises the requirement for qualified guidance counsellors to have

the relevant knowledge, skills and competences to be employed in a DES recognised school or FET centre for education and training.

As a result of the initial phase of consultation, in Spring 2015, the Department published a Background Paper and Questionnaire on the *Recognition of Initial Teacher Education Programmes in Guidance Counselling* by the Department of Education and Skills: Proposed Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers and invited interested stakeholders to make submissions. The submissions received were reviewed and a subsequent penultimate draft was prepared. Those interested stakeholders who had made submissions to the initial document were invited to a consultation forum hosted by the DES on 4th November 2015.

The DES is taking on board the outcomes of the discussion for the final edition and publication of this document. It is expected that *Recognition of Initial Teacher Education Programmes in Guidance Counselling* by the Department of Education and Skills: Proposed Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers will be published by the end of this year.

We have moved!

Finally! The boxes are unpacked, the milk is in the fridge and desktops are supporting abundant in-trays (both in the physical and online sense). Yes, we've moved, and we would like to thank you for bearing with us during this busy time.

Normal service has been resumed and we very much hope that you didn't experience any interruptions. We look forward to many fruitful engagements with the guidance community from our new home.

The details

Our new address is as follows:

National Centre for Guidance in Education
Avoca House,
189 – 193 Parnell Street,
Dublin D01 H578.

Contact details remain unchanged:

Phone: + 353 1 8690715/6
Fax: +353 1 8823817
Email: ncgeinfo@ncge.ie

